

Gregory-Political diagnostician

by Michael Greenfield

Two plus two equals four; but in the world of politics and public relations people are often led to believe that five is the correct answer. We tend not to question why Richard Nixon would not eat hospital food, we tend not to question why the Warren Commission report has been put under lock and key, we tend not to question why millions of people face starvation if there is enough available land to feed more than twice the present population. And if we do question certain "facts" it is usually because a few individuals have put two and two together and made four. Dick Gregory is one

such individual. He has been speaking on the CIA, food crisis, and Vietnam long before they became fashionable in the media.

Dick Gregory poses as a comedian, but that is merely a facade for his true identity, a political diagnostician backed by a team of researchers prepared to "examine the body" and pronounce it sick. Asked why he rarely says anything nice about America he replied that he was not fool enough to try to delude himself.

Gregory deftly manipulates the audience through humour and then painlessly lays on the truth as Dick Gregory sees it. And the way Dick Gregory sees it is often so simple and realistic

that you start questioning your previously unquestioned assumptions. How much does the CIA manipulate domestic or even Canadian affairs? Is the United States ready and waiting to become the 4th Reich? Almost without exception, to listen to him is to believe in what he is saying. Moral values have been on the decline and Dick Gregory is fighting a relentless battle against complacency and blindness.

Unfortunately for Canadians Dick Gregory is an American. With a characteristic wipe of his face he will look at you and say "Things are bad in the U.S.. Indeed, things are bad in the U.S. but the problem is that Canadians

tend to regard the sickness as being an American disease which Customs effectively stops at the border. The ills certainly reside on both sides of the border.

However, Dick Gregory wants you to feel that you are part of the solution, and not part of the problem. But in order to be part of the solution Gregory makes it clear that you must recognize the problems. The problems of the food crisis, the sickness of the CIA, a rich business establishment that supports the plunder of not only foreign nations, but its own as well, the problems of racism, a "democracy" where the two highest officials are presently not elected, and

the decaying of personal spiritual and physical well-being are all presented by Dick Gregory. Those who cynically state that they have heard it all before do an injustice to the multitudes of people who have not.

One person in the audience asked him why he did not present any solutions to all the problems. Gregory replied that it would be foolish and presumptuous to try and prescribe en masse solutions. He said it was up to the individual Canadian to best utilize his/her ability and position to effect a cure. He has, however, in the past given seminars dealing with the solutions.

Although Dick Gregory started off with comedy, two and one half later a mood of political and moral determination has taken hold of the audience. The standing ovation he received was not for his funny "nigger" routine, it was for the man, Dick Gregory, and his personal vitality, unique insights, and dedication towards raising our consciousness.

entertainment supplement

Dick Gregory - Deja Vu

by Allan Nicholson

Deja vue is a Hindu concept that is used to describe a sensation that most of us have experienced at one time or another. It is the reliving of a previous experience, the sensation of hearing or seeing something a second time.

Within minutes after Dick Gregory began his lecture in the McInnis Room of the SUB Tuesday night, I found myself undergoing what initially appeared to be a **deja vue** experience but unlike a real **deja vue** experience, the origin of which always remains a mystery, I soon realized where I had heard the lecture before -- it was at the McInnis Room of the SUB when Dick Gregory was here last year. In fact, he was still wearing the same leather jacket, and I still admired it just as much.

Before I attempt a critical commentary on certain aspects of Dick Gregory's lecture, let me say that I am and have been since his **Back of the Bus** days, an avid Dick Gregory fan and in complete agreement with at least ninety-five percent of what the man advocates. I enjoyed his lecture and laughed and applauded along with everyone else, but I laughed longer and applauded more vigorously the first time around.

Gregory's caricature of LBJ, the Texas cowboy who would have scarcely interrupted one of his famous

barbeques to admit to and dispense with the whole Watergate affair, was funnier and much more topical the first time I heard it. Also, we have Gregory's humorous portrayal of the Black's determination to immigrate to America against the protestations of the white procure elephants. Then there was Gregory's rendition of a Lenny Bruce theme that dealt with what would happen if Jesus returned to earth today; rather than crucify Him, Gregory feels the people would opt for the electric chair and this would create all sorts of confusion for Christians as they attempted to make the sign of the chair in a display of reverence. Once more we were introduced to Jappo Jones the would-be black bugger of the Watergate Hotel, and Gregory still believes that the fashionable high heeled shoes were designed primarily to slow down Blacks to facilitate their capture by the police.

Perhaps the major weakness in a Gregory lecture is his almost paranoic fascination with spying and conspiracy; he claims to be under constant surveillance, and hints at documented evidence that would further illuminate the Kennedy assassinations, and the FLQ crisis. He suggests that Nixon was framed in order to allow Rockefeller to eventually become President of the United States.

These thoughts are interesting but not new, and not surprising anymore, with recent events such as the Watergate scandal, the milk scandal, the egg scandal, the IT&T scandal, the RCMP scandal. Even the most apathetic and poorly informed members of society harbor few delusions on the purity of governmental and industrial leaders. Let us have more than hints, innuendos, and knowing glances. We all know the system stinks.

In my opinion, the most unusual statement Gregory made was his remark that Dr. Martin Luther King did not know what the Mafia was, did not understand the meaning of the term 'the syndicate'. I see only two ways this statement can be realistically interpreted and that is a severe blow to the credibility of Dick Gregory or an equally severe blow to the credibility of Martin Luther King, and I prefer the former.

Gregory's emphasis on the purity of Martin Luther King leads me to believe this statement may have been made in an attempt to neutralize the rumors of King's communist affiliation and his extramarital affairs that began circulating shortly after his assassination. But surely Gregory realizes that the majority of people paid little attention to these rumors and recognized them as merely an unsuccessful attempt to discredit one of the few truly

dedicated leaders America has produced.

Gregory was self-contradictory on more than one occasion. He appeared unable to decide whether Canada would be able to survive on its own, or whether the problems now facing the United States are inevitable for Canada. At times he seemed to believe we had a chance, but later remarked, "What happens in America today will happen to Canada next week."

Gregory dealt with the world food problem in a contradictory manner as well. He prophesied great shortages of food, but discouraged storing food for the impending disaster; instead, he proposed as a solution to the food shortages that we "get in tune with the Universe" but never, at least to my satisfaction, explained the mechanics of getting in tune with the Universe.

Despite the few failings

considered above, Dick Gregory has a message for the world, and perhaps it requires repeating. The message is that we have a right to know what is going on in our government and industry, that there is enough food for everyone but it must be used more prudently and distributed more equitably if all people are to enjoy a reasonable standard of living.

His message is, however, more than an appeal for a shift in the world's thinking away from profit and acquisition to humanitarianism. It is a warning as well, that if we, the rich nations of the world, are unwilling to share our bounty, to utilize our natural resources and farm-lands to the best advantage, we will very soon find ourselves in the same unenviable position the less fortunate peoples of the world find themselves in today.

