

JANUARY 2002 EDITION

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A publication of commentary, essays, satire, observations and political cartoons.

# HOW LOW CAN YOU GO?

Smugglers have now been using infants to smuggle drugs into the USA for years. They used to plant drug bags in dirty diapers and carry-on bags. Who would check?

A recent news story from Chicago reported that a band of smugglers have been “renting” new born infants from their mothers to be used as decoys and props to smuggle in liquid cocaine in baby bottles. Street value of liquid cocaine in a bottle is \$700,000. This has to be a new low.

It came to the attention of the authorities when a “rent-a-mom” called police to report her infant never returned from a week long trip. The reason was that the mule was in jail in Atlanta and the baby in protective custody.

Maybe Lenny Kravitz could riff on this tune:

*How low can you go  
To score some white blow?*



*How low can you go  
With a baby in tow?  
We may never know.*

## Low Road for Chicago Sports

The Bears at this writing are still the best 3-13 football team in the NFL. Pete Rozelle’s parity has turned into Sunday afternoon parody.

Anyone can win on Sunday because rookie wide-outs can’t run routes, and cornerbacks can’t cover, and safeties get flagged every other play for interference. The average 300 pound linemen lumber more than real lumberjacks. And coaches are trying to micromanage the game plays more than the US Congress attempts to micromanage our economy.

But the Bears could be the worst offender. They were supposed to be BAD this season.

*Continued on page 2*

## INSIDE THIS EDITION:

**IS SKI THINKING TOO MUCH ABOUT THE STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS?**

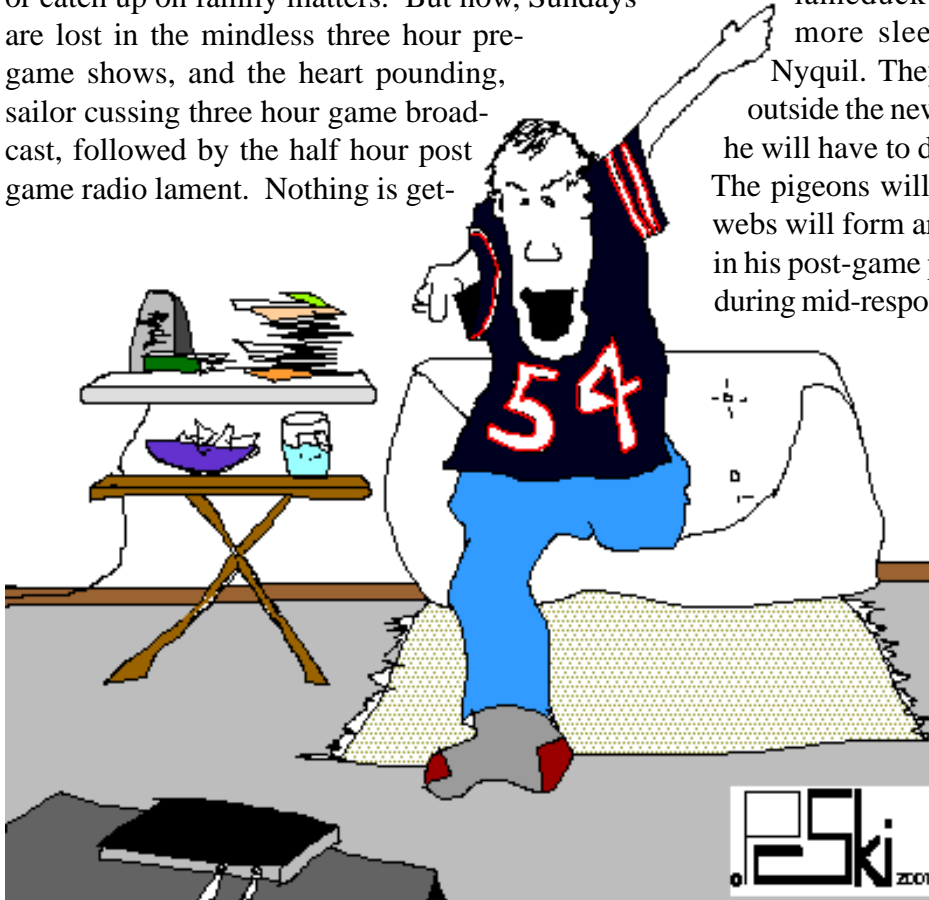


**WHY IS THIS BEAST CONSUMING ALL OUR AIRTIME?**



## LOW ROAD:

Sundays were supposed to be the one half-day retreat from work, to slave around the house or catch up on family matters. But now, Sundays are lost in the mindless three hour pre-game shows, and the heart pounding, sailor cussing three hour game broadcast, followed by the half hour post game radio lament. Nothing is get-



ting done, and things are fast piling up like rubble in Kabal.

Bears fever is catching on. And it is an ugly, blistering disease. It ruins the Mind, expands the gut via potato chips and beer overdoses, and leads to uncontrollable convulsions of throwing objects at the television screen. There is no cure.

Gov. Ryan and Mayor Daley made that back-room O'Hare deal because they were the only two males in Illinois not glued to a big screen ranting at the officials screwing the Bears on call after call. People would be distracted by a thrilling, overtime victory than to react to an army of bulldozers destroying 600 homes and 500 businesses in the name of "progress."

I have been to O'Hare post 9-11. You can land all the air traffic on the deserted concourses

without having to expand the airport runways. But that is another story.

Paving the way for this sports flu is the lameduck Coach Jauron, who packs more sleepy eye punch than spiked Nyquil. They will not erect a statue of him outside the new Soldier (Sombreo) Field; all he will have to do is merely stand at will-call. The pigeons will roost on his shoulders; cobwebs will form around his puffy eyelids. Like in his post-game post-mortems, he will nod off during mid-response, then act like a deer caught in the headlines when told his team had pulled another victory from defeat.

Yes, this team was destined to be the dirt road low riders of the NFC Central during the preseason. Three wins was the consensus prediction. Yet, we never realized how bad the rest of the NFL got so quickly.

The Vikings imploded on national television during the first half of game after game. The vaunted Bucs defense was porous against the dink

and dunk Bear offense. The Lions, the Lions are the doormat to history until they won their first game.

The Bears have a chance to run us down that low dirt road before this thing is over. These are not the 1985 Super Bowl Bears; this team may be the 1984 club--- that got whipsawed in the play-offs like slackjaw yokels. And we will all be totally deflated, violated, cursed, and sulky for the rest of the winter.

But the McCaskey clan will attempt to steal your wallets with the whispers, "Wait to next year," and attempt to rip \$3,800 personal seat licenses from the unemployed season ticket holders. PSLs will not play well in Chicago because we have calculated that the public-private partnership on the new stadium is really public financed and guaran-

ted with the Bears risking zero. But that is how politicians and sports owners operate in the heady days of unlimited dot-com wealth. But the low brow reality of it all is that the taxpayers on the hook for the bonds and the fans will pay huge ticket price increases to keep Bears ownership happy and content with new boxes, new revenue streams and a sweetheart lease deal and concessions so good that the parties still refuse to release the complete details to the public.

Just like Notre Dame's folly in shotgun hiring its last Coach O'Leary, who kicked over the Truth Lantern in the Barn and burned down the Credibility side of South Bend in less than a week. Can O'Leary put down on his updated resume that he coached at Notre Dame? That part is technically true.

But the real scandal is hiring the guy in the

first place. There is a huge rush to fill the vacancy to keep recruits. That is wrong. ND is not the national team anymore. ND thinks it is. But with cable sports broadcasting everything, the football schools are the BCS conferences, and Florida schools. No national championships for ND because the system won't allow it.

Touchdown Jesus may be covering his eyes on the O'Leary mess, but he might keep them shut because the Irish football team is falling to the ranks of its men's basketball program, slithering down the low road to the agate type in most newspaper sports sections.

But there must be some Devine intervention at play. The Bears are the best 3-13 football team in the NFL.

Its a weak offense, highly charged soft defense, good special teams, and neo-fascist conservative coaching styles in a swampy soup of talent that pro football has become in 2001. Hail Marys, trick plays, lucky bounces, key interceptions, and parody, yes, parody in the post-Rozelle era.

Who in their right mind will pay \$3,800 for the seat license to pay another \$100/game to see these Bears play in two years at the new Soldier Field? This team will not exist under the current system. Teams are now recycle bins from season to season. Players move around, payrolls slashed because of caps, not performance. Just like management says it cannot invest long term in a popular player, the average sports fan cannot invest in long term season tickets, higher prices, and outrageous ancillary fees for parking, beers, etc.

The Ghost of Papa Bear is not wandering the halls to root the players to victory; he's there to tome "Where's the profit?"





## CHARITY DAS BOOT

George Clooney still defends the United Way fund for giving 100% of the donations to the victims. When told only 77% actually goes to victims because the UW only gives it to organizations, who then take administrative costs off the top, Clooney repeated that 100% is going to the victims. George is an actor, not an accountant. Good luck on balancing the retirement fund.

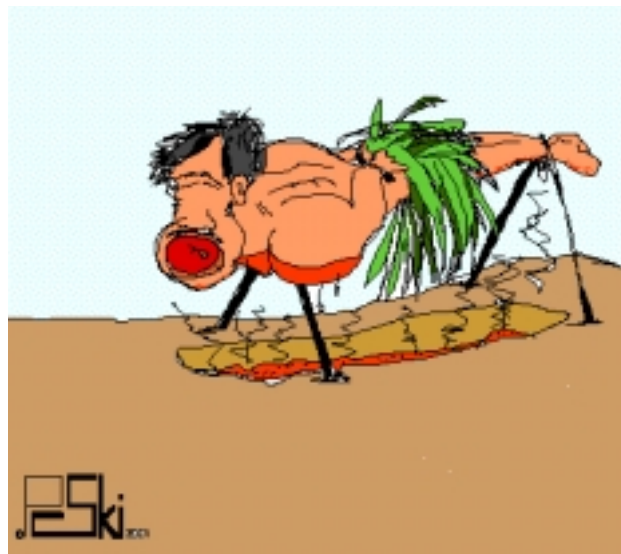
The UW had a huge scandal a few years back when management was accused of nepotism and personal financial expenses being paid with donations. This year, the scandal is that the money is being stockpiled for "other uses" besides the proposed "everything will be given to the victims of 9-11." The real problem is the special charities were flooded with money, and they are not being charitable with the funds.

It does not take a courthouse full of Enron bankruptcy lawyers to distribute cash to NY FD and police officer families, the victims families, the businesses lost by the WTC collapse. It is really public information and coordination with the mayor's office. But the windfall to the charities is too great a temptation in a bad economy; the interest alone can fund their programs for years to come. And that plan will backfire in fewer donations in the future when people realize charities are just businesses redistributing other people's money.

## THE LAND OF PUNI



Yes, there were several adventures missing in the Outlaw Eastern Alumni trip to Honolulu in 1985. Big Time sportsfishing was one. Tourist Trap Luau was another. But what is a glass of spilled water in the Pacific Ocean?

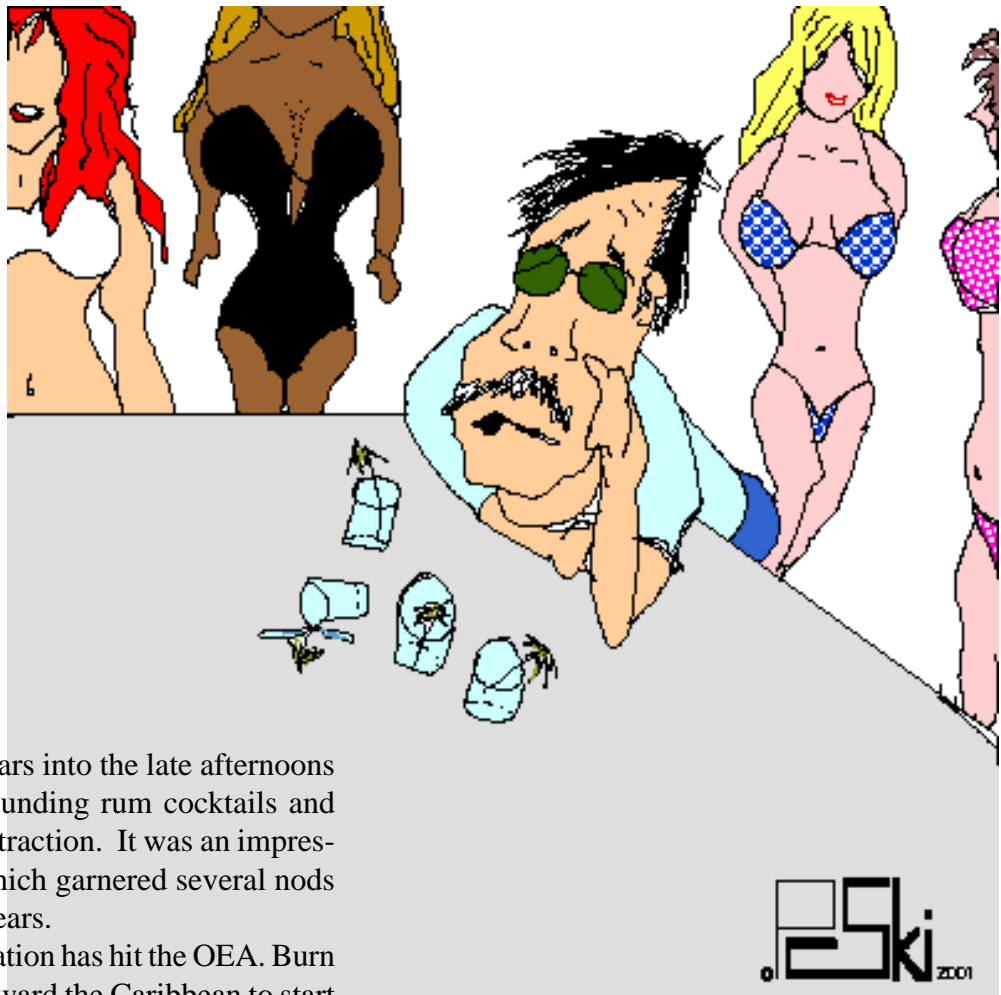


Hunter S. Thompson returned to Honolulu allegedly to research the movie adaptation of his book, *The Curse of Lono*. Lono was HST's best overall production. We have no such production deals in the works, so we merely curse.

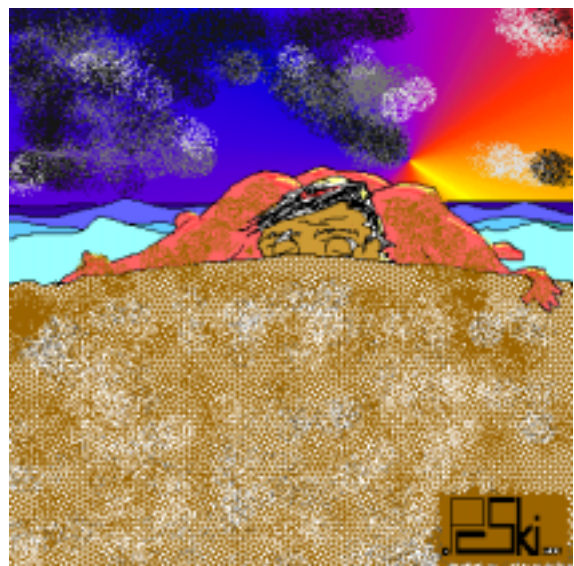
But the idea of roaming around a tropical island has resurfaced again. At first, throwing away one's career, family, friends and creditors was merely a topical jest. But as the years tumble by, when the going gets rough, the Rough have a Plan.

The original Ski plan was to liquid all accounts and flee to Nassau. I would sit on the beach and draw \$10 caricatures of drunken tourists. Then, one would hang out at the hotel swimming pool bars into the late afternoons and early evenings, pounding rum cocktails and becoming a "tourist" attraction. It was an impressive and pitiful Plan which garnered several nods of approval in recent years.

But a new revelation has hit the OEA. Burn the bridges and head toward the Caribbean to start a new business venture in the sun called the Squatter's Beach Casino. Farmer Hep can be the pit boss; Rocky the bartender-bouncer; Mr. Hash the security chief and voodoo priest; Prz the entertainment guru; and Ski could run the games of chance. It's a really good plan, but it will never work.



It won't work because we will pour the profits back into booze back into ourselves and wind up rolled up on the beach by psycho spring break babes from Miami. Next dream, please!



## FEEDING THE CABLE BEAST

The television news business is grinding out more tripe than an Asian fishing boat factory making frozen dinners. The sausage grinder of going 24/7 with multiple channels running the same top three stories off the early edition AP wire is getting tedious, frustrating and annoying to the average viewer.

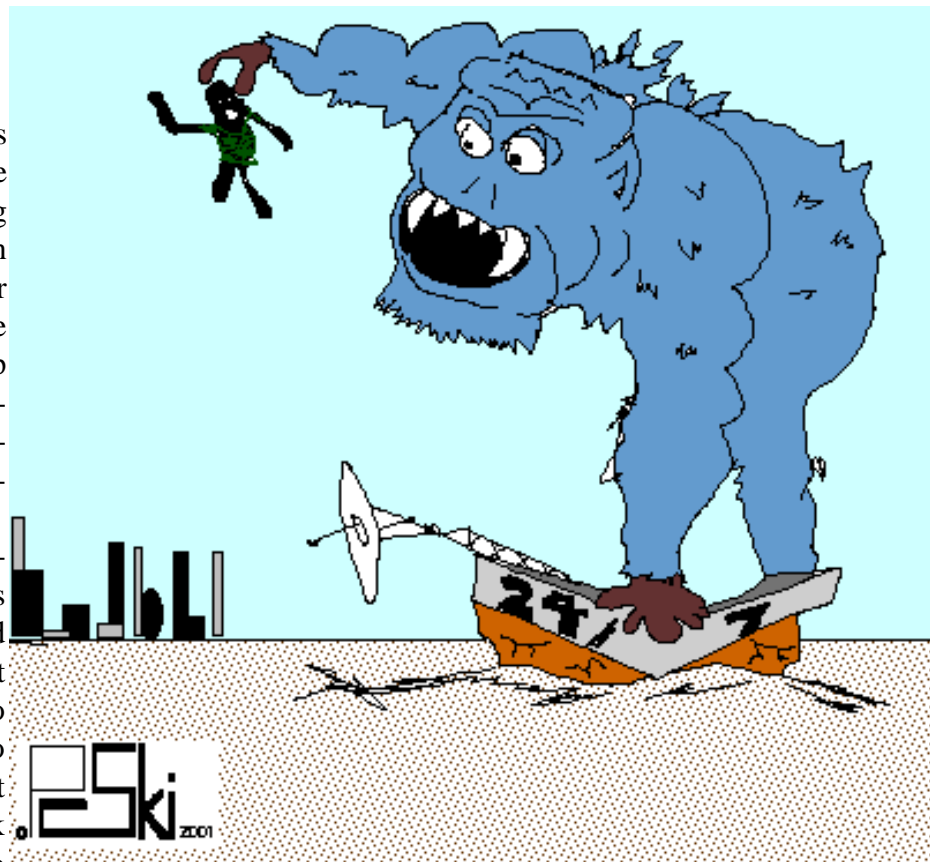
In a collapsed ad market, and the media companies who poured billions in failed internet portals and content sites, have desperately tried to merge news departments to stem the tide of red ink. But there are no takers. Network news and local news used to be the networks cash and sacred cows. However, times are changing.

The CBS local affiliate in Chicago fell to fifth place in the prime 10 p.m. news ratings. It used to be embarrassing to place third in the ratings in a big news town. But fifth? Behind reruns of the Simpsons and FRIENDS?

Even if you throw in exotic sites, like the view from a hotel balcony in Pakistan, when you read the same boring copy, people get bored. Really bored. Click off the cable type bored.

The top prime time shows on the networks rarely garner more than 20 million viewers. That figure used to mean instant cancellation. Cable news ratings have basically flatlined at a 1.0 share or less than a million viewers. Only when a huge news story breaks does the meter bump and surge.

In order to try to garner some sustaining eyeballs, the cablenets are trying to personalize the news casts. Its not the news, it is the anchor's named show, like Aaron Brown Reporting or Joe Blow Reads To You. The producers have not real-



ized that changing the package of dung still makes the package contain the dung.

Part of the problem may lie in the fact that the news department is no longer independent, but part of the domain of the entertainment headcounters. Katie Couric gets \$65 million not because she is the greatest journalist-host of her generation, its because the network projects that it can generate \$300 million in ad revenue because people like her.

Its getting to the point of nauseating gimmicks. There is a Canadian news broadcaster who strips during her newscast. The only trouble she has, she states, is with her buttons. How low will the net execs go to sell the news as entertainment?

They want full TV courtroom coverage of any terrorist trials, a la O.J. They want full access when they drag the terrorists to the firing squad.

But things could be better if the hours were cut back and the effort was put into producing high quality journalism and not the 24 hour repetitive nonsense that it has become today.