

Rolling Stone®

**BOB
GELDOLF**

**THE ROLLING
STONE INTERVIEW**

**MARILYN
AND THE
KENNEDYS
THE COVER-UP
UNRAVELS**

**CHECKING IN
BOB DYLAN
THE STONES**

**PENN & TELLER
WEIRD MAGIC**



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COVER: Photograph of Bob Geldof by Davies & Starr, London, October 1985.

Marilyn Monroe

BOB GELDOF

THE ROLLING STONE INTERVIEW

BY DAVID BRESKIN

It's a nice day for a white wedding, sneers Billy Idol from the opened doorway of Bob Geldof's London town house. Walking into the entrance hall, I hear rhythmically creaking floorboards, which can only mean: aerobics. This is odd. Geldof has never in particular seemed the aerobic kind of guy. Around the corner in the living room, three hyperventilating young blond women are clapping their hands and counting, "One-two-three." One of them is Paula Yates, British television celebrity, owner of the house, girlfriend to Bob and mother of their two-year-old daughter, Fifi Trixibelle. She shouts, "Bob's upstairs. And one-two-three..." ■ Bob's upstairs exercising, his mouth. To warm up for our interview, he's doing another one — talking to researchers



MAKEUP BY MAGGIE BAKER FOR THE CREATIVE W.C. FORCE

GELDOF

about his early school years in Dublin (pranks seem predominant), his early politics (much debating and marching) and his early love life (much shyness at dances). When he is not up on his feet to answer the telephone, which rings excessively, and pace about on a dead leopard, which hugs the floor, he slumps on a silver and white satin sofa. Geldof has large, expressively delicate hands, and as he talks he tends to slip his right one under his grungy denim shirt and across his chest, like some sort of punk Napoleon.

Over the course of the next two days, Geldof slaloms through an impossible schedule. He's got meetings with government officials about development programs; he's got meetings to organize Sport Aid (a Live Aid for jocks planned for next May in Birmingham, England); and he's got meetings to plan his trip to Rome (where he'll discuss immunization with world health leaders before attending a chichi Fendi dinner with the Catherines Deneuve and Oxenberg). He's got meetings to discuss his second African trip, which will be followed by a speech to the European Parliament, which will be followed by a presentation at the United Nations. And so on. There is also the small matter of his thirty-third-birthday party. Bob talks in between phone calls, in crowded coffee shops, in cabs careening through London (causing accidents, but for a cause). He talks while hurrying down the street and, more calmly, on the sofa, fighting sleep.

In those few unharried moments at his house, he shows me some of the unusual artifacts this year has brought him. There is an award from the Congressional Black Caucus Incorporated on which his name is misspelled GELDOLF. There are the vice-presidential cuff links from George Bush. There is the antique wood-bound Ethiopian Bible. A few days after he leaves for Africa, yet another artifact appears: a new issue of the British *Penthouse* with Bob and Paula on the cover. Its headline announces, BOB GELDOLF'S GIRLFRIEND PAULA YATES NUDE. Inside, accompanying shots of Paula's T and Paula's A (et cetera), the Band Aid address is provided for those panting readers who have a hand available to write a check. It has been a very, very strange year for Bob Geldof.

At Heathrow Airport, the customs official asked me what I was doing here, and I said, "An interview with Bob Geldof." He said, "Oh, Saint Bob!" and cocked his head sarcastically. What do you make of that?

I agree with him. It's a preposterous notion. I don't want to be "Saint Bob," because halos get heavy and they rust very easily and I know I have feet of clay because my socks stink. I don't live up to it, and I'm not interested in living up to it. And I'm at pains to disabuse people of the notion at the earliest possible opportunity. I get the old God guys coming up and gulping; I get the weepy crowd, the laying-on-of-hands crowd, and I get ministers coming up and saying, "If Jesus was alive, he'd come up to you and try to help you." I said once, "If Jesus was alive, I'd ask him what he was doing here and why wasn't he in Africa."

How do you feel when people approach you that way?

Awful, absolutely awful. It makes me vomit.

And does this fame-from-famine routine make you uncomfortable?

People treat you like a celebrity, but people treat the pope like a celebrity. It becomes irrelevant in what way you gained your notoriety — you just are a celebrity.

But people do not usually walk down the street thrusting money into the hands of celebrities, as they do with you.

Contributing editor DAVID BRESKIN wrote the book 'We Are the World,' about the USA for Africa recording session.

I flew to Ireland last weekend, and by the time I landed I had in my pocket forty dollars, fifty Australian dollars, French francs and Irish pounds. The problem is, when I get coins, I have to put the pennies in one pocket and the ten pences in another so I don't get them mixed up with my own money. This is a bit of a burden, this trust, but it's a nice thing to have happen.

You began by using yourself to draw attention to the famine, but has it gotten to the point where you wish you now had a bit more anonymity?

The fame has never bothered me, because I've been doing things that put you in the public eye for eight years. Fame to me is not imprisoning — it expands what you are capable of doing. I don't understand people when they say, "I want to be alone." I do want to be left alone sometimes — and so I take the phone off the hook and I shut the door. I don't find the fame a burden, but the dependence on me to be All Things to All Men, or the final person to have to approve this or that, yes, that's a bore.

Is it hard for you to delegate responsibility?

No, not at all. The very opposite. The problem, though, is that I have to be aware at all times what these people are doing with the money. Because if something goes wrong — let's say with School Aid — I am the one responsible, even though I am not running the program. So I have to approve everything.

So how do you keep this from turning into a cult of personality?

I wish to Christ I knew how. You saw those people today from Sport Aid. They could have done all that on their own, but they wanted me to inspire them and refine their ideas. They want to come and meet me. I've tried and tried to avoid this, but I don't know how to.

Well, Bob, you're a brand name. . . .

Yeah, I wish I could sell it [laughs].

And it's a brand name that has credibility, integrity and a certain magnetism, mostly because you stand outside the normal political corruption and aid lobbying. For one thing, you say what is on your mind, which people like — even if they don't like what you've said.

See, it's not like I have to fight to be true to myself. It's the very opposite. If I have to do something I think is false, I physically can't do it. That sounds like I'm saying, "Hey I'm such a great guy!" No. I just cannot play a game. I sicken myself to such an extent that I can't sleep if I'm forced to do something that's false. As for this place I'm in, everyone knows I'm just a pop singer — not a political figure. So I am not a threat to anybody. I'm not a major pop singer, so I'm no threat to pop people. I'm not a major political figure, because I'm not in politics. And to the African politicians, I'm a guy waving a check at them. So I do not represent anybody but myself and, perhaps, this vast constituency that wanted to help in this thing.

So that gives you a certain freedom.

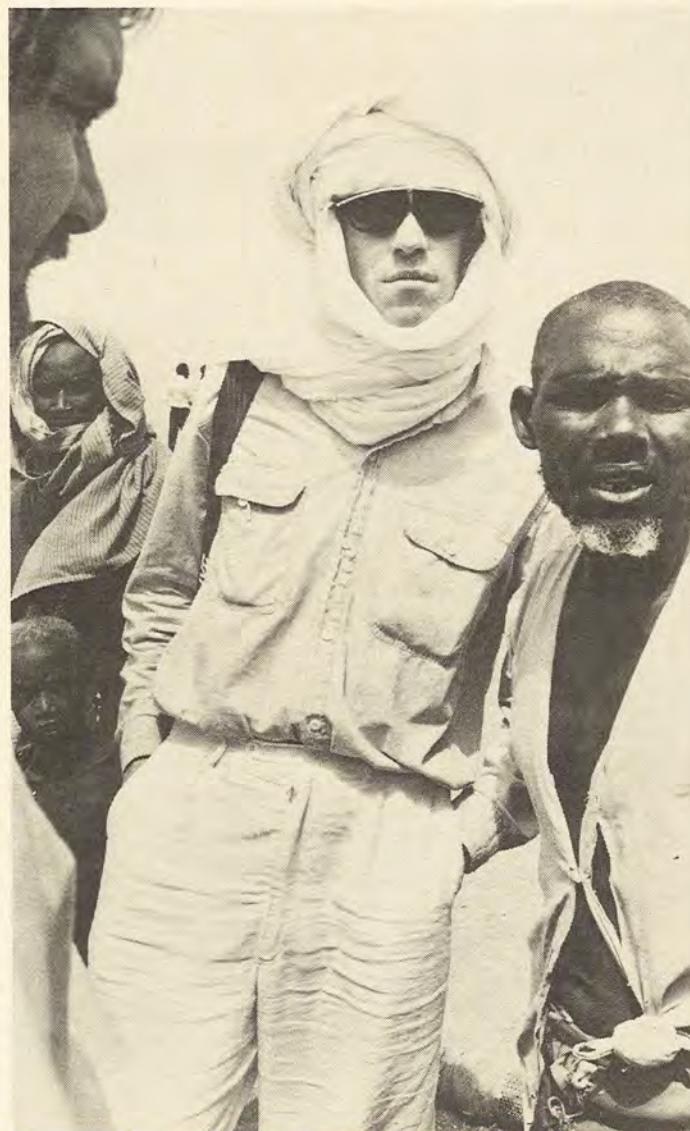
Yes, it does. I am never coy in negotiating things. I say, "This is what I want, and I'll tell you my reasons," and that's that. If they don't want to deal, goodbye! I'm dealing in something that is important. I don't allow areas that can be "negotiated" in the usual sense.

Well, your form of negotiation is more or less moral blackmail. Do this or get lost, so to speak.

Midge [Ure, of Ultravox] says that I go for the jugular all the time and that I don't know when to stop. That's wrong. I stop when I feel I've gotten the most I'm gonna get. I know exactly when to stop. Being blunt is not necessarily going for the jugular.

Which is worse to struggle with, the petty bureaucratic mind set you have to fight to get things done or the fact that there is only one real road in the Sudan to distribute aid?

Well, the physical problem is worse. I completely ignore the bureaucracy. I bypass it. I cannot bypass the road. With the bureaucracy, they tell me, "Well, this will take a while, Mr. Geldof." I tell them, "Fuck that!"



Bob Geldof on his most recent trip to Africa, where he was investigating long-term aid projects in the Sahel region.

I do not threaten, because I have nothing to threaten them with. But there are ways of getting around bureaucracy. In fact, the purpose of Band Aid is to get around bureaucracy. In our office, the idea is just to get things done. The office looks and feels extremely temporary. I do not want to build up huge files and lots of paperwork and memos. That's a waste of time. The object is just to get things to Africa.

Has your concept of money and what is a lot of it changed this past year?

No, not at all. I'm well aware that a million dollars is a lot of money. But when 130 million people are affected by this problem, even \$67 million is nothing. Which

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is not to denigrate people's effort. But the only way to deal with this problem is to deal with it perhaps on the scale of a Marshall Plan for Africa.

But there were vested political interests involved in the Marshall Plan.

You can't get politics out of it.

And yet you have tried to foster the notion that what you are doing is "apolitical."

That's right.

How can you have "apolitical" aid in such an obviously political situation? Certain types of aid prop up awful governments and allow destructive policies to be continued longer than they might have otherwise.

Yes, but we can't be culturally or intellectually imperialistic or colonialistic. We have to say, "This government is there by whatever reason, whether I agree with it or not." So regardless of what that government does, this aid was given by people to help other people that are dying – so I will bypass that government. And if that government doesn't want to play ball with us, we will give it to some other people who are dying that we *can* get to. If you can keep one person alive, and there are two people dying, and one of them is dying in Cleveland and the other in Detroit, and the people in Detroit stop me from getting to the dying one, then I'll just go to the guy in Cleveland. What difference does it make as long as you keep someone alive?

Have you encountered this scenario in Africa?

No, not yet. For instance, in Ethiopia's secessionist provinces, we just go through the Sudan. And we've tried to force concessions whereby the Ethiopian government lets us get to the people from within the country, which is a difficult thing for them to let us do, because they are at war with them, but nonetheless we've managed quite successfully.

As I've said, I will shake hands with the devil on my left and the devil on my right, as long as it gets us what we want. That is pragmatism. That is the reality of the matter. So what if this leader is a Marxist or a fascist? So what? I'm only interested in him to the extent I can bypass him or he will allow me to do certain things, and if he won't, we will do it anyway, willy-nilly.

But you will agree that a great deal of aid – institutionalized or governmental aid – is used for certain political ends in the countries themselves.

Yes, it is. And it is imposed with political objectives, as well. Aid from governments usually comes with ideological and financial impositions, which are to me iniquitous, because you can't impose conditions on people that cannot possibly meet those conditions. You can't impose conditions on people that are dying. But aid is never given by governments without conditions. Moscow or Washington aid is given to their client states. But at the same time, there would never be enough to help were it not for those governments.

According to the Live Aid book, Europe spent \$375 million destroying 2 million tons of food. I've seen some lower figures, but surely an extraordinary amount of food is routinely destroyed in order to artificially support farm prices.

That to me – and everyone else, I think – is the greatest moral outrage. And people cannot comprehend this fact. What the hell is going on here? Why not just give it away? I've talked endlessly to politicians,

and I haven't found a rational, moral or financial justification for doing it. If you're going to store food, give it away. The price still will remain artificially high, because you're saying the value of this food is nothing because we can't put it on the market. So now entire farms grow useless fields of wheat.

And we also have farmers being paid through subsidies not to grow crops.

That's right. Which is even more unbelievable. The farmers themselves are horrified by it. And the farmers losing their mortgages in the Midwest – these things are not unrelated, these things don't happen in isolation. I think farm policies need to be examined, because we will look back on this and say, "The world produced enough food to feed everyone, and yet it was never given to those that are dying."

What do you think about this on a more philosophical level? The Social Darwinists would say it's a matter of

'We are preventing others of our species from living. It's murder.'

natural selection.

Well, if it was natural selection, then the people who were dying would have access to the food, and they do not. It is unnatural, because they are prevented from having access by us.

Yes. Certain animals of the species are preventing other animals of the species from continuing to live. . . .

Yes. And that's morally unacceptable. Philosophically it might be acceptable, but not to me. Yes, we are preventing others of our species from living. And that is murder. If I prevented you from eating and locked you in a room, and I had ready access to my fridge and you didn't, then I would have murdered you by starving you to death. What's the difference?

You usually comment on this famine in both moral and historical terms.

When I was in Washington, I said, "This is the African Holocaust, north to south, east to west." The continent is in uproar: mass death, political iniquity. South Africa will wither in the face of our scorn, derision and contempt – and the sooner the better. It is a historical inevitability, and I hope that it happens with a minimum of bloodshed and that whites are still able to live there, for their own sake. And then you have the greatest natural – or not so natural – disaster to occur in Africa, ever. When people talk about Social Darwinism, I get *overwhelmed* with rage. As I do when people say to me, "Well, let's face it, Bob, are these people really *breeding* too much?" Even the very language they use is appalling. No, they are not breeding too much – the average life expectancy of a child is six months. Everyone likes to have children, and in poor societies you need a lot of them to work in the fields and support you in your old age. When one dies after six months, you tend to have another.

Even if you don't care about the way Africa solves its own problems – which is the way it should be, since we've interfered enough – we *cannot* every day see these

people die on our TV screens. We cannot do it. I cannot do it. And obviously millions cannot either. But I am not trying to engender a sense of guilt – merely a conceptual leap to understand the world these people live in. As I said in the song, "Tonight thank God it's them instead of you."

Which you meant ironically.

I didn't! I meant it exactly. Because I wouldn't wish this hunger on anyone. When I think of myself or my family, I'm thankful it is not us. Bono, from U2, said to me, "Are you sure this is what you want me to sing?" I told him, yeah, that I did not want to pussyfoot around this. Most people look at the TV and they look at their kids and they say, "Imagine me there." That's the reaction: they are just glad that their kid is home safe, and then they reach in their pocket and help. So yes, thank God it's them. Of course, there's a bit of irony – because you would not wish this on anyone.

Why do people need the television image? There were printed reports of the famine for a long time, yet it was the image that first moved you, and at Live Aid, the moment of greatest phoned contributions was during and immediately after the showing of famine images. It's almost Pavlovian.

No, because Pavlovian is a response without thought. It's an instinctive reaction.

Well, a "feeling" perhaps is an instinctive reaction.

The image brings it home. Famine is just a word, and when you read that hundreds of thousands are dying, you say, "That's fucking awful." But when you see it, and you see a human – i.e., yourself, since you may put a personal projection on it – then it is brought home. I have seen pictures in papers, and it is not the same. When I saw that first TV report I felt an overwhelming pain, and shame for humanity. Those people were so dignified in their degradation.

There's an awful despair, and you have to do *something*. Now if it's a video image that sparks it, well then maybe that is Pavlovian: maybe if human beings are tapped in exactly the right place, they will say, "I can't take this, I must do something."

What stays with you from your African visit?

The rage and the despair. I still don't think people grasp the enormity of it. We're so used to images of the willful, perverse, evil, mad destruction of a race in Europe by the Nazis. We say, "How the hell did human beings do that?" And that was just the Jewish Holocaust – over 6 million people. How was it possible? Well, how is it possible for us to know that this is now going on in Africa and yet turn our backs? What was the difference between the Germans that knew what was happening and turned their backs and us? History will ask, "How could a world which was burning food, storing it, letting it rot, how did the world say, 'That's all right,' and at the same time watch it on their TV screens every night?"

People are still driven by a fear of scarcity.

But everyone is aware that the silos of Idaho and Arkansas and Ohio are bursting. Bursting! It wouldn't even take half of those bloody silos to keep these people alive. People think the immediate disaster in Africa has been alleviated. It has not. There has been rain this year – for the first time since 1981, in many places – but it means nothing. The shortfall in Ethiopia alone for the next year is hundreds of thousands of tons. And now people are sick of talking about this and find it boring to listen to and feel they have done enough. But you haven't. People are still dying.

There are pop stars who felt they had done enough after being on one record, who turned down Live Aid. . . .

Yes. Some said, "We've done our bit, and it's not gonna make any difference if we play the concert or not." Well, of course it makes a difference.

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Apparently there were a number of black acts that felt this way, as this was partially behind the fact that there were so few black acts on the bill.

Yeah. That's true. Also, some felt it wasn't going to work. There were a lot of reasons, but basically I felt they just didn't want to do it. It was a bit of a hassle for them. That's a shame.

Reflecting back on this whole campaign, do you wonder why you were the guy who started all of this?

Yes. I think I know why. I had some time on my hands, and I wasn't out on tour or trying to follow up a hit record. My band's fortunes had already failed to a large extent, and we were bringing out a single and an album, but there was no indication they would be any more successful than the last two. So I was in an ideally placed position. I mean, maybe if Simon Le Bon had rung up George Michael to do something, there would have been suspicion. But I was no threat to anybody. I also knew that if the Rats had done the same record, it wouldn't have been a hit. So I had to get the stars.

This thing almost happened to you as much as you happened to it.

Well, it happened to me because I was in that night when the report was on the TV. I often wonder what would have happened had I not been in that night.

Would someone else have done it?

No, I don't think so. People started doing things afterward, because they wanted to contribute their bit. But the thing is, all elements of this were crucial: I wasn't a threat, I had time, I saw the thing, I knew the people. And also, this was a subject that was beyond any argument. Is it right to help people? Yes. Is it wrong to help people? No. There is no moral quibbling about this. And the political argument does not enter the arena whatsoever. English pop music is highly politicized. Records come out in support of a strike, and they do not do very well. Let's take the coal-miners strike, which was viewed outside this country possibly as this great struggle, which it wasn't.

And yet you got criticism from some rock & roll journalists in the States, who thought the coal-strike record was so much more effective, appropriate, politically correct, compared to Band Aid's, which I think one critic likened to putting a Band-Aid on someone's forehead

'I would like this to be a movement, but it isn't going to be.'

when he is starving.

Well, the coal-miners song was a stiff, because eighty percent of the people didn't agree with the strike. And I'm surprised that critic never understood the pun on Band-Aid in the first place. I said, "There's no use putting a Band-Aid on a wound that requires twenty stitches." What we did was draw attention to it. Now I can't think of any more effective political action than Leonid Brezhnev's son issuing direct challenges at me; or the British Parliament debating the issue three times and citing Band Aid and Live Aid and adding more to their overseas budgets; or the congressional

committees in America meeting and discussing this with us; or the French political system calling us and getting behind us. In terms of effective political action, other than mobilizing the *in situ* political powers of the world, I don't know what political action means.

Some critics have carped about the way certain things have been done, or even trashed "Do They Know It's Christmas?" or "We Are the World" for aesthetic reasons. Greil Marcus not only trashed your single but claimed that the USA for Africa singers were projecting themselves on the world and symbolically trying to eat it — he said, "Ethiopians may not have anything to eat, but at least these people get to eat Ethiopians."

Yeah, but people are *alive*. This criticism irritates me, but then I think it makes people question even further: what price criticism when the end result of a bunch of people in the studio is without doubt millions of people being helped to stay alive?

Now in England, there's an intense loathing of me and my personality by some — one particular paper, *New Musical Express*, more than the others. They were snide and sneering from the beginning. There were questions as to why I was doing the whole thing. People said it was to resurrect my failing career, which I likened to Demis Roussos, the Greek pop star, planning the hijacking of the Beirut TWA jet he was on to reactivate his flagging career. It's a little extreme in terms of hype [laughs].

Have you thought about your Irishness in relation to this effort, maybe some kind of ethnic or subliminal sensitivity toward famine?

"Out of Ireland have we come/Great hatred, little room/Maimed us at the start/I carry from my mother's womb/A fanatic heart." That's Yeats. The Irish famine was a disaster even more profound than Ethiopia in terms of per capita death and devastation. Ireland was hideous: there was wheat being exported at the time, and there was the nearest equivalent to the slave ships that white people have probably ever experienced — with the coffin ships going to America with the Irish on them. I think the memory of this must have had some impact. I have been surprised at the depths of the Irish reaction — more people in Ireland bought the Band Aid record than anywhere else, more people contributed in Ireland than anywhere else, with the exception of Bermuda. So I imagine it is very vivid in the folk memory.

Are you especially conscious of lavish layouts of food at famine benefit events?

Yes, because it is an obvious symbolism that the press can attack. It is an easy story. And secondly, I think it is a little distasteful. I think if you treat the event like a party, you're wrong. If you are

going to get the relevant benefits of understanding and passion, then you must bear in mind what you are doing it for.

Well, what about the Concorde, which was used to ferry artists over to America during Live Aid? That's an expensive plane to operate.

Well, that was a symbol to link the two concerts, and it was the only way possible. Secondly, it was to show something: look at this fantastic technology, this beautiful plane — what a plane should look like, not a 747 — and we were using space to link the world. The point was, isn't this amazing? Look what we are capable

of doing! And now look at this famine, isn't there something really wrong with this? I mean the whole thing was fraught with symbolism.

You've talked about making compassion "hip." But if it can be hip, or fashionable, then it also can go out of fashion.

And it will too. I'm certain of that.

So you don't feel that what we're seeing here is a change of consciousness or the beginning of a movement of concern for other people, but rather just a blip of compassion, an aberration?

I would like it to be a movement, but it is not going to be so. This has been an aberration in my life, and I would imagine that when the most consistent story of this year has been the ludicrous fact of people *giving*, it is an aberration for most others as well. People do want to keep this going. And we actually *need* that crowd that's dying over there as much as they need us. We actually *need* them. . . .

For our souls?

Not for our souls. Forget our souls.

For our humanness?

Yeah, I think so. We need people in Africa for loads of reasons. Because they are worthwhile people, because they can give us beauty and joy that far outweighs any money we could give to help keep them alive. Every death diminishes us.

Do you wish that Band Aid was not planning to stop in six months? Would you like this to turn into a Sixties-style movement?

I'm ambivalent about that. I fear it would only become politicized and diversified into stupidity, like concentrating on minor affairs like a coal strike, which affects a small, local population. This is something that is more massive and has global consequences. But I think it will peter out, because we've used the spurious glamour of pop music to draw attention to a situation, and we've overloaded the thing with symbolism to make it reach people. But people get bored easily. People may have been profoundly affected by the Live Aid day — some were shattered by it — but that does not translate into a massive change in consciousness.

You also said the day vanquished what you called "the New Brutalism." What are you talking about?

What I mean by the New Brutalism is the fact that mediocrity is now the accepted norm. The pursuit of excellence is gone, by and large, certainly in Britain. To make an individual stand is to invite derision. To fly in the face of the accepted norms is to court disaster.

We have architecture that is so banal and destructive to the human spirit that walking to work is in itself a depressing experience. The streets are shabby and tawdry and litter strewn, and the concrete is rain-streaked and graffiti strewn, and the stairwells of the social-engineering experiments are lined in shit and junkies and graffiti. Nobody goes out of their rooms. There is no sense of community, so old people die in despair and loneliness. We've had a lowering of the quality of life. The newspapers rarely inform any longer. They SCREAM nonsense at you on a daily basis. By and large lies. I deal with the press constantly, and in regards to myself, I read eighty percent lies.

And what is their motivation to tell such lies?

Their motivation is to make good copy. Any slant can be given to a story. And they brutalize the English language. Words cease to mean anything. They mean the opposite. It's a very Orwellian sort of process. And where the New Brutalism ends up is at the soccer stadium in Belgium, where you have people killing each other at a match between Liverpool and Turin. That's extreme, but that's where it ends up. It's this tawdry, shabby, cynical, pointless attitude which destroys us. Why this obsession with death and destruction? Why

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not a passion for life? Why not?

The point is, we each have, on the average, seventy years to live. Now, we should see what we are capable of doing in that seventy years and go for it. I don't mean drugs, women, drink. I don't mean living to excess, or living on the edge. That's Nietzsche, that's quasi-fascist. That's not rock & roll. The point surely must be that "living on the edge" must mean *pushing*: can I do this, is it possible, how far can I take this?

I did something for "peace" the other day, which I usually don't do, because I don't accept that "peace" is possible. I don't accept it, because I personally find myself in an almost constant state of civil war.

And if you're in a state of war with yourself, just one person, how would the world ever find peace?

Yes, that's right. I've met only fleeting moments of what I construe as happiness. And then I am aware: How long will this last? Happiness is only a mood, not a condition. Discontent is a condition. And the point I'm making is, just as you said, that if you're not at peace with yourself, what price the rest of the world?

A few weeks ago on some Peace Day, they rang bells all over the world at nine o'clock. I said, "Ring bells is nice, but the state of the world is such that most people will feel it's an incoming nuclear attack." Bell ringing is charming, but it is only bell ringing. And children singing is cute, but so what? It's only children singing. And how do you know the Russians are ringing their bells in Moscow?

Having said all that, and not accepting that it is possible to have peace – that does not stop you *trying* for it. And I think it is the ultimate human failing and the ultimate human glory that we constantly reach for things that exceed our grasp. Constantly. Some of us do it publicly, some privately. And nearly always we fail. But if we didn't keep reaching for these things which exceed our grasp, then we might as well give up.

You mention the Russians. You say you don't want nationalism to play any part in this effort, and yet it has crept in. In the Live Aid book, Japan is taken to task for its "meager" contribution, and you write of Russia's "desperate attempt to defend a record of cynicism, deceit and arms sales."

All I'm trying to do is to force them into doing more. I want them to respond. I was very upset by the way the Russians treated Live Aid. We invited them to participate, and they took the broadcast, and lied to us. [The broadcast was not aired.] And so I attacked them, and their record. Now they have contributed, supposedly, \$110 million [UN figures show the U.S.S.R. has contributed no more than \$15 million of food aid], in terms of produce, but for the size of their empire – which entails a moral responsibility – they have not done much. All I'm trying to do is get a greater response, to keep more people alive. Their attitude toward this is deceitful, and I found nothing wrong with saying so.

How did you find dealing with the U.S. government?

It was an education. I assumed it was going to be Byzantine, but it isn't that. It was quite direct. What can they get out of you, and what can you get out of them? It's a straight trade-off. They are prepared to do some things and not prepared to do others. I found nothing particularly strange in Washington. The Republicans and Democrats constantly try to score political points off each other – but that's their game. I don't care. A guy would say, "Don't meet him, he's a Republican," or another, "Don't meet him, he's a Democrat." The power game goes on. But the deals we have done with the U.S. A.I.D. people have been mutually beneficial. U.S. A.I.D. is the major donor in Africa, and if you don't do business with them, you're screwed.

You attempted to approach Reagan and Gorbachev

for statements to use at Live Aid. What came of that?

I think it came down to, they'd do it if Thatcher would do it. I think it's like pop music. They ask, "Well, who's doing it? Okay, if they are, we will."

Some pop artists didn't want to get involved until they knew it was safe. You had approached a number of American artists for the Band Aid record, and you couldn't get past their publicists or managers. How do you feel about that experience?

Some of it has embittered me. But then I just said, "Oh, the hell with it." Some artists and managers helped a great deal, and some were complete wankers.

I was happy about USA for Africa because I couldn't have done an American record. I tried to develop an American record on my own. I rang up Cyndi Lauper and Hall and Oates, and they said yes. But some of them said, "Well, we don't know," and some of them said no, and some of those folks showed up at USA for Africa. Look, they viewed me as a minor pop singer from England. From their point of view, it's like Joe Blow calling up, and they figure, as John Lennon said, you get benefited to death! They don't know me. But if Ken Kragen calls up, they know it's kosher. They know that Lionel and Quincy will be there and that you're gonna have a good show.

You gave a speech to the USA for Africa singers, just before they started to sing, and said that when the tale is told of this famine, you did what you did so that you could hold up your hand and say, "Not guilty, pal!" Now, inherent in that remark is a certain feeling that you are doing this to cleanse yourself, or out of guilt, or that in doing it there is a certain self-satisfaction.

The only moment of satisfaction I've gotten from this was when I saw the first Band Aid boat. It was so big and so full of things – it was a life-support system on the sea. And Live Aid was a satisfaction. But when the history of Africa is written, it will have a lot to accuse the rest of the world of. Just as the Jews, without doubt, have a right to accuse the rest of the world for what they allowed to happen. I'm saying, I'd like to be one of the guys that saved people from the gas chambers or smuggled people out of the Nazis' control. I'd want to be like that. So if the international court of history holds the world on trial, then if I am one of the ones on the stand, I can say, "What I tried to do was this: I tried to raise the issue. I tried to create an international lobby of concern that would affect nearly all governments. I tried to instigate a massive and immediate rehabilitation program."

Do you feel you have succeeded?

No, but I feel we have done a lot.

Do you feel a bit like your own hero at times?

Never. Never, ever, ever. Never. I still sometimes think, "So what? Big deal!" It's that syndrome – it's called the fake syndrome, or the impostor syndrome. It's like when I was there onstage with Bowie and Townshend and McCartney, I actually thought, "I shouldn't be here."

About Live Aid, you said, "This is the most I can do. This is the end of what I can do."

Yes. To get the greatest pop musicians and get them to play their music live to the world, surely that is the ultimate act pop music can do.

Do you think Band Aid in general can continue?

No. I want it to stop when the money runs out. I want it to be effective. I just instinctively kick against all institutions. Band Aid should never be an institution. It should be a shooting star – brilliant and beautiful for a second – and then live forever in your memory.

You have problems with institutionalized aid.

There are so many problems with aid per se, such as creating aid-dependent societies. This is why in most of the African countries, where the famine isn't as devastating as it is in Ethiopia, the Sudan, Mali or Chad,

'This is the African Holocaust, north to south, east to west.'

the governments will make people do even the most symbolic of tasks to get their food. It's a food-for-work program, so they understand that this is not a handout. So I understand all the implications of aid, and I never wanted to get into that.

Are institutionalized agencies fat and lazy?

I think they are fat, some of them, but not lazy. I think the potential for corruption is there, but I haven't seen it in any of the people we have dealt with. Some of them are overbearingly fat, and overloaded in the bureaucratic department, but the people that work in the field are *amazing* people. I have total admiration for them. It's one thing for me to sit here and pontificate about fucking pop stars and our ship, and it's another thing to work out there in the field for a year.

You could never do it, could you?

Physically I could do it, but it just does not interest me. I think I'm better off raising the cry here – I'm better off as Paul Revere than Dr. Albert Schweitzer. But I will cease to be effective and Band Aid will cease to be effective when we become like those Save the Children adverts on page 5 of the Sunday *New York Times*. You see them, and yet you don't see them. And eventually, people will hear me and not hear me. And I don't enjoy what I do. I don't find this enjoyable at all. Or rewarding. I find writing songs and playing rewarding and satisfying. There must be some connection between what I have to do and what I want to do. The two must meet some place, and hopefully I will find that balance.

When will this stop being what you "have to do"?

I withdraw from the front line sometime after Christmas. I won't mind being the figurehead, but I will be less active and less intense.

Do you miss having time for creative efforts?

Oh yeah, I haven't done anything creative. I'm snowed under. I go to sleep thinking about it, and I wake up too early. I have no time to cogitate and ruminate. Usually a song will come to me when I'm walking down the street humming tunes. I'll hear a tune that I don't remember hearing before, and it becomes a song. These days, I don't walk down the street, I run.

When you first brought the Boomtown Rats to the States, you wanted to have press conferences. You wanted to foster a politics-of-confrontation thing about the band, and it didn't really work. [Cont. on 60]

RECORDS

equally discomfiting songs. When home-style music makes it to Nashville, that conviction (or the ability to fake it) finally counts for more than cold expertise – and partly redeems some dubious politics.

– David Gates



SO MANY RIVERS

BOBBY WOMACK

MCA

SOMEDAY WE'LL ALL BE FREE

BOBBY WOMACK

Beverly Glen



RADIO M.U.S.C. MAN

WOMACK AND WOMACK

Elektra

THESE THREE RECORDS FROM THE illustrious Womack clan – two from Bobby and one from brother Cecil and wife Linda (daughter of Sam Cooke and Bobby's stepdaughter, if you can follow that) – yield three great cuts and lots of near misses.

It should be said that one of Bobby's is a contract-obligation disc to Beverly Glen recorded before he moved to MCA. One cut is a retread from *The Poet II*, and a bunch sound suspiciously like outtakes. Still, "I'm So Proud," written by and sung with Cecil, is a likable ballad, and Bobby's reading of the Donny Hathaway title track stands with his best performances. What's puzzling is the mediocrity of Womack's big-label comeback, and the fault lies with Bobby's writing.

Between the desultory collaborations with Jim Ford and Harold Payne are two good covers, of Sam Cooke's timeless "That's Where It's At" and a sensational new song from Payne and his writing partners. "I Wish He Didn't Trust Me So Much" sets up a triangle so lucidly that by the end of a plain-spoken four-minute song we know where everyone stands and how they feel about

it – and we sympathize with all of them. The lines are simple, as when we're told, "It's not that she leads me on/I'm getting there all by myself," yet the complexity and intensity will make your skin tingle.

Womack and Womack, following up *Love Wars*, have recaptured and even deepened the rich grain of their brilliant debut – but these songs just don't seem finished. The two aces are Cecil's measured reinterpretation of "Here Comes the Sun," as healing a recording as you'll hear this side of Van Morrison, and "Strange and Funny," the only original to catch the mood that made *Love Wars* a cause célèbre both here and in the U.K.

With Cecil and Linda writing for a number of big acts and Bobby helping out on the new Stones record, perhaps it figured that their own output would suffer. It's a pity that the best remaining writers of real soul music have come up with only six worthwhile tracks on three albums as artists and that four of those are covers. But that still makes any one of these a better buy than nine-tenths of what's in the racks.

– Davitt Sigerson



ROCKIN' AND ROMANCE

JONATHAN RICHMAN
AND THE MODERN LOVERS

Twin/Tone Records

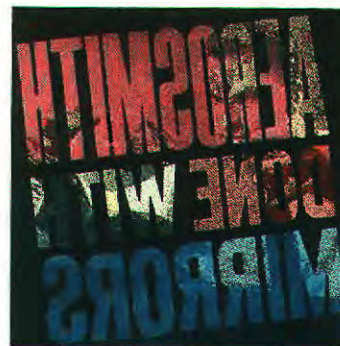
'ROCKIN' AND ROMANCE' SUPPORTS THE idea that it's great to live in the sort of world where Jonathan Richman can even exist. All the better that he gets to make records. For those unfamiliar with his *oeuvre*, a better place to start might be *Jonathan Sings!* or the first Modern Lovers album. *Rockin' and Romance*, however, with its back-to-back nuggets of minutiae from the heart, gives a pretty good indication of where Jojo is at.

With his benedictory gesture and beatific grin in the back-cover photograph (Has there ever been a cheesier album design?), Jonathan is plainly welcoming us to his world, a rockin' modern world where everything is a song, where there are no pretensions (Honest!) and every grain of sand on the beach is cause for celebration. Jonathan Richman's Peter Pan world view would be as gooey as the "Chewing Gum Wrapper" he devotes an entire song to if he weren't so manifestly aw-shucks sincere about his vision.

And there lies the secret: in details, they say, we find God. And Jonathan Richman pays attention to every detail. Like *exactly* why Wrangler's fit him better than Levi's ("My Jeans") and who was "the baddest painter since Jan Vermeer" ("Vincent Van Gogh"). Jonathan Richman loves life, plain and simple, and wants nothing so much as to communicate this simple faith to other people. And just like Jesus said about not getting into the kingdom of heaven unless you become as a child – Jonathan Richman is *already* in the kingdom of heaven, since there's almost nothing on earth he can't see some good in.

The production on *Rockin' and Romance* is even worse than the recorded-in-the-bathroom sound of *Rock 'n' Roll with the Modern Lovers*. In his effortless move from low tech to no tech on *Rockin' and Romance*, Jonathan Richman, perhaps inadvertently, slides into avant-garde sound territory. Everything he sings is meant to be taken at face value, and in today's slickoid market, a talent like Jonathan Richman's is *better* than gold.

– Tim Holmes



DONE WITH MIRRORS

AEROSMITH

Geffen

PMRC TO THE CONTRARY, HEAVY METAL is not an inherently noxious influence on young children. At its best, heavy metal acts as a genuine voice for a community that hasn't yet developed its own. But Aerosmith's unawaited reunion LP, *Done with Mirrors*, is the work of burned-out lugheads whose lack of musical imagination rivals their repugnant lyrics.

A competent rehash of "Let the Music Do the Talking," the title track of guitarist Joe Perry's 1980 solo LP, opens the album with the concise hard rock that made the original incarnation of Aerosmith an entertaining if derivative diversion. Unfortunately, seven more songs follow it, most of them advertisements for vicious sexism. "My Fist Your Face" describes the band's idea of domestic bliss, and "The Reason a Dog" refers to the singer's latest conquest. Perry's once fiery guitar leads are now rote and lazy, and Steven Tyler's arena shouts make Ace Frehley sound subtle. Aerosmith may be back in the saddle, but they picked the wrong horse.

– Jimmy Guterman

Geldof

[Cont. from 34] Well, now it seems you've had your fill of press conferences.

[Laughs] I have, as it turns out. I wanted press conferences because I wanted to create argument and discussion. Going back to someone like Greil Marcus, who used the Clash as this *totemic* band – which always to me was nonsense – and thought this was direct political action. To me their whole idea of "Sten guns at Knightsbridge" is a laughable farce. Where are the Sten guns going to be? Are they going to be in the Harrods bags, and are they going to have Gucci stocks on them? It was silly nonsense. And I would point this out, and it would cause an uproar because I was assaulting their preconceptions. That was just Pure Nonsense for Now People. And so they called me shallow, and I told them that the rhetoric of pop revolution was too easy.

You weren't well received in America.

Well, I did not expect the red carpet, and I did not give a fuck. We had done very well, thank you, around the rest of the world, and in my youthful arrogance I assumed America would fall. But I was stupid! I was moaning about the radio, I was moaning about the press, I was being rude, and the Americans just told me to fuck off.

What I'm getting at is that famine is probably a more proper subject for your moral indignation than the inanities of American rock-radio programmers.

The inanities of rock music, period, irritate me. The political posturing, the radio programming, the vanity of critics and so on. I enjoy pop music. And the acme of the art form is the great pop single. A great pop single will always last. But when I came to America and came to a system that forced me to bend down a little and to brown-nose to get radio play, I could not abide that. It's a red rag to a bull to tell me someone is really important to my career. I would sooner go wreck that career than be dependent. Actually, what it comes down to is that I cannot tolerate being dependent on anything or anyone – be that a substance like a drug, cigarettes or alcohol, or anybody – I can't handle it. And that is probably the result of the way I was brought up.

Aren't you dependent on your family?

Well, that's my choice. That's different. I chose to accept that. See, I was essentially brought up by myself, on my own with no one in the house, I learned to be self-sufficient very early on. So having to depend on people was an alien thing, and when someone says this guy or that is important for my career, I react badly. The guy comes up and says, "Oh Bob, I love your record!" I say, "Yeah, what do you love about it?" I try not to be rude – because rudeness is part of the New Brutalism – so I try to be polite. I don't like rudeness. If I'm on [Cont. on 63]

Geldof

[Cont. from 60] the train and someone is blasting out a ghetto blaster, I don't like it, because they are imposing on me. So I will ask them to turn it down, and if they are not so inclined, I will take it off them and throw it out the window, as I have done.

You've been known to be a bit impolite in your day.

Yeah, and probably with justification. If someone comes up to me and is impolite to me, well, fine, let's fight.

When Prince didn't show for "We Are the World," you responded to a question at the press conference with a rousing "Fuck Prince!"

Well, I said, "Fuck him! Who cares?" And as it turned out, he then contributed a track for the record and did a thing for Live Aid. Expedience nearly always rules and pragmatism comes to the front, but not to the point where I will become by my own lights dependent on someone, or by my own lights compromise myself.

Likewise, when I appeared on a game show in England, people wondered: Wasn't that a compromise? Hadn't I sold out? But to me it wasn't a compromise, because I dug the game show. It was just one of my favorite shows. And yet it caused an uproar.

And now you are doing commercials for

a British magazine, in which you say, "Not everything is a matter of life and death," and so on. This upsets people.

It's for a new paper called *The Hit*. I say the things in the paper are not matters of life and death, but sometimes what we need is a good read. That's it. And for doing it I got 1000 pounds, thanks very much. I've got no money. It's my sole source of income. So I don't have a problem with it. It's not indiscreet, it's not in bad taste. Yes, pop music is not life or death, and I don't even have to say, "Buy it!" Believe me, I have turned down things that could reap me far more money.

Because they were distasteful?

Right. Or because they capitalized on the fact that I'm famous for doing this thing now. I won't do that. I get solicitations for other charities, and I don't mind that if the charity is all right.

Speaking of commercialization, corporate support of the Band Aid-USA for Africa-Live Aid effort has been prominent, and corporate support of pop artists and tours is increasing. What are your feelings about this?

In regard to Band Aid, to me the whole thing is morally justified. Our brief is to keep people alive, as many as possible. Therefore, anything that helps keep those people alive, anything, is justified. If I can get Pepsi to sponsor an event, and make us money, it's fine by me — regardless of what they get out of it. Because it

keeps more people alive.

Would you take money that you knew was coming from heroin-trade profits?

No, because that is killing people. That's not expedience, that's merely stupid. So I do have some parameters. Big business and the heroin trade are rather different. Obviously, we are not going to go rob a bank either.

Some institutionalized-aid people, who have been working at this thing for a long time, have said you are naive.

Yeah, I've heard that since we've been started. I couldn't give a bollocks. These guys are wringing their hands all the way to the bank: it's not by coincidence that all aid agencies have tripled their income this year. No, I am not naive. I was not naive in the beginning. The very people that probably accused me of being naive we have already funded to the tune of \$7 million. So how naive do they want me to be?

You're talking about Save the Children in Britain?

Sure! Who do you think are using our boats, right now? Who do you think are submitting endless projects to us, for money?

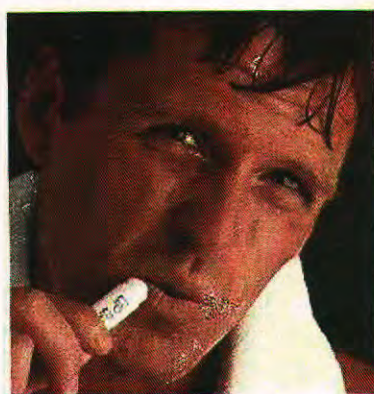
And yet on a television report, one of the people from Save the Children suggested Band Aid has made a huge mistake over the purchase of trucks — that the trucks didn't work and were second-hand. Are you familiar with the report?

Yes. [Seething pause] The trucks they said wouldn't work — every single one of them right now is working. The person who said we'd been naive has contracted us to use those trucks for his agency. [Save the Children U.K. denies that it is using those trucks.] So it begs the question: who is naive? Getting on TV and saying that we'd bought dogs, and now they are trying to contract them from us, those very same dogs.

Where does a story like that come from? And why are we getting so much disinformation — to the point where many Americans think every kernel of grain that's been sent has either "rotted on the docks" or gone into the pocket of an evil Marxist?

Let's look at this truck deal as an example. *Panorama*, which is like *60 Minutes* over here, devoted a program to the mess that the Sudan is — politically and in terms of the drought. And the rivalry between the agencies makes it difficult to have a cohesive aid program.

Now, a cartel of trucks was operating out of Port Sudan. Prior to this, you might have been hearing about the food rotting on the docks. Okay, that is misinformation: food was stored on the docks by the governments and the aid agencies, because what is the point of storing it in the middle of the desert? And it was stored on the docks because there weren't enough trucks to move [Cont. on 64]



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Geldof

[Cont. from 63] it out of the docks.

Not only that, but ships were queuing up outside the port. You get a wheat tanker in, and you're trying to unload it in Port Sudan, and it's not the same as New York or Rotterdam; it's a smallish port in a very poor country. It's manual labor and it's slow. The port can only take one at a time. So they take the food off, and even if there were enough trucks to take it to the countryside, there is only one major road. Imagine a place almost half the size of the United States with only one major road, which is at best 500 miles long.

So we looked at the problem. At least four agencies and the government of the country said the best way we could help was to put in a fleet of trucks. So responding to the experts, we said, "Very well, we will do that." We had two reports done, detailing how best to house the trucks in compounds. The compound would have cost almost \$1.5 million to build. So we located a compound in Port Sudan that had with it a fleet of trucks for \$800,000. Now that's cheaper than the one we proposed to build, plus had the bonus of having trucks already there.

Along with this compound, we got sixty-four trailers, six Land-Rovers, warehousing, oil storage tanks, domestic trailers and \$300,000 of brand-new spare parts. Plus, on top of that, forty trucks. This was all the property of Geosource, a petrol company that was leaving. We said, "This is brilliant!"

Now the reason we needed a compound was that we had bought a fleet of trucks in Kuwait. The survey on those said they were worth \$55,000 each. We paid \$33,000 each, a good deal. We bought 94 eighteen-wheel, forty-five-ton trucks. And we were driving them across the Kuwaiti desert. We needed an agreement with the Sudanese government that would allow us to import the trucks, because the duty on trucks is 250 percent. So we'd have to pay really about \$115,000 per truck. So we went to get an agreement with them, and that took seven weeks.

We also got an agreement allowing us to import tires without duty. And that is a major thing. One reason trucks were breaking down is that no one could import tires. The Sudan has their own tire industry, and they didn't want to depress that. But they only made certain types of tires. And we concluded with them a treaty allowing us to import free of charge tires and trucks.

Our compound was sitting there. We had four trucks working of the forty that had been sitting there, unused, for two years. We brought in batteries and mechanics and spare parts. Now the forty trucks have been operating for two weeks — there's a convoy leaving

Friday with 1000 tons of goods. We broke the cartel at the port. We brought down the cost of freighting, by charging cost-only, nonprofit freight service, plus ten percent, which goes to train local Sudanese so we could give buoyancy to the employment picture: we employ at least 150 Sudanese, and it will rise to 500.

So there is less food "rotting on the docks." We've got a fleet of trucks. We've made great agreements with the Sudanese. We're carrying freight. All in the space of less than ten weeks since the Live Aid concert.

So what motivates this disinformation campaign?

Well, the journalist said to me, "Bob, there's sand on the dashboard!" I said, "If you park your car in England, you get rain on your windshield. If you park a truck in the desert, you get sand on the dashboard." And there were broken axles. Well, in a convoy of ten trucks in the desert, three broken axles are endemic. That is the scope of the problem.

Okay, that's ignorance. Is there nothing else behind these reports?

It's the story. What can you say after all the hyperbole? You can't say, "This was done successfully." The journalist said, aren't you afraid of getting your fingers burned? I said, everyone gets their fingers burned in Africa, and we will too, but the people who are most getting burned are the people who are dying. So we have to put up with getting our fingers burned to stop them from dying. That's the bottom line.

There's a lot of politics behind the pouncing. In this country, we've seen a real right-wing backlash about this.

And there's a left-wing backlash as well. It's weird. It's like the Swift prologue from *A Confederacy of Dunces*: "When a true genius appears in the world, you may know him by this sign, that the dunces are all in confederacy against him." I don't mean me, I mean Band Aid. And I don't say it's a work of true genius, but when you have both extreme right-wing politicians and a Marxist review criticizing you, and you have wishy-washy liberals coming out against you, then you must know that you are offending everybody by helping keep millions alive.

The only way to answer the critics is to go to a starving person that's eating food that a kid in Cleveland helped buy because he bought the book or the record, and ask that starving person what they think about crypto-imperialism.

What worries me is that the kid in Cleveland, who bought the book or record and was full of hope and idealism, is being told by various political interests that he's been had.

Right. And what I find most offensive is not the right-wingers, because I know what their attack is going to be, but rather the well- [Cont. on 66]

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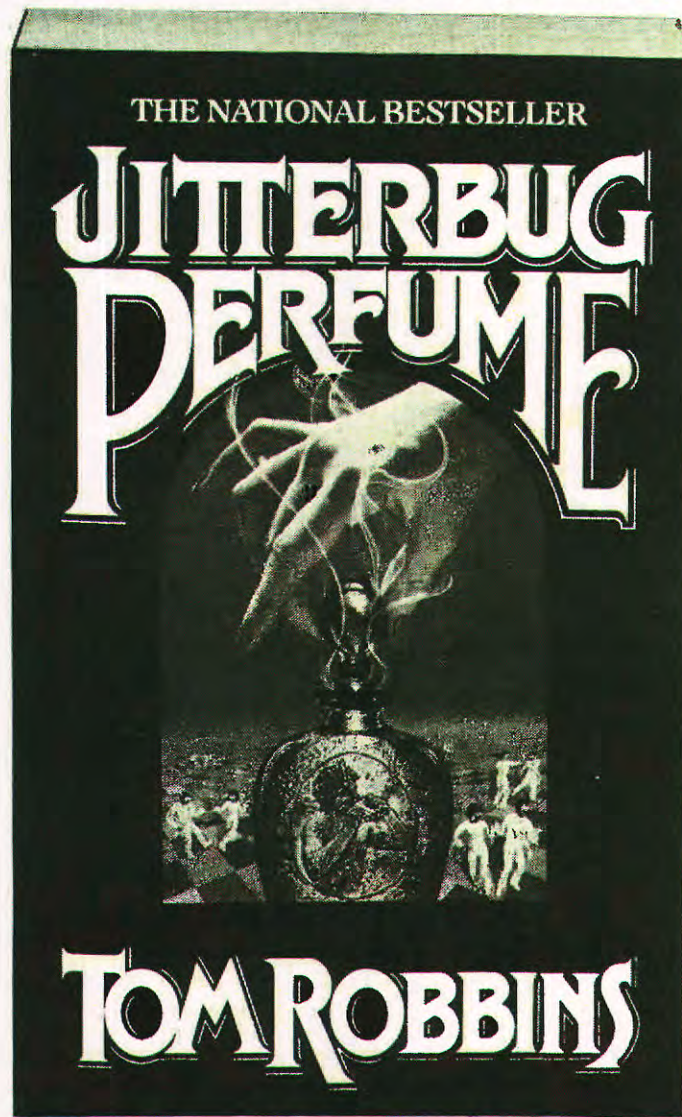
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BANTAM 

Geldof

[Cont. from 64] meaning idiots, as Lenin called them – the saloon socialists, the crypto-revolutionaries. They irritate me beyond belief because all they want is argument – a purely empty and soulless and cynical type of futility. I have no time for that. I dismissed that when I was fourteen.

As you have such a strong feeling against being dependent – on anyone or anything – how does it feel to have so many people now dependent on you?

[Long pause] I don't think they are dependent on me, because if I didn't do this someone else might have.

You've already said that someone else might not have.

[Troubled pause] Ummmm. Well, it is a burden, which I am tired of now. I still feel compelled to do it, but only because the trust is on me to see that peoples' wishes are implemented. I feel it incumbent upon me to keep as many people alive as I can. But I find it burdensome. . . .

Not a great deal of fun, I suppose.

Well, going into government offices on a daily basis and kicking up a fuss on wherever we're going – of course, that's fun. I'm sure in the government offices they look at me and think, "What a wanker!" Which just suits me fine, just fine. 'Cause I like arguing with these guys.

And yet yesterday at the Sport Aid meeting, here were these fourteen conservatively dressed, tie-and-coat, strait-laced sporting-type guys, standing in a warehouse, and they were quite literally awaiting your each and every word.

It is weird. Absolutely weird. I mean, with the politicians, they look at me funny and think, "What is it with this guy? What does he want? Where is he coming from? It's a pisser I got to meet this creep!" But the TV cameras are there, so he has to meet me. And I tell you, I would rather work with these guys than be guilty of the immediate bravado of saying, "You fuckheads!" because by working with these guys I'll get more to serve the people that need help. That's the object. And it's a game of chess. And I enjoy it: anticipating six or ten moves ahead in the chess game. But I don't expect everyone to like me. In fact, if I met myself as a journalist, I'd think, "What a prick!"

Why?

Because I talk too much. I think someone years ago wrote, "Geldof gives voice to the most fleeting idea that passes across his mind." I can't stop it.

[The phone rings for the fifteenth time in an hour and finally Geldof picks it up. He has a brief conversation about the Nobel Peace Prize and returns.]

The *Guardian* says I've gotten the Nobel Peace Prize. They say the com-

mittee has waived the deadline. [In fact, the deadline was not waived, and Geldof will not be eligible until 1986.]

Does that give you a jitter?

No, it doesn't. As I constantly say, I would love to have it, because it's the ultimate prize-giving honor. . . . And people have asked what I would do if I got it. I said I'd pay for my own ticket to get there, because it's such a vibe. But my life does not begin or end with it.

You are protecting yourself from possible disappointment.

Yeah, you do that. To be even nominated just freaked me. It's weird, I'm a fucking pop singer. I've never thought of myself in this context. That's a lot of the problem: people tell me I'm this major political figure, and I don't see myself as that. When people tell me about the Nobel, I think of Desmond Tutu. But then I think, Henry Kissinger – you know, fuck that! So I'm ambivalent about the people who get the peace prize. And I don't actively seek it. Do you understand? It's not crucial to any sense of disappointment or elation, if I get it or not.

I think most people under thirty or thirty-five will be screaming with joy if you get the Nobel.

[Raising his fist in the air] Yeah, like that. But I don't know if I am what they think I am. I can't live up to people's expectations. I constantly let people down, when they meet me, when they talk to me. People automatically think that because I've done this thing, that I believe in peace, and that it's achievable; and that I believe in nuclear disarmament, and that it's preferable; and that I think big business is awful, that it is terrible. Some is, some isn't – what can I tell you? It's too much to say, "Oh, big business, it's all crap!" This is not total rebellion. If someone thinks I'm sloppy or dirty, okay. But if someone asks me to wear a black tie to a function, I will wear one, because I don't want to be rude or to indicate that I am being scathing, or laughing at people.

What have you learned in the past year?

Trust your instincts, and speak to only people who can make decisions. Having the moral power – and having nothing personally to gain by it – allows you to achieve far more in a given area than were you to do something that had a profit at the end of it.

It's the whole thing I realized when I watched Mother Theresa work in Ethiopia. She is so great. She is the living embodiment of moral good. Without a doubt! Watching her play the old-lady shtick, and the real story is her feet, which are all twisted and bent in these beat-up leather shoes. It's like a cliché, but she is so strong, this tiny little old lady. And she has these roadies around her, and sort of a tour manager, and she checks out where the cameras are before she goes to the government minis-

ter. And she'll say, "Oh, I saw that little old empty house, and I'd like to have that for one of our orphanages." Now of course the TV cameras are on this little old nun and this government minister, and what can the guy say? He can't refuse her.

I think people feel a sense of fulfillment when they are gaining nothing. *Nothing* is the key thing here. It puts some value on their work. What is the ultimate value? If you are a journalist and get an extra bit of space for your story about famine relief, then it keeps someone alive. If you're in Sport Aid, you've actually through your job in an international sports body kept some guy alive. That's absolutely true. I've seen it. I've seen someone buy a record and I've watched that dollar or pound translate into keeping someone alive. I do know what I'm talking about.

I ring up these multimillionaires and I say I need a plane or I need a ship. I say, "This is not charity, this is straight business. Give us a plane and you can use Band Aid. You can do what you want with our name, I just want a plane to get this stuff there." We sometimes go to people, and say, "Hey, no one has given any money from this field. Why not?" And they get caught up in it. With the Live Aid book alone, in Britain, we've gotten over 3 million pounds of free advertising. Saatchi & Saatchi, the biggest ad agency in Britain, has given us over 800 billboards for free. Almost every TV company has given us free time. It's a weird thing.

How do you like dealing with these multimillionaires and, in some cases, billionaires, like [Saudi arms dealer] Adnan Khashoggi?

He was all right. He gave us a couple of planeloads for free. I think it's fun, dealing with these guys. If they can do me a favor, I don't hesitate to call.

What's the strangest thing about this whole year?

If I put it all together and looked at it this time last year, that these are the people I would be talking to on a one-to-one level in the next twelve months, I'd wonder what I was going to say to them. As it turns out, I've said exactly what I've wanted to. You more or less are trying to get something from them, and they more or less are trying to stop you. And you have nothing to offer them, except "Why not? Why don't you want to keep some people alive?"

Your current problem concerns long-term development. It certainly doesn't play as well on the news.

Long-term aid is less exciting than the Seventh Cavalry arriving with food to bring people back to life. And that's a problem. The news, as Ted Koppel said, is crisis orientated. And a tree growing ain't a crisis. It's the remedy to one — a crisis potentially in the future [of deforestation and erosion]. So you're dealing with hypotheticals, and TV can't handle that.

It's not result orientated.

Long-term stuff is much more difficult, because you want to make bloody sure you're getting it right. Because you're investing large amounts of money, and people's ongoing lives are at stake. You know, to keep someone alive by giving them a biscuit is easy. Relatively. But with long-term development, you're fucking with their lives, and you better be sure it's good for them and that they can get all advantage and no disadvantage out of it. That takes time.

The problem is, when these people leave their camps, they can't go home, because there is nothing to go home to. Imagine it like the dust bowl in the Thirties. The drought comes. There are no trees because people have cut them down to keep themselves warm at night, wood being the only fuel. Ethiopia is quite high up and quite cold at night. So the trees are gone, so there are no leaves to shade the soil, which bakes in the sun. There are no roots to draw up the water, to moisten the soil and break up the rocks. And so the soil turns to dust, and you can't grow anything. And then the wind comes up and blows the soil away. You get dust-bowl storms. You are left with bare rock. People can't eat rock. As it is, they have already eaten the seed they planted, which didn't grow. So they leave and they try to find food. And the camps become swollen. Typhoid and cholera break out. Then they must leave at a certain point. And where do they go to? Back out into the desert? To wander around for a week or two weeks and come back to camp nearly dead?

So there has to be some way we can help them regenerate. They don't need our help in a sense — they are the best farmers in the world, but they just have the shittiest conditions to farm in. And we do not want to tell them what to do; we want them to tell us the best way for us to operate in their area, to tell us what they need. As I said at the concert, we have helped to keep people alive, and now we must give them a life. And so when the next drought comes, it will not be as disastrous.

Hopefully, we can do something, however minor. Our money is a pittance, a *pittance*, considering the scale of the problem. We must drill for water, build irrigation systems, use appropriate technologies, stimulate the rural economies, help create markets — all these things are crucial. I must tell people: it takes twenty years for a tree to grow, so don't expect to see result-orientated programs. It isn't going to look fabulous on TV. It takes twenty years for children to become adults. And there's 200,000 without parents, we must address ourselves to that. These are the things we must deal with, and they are not so romantic as keeping someone alive. The point is, if we don't do it, they are going to die.



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