

A portrait of Paul Krassner; the realist behind the Realist

Several weeks ago the McGill Daily, student newspaper at McGill University printed an article by one Paul Krassner implicating President Johnson in the murder of President Kennedy. Subsequently the Daily had to admit to poor judgment after being censured by students' council and the administration.

Krassner later revealed the article to be a satire and that he had warned the Daily it may be censured if it printed the article. The article had originally run in the Realist, an American satire magazine.

In this day and age of fear of retaliation from society and especially the people who run the economics of our society, namely Big Industry, a man like Krassner is an oddity since he appears to be financially successful, even though he is satirizing these same people. How can this be possible?

Here then is a short description of Krassner.

After reading it, ask yourself: even if this man is satirizing things that need satirizing, will anyone do anything about it? Can it be we are permitted to criticize all we want so long as we do not act against the status quo?

The Editor

By Ellen Roseman

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Paul Krassner is a realist. He believes existence has no meaning, but he intends to enjoy every absurd moment of it.

He is 34 years old (but looks like 20), has a 3½ year-old daughter and confesses that he is very happy. He has no vices—"I don't drink, smoke or do crossword puzzles."

He started his career as Paul Maul, a stand-up comedian performing at hospitals, colleges, and in army camps. He did some night club work, but felt it was snobbish to make people get all dressed up and buy a drink in order to hear him.

He then became a free-lance writer for Mad magazine and the Steve Allen show, but left them in 1958 to become editor, publisher, and ringleader of the first American satire magazine for adults. "I felt that America needed a Punch."

His objective was a magazine that would communicate without compromise or condescension. He wanted to "fill the void sponsored so successfully by the socio-cultural-politico-religio-economic Association for a Dynamic Status Quo."

In 1961, the Realist had 3,000 subscribers. Today the number stands at 100,000, and the magazine is sold at newsstands all over the country.

Not everything in the magazine is satire. Krassner also publishes straight articles when he feels the material warrants it. For example, in past issues he ran an article

implicating the Central Intelligence Agency in the murder of U.S. Black Muslim leader Malcolm X, and another revealing that the United States maintains six concentration camps to be used in a crisis for containment of "enemies of the state."

He feels the dividing line between satire and fact has narrowed extremely. Satire in the Realist is often accepted as fact because life has begun to parody itself, says Krassner.

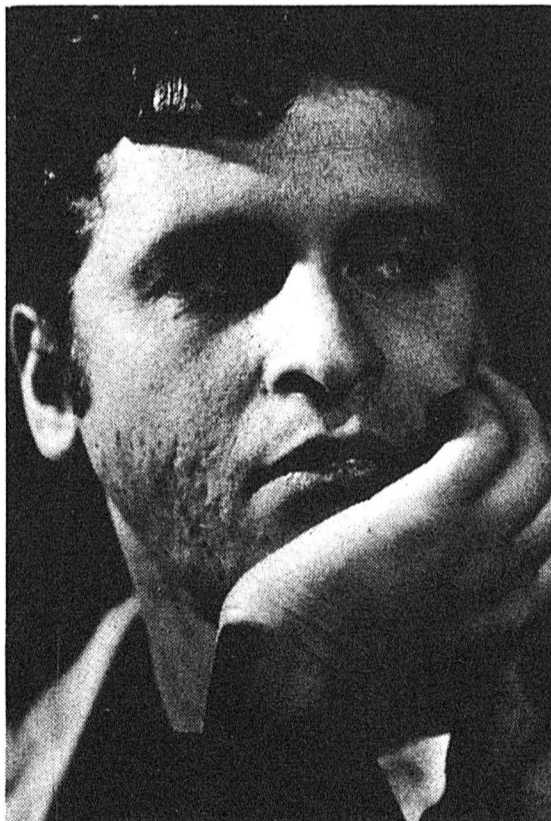
His critics accuse him of irreverence and bad taste. He thinks taste is extremely subjective and says in his defense, "When I become unaware that civilization is sick, then I myself become part of its sickness." Anyone with a cause amuses him; he dislikes self-righteousness or pomposity.

When invited to Montreal this summer to take part in a Youth Pavilion symposium on hippies, Krassner created a scandal of sorts when he set fire to his draft card on the site. Actually it was a Xerox copy that he burned—he saves the original as identification to get him across the border.

Krassner takes no salary from the Realist. He earns his living as a columnist for Cavalier magazine, society editor for Ramparts, and from royalties, if any, from his 1961 book, Impolite Interviews.

He intends to keep publishing the Realist until it stops being fun. In nine years, of publication he has never been convicted of libel or obscenity and never has the Realist been stopped by the U.S. Post Office.

He likes the United States because he realizes that in very few other societies would he be allowed this kind of freedom. You see, he's a realist.



THE REAL PAUL KRASSNER
... "America needed a Punch"

Rich Vivone

A couple of gripes; the degrees of equality

The students have gripes this week. I have too, although these are relatively irrelevant. However due to favoritism seldom practiced by this pest, my gripes get top billing.

The problem concerns young ladies. Notice they are not called women because the people concerned say it hints they are old, but calling them girls means they are young which is equally sinful.

Anyway, my problem. First there is P.R.M. who let some person talk her into cutting her hair, which she should never have done.

Strange that boys won't get into barber chairs while young ladies are turning beauty salons into glorified barbers. The old way was better where girls had long hair and boys short. That way, when she kicked you in the shins, you could pull her hair which was never too damaging but always managed to keep her quiet for a while.

As for legitimate gripes, here is number one. The names are not mentioned because it is not relevant to the issue. The fact the issue does exist is pertinent enough.

A fellow student told me he flunked out of this place two years ago. His grades were a shade under passing. He was notified by the authorities that he must stay out of university for a full academic session—a polite term meaning a year.

He did as ordered but is now back and has become a serious student. He admits the layoff did some good.

Meanwhile, this same student claims he knows of another student, who flunked out last year. This person's grades were lower than those of our friend above. Yet, he did not have to stay out a year.

There is not too much point in being stupid and raising eyebrows and saying—does this mean there is favoritism at the University of Alberta?

at a democratic school

No, it serves merely as a reminder that we are all equal except some others who are more equal. There are degrees of equality. It helps if your dad is a big wheel.

Here is gripe number two.

Names are not printed here to protect the guilty.

Take two universities, say A and B, and two students. One of these plays a major sport and the other does not.

It happens they are buddies and both flunk out. When the time comes that they are to re-enter university, they decided to go to university B instead of university A. The applications of both are rejected for various reasons.

The student who played the major sport phones his former coach who, in turn, phones the coach at university B saying so-and-so wants to attend your school, and he is a very fine athlete, etc.

Then, surprise. The student is accepted because the registrar re-evaluated his application. The other student is still out in the cold.

Those two gripes are amongst a number I either overheard or was directly told.

They shouldn't cause any great riots or even a mild murmur. But, you should sit down and assess the facts and wonder. If little trivialities like these occur, what are the things we never hear about?

And if maybe you want to go into grad studies or into law or medicine or some other post-graduate training, and your marks are just so-so, better check your dad's standing in the community, or how many influential people you know. Keep them in mind. They may come in handy.