



FREE

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Mayor Widener makes a deal Do bribes and mobsters make good neighbors?

By Bill Wallace



Dave Patrick

Taxpayers of Berkeley, beware: your City Council is in the process of virtually giving away a \$400,000 chunk of prime-grade municipal real estate to a huge global conglomerate with a long history of bribes, kickbacks and links to organized crime.

The land in question is an 80,000 square foot parcel at the corner of Fifth Street and Delaware in the city's controversial West Berkeley Industrial Park project. The city acquired the real estate as part of its sadly misguided \$9 million plan to redevelop land in Berkeley's industrial zone. According to the plan, the improved land would be sold at bargain basement rates in order to encourage new businesses to move into town.

But the new business that is scheduled to move in may not be precisely what the project's planners had in mind. In a deal made late last month, the City Council accepted a \$132,600 offer for the land from ARA Services, Inc., a \$1.5 billion-a-year conglomerate which numbers juke box companies, vending machines, industrial clothing suppliers, school bus firms and even nursing homes among its holdings. Since the company was founded in 1959, ARA has:

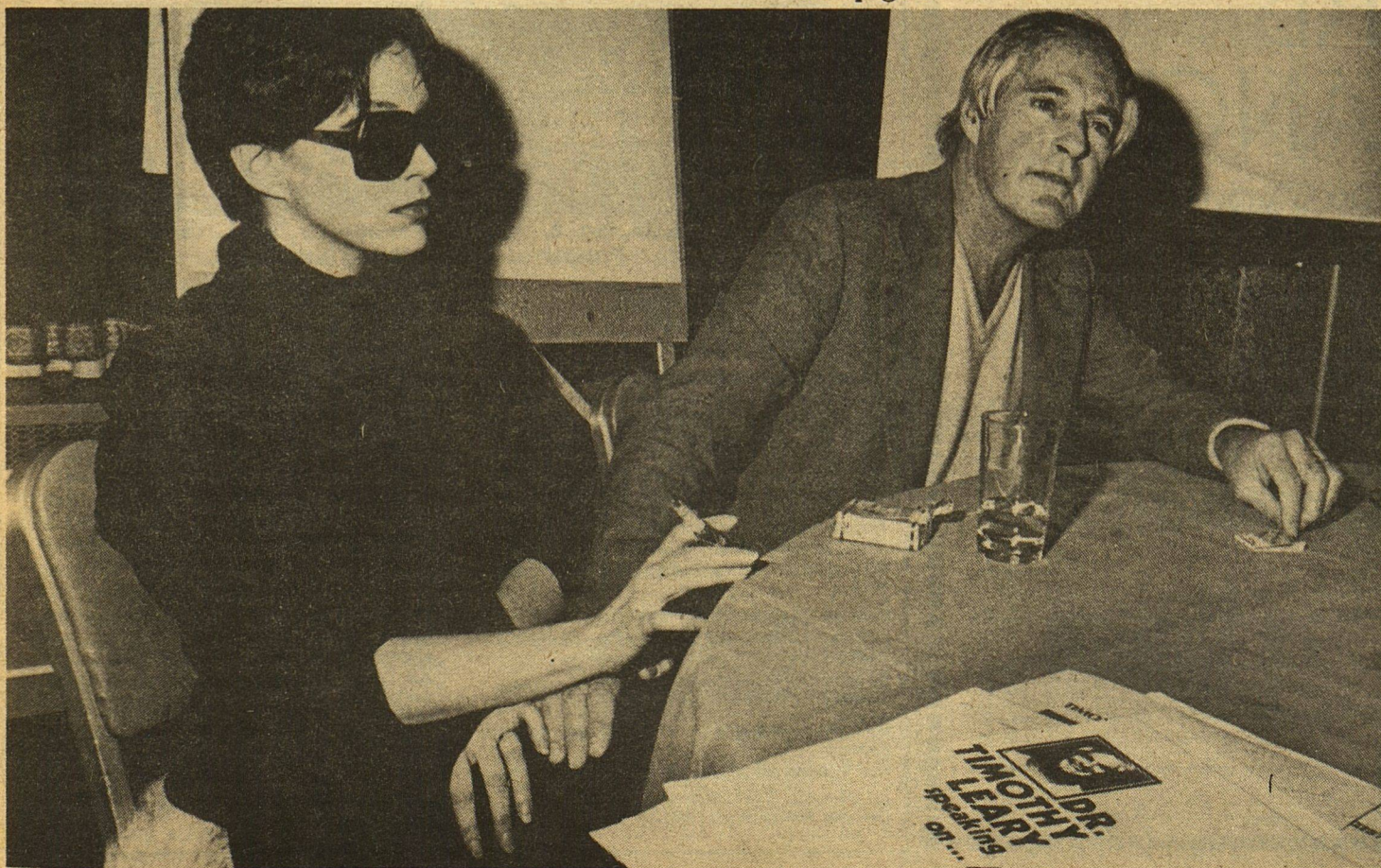
- * Been linked to top U.S. mobsters and their associates by affidavits sworn in U.S. District Court, Philadelphia;
- * Admitted making \$393,000 worth of bribes and questionable payments to U.S. and foreign politicians and businessmen between 1970 and 1976;
- * Received hundreds of citations at its nursing homes — more than 20 of which are located right in the Bay Area — for violations of state laws and nursing home regulations;
- * Been sued by Southern and Mid-Western news distribution companies for unfair business methods, illegal restraint of trade and unlawful monopolies.

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Widener: Did a quick trip to Phillie clinch the deal?

Leary reaches for the stars

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Susan Friedrichs/Dramatic Image

Is the end near for legal abortions?

By Elaine Herscher

Their speeches are peppered with phrases like, "We shall overcome." They claim support from Dick Gregory, Jesse Jackson, and Cesar Chavez. They march in demonstrations, sit-in, lie-in, and are arrested by the score. But they are not, as one might think, a New Left group repeating the methods of the '60s. They are part of the increasingly powerful anti-abortion movement, a New Right group in progressive clothing. Their anthem: "All we are saying is 'Give life a chance.'"

In recent years the anti-abortion movement has been taken over by slick poli-

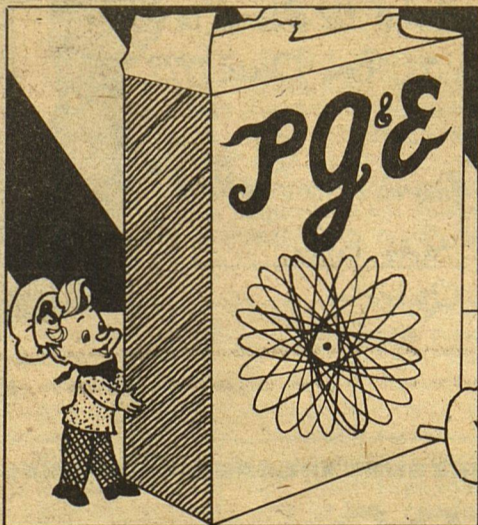
tical analysts who have successfully blended what they've learned from the Left about influencing public opinion with what they've learned from the Right about building power bases. What has emerged is a hybrid force that could eliminate legal abortions in the next five years.

Their success in last November's elections was impressive. The National Right to Life Committee (NRLC), the country's most powerful anti-abortion organization, takes credit for the election of six "pro-life" Senators (who replaced pro-choice people), four Congressmen, three

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Plutonium for breakfast? Eat it, PG&E!

By Marcy Darnovsky



Kim McCloud

It was one of those grandstand gaffes that PR men are paid to avoid. In the midst of a three hour debate on San Jose's KXRR radio, PG&E public relations representative Dick Davin smugly proclaimed, "Plutonium—you could hold it. You could put it on your breakfast cereal. Literally you could. And you could eat it."

Eat plutonium? The suggestion startled a lot of listeners and not all of them health food advocates. There is, however, a grain of truth in Davin's smug remark—the main danger associated with plutonium comes from inhalation resulting in lung cancer.

But even so, the presumably well-informed PG&E spokesman is dead wrong according to Dr. John Gofman, professor emeritus of medical physics at Berkeley. "It's a case where knowing a little hurts a lot," says Dr. Gofman. He explains that Davin's claim is based on the low absorbability of plutonium in the intestine. But there's a very serious catch: the simple chlorine found in drinking water oxidizes plutonium in which case, according to Dr. Gofman, "the absorption is about a thousand to ten thousand times better."

Unfortunately, it is not only Davin who hasn't kept up on the scientific literature. Current federal limits on plutonium in food do not reflect these findings, which were published in Science magazine last year.

Furthermore, adds Dr. Gofman, "All you need is a couple small ulcers where some of those (plutonium) particles can lodge down in a crevice ... and it's going to stay there and guarantee cancer ... That's totally missed by this idiot, and it's a very serious oversight."

Thus armed, I called Mr. Davin to ask if he was ready to eat his words. "I didn't make that statement," Davin said definitively. I told him I had a tape of the broadcast in my possession, and he paused. Remaining as gracious as ever, he nonetheless stammered a bit as he launched into an explanation of "relative hazards" and of "the point I was trying to make."

So you'd go ahead and say the same thing again? I inquired. "Probably not," was the reply. "Out of context like that it

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Krassner's media cocktail

By Paul Krassner

When the late Lyndon Johnson showed off the scar on his stomach to photographers, it immediately became an international image. People wondered privately what he would have done if he had been operated on for hemorrhoids. Now Jimmy Carter has helped break that taboo. In an opening monologue, Johnny Carson reported that a White House hoaxster had substituted Crazy Glue for Preparation H.

Dan Sorkin, former disc jockey who first brought comedian Bob Newhart to public attention, is now an official



Krassner asks

spokesperson for Synanon. In that capacity, Sorkin sounded as though he were doing a Newhart bit, charging that Los Angeles attorney Paul Morantz himself arranged for a rattlesnake to be put in his mailbox as a way of smearing Synanon.

Several all-music radio stations have been playing records uninterrupted by commercials. But they haven't explained their motivation — it's rating time — which is a wonderful paradox. They don't have commercials in order to attract listeners and get high ratings so that they can get more commercials.

Here is perhaps the most bizarre explanation of what happened to the members of People's Temple. The official newspaper of The Black Panther Party states in an editorial: "It is quite possible that the neutron bomb was used at Jonestown. The neutron bomb contains radioactive molecules, which, when released into the atmosphere, kill human beings — but do not destroy property."

There is an unofficial race on between *Hustler* and *Playgirl* as to which will show the first completely erect male penis. Apparently both magazines are approaching that goal on the installment plan. Meanwhile, the question remains, how many district attorneys can dance on the head of a hard-on?

According to a University of California study, marijuana smokers have worse teeth and gums than non-marijuana smokers. This could be attributed to the eating of sweets during blind munchie binges. However, researchers found that the non-smokers visit their dentists more

often than the smokers, who are probably just too stoned to make an appointment.

As with Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*, the original version of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* was intended as a metaphor for the obsessive anti-communism of the '50s as personified by Senator Joseph McCarthy. The remake seems more like a documentary about est graduates.

Rock promoter Bill Graham has published a slightly egomaniacal calendar for 1979. However, his own birthday is listed on the wrong date. Incidentally, Joan Baez and Richard Nixon were born on the same day. Obviously, they have different rising signs; otherwise, Baez would have been nominated for a Grammy Award too.

Quoted without comment: Bob Hope, referring to his wife, Delores, on a talk show: "She's got it, she's solid Max Factor."

Margaret Mead, in her last TV interview: "If we had to start evolution over again, we'd never get to us."

Eric Sevareid to Walter Cronkite: "You can't always go with your moral instincts if you're a government."

Mork, describing his adventures in space travel: "Don't ever go to Pluto. It's a Mickey Mouse planet."

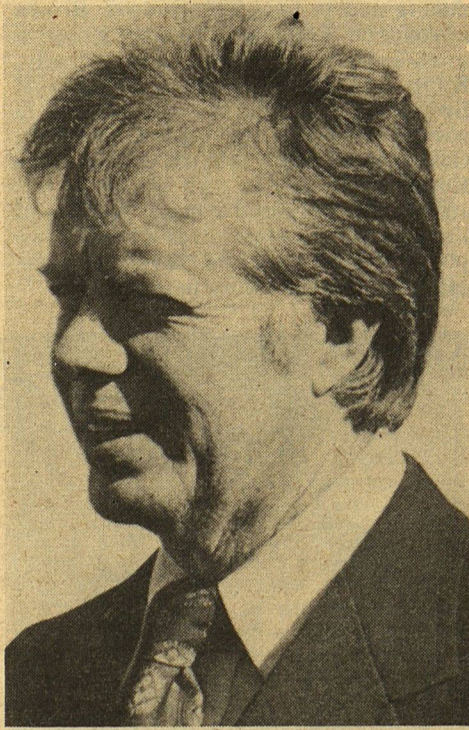
The Flying Karamazov Brothers: "It doesn't matter how you get there if you don't know where you're going."

Evolution takes place, instead of within individuals, inside their television sets. Elinor Donahue once played the daughter of Robert Young in a situation comedy, *Father Knows Best*. Then Young went to medical school so he could

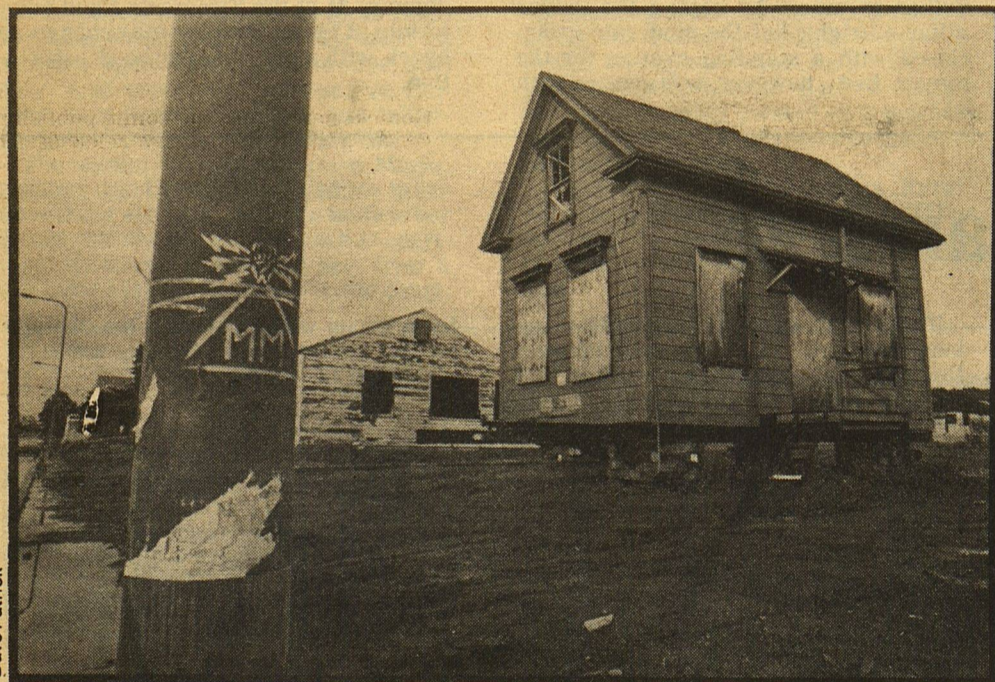
do Sanka commercials, and now Donahue is a mother in a situation comedy, *Please Stand By*. It helps give the passive viewer a sense of imaginary continuity.

Although Woody Allen has never been considered as controversial as Lenny Bruce, Allen actually made this comment:

"If you are going to die for something, you should at least take one of them with you. Go back to the Jews in Germany. If you have a loaded gun in your home, and the state comes to get you, you can at least get two or three of them. I'm not opposed to violence as a course of action in many instances. Sometimes passive resistance is fine, but violence in its place is a good and necessary thing. But setting fire to yourself is not the answer. With my luck, I would be un-inflammable."



Show me where it hurts



Pulling down homes for the mob: Do corrupt multi-nationals make good neighbors?

Civic handout for the mob

Continued from cover

tic practices in the circulation of newspapers, magazines and pocket books.

In short, the evidence suggests that ARA may not be a very good neighbor, and raises serious questions about the probity of public officials who would bend over backwards to welcome them to town.

ARA's ties to the Mafia came to light as the result of a civil lawsuit filed in Philadelphia last May by Peter O'Neill, a former FBI agent who was hired by ARA as a security officer in 1974. O'Neill charges that he was fired in 1977 because of his investigation of illegal payments and bribes in the company.

His investigation initially centered on ARAVEN (ARA Vending), one of the firm's more than 200 subsidiaries, but soon came to take in ARA operations in Detroit, New Jersey, New York, California and Florida. O'Neill learned that \$50,000 had been bilked from ARAVEN's operations in Detroit by a crooked manager who had made uncollectable loans to Anthony ("Tony Jack") Giacalone, among others.

Giacalone is a member of a Detroit mob family who got his start in the rackets running bootleg liquor with Sam

("Mooney") Giancana in the suburbs of Chicago.

In 1975, Giacalone emerged as a central figure in the disappearance of Teamster boss Jimmy Hoffa. According to FBI reports, when Hoffa disappeared, he was on his way to a meeting with "Tony Jack" and Anthony ("Tony Pro") Provenzano, a New Jersey hood with convictions for extortio, labor racketeering and murder.

According to O'Neill's suit against ARA, the firm's money was not only going to unsavory characters like Giacalone; it was also being used to finance loansharking and gambling operations. What's more, "certain executives were systematically defrauding ARA of substantial sums."

ARA officials have denied O'Neill's allegations of organized crime kickbacks and infiltration. Nevertheless, the fact remains that O'Neill is not the only source which alleges ARA's ties to the mob. Even the stodgy *Director of Corporate Affiliations*, published by the National Register Publishing Company, lists several ARA subsidiaries which were originally founded by New York juke box czar Alfred Miniaci — including his own com-

pany, Alfred Miniaci, Inc.

Miniaci was named as one of the top men in the New York juke box business in testimony by crime associates before the Senate investigating committee chaired by Senator John McClelland in 1959. Moreover, Miniaci was identified by then-Senator John F. Kennedy as an associate of top U.S. gangster Frank Costello.

In his lawsuit, O'Neill claims that Miniaci figured significantly in ARA's relationship with the mob. A sworn affidavit filed in December 1978, alleged that when O'Neill told ARA about the firm's unsecured loans to thugs, ARA executive Martin Sperling suggested that Miniaci be given the responsibility of recovering the money.

ARA's history of bribery and kickbacks is no less shocking than its alleged gangland ties. According to a report which the company filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in 1977, its nearly \$400,000 in "questionable or unlawful payments" included \$11,850 in illegal state and local political payoffs, \$170,000 worth of gifts to U.S. officials and businessmen and an additional \$200,000 in "gifts" to government and business officials overseas.

As for kickbacks, ARA admits having received \$504,000 in questionable and unlawful "rebates" between October 1970, and January 1976. This figure includes \$35,000 in possibly illegal kickbacks from milk suppliers to an ARA subsidiary, \$154,000 in illegal ocean shipping rebates and \$300,000 worth of kickbacks from beer and liquor suppliers.

Even so, the SEC report may cover only part of ARA's illicit financial maneuvering. O'Neill's lawsuit alleges that the company failed to reveal the full extent of its illegal payments and kickbacks to the SEC in 1977, and that his own investigation found evidence of far more corruption.

But one need not look so far away as Washington, D.C., for examples of ARA's difficulties with the law. Right here in the Bay Area, the firm's nursing home subsidiaries are constantly under citation for violations of state health and safety laws and regulations.

Consider Parkland Convalescent Hospital, a nursing home operated by ARA through a subsidiary, Western Medical Enterprises. On April 28, 1976, a team

from the state Department of Health inspected the hospital and found eleven violations, one of them quite serious. Six months later eleven more violations were discovered. Another inspection during the same month revealed 45 more violations.

When Parkland was reinspected in April, 1977, it was hit with 35 violations. Three of a particularly serious nature involved inadequate medical care and record-keeping for a dying patient.

Nor is Parkland an isolated case. Parkview Convalescent, another ARA nursing home located in Hayward, was cited for an incredible 73 violations — including 16 serious ones — during the same period. Hayward Convalescent Hospital, another ARA affiliate in Southern Alameda County, was cited for 50 violations between March, 1975 and August, 1976.

Moreover, during a four month period last year, two elderly female patients left with inadequate supervision at an ARA nursing home in Pleasant Hill, met hideous deaths. One was scalded to death in the hospital's utility room. The other wandered off to a nearby creek where she slipped in and drowned.

Given ARA's seamy record in the local nursing home business, it is ironic that the Berkeley land which the firm is scheduled to buy is located across the street from a city-sponsored Senior Citizens' Center. What's more, an alternative buyer for the site was a proposed housing project for elderly citizens which is strongly supported by local residents and a group of Bay Area senior activists. The City Council turned the housing project down for the simple mercenary reason that ARA offered money up front, whereas financing for the senior project would have to be arranged.

ARA's pending move into Berkeley could prove embarrassing to some of the city officials who have been working overtime to encourage the relocation — particularly Mayor Warren Widener, who last fall took a special trip back to Philadelphia to meet with ARA's president. Widener could not be reached for comment on ARA's checkered history but Councilmember John Denton, a steadfast opponent of the deal, was less reticent.

"I believe that it is inappropriate for taxpayer's money to be used to subsidize a monopolistic multinational corporation," Denton told us, "particularly one with a history like this one."