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My Date With Jim Hogshire (Version 2.1)

Bob Black

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Contents

APPENDIX:

| | |
|------------------------------------------------|----|
| TOP TEN REASONS TO BUST JIM HOGSHIRE | 18 |
| A FUN(D)-RAISING APPEAL | 19 |

it takes — to do it. When I was younger, I was very free with throwing around threats, just as Poppy Boy is. Now I think that, if you're justified in threatening someone with something, usually it's better to skip the threat and just do it to him. And so I did.

As word gets out how prickly I can be about an assault with a deadly weapon, I risk receiving fewer slumber-party invitations from narco-terrorists. Maybe that's not such a bad thing.

A blind date — with Jim Hogshire! I was fired with anticipation. It was arranged by our mutual friend, Mike Hoy of Loompanics, so I knew everything would be all right.

I went to Seattle, in fact, en route to Port Townsend where I was to do a story on “the people behind Loompanics” for a new magazine, Curio. To make the trip financially possible, I had to kill a couple of days before showing up at the Loompanics compound. Hoy suggested I “hang with” Hogshire, a rising star in the Loompanics firmament with three books in print, including *Sell Yourself to Science and Opium for the Masses: A Practical Guide to Growing Poppies and Making Opium*. Complementary topics, I noticed ... you could get an organ transplant with the anesthesia built in. The HMO's are always looking for shortcuts like that.

After six arduous hours airborne, I arrived in Seattle on a Saturday in mid-afternoon. A young woman held a sign with my name on it. “So you're Bob Black,” I said. “You're not at all like I imagined you.” It was Heidi, Jim's wife. Jim, she said, was asleep. She explained that he kept irregular hours. She was the main breadwinner, working as a “drug rep” for Merck — a dream job, considering! — but she wanted to quit and get on SSI. Since I know something about the applicable law, we discussed her claim (diagnosis: depression) in some detail. A med-school dropout from, like Jim, a rich family — his threw him out at age 17 — Heidi met Jim at college back in their native Indiana. He was already publishing his well-known zine *Pills a Go Go*. As is typical of the declassed bourgeoisie, the Hogshires cling to certain remnants of affluence despite their modest means. Heidi, for instance, has never ridden a bus. And then there are the drugs. Are there ever!

We got back to the Hogshires' \$800/month apartment (across the street from what they call “the fag building”) in Seattle's hippest neighborhood and I met Jim Hogshire himself — a tall, thin, fair-complexioned fellow with dark blond hair in a ponytail. He looked older than he must have

been. He wasn't noticeably happy to see me, but at least there wasn't a pistol in his pocket. (That was later.) As I was soon to learn, the restrained reception didn't mean anything. It's just that Hogshire does not like to submit the way he feels to chance and circumstance. He engineers his emotions pharmacologically. "One pill makes you larger and one pill makes you small," and Hogshire not only knows which is which but how much larger or smaller it makes you, and he combines his pills for specific effects as a painter mixes paint on his pallet.

A cup or two of opium tea put Hogshire in an agreeable, indeed an expansive mood. It turned out that neither of us was all that familiar with what the other was up to in the marginals milieu. Until then I'd never seen *Pills a Go Go*, and he'd never seen most of my books. I gave him a copy of *Beneath the Underground*. As authors, we agreed that Loompanics was a peerless publisher: "They always play straight with you," as Hogshire put it. I told him about some of my other publishers who didn't, usually out of ineptitude, not malice.

As we'd already conversed at length by phone, Hogshire was familiar with my mission. I said that the least I could do in return for his hospitality was to talk him up in my article (after clearing anything incriminatory with him first). So are you, I asked, a typical, or legendary, self-empowered macho Loompanics author? With a triumphant cry that, frankly, from what I'd seen of his condition and physique, I would have thought was beyond him, he made a grab toward the wall for something I hadn't noticed: the rifle that was leaning against it. He raised it aloft and shook it with some further ululations of the sort I associate with Muslims celebrating by firing into the air. In this impression I was, as it turned out, much more disconcertingly right than I wanted or expected to be. Jim said the gun was an M-1 (a .30 caliber semiautomatic rifle). His was equipped with a laserscope.

A FUN(D)-RAISING APPEAL

I, Bob "Dice" Black, hereby announce the establishment of the Bob Black Victim Compensation Fund. Donations large and small are invited which will be applied to two purposes:

(1) Defraying the cost of reproducing and distributing copies of "My Date With Jim Hogshire" and other materials explaining what really happened that night, and what's happened since;

(2) Offsetting the direct financial losses inflicted on me by Poppy Boy's publicity stunt. These include expenses in (and getting out of) Seattle, payment for the article on Loompanics I never got to write, and payment unreceived for an unrelated article written for, and previously accepted by, Loompanics which was kicked back to me in reprisal for offending Jim Hogshire. (The good news is that it's in the July 1996 issue of *Liberty*. The bad news is that *Liberty* doesn't pay its contributors.) When you have no savings, lots of debt and an annual income of \$6,600, an \$800 loss is a tremendous hit.

I'm not implying that Hogshire hasn't lost more, and stands to lose a lot more, out of all this than I. The prospect pleases me mightily! The difference is, I don't deserve to lose anything whereas Hogshire is paying a price for the calculated, cynical, malicious backstabbing of somebody who never did him any harm. He forgot that if you live outside the law, you have to be honest. His addiction aside, he's a blustering, grandiose-delusional prima donna whose exaggerated self-importance is exceeded only by his exaggerated self-pity. He's not nearly smart or powerful enough to get away with what he tried on me. Accounts out of the Loompanics cult compound make it sound like Hogshire is genuinely bewildered to learn — as his father, in disowning him, was trying to teach him — that everything that goes around, comes around.

I may be an anarchist, but I'm not a chump. I do as I'm done by. I didn't rat Hogshire out until he ratted me out. If I think something just has to be done, I do what it takes — whatever

APPENDIX: TOP TEN REASONS TO BUST JIM HOGSHIRE

Direct from the home office in Croatan, here's a list of the top ten reasons to bust Jim Hogshire:

10. To generate subject-matter and publicity for his next book.
9. So he can hit up suckers like Mike Hoy and Adam Parfrey for big bucks.
8. Test case for his claim that it's legal to possess poppy pods with the intent to manufacture narcotics from them if you bought them at a florist shop.
7. To test his claim that withdrawal from opium addiction is no worse than having the flu.
6. A felony conviction disqualifies him from legally possessing firearms.
5. Being a bad man's boyfriend may perk up his sex life.
4. To take his rifles and 3 Saturday night specials away.
3. To take his firebomb away.
2. To make sure he doesn't shoot his wife the next time somebody uses her as a human shield.
And the No. 1 reason to bust Jim Hogshire:
3. He fucked me over.

The conversation was frank and far-ranging. Hogshire left the impression that, as befits a Loompanics author, for him nothing was off-limits. He drank maybe two quarts of opium tea over twelve hours. His flirtatious wife has lower tolerance, except for him, and drank less. I've seen some real zoners in my time, and I don't pretend to be straight-edge, but I've never met anyone whose life was so completely and by conscious contrivance organized around drugs. For him, addiction is a cause, not a curse, and he is apostolic about it. The opium is Hogshire's baseline consciousness control — his default setting. When he wants to rouse himself to some major effort — such as making a telephone call — he takes, not less depressants, but more stimulants.

Jim goes in for immediate gratification. He doesn't swallow Ritalin pills, he powders and snorts them. He doesn't just wash down Dexedrine pills, he chews them first for faster impact. And he knows a lot about drugs, almost as much as he thinks he does. (Glue-sniffing, he's written, destroys brain cells, "but so does breathing the air in any city or town." As redwoods cause air pollution.) He boasted, "I can make heroin out of Sudafed!" Just what the world needs. The man has so much to give.

Jim also consumed some "smart" drugs. Unfortunately, they never kicked in.

The Hogshire lifestyle is more than a little unusual, and I was admitted to some of its mysteries in graduated stages. I'd already noticed that Jim doesn't sleep the way most people do. Instead, he nods out and in as the drugs dictate. He wasn't at the airport to pick me up because — in mid-afternoon — he was zonked out. A few hours later he nodded out again, complaining of a migraine. As he has a slave-girl to pay the bills and run his errands, Jim has no reason to do anything but surf the chemicals coursing through his veins and dabble in writing every so often.

Stranger still was Hogshire alimentation. They do not, they explained, eat meals, and mostly they don't even eat food. Jim pointed out a huge pile of boxes of powdered, chocolate-flavored protein concentrate, the stuff they feed to anorexics and AIDS victims. That and vitamin pills are what the Hogshires live on. All they ate when I was there was a bag of potato chips. There was nothing in their refrigerator but what looked like the fossil remains of a pizza and a few beers left behind by somebody else. (Alcohol, which Jim calls "crude," is the only drug I know for sure he doesn't do.) The part about the irregular sleep patterns I'd taken in stride, but as a food fancier, now I was taken aback. Was this indifference to food (I asked) a drug side-effect? "I never liked eating," Jim explained.

As the speed and the Ritalin kicked in, Jim warmed to me, or maybe he just warmed. He expatiated upon his hobby, telephone harassment, at great length and with obvious relish. I only remember one of the anecdotes he related, but it was representative of the rest, except for its anti-Semitic spin. Jim gained access to a Jerusalem telephone book from which he gleaned some numbers. He placed a collect call to somebody over there and (he recounted), putting on his best Yiddish accent, had his fun with him:

Oy, Moishe, this is David from New York! We met at the airport.

Uh ... I haven't been in New York for five years.

Of course not, we met at the Tel Aviv airport! (etc.)

Jim was just unable to contain his mirth over this witty prank. His laugh began as a wheeze and rose to a modest cackle. Politely I nodded and smiled. I was, after all, his houseguest. Jim also related many tales of practical jokes perpetrated by his friends. One of them, for instance, has a feces fetish. He loves talking shit — on the phone. The gentleman called somebody he knew wasn't home so as to get his wife instead. He was (he explained) a medical researcher

counted on my anarchism to insulate him against my bringing the law down on him. A pretext for faking a fight with me was easy to come up with: for that purpose, religion is foolproof. Hogshire may not have known my actual beliefs, but he knew I wasn't a Muslim, and that was all he needed to know. In many respects the scenario unfolded according to plan. But, like lots of losers before him, Lord Jim underestimated me.

Jim Hogshire has written three books. I've mentioned two of them. Like some Loompanics books, they promise more than they deliver. Like a few Loompanics books, their legal advice is dangerously unreliable. Hogshire's claim that "there's nothing illegal here" is now in the courts. There was plenty illegal there, and his readers deserve to know it in order to make their own informed decisions about the legal risks they choose to take. He's scarcely a sympathetic defendant, coming across, as he will, less like Timothy Leary than Timothy McVeigh. This is a very bad time in this country for anybody, especially a Muslim, to go to trial on a bomb charge.

And Hogshire knows it. He was scheduled to be arraigned on June 28. He didn't show. He is now a fugitive. (There are no charges pending against Heidi.) He must have stiffed whoever bailed him out, probably Hoy. Now Allah Hoy's money and Allah Hoy's men can't put Jim Hogshire together again.

There's something prescient about Jim's latest book: You Are Going to Prison. That he will. It's his opportunity to be the next Jack Abbott or Eldridge Cleaver. And it couldn't happen to a nicer guy.

Bob Black

PO Box 3142

Albany, NY 12203-0142

Hogshires haven't taken their Koranic studies that far. To be even less tolerant than the Prophet is intolerant indeed. But what had Mike Hoy been smoking to arrange a blind date between Salman Rushdie and the Ayatollah Khomeini?

Was the whole thing an ambush, a set-up, a king-of-the-mountain game? After thinking long and hard about it, I'm convinced that it was. Every other theory makes even less sense.

Early in the evening, Jim said something I didn't give much thought to at the time: "Why do so many people hate you?" You seem okay to me, he went on to say. My reply, if I recall, was that I didn't think many people did hate me these days. Only long after this night to remember did I remember this question and ponder how peculiar it was. Why would anybody knowingly admit a much-hated stranger into his home? Someone so dangerous that you take the precaution of having a rifle within reach? My being there was his idea, not mine. His tabloid-trash topics don't interest me much, and he, in turn, was as unfamiliar with my writings as he was with my real reputation.

To me it now looks like a premeditated publicity stunt. Hogshire envied my relative celebrity and decided to boost his own fame at my expense. He'd play Mark Chapman to my John Lennon. He counted on what he supposed to be my reputation for contentiousness, feuds, drunkenness, etc. to give credence to the version of the encounter he'd engineer. He counted on what he supposed to be my legion of enemies to provide him with a new, ready-made audience of sympathizers. He counted on his privileged access to Mike Hoy (who is "close" to the Hogshires, according to L.A. Rollins of Loompanics) — evidently Hogshire had, as I didn't, Hoy's home phone number — to turn Hoy against me by a preemptive strike. He counted on his legal status as householder — that and his gun — to guarantee his total control of the situation he was creating. And he may have

who had some questions concerning the husband's stools. The wife was unable to supply any specifics. "Well," said the caller, "maybe I can ask you a few questions." How often do you defecate? What color are your feces? Do they float? And so forth. Jim thought this was even funnier than his own Jerusalem jape.

Why Hogshire hates Jews I learned a little later. The little lady early on sounded me out to see if I was (as I am not) Halachically Challenged. It got to be very late at night in Seattle, which was three hours later than in my time zone, and twenty hours after I'd gotten up. I really wanted to crash, but my date Jim still had so much to share with me. Specifically, his religion. Jim Hogshire, wasted WASP by birth, is an Islamic fundamentalist. He claims to have turned Turk five years ago. His wife finally embraced the Faith a year ago. Bitterly he railed against the Jewish-owned media which demonize Muslims. He showed me what was in his in-box for current reading, a reprint from an anti-Semitic publisher of an obscure old volume by a Russian Orthodox priest collecting anti-Christian assertions and injunctions from the Talmud. Why this was of interest to Hogshire, an anti-Christian himself, was not clear. It certainly held no interest for me.

Elaborating, My Date complained at length about the way the West abandoned the Bosnian Muslims to the tender mercies of the Serbs and Croats, proof positive of the timeless anti-Islamic animus of all Westerners. (Oddly enough, by then the Western powers had already bombed the hell out of the Serbs and coerced them into a peace agreement which greatly improved the Muslims' situation. Go figure.) But why was he laying all this on me? I oppose the arms embargo and all other outside meddling over there. I told him so early on, as I found the topic tiresome and I was tired enough already. I am not well-known for my influence on American foreign policy. Warren Christopher never returns my calls.

Hogshire had, however, other examples of infidel iniquity to deplore, notably the Iran/Iraq war of the 1980's. He thought it was a distinctively and characteristically wicked Judeo-Christian plot to get Muslims to kill each other. I thought it was the routinely ruthless balance-of-power politics which all states practice on each other, and always will until the peoples rid themselves of all states, including Islamic states. I don't think Muslims need much more encouragement to kill each other than they need to kill anybody else. Nobody forced the Iranians and Iraqis to slaughter each other except their own Islamic governments. Regarding covert American support for the aggressor, Saddam Hussein's Iraq, regrettably I had even less influence over Reagan and Bush than I do over Clinton. Kissinger never returned my calls either.

What all this was leading up to was a junk-driven jihad's-day's-night that caught me completely by surprise. I only wish it had caught me napping, for that was what I wanted to be doing.

I was drawn into an argument which, I belatedly realized, My Date was treating as an argument about religion. For me it wasn't. I'd gone there assuming I was linking up with a writer like myself — somebody like me, somebody writing was important to — a practitioner of the Craft.

For such as ourselves, what's crucially important are words, meanings, connotations, contexts — interpretation in the widest sense. To read is to interpret. To write is to interpret. Reading and writing are intellectually the same activity. Text is no more self-explanatory than it is self-written. A recipe or a rule is as necessarily subject to interpretation as a poem or a novel. If there is an omnipotent God, He has the power to reveal Himself immediately to our understanding, as mystics claim He's done for them. But if He appoints a human Messenger to deliver the Message in the words of a natural language, be it Arabic or English, He commits His Message to an interpretive community of fallible humans. God knows

it. He reneged. After trying but failing to fall asleep in a park — it was just too cold on that winter night — I finally found a motel.

Monday morning I started on my way toward Port Townsend. I'd been so rattled that I didn't realize I was a day early, but as it turned out, that made no difference. I called my matchmaker Mike Hoy. He'd already heard about my special Saturday night with the guy who loves Saturday night specials. "I'm cancelling the interview," he told me. I was stunned. I hastened to reassure him. I didn't blame him in any way. He couldn't possibly have known what Hogshire would do. But maybe it was a blessing in disguise: "I came here for one story and I'll leave with two," I said.

But I didn't. I left with one tale, and with my tale between my legs. I had it all wrong. Hoy blamed me for the imbroglio. "Do you know he ran me out of his place at gunpoint?" I asked. Yes, he knew that. But why? According to Hogshire-coached Hoy, because I "became obnoxious." How so? "You insulted him, his wife, and his religion." (Interestingly, Hoy said nothing about Jim's subsequent claim that I tried to strangle Heidi — Jim must not have had time to make that part up yet.) I told him what really went down. "I don't think it happened that way, Bob," was Mike's reply. There went crashing my 12 year personal friendship (and an even older business relationship) with one of the very few people I've ever fully trusted — on the say-so of a junkie who got the first word in. I said, "You didn't tell me he was an Islamic fundamentalist." To this Hoy responded with dead air, with no words at all. He did say I should turn around and go back where I came from as soon as possible. I did.

According to the Koran (surah 109):

Say: "Unbeliever, I do not serve what you worship, nor do you serve what I worship. I shall never serve what you worship, nor will you ever serve what I worship. You have your religion, and I have mine." Fair enough. Apparently the

Heidi has a dependent personality, but she isn't stupid. She's since drawn her own conclusions from what happened that night. She's split up with Jim.

I suggested that Jim (rather, I dared him to) call the police to sort the situation out. "There's nothing illegal here," he said. But he didn't take the dare, and I was pretty sure that if I went over to the phone, he'd shoot me.

In retrospect, I'm totally sure. As he's since written, "in retrospect it would have been far less trouble to kill him." There was a lot of "illegal" there, more than I was aware of, and not just the opium — he had a bomb on the premises.

I was in a bad way. It was a very real possibility that my enraged, doped-up date would kill me whatever I did. I didn't want Poppy Boy to hurt or even kill his wife, but that was at the very least a risk he was prepared to take — and for what? To eject a trespasser? All he had to do was call the cops if he thought I wasn't leaving fast enough. But he couldn't do that because he had drugs, drug paraphernalia, five guns and a bomb to hide. A rifle with a laserscope is not a weapon for home defense — for that you want a handgun or perhaps a shotgun — and neither is a thermite grenade. What he meant to do with it, Allah only knows. Think about it. The drug lab was more important to Jim Hogshire than human life — not merely my human life (infidel dog that I am), but even his own wife's life.

Unlike Poppy Boy, I'm an anarchist, but our society is not anarchist. Poppy Boy didn't break out a brace of duelling pistols, he got the drop on me with a rifle. Otherwise, I'd have taken down the spindly junkie on the spot, which I could almost have done in my sleep. Hell, I nearly was in my sleep. I thought I had a few anarchist comrades or colleagues in the vicinity to help me (such as Mike Hoy and James Koehnline) but it turned out that I didn't. Once out of the apartment, the wind whistling through my shoes, I phoned Koehnline, who'd offered to put me up if I needed it. I explained that I did need

this, since God knows everything. He must expect us to try to understand His words, to take them at least as seriously as any text of only earthly origin, using the best interpretive tools at our disposal. God deserves no less. Lord Jim denounced me for my "Western way of thinking."

In retrospect, it was absurd of me to expound hermeneutics to Hogshire. I mistook a journalist for a writer. Even if he were sober, sane and secular, this hophead wouldn't have a head for ideas anywhere near that level of sophistication — although they're really not so terribly sophisticated, at least they shouldn't be to an author with a masters' degree (according to his wife) in Renaissance Italian literature. I thought I was steering the conversation away from his Muslim manias toward a place where dialogue was again possible. Either I was too late or it'd been a set-up all along. I suggested we call it a night and agree to disagree, but it was too late to calm Poppy Boy down. The uppers, not the downers, were definitely ascendant in his bloodstream.

Instead — this was maybe 2:00 A.M. Seattle time — Hogshire ordered me out of his apartment. He was, as he later put it, "screaming" at me to leave. It will be recalled that the only reason I was there at all was because I had nowhere else to stay until I moved on to see the Loompanics people in Port Townsend three days later. (Hogshire saw to it that I never did.) Hogshire knew I was "sleepless in Seattle," helpless and alone, just where he wanted me. He had me at his mercy, and he made the most of it. I had nowhere to go, but I had to go. If Hogshire were a real Muslim, not just a poseur getting back at his parents, he'd know that hospitality is one of the foremost social and moral obligations for Muslims. Even an unmannerly guest is to be accommodated once you have taken responsibility for his lodging and safety.

In the middle of the night I was ordered out of Hogshire's apartment into an unfamiliar area of an unfamiliar city 3000 miles from my home. I had no choice but to go, but I couldn't

pack my bags fast enough for the miffed Mufti. The surly Sunni ran up to me and tried to grab me and, I suppose, overpower me. He was in no condition for that. As gently as I could, I pushed him away from me, which, happily, I was able to do without even hitting him. This Musselman is no muscleman. It was bad enough what was going on without somebody getting hurt.

But the muddled mullah wasn't finished with winning our argument the only way he ever could, by force. Now he grabbed, not me, but his M-1 rifle, and he trained it on me. What made this even more crazy than the rest of the encounter was that at this point Poppy Boy took up a position between me and the exit. Was I supposed to jump out the window or what?

It's just as well I hadn't read Hogshire's contribution to the 1994 Loompanics Catalog winter supplement, "I [Heart] Saturday Night Specials." There he explained why shooting people with small-caliber guns, "the coolest guns," is even more fun than shooting them with the costly "hand-held cannons" the gun stores push:

Small caliber ammo will bust into a human body just as well as any other bullet, then, unlike more powerful ammunition, it loses a lot of energy, gets deflected off bones or even solid tissue and from there it's anybody's guess where it will end up. While a larger caliber might punch right through causing a beautifully scientific "wound channel," the .25 caliber might tunnel around a person's innards, chopping up an intestine here, fragmenting into a lung there, before lodging itself alarmingly close to a vital organ.

Such a wound does more than sting a person — though it might not kill him. Not outright.

Such wounds might be exactly the type you want to inflict. Why limit yourself to fatal wounds only? It's not always necessary or desirable to kill someone, after all.

Even if not instantly dead, the person stands a good chance of dying unless he gets immediate medical care. In many ways you, the shooter, are the one who decides how fast that medical care will be coming [emphasis added]. A few .22 slugs rototilling the abdomen have caused serious internal bleeding. And it hurts a lot. It is agony. Such a sight might be even more pleasing than a corpse, depending on who [sic] you shoot.

And so what if the guy lives? He ain't never gonna be the same again. Perforated intestines, a chopped up pancreas and the like cause pain and debilitation for years, probably for the rest of the dude's life. There are going to be operations to remove the slugs and slug fragments from him, more operations to sew up all the rips and tears and piece together the severed veins and arteries. Hell, they might have to give the guy a colostomy!

I am informed that Hogshire is wrong — a gun's caliber doesn't determine the type of injury it inflicts — but I'm not quoting him out of an interest in forensic pathology. These are the words of an armed sadist eager to shoot and kill or, better yet, cripple somebody (an "even more pleasing" sight) the first time he thinks he can get away with it. That might have been the night for me to make his day.

I turned the tables on the Muslim maniac. You know how the towel-heads are always taking Westerners hostage? I took one of them hostage. Having a gun trained on you concentrates the mind wonderfully. When Jim pointed his rifle at me, I grabbed Heidi as a human shield. Whereupon (you surely suppose) he put his gun down. Not so! He trained his rifle on his own wife! "The animal did not seem to care!" as he wrote to Junto. I didn't care? I wasn't aiming a gun at her. Jim was wired up and fired up to shoot her if that's what it took to shoot me. Which, come to think of it, is consistent with how Muslims regard their women — as disposable. And with how junkies regard their junk — as their top priority: "Opium is that Muslim's religion!" (John Marmysz).