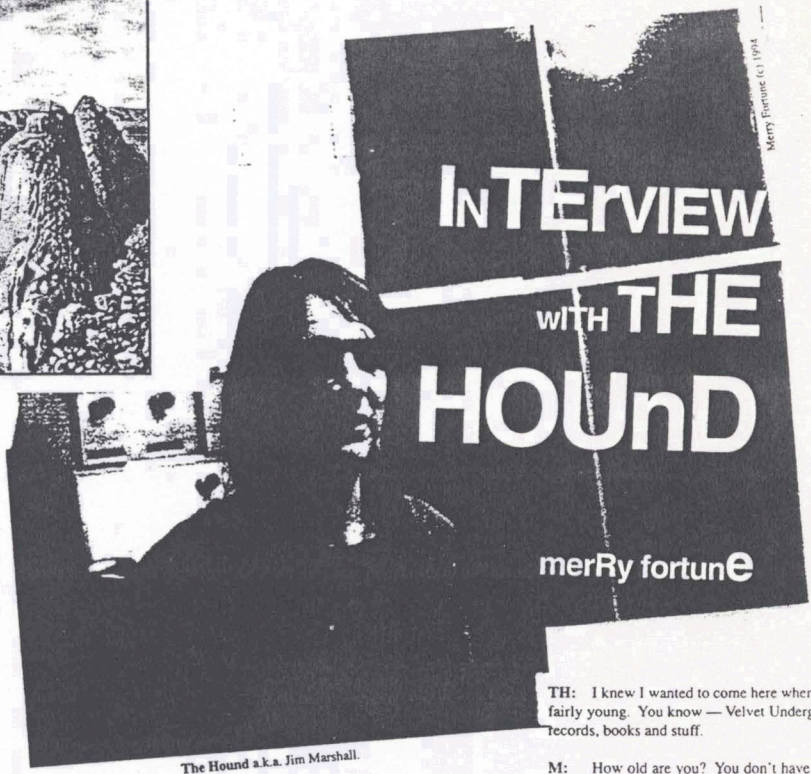
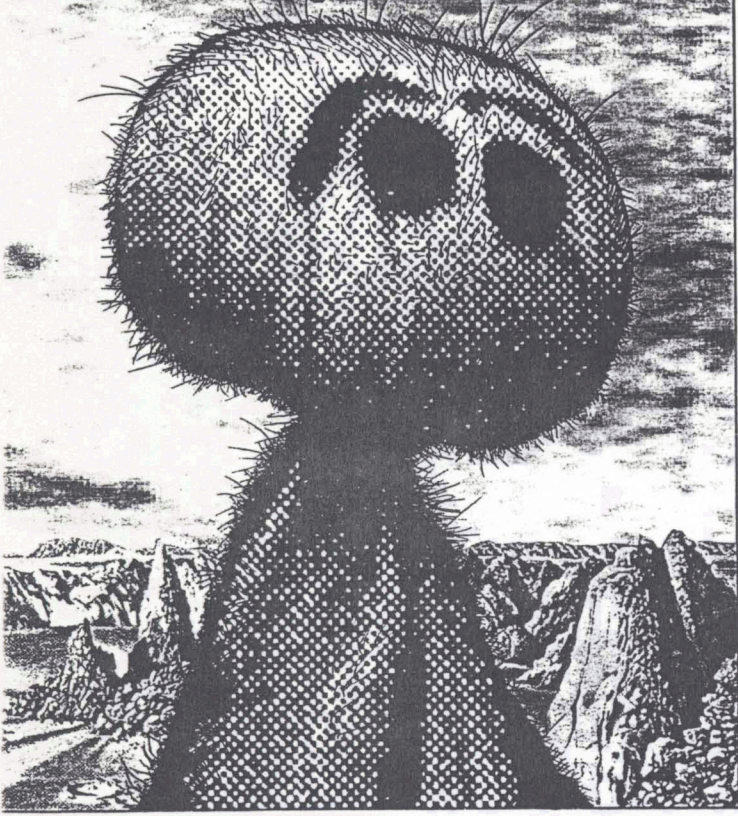


# PAGAN PLACE



The Hound a.k.a. Jim Marshall.

"Marshall's in a class by himself. Even if radio weren't as insultingly awful as it is now he'd be the One. He's like Jerry Lee Lewis crossed with W.C. Fields, and his obscure record collection — which ends somewhere in 1962 — is unmatched for spontaneous lust, stupidity, balls, and chaos."  
-- Richard Hell

"Jim may sound obnoxious on paper but ya have ta hear 'um— he utilizes such a gentle intonation that it hardly sounds truly obnoxious. The part I liked best is the part right before I was about to leave when he carefully slid my black leather over my waiting shoulders — oh baby...."  
-- Merry Fortune

M: Give me your history.

TH: I was born in Paterson, New Jersey and I grew up in Broward County, Florida — Ft. Lauderdale. I moved to Florida when I was seven or eight I guess. I was adopted and then I moved to Florida.

M: Adopted from birth?

TH: No. Later. I grew up in a town called Davey, Florida, which back then was all cattle ranches, horses, horse farms, swamps, Everglades. West of Fort Lauderdale it was all swamp land. Now where we lived is a mall. It's all been filled in and there's all these weird attached housing communities, and there's big malls there and stuff. So where I grew up isn't there anymore. When I was about fifteen or sixteen my family moved to the beach in Fort Lauderdale, so I spent my last two years in Florida on the beach and I moved here the day I turned eighteen back in '77.

M: What made you decide to move here?

TH: I knew I wanted to come here when I was fairly young. You know — Velvet Underground Records, books and stuff.

M: How old are you? You don't have to answer that!

TH: Thirty-four. I've been here awhile.

M: And you were going to see the Velvet Underground?

TH: No they had broken up when I was ten but I would listen to their records. The New York Dolls used to play in Fort Lauderdale a lot. Patti Smith was a big inspiration. I interviewed Patti Smith when I was fifteen. I had a fanzine down there. *New Order* in like 1976.

M: Yeah, you know Lenny.

TH: Yeah, I met Lenny when I was fifteen. And they (the Patti Smith Group) were pretty encouraging. They were like, "Oh you should move to New York." I kind of knew I wanted to come. I had a lot of pen-pals back then. Fanzine days — it was right before punk-rock but it was sort of like the precursor to punk-rock, with these fanzines.

M: Seventy-five?

H: Seventy-four, '75, '76 — there were all these little magazines like *Backdoorman*, *Denim Delinquents* and *Punk Magazine*. That was a little bit later.

I: I liked *Punk*.

H: So this one pen-pal was this girl in Ohio, Ariam Lenna. She moved to New York and she ended up playing drums in the Cramps and she just said — oh if you ever want to come to New York you can stay with me.

M: Yeah, right — yeah, yeah — the girl with the curly hair.

H: No she was the one with the straight hair. She was out of the Cramps pretty fast. She's in the A-Bones now. She's been in the A-Bones for a long time. But I ended up staying with her. I came here and met a bunch of people and then found a place to live. I ended up going to college here.

M: What college did you go to?

H: Queens College. I studied political science at Queens College. They have a really good political science department there. The late Michael Harrington taught there, and Andrew Hacker and Barry Commoner. A lot of really big names in that world were there and it was really cheap to go. I got a scholarship but it was \$400 a semester or something like that.

M: You wanted to be a political scientist?

H: No. I just didn't know what I wanted to do. I wanted to go to N.Y.U. and study film but here was no way I could afford — back then it was like \$12,000 a year. So it might as well have been \$120,000 a year. It was like — what can I do cheap. And here was a good school with a couple of good departments. I had no interest in politics really. I just thought it would be something to learn about that I wouldn't learn any other way.

M: Did you retain it?

H: Yeah. And I was cynical then; I'm cynical now. I still go out and vote. I decided after the last election I would be apolitical for like, the rest of my life. Democracy doesn't work. There's too many stupid people; there's no way around it. You can't have democracy when most people are idiots because they'll always choose the dumbest, most crass, idiotic thing.

M: Yeah, that's the problem — you think people are stupid? What do you think would make them not stupid. What could they do to de-tupefy themselves?

H: I can't help them. It's not my problem. I don't know. They can raise their children to learn how to read. They can take an interest in their

children. That's what they can do. I don't know. Even that doesn't help them. I mean there's no telling with people.

M: It's complex.

TH: Plenty of nice, intelligent, great people had assholes for parents and plenty of assholes had really nice caring parents. There are no rules about any of this bullshit. People are just horrible assholes, and they've always been. Nothing's new. You can go back and read ancient Greek text and find exactly the same shit went on back then. You know the history of Macedonia — I mean it's the same shit. It just gets played out on a bigger, uglier scale. Right now what we're looking at is just too many people. We've overpopulated the planet, we've overtaxed the resources, we've overtaxed everything. Whatever there is there's just too many people trying to do it. I mean, why does rock-n-roll suck?! Because the assholes have ruined it!

I sort of like  
the fact that  
all these rappers  
are going around  
killing people now.

M: Oh. Which ones?

TH: Name them — Billy Joel. I mean, who's on the charts now — Guns And Roses. They're just utter nobodies. Utter fucking — people with no charisma, no talent for music, no nothing and they just clog it up for the good people.

M: What do you think of the music scene as it is now? Around here (Lower Eastside/Manhattan) for instance.

TH: I think it sucks. I really think that pop-culture just hit a wall, almost on every level. How many times can you rearrange the same three or four chords? After the Sex-Pistols — the Sex-Pistols were rehashed. But that was the destruction of rehash. Now where do you go from there? It's just the same shit. It doesn't mean as much. It's so acceptable to have long-hair. It's so acceptable to have tattoos or be in rock band. You should have to get your ass-kicked a couple of times to do it or something. Now kids go to college to learn how to deal with music industry lawyers. They're a bunch of spoiled-brats — who cares. There will always be a couple of o.k. things out there but it's not anything relevant. It's just more product. Like the rock video thing — they're made by the same people who make TV commercials. The same film crews, same directors. So they got kids stupid

enough sitting there watching fucking TV commercials for rock bands all day. It's pointless.

M: You said you approve of some. Who?

TH: Not necessarily to listen to them. There are a couple of o.k. groups out there —

M: Like —

TH: I could give a fuck about 'um. I mean — Nirvana. They're a cut above the rest. They're alright. I sort of like the fact that all these rappers are going around killing people now. It makes me sort of like Snoop Doggy-Dog. And what's this guy's name — Two-Buck?! Two Brick?! Two-Pack! He got arrested yesterday for a gang-rape in a hotel.

M: Saw that one in *The Times*!

TH: And about a month ago he shot two off-duty cops. I'm just saying, musically — who cares. I can't imagine myself going out and buying a Nirvana record. I like this old trash because it's just so fucked-up that it's hard to believe some of it even got recorded. The original 45's — those are what get me going; that's the really valuable shit. That's the really great shit. If I could I would have everything on the original 45 or the original 78. I think albums had something to do with ruining rock-n-roll. Nobody has ten good songs in 'um except for the Stones, Dylan, the Stooges, Elvis. Not that many people made good albums. Little Richard made good albums — a couple of them.

M: You're very black and white.

TH: Well I'm not as bad as I was when I was younger. I do have definite ideas.

M: It's rather interesting. This (indicating the Hound's wall to wall record collection) is — *obsession*.

TH: Definitely. It's all I really care about.

M: But what does it do — does it keep you sane?

TH: It's a world unto itself. You sort of become a part of it ultimately. Any person who really loves something — really lives for something — it just becomes such a huge part of your personality. It just becomes — you're that. Like the Hound; that's a character. It was my nickname before I even started doing the radio show. That's the person that came of all these years of rock-n-roll and all the fucked up things I been through and did to myself. It's all part of the same thing and that's what emerged from the person I was born as. You go through all these different transformations in life. Some of them you can't help, some of them are done to you, and some of them you do to yourself. You never really know what the end product is going to be, right. But here's the product right now in 1993. And this is all input into it. You can

go in the back and there's a roomful of books and that's the input too. It all means something to you — Raw Power and Jimmy Reed and the Sonics and all that shit is one part of it. There's other stuff — like the first time you got laid, or a book that meant a lot to you, or drugs you took — your own personal habits, who your parents were, what your life was like. My grandparents were fucking sharecroppers in Sicily, ya know — literally.

**M:** You knew them?

**TH:** I knew my grandmothers. I didn't know either of my grandfathers. My grandfather's name was Giacomo Anton Ascello — Anton Ascello, that was my name before I was adopted. He came here in the '20s. He murdered my grandmother's parents who owned the land. He came here running from the law, fought in World War I, got his citizenship and brought her over. It's a really great story — it's a bizarre story. It's actually sort of a book.

**M:** You going to write a book?

**TH:** No. I don't think anybody's interested in it but it would be good for somebody's book. I guess books are sort of like the other part of it — I always read. I did a lot of weird shit. I used to fight. I used to box — golden gloves. I wrestled. I played football in high school. I was an athlete all through high school. I was sort of forced into it by my psychotic stepfather. I was good at it.

**M:** You turned me on to this stuff. I was listening to your show on FMU and I was like, "Wow, listen to this." I still don't know anything about it but it was exciting; the moment of discovery always is. When did you first get into — *this*?

**TH:** It was kind a slow process like anything. I grew up listening to the AM radio, like everybody else. You would hear soul music and early Stones, Yardbirds, Kinks — stuff like that. Then there was that period — '68, '69 when you noticed that things got bad. All of a sudden *Bridge Over Troubled Water* was on the radio. All of a sudden records like *You Really Got Me* weren't coming out anymore. So I just started reading magazines and just searching out shit for myself. I got into the Velvet Underground, the Stooges, the New York Dolls, the Stones. Then I just started figuring out other shit. I worked in record stores when I was in high-school. One of the first big ones I bought was the Howling Wolf *Evil* album. I knew the Stones had brought Howling Wolf on *Shindig* with them. I must have seen that when I was six or seven and that made quite an impression. So it was like Howling Wolf, Jimmy Reed, Hank Ballard and The Midnighters. I found the first Midnighters album in a flea-market for a quarter in 1975 and that was a big one. I was always into junk-stores and flea-markets and there's a lot of that shit in Florida. So I just started collecting records; I always liked records and I'd just find all this weird shit. You know, the more of an ar-



cheologist you become, the deeper you dig, the weirder the shit you find. What I really decided I liked the best was this fucked up '50s r-n-b and hillbilly rock-n-roll. These guys, you know, they really thought they were going to be the next Elvis or the next Little Richard, but they just didn't have a fucking prayer, you know. I'm like the only prayer these records ever had of getting played on the radio forty-years later. I guess there were no rules; there was no A&R man telling them to remix the record. And all that shit was done on such a low budget. Pop culture was just so wide open to anybody because it was so unformalized (sic). I mean, anybody with a hundred bucks could make a 45. It was cheap. And rock-n-roll could only exist on a 45 r.p.m. record. From Elvis Presley's first record to the Sex Pistols last record, it was all 45s. That's how Punk Rock was in the '70s. Any asshole with two-hundred bucks could put out their own 45. Now you want to put out a record you got to make at least an investment of \$10-15,000 dollars to put out a C.D. — you know, that's a big part of it. I think that's a conspiracy. I think that was definitely thought about.

**M:** I think so too.

**TH:** I think the C.D. thing was a total record company thing to shut out the possible competition.

**M:** I think there's something about always upgrading technical equipment that's conspiratorial in and of itself.

**TH:** Right. think the best sounding records were made in the late '50s early '60s. I think the best sounding records were *Chess Records* in the late '50s. I don't think any rock-n-roll records ever sounded better than that.

**M:** When did you start doing your show on FMU?

**TH:** November — oh shit! You know what?! Yesterday was my anniversary. Oh lord, I forgot! November '86 was it. Eighty-six or '87. Eighty-five or '86.

**M:** So six years.

**TH:** No, I've been there for about seven or eight years.

**M:** It's going to be '94, so —

**TH:** Wait a second now — we had a Hangover Hop on the Fifth Anniversary Show. That must have been two years ago, so it was the seventh — yesterday was my seventh anniversary.

**M:** Oh. Congratulations!

**TH:** And I forgot about it.

**M:** Do you still hate being there?

**Democracy doesn't  
work.  
There's too many  
stupid people;  
there's no way  
around it.  
You can't have  
democracy when most  
people are idiots  
because they'll choose  
the dumbest, most  
crass, idiotic thing.**

**TH:** No. It's just a lot of work and there's no money — it's not that it's a lot of work. I mean, I do work hard on the show. I put a lot into doing it because I really want to make it unique. Anybody can get in there and play a bunch of old records and these guys on KCR, or FUV, or you know, every college station around the country has a couple of blues shows or country shows and these guys all get on there and say, "Oh, oh Paul (?) got ripped off for his song-writing royalties" or whatever. You know they treat this shit like it was so reverend. Let's face it — most of these guys were drunks, they were fuck-ups, most of 'em — a lot of 'em. Some of them were geniuses and some of them were just idiots who made good records. They were just people and I try to treat this stuff in the spirit that it was made -- have some fun with it. But it's hard work getting all those little sound-bytes, making it different, changing ~~the~~ songs every week. We're talking about two and a half minute songs, so you got like fifty or sixty records every week. That's a lot of work. And it's hard work to get out from Manhattan to East Orange every week — just to drive. I work on the show all week, then at noon I go and pick up the news from the girl who does the wire service news. And I do a lot of news myself but she does like 75% of it.

**M:** So you get all that strange news from this wire service?

**TH:** AP. The AP comes over the telephone line. This friend of mine is a computer genius and he has the AP wire. His wife goes over it for me. She spends all week looking for weird news shit over the AP wire. I skim all four news papers everyday, clip out shit for myself, or people send shit in. So I go get the car, bring the car around, bring the records downstairs, drive out to East Orange, fight the tunnel traffic. East Orange is on a road called 280 West which is usually closed so you have to wind through all these weird back streets of Newark to find your way there. It takes like five or six hours to do it between getting there and getting back; it's hard work.

**M:** Did you ever attempt to go on another station and actually get paid?

**TH:** I would love to do that but I don't think any of the stations want me.

**M:** Wants that format because it's just too —

**TH:** I don't know what the fuck they're looking for. Radio is run by morons from the top to the bottom. You have your hierarchy of jobs. Film is the highest paying, most prestigious job you can have. If you can't get in film you go to TV, if you can't get into TV you go to cable TV, if you can't get in cable TV, you go to radio, if you can't get into radio, you go to public radio. So we're talking about the bottom echelon, so we're not dealing with a lot of bright people here. What's big in radio — right wing politics is the biggest thing in radio. Whether it's Rush Limbaugh, or Howard Stern — you got to have right wing politics and you've got to like classic rock. I mean that's all I can think of. You either play disco music or classic rock. They're just going to shove Eric Clapton and Rod Stewart down your throat. That's the shit they were shoving down our throats when I was a teenager — 1972, you know, it was the same bullshit. I hated that shit then, and I hate it now. I mean no one is going to convince me that Aerosmith are rock geniuses.

**M:** Do you like Queen?

**TH:** (Appealing chuckle.) Queen?! No. I don't like Queen. I worked in a bar once when I was in high-school, maybe it was the summer I got out of high-school. In the Spring I remember they had a Queen song on the jukebox and it got played over and over again — *Bohemian Rhapsody*. It was all I could do to stop myself from putting a shot gun up to that thing. I saw Queen, actually, on their first tour opening for Mott-The-Hoopie. They were bad.

**M:** Something Jim Carroll said about Lenny Kaye in one of his stories was that he admires the fact that Lenny doesn't judge people by their record collection. Some people, if they hate your record collection, they'll hate you. Are you like that?! Some people will kill others over their record collections! Are you like that?! Do you go over someone's house and if you deemed their collection unworthy or offensive would you kill them?! Or would you not like them, or not be able to look at them, or trust them, or be able to have a relationship with them?

**TH:** No, it depends on the person.

**M:** If I told you I like John Denver would you think less of me?!

**TH:** No, no. No — that's so perverse it's almost cool. Plus James Burton plays on his records — so. There's lots of people with good

taste in music who are utter assholes too. I try to take people as they come because you can't make any rules about people. I just figure 90% of all people are assholes. About 75% of all people will just try to live up to whatever stereotype they were born into and they think they have to be. Whether it's the dumb ginny, or the crazy nigger, the old Jewish guy — you know, people will just think they have to live out whatever they're handed. The 10% of people who are intelligent and nice people can come from anywhere — there are no rules here. They can be rich or poor, black or white; they can be anything. You never know where the nice people are going to come from. They could have good taste in music; they could have horrible taste in music. Someone told me Drew Friedman, who I think is an utter genius, is a David Bowie fan.

**M:** You don't like David Bowie!?

**TH:** Not particularly. I mean if you get something out of it — obviously the guys utterly brilliant, so I guess it's o.k. Let's face it, there's a big difference between this stuff and jazz. Lester Young, Charlie Parker — these were actual geniuses. These were actually sophisticated, brilliant musicians.

**M:** Do you have jazz?

**TH:** Yeah, I like jazz. I don't play it on the radio because a lot of other people do it and can do it better than me. My first love is really rock-n-roll but so much of it is what you read into it. People project things. I really hate the whole rock criticism gig. So much of it is kissing people's ass and analyzing the lyrics. You can go through a year of *Village Voice* issues and not find one mention of what anything sounds like. Nobody writes about sound. They write about lyrics. To me lyrics are the last thing you look for in a pop record. Let's face it — what are the best lyrics you ever heard — *Surfin' Bird* or something; those are cool.

**M:** I like Leonard Cohen.

**TH:** Yeah. Well he's a writerly kind of a guy. He's just so tasteful. If I was at a Leonard Cohen concert I would be so tempted to fart or belch or I would fall asleep or something. I thought the New York Dolls were cool — I like to see a band that falls off the stage and unplugs themselves.

**M:** And they fell off the stage alright — and often! Were you part of that whole scene? Did you hang out?

**TH:** Up until a couple of years ago. I was always the youngest person I knew. I was always way younger than anybody else I knew.

**M:** Yeah, me too, it seemed. Were you at Max's?

**TH:** No I was in Florida. They used to play at

a place called the *Flying Machine* down there. That's where they broke up actually.

**M:** So you didn't hang out "here."

**TH:** Well, I hung out at a later Max's — Max's when Tommy Dean owned it.

**M:** I probably ran into you. I always thought you looked familiar.

**TH:** From '77 on I was there all the time. The bands I used to go see were the Heartbreakers, the Cramps, the Senders — they were really good friends of mine. I remember seeing all kinds of weird bills like Devo, Suicide and the Cramps on a triple bill.

**M:** Suicide — yeah! Those guys are around here a lot.

**TH:** I haven't seen them in ages.

**M:** Marty lives around here I think. I used to see him on the street. I called him Alan once or twice. He's a nice guy.

**TH:** Yeah, they were both nice guys. Alan was just so crazy. They took a lot of shit. They were just way too far ahead. Those poor guys.

**M:** I didn't know what to make of them at the time. I didn't know what to make of the Ramones either. When I first heard the Ramones, I was hanging out downstairs (*Max's*) with a friends of mine and we were drinking wine and laughing *hard* — which they probably would have considered an appropriate response. We were probably the only people sitting downstairs.

**TH:** Back then they sounded different. Now the first Ramones album sounds so tame because everything sounds like it. But back then boy, in the Leonard (sic) Skynyrd era, Peter Frampton, ya know. When the Ramones album came out, the biggest record of all time was *Frampton Comes Alive*. There was that sort of running line of aggression that went: Raw Power, the Dolls, Patti Smith, the first Dictators album. The first Ramones album came and had stripped all that stuff down as far as it can go.

**M:** Did you like Television?

**TH:** Yeah, I like them. I saw them recently and I thought they were better than they were back then. I saw them last winter. I thought it was the best show I'd ever seen them do.

**M:** And then they just stopped. They played and then —

**TH:** I think they lost their record deal. *Capitol* dropped them.

**M:** Really? But they could play around here.

**TH:** How many times ya gonna play the same city, ya know? I'm sure if they get a record deal they'll play again. Those guys spent so much time together, I kind of doubt they can stand being around each other.

**M:** Did you ever get paid from Sony?

**TH:** Yeah. I did. I got paid very well actually.

**M:** That's good. Yeah.

**TH:** *O.k. Rhythm and Blues Box*. I recommend it highly for Christmas buying.

**M:** *O.k. Rhythm and Blues Box*? O.k.! Anything else.

**TH:** I have a column in *High Times* every month. A music column — *Hound's Eye View*. I've been in there for about seven years. John Holstrom, the former editor of *Punk Magazine* is the publisher of *High Times*. Great guy to work for — real easy guy to work for. I've written for like a million magazines. Ya know, the *Village Voice* — that was a horrible place to write. They don't even pay very well. Right now I'm trying to get a book deal.

**M:** (Tape is off for a while, then — I'm mumbling something about prisons being big profit makers.)

**TH:** What does it cost to keep a million people in jail? What does it cost to pay for how many millions of cops there are, and how much corruption is going on in the middle of that? How much of that money is getting kicked-back under the fucking table. Look at the figures. It cost \$33,000 a year to keep a man in prison for dealing crack. Yeah, but how about if we gave him a job for \$33,000 a year? Then he wouldn't be selling crack.

**M:** What do you think about the cops around here?

**TH:** I got mugged by two cops.

**M:** You got what!? You got mugged by them! Mugged by them!?

**TH:** Um-hum. The only time I was ever mugged in New York was by two fucking cops.

**M:** Around here?

**TH:** Right on my block.

**M:** But mugged —

**TH:** They saw me coming around the corner; they were standing on the corner. I had to come home and get money because I was going to go food shopping or something. They thought I went around the corner and copped drugs and came back, because there was a drug spot across the

street — a coke spot. So I came around the corner and they searched me for drugs and I didn't have any. And I had like sixty-bucks in my pocket and they kept it! They wouldn't give it back to me.

**M:** They took your sixty-dollars?!

**TH:** Yeah, then I tried to report them and I got threatening calls. I'd go down the stairs and they'd be hanging out in front of my building.

**M:** What were they acting like when they took the money?

**TH:** They were fucking plainclothesmen. They were two fucking coked-up assholes.

**M:** You knew who they were?

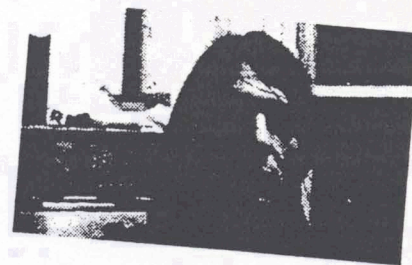
**TH:** Yeah, I knew who they were. They identified themselves as cops. They were going to bust me for copping drugs.

**M:** But you knew for a fact they were cops?

**TH:** Yeah. I'd seen them around. I haven't seen them in the last couple of years but I saw them around for ages. They were always around on this block.

**M:** Sixty-dollars!

**TH:** They were just cops with coke habits. This precinct is bad, man. I mean I was in the middle of a lot of those fucking riots — by accident. Just walking by I would end up getting attacked by cops. New York City is now under siege by a colonial army of assholes from Long Island — one being Rudy Giuliani, who didn't even fucking grow up in New York — and his fucking army N.Y.P.D. And that's where my politics end for today. It's a really depressing thought.



**Jim Marshall's** show airs Saturdays on WFMU, 91.1 FM in the metropolitan New York area.

**Merry Fortune** is editor of *Living With A White Girl* and contributing editor of *The World*, the literary magazine of the St. Mark's Poetry Project.

*During the typesetting of this article the proofreading firm of Nachem & Nachoff went on strike, forcing the staff of No-Lunch Productions to do the spell-checking themselves. No-Lunch apologizes for any misspelled names and places that escaped their attention.*