

Dr. Al Ackerman, Casfc

Geeksville

One of the reasons (if you want to count both of them) why I thought it might be a good idea to set down something here about "xerox hoaxes," is that (1) my work generally involves xerox and (2) is frequently spoken of by the critics as a "gigantic (some say 'monstrous') hoax."

The first xerox hoax I ever pulled was back in '68, in Anchorage, Alaska, of all places. I was working the lobster shift at an office building downtown and this job, a custodial gig, gave me the run of the place, including access to the large xerox copies that stood outside the stockroom.

So one Friday night having nothing better to do and nobody around from midnight till seven to disturb/observe me, I was seized with a brainstorm, and tinkered up a bogus flyer using an office typewriter and drafting equipment, which to someone as easily amused as I am looked like a pretty swell professional job when I got through with it (and maybe was, for all I know).

The flyer featured a splashy heading in 80-point caps ("YOLANDA AND HER GERMAN SHEPHERD!!!"), followed with the information that this exciting "Novelty Sex Act!" would be appearing "THIS SATURDAY—ONE NIGHT ONLY!!" at Klub Klondike, and that the first twenty people through the door would be served "UNLIMITED FREE DRINKS TILL CLOSING!!" compliments of club manager "Santiago Dean," although Klub Klondike itself was real enough, a fairly plush gin-mill over on 6th Avenue that today would probably qualify as a fern bar.

Then using the xerox machine, I ran off 100 copies of my masterpiece, on yellow paper. Then when I got up from my nap next day, Saturday, I went downtown and started sticking yellow flyers under every windshield wiper in sight, just papering the town with the things. Then, around six, feeling pooped but pleased, I beat it over to Klub Klondike, grabbed a table near the door, and settled back with a pitcher of Margaritas to watch the fun.

It didn't take long. In Alaska during the winter months the main recreational activity is sex and/or alcoholism, so I had figured the combination of free drinks and a dog act would generate considerable action at the door, and it did. By eight, twenty people had already shown up, all brandishing yellow flyers, all thirsty for their free drinks and wanting to know when "Yolanda and Her German Shepherd" would be on, and all (when they were turned down) angrily demanding to see club manager "Santiago Dean."

The club manager, the real one, was a beefy humorless fellow who wore a lot of

rings and looked like the heavy in a Robert Mitchum movie about gambling in Las Vegas. Under the steady onslaught of fake flyers he was kept running back and forth trying to straighten things out, as busy as a two-headed moth in a dress-shield factory—just going nuts.

"Where are they getting these @\$!!*\$#%?#! things from?" he kept saying to the bartenders, as he tore up yet another phony yellow flyer.

Well, that was my first xerox hoax—simple-minded yet jejune. And I don't know but nowadays, after two decades of xerox hoaxing, and perhaps 100 (at least) successful experiments under my belt, I like to think that my touch has grown subtler, more sophisticated and elaborate, Byzantine even (though no less jejune, for all of that).

We live in hope. We all have our cherished dreams. Mine is that someday, after the Statute of Limitations has run out on enough of this stuff so that I no longer have to worry about facing criminal prosecution, I'll be able to at last get a book together detailing the full scope of my activities. It would be nice to tell the story of the Harry Bates Club Mysteries, the Stark Lee Davenport/E.A. Poe Illusions, The Adventure of the Purloined Head of Verlaire, The Yugoslavian Appearances and so many many more. It would be nice to tell the story of this strange twilight world of xerox hoaxing that those of us privileged enough to live there call "Geeksville."

P.S. I will too, if my family doesn't manage to make good on their threats to have me committed.

Yours as ever,



Ackerman