

something constantly intriguing about the Ave. It's not the businesses that come and go. It's certainly not the students, who are the true transients of Berkeley. For me, it is the fringe element, the complete gonners, who make me listen.

But is Berkeley cool? Many people seem to think so. They would rather live in Berkeley than Oakland or anywhere else in the East Bay. They give you all sorts of reasons, but it all comes down to "Ya know, it's Berkeley!". But Berkeley is run by the completely evil bureaucracy of the University and a completely inept city government who can't decide on anything. The U.C. bosses around the city ("Repave the street near the campus", "Put a traffic light here", "Fix the sewers near campus") but they don't tell the Berkeley City Council what to do when it comes to Telegraph. Which is fine, cause the U.C. would probably have all the homeless people disappear mysteriously one night without a trace. In fact, Telegraph Avenue would be quite pristine with the U.C. running the show. Basically, Telegraph would be destroyed. On the other side of the coin is the city's *lessez-faire* attitude about it's streets which has created a breeding ground for a new asshole kingdom.

On the corner of Telegraph where I work now, I see women constantly harassed by dickhead rip-off drug dealers. Drugs are fine, but these guys are just total asshole scum. About a year ago, two guys from my work were beaten by People's Park drug fences when they chased down a thief. They both had to go to the hospital from being kicked in the head several times each. And you can't turn those people in. Nothin' will stick and they'll be out lookin' to take care of you later. I mean, it's not as bad as the Upper Haight, but it gets pretty fucked up sometimes. Berkeley's solution is to not let people park their cars on certain streets at certain times during the weekend and having beat cops give out jaywalking tickets to random people at random times.

In the end Telegraph is best left uncontrolled, better to let the experiment come to fruition. It

could possibly work out someday if it was left alone. A show of authority breeds riots. No authority breeds scum. So maybe without authority, scum needs to be educated or eradicated. Possible?

"Hey man, spare change so I can buy some hairdye?" "Spare change so I can buy a gun and kill George Bush?" "Spare change so I can buy some acid?" "Hey man, Jerry Garcia's playing at Madison Square Garden tonight man. He's gonna take it out man, he's gonna fly the cosmos man. Climbing the stratosphere, bending the rainbow. Uh, man, cascading thoughts through time. Dylan's gonna be there man. Well, have a merry Jerry Christmas and a Bob Weir new year".

The deadhead guy is in the store again. Who wants to listen to this guy?! Fucking tie-dye and patchouli oil. Doesn't this guy know that everyone hates him? "Jerry" gets so bad that Chris, the heavy metal door guy at Amoeba, has to chase him down the street sometimes. There's a lot of street crazies that people who work on the Avenue just hate. It's another lame part of Telegraph. Some people just block the whole thing out, they put on personal stereos and walk by like they're in their own personal movie. Telegraph's just too much for some people to deal with.

But I miss the street crazies when they disappear, even the ones I don't like. I always wonder what happened to them. I miss Serge. They say he died trying to fly off some rocks. Another myth? I miss the polk-a-dot man. I'll really miss the Hate Man when he's gone. I mean, I watched him get his start, I followed his career. He was just a kid with a beard and a mini-skirt, now look at him, a full fledged phenom! I'll even miss "Jerry". A little spice gone from the Ave.

The pot still boils on Telegraph. I used to think I knew everything when I was 10 or 11. Now I know more and I still know everything. So I don't really have a clue. But I know I don't like feeling like the weirdest person around, and in this environment on Telegraph I have the comfort of feeling perfectly normal.