

# 1971

© Malcolm Mc Neill 2008

...Confrontational revolutionary groups were a feature of the early seventies. Germany had its Bader Meinhoff gang, Italy had its Red Brigades and England had its Angry one: a group of young communist urban guerillas which had decided to confront the status quo head on. They'd bombed the homes of judges, high-ranking police officers and politicians as well as banks and army facilities. And as an indication of feminist solidarity they'd also blown up a 'dolly-bird' boutique in London, and the BBC headquarters in protest of The Miss World competition. Their perceived form of anarchy, which amounted to at least 25 bombs\* so far, had now run unchecked for over a year and the police were at their wit's end trying to catch them.

When combined with the ongoing round of anti Vietnam war demonstrations, free rock concerts, skinhead mayhem and all-round drug taking, blowing up the place was a clear indication that the first generation baby boomers were getting out of hand. To top things off, the *OZ Magazine 'School Kids' Issue* had just been published: "...the most brazen and disgusting attempt to corrupt young boys and girls yet made in Britain."\*

The *OZ* \*editors had handed over one of the issues to a half dozen teenagers and given them free rein to do whatever they wanted. The result was a criminal charge not only of producing an “obscene article” but of conspiring to “corrupt the morals of young children.”

A star witness for the prosecution was England's beloved Rupert the Bear. A children's comic book character who'd been around since the '20's. Rupert was (and still is) a human child with a bear's head who lived with his mum and dad and had all kinds of adventures in a place called Nutwood. His pals were also human, some with animal heads, others not. Rupert wore plaid pants, a look that would later be adopted by punk rockers. Right now though his pants were off. His bear's head had been pasted onto a human body drawn by Robert Crumb. Some teenage pervert had given our Rupert a woody for God's sake!

The magazine was so innocuous, it was hardly worth buying, but the resulting obscenity trial, would be the longest in English history, the three editors receiving hefty jail sentences (dismissed on appeal) with 'heavy labour' no less. They also had their hair cut off.

Given the number of erections that were starting to crop up in *Ah Puch* it was a caution. But in the light of the trial's final outcome, not something to be concerned about. It was Spring after all. Erections were everywhere. And in case I was unfamiliar with what one looked like, Bill suggested another field trip.

He got in shape everyday with a spell in his Orgone Box. An inhouse/outhouse affair made of layered organic and inorganic materials - wood and metal basically - with a seat inside like a privy. Its purpose was to tone up the essential energy named by its discoverer Willhelm Reich. Normal healthy flow of Orgone was expressed through orgasm. The more flow the better.

Bill swore by its effects. Sometimes after twenty minutes in the box he said, he could "go off without even touching it." He invited me to try. I sat in a couple of times, but fortunately, the way it is when you don't have your own piano to practice on, I wasn't able to manage a spontaneous outburst.

On his advice I'd read Reich's books, and when the documentary *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* opened, he suggested we check it out. It was the first time an erection had been shown to the general public he said. "It's historical!"

The scene in question starred the Chicago Plaster Casters. A couple of art gals who'd made a career out of casting the upright cocks of rock stars. Seeing a fifteen foot, grainy hard on, on-screen was a novelty, but somehow anti-climactic. "So what did you think?" asked Bill. "Great." I said "It's a start."

Not long after he decided to clarify what kind of “start” I might have in mind.