

BOMTV'S

SECRET

In this special 1st Double Issue: STYLE!!!, Superman, Political
Fundraising, Fiction and a Doite of Doctor Pepper

THE EYES, EARS, NOSE AND THROAT OF PEACE CORPS GUINEA

TED KACZINSKY: PCV?!?!!



Unabomber to swear in??

AMERICAN
JUSTICE?

January ?? 1998

Things to do while travelling in our fair republic

1. Figure out what this means :



2. Take your pulse
3. Read Don Quixote (not in car though)
4. Make sunscreen designs on your right side
5. Memorize the Onjarama song
6. (From Kankan) see who can get orangest by NZerekore
7. Kiss the cute person next to you
8. Figure out what these mean:



9. Plan your very own medivac, or underwater exit from the vehicle
10. Test your oral dexterity by counting along with #2
11. Think up adjectives for sheep
12. Count examples of illogic (verifiable most wins a prize!)
13. Have Tiga with the vultures near Kindia
14. Calculate some Pi
15. Learn a forest language



A toast to your health: Is raising a glass the best medicine?

TOP TEN REJECTED MICROBREWS, NORTH AMERICAN BEER COMPETITION

10. Skol Light
9. Baton Spooze
8. Black Norbert's
7. Barley Cola
6. Newark's Finest
5. Okeefenokee Saltmarsh Wheat Sop
4. Ma Piddle's Chicken Pot Porter
3. East River Stout
2. Madonna Ciccone's Evita Cream Ale
1. Old Hoary

Bintou's Secret

Published by Lonely Men with Too Much Time on Their Hands, Ltd.

Editor-in-Chief Perry White
 President Red Auerbach
 Skaters Brian Boitano and Tanya Harding
 Managing Editor Rick Pitino
 Mangy Editor Snoopy
 Assistant Managing Editor The Red Baron
 Editor-at-Large T. Kaczinsky
 Terrorist-at-Large The Jackal
 Field Operative Conny McKenna
 Editor-at-Small Alfred
 Editor-at-Small-Small James Bucher
 Contributing Editors Josh Johnson, Ann
 Ingraham, Jeremy Eggleton, Martin Kifer, Snack Girl,
 Monica Miller, Mike Nemec, Sé Bouuo
 Director of Photography Confused
 Makeup for Mr. Kifer Enthusiastically Received
 Fashion Coordinator Snack Girl
 Personal Assistant to the Mr. Johnson
 The Wookie
 Key Grip Konstanze
 Key Whipping Boy J. Brian McKenna
 Petit Ouo-Ouo
 Ji petit Ye Ye
 Management Consultant Lynch
 Consultant Management Merrill
 Polling Firm Norassoba Bac Industries
 Snacks Shanda Steimer
 Musical Score Elton John, Hans Zimmerman
 Political Consultant K. Tilford
 Oldest Living Human Now an American!
 Sponsorship Nikke Shoes

KACZINSKY DEFENSE REDEFINES INSANITY; CLINTON PEACE CORPS INITIATIVE IN JEOPARDY

By John Doe
Washington Bureau Chief

Sacramento, 12 January, 1998 -- The high-priced legal team assembled to defend Unabomber suspect Ted Kaczinsky won their first battle this morning during a pre-trial hearing when they succeeded in convincing the judge to accept their contention that Kaczinsky was legally insane.

The basis of their argument was that a person eschewing all of society's norms to live in a 10' x 12' shack, with no telephone, no toilet, no television, nor any other of the trappings of modern life, must be incompetent to stand trial.

Though Mr. Kaczinsky could not be reached for comment, his chief lawyer held a press conference after the hearing. "My client is purely a victim. Anybody who lived a life that severed from the rest of the world is bound to end up murdering people. Two and two make four, you know?"

The judgement created a public stir when it was announced just before lunch time, but in the afternoon the story took an odder twist. When apprised of the situation, Jesse Helms, head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, gleefully seized the issue as an opportunity to discredit President Clinton's newest initiative, the expansion of the Peace Corps.

The curmudgeonly Republican from North Carolina was quoted by the New York Times earlier this week resisting the public expenditure as, "more ratfood for the third world." When he found that nearly three-quarters of the Peace Corps volunteers currently serving lead lives not dissimilar to that of Mr. Kaczinsky, Helms had this to say: "I've been telling people for years that Peace Corps was a refuge for drugged-out losers, leftists and homosexuals. Now judicial receptivity informs me that they're insane, too. This shouldn't be a surprise to anyone. All I have to ask America is whether or not they want their tax dollars supporting seven thousand lunatics. The President can pretty much expect a veto on his new bill-- why subsidize a freakshow? God Bless America. That is all."

The President had announced last week that he intended to increase Peace Corps funding by 50% in order to have "10,000 [volunteers] by 2000".

Talks were underway as we went to press as to whether or not something could be salvaged, but the Clinton administration was not optimistic.

Spokesman Mike McCurry lamented, "They've got us between a rock and a hard place here. Kaczinsky's last laugh, I guess."



Kaczinsky with unidentified Guinean woman (teint cl

Unabomber plea bargain negotiations take unexpected turn Kaczinsky may be headed to Africa

By White House Correspondant Jane Doe

Washington, 13 January 1998 -- The trial that has transfixed the nation took yet another unexpected turn yesterday as press leaks from principals involved in plea bargain negotiations and positive White House signals indicated that an interesting compromise may be struck for the former Math professor who has been accused of one of the highest profile bombing sprees of the twentieth century.

*As with the name "Quaddaffi" ("Khaddafi", "Khada-fee"), Mr. Kasczynski's name has numerous interpretations

The Washington Post (which does not own this publication) reported yesterday that Kaczynski, representing himself, had pulled off a major coup. There are now signals that the middle-aged anti-technology hermit may be headed to an isolated post in underdeveloped Guinea, West Africa. Publically the prosecution has denied that such a deal could possibly be closed but sources close to the team said that although Kaczynski may be handicapped by persistently seeking to defend himself, "in these Post-OJ days one often considers the kind of mountain of evidence we've amassed against Kaczynski to be a disadvantage, there is simply too much."

Meanwhile reports that Senate Foreign Relation Committee chairman Jesse Helms (R-NC) would seek to have more than 6000 Peace Corps volunteers who live in similar conditions to Kaczynski declared insane or immeasurably incompetent sent White House staffers scrambling to respond. A statement released late on Friday blasted Helms's assertion and focused on Kaczynski's strengths as a talented mathematician and independent thinker rather than what many people see as glaring personality flaws.

The statement said "We deny that all Peace Corps volunteers are insane. No one has proven that Ted is insane. Therefore, we believe that he would make a fine volunteer."

Some Republican legislators and conservative columnists attacked the the position as simply a message that Peace Corps was moving toward an across the board lowering of hiring standards. Conservative firebrand William Safire wrote in Saturday's Washington Times that "Peace Corps administrators struggles to fill thousands of new places under 'President' Clinton's new and ridiculous 10,000 by 2000 initiative reek of the same pandering that led to the organization's naissance in the 1960's. It's pure flummery. It seems to say: Why should we send our best and brightest when there are so many others we could sign up?"

Clinton's fabled rapid-response team was ready for the conservative media blitz, parrying the strikes on Washington's myriad Sunday interview shows. "This is nonsense," retorted White House senior advisor Rahm Emmanuel. "You have to look at Kaczynski's record as a whole. No one is perfect and he has, in spades, the types of qualities that lead to high success in Peace Corps. He is self reliant and a brilliant mathematician with teaching experience and a rugged outdoorsy lifestyle. Further, he has shown uncompromising dedication to his meeting his goals."

Other reports told of arrangements to fast track Kaczynski's Peace Corps application so that he can be sent directly to Republic of Guinea, a small nation on Africa's West Coast. Although it is often forgotten in discussions of geopolitics, it has recently been in the news for its virtual lock on the bottom five of the United Nations Human Development rankings and accusations of money being filtered from Guinean nationals to the Democratic National Committee. A regional expert in the Administration said "Ted will be right at home".

Peace Corps volunteers in Guinea were overwhelmingly positive in their response to Kaczynski's relocation to their humble nation. Martin Kifer, a volunteer characterized as "not completely incompetent" by his superiors, expressed unflinching support for the White House and its decision. "I mean, I like accept the proposed move hook, line and sinker. I've heard a lot about him. He's real smart. I hope he can get the mail running more smoothly. I mean, I don't like too much strong arm stuff but I hear he's got some good ideas."

Kaczynski has reportedly placed several conditions on practical aspects of his service including housing and employment. He is demanding a small house free of the encumberments of running water and electricity. Further, he is demanding that a proposed teaching post not require him to monitor end of the semester compositions and strictly limit the number of students he would be required to teach. "I'm not f---ing crazy," he wrote justifying his demands in an early draft of his list of conditions.

The Bantu's Secret editorial board bristled at what was possibly his most controversial request: control of the news and editorial content of Bantu's Secret, a beacon of truth and reason which informs and entertains the Volunteers of Peace Corps Guinea. We don't care who the f--- he is. No one can force us to compromise our integrity as journalists.

JUSTICE

The Makeover

THEY SAY CLOTHES MAKE THE man. So with his trial set to begin next week, suspected Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski is going for a new look. A far cry from the wild mountain man FBI agents dragged from a squalid Montana cabin 18 months ago, the new Kaczynski appears in court these days in a tweed blazer and with neatly styled hair. But it will take more than a makeover

to convince a jury that Kaczynski isn't the serial murderer who killed three and wounded 23 others in a 17-year bombing campaign. Prosecutors have stacks of damning evidence, taken from Kaczynski's personal diaries, describing his attacks. And the makeover could backfire. The new Kaczynski looks less like a deranged hermit and more like a methodical killer. Conjurung up his old image may be the only way to keep him from being executed.

The new Kaczynski



TOP TO BOTTOM: CULPER PICTURES; USA—AP; WORTH CENTURY FOX JAPAN—AP; AKAT CITY—AP; ELAINE THOMPSON—AP

Wow! We're past the halfway mark! Where did that first year go? I thought by now I'd be speaking Malinké fluently and totally integrated into the culture. Instead I find myself thinking about how I felt a year ago (homesick) and finding that thinking about feeling homesick makes you homesick. Of course it's a lot easier this time, because I think to myself "this time next year I'll be feeling homesick for Africa." I fact that's just what I was thinking the other day as I biked out to a village with a friend. "Man, I'm really going to miss this place." I thought and felt the tears welling behind my eyes. "You know, I'm going home in eight months," I said to my friend, my voice catching. And I'll never forget the look on his face-- surprise, bafflement, sadness. *I thought you'd always be here*, it seemed to say. I find myself saying, "You remember when . . ." and it's a great feeling to have friends who share memories with you, to have friends that stick up for your idiosyncracies ("She doesn't eat meat. She always does sports at five AM.") -- to have a small place carved out in society and friends that greet you and really mean it when they ask how you are doing.

"Sometime I hope we can go to Banankoro, because I want to meet your father," I said, suddenly feeling sad and scared as I could finally see, on that seemingly endless stretch of time, a horizon. All the things I had wanted to do for the last year came clamoring down upon me. How could I ever possibly do all I wanted to do? The time now seemed so short! We continued biking and I breathed the air, glancing about me and feeling an outpouring of love for the landscape and all that is good and wonderful in Africa. I vowed to myself to cherish each remaining moment of my service, knowing that it will be over all too soon.

And so with a lighter heart I arrived in the village. The women greeted me with friendliness and warmth. Some children ran away screaming in terror, while others ran to find their friends to stare at me. I spoke with the women about what they needed to do in order to work with me and PCPP to help them with their coop garden, and as we walked the kilometer and a half to their garden, I thought of the wonderful letters and beautiful prose I would write when I arrived at home, to help them. After seeing their garden the women thanked me profusely and then insisited that I take an entire rice sack full of vegetables home with me. A year ago I remember being overwhelmed at the generosity of people who have so little, but this time I wasn't shocked at all and would have been offended had they not offered me something.

And so we biked back. I was in happy spirits and thought about all the friends with whom I would share my vegetables. I thought warmly about how happy a simple cucumber could make someone, even me. Arriving at home, I divided up the vegetables and went out to visit my friends to distribute gifts. Everyone was happy.

When I finally got home I was tired and decided to rest, but the moment I lay down I heard unfamiliar children's voices outside my house. Somewhat unnerved but still in a relatively good mood, I told them in Malinké to "go home I'm resting." A few minutes later the 'knock on the toubab's door then run' game started and I started to get pissed off. I yanked open the door and then walked after them; some continued to jeer, but most ran away terrified. For the little brats that stayed I picked up a stick and continued following them-- that got rid of all of them, and fast. It always does. Last year I thought, "How mean second year volunteers are with kids." Now, although I could never harm a child, I often have an overwhelming desire to smack the shit out of them. I went back to my house and continued to nap, but I couldn't sleep. I couldn't really do anything either, so I sat brooding in the heat.

Finally it was time to go to Mike's house to work on our lesson for the adult ed. class we intended to teach the following day. So I set out, promising myself that I woule only recount the positive aspects of the day to him, since every time I think I've had a bad day his always turns out to be worse. Of course, when I arrived he wasn't there-- he was at my

house. I sat and laughed at the ridiculousness of the situation and waited. And waited. And then it started to rain. I decided to go to a bar and get a hot chocolate while I waited. I was still laughing and musing and trying to infuse myself with good humor by remembering how great I felt earlier in the day, when I arrived at the bar. It's the bar I always go to because the guy's really nice and all I have to say is "the regular" and he makes me a great salad. So this time I went in and asked for a hot chocolate and he started making me a great salad, but I didn't notice because I was being accosted by a Gendarme. "Are you married? Do you have children? Can I get a visa? You're beautiful. Are you going to invite me to your house?" etc... I was starting to get pissed off again but I thought I'd have my drink any minute and then I'd be on my way. Then Mike showed up and asked what I was doing. I explained our miscommunication and I'd be over in a few minutes.

About a half-hour later I finally got my drink (and salad), went to Mike's and did our lesson, then I came home, took out my calendar and counted the days to go 'til COS-- it seemed like a lot.

The Insider

by LA& DeDe Dunevant

Martin Kifer recently rethought his Beyla digs and job. Citing moves by the Houston Oilers (to Nashville) and the LA Rams (to St. Louis) for lucrative stadium deals, Kifer-- still tied to a 2 year, multi-franc contract-- threatened to walk if he wasn't offered a building that was up to par. The prefecture called his bluff and kifer accepted an offer in Boké that included a drip-free roof and batless interior. Our source tells us that Amy Blasen-- miffed at being kept in the dark on her home town dealings-- made a trip the Thies training camp but was unable to ink a deal with any TEFL rookies. ...

James Ham left the country on vacation and came back with an unlikely souvenir-- a wife. Ham (32) tied the



THE MOVE Boké's Kifer announces move in Thies

know with fiancée Sharoya in a double ring ceremony in July. Ham's publicist says the couple has never been happier, but our source says they have set up separate housekeeping since their arrival in country. ...

In an uncharacteristic display of patriotism, Jennifer Jurlando and Jennifer Foote have taken the USO theme of "entertaining the troops abroad" to new lengths. One wonders if the pair misunderstood the term-- American Army Special Forces.

The question on all the lips in Thies is just how special were those forces? Apparently the troops weren't the only ones getting entertained. Jealousy over the liaisons prompted Ann Grodnik to pine, "I need an army boyfriend."

Known for years as the home to stifling heat and countless mosquitoes, Lower Guinea has launched a PR offensive to try to improve its image. Calling the region "Da Boss Cote", the public relations firm Johnson, Johnson and Johnson will try to deemphasize such stereotypes as coup attempts and open sewers while pushing slogans

like, "Electricity-- makes up for a lot!" and "Susu, international language of the future." The media blitz has already proved successful having attracted Martin Kifer and prompting Jeannie Leesman to re-up in the region for a third year. However, defections like that of Karen Floyd (to Upper Guinea) and the impending move of Lower Guinea stalwart, Wick Powers, leave the region's future uncertain.

WRITE AN

The TEFL teacher formerly known as Cindy has been making serious gains in her campaign to promote the use of her "real" name, Cynthia. Sources close to the teacher say that she was "very encouraged by" the results of a limited trial in Thies, Senegal and hopes that the usage will continue in Guinea. Reasons for the name change are unclear, but speculation centers on a backlash against Peace Corps admin's "cute" sitemate pairings such as Cindy and Mindy and Scott and Scott. Scott Sackett is said to be following suit by promoting the use of his true name, Ruprecht.

ANN-
OYED
BY
BLANK
SPACE
?

ARTICLE
FOR
This

Journal.
That is
All.

Leaks from the set of the currently filming "Mobel

III" report that trouble is brewing among the collaborators. Julie Schultz had reportedly "had enough" and took off for Paris. In the wake of her departure, co-writers Josh Johnson and Martin Kifer have resorted to freelancers to finish the job. Hired guns Dustin Sharp and Scott Sackett have been tight-lipped about the work, citing pressure to finish on time and under budget from executive producer Wick Powers. Additional pressure comes from the huge box office success of Mobels I and II. That pressure recently got to Johnson, who reportedly grouched, "Yeah, 'show me'-- what imbecile couldn't have written that crap?"

Jet setting society types are shunning the previously fashionable Forest Region for the newly chic Fouta Djallon. "They left St. Tropez for N'zerekore. Now it's Labé," sighs Jeremy Eggleton, the self-styled party czar of the Forest. One attraction to the Fouta is reported to be the arrival of the in-demand Nolan Love. Parties with his signature flair were legend in his previous haunt, Thies, Senegal. (He reportedly netted

thousands of CFA on his much-discussed chawarma fest there in August.) While departures like that of party girl Vanessa Conrad have left the Forest scene a little stale, Love will undoubtedly contribute to the coming Labé party season-- already labelled Love's Fouta Fete by his entourage. Asked if he was contemplating a move to this season's hot spot Eggleton sniffed, "They've been lured away by rookies like [Love] before. They'll come back. They always do."

A contented Love enjoys the limelight



QUESTIONS FROM THE GERMAN EDITION OF VOGUE-- (WOGUE??)

- What dream or nightmare do you have over and over?
- What music should be played at your burial?
- What is-- independent from its content-- your favorite book title?
- And which do you find stupid?
- What nasty deed should your lover do for you?
- What good/honorable action do you find off-putting?
- Where would you like to be buried-- or where should your ashes be strewn?
- What cult of ancient divinity would you like to see alive again today?
- If you could travel in the past, which historical even would you change?
- Your favorite film?
- The most boring film you've ever seen?
- What do you want to bring up with God?
- For what would you most like to thank the Devil?
- Your favorite drug?
- Your favorite musical instrument?
- What should there be to eat at your funeral?
- What piece of good advice would you absolutely not want to have?
- What is, according to you, the most sinful material?
- If someone were to say to you that the next day would be the end of the world, what would you do?
- If you could change sex, which would you be?
- Which social convention do you find to be absolutely tweaked?
- Which author needs to be thrown in prison?
- If there is a hell, what is it like?
- And Paradise?
- In case we should all revert to cannibalism, whom would you like most to eat?
- In case you were the plate du jour, how would you like to be prepared?



Glenn O'Brien is THE STYLE GUY

Real help for the flair-impaired

A friend of mine extinguishes his cigarettes in my houseplants. He says it's good for them. Is that true?

It probably won't hurt them. Farmers have been burning fields for eons to enrich the soil. But I hope your friend removes the filters after stubbing. Have you tried putting out ashtrays?

I've been dating a girl I really like. She wants me to meet her parents. I'm terrified. What should I wear? What should I bring? What should I say? What shouldn't I say?

Be yourself. They'll be seeing the real you eventually; you might as well be real from the start. Just dress nicely in your own way and avoid wearing anything particularly frightening. A suit or a sweater and slacks are bound to make a better impression than a studded motorcycle jacket and bondage pants. If you're invited for dinner, you might bring a nice bouquet of flowers—not roses, maybe tulips or lilies. It's safer than wine for

cause deterioration in suits where glue is used to fuse the outer fabric to the inner canvas structure—i.e., most suits. If you spill food on a suit or other woollens, you had better get it cleaned—that's where the moths will most likely attack. If you steam your suits between cleanings, it might help get rid of that cigarette smell. You can also air them outside on a nice sunny day. Just make sure to bring them in before it rains or gets dewy.

My mentor insists that the correct way to eat a sandwich, especially in a posh restaurant, is with a knife and fork. I insist that eating a sandwich with your hands is correct everywhere.

I'm with you—unless we're talking open-faced hot roast beef, turkey with gravy, an overstuffed sauce-dripping meatball hero, or something generally unwieldy and messy. Of course, you should wash your hands before gripping a sandwich.

a first meeting. As far as conversation goes, you can't go wrong being complimentary of their daughter—they are bound to be proud of her. Just don't overstate your degree of intimacy with her. What shouldn't you talk about? The tattoo of their daughter's name you've got on your butt. Your HIV test. Your old girlfriend. Your sex life. Politics.

I have been told not to have my suits cleaned too often because it's bad for the fabric, but I often go out straight from work and my clothes pick up the smell of cigarette smoke. What's the proper way to care for a suit?

Dry cleaning should only be done when your suit really needs it. Dry cleaning doesn't damage most fabrics, but it might not be too good for some buttons. It can also

My wife always points out that I'm dressed or "hanging" to the left or right. My old girlfriends also used to note my blatant package. I'm big but not enormous. I prefer boxers. I'm not parading around semierect, but I'm embarrassed. What's the answer?

Loose pants with more pleats. Jeans or plain-front narrow trousers aren't for you, big boy. And make sure your fly is up. Only your wife will know the awful truth.

I find more guys are wearing flip-flops in public. Is this fashionable and/or acceptable?

It seems to be increasingly fashionable. How acceptable is more complicated. I don't think they'll get past the maître d's. For a trip to the beach or a burger joint they would seem presentable, as long as your feet are clean and your toenails are trimmed. But I don't think they make it as evening wear. Flip-flops don't work with a tux, even if they're black.

I wear boots, and whenever I wear loose jeans they're tight at the bottom, and when I try baggy jeans they seem exaggeratedly large. What are the right jeans for me?

You should be looking for jeans with a boot cut. Lots of makers offer them. Why not try the jeans real cowboys wear—Lee Riders and Wranglers?

A lesbian couple of my acquaintance would like me to be a sperm donor for their baster baby. What is the etiquette of that?

There is no etiquette where ethics are the issue. Would you, personally, like to have emanated from a baster and into their universe? If you are sure that's a yes and want to have children at a distance, go for it. Otherwise, have that new book on eunuchs with you the next time you see them, and tell them that you need a little more time to think about it.

Send your questions to: The Style Guy, Details, 632 Broadway, New York, NY 10012, or by e-mail: StyleGuy@Details.com.



*Shanda Steimer is...the **STYLE GAL!***

A friend of mine spits in my hut. He says it helps stabilize the mud floor. Is this true?

It probably won't hurt it. You should be careful about volume though — it could get too muddy. As you know, Guineans have been spitting for centuries and they're well practiced; I bet they could hit a spittoon. Have you thought of that?

I've been dating a girl I really like. She wants me to meet her family. I'm terrified. What should I wear? What should I bring? What should I say? What shouldn't I say?

Be yourself. Whatever you do it doesn't matter anyway. Just dress nicely in your own way and avoid wearing anything particularly frightening — like purple pajamas. A forest cloth boubou is bound to make a better impression than patched pants and your college T-shirt. If you're invited for dinner you might bring a nice chicken, or a goat if you're looking for nookie — it's safer than palm wine for a first meeting (they may be Muslims, you know). You can't go wrong being complimentary of thier daughter, just don't overstate your degree of intimacy with her. What shouldn't you talk about? Well, avoid the obvious taboos: visas, marriage, plane tickets, that sort of thing.

I have been told not to have my clothes cleaned too often because the women tortue the fabric, but I often go straight to the soiree from the health center and everything's all bloody. What's the proper way to care for my wardrobe?



Handwashing should be done only when your clothes really need it. It doesn't damage most fabrics, but it might not be good for some buttons and those delicate unmentionables. It causes the deteriorations of some complets where poor stitching has been used for the seams. If you spill food on your boubou, get it washed right away — that's where the ants will attack. If you do clean your clothes, and then set them out on a sunny day, beware tumba flies. They're a big turnoff when things get intimate — just ask a Bas Cote volunteer!

My family insists that the correct way to eat your meal, even in a grimy, filth-ridden restaurant, is with my hand. I insist that eating with a spoon is correct everywhere.

I'm with you — unless we're talking phisoderm, I'm all for the spoon. Of course, you should wash your spoon before digging into the bowl, too.

My "friend" always points out that I'm dressed or "hanging" to the left or right. My old girlfriends also used to note my blatant package. I'm big but not *grand, quoi*; I prefer boxers. I'm not parading around semi-erect, but I'm embarrassed. What's the answer? That's simple, big guy. Two words: grand boubou. Jeans or plain-front narrow trousers aren't for you. Only your friend will know the awful truth.

I find more guys (and women, for that matter) are wearing flip-flops in public. Is this fashionable and/or acceptable?



Note exceptional coverage of the grand boubou-- hides everything
[Faces have been airbrushed to protect the innocent]

It seems to be increasingly fashionable. How acceptable is more complicated. I don't think they'd get past the *secretaire communautaire charge de la collectivite*. For a trip to the pump or the rice bar they would seem presentable, as long as your feet are clean and your nails are trimmed. But I don't think they make it as evening wear; flip-flops don't work with a grand boubou, even if they're leather.

I wear flip-flops, and whenever I wear loose jeans they drag on the ground. But when I try wear tight jeans it's hard to "*me mettre a l'aise*." What are the right jeans for me?

You should keep your eye out on *marche day* -- the dead porto jeans will come to you. Be careful with the merchandage and remember neck-sizing -- that will solve all your problems.

A Liberian woman of my acquaintance would like me to be a sperm donor for her new baby. What is the etiquette of that?

There is no etiquette where ethics are the issue. If you want to have children are a distance, go for it. Otherwise have that new book on infertility with you next time you see them and tell them you need more time to think about it.

Lately I've been seeing a lot of men wearing hats with women's names on them. I find this extremely uncomfortable, and I'm getting from my friends to wear one, too. I'm so confused!

Come out of the closet, boy-toy! Try easing yourself into things with "*RICARDO*" before you jump into the deep end with "*ROSA*".

PAF Resistance grows in Congress

Washington (UPI)-- Tuesday, Dec 17-- Congressional debate on election reform today reached a new level. House Bill 1856, written by a coalition of legislators from both parties, is the most strident attack yet on the use of Political Action Figures (PAFs) as a means of fund raising.

Passage of the Bill by the House, says Rep. Willy Liggett (R-AL, 3rd), "would forever alter the way these people do business; they'd have to look their constituents in the eye and show themselves as God made them."

Liggett is assumed to be referring to the most recent Nute Gingrich PAF, which shows a svelte, muscular Mr. Gingrich in tight khaki pants that, even his fans will admit, overstate his anatomical correctness. Gun Control advocates were also incensed by its interchangeable "Anti-Ruffian M16" and "Uzi Undesireable Ulllllliminator", and support the Bill.

The Al Gore PAF has drawn fire from the environmental lobby as not well representative of the Vice President. Gore's doll has him swathed in banana leaves, which has been labelled hypocritical given, in the words of Sierra Club President Steve Ochs, "The current administration's half-hearted effort to fulfill its contract with the Earth." A spokesman for the Vice President notes, however, the fused joints and life-like frozen smile.

Of course, many analysts are skeptical of the Bill's chances, due to the Senate and the White House--



Political boost: Marilyn Monroe as the purported plaything of John and Robert Kennedy is hardly news. But now it's the stuff of art: nine feet high, in fiberglass.

through both of which it must pass in order to become law. Says Suzanne Thurber of the non-partisan thinktank Washwatch, "Even if it does get by the House-- which is by no means certain at this point, it still has to pass the Senate and the White House. That's a long, difficult road for a Bill this revolutionary."

George Washington University sociologist Slodoban Rifnik added that the Bill will have problems in both places as a result of the more prestigious and media-centric nature of the two bodies. "The people in these positions are used to self-glorification and political refinement-- they'll guard PAFs life a second identity. It'll never pass."

Because many of the action figures are co-sponsored by wealthy corporations, some members of the Republican party denounce them, particularly the Democratic ones, as yet another example of the President's unethical, and possibly illegal fundraising activities. President Clinton's figure is co-sponsored by Taco Bell. Senator Harlon Newbody (R-Neb), who supports the measure, says that, "It's a shameless political intrusion on the privacy of Americans who don't know-- and don't want to know-- who their President is. When I buy a 'Bubba's Big Burrito Dinner', I don't want to watch Crossfire, I want to enjoy my Taco. It's unconstitutional, simple as that."

TOP TEN THINGS THAT SHOULD NEVER TAKE "CHUNKY" AS A MODIFIER

10. Threadworms
9. Fog
8. Jet fuel
7. Bas-Fonds
6. Skol
5. Mycelex
4. Sauce-feuilles
3. Gii-glacée
2. Palm wine
1. Blood

Some of the Bill's sceptics on Capitol Hill brush aside arguments against PAFs as petty jealousy by junior members of both bodies. According to Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC), "The only reason this Bill is even breathing right now is because you won't find any of its supporter's smarmy little faces pressed out in plastic." The Helms figure is one of the third generation action figure just released this year, and is called "interactive" by its makers, Kenner and RJR. It shows the portly southern Senator sucking hard on a big fat stogie, and when you squeeze his belly, it blows smoke and rains invective on the island state of Cuba.

Despite such criticisms, the Bill's supporters see it as a large step towards cleaning up the electoral process. Indeed, there are some who champion the measure with an almost evangelical zeal, such as Rev. Ellis Smith, of Chicago (D-IL, 10th). "The Bible writes that there shall be no graven images of any Gods but Him. I think we're getting dangerously close to that. We don't want to bring the apocalypse down on us, do we?" he asked when interviewed. Rep. Liggett is a little more prosaic, but his words are the words of a crusader nonetheless, "Even if it's the first and last thing I do in the service of this, my great nation, I intend to eradicate the PAF."



Scraping the bottom of the Hollywood barrell: Former Dr. Smith (lost in Space) with Gore PAF

Rock Star Mike: Roi de Boffa

Manny Wurtzler, Lifestyle and Music Correspondant

I caught up with Rock Star Mike Nemec at his cozy bungalow in the Government complex of the post-colonial prefectural Capital of Boffa. After popping open his third Skol and slurping with satisfaction, he sat beneath his Elvis "69 Comeback" wall hanging and opened dialogue about his new album, the New York Yankees, and the twists and turns of global marketing from an impoverished third world nation. When we needed more beer or peanuts, he would holler at a diminutive HCN, to whom he affectionately referred as "Head". Then we played "Drinking Jenga"; he won.

I surreptitiously scammed this gig--under the guise of a "quick background chat" -- from his hardnosed publicist/media wizard, the inimitable Dede Dunevant. Dunevant makes quite an impression. A sarcastic 5' 11" blond Californian whose demeanor is somewhere between that of Murphy Brown and P.T. Barnum, Dunevant surprised me during the conversation by pulling out a concealed notebook and quoting me.

I asked her what Rock Star Mike meant to popular music. "He's the Beethoven of the Funk." I was flabbergasted. "You mean the goofy troublemaking St. Bernard of funk?" She didn't giggle. But she wanted too.

An emerging *wunderkind* in the genre of naive Post-urban protofunk, Nemec has virtually bulldozed his way into the international Pop world. His intense fusion of disparate styles has been referred to as the clip-hop Madras-style Hungarian Goulash of the Funk. The Rock Star certainly has the kind of confidence that breeds charisma and his take on such categorization was telling: "You can fumble around and agonize about which specific modifiers best explicate the subtleties of my style and technique, but I really don't give a shit what you call it. I prefer simply to be known as one hard motherfucker."

And hard motherfucker, he is. The Rock Star got his first 15 minutes of fame as a child hero, foiling a robbery at a local convenient store. Great reward, but he blew it all hiring Van Halen to play his birthday.

So, trying to get a handle on his sound is a dead end? "That's just exactly the wrong idea. I just say it's *je ne sais quoi* with emphasis on the 'I don't know'. It's

wonderfunk for dunderheads. The highschool burn out crowd is a perfect audience. No one ever lost a buck underestimating the intelligence of stoners." A sly marketing strategy, no doubt. Has it been tried before?

Mike Scored his first X-cultural hit this fall after coming up small-small on his first few essays. His "Tana Yo Mu Na" has been prompting calls of "encore" every time he plays it at "Salle de Fete" shows in Boffa. "Not much of a hit, really," he says with uncharacteristic candor. "It's just the music to Santana's 'Oye Como Va' with a tam-tam and a balafon."

Do local folks 'get' his other stuff? "Well, usually I have to lie and say it was originally written by Michael Jackson or Phil Collins, then they pay attention." His Guinean backup singers are all members of his Terminale Science Social class. How much are they paid? He sips, winks and deadpans "We have an arrangement. I control their grades. *Est-ce que tu comprends?*"

Filling out the band's line up is MC Diaby--sometime university professor and professional hipster. Rock Star Mike says that Diaby first caught his eye during a TEFL training session in Thies, Senegal. "Diaby's a real find. He's a jack of all trades. He handles some vocals for us--both singing and dancehall." He's also been stepping behind the turntables once in a while to lend some hip-hop flava to the Rock Star's sound.

Though much of his sound may not translate culturally, he's enjoyed amazing success stateside. His media blitz includes "WEBSWINGERS", a vigorous on-line campaign comprising more than 100 different Rock Star Mike related websites. His critically acclaimed first album, *Dick Nixon Revival*, has yielded three number one singles and have the *funkeratti* talking Grammy. The music videos combine Mike's churning guitar work with cutting edge cinematography. Everyone from Blues Traveller to the Allman Brothers is lobbying for a place on the tour that will surely follow Mike's COS from Peace Corps Guinea. Asked what he planned to do after Peace Corps, he responded. "Me and Mick are jetting over to London to jam with the Stones."

And what of the British supergroup Oasis's claim that they were much bigger than Mike? The Rock Star, no great anglophile, showed the grasp of American history that makes his music so compelling. "Thomas Jefferson said 'These British dudes are bogus, you know. But if we don't get some cool rules of our own pronto, then we'll just be bogus too.' That's how I feel about this poser British ego-pop. [redacted] them. Let's declare independance all over again." Funk-rock jingoism is born.



FREEBIRD! Festival crowd can't get enough of funk-rock's latest icon

Speculation has surrounded the production of the Rock Star's new album. The buzz is about some hefty names that maybe handling the mixing boards. "Yeah, Rick Rubin is producing it. That is, all but the Johnny Cash duet. Flood is taking over for that." What's it like? The Rock Star was characteristically evasive. He took a long look at the Prefet's residence, downed a bit of brew and barked "Did you ever listen to 'Dog Bite' by the Dead Kennedy's 120 times in a row after drinking a bottle and a half of robotussin? [Author squints and shakes furrowed forehead 'no', filling a dramatic pause] That's not what it sounds like."

LOOK!! . . . Up in the Sky!

Superhero's arrival in Guinea could signal transformation in international development work

By Rufus Agee
African Bureau Chief

ABIDJAN, Côte D'Ivoire -- The struggle for third world development took on a dramatic new dimension Sunday when the Republic of Guinea called in Superman to help it overcome problems related to lack of infrastructure and overwhelming poverty.

"We have decided to appeal to Superman to speed us along our path to development," said [REDACTED] the Guinean president.

Superman's arrival in Guinea underscored growing frustration on the part of international aid workers in this West African nation, beset by [REDACTED] corruption and a populace often suspicious of outsiders. "There's only so much we can do, said George Tagami, a researcher at USAID. "We are not Superman."

The so-called Man of Steel showed no signs of such frustration. The hero, apparently a master linguist, was greeted by adulatory crowds when he landed in Boffa, on the Guinean coast.

"Ara ba xidi," he said with a grin, sparking laughter and wild applause.

Anticipation had run high throughout the day as groups around the country waited for their first glimpse of the superhero.

"Hey, look at that bird," said one villager.

"That is not a bird, you peasant," said a bystander. "That is most certainly a plane."

"No!" shouted a third, shielding his eyes against the tortuous African sun. "It's Superman!"

The aging superhero, arriving from his North Pole Fortress of Solitude retreat, joked to reporters, "It's not the heat, you know, it's the humidity. And that's *Super-foté* to you, pal."

Ted Peck, a Conakry-based administrator for the American Peace Corps, is a long-time Superman admirer. "I always thought it would be really neat to have x-ray vision, especially when I was a teenager. Since Superman never asks for money, I guess you could say he's a volunteer, though unfortunately not one of ours. He'd give new meaning to the term 'super-volunteer.'"



African hospitality Delirious Bas Côte mob welcomes Man of Steel to Guinea

Some experts believe that Superman's unprecedented entry into the fight against world hunger could signal a revolution in thought about international aid and development work.

"Now that arch-villains like Lex Luthor and the Penguin have been put away -- let's hope this time for good -- and since the fall of the Legion of Doom, there is a lot of thought in superhero circles about where to go from here," said Lance Hutchison, superhero analyst for the Progressive Policy Institute, a Washington, D.C., think tank.

But locals seemed wary of accepting too much from Superman. After fierce debate in the legislature last week, officials in Conakry voted to decline Superman's offer to fly around the planet at unimaginable speeds, thus reversing the rotation of the Earth and the flow of time back to the arrival of the first Europeans. He had then proposed to help the indigenous peoples fight to keep out the plundering colonists.

"We can't let outsiders do everything for us," said Guinean union boss Amadou Fofana. What we need are Guinean solutions to Guinean problems, and if that "super man" can't understand that maybe he should go back to where he came from. *C'est pas chez lui-deh.*"

Superman seemed upset by the apparent reference to his home planet Krypton,

which exploded long ago in a cataclysm that killed his parents along with all other Kryptonians. He retorted, "Jesus, I feel like I'm back in 'Bizarro' world."

Others doubted the sustainability of Superman's recent activity. "What knowledge are these people going to have after he's gone?" asked PCV Dede Dudunevant. "Anyone can fly around using their heat vision and super strength to do things for people instead of with them. Well, maybe not anyone."

Some critics have suggested that Superman is less interested in altruism than in bolstering his image overseas.

"People all over the third world are talking about Michael Jordan, Michael Jackson, Phil Collins," said Stone Crawford,

"
I always thought it
would be really neat to
have x-ray vision,
especially when I was a
teenager."
"

--Ted Peck


entertainment analyst at USAID. "No one is mentioning Superman. I think what we're seeing today is an effort to change that."

But others remained enthused.

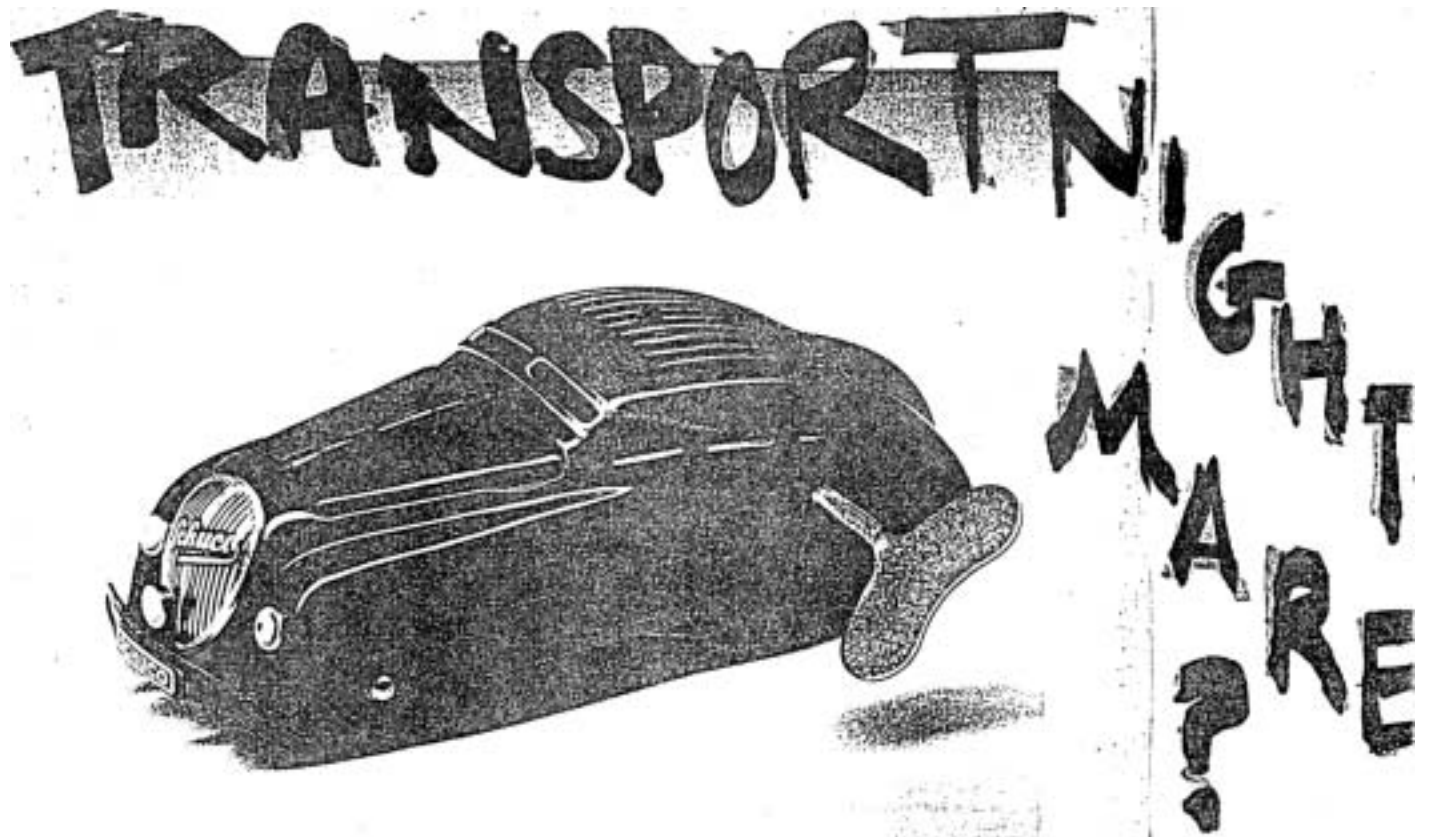
"Superman truly has buns of steel," said PCV Tina Garand, returning from a quiet weekend in the Gambia with the hero.

"This is a new type of battle for the Man of Steel," said Clark Kent, an American adviser to the Independent, a Guinean weekly newspaper. Kent, a longtime Metropolis journalist with years of experience covering Superman, arrived in Guinea about the same time as the hero.

Public approval for the superhero was evident in Conakry, where the red-caped do-gooder's image graced countless billboards, hawking condoms, aluminum roofing and Skol beer.



VEGGIE KRYPTONITE Amazed Guinean can't believe how fast Superman can cut meat



Are you frustrated when you can't express yourself well enough in a taxi?

Do you feel that your "i ni ke" just doesn't go as far as you'd like?

Well here's a list of useful travel phrases especially designed for you, the Guinean bush taxi traveller. This list is helpful in situations that language trainers may, or may not, have covered in Thies and Mamou.

(Our apologies to the Malinke scholar because the phrases are not at all translated into classic Kankan Malinke. But we assure you that once you begin to practice them in real-life taxis, you'll be the hit of any car, from Beyla to Bamako.)

ENGLISH PHRASE MALINKE TRANSLATION

1. Is that your goat or mine?
Ila baa le neewa, ba nta baa?
2. Your chicken just shit on my foot.
Ila sisen bara bo ke nsen kan.
3. I thought tires were supposed to be round.
Mi li la ye pneu ka kan ka minnie minnie.
4. Did you see my foot or are you trying to play footsie?
I ka sen nyina, ba i ya fe ka footsie tolon?
5. Is that noise normal or should I worry?
Magan ye wo kaynin, ba hamina ko-le?
6. Dieu merci.
Allah barika.
7. God help me.
Allah n demen.

8. Let me get this straight, the object is to aim for the ruts or to avoid them?
N ba fy ka nya ye, dah lu le ka ta den karo, ba ka matanna?
9. Do you eat rice here often?
I ye kinnin domunna yan wati be?
10. Don't look down.
I kana i yala jii.
11. This car is a piece of shit.
Monbili ye bo yala le di.
12. Is my mascara running, or do you just like to stare at me?
Nn mascara borila, ba i ya fe ka mafelen le dron?
13. It's Mrs., you're offensive, and stop talking to me.
Fudu muso le ndi, yentoronla, wa idabonna.
14. You are impolite.
Sarantan le i di.
15. I think we can, I think we can.
La y nala an be se, la y nala an be se.
16. There's no place like home, there's no place like home.
Faso `non te, faso `non te.
17. So do we walk it or stay with the car?
An ye se taama, ba an ye monbili makono?
18. Is that an expat car coming?
Monbili expat nala?
19. I'm just curious, how much can you see through this cracked windshield?
Ko hamilila, i ye yini kila di vitrii tininna?
20. Please shut up, it's quiet time.
Ay makun, sabali wati sera.
21. I love what you did by removing the windshield, it really opens up the car.
Inna ko min kela ka vitri bo, wo kaynin, a be mobililla fere.
22. Excuse me, may I borrow your barf bag?
I sabali, n sen ka ila fono boitila?
23. My you're fat, will you buy 2 or 3 places?
Ile bunyale! I di se ka siidiya fila ba saba?
24. Chauffeur, I think we can fit more people in here.
Chauffeur ke, moo siyaman be kun yan.
25. Excuse me, may I borrow your window turner?
I sabali, ila vitrii laila fen sen kan ma?

26. Here, give me the tube, I'll suck the gas.
Tiyo di yan, n be se sanze saman.
27. Where can I get a beer around here?
N be biere santa soron minni?
28. When you're done praying, you can find me at the bar.
Ni bana selila, ne ben soron barila.
29. Speak to the hand, because the face don't understand.
Kuma n bolola, ka masoron nya karo te na an yayina.
30. You're drooling on my shoulder.
I daajii ye kelan koro.
31. Would you like to borrow my deoderant?
I ba fe ka deoderant doo singa?
32. THANK GOD I'M IN BEYLA!
ALLAH I NI KE, N BARA SE BEYLA!

Our warmest thanks go out to the members of the Ministry of Transportation and the various syndicates of Guinea for making these phrases possible.

And yes, to the stunned, Amanda Galton did utter phrase number 32 on the 2nd of December, 1997.

SAFE JOURNEYS!

Amanda Galton "Dork of the West"

Amy Blasen "President of the Bama-Hater Club de la Foret"



"Next to my two years in the Peace Corps, you're the best thing I've ever done."

Entrance

by Ann Ingraham

She was feeling the groove in her lover's lower back, watching the contrast of her fingers touch his skin. Everything by lamplight looked so beautiful. This brought a devilish smile to her lips. Too beautiful. Her eyebrows furrowed and the space between her eyes cramped into a worried crease. It was unreal, like the dream of flying or walking around naked and greeting everyone. The too bright ugliness of daytime seemed true. The dirt. The full bodied wail of children. The pores in people's faces. Nose hairs. Ear hairs for fuck's sake. Jesus, stop thinking, she commanded herself. She wanted to puke.

She tried to rationalize. It's all true, she forced herself to believe. The flying weightlessness of dreaming, the world disintegrating mindbody nowhere and everywhere instant of orgasm...along with all the shit. It was too awful to think otherwise. She let her back collapse under gravity into a defeated C. It was inevitable. She concentrated on feeling and trying to block out all analysis. Feel...feel...feel...feel. She focused her eyes on the steady yellow flame of the hurricane lamp. She looked like a confused Buddhist engrossed in an outward meditation or a drugged mental patient settling into the daily static. She felt full, sleepy, and lazy watching bugs bump into the lamp's glass. Were they really just stupid like people thought or maybe it was something else? Maybe this was their nirvana. Outside the circumference of the lamp's warm glow, she couldn't see. She listened and felt. It's a cool night. There's a baby crying and the buzz of adults chatting in Soso. A light shining from the hospital. The hospital possessed the only electricity, created from the sun shining into panels that fed big batteries that fueled hanging bare bulbs. She relied on her flashlight to get around at night. She was not used to walking around in the no moon nights of utter darkness. She couldn't, like the villagers, anticipate the turns of the skinny winding dirt paths cutting through the tall grass. But, tonight her friend had taken her flashlight to the port to collect fish. She sat, feeling a bit more lost and a bit more at home. The darkness hid everyone except for their voices, and it seemed, her. Her white skin refused the cover of darkness. At night she wished harder that she could be like everyone else. She wanted to be invisible, just another voice in the night. During the day it seemed the young women's black skin absorbed the sun, sucked it up, and shone. Her white skin always seemed vulnerable. The tiny brown hairs obscene. The freckles, zits, and sunburn, markers of her inability to adjust to the incessant beating heat, the stripped down rigorous monotony of village life.

It was so dark. She walked towards the light and noise coming from the hospital. A few women were gathered outside around the bug infested lights and more women were inside the birthing room. She walked inside tentatively. The matron was there and welcomed her with her regular smile. A pregnant woman with her bottom half covered by a colorful piece of material wrapped expertly around as a skirt was lying on a brown mat covered with a sheet of old yellowed plastic. She looked up at the white girl pathetically and most hospitably said, "Prennez place." Take a seat. The girl obeyed and sat down on the stained mattress resting in a metal frame across from the matron with her one blue gloved hand. The pregnant woman was moaning and shaking her head and looking up at the girl. The girl tried to convey her helplessness and sympathy with her eyes and by shaking her head and saying, Oh God. "Ehhh Allah!" When it was held out to her, the girl clasped the pregnant woman's hand. Then the woman got up and shuffled around the

room slowly and leaned her elbows on a table and wailed. It was like watching a slow, beautiful, passionate, painful dance, the way she waved her arms in large graceful circles and rolled her head and fell on her knees and rested her head in the matrons lap, "Ehhh Nnga!" Oh Mama, she cried in Soso. Then she lied on the old plastic covered mat and looked up at the girl and rolled her eyes like something dying and moaned and the girl responded by shaking her head and saying, it's hard. "C'est difficile!" and sighing helplessly while desperately wishing there was something she could do to ease the pregnant woman's...or was it her own, she thought briefly--pain.

Two male doctors walked in briskly and formally and one set a tiny vial of serum on the table. As he looked down at the woman, he said, if necessary, this could be injected if she needed to be dilated. The doctors then walked out of the room and yanked the hanging sheet of material fully across the door frame to leave the women in private.

The girl was excited. She had been wanting to see a birth since her arrival. She was filled with the excited anticipation of new life and drama and the thrill of acceptance. She had been invited, however informally, to witness this beautiful and personal act of creation. The beauty, the drama, the spectacle of it all in this old dirty room equipped with only a bucket of water, a blue rubber glove, a pair of scissors, a tiny vial of serum. Another woman walked in with sleepy eyes and a static look of bored distaste as she scanned the scene. The white girl looked around the room as she felt the woman looking at her. The pregnant woman was shuffling around the room, slowly swinging her arms in large graceful strokes and moaning. The bored woman leaned against the wall, folded her arms across her chest, and slowly followed the pregnant woman with her eyes. The girl sat on the metal bed and leaned forward resting her elbows on her knees and looking towards the pregnant woman. The girl tried to express her commiseration with the woman's pain by looking at her with compassion and shaking her head and letting the woman squeeze her hand. Suddenly the woman untied her skirt and lay naked, missionary position, on the plastic mat. Her water burst from her vagina and the matron, already squatting between the woman's legs with her hands ready to receive the child, moved slightly to avoid the slightly green fluid from flowing over her sandals. The girl squatted down beside the matron and watched as first a black head emerged, then the matron reached inside the woman with her blue gloved hand and slightly eased out the child while slipping the umbilical cord from around its neck. The child popped out like a seed. Pop!...and it was there, a whitish blue lump smeared with a yellow paste and attached by a jelly like cord to its mother. The girl was amazed and fascinated by how simple it looked. The creation of life here with a pop. The girl was squatting beside the matron who gave the girl her smile and the girl smiled back with understanding. A BABY! A NEW LIFE! The beauty of it lying squirming like some extra terrestrial being on the cracked plastic. The girl held the baby's squirming legs apart as the matron cut the umbilical cord. "I held its legs apart!" she thought. I helped deliver a baby. The girl then grabbed some cotton off the table to hand to the matron to put on the nub of a cord left bulging from the baby's belly. "Adé," the matron said. No. The girl put down the cotton, slightly let down, but looked at the squirming baby which had now turned a nice pink while screaming with its new voice, and smiled again. The girl squatted down again to watch the baby being washed when the doctor's wife appeared at the door and stared straight at her. The wife squawked something in Soso to the two women now beside her and looked at the girl fiercely accusing, "Pourquoi tu es entrée ici?" Why did you enter here? The girl felt her stomach suddenly turn to knots and well up into her throat and tears come to her eyes. She didn't know what to say. The best she could come up with in a few seconds, L...I want to help you, was translated and stumbled awkwardly from her mouth.

"Je...Je veux t'aider," she mumbled helplessly. The woman's eyes grew wider, angrier, more accusing, "Et est-ce que tu as aidé? Heh?" And did you help? The girl felt sick. Her head felt squeezed. She could feel her mouth agape and her eyes wide. She could see herself helplessly trapped in what her father called, her deer in the headlights look. She didn't know how to respond. Then she thought of holding the baby's legs. "Dondoroti." A little, she mumbled weakly in Soso. The doctor's wife looked away and started talking Soso to the other women. The women bundled up the freshly washed baby, picked it up, and walked out with the mother shuffling slowly behind. The matron wiped up all the blood and left for home. The girl walked out of the hospital. It was dark and she didn't have her flashlight. A tiny girl from her adopted family was sitting under a buggy light watching a small group of older girls braiding each other's hair. The white girl told the little girl how her friend had her flashlight and she needed it to get home. The little girl held out her hand and said in Soso, "Wongé!" Let's go! The white girl took the little girl's hand and they walked into the dark.

"I can't do that, I'm a slut!!"

-- Jeremy Eggleton, on attaching
his pagne right over left

"Sorry, I was paralyzed by my terror."

-- Jamie Folsom, explaining his speechlessness
during the affectation trip

ONE FINE DAY

28 October, 1997

I just had a spiritual experience. I felt excited and almost nervous as I grabbed the ice-cold can of Dr. Pepper from the refrigerator at my health center. A sense of euphoria overcame me as I felt the cold aluminum against my skin. I needed to be alone for this. Who knew what my reaction would be to drinking my first DP in over a year?

I snuck back behind the health center, skillfully avoiding the mothers and their children, to our unfinished maternity building. When I opened the can, I had to say something, but what? In my state of bliss, all I could think of was thanking my friend who brought it and the Gambia for selling it. I think I also slipped in something about capitalism and America, but it's blurry.

Like I was drinking a fine wine, I let it breathe for a second or two, and put my nose to the opening. The first thought on my mind? Lake Powell, Utah. I saw myself as a ten year old kid sitting on a motorboat, still wet from a swim in the water that reflected the red rock walls that surrounded me, drinking a DP that my sunburnt mother gave me. Then, as I drank, other random thought flashed before my eyes: Chris Decker, an old friend from childhood, and I quenching our thirsts after playing in my front yard; ice hitting the sides of my Super Big Gulp at the 7-11 on Broadway; trying to stay awake while studying for finals in the library by infusing myself with my favorite caffeine-filled drink.

I tried to relax and take my time, but, like when I get candy in the mail from home, it was too good and I couldn't stop. It wasn't gone in one gulp, I'm happy to say-- maybe three or four though. As I let the final drops fall into my mouth, a slight note of depression cut into my happiness. It was short-lived though. I wasn't going to ruin the moment. I sat there in the windowsill and looked at the can, admiring the maroon color, and said a quick prayer for the factory in Paris that made this all possible. Before I could leave, I brought the can to my nose again for one last smell... mmm... motorboats. But this time I also see a pepperoni pizza sitting on my carpeted TV room floor at school (I think *The Simpsons* was on). However, as quickly as they come, the images vanish into the heat of another hot African day. As I throw the can over my shoulder into the bushes behind me, I don't despair... it's cool-- I've got another one waiting for me in the fridge.