One page of PERsonal Attacks on Bruce LinsEy

This is ***OPERABLE***, the subzeen of ***House of Lords***, which I (Julie Martin) put out to fulfull *my* Linsey Poll charity pledge to print one page of personal attacks on Bruce Linsey for each vote ***HoL*** received in The Poll (1988). I personally put a gun to Simon Billenness' head and make him read every single word. Then I starve him till he eats meat, and then I bore him to tears. There's just nothing so petty that I won't do it in order to drive Simon Billenness out of Dipdom. Consider it my service to the hobby.

(KEVIN BROWN) If I write something for ***House of Lords*** then you'll have less space for all that Linsey stuff, right? I hope so. My only opinion of Bruce Linsey is that I'm tired of reading about him and his alleged actions in ***HoL***.

As a corollary to that, I love ***OPERABLE*** as it gets the worst of the Linsey stuff out of ***HoL*** and into a form I can ignore easily. I hope ***OPERABLE*** lasts as long as the feud, so I won't have to read about it.

(MARK LEW) sue mcpherson is your sister-in-law, yes?

i actually enjoy reading ***operable*** notwithstanding that i look forward to the end of the feud. maybe it's my imagination, but it seems like the arguments are becoming more rational lately, almost as if the participants are growing weary of being nasty all of the time.

(BOB OLSEN) Well, OK, so maybe I'll stick round just a little bit longer. You see, they closed the monkey house at the Wichita Zoo, and I've been pretty desperate for entertainment along those lines of late…speaking of which, why no letter from Don Williams?

I only write tonight to present my Responses to the vicious personal attacks made upon me by those two deplorable polecats, Ken Peel and John Caruso. If they don't quit picking on me, I will do something sick and irrational and blame it on them! (By the way, thanks for printing the "Hurst and Olsen are responsible for my idiocy" letter—it eloquently demonstrates the steadfast and uncompromising refusal to accept responsibility for his own actions that is the sum and substance of the Supreme Commander's greatness.)

My Response to Banana Peel: I'm completely right about everything so there that proves it.

My Response to Wimp Caruso: I'm completely right about everything so there that proves it.

Well, it's more concise than some, now isn't it?

Slappo Hopcroft is, of course, not the first to cry "I feel used" after associating with Our Leader. But complaining about it makes as much sense as joining a Diplomacy game and being surprised at a stab. Stabbers stab. Users use. Manipulators manipulate. It's what they do. Simple as that.

My answer is total disassociation, but even this is not completely successful. Even as definitive and unambiguous an act as refusing mail can be manipulated into fantasized "proof" of Ghod knows what, given the compulsion to use and manipulate everything and everyone. There's really nothing to "prove." Quite candidly I will say that I have for several years either returned Supreme Commander pronunciamentos or deposited them directly in the garbage, and will continue to do so in the future. If there's some poopaganda point to be scored as a result, too bad.

I'm probably the depraved miscreant who so wantonly denies the Supreme Commander the buzz of seeing his name in print. But then again, I wasn't named. *Why wasn't my name used? My puny little ego feels desperately threatened! And I'm real, real important, too!*

Gee Julie, I thought you were a sharp cookie…but you let one get away last issue. In this matter of El Supremo's spurious quote from you…have you forgotten that when somebody (Bob Arnett, to be specific) did that to him, he got endless poopaganda mileage out of it? But now it's OK, I guess. It *couldn't* be that there are two sets of rules, one for mere mortals and one for our masters. No, it must be that if the quote is clumsily written and patently phony, it's OK. Yeah, that must be it.

(DON DEL GRANDE) I wonder—is John Caruso talking about the same Jack Masters and Bob Arnett who made up quotes attributed to, or about, Linsey (the last ***Black Frog*** even had a "quote" from

someone to whom Bruce was engaged, along the lines of "Not marrying Bruce was the smartest thing I ever did")? Then again, who *did* Bruce charge the "famous phone call" to? (All I've heard is that this person refused, so, for some very strange reason, the phone company went after the recipient of the call rather than Bruce, which *might* make sense *if,* for example, the call was made from a pay phone.) At least now there's a "cease-fire," although it remains to be seen how Bruce's staunchest allies handle it.

(STEVE LANGLEY) Did you ever wonder why it is that Mark Berch can drone on and on about trivial points, making totally inaccurate statements while calling you a liar for disagreeing with him, and then, when you present proof that he is full of it, totally ignore the proof (typically he either slightly alters his attack, usually by nit-picking about whether or not a particular word was used in a sentence, or by presenting a strawman position which he then demolishes, or, if there is just no way around it, drops the subject completely as if he had never attacked you in the first place...the one thing he has never done is acknowledge that he might have made a mistake) to move on to drone at you endlessly about some other nit-picky point? Did you ever wonder about that? Well, I think I may have figured it out.

I think it had to do with his toilet training. I'll bet his mother started training him at two months and had him trained by three months. I've put a lot of thought into this, and I can come to no other conclusion.

You actually have novices out there who are so naive that they think we would all enjoy this more if we were constructively discussing how to publish? There is nothing that can be said about publishing that is of any use. It is more work than you think it will be. Whether or not it is worth the work is something you will have to discover for yourself. There, now, are you happy? Now can we get back to the interesting stuff? Did Mark Berch move straight out of diapers into long pants at the age of three months?

Let us look at a scenario (I only do this because Berch hates it). Let us suppose that Mark Berch is right (a total suspension of disbelief will be required here) and there really was a telephoned death threat from Jack Masters to what's his name. Now, for all of you who don't give a shit, all you novices out there, and Pete Gaughan, put yourself in this position. There is someone you have been actively pissing off. You will have to supply your own motivation here. You have been working hard at causing this guy grief and, finally, he calls you on the phone and tells you that he is going to kill you. What is your reaction? Do you laugh? Do you tell yourself that you really got to him? Do you wonder what was the final straw? Do you go to the police? What? Go to the police? Think about it. Do you go to the police?

What sort of person goes to the police over a phoned death threat from someone who lives over three thousand miles away? The same sort of person who writes to the navy about death threats. The same sort of person who complains to a college about students who have annoyed him. Basically, we are talking about the tattletale mentality. Why does Berch go to such lengths to defend this tattletale? Is it because Berch identifies with the social retardation involved? Was Berch potty trained at three months?

Of course, any relatively sane individual would look at us all in wonder. Who cares whether someone said that three, five, nine, thirty, or any other number of zeens should have scored better in a poll? Even if someone does claim that I said such a thing, is it worth my time to deny it? Think about it. Just what is all this about? Certainly not what was or was not written in six-year old zeens. No, there has to be a much deeper, more profound motivation behind all this. The only possible answer is that Berch was trained to hold it in at too early an age, and he's been pushing it out on us ever since.

Tattletale suffers from rejection and takes revenge by being the biggest nuisance he can, and then crying to mommy (or the cops, or the navy, or...) when people react negatively to him.

You want facts? We don't need to steenking facts. There are no facts, just a lot of overblown opinion (on both sides) that is useful primarily for its entertainment value. Just don't take it seriously. And, whatever you do, don't denigrate those who do take it seriously. That's the best way I know to get into it yourself.

Oh, and thanks to Don Del Dumb for his voice of moderation. Now if he only had even an inkling of what it was that he was talking about. I'll bet that, on a cosmic scale, I've come closer to the truth than Del Dumb. His assumptions and mine are both based on distant observation and inference. The difference is that I've put lots more thought into my conclusions.

Yes, there is no remaining doubt, Berch was potty trained at far too early an age, and Tattletale never outgrew crying to mommy when he didn't get his own way. But face it, Dipdom draws people like us. People like us? You know, the ones who were always a little bit (or a lot) different as kids. The ones who didn't quite fit in with the normal crowd. Given that, and it's good enough to bank on, is there any surprise that a few of us will turn out to be Berches and Tattletales? They don't fit into any other society. Dipdom is

natural for them, an unregulated bunch of weirdos who can't turn them off no matter how much we would like it. It's all rather karmic.

And to think, I was once likened to a computer. Have I ever received an apology? No! Am I feuding with the one who made the aspersion. Nah...I'm even willing to cop to it. Despite being totally illogical (as one of Tattletale's supporters labeled me), I do resemble a computer. I can be relied upon to have greater depth and complexity than would at first appear. I operate best when told the truth (one of my top points of contention with Tattletale is that he lied to me, and continued to do so, admitting to only those parts of the truth that I could uncover for myself, and that, reluctantly) and given really simple rules to follow. I also have a very colorful monitor, a user-friendly keypad, and a very good memory.

(MARK BERCH) John Caruso's letter deals in large measure with "The Ethical Bruce Linsey." For the benefit of what John calls "the newer people in Dipdom," this was a mass mailing distributed by Kathy Caruso (then Kathy Byrne) in late August and early September 1984. It reached an incredibly wide audience. In addition to the apparently large number of copies sent directly, at least five zeens reprinted it, and it engendered a lot of comment and controversy.

After discussing for a bit the "sick" letter business, John writes, "What Linsey fails to mention in this scenario is that Kathy accused him of numerous other misdeeds, all of which have been proven or he's admitted to: going to the authorities about a Jack Masters' death threat (which was nonexistent)..." Well, let's have a look at that first one, because John's "proven or he's admitted to" is just plain false. We begin with Kathy's immortal words: "...so he ((Linsey)) takes his diplomacy board to the State Troopers and files a formal complaint against Jack Masters stating that Jack Masters has hired a hit man to kill him. Can he prove this, of course not? He actually expects us to believe that Jack called him up to tell him about the hit man." Bruce has *not* admitted this. He has repeatedly denied filing a formal complaint with the State Troopers (or anyone else for that matter, or filing an informal complaint for that matter). And there has been *no* proof of any complaint (formal or informal) filed with anyone. So:

1. *John Caruso, where is either the complaint or the proof that Linsey did what Kathy alleged he did? And if you can't produce it, why did you say that was either proved or admitted?*

{***No Fixed Address*** *#29/30* (Valentine's Day, 1985)

Bruce Linsey: "What Actually Happened: 1. During the height of my dispute with Jack Masters several years ago, Masters made a threatening phone call to me. I went to the police and asked whether I could, or should, do anything about it. I was told that without proof, there was nothing I could do. I did not contact the FBI; in fact, I'm fairly certain that I did not even mention Masters' name to the officer. I simply stated what had happened, asked my questions, and that was that."}

John states flatly that the threat was non-existent. But if there was a phone conversation, only Masters and Linsey know what was said. John can express his opinion, but is in no position to assert that it didn't happen. Is it believable that Masters would do this? Kathy's mass mailing ridicules the notion that anyone could believe this. But the best evidence that this *was* believable comes from, believe it or not—Kathy herself. Neither Caruso's letter nor Kathy's flyer mentions this, but Kathy in fact wrote Bruce about this incident, a letter dated December 9, 1981. She approached the matter in a very sensible way—by looking at Master's character as seen in some other incidents.

She first discussed her conflict with Fred Davis. Jack Masters had printed that Fred had said some harsh and hurtful things about Kathy, and Kathy was understandably livid. The letter explains how she had thought about it and discussed this with Rod Walker, and "Anyway, I wrote Davis and apologized for really ripping into him. I really do think that it was totally made up by Masters." She then went on to describe another incident with Jack Masters, in which she had picked up a standby position and was holding off Masters' push for a win: "Masters ran a whole story about me ruining his game in ***East of Eden*** ((a game zeen Masters ran). We had words and ((Dick)) Martin helped me to realize what an asinine thing it was on Jack's part...I think a hobby boycott of ***Black Frog*** ((Masters' main zeen)) is necessary." Having given this background to her opinion of Jack's character, she continued: "I'm sure Jack did call you and say he hired a hit man—Just like him. I really think, he is a very sick person! I think he is just trying to destroy as many people as he can in the hobby."

Clearly, Kathy *did* believe it. Of course, Kathy's evaluation of Bruce could and did change in the intervening years. But note that her judgment is not based on her evaluation of ***Bruce's*** character, but on

her reading of *Masters'*.. Whether Masters actually made such a call only he and Bruce know for sure. But so far as I'm concerned, there is nothing inherently unbelievable in Masters doing such a thing. In my view—and Kathy's at the time—such an action was quite consistent with other actions he had done. All this Caruso conveniently left out of his account. And there is a certain irony in Kathy accusing him of misconduct in a case where she did indeed believe that Masters did what Bruce said he did. So:

2. *John Caruso, if you believe that Masters' threat was "non-existent," how do you account for the fact that Kathy found such an action to be entirely consistent with other actions Masters took?*

{How dare you use Kathy's word as "evidence" of anything as many times as you've pissed on it.

{Davis incident: Several years later, Kathy found out in the "Dipcon letters" that Davis *had* in fact said some nasty things about her. Remember, you told him, "Just stick to your denial." And in that same paragraph, you also said, "They ((John and Kathy)) are separate people and often hold contrasting views."}

John's ***HoL*** letter continues by mentioning the Arnett, Highfield, and phone calls to Kathy matters, and says, "Linsey sort of swept all these gems under the rug and decided to concentrate on the one charge of Kathy's...and to back up his claim with a deletion of all other charges...." It is *outrageous* that Caruso would so grossly misrepresent the facts to the ***HoL*** readers. There was no "deletion of all other charges," no sweeping "under the rug." Bruce responded *repeatedly* to *all* four of those matters Caruso mentions. Linsey's mass mailing, "It's My Hobby Too!", responded to all the issues Caruso mentioned. Likewise, his massive letter to ***NFA #32/33*** covered all those issues, as did his letters in ***NFA #29/30***. His reply to ***The Not For Hire #1*** discussed the Arnett, Masters, and Highfield matters. The Arnett conflict was discussed in detail in ***Voice of Doom #45; VoD #100*** had both the Masters and Highfield matters discussed, and ***VoD #98*** and ***#99*** both discussed the Highfield matter.

3. *John Caruso, how can you assert that all but the Francine letter matter were swept under the rug when in fact he has given extensive discussions of these?*

{The date of ***NFA #32/33*** was May Day, 1985. For the last four years, particularly in his ***A Response to...*** zeen, the issue which Linsey has repeatedly invoked *vis a vis* Kathy has been the "sick" letter, even when it has nothing to do with the discussion at hand. It has become his knee-jerk epithet for her.}

And finally, what was easily Kathy's most sensational accusation: that Bruce had written a "sick letter" to her 12-year-old daughter, Francine. Bruce alleges that the letter was innocuous, was written to both Frank and Francine, was written at a time when he was on good terms with Kathy, and that he had gotten Kathy's permission to write the kids in the first place.

This issue is of some interest to me, as I conducted my own investigation of this and wrote an editorial (in ***DD #84)*** which dealt largely with this accusation (and the background to it). Those people not around at that time will have trouble imagining how worked up people got about this matter. My editorial, for example, which offered Kathy $50 to produce a copy of a sick letter to Francine resulted in three sub cancellations, the only time any editorial has ever resulted in sub cancellations. People used incredibly harsh language. There were zeens which printed this accusation and would not even permit Bruce to respond there.

John's discussion of this accusation in ***OPERABLE #3*** is by far the most detailed single presentation he has ever made on the topic. Unfortunately, it is very, very, very, very difficult to reconcile some of this with events that have already transpired.

Let's start with a simple matter—the date of the letter. Caruso says, "Linsey would have you believe the letter was written in January...The date isn't important except to illustrate the inaccuracy in Linsey's reporting. The actual date on the letter was March 31, 1984." First of all, if we are going to talk about "inaccuracy" here, the fact is, Linsey's recollection was that the letter was written in mid-or-late *February,* not January.

It's remarkable that John could remember the exact date of a letter he alleges was destroyed 4 1/2 years ago. What is even more remarkable is that John didn't seem to have this knowledge years ago. In ***NFA #29/30*** (Feb 85) Bruce gave his recollection of the letter, including the February date. His letter also asked Kathy whether this recollection was reasonably accurate. John's response was printed in #32/33. He attacks Linsey's account of the whole business—but does not, curiously enough, dispute the date. He says the letter "was alleged to have been sent 2/84...." John doesn't agree to the date, but he also doesn't say

that it's wrong either. Indeed, he just uses that 2/84 date for the purposes of the discussion. Nowhere does he state that the date was 3/31/84, although he does dispute other things. So:

4. *John Caruso, if you knew the date was March 31, why did your criticism in **NFA** #32/33 fail to dispute Bruce's recollection of February, or make any mention of a March 31 date?*

{You've got the quote right there in front of your face, Mark. He said, "(By the way, the letter was *alleged* to have been sent 2/84,..." (emphasis mine) He's calling into question the authenticity of the date. Then he goes on: "...yet Linsey didn't publicly acknowledge sending any letter until your 12/84 issue, 10 months later, and at the same time stated he did so with Kathy's permission. Then in your 2/85 letter, a year later, he tries to tell people that Francine thanked him. Francine was upset by the letter, and she did not thank him.) Furthermore, in Nov & Dec, we had 2 Byrnecons that Linsey said were ruined for him (why anyone would return for a second after the first is beyond me). Yet he wants people to believe that he and Kathy were friends straight through all this adversity. Linsey's unsubstantiated claims that he had Kathy's permission and Francine's thank you are fabricated and editorializing sensationalism, in a feeble attempt to justify why he'd write a letter to the 12-year-old daughter, a non-hobbyist, of an adult (parent) that thinks he sick." Sounds to me like John was disputing everything Bruce claimed about the letter, and not at all like he accepted the date.}

Next, we turn to the heart of the matter: was the letter "sick"? John has insisted all along that it was, and even in ***OPERABLE** #3*, he berates Linsey for failing to apologize. But did Kathy *really* think it was sick? The most powerful evidence against that notion comes from Kathy's own actions, which speak much, much louder than words.

On May 1, 1984—about a month after John says the letter was dated, Kathy wrote Bruce a letter for ***Voice of Doom***. It is a very friendly letter. She sends him her try at his crossword puzzle. She jokes with him that if he tries to make a living at this he will find himself "on a permanent diet of cat food." She thanks him for a Runestone Poll ballot and asks him for some return address labels so she won't have to look up his address. But most revealing of all was this: "Thanks for 'To A Friend'—did you write that yourself? If so, I'm impressed it was very good. And much appreciated."

And this warm letter was not all. She then left for a trip to Arizona and sent him a cheery postcard, postmarked May 7,1984.

If Bruce Linsey had written a letter to *my* 12-year-old which I thought was "sick," you can be certain that there would be no warm letter of thanks for "To A Friend." I would not work on his crossword puzzle for ***VoD***, I would not send him a postcard from vacation of any of the rest. I don't think any responsible parent—including Kathy—would either. I don't think she considered the letter to be sick, because the letter didn't appear to have disrupted the good relations they appear to have had at the time. So:

5. *John Caruso, if Kathy considered the letter to be sick, how could she possibly have stayed on warm and friendly relations with Bruce as of early May?*

The relationship between Kathy and John and Bruce at this time period is relevant to another matter here. John says: "The Linsey vendetta began after the New Year's Byrne Con...little things like smears and innuendo about the BNCship and the BNC herself (Kathy), attacks...on friends of ours and their publication, and the letter to the kids. Then in June, after I refunded his sub...." This notion—that Bruce wrote to the 12-year-old child of someone he was feuding with, has been raised by others too. But is any of this true? Did John and Kathy actually feel like they were the subject of a vendetta? The above two letters seem to show a very good Kathy-Bruce relationship as of early May. I've gone back into my letter files for that time frame (January to early June 1984) and I cannot find a single negative reference to Bruce in letters from Kathy or John (believe me, I've gotten many such letters from them at other time periods!). Perhaps the most revealing is this letter from John, dated June 4, 1984. He is discussing the nominating committee for the Don Miller Memorial Award. He says, "DMMA—Davis & Kathy are both good choices...the same for Kador...Bruce is OK, too." Get this—Bruce has supposedly been conducting a vendetta against Kathy and her friends for months, two months ago he supposedly wrote Kathy's daughter a sick letter, and now, Caruso gives his approval for Bruce and Kathy to sit on the same nominating committee?? Moreover, evidence of generally good relations doesn't come just from correspondence. I've look at the issues of ***W/KK*** during that period, and most of them have references to Linsey—none of them unfriendly—this as late as the front page of the May 28, 1984 issue. For example, the April 23 issue is loaded with jocular references to Bruce. Or take this from the front page of the March 26 issue: "Bruce and

I ((John)) have had difficulties in the past, and that is just where the issue lies, in the past, buried." Of course, anyone can have an opinion on whether any given action by Linsey was a "vendetta," but my point is that John and Kathy didn't seem to be *acting* like they felt themselves to be targets of a vendetta. So:

6. *John Caruso, if you say that Linsey started a vendetta after the New Year's Byrnecon, why is it that correspondence, and what appeared in **W/KK** all seems so very friendly? How is that as late as June 4, the notion of Kathy and Bruce being on the same committee seemed OK to you?*

Next, we turn to the views of others, and in this regard, John quotes Mark Larzelere and Bob Olsen. Larzelere is quoted as saying the letter was "very strange." The quote I have seen is slightly different: "Personally, I consider it strange, but not sick." (***NFA** #32/33)* As for Olsen, that was an infelicitous choice for John to make, for here is what Larzelere said about his description: "Hurst's and Olsen's statements show that they never saw this letter, and there is no way anyone who saw this letter could have called it a 'smutty hate letter....'"

As for Olsen, John Caruso quotes him as saying it was "obscene filth." He wrote me that they were "smutty hate letters." But contrast this with Dick Martin: "The Francine letter in isolation is fairly innocuous, in context, it isn't." (Again, from ***NFA** #32/33*. Dick did not explain what item lost its innocuousness, and how context did this.)

This is an odd contrast. I can understand how a borderline letter could be called "sick" by one person, "not sick" by another. But I can't see how one person could say that the letter was, in isolation, "fairly innocuous" and another "obscene filth." Maybe John can:

7. *John Caruso, could a reasonable person have described the letter as obscene filth? Could a reasonable person have described the letter as, in isolation, fairly innocuous? If the answer to both questions is yes, how could such a thing be? Could you give an example of such a phrase or sentence, as best you recall it, from the letter?*

{The bit about wanting to give Francine "horsieback rides."}

However, the distinctiveness of Olsen's description doesn't stop here, and indeed, I believe *it gives us a vital clue* to understanding the entire Francine letter affair. The second item has to do with Francine's reaction. Olsen says, "It turns out that, being 12, she didn't understand what they meant." ("They" referring to the "hate letters.") By contrast, both Kathy and John refer to Francine as being "upset." But how can you be upset if you don't understand what they meant? One person suggested to me that she was possibly upset because she didn't understand it, but then again, Bruce was accused of writing a "sick" letter, not a mysterious one. Only Olsen seems to have said this. So:

8. *John Caruso, is it true that Francine didn't understand the letters? If so, was that what made her upset, or was it something else?*

Third, Olsen, and only he, called them "hate letters," which implies that they were very hostile to Francine. For example, John's description in ***OPERABLE** #3* doesn't carry that connotation at all. So:

9. *John Caruso, could a reasonable person have described these as hate letters?*

Fourth, Olsen said twice that they were off the record, which would be a rather strange thing to do (Bruce has denied this). So:

10. *John Caruso, were these letters off the record?*

And fifth, you've probably noticed the use of the plural. This wasn't a typo; he said "letters" four times, and never used the singular. So:

11. *John Caruso, were there more than one such letter, and if so, how many?*

{Why are you asking John Caruso to explain Bob Olsen's words, which he has disavowed: "I wouldn't go that far—but that's Bob's opinion of the letter, not mine"? I believe "off-the-record hate letters" would include the infamous "drunken rages" letter about Kathy, but there is evidently some confusion here.}

This strikingly unique description coming from Olsen begs for an explanation. I have a theory to explain this, but it's only a theory—I can't really prove it.

First of all, Olsen never saw the letter itself. I base this on a) Larzelere's flat statement, b) the fact that Olsen wasn't around at that April 1984 meeting when others did see it c) the conflict between his description and those who did see it, and, perhaps most important, d) Olsen didn't say he saw it. He used second-hand language: "Did you hear about the hate letters that creep sent to Francine? I did!" Note the

verb—"hear about"—not "see." But who did he hear it from? My theory is that he heard about this directly from Kathy.

My above direct quotes from Olsen all come from a remarkable, long (5 pages) letter he wrote me 8/21/84. All but the first half of page 1 deal with hobby conflicts. It is clear that in matters pertaining to Kathy, he is operating from first-hand information—these are things he heard directly from Kathy. He describes the content of some Linsey-Byrne phone calls, for example, and believe me, he didn't get this from Bruce. He described how Kathy had broached with him the idea of him taking over the job of BNC, and her further plans with regard to timing, etc (this was never consummated). Again, first-hand from Kathy. Or take this item: "Kathy believes that the entire trumped-up hate campaign against Caruso, Walker's loony attacks on her, and Linsey's attacks on her and her family were all motivated by a desire for her to say, 'Here, Rod, if you think you can do better, you do it.'" Believe me, Olsen is not a telepath—this is what he learned directly from Kathy. The same is true, I believe, for the information about the letter to Francine, which he keeps coming back to.

My *bottom line* is thus this: Caruso presents differing descriptions of the letter as just "subjective opinion" or "differing opinions." But I don't agree. I think the difference between Larzelere's description of the letter and Olsen's is that Larzelere actually saw the letter, but Olsen relied on Kathy's description—a description very much at odds with the actual letter. Indeed, Caruso distances himself from Bob Olsen's "obscene filth": "I wouldn't go that far—but that's Bob's opinion of the letter, not mine." But is it really Bob's "opinion"—or just how it was described to him by Kathy? So:

12. *John Caruso, to the best of your knowledge, is Bob Olsen's description (obscene filth, off the record, hate letters, etc) based on him actually seeing the letter or based on what Kathy told him? If neither, then on what?*

Moreover, I don't think Olsen is unique in relying on Kathy's description of the letter. Robert Sacks said that Bruce and Rod Walker "sexually harassed Kathy and Francine." The "sexually harassed" terminology and the linking of both Kathy and Francine as victims is present, so far as I know, only in Sacks' description. The inclusion of Rod Walker as a co-villain exists only with Sacks and Tom Hurst. In mid-August of 1984, Hurst distributed an extraordinarily harshly worded mass mailing which repeatedly accused both Rod and Bruce of writing "obscene filth to Kathy's children." Sacks' description doesn't jive with that of others who did see the letter—even Caruso's. And finally, Terry Tallman told me in a phone conversation, 8/31/84, that Bruce had in the letter improperly questioned the relationship of John and Kathy. Tallman, I might add, said explicitly that he hadn't seen the letter and recognized that since he hadn't, it might be wrong. But he had confidence in his source, which he wouldn't name.

I'll add for completeness that I have gotten letters from Mark Larzelere and Mark Boney on this topic, both of whom were publicly identified as having seen the letter. Despite repeated efforts on my part, I was unable to get these letters on the record, but I have said nothing in here which contradicts what those letters said.

I firmly believe that Olsen, Sacks, Hurst, and Tallman all did *not* see the actual letter. I would like to believe—and I do—that if they had, none of them would have written what they did. Instead, they relied, I believe, on what Kathy told them—and each person got a different version. These versions, especially Hurst's, since it was mass mailed and so very harsh, were very instrumental in stirring up the sensational reaction in the hobby. Most people didn't care what, *eg,* Masters did or didn't say to Bruce on the phone four years earlier. But writing "obscene filth" to a 12-year-old girl was very, very hot. The other thing these various versions did was make providing the actual letter very problematic. People who had called it "obscene filth" would be blown out of the water with the actual letter, people who had innocently and understandably relied on Kathy's description.

Finally we turn to this question of proof, the one aspect of this matter that Kathy and her defenders have been the least willing to address. Kathy's flyer was quite emphatic about her proof: "I am asking all publishers to please print this. I can prove what I am saying. And that proof is available to anyone…and yes, I can prove it." When I got her flyer, I wrote back immediately, saying that I may well run the flyer, but I wanted the proof. I asked for a copy of the letter. I mailed two additional copies of my request just in case the USP"S" lost it. I got no proof.

John now says, "The original was destroyed back in the summer of 1984. Linsey knows that, as do a number of others." This is certainly news to me. This is the first time I have heard anyone say the letter was destroyed in the summer of 1984. What I have heard from John has been very, very different.

The first thing I got from John was a letter from John, dated Sept 30, 1984. In the envelope was a note

from Kathy, cutting off all communication. John did the same, saying not to write "accept ((sic)) to apologize." But he also addressed the question of proof, saying this:

"All others that want copies for proof to formulate their own opinions are getting them upon request. Since you seem to want to defend Linsey & already know all the facts (otherwise how would you have all the answers to refute all the remarks) you don't need the copies."

So, people other than Berch are getting their proof—but it's not summer of 1984 anymore, and, according to John, the proof no longer even exists. So:

13. *John Caruso, how could you have been providing proof in the fall of 1984 when you say the letter was destroyed in the summer of 1984?*

Since the flyer was distributed in the summer of 1984, and the destruction supposedly took place then, it's unclear which happened first. But either way there are problems presented, so:

14. *John Caruso, was the letter destroyed before the flyer was distributed or after? If before, why was proof which no longer existed promised; why did you tell me on Sept 30 that proof was being given out? If it was destroyed after the flyer was distributed, why was care not taken to safeguard that which was promised to the hobby?*

John's bald statement that it was destroyed certainly raises a basic set of questions:

15. *John Caruso, who destroyed the letter and why?*

I must add that I was not the only person unable to get this proof. Of course, Bruce wasn't given it either. Gary Coughlan recounted a phone call he got from Kathy late on Sept 15, 1984 in which she asked, "Why is he after my kids?" Gary also said that she wanted him to call Bruce and find out. Gary was willing to do it, but said he wanted to see the proof first. He didn't get it. (This is, of course, just Gary's version of the phone conversation.) When Don Del Grande asked Kathy (in a phone conversation, 7/2/85, 7:07 PM EDT) why I hadn't gotten the proof, her answer was that, "She had given me the answer last February and wouldn't repeat herself." (Again, this is just Don's version.) The answer is absurd. In Feb '84, I didn't know any letter existed; by Feb '85, John and Kathy had long since stopped writing me.

Anyhow, the next reference from John about the proof came in ***NFA** #32/33* (May 1985): "...That's another very good reason not to make the Francine letter public either—what will it accomplish? It's allow people to have their own opinions on my family's private matters." There are very, very few people in the hobby who would have the nerve to have this flyer distributed, ask explicitly that it be publicized ("I am asking all publishers to please print this")—and then turn around and call it "private." Once Kathy distributed the flyer and offered proof, it was no longer private. And note that Caruso's rationale is in one sense the opposite of his Sept '84 letter to me. Then, he said he was sending out copies so people *could* "formulate their own opinion." Now he is refusing so they *can't*. But in both cases, he talks in terms of being *unwilling*, not unable to provide it.

The last item from John on this is a harsh letter, dated Feb 4, 1986, which appeared in ***The Not For Hire** #8*. In it, he says, "You've already stated that the letter was 'totally innocuous,' which I will easily prove to be a *lie* by the letter itself...." Ah yes, the "letter itself"—which John now tells us was destroyed long, long before Feb 4, 1986! So:

16. *John Caruso, how could you have talked about using the letter itself to prove Bruce's account a lie in Feb 1986 when now you say the letter was actually destroyed in 1984? Why did these post-summer 1984 discussions of why proof wasn't being offered all fail to mention that the letter was already destroyed? And did you ever state publicly prior to this **House of Lords** that the letter was destroyed? Did this appear in print?*

In conclusion, I believe that John's account is just not credible. In some cases, I can show that what he is saying isn't true (see *eg*, Question #1). In other cases, I can't do more than show that it's unlikely. It is, for example, possible that the letter actually was destroyed in the summer of 1984. It's just that John hasn't acted like this was the case. So if John expects us to believe that it was destroyed then, he ought to explain these discrepancies, state whether the letter still existed at the time the flyer was mailed, etc. And I'll close with one last question to John, which I won't put into capital letters [italics] because it's really more for him and others to just think about:

John, you criticize Bruce for not apologizing for the pain he allegedly caused with a letter he allegedly wrote. But how about the pain caused to Bruce by Kathy's accusation? How would you like some day to be accused of writing obscene filth to a 12-year-old girl? Suppose you knew in your heart you had done no such thing. Unless all those who leveled the charges retract it, only the letter itself could save you. And then you are told the letter is gone. Believe me, you would be in a painful dilemma—have you thought

about that? You say, "The offensiveness of this letter reeks." But if he's innocent, he can't rebut that, because you make this charge on the basis of a letter you don't produce. Whether it's reeking of offensiveness, or sick, or smutty hate letters, or whatever, those charges will hang over him as long as he stays in the hobby. Bruce says he never wrote such a letter—but Kathy says that he did. Somebody is presumably wrong. And if it is Kathy, then Bruce has been wrongfully put in a box he cannot possibly get out of. John, how would you like to feel you were in such a box?

Julie, I realize this is long, but there is a lot of territory to cover. Do us all a favor, though: don't answer John's questions for him. Skip the "Well, maybe he..." bit. That resolves nothing. Let him pick his own replies, if he wants.

{Right, Mark. You can speak for Bruce, but I'm not allowed to speak for John, although you ask him to speak for Kathy, Bob Olsen, and Tom Hurst. Sorry, it doesn't work that way. I don't even have to guess—I know the answers to your questions—but some of them John would probably prefer to answer himself.

{I ask again why neither Linsey (nor you, who appear to have extensive access to his files) have ever produced a true copy of this letter. I see from a courtesy copy you sent me from ***Diplomacy Digest*** that you are too dense to understand what I mean by a "true copy." I mean a genuine copy, not a watered-down paraphrase like Bruce submitted to ***No Fixed Address***. He keeps xeroxes of postcards, fer chrissake. Why does he not have a copy of this one crucial letter that, if published, would prove his innocence of these sick charges that have needlessly ruined Dipdom for him?

{No, make that *two* crucial letters he has not produced. He has also never shown a letter which proves his claim that Kathy asked him and/or gave him permission to write her kids.}

(MARK LARZELERE) I had really hoped that I'd heard the last of the "Francine letter" controversy, but since it's coming back and I'm one of the people who has seen the letter, I thought I'd throw in my 25¢ worth.

John Caruso's description in the last ***HoL*** of what was in the letter is accurate. I thought (and still think) that the letter was very strange because I do not understand why Bruce wrote it. He seemed to think that Kathy's kids would receive the letter in a vacuum and be persuaded to try to get Kathy on better terms with him (and perhaps not even discuss the letter with her). It was just bizarre, dumb, and inappropriate. Earlier Bruce had sent out a bizarre request to a number of his subbers to write letters to two of his female students, and this letter to Francine struck me as similarly strange. In the light of that, I felt Kathy was justified in being bothered by the letter.

However, I think Kathy would have shown better judgment not to print the comments describing the letter as "vile, obscene filth" and a "smutty hate letter." John calls those comments a difference of opinion, saying he wouldn't go that far himself. I would call those comments "simply not true." Where on earth do you get a "hate letter" out of what Bruce wrote? Where do you get "smutty" or "obscene"? I suspect the authors of those comments never saw the letter, so "difference of opinion" or not, their opinions are worthless. Unless they are willing to come forward and say exactly what in the letter was "obscene" or "smutty" or "filth" or a "hate letter," I see no reason why anyone should take those comments seriously. I also think Kathy would have shown better judgment if she'd made some statement that the comments weren't true, instead of just remaining silent while Bruce complained.

(MARK NELSON) John Caruso says, "Liars will always stick to their story...." Well, I found that some of the material in ***OPERABLE #3*** went over my head; I couldn't really see what people were trying to get at. The question of Bruce sending a sick letter to Francine is irrelevant; he might have sent a letter to Francine, or he might not have done so.

However, am I really expected to believe John Caruso stating that such a letter was sent when he is unable to provide a copy of the letter? It's very convenient that the only people who claim to have seen this letter are people whose neutrality is open to doubt. Bruce is quite right to question the honesty of people who make accusations against him who aren't willing then to back up what they have said. Yes, it's very convenient for John that the letter was destroyed, and frankly unbelievable. If I was sent such a letter, it would be published ASAP and the original kept. That someone of John's standing in the hobby should destroy such a letter is very strange, but I don't believe he was ever sent such a letter. Bruce may have sent a letter of some kind; it obviously wasn't the kind of letter that John is making it out to be. John should either produce a copy of the letter or retract his statement.

{And now seventeen pages to go!}

HAVE YOU HEARD? #1

HYH is the newest in the roving subzine world. It is put out by the pioneer in the roving subzine world, me, John Caruso 636 Astor St Norristown, Pa 19401.

The purpose of this roving flyer will simply be to keep hobbyists privy to the new and changing events in Dipdom. Sort of like the poor mans DW NEWS REPORTS. From time to time I will have things pertaining to service changes, polls/surveys around, any momentous gaming activity, or anything remotely related to Dipdom, be it rules changes/discussions or even new publications that I come across. It'll all be here, eventually.

How can you get a copy of HYH? There are many ways. You can trade- but the chances are you'd lose money on the deal, since my publication will come out a couple to a few times a month, but will only be a page or 2. You can sub to every zine in America, guaranteeing you see HYH. Thats not too bright, take it from me. You can send me a SASE and ask me where the issues have appeared or will appear. I will respond SVP. You can sub directly to me for 50¢ an issue, or you can give me a few dollars and I'll charge you my actual cost which will be 25¢ postage plus copying costs which will cheaper than 50¢ an issue. The alternative is to do nothing and hope that 1 of the zines that you receive prints HYH. Probably the dumbest way of all. But hey- I'm not you all. So you decide. Do you want to stay privy on whats what and who's who and all of the other things going on in Dipdom. Or do you want to remain deaf, dumb and blind and left out in the cold.

This issue is appearing in HOUSE OF LORDS the #1 discussion zine in the World, and the #1 rated zine in the accurate and legitimate MARCO POLL,(which is run by the reputable Pete Gaugham.) HOL is published by Julie Martin. My congratulations to Julie for placing #1 and to you all for helping her to get to the top spot. As short lived as the top spot might seem.

If you publish and you'd like to have a HYH appear with your zine (once or on a regular basis), just drop me a line and let me know.

And now, on with the SEX AND POTATOES of this roving subzine.

1- Have you heard that Gary Behnen recently got 3 builds in 1901 as Italy? He claimed that he didn't stab anyone.

2- Have you heard its poll time of year again. Linseys poll is just around the corner. The poll may not be accurate or legitimate, but it is entertainment, sort of like the PRO WRESTLING of Dipdom. Remember to go out and vote. Get your friends, neighbors and relatives to vote too. Show them a stack of you old zines, hand them a ballot and help them fill in the blanks. Remember the motto- VOTE! AND VOTE OFTEN!

3- Have you heard that Michael Hopcroft and Brad Wilson will be doing the KGOZD under the colors of Robert Sacks and the NYGB. Its sort of an East meets West type project.(Like the Rocky IV movie) With auxillary comments intertwined from other disreputable hobbyists. Gone are the good old days of the Bruce Geryk KGOZD.

4- Have you heard that Ken Peel puts out a ZR much more tame than the KGOZD.

5- Have you heard that John and Kathy Caruso have moved to PA. Their new address is 636 Astor St Norristown,Pa.19401.

6- Have you heard that this 1st issue isn't very big, and even tho it has some general info, it isn't indepth enough to help anyone? What do you expect from the 1st issue of a novice roving information publisher? Perfection? Well get that thought out of your heads.

I hope the small bits of info here have helped you. If not, there will be more issues, and I'm sure 1 of them will help you.

Take care.....