

The Angriest Dog in the World  
Song Cycle, New York  
January 28 - February 1, 2018

“The dog who is  
so angry he  
cannot move.  
He cannot eat.  
He cannot sleep.  
He can just  
barely growl.

...Bound so  
tightly with  
tension and  
anger, he  
approaches the  
state of  
rigor mortis.”

The above text introduces every installment of David Lynch’s comic strip *The Angriest Dog in the World*. You might think of it like the theme song. The strip appeared weekly from 1983 to 1992 in the now-defunct free alternative newspaper *Los Angeles Reader*. Despite its 9-year run, what shapes the strip’s legacy most is its absolute lack of development: every installment is nearly the same. Each week repeated the same structure of five panels, photocopied from a template by the *Reader*’s art department: the introduction, then four panels of the Angriest Dog splayed out in a suburban backyard, eyes wide open, emitting a low, constant growl. Angular and stupefied, he looks maybe more like a crocodile than a dog; he’s drawn even more crudely than his surroundings. The letters of his growl are barely letters, so crassly inscribed, each ‘r’ a shrug of the pen. He’s yoked to a stake; his leash is always taut. Smokestacks loom

beyond the fence. For the first three panels, it’s unchanging daytime. In the last, it becomes night, but the dog’s eyes stay wide open.

Besides nightfall’s arrival, the only apparent change in this world is dialogue, spoken by unseen figures inside the house, heard through the window. Their dialogue is typically a mixture of corny puns and platitudes. But despite being the sole engine of difference here, their dialogue is somehow beside the point. Their utterances are spare, leaving two, three, or in some strips all panels blank, aside from the dog’s own word bubble of a growl, his withered, constant companion. In one example, a one-liner plays out across two panels:

“If bird shit was gold... /  
I’d have a little brooch.” [1]

...then vacant day, vacant night. The dog stares through and past it all, his eyes and his growl bubble still bright in the night. Another strip intones more solemnly, after two vacant panels:

“People are dying living here.” [2]

...and again vacant night. No set-up, no response. No matter what is said, the world goes back to its resting state. See you next week.

On the timeline, *The Angriest Dog in the World* plays soft accompaniment to Lynch’s cinematic ascent. And while it has never really been loved, the strip’s run nonetheless parallels the filmmaker’s development of what gets called “Lynchian,” and suspends it in crude miniature. He claims that the idea for the strip is as old as that of *Eraserhead* (released 1977, but conceived 1971) and it first appeared in the paper in the wake of the lauded *The Elephant Man* (1980).

But its setting anticipated one of *Blue Velvet's* (1986) key developments: that the depths of Lynch's horror are best mined not in industrial hells, but in eerie idylls – finding hells in ostensible heavens. The strip was still kicking while he pushed this motif further with *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991), and it concluded in the same year as the turbulently received *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me* (1992). From this vantage point, the strip spans the entirety of Lynch's first golden period, exiting before a quieter period in the later '90's.

All that time, and up to today, when the Dog does get referenced, it's typically as apocrypha. He's known mostly by diehards, who write him off as a cheap stray thread of his maker's broader project. The strip is definitely stupid, but I don't think stupidity is always simple, or that simplicity undercuts worth. There's something admirable in the fact that he kept up this rigid game for 10 years – that's about 450 stabs at this narrow formula. It's stubborn. And the tradition through which it originally circulated – the American alternative weekly – was a shrine to the art of stubbornness.

The Dog and his maker found their way to the *Reader* in 1983 at the invitation of founding editor James Vowell. The paper was five years old then. Throughout the US, free weeklies like it were proud subcultural tastemakers, serving as road maps and lightning rods to different undergrounds. In those pages, pre-internet and parallel to Reaganism, there remained a sense of monoculture, and thus a sense of a feasible, if fading, outside. The *Reader* was one of its gates. Today, whatever confluence of economic and cultural conditions that had allowed

for such fledgling outfits as the *Reader* to not only survive, but to make it somewhat livable for young writers to write with spirit, appears to be lost to time. We look at it from a cold, distant shore.

The especially scrappy *Reader* was known for publishing cultural criticism of unusual tenacity, and for digging deeper and farther left than most, including its main competitor, *LA Weekly*.<sup>[3]</sup> One of its music columnists, a former distribution manager and editorial assistant named Matt Groening, looms large in the *Reader's* legacy, for making it the first paper to publish his own dumb yet existential, soon-to-be-famous cartoon, *Life in Hell* (1977-2012). But while the future creator of *The Simpsons's* strips were a main attraction, featuring prominently on their own page, Lynch's repeating panels, when they arrived, were holed up in the Classifieds section, suspended above the weekly thicket of full-body massage ads, promises of new organic weight loss formulas, and endless casting calls.

The jokes write themselves in these silly, lonely, populist bargain-bins of ad revenue. One special, self-knowing ad from 1989 cuts to the chase:

UNUSUAL JOBS  
THE JOB FACTORY

213-475-9521 M-F established 1970<sup>[4]</sup>

It's like Craigslist (which, not coincidentally, the *Reader's* longtime publisher Jane Levine credits “with the death of free weeklies”<sup>[5]</sup>). Later on, the strip would travel to other, purer contexts: first, the Comics-specific sections of other alt weeklies (including Atlanta's *Creative Loafing*, Denver's *Westword*, and the *Baltimore City Paper*), and then in *Cheval Noir*,

Dark Horse Comics' artsy anthology of mostly self-serious European comics in translation, "for mature readers."<sup>[6]</sup> But I think it's this first scene, in the *Reader's* dense newsprint, that suits the Dog best. There, he's down in the dirt. There, he has a chatty foil to his world's disquiet, a nest of dead-ends and desperation to complement its rudderless nonsequiturs, week after week. If Lynch's films tend to build surreal, sealed-off worlds with opaque internal logics, the Dog in the *Reader* is special in part because it puts Lynch outside of his castle, so that his world and our own can bleed into one another in a different way. Looking at the ads enveloping the dog, it's clear that our world is strange, too.

This placement reveals a kinship between Lynch's weekly experiment and the pedantic churn of periodical publishing. The *Dog's* drab content fills what could otherwise be advertising space – and for a writer in a moment of frustration, or burn-out, it can seem like filling gaps between ads is all that they're really doing. The *Dog* is about despair, and so is the publishing life. As *Reader* editor Richard Gehr put it to me in an email: "Lynch was doing \*exactly\* what newspapers like the *Reader* were doing: publishing something that was exactly the same except week after week after..."

*Reader* staff was unusually involved in the production of this strip. They assembled it themselves. Each week, Lynch would relay the week's dialogue and pacing to staff, typically by phone, and sometimes through a surrogate (spouse, or assistant).<sup>[7]</sup> The art department would then draft word bubbles, straining to emulate Lynch's handwriting in the introductory panel, and glue them to the mimeographed template. Every Monday a script, every Friday a strip. *Reader* editor Randy

Signor was for years tasked with making the call, and according to him, the dialogue usually seemed made up on the spot. To him, it seemed that the call was as much a nuisance for Lynch as it was for himself. And yet they kept at it – a somehow necessary drudgery. If completing a feature-film project is a glacial achievement, doing *Angriest Dog* was like managing a chronic pain.

Reading over the strips, it's not hard to believe that they were penned off the cuff. It can be tough to care about them when you view them in isolation. Lots of the them are underwhelming, due to either sheer cheesiness ("Does the name Pavlov ring a bell?") or mopiness ("Some weeks nothing is funny." "Woe / is / me."). Throwaway jokes in a throwaway newsrag, which nobody even bothered to keep an archive of.<sup>[8]</sup> There isn't so much to 'interpret' – which, it turns out, makes it hard to write about. And besides, doesn't explaining a joke kill it?

I think the strip hits hardest, instead, in the long view: when it is seen as a continuous project altered weekly. A weekly murmur among the yoga listings, relayed through a chain of para-literary production. A decade of inertness accrued, one frame after another, chronicling little more than a day turning to night, each strip as unremarkable as the last. The *Reader's* readers remember the strip, if at all, as a steady, unheralded fixture of the paper – more like a weather report than a column. Its pleasure is in patterns, in curious permutations on a formula, small gestures made grand through mute repetition. America's favorite surrealist was playing a conceptualist's game.

Contrast this to the grand esotericism of Lynch's films, so indebted

32 CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

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**IF YOU mail in your ad, the rate is \$7 for the 25 words, 50 cents for each additional word.**

**IF YOU want to telephone your ad or, if you want to fix it, the rate is \$10 for the first 25 words, 50 cents for each additional word. Repeated ads submitted in this manner will run at the regular rate of \$7 for the first 25 words, 50 cents for each additional word. Call for the fax number. You must give a VISA or MasterCard number to buy Classifieds over the phone or via fax.**

See Matches for special rules applying to that section.

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**Los Angeles Reader reserves the right to edit or reject any advertisement. Cash refunds are not available.**

**READING FOR ALL CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING IS MONDAY AT 5 P.M.**

|                         | 1a     | 4a    | 1b     | 12a    | 20a    |
|-------------------------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| <b>FIRST 25 WORDS</b>   | \$7.00 | 24.00 | 40.00  | 54.00  | 104.00 |
| <b>FOR 26-50 WORDS</b>  | 5.00   | 32.00 | 54.00  | 77.00  | 130.00 |
| <b>30-40</b>            | 14.50  | 48.00 | 82.00  | 108.00 | 182.00 |
| <b>35-40</b>            | 17.00  | 40.00 | 68.00  | 90.00  | 156.00 |
| <b>45-60</b>            | 12.00  | 56.00 | 106.00 | 128.00 | 208.00 |
| <b>60-80</b>            | 20.00  | 64.00 | 110.00 | 144.00 | 234.00 |
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Reader Reply # Add \$5 Per Month. Visa/Mail Fee \_\_\_\_\_

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or (313) 933-0161 (nights, weekends)

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Reader Classifieds, Friday, October 13, 1989

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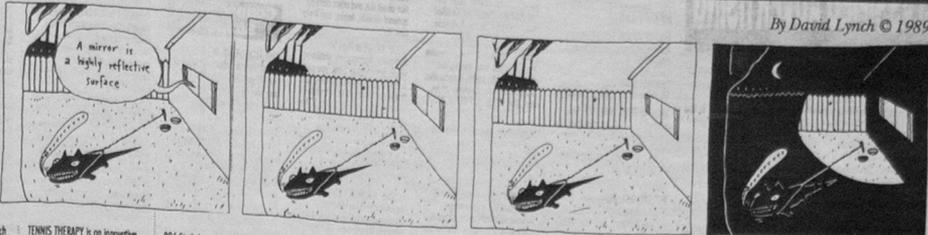
# THE ANGRIEST DOG IN THE WORLD

Reader Classifieds, Friday, October 13, 1989

33

The dog who is so angry he cannot move. He cannot eat. He cannot sleep. He can just barely growl.

Bound so tightly with tension and anger, he approaches the edge of a rage maelstrom.



By David Lynch © 1989

**CAN YOU BE A TOASTMASTER** each Tuesday morning in Hollywood? Call (213) 463-6263 for information.

**\*TOASTMASTERS meet each Tuesday morning.** Call Frank (213) 463-6263 for information.

**IF YOU LIKE RAP DANCING** and live jazz music don't miss "Discoopy in the Park" and his legend Eddie Brown! Oct. 27, 28 (Caper America Theatre, 681-3700, 9/27).

**FEMEXE!** Wine and French friends, people, love, vacation hints? Join our Franco-American International! Box 2054, Hollywood, CA 90028. (213) 474-2026. #/.

**READINGS/SURVIVORS:** Help for those being angry, anxiety, shy, etc. If you've been hurt, want to regain joy and confidence, call A Gentle Awakening Counseling Center. (213) 474-2026. #/.

**NEW! The Single Guy** Community Exchange. One in great company with The Single Guy, the social dog who has provided the perfect way for single men and women to enjoy fun dating in L.A.'s best restaurant, meet parties and fabulous tips. Be a member, you will enjoy great food, great fun, and meet all of your new friends. For membership information and newsletter call L.A.'s most exciting single club, call "The Single Guy", (213) 653-4904. 15/2.

## Instructions

**INDUSTRIAL MASSAGE CLASSES** for professional/non-professionals. Instructed by best of L.A., Executive Massage. Featured in L.A. Magazine, Far South Coast, CBS The Morning, Call C.J. (213) 935-1044. 15/4.

**ERECTIO PROBLEMS?** Correct them! Free report! Write C.F.S. #55, 1770 W. Highland, L.A., CA 90028. Send \$2.00 for P. & H.

**GOING TO EXOTIC BRAZIL?** Learn Portuguese from a Native, group or private lessons, call Tonia (213) 739-5555. 15/2.

**ZEN PRACTICE:** Sun, Mon., 8:45 to 11 a.m. New classes forming on a regular basis. Zen Center of L.A., 925 S. Normandie Ave. Call 387-2351 for further info. 11/1.

**ANGEL CONTROL:** For those who "love it" and those who hold anger in too much. Private sessions by appointment. A Gentle Awakening Counseling Center. (213) 474-2026. #/.

**Models**  
Male & female models wanted now! No exp. necessary, all ethnic types, 13 yrs and up, min height 5'8 1/2" call now for information about our Tunes & Tots. (10am to 2pm) model calls.  
Call... 294-2074 for info.  
4020 Buckingham Road #203

**\*CASTING EXTRAS\***  
NON-UNION ACTORS ONLY  
NEED IMMEDIATELY  
FOR ROLES IN FILM & TELEVISION  
**GUARANTEED WORK**  
JOHNSON & BUCKINGHAM CASTING  
213-463-4401

**TENNIS THERAPY** is an innovative approach to making tennis a more enjoyable game, regardless of the level you play. It is a proven philosophy combining mechanics and movement. The results will be immediate. Learn high percentage, ball control, correct strokes, and a deeper understanding of the discipline involved. For more information contact Tony Brooks T.A.M. (213) 470-4048. #/.

**FREE YOGA CLASS:** Sunday, 4:00 p.m. group meditation, 4:30 p.m. Beginners welcome. Sansara Yoga, Toluca, California, 1600 Soledad Blvd. Call for information: (213) 478-2027. 15/2.

**"LEARN SPANISH"** in 3 to 6 months. Guaranteed. Invest in your future. Judith (213) 413-7616. 10/2.

**FRENCH & SPANISH LANGUAGE** by native speakers. Classes for doctors, lawyers, performers, or just to improve your professional life. Fast, easy, natural. Occasions. Judith (213) 285-6418. 8.8. (818) 783-2409. 01/1.

**R.E. ALLISON & ASSOCIATES,** an association with Hollywood L.A. Productions, now casting for music videos, commercials, film and print. 18 + over, M/F. Places send resume and photos to: 6940 Vesper Ave., Van Nuys, CA: 6940 Vesper Ave. Ridgely. Fee required. 01/1.

## Lectures

**"BREAKING FREE OF CO-DEPENDENCY"** Free public lecture by Rhonda Proffitt, M.F.C.C. Sat. Oct. 14, 10:30 am - 12:30 p.m., 3rd floor Community Room, Westside Pavilion, 10800 W. Pico, W.L.A. For info call (213) 391-9255. 15/2.

**HOLLYWOOD UNITED Methodist Church,** 6817 Franklin Ave. (at Highland). Sunday worship at 10:30 am with Pastor Dr. Ignacio Castanos. Also Wednesday services of 12 noon. For more information call (213) 874-2104. #/.

## Business Opportunities

**NO INVESTMENT NEEDED** to make some money at home anytime while rejuvenating your appearance, age, health, stamina and eye treatments. Dr. Scazzari, Box 5240, Box Hills, CA 90210.

**TURN \$20 INTO \$20,000 PER YEAR** income in your spare time. Free information. Smart Publishing.

**804 Sixth Ave., Ste. 120, Venice, CA 90291. 01/1.**

**IT'S HERE!** Lighten up, "Work-at-Home" programs. Over 100 to choose from for \$9.95, satisfaction guaranteed. 10/1.

**MAKE MONEY/SAVE MONEY.** If you choose to achieve wealth, not just survive, call today. Direct sales/marketing a plus. Serious inquiries only. Willgo and Success. (213) 874-0530. 10/2.

**EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY** for self-starters. Distributor needed for self-help product. Great repeat business, reasonable profit potential. Call (213) 273-7071. 15/2.

**BE YOUR OWN BOSS!** Earn \$5,000-10,000/mo. part-time. This is the business opportunity of your life. For 24-hour message, call (213) 447-9233. 10/1.

## Business Services

**FREE 8 x 10 GLOSSIES** to qualified customers with every \$100.00 professional model portfolio. Bill Ormrod (213) 537-3712 or 743-745. 10/1.

**WORD PROCESSING.** Manuscripts/letters/reports typed with professional secretary (five years exp.). \$3.50 per 1000 words. Call (213) 399-0434. 10/1.

## Services

**RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL PROTECTION** of your property by armed officers, special law officers in Hollywood. Also DWI primary, location of missing persons & much more. Call Golden Protection at 657-2575 for more information. 10/1.

**PRIME MODEL/ACTRESS SERVICES.** specializing in small but hot to do jobs, lowest rates! 10 yrs exp. short notice! Call Chris 477-1769. 10/1.

**FOR WOMEN ONLY.** Gentle, authentic, non-professional, will perform for individuals or small boutique parties, no charge (213) 457-5644. 15/2.

**WORD PROCESSING/TYPING.** Manuscripts, Screenings, Transcriptions. Write it, date accurately & cheaply by computer? Then call Mr. Fingers at (213) 644-1355.

**PROFESSIONAL MASSAGE.** Homecare 27 yrs. old will make you

me! Give me a call James, (213) 838-9158.

**HOUSEMAN:** Will exchange house hold services including child care and side to housekeeping for rent or private living quarters. Experienced with excellent references in Beverly Hills. Cong (213) 858-6615.

**GUEST STRAID Services.** 1 mo. free with ad. \$35 per mo. 1888 Century Park East, Ste. 10, L.A. CA 90047. 971-3052-3358. 10/2.

**8 x 4 CLEANING/** licensed offices & houses, exp. Good looking guys do all kinds of cleaning, law parties. 10/1.

**FREE SELF-DEFENSE LESSON** for women. A modified Chinese Wing Chun, Gong Fu, sponsored by the Leo House & National Trade, 10530 Venice Blvd., Culver City. Seminars only for men. (213) 207-0852. 10/1.

**Typing/Transcribing.** Manuscripts, screenplays, press releases. Done on computer with letter quality printer. Reasonable rates. (213) 471-1005. 15/2.

**STUNNING STYLISTS** for your beauty/salon/boutique party, birthday party, and all occasions. Call Sugar & Spice, (213) 704-1693. 10/1.

**PELT'S HAIR SERVICE.** All chemicals, home, salon, offices, pedicures, manicures, custom coloring weekly, blow-dry and monthly. Sanitized quality cleaning at reasonable rates, free estimates/sale items. Baby-sitting services available. Call (213) 662-4074. 10/1.

**NEED HELP** with a writing project? Writer/Editor (7 yrs. W. publishing exp.) looking for challenging work, projects or business. Great rates. Reasonable ethics. (818) 508-8047. 15/2.

**YOUNG, RESPONSIBLE, EUROPEAN ARTIST** (very nice personality), as help companion for elderly. Fortuna. Set and fitness consultant (vegetation and international cooking). 3 several languages spoken. Call (213) 285-6418. 15/2.

**DAN'S DISSENT MOVING.** Hiding and furniture delivery. Fast, efficient and reliable. Free estimates. Some day service. (213) 662-8580. 11/1.

**HOMEMAN & CLEANING SERVICE.** We do it all! Including the jobs you can't get anyone else to do. Reasonable rates, call now. (213) 471-2886. 04/4.

**DESKTOP GRAPHICS.** Flyers,

newsletters, forms, resumes, and more. For affordable, professional service call Kate Goldstein Productions (213) 276-9324. 10/4.

**WE LOCATE PERSONS!** Meet persons current addresses or background SCS, DMV & license numbers, also patrol of your home or business by armed officers. The Only Private Patrol licensed by the City of West Hollywood. (213) 657-2575. 15/2.

**ATTENTION NEW MODELS:** Outfits/for location Portfolios. 100 Photos/\$125.00. Natural photography. 337-3712. 15/1.

**SINGLES INTRODUCTIONS** until November & local. All ages. Let us find that special person. Call 1-800-336-9933. 142/90.

**JEWEL INTRODUCTIONS INTERNATIONAL.** Local and personalized. Ages 21-101. Let us find that special someone. Call 1-800-442-9650. #/.

**SELECT COMPANY** for SINGLES offers you, the selective available single individual, a new approach to the video dating concept. After years of experience in the field, our founders are committed to discretion and good taste. Your happiness and relationship are important to us. Located at 1100 Genoa, Ste. 771, Westwood Village. Call for an interview. (213) 874-0555. #/.

**PRECIOUS HAIR & NAILS.** 5379 Wilshire Blvd., 934-4103, 936-2712. Winner of many awards including the Golden Award and the 1984 Olympic Games Beauty Head-Quarters, this full service salon has 18 yrs. of experience in hair, skin, nail and wedding services. English speaking, international operators. Selection & Neous products; Luv'N' (9-4) a monogram/pedicure is only \$9.99! Call for an appointment! 10/1.

**INSURANCE.** Excellent and friendly service. Auto and disability, and Health and life insurances. Please call for free quote! Helmyo Day (213) 251-1445, night (213) 938-7850. 15/2.

**FEMALE MASSAGE** (No exp. necessary) needed to give massage in my home about twice weekly. Richard Andrews, 11684 Ventura Blvd., #316, Studio City, CA 91604. 10/1.

**HOME WORKS/FINE TIME.** Paid weekly maintenance boys, some \$200 set. No exp. necessary. Amazing record message records details. Call anytime 1-905-454-5457. 15/2.

**STYLISTS/MANICURISTS/FACIALISTS** for upscale W.L.A. salon. Call Mr. Awer (213) 285-5310. 10/1.

**JAPANESE TUTOR NEEDED** Westside, good pay. Call Tom, (971) 477-5803. 01/1.

**EAST COAST ADRESSES ONLY.** New pay. New company. 851-3081 or 876-2936.

**VIDEO SALES.** Reader \$3,500 per

week. Telemarketing 4 hrs. per day. Sell movies with the biggest stars to video stores from your own home. We ship for you. All leads and training provided. Ample drive. (213) 256-0310.

**OFFICE/RECEPTIONIST.** Fulltime, excellent opportunity! Veterinarian clinic. 936-9552.

**FRED SEGAL CAFE/EXPERIENCED** Waiter, Host, counter, Cook and Baker. 653-6918 or 394-0199, 3 p.m.

**RETAIL CHAIN-Customer** Service, will train, flexible hours, scholarships awarded. \$9.25 to start. Agoura Hills (805) 496-5547, Burbank (818) 567-4147, Pasadena (818) 564-0901, Torrance (818) 342-2612. 03/1.

**ATTENTION/HRING!** Government job/your own. \$17,940-\$49,485. Call 1-800-838-8885, ext. 8. 12240. 01/1.

**AMERICA'S PREMIER IMAGE COMPANY** now interviewing. Meet at 4 Image Consultants to color hair. Prefer background in sales, modeling, airlines or cosmetology. Professional training. Call (213) 287-2061. 03/1.

**DO THE RIGHT THING!** Save the planet from environmental destruction. Join the movement. Campaign with Calling. Call Sam (213) 276-9244, 8/17/1 center opportunities. 10/1.

**EVN or RN POSITION AVAILABLE** to work Friday & Sat. 98 hr. day shifts 1 for AIDS research project involving plasma collection from automated plasma collection centers. Will train. W. Hollywood location. Must have excellent IV skills, current CPR and BLS. Contact Linda McLemert at Herndon, 4954 Van Nuys Blvd., Sherman Oaks, CA 91403 (818) 986-3883. 06E M/F 11/1.

**FEMALE MASSAGE** (No exp. necessary) needed to give massage in my home about twice weekly. Richard Andrews, 11684 Ventura Blvd., #316, Studio City, CA 91604. 10/1.

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**EARN MONEY PER HOUR.** Flexible hours, working for a crime prevention group. 396-7345, ask for Bill. 02/1.

**Health & Fitness Company** needs customer representatives (1 and 2). Call (213) 474-8594. 15/2.

**DETAILS:** 1-805-687-6000 Ext. 22364. 06/1.

**HELP! 6/7, 10 P.M.** work at home, work at office. Send resume to Rev. Ignacia Contreras, United Methodist Church of Hollywood, 6817 Franklin Ave., L.A., CA 90028. Deadline Oct. 14, 1989.

**ATTENTION: EXCELLENT INCOME** for home assembly work. Info. Call 504-648-1700, Dept. 7691. 01/1.

**58.50 PER HOUR.** Flexible hours, working for a crime prevention group for local law enforcement group. 396-7345, ask for Bill. 02/1.

**HEALTH & FITNESS COMPANY** needs customer representatives (1 and 2). Call (213) 474-8594. 15/2.

**EARN \$1000'S WEEKLY** mailing commission croakers in your spare time! No experience necessary! For details, ask S.A.S. by Innet Enterprises, Box 71041 HC, L.A., CA 90071. 15/2.

**PART-TIME APPOINTMENT SETTERS** needed. Mon-Fri., 8:30-3:30 p.m. Guaranteed hourly to start. Great bonus structure. 10 positions open. So. Santa Monica. (213) 390-2205. 15/2.

**AIRLINES NOW HIRING.** Flight Attendants, Inland Agents, Mechanics, Customer Service. Listings. Salaries to \$105K. Entry level positions. Call (1) 805-462-6000, ext. #27241. 02/1.

**EXPERIENCED AUTO DETAILERS** WANTED. Will pay top dollar commission. Call (213) 653-2572. 10/2.

**MODELS, MALE/FEMALE/CHILDREN.** 4 yrs. & up. All sizes for catalogs, TV, print, etc. Call Models Guild of California. (213) 462-6861. 11/9.

**EXTRAS! FILMS/COMMERCIALS.** \$\$\$ to \$50 per day. 10-80, all areas. Will guarantee. Superior Casting. (213) 949-0455. (Please mention The Reader.) 10/5.

**NEW ANNOUNCERS** for our radio stations. Host weekly music, talk, interview shows in your spare time. No experience necessary. Fantastic opportunity to break into broadcasting in Los Angeles. Audition information. (213) 468-0080. 05/5.

**MODELS, MALE/FEMALE.** All ages & sizes. TV, fashion, commercials, and print. Kids also needed (not a school). Models Guild of California (213) 462-6861. (Please mention The Reader.) 11/6.

**EARN MONEY PER HOUR!** \$30,000/yr. income potential.

**Reproductive Rights** seeking a Project Coordinator/position for candidates with nursing, medical and commitment 17 1/2. Send resume to Rev. Ignacia Contreras, United Methodist Church of Hollywood, 6817 Franklin Ave., L.A., CA 90028. Deadline Oct. 14, 1989.

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**MODELS, MALE/FEMALE.** All ages & sizes. TV, fashion, commercials, and print. Kids also needed (not a school). Models Guild of California (213) 462-6861. (Please mention The Reader.) 11/6.

**EARN MONEY PER HOUR!** \$30,000/yr. income potential.

## Legal Notices

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT No. 89072453.** Doreen this public notice that Troy Jan Jan, 8306 Wilshire Blvd., #256, Box Hills, CA 90211 is doing business as Pacific Vinyl, 8306 Wilshire Blvd., #256, Box Hills, CA 90211. This business is conducted as an individual. Signed: Troy Jan Jan. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles on Sept. 16, 1989. The registrant committed to marital business under the Fictitious Name on Sept. 18, 1989. Notice: This Fictitious Business Name expires 5 years from the date it was filed as shown above. A new Fictitious Business Name Statement must be filed prior to that date. The filing of this Fictitious Business Name does not of itself authorize the use of the name of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14400 [E] 562, Business and Professions Code). Published (4x): 10/13; 10/20; 10/27; 11/3.

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT No. 89075226.** Doreen this public notice that Thomas Allen Scherzschel, 14131/72 N. Moorfield Ave., L.A., CA 90028 and Glynis Baker, 6252/72 Anacapa St., L.A., CA 90027 are doing business as Kelly Scherzschel, 14131/72 N. Moorfield Ave., L.A., CA 90028. This business is conducted as an individual. Signed: Kelly Scherzschel. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles on Sept. 16, 1989. The registrant committed to marital business under the Fictitious Name on Sept. 18, 1989. Notice: This Fictitious Business Name expires 5 years from the date it was filed as shown above. A new Fictitious Business Name Statement must be filed prior to that date. The filing of this Fictitious Business Name does not of itself authorize the use of the name of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14400 [E] 562, Business and Professions Code). Published (4x): 10/13; 10/20; 10/27; 11/3.

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to surrealism's Jungian gaze. They spin enigmas that encourage classical notions of interpretation – or at least the kinds that thrive on online message boards. 'What \*is\* the Black Lodge?' 'What does *Eraserhead*'s Lady in the Radiator \*represent\*?' In the style that gets called "Lynchian," opaque imagery like these entice explication, exploration. If the *Dog* is so ostracized from Lynch's inventory, it may be because the strip deflects such close-reading parlor games. It uses tropes familiar to Lynch's worlds (heaven and hell as Möbius strip; uncanny dialogue; 'unnatural' pacing; ambient dread), but to very different ends. It arrives at a quandary that is unspectacular, implacable, existential. Its dread is on its face, and it's of a much more earthly kind. In its plain way, it depicts the indifferent détente between an embattled subject and the big, cold world churning on around them. Bitterness in the din. Stagnation.

The strip in all its dumb, mute brutality tracks an affect steeped into the slow-death experiences of contemporary life – the numbness one might come to feel from weathering debts, traumas, addictions, oppressions, precarity, and an inability to metabolize it all. It's about being speechless and powerless in the face of all that. It's about distraction, or dissociation, or depression, and pointing out the shortcomings of our vocabularies for capturing voids like these. It stages the problem of witnessing these voids swirling in others. It's a Lynchian form of realism, his crudest and truest marriage of banality and Hell. It's pain, quotidian.

It's odd that the *Dog* touches all these aspects of melancholy, but the title that he has been granted is "Angriest." He has neither bark nor

bite. I see him as a mascot for an anger of a different sort. His is not anger as violence, yelling, broken plates or mirrors – contagious, spectacular anger. Rather than a flame, the dog is a smoldering log. He seethes.

Seething is a sullen type of anger, and one which rings more true to me than most of its depictions. It's less concerned with lashing out into the world than with keeping a lid on it: it's a non-dramatic, absorptive way of processing pain. I see anger in the dog's insistent, pitiful growl, the pierce of his thousand-yard stare. I see it in "left melancholia" and the interwoven drudgeries of political loss and hope, piled on top of just getting by. I used to think of anger as an event, as a rupture, and thus a moment of reaction. But now I see anger in the baseline between outbursts – the growl subtending each occasional utterance. Seething is not a switch, but a sieve. An imperceptible atrophy. It eats away.

Day in and day out the dog lies prone, exposed to the elements, exposed to the noise of his owners. His food and water bowls never empty. He is not dead, but he's not exactly living a life either. No eating, no sleeping, and none of the actions that these basic needs tend to afford. He lives in negation. He lives \*as\* negation – but with none of the liberty or joy of refusal. We can't commend him for anything; he is no radical. This is not a decision. It is a sorry state.

Throughout all this, he is trembling. His measly word bubble looks withered in comparison to the supple bubbles and text that come from the house. But at least it's reliable. It is a limb. It is a nightlight. Like steam from a kettle, the bubble's steady emission betrays an inner tumult, the only

trace of the dog's steeping interiority. My suspicion is that his petrification comes from fullness, not hollowness: that so much is inside that nothing really, truly gets out. Just inscrutable signals through a mute material valve. In his slovenly way, the dog runs afoul of the positivist mandate to speak, to act, to actualize. To give attention to this comic is to give time over to inertness, with no return on investment. But as Bartleby's example came to teach us, there's something to this. To not heed the call, to not talk back, can strike fissures in the façade of daily pains. Maybe.

He's opaque, sure, but sometimes that's right. It's not that he is simply dumb: he is dumb\*struck.\* Struck dumb so deep that the source can't be spoken. We're flooded with quandaries, and deprived of good means for metabolizing them. You see this in the pages of a paper like the *Reader*: the abrupt conjunctions of hucksters and masseuses in the classifieds on one page, and ambitious investigative journalism on the next. People trying to come to grips with problems either too big or too small, in a city then (as now) plagued with corruption, police violence, and the vice-grip of neoliberal policy, which was then only beginning to clamp down on the bohemian Los Angeles of the *Reader*. The paper shows a public of a city struggling in vain with macropolitical forces alongside more personal ones, in a collective, extrasubjective seething.

Without solutions, without a sense of potential action, things have to either slide off of you or absorb into you. The dog, like so many of us, is congested. All worked up and nowhere to go. To all this, in Los Angeles in the heat of 1991, the strip's speakers issue a bit:

"Bill... the LAPD has a new motto..."

"What the hell is it?"

"We treat the public like a King."<sup>[9]</sup>

...and *Cheval Noir* prints twice my personal favorite: "People are dying living here."

Moments like these cut through the strip's asinine vertigo, and the world seeps in. But even here, a read-through of the *Dog* comics suggests that, above all, words are stupid. The voices from inside the house – we glean some names, Sylvia, Bill, Pete, Pete Jr. – they play a cruel vaudeville routine to a tough crowd of one. Each joke just digs them deeper, and what's unearthed is an impotence of speech. In puns, that so-called "lowest form of humor," language becomes infantilized. Words get turned into dolls and then tortured for their plasticity. "We treat the public like a King." To speak of the unspeakable, to try to render transcendent horrors in mere language, is a farce. It's not new to point this out. But for the strip, the fear behind the joke is that it treats the very act of speaking, or any kind of assertion into a shared world, \*as\* a joke. That all speech is a non sequitur to pain. That in his total myopia, his dissolution into the dirt, the dog is somehow taking the most sensible path.

That's the fear, anyway. On a less apocalyptic scale, you could say that as the dog "approaches the state of rigor mortis," Lynch prods at the endgame of cynicism: a tragedy of impasse, of cyclical thinking. There's an element of this in the ironizing tone of the slacker generation to which the *Reader* belonged, and in a sense the strip is an admonition tale to that impulse.

But there were real believers, too. Matt Groening wouldn't have breathlessly reviewed unheard-of punk tapes week after week, or driven a

van around the city to drop off stacks of the *Reader* at corner stores, if he didn't have faith in some catharsis of communication. If Lynch didn't care, he wouldn't have returned to hand-lettering of the strip toward the end of its run.<sup>[10]</sup> James Vowell wouldn't have started the whole operation and run it for as long as he did. His editors wouldn't have taken the time to talk me through my obsession with their experiment from 30 years ago.

When it was decided that the strip would end (Lynch claims it was his editor's request), the final panels were redrawn to be set on fire, and for the last few years of the *Reader's* life the Classifieds were a bit more standard (and consequently more flexible).<sup>[11]</sup> The dog finally went from smoldering to flames. I don't find this cremation especially brilliant, but there's some comfort in closure, even here. I've wondered how else it could have ended. In an implausibly happy ending, some dumb joke from inside the house might finally strike some secret chord of communication for the Dog, unraveling his tension and anger, permitting him to slacken his leash, drink his water, close his eyes.

– Nick Irvin

Endnotes:

[1] reproduced in *Cheval Noir* Issue 25 (Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Comics, October 1992).

[2] reproduced in *Cheval Noir* Issue 25 (Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Comics, December 1991).

[3] *Reader* Publisher Jane Levine on these halcyon days: "Oh, God, it was so cool...as if the *Village Voice* had a baby. It was very small, but it always had incredibly high standards of literary journalism, and these are such difficult words, hipness and alternative-ness. [...] The line hadn't blurred between mainstream and alternative journalism to the extent that it has now. So when we wrote about punk rock in Chinatown it wasn't something that everybody was writing about. And we wrote about the city as a city, as a place to live, and not about the industry." in *The Simpsons: An Uncensored, Unauthorized History* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), p. 18.

[4] *Los Angeles Reader*, October 13, 1989.

[5] *The Simpsons: An Uncensored, Unauthorized History*, p. 304.

[6] These outlets also foreground Lynch's rising name recognition. In the *Cheval Noir* spreads, two strips are divided by a huge diagonal byline: "By DAVID LYNCH," and frequently make mention on the cover, despite being rather peripheral to the magazine's project.

[7] In a 1990 Channel 4 profile on Lynch, James Vowell instead claims that Lynch more noirishly had his envoys slip each script under the *Reader* office door in envelopes, but all the editors I've spoken with have said this was a phone routine.

[8] In a year of searching I've only been able to obtain three purchasable issues of the *Reader*. It's far easier to track down issues of *Cheval Noir*, thanks to the collectibility market for comic books, and as a result the *Dog* strips that were reproduced there are the ones that tend to get circulated online. Since *Cheval Noir* ran 2 strips per issue for 18 issues, this means there are only 36 of approximately 450 strips readily accessible – including a few repeats.

[9] reproduced in *Cheval Noir* Issue 23 (Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Comics, October 1991).

[10] David Lynch, *Catching the Big Fish* (New York: Penguin, 2006), p. 42.

[11] I've only found these online, as the smallest, most compressed .PNGs from 1998.

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"Humor can be dissected, as a frog can, but the thing dies in the process and the innards are discouraging to any but the pure scientific mind."

E.B. White