

One page of PERsonal Attacks on Bruce LinsEy

Back by popular demand, this is *Operable Lite*, the subzeen of the '90s, which I, Julie Martin, put out to fulfill my two-year-old Linsey poll charity pledge to print one page of personal attacks on Bruce Linsey for each vote *HoL* received in his 1988 Poll. I am a woman of my word, you see. Now the question is not whether I can finish this up before Eric B does the poll, but if I can do it before *HoL* folds. We shall see!

(GEORGE MANN) I'm glad to see Caruso and Linsey have called a cease fire. As you say, this feud is getting old. I personally avoid feuds as I've yet to convince someone I'm right and to change their ideals to match mine. At the same time, no one has made me change my views. It all seems fruitless to me. That's why we have debates on abortion, religion, capital punishment, Jack McHugh's sanity, and other worldly topics. Maybe if people would realize their differences are just that and not make a feud of it.

(KEVIN BROWN) OK, I've got to say something feud related, but don't think it'll happen regularly. Why have Berch and Caruso been feuding for five years (approximately) when the cause of the feud (that letter) has been destroyed for five years (approximately). Obviously Caruso is wrong: ending a feud requires more than removing the cause. He did that, and the feud continued anyway. I'm already sorry I wrote this.

{Yes, ending a feud surely requires more than removing the cause. Even a declaration of intent not to feud doesn't work. I look forward to the fold of *High Inertia* and the end of unprovoked and unanswered attacks on me there from people like Fred Davis, who asked me for a truce over a year ago (to which I replied, "You're the one attacking me"), and David Hood, who wears the mantle of a "non-feuder" for political advantage, all the while continuing to air his partisan views. Even the zeens which claim to be "feud-free zones" don't seem to realize that simply by that proclamation they *are* taking part in the feud.}

(DON DEL GRANDE) It was time for an end to the feud about five years ago. However, after seeing the last two *Operables*, now I know that saying "everybody stop feuding" won't work. And why *should* I cease to amaze you?

But as long as there has to be a feud, at least *Operable* lets all sides get in their views. (Does John Boardman know about this? He used to have a policy that his readers should be "warned" about zeens that give "the Bruxelles" an open forum.) That's why I, for one, gave it a high rating.

Well, so much for "peace in our time." Just when Bruce Linsey decides to go quiet, Mark Berch decides to pick up the banner—and then John Caruso, in his "non-answer," calls Berch's statements "inaccuracies and fabrications." While I agree with John's stance of not answering the questions—are any of the things Mark asked about *really* any of his business (this from a man who answers Bruce's questions to Kathy), I think John calling Mark a liar (or has somebody changed the definitions of "inaccuracy" and "fabrication") defeats the purpose of non-answering.

May I suggest that when somebody "pokes fun," you make it quite clear that the text in question is, well, "fictional?" I almost thought that Steve Langley really called, well, "Tattletale" a child molester, until I reread the previous paragraph. (Remember the "Missing Child Poster" incident...)

I don't know how the other voters for *Operable* feel, but the "mandate" from me is that it remain an open forum for all sides. If it must be discussed, at least give everyone a chance to counter everybody else's lies with lies of their own. Or didn't you realize that every statement made in the feud so far has been a lie? Here's the proof:

- (1) Everybody admits that they are telling the truth;
- (2) Since everybody is a liar, these statements are false;
- (3) Therefore, nobody tells the truth, so everyone is a liar;
- (4) Since I am a liar, my statement (1) is proven to be false, so statements (2) and (3) logically follow.

Does this mean that the entire feud has been a lie, or does it just verify what we've known all along—that I'm *totally insane*?

OPERABLE #6

{No, it just verifies that you need to brush up on your logic. Try this one: “None of the following must be false, EXCEPT...” Quick! Are you looking for the one that’s true, or the one that’s false?

{As for why this feud couldn’t and didn’t end five years ago, ladies and gentlemen, I give you the Feudmaster himself:

{“An Open Letter to Kathy Byrne” from Bruce Linsey (12/7/84)

{“Dear Kathy,

{“As you know, I usually tend to be very deliberate when I express myself in writing. I wish to point out that in this letter, I mean exactly what I am going to say, no more and no less. I will do my best to avoid hyperbole. I would urge you to bear that in mind as you read this.

{“You have now been made aware of just how it feels to have one of your own personal problems paraded in front of a substantial number of people, both friends and enemies. I didn’t enjoy sending the ‘drinking letter’ out, for it was an ugly thing to do. One’s personal problems are always best left out of the hobby press, especially when they are of such a sensitive nature.

{“Therein lies the rub, unfortunately. You needed to learn exactly what it is like to have this happen to you, since you exhibited no hesitation whatsoever in doing it to me. I refer, of course, to the manner in which you held the infamous ‘Alex letter’ over my head. You repeatedly threatened to use a very sensitive piece of personal information against me—witness the ByrneCon incident in which you pulled out that letter because I had the colossal gall to attack you in a Gunboat game—and when I finally decided to stop giving in to your blackmail, you went ahead and used that letter as you had threatened, sending it to many people and offering to send it to anyone. I hope that perhaps you have learned something from this sequence of occurrences.

{“As for the problem of yours which I brought up; I am not really comfortable discussing it publicly, and to harp on it further would be unnecessarily vindictive. I do hope that if some of your friends decide to talk to you about it seriously, you will listen and know that they only want to help you. Obviously, I am in no position to claim such a pure motive. I am aware of a significant number of people who know you personally and are quite cognizant of the problem. If they are truly your friends (and some of them are), they will one day have the courage to try to help you. Please let them.

{“As far as the ‘Francine letter’ is concerned, I’m sure you now realize that this was a horrible move on your part. You and I both know that the letter you described never existed...that the story of someone ripping up such a letter in disgust is pure fabrication...that I’ve never written anything remotely nasty to any of your kids. Even some of your friends don’t believe that I would do this, and won’t without proof: Eric Kane, Joan Extrom, Gary Coughlan, and others. Perhaps you felt that you could blend this charge in with all the others; that it would not be questioned so vigorously in light of all the other ugliness flying around. Perhaps you just felt that you could get away with it because you’ve gotten away with so many other falsehoods in the past. I really don’t know your reason for having done this, but I do know that it was a bad mistake, and that barring a retraction on your part, it isn’t going to die soon.

{“That’s perhaps the most serious thing you’ve done to date in this feud, but it’s far from my only complaint, of course. There are many others. The ‘irregularity’ threat and (far worse in my book) your subsequent total denial of it. The attack on me in *Everything*. The ‘Alex letter’ affair. The distorted version you gave of my dispute with Masters (have you really forgotten what he did to you?). The story about me charging phone calls to your employer’s phone, thereby threatening your job. And there is much more.

{“How am I going to react? I am going to continue fighting back, for as long as it takes. Please believe me when I tell you that I will be in this hobby five years from today. How long will I have to respond to lies spread by your and your supporters? Six months? A year? Five years? That’s entirely up to you and them.

{“My response will take several different forms. You may wish to check out the letter column of the next issue of *No Fixed Address* for one example of how I will be replying to those who treat me unfairly. There are going to be more circular letters such as my response to your ‘Ethical Bruce Linsey’ pack of lies. Two more circular letters are in the works currently, although both of these are going to be primarily directed in response to two of your supporters, and not your directly. I am hoping for January release dates for these. There is a good chance that *Voice of Doom* will someday resume with issue #101, and at that time if I need to make my points in that forum, I will do so. And please don’t delude yourself into thinking that I can’t pull in 100+ subscribers and start up half a dozen games in full swing again. I have now, and always will have, a broad base of strong supporters and good friends throughout this hobby. I promise you that I will not resume publishing solely for the purpose of defending myself, but rather because I genuinely

enjoy publishing. I think that much is obvious even to my worst enemies.

{“How should you react? I can’t dictate to you any more than you can to me. I can only suggest very strongly that you carefully consider the consequences of your actions from now on. Some battles cannot be won by brute force. In fact, some battles cannot be won at all. This feud is, and shall always be, a stalemate.”}

(MARK BERCH) You say I have “a very selective memory.” I’ve had a selective memory for as long as I care to remember.

But seriously, you pull a five-word quote out of a letter I wrote seven-and-a-half years ago and probably haven’t reviewed since then, and you expect I’m going to remember it in total detail? Moreover, I don’t see any conflict between the recollection that I gave you and the texts that you quoted.

What precisely is your point here? I did say, “Just stick to your denial...”—are you saying that I did something wrong here, and if so, what? I wasn’t telling him to deny something that was actually true, right?

{I think it is wrong to tell a truth in order to imply an untruth. Here you told Fred to say that he had not said a specific nasty thing about Kathy (“Just stick to your denial that you used those words...”) in order to imply that he said nothing nasty about Kathy when he had (“Remember, what other things you said were not the point here....”)}

And I want to remind your readers that when these letters came into the hands of Ed Wrobel and Dick Martin a little while back, I, Fred, Rod, and Herb all stated that they were not for publication. I want your readers to understand that Julie Martin is the sort of person who will print a letter that wasn’t written to her, doesn’t mention her, and in which the writers and the addressees all have stated is not for publication. I want your readers to understand that seven-and-a-half years from now, Julie Martin just might choose to publish one of their letters that has nothing to do with her, and against the express wishes of both the writer and the addressee.

{Sorry, Mark, I already beat you to that punch. *Operable #3*, (February, 1989): “...if I get a nasty letter about some other hobbyist’s drinking or sexual problem; or some slimy deal where you badmouth a hobbyist in private, but publicly you’ll deny saying it, and if I reveal your letter, you’ll impugn my integrity for revealing a confidential letter; or if you slap a ‘Not For Print’ on something you wrote two years ago to prevent me from quoting you—I don’t care what it’s labelled or how I came by it—I’ll do with it as I see fit, including referring to it, quoting from it, or reprinting it.” The Davis denial letter in particular and “The Dipcon Letters” in general were *exactly* what I what I had in mind when I wrote that. And, of course, letters like the following:

{Letter from Mark Berch to Bruce Linsey (8/1/84)

{“I have just received from Dick Martin a letter to you, dated 6/16/84. This letter refers to, and quotes from, a 1982 letter written by me. This letter was a) not intended for publication, and b) not written to Dick, and c) does not mention or refer to Dick in any way. The discussion also includes a statement which is false. You do NOT have my permission to run this material. Unless you obtain the explicit consent of one of the adressees {sic} of the letter (Davis, Walker or Barents) (which seems very unlikely) in view of a, b, and c above, it would be completely improper for you to run this material. For you to do so would only confirm Tallman’s charge that you print from letters not intended for publication. I am sure that you do not want to do this.

{“c.c. Dick Martin. By the same token, I am also denying you, Dick, permission as well

{“{handwritten note} This is off the record to you”

{Yes, Mark, I will use seven-and-a-half-year-old letters with a five-and-a-half-year-old OTR on them to demonstrate that the man who referred to most of Dipdom as the “ignorant masses” has not changed his attitude nor his methods since then. I think people have a right and a need to know.}

With regard to the last paragraph on page 2 of *Op #5*, you all are really something. You won’t run my letter which gave John Fisher’s description of his hobby involvement and my reasons for not believing Kathy’s version of his hobby involvement—and yet you use the same letter to try to hit me over the head. How are your readers supposed to know what you are talking about when you say I “accuse her of making

OPERABLE #6

deliberately inaccurate statements...” specifically? You are willing to criticize the letter, but you won’t actually run it. That doesn’t seem fair. How can your readers evaluate your criticism unless they can see what you were criticizing?

{Boy, Mark, you really are something, too. Your allegations about Kathy and John Fisher were right there on page 27 of *HoL* #21. There’s certainly enough there for my readers to understand *my* criticism of you, which is that sometimes you want to use Kathy’s word as evidence and other times you want to accuse her of making deliberately inaccurate statements. You can’t have it both ways—or rather you can, but it’s pretty dumb to go out of your way to prove that your own expert witness is a liar.}

With regard to the business with Caruso, John Caruso calls what I wrote “inaccuracies and fabrications” and he says he “will not be answering” it. Come on, John, if you are going to call it a fabrication, then spell out what was made up, and if you aren’t going to answer, then don’t answer. Don’t try to have it both ways. If you accuse me of writing fabrications, then that *is* an answer.

To answer your question as to what I want to do, I basically made the points I wanted to make in my main letter. As with the previous letter, I’ll just reply to the comments and questions posed.

You write in amazement that Linsey keeps copies of postcards he sends out. I don’t recall any discussion touching on a postcard Bruce sent out, and I’m not sure I see your point. If I can fit something onto a postcard, I’ll save the postage and do it that way. I keep copies of things I might want a copy of. Really, one has nothing to do with the other. I’ve sent out plenty of letters keeping no copies and made plenty of copies of postcards.

I’m not sure what to make of the rest of your paragraph. You say that the actual letter if produced “today would serve no useful purpose” but on the other hand if Bruce produced a copy it “would certainly vindicate him for all time.” Sheesh. Incidentally, how was Bruce to have known he would ever need to produce a copy?

{I have a copier in my basement and I never make copies of postcards I send out. The only letters I have copies of are those I write on the computer. I would consider keeping copies of everything I write to be compulsive and/or paranoid behavior—it’s just not that important. We have enough paper around here from other people—and most of that is just shoved unsorted into boxes in the basement.

{Bruce, on the other hand, apparently has kept extensive records and files of his career in Dipdom, yet he cannot produce this letter. I find that amazing. I find it particularly amazing when he was the one who dragged up the “sick letter” feud all over again when others had laid it to rest. At the same time, I don’t think that producing the letter today would serve any useful purpose. When I said it “would certainly vindicate him for all time,” I was being sarcastic. I don’t think it would vindicate him except in the eyes of those who already believe him anyway.}

As for the date of the letter, you say Caruso “wanted to be noncommittal.” Oh sure. He’s blasting Bruce all over the place for the letter, knows it to have been misdated in Bruce’s description, but opts to be noncommittal on the subject. That doesn’t make sense to me.

{It makes sense if you remember that Caruso’s letter was written to and published in Steve Hutton’s *No Fixed Address*, a decidedly pro-Linsey zeen. It is prudent to be noncommittal in your opponent’s zeen—gives him less that he can latch onto and attack you (back) with.}

(MARC HANNA) When are you going to change the title of this publication to *OPERABYBERCH*?

Aside to Steve Langley: There are many opinionated “Marks” in Dipdom, and while I happen to be a “Marc,” I choose to label myself “King” of the Marks (or “REX”), though they may freely call me “JERK.”

(ROBERT SACKS) To Langley: I’m very naive, but even I’ve heard that a horse back ride is sometimes used for a certain position in intercourse. I just never thought of it in this connection until now.

Four more pages down; nine to go. Be prepared for the final, no-holds-barred blowout issue!