

APPENDIX 143: REPLY TO “HOISTED BY HIS OWN PATOIS”

- by Michael A. Aquino
June 30, X ÆS/1975

Several of you have brought to my attention a little gem entitled “Hoisted by His Own Patois”. This letter [a copy of which was not sent directly to me] is Anton LaVey’s response to my recent communiques regarding the corruption of the Church of Satan and the creation of a new organization in its place. Dr. LaVey, incidentally, has received copies of all these communiques directly from me.

“Hoisted by His Own Patois” is factually inaccurate and quite insulting in tone. I had half-expected something like this, as I intimated in my June 16 letter to you. And, as I said I would, I will now clarify the factual points and disregard the tone.

Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Dr. LaVey is correct in saying that I declined to subordinate my own common sense to his efforts to exploit the Church of Satan and its degree system. Hence I reproached his authoritarian attitude and refusal to respect the standards of ethics advertised by the Church over these many years.

In the new organization [to be called the Temple of Set], the High Priest will not be in a position to abuse his office. Final authority will rest with a Council of Nine, of which the High Priest will not be a member. And administrative matters of the Temple will be overseen by an Executive Director also appointed by the Nine. The interrelationship between the Council, the High Priest, and the Executive Director will be one of cooperation, but it will also contain mutual checks and balances to safeguard the organization against the fate of the Church of Satan. All this will be written into the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, copies of which will be sent to you as soon as the drafts are ready.

Anton LaVey then asserts that he never claimed to hold anything resembling an “Infernal Mandate” and that he regards his titles as High Priest and Exarch of Hell as “symbolic and not literal”. Taken at face value, such a statement would indicate that the Church of Satan and the *Satanic Bible* were nothing more than an elaborate con game in which LaVey exploited the name, imagery, and heritage of the Prince of Darkness.

But I think his statement is not a true reflection of his actual feelings. For years Anton LaVey has spoken and written of the Prince of Darkness as an intelligent entity - not necessarily anthropomorphic, but quite real. This conviction of his is quite evident in both the *Satanic Bible* and many other documents of record. If he now seeks to pretend that he never meant any of it, it is probably because that is the only way he could hope to excuse his betrayal of that entity.

There was nothing supernatural in the Church of Satan, and there will be nothing supernatural in the Temple of Set. The Church of Satan **did** concern itself with experimentation in both formal and informal magic - being metaphysical assumptions and philosophical hypotheses for which there are not yet demonstrable scientific laws. The Temple of Set will carry this forward, because it is interesting, stimulating, educational, and just plain fun to do so.

I am next accused of “trying to mislead you in accordance with my own rigidly fixed moral code”. It is true that I set great store by my personal integrity, but it is not true that my understanding of ethics is rigidly fixed. Throughout life we are constantly confronted by new information which expands our perspective and frequently necessitates an “updating” of personal philosophy.

As for “misleading” recipients of the packets, I think that the contents and cover letter of those packets speak for themselves.

The next paragraph of Dr. LaVey's letter is as follows:

“Judging from initial response to Mr. Aquino's packet, the vast majority of recipients have reaffirmed their alliance with the Church of Satan. Response has been most gratifying and will not be forgotten. His behavior has been described by communicants as: ‘petty’, ‘priggish’, ‘raging’, ‘puritanical’, ‘bitchy’, ‘disgusting’, ‘foppish’, ‘overbearing’, ‘unimaginative’, ‘lacking perception’, ‘autistic’, etc. - the list is long and varied, but unanimous on certain points.”

The packets were sent to all of the officials listed in the enclosure to my June 26 letter, plus Dr. & Mrs. LaVey, Magister John Ferro, Magister Adrian-Claude Frazier, Reverend Stephen Hollander, Reverend Stuart Levine, Warlock William R. Payne, Reverend & Mrs. James Stowe, and Reverend & Mrs. Paul Pipkin. To date I have received no responses from any of these people indicating the slightest dissatisfaction with my actions or decisions - save from Anton LaVey and Paul Pipkin, both of whom have commented upon my personality rather than upon the actual issue raised. Since Dr. LaVey does not get around to identifying the individuals comprising that “vast majority” of his, I confess myself somewhat suspicious of his mathematics. Perhaps he ran off a few dozen more copies of that packet and sent them off to officials of whom I have never heard?

In any event, this mystery is easily resolved. Simply talk to one another, and you will discover who thinks what. Q.E.D.

Anton LaVey next expresses increasing dissatisfaction with the *Cloven Hoof*, saying that only his frequent intervention salvaged it from Editorial abuse. If in fact he were dissatisfied with the *Hoof*, he certainly did a good job of concealing it from **me**. In leafing through letters from him and Diane following each issue, I find nothing but compliments.

And as for his “instructions to print items which I subsequently altered in both content and meaning”, that's not quite accurate. Since I was first invited to edit the *Hoof* back in Louisville, I have received almost no input from San Francisco save the Anton LaVey essay. Such alterations as I did make in material not written by me were limited to the unsplitting of infinitives, the correction of grammar/spelling/punctuation, and the occasional deletion of something which I thought the readership might find offensive or undignified.

With only one or two exceptions, each issue of the *Hoof* was typed in final camera copy by me in Santa Barbara and forwarded to 6114 prior to the turn of the month in question. Delays in the distribution of each issue were due to printing and mailing procedures in San Francisco. When any issue of the *Hoof* was returned to me for changes of any sort, a new camera copy was in the mail within 24 hours.

As a matter of fact, I **am** adding a few more certificates to my wall full of them right now - a Master's degree in Political Science from the University of California, a diploma of graduation from the Officer's Advanced Course of the U.S. Army Armor School at Fort Knox, and a certificate of appreciation just received from the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Those who have seen my study know that my IV^o certificate from Dr. LaVey occupies a place of prominence above and apart from the other 31 documents. I was quite satisfied with the IV^o and in fact had just taken delivery on some fancy IV^o stationery at a rather hefty price when this situation developed.

Apart from Tony, I am aware of two other individuals who received the blue Baphomet - John Ferro of San Francisco and Adrian-Claude Frazier of Denver. I have always maintained friendly relations with both of them, as their letters to me and mine to them evidence. I seem to recall that I also pestered Anton and Diane unmercifully for months to get them to restore John Ferro's IV^o, which had been invalidated following the cessation of group activities at 6114 some years ago. In short, I encourage the titular recognition of those who **deserve** it, but I was and still am opposed to the bestowing of

degrees for any reason **other** than demonstrated competence.

Upon my elevation to the III° in June of V/1970, I was informed by Anton LaVey that I was to consider myself a member of the Council of Nine. Subsequently I was presented with the special medallion bearing the trapezoid/pentagram/trident seal of that body. Subsequently I attended occasional meetings at 6114 with Magister Ferro, the LaVeys, and other ladies and gentlemen who certainly **talked** as though they were the Council of Nine. If all this were an elaborate show for my benefit, then I can only compliment Anton and Diane for the elaborate rehearsing of roles and lines that was obviously required. And if there is another Council of Nine lurking in the shadows somewhere, I can only observe that it hasn't done any of us much good!

From the letters and face-to-face comments I have been getting from many of you during these last couple of weeks, it does indeed appear that I was getting cut off from certain Church developments. Mail sent to me c/o San Francisco was not forwarded if the contents disturbed the *status quo*, and both officials and members of the Church were constantly discouraged from writing to me by "Lana Green" and "John M. Kincaid". Now a whole lot of facts are coming out in the wash, and I continue to be amazed at some of the things that have been going on.

My mailing list is hardly fractional: Since November of VI/1971 I have maintained and updated the entire *Hoof* mailing list, for the simple reason that it had previously been in such a mess that 6114 was inundated with requests for missed issues, repeated address changes, repeated renewals, and new memberships not included on the list. If you were a member back in those grand old days, you probably remember the fun - particularly if you were a Grotto Leader!

Furthermore, whoever was in charge of "keeping my list fractional for security reasons" did a pretty rotten job of it. Included on the list, as I mentioned in my 6/10 letter to the LaVeys, are a flock of the LaVeys' personal friends and publishing correspondents and Hollywood jet-setters. If I had indeed gone bananas and set out to ruin Anton LaVey, I wouldn't have missed the chance to send Diane's 6/4 letter to such people. How do you think some of the Beverly Hills gang would react to a scheme to milk them by selling them degrees? Probably not too enthusiastically. But I have not done so, I do not intend to do so, and I don't want any of you to do so. It will help nothing at this point, and it would only hurt the LaVeys. We concentrate only on cleaning our own house, right?

Yes, I **am** opposed to material contributions as qualification for degrees. I have set forth my reasoning in the letters included in my packet, and I don't think I need to go over it again. To say that buying a degree is an alternative to earning one is, to my way of thinking, worse than scrapping individual accomplishment altogether and redesignating the degrees as simply a money-making gimmick. As Diane so accurately points out in her 6/4 letter, it is precisely because the degrees have always symbolized **personal prowess** that they are desirable.

As for the Church of Satan's "progressing according to plan (including schism)", all I can say is that it must be some wild sort of plan indeed, involving the destruction of the Church of Satan, the discrediting of its High Priest, and a great deal of unhappiness and disillusionment among all of its officials and members. And why? Because of a stupid scheme to make a fast buck that would not have succeeded even if it **had** been implemented. Some plan indeed.

And finally, Dr. LaVey - for you are getting a copy of this too - you have some gall to say that you will nurture "hard feelings" against those who have trusted you and followed you for years, only to find their achievements prostituted for a financial stunt. Rather you should count yourself lucky that we are trying to approach the situation constructively, set

this incident to rest as gently as possible, and think of you in terms of the many positive achievements you have authored. If you can't help us, then I suggest you leave us alone until a future time when old wounds will not seem so painful. Perhaps then we may work together once again, as I believe the Prince of Darkness would prefer.

Xeper.
Michael A. Aquino
Magus V°
High Priest of Set