



Top Stories



Latest trial of the One Laptop Per Child running in India; Uruguay orders 100,000 machines

Edmund White on writing, incest, life and Larry Kramer



Wikinews talks to the Princeton University professor about his literary

existence, sexual prowess, Chinese politics and his feud with activist Larry Kramer.

Featured story

New Zealand police blocked from laying terrorism charges

Following dozens of anti-terror raids across New Zealand a few weeks ago, the Solicitor General has advised the Police Commissioner, Howard Broad, the New Zealand Police will not lay charges.

Wikipedia Current Events

EU interior ministers agreed that nine member states from central and eastern Europe are sufficiently prepared to join EU's Schengen border-free zone on December 21.

- A US Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crashes in Santa Lucia di Piave, Italy, killing four people and injuring six.
- The US Senate confirms Michael Mukasey as the Attorney General of the United States.
- At least 29 miners are killed in a gas leak in a colliery in China's Guizhou province.
- Pakistan Television quotes President Pervez Musharraf as saying that Pakistan will hold elections before 15 February 2008.
- A 3 metre storm tide heads for the English Channel, causing dozens of flood warnings by the UK's Environment Agency. Prime Minister Gordon Brown calls an emergency COBRA meeting for Friday, as the wave could potentially affect thousands of properties and a threat to many lives. The tidal wave is thought to be caused by gale-force winds off Scotland and high tides. 200 are evacuated.
- At least seven construction workers are killed and 15 others injured when a bridge under construction collapses in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
- Georgia's opposition says it is suspending anti-government protests in Tbilisi, after President

12 'fire bombs' found inside Buffalo, New York apartment house

Buffalo, New York – The Buffalo Fire Department is currently investigating how 12 "fire bombs" ended up inside an abandoned apartment house on 15 Allen Street in Allentown, a neighborhood in Buffalo, New York on Wednesday November 7.

In an exclusive report, Wikinews has learned from a witness who wishes to remain anonymous, that at approximately 12:00 p.m. EST (UTC-5) Heidi Garner called 9-1-1 to report that while walking her dog, it had been attacked by two other dogs when it sniffed under a gate of the house. When police arrived to investigate and retrieve the assaulting dogs, they entered the house and found the 12 fire bombs. It is not known what the devices were made of or what the explosive material was, but unconfirmed reports say the main explosive source was gasoline.

The Hazmat team, the bomb squad and emergency services were then dispatched to the scene, to dispose of the devices according to witness reports. It is not known where they were taken.

Both dogs were immediately put to sleep, because they were fighting over the body of the dead dog. It is not known who is the owner of the dogs, as the house was not rented, and no one was supposed to be living there.

Wikinews has also learned, while investigating the property history, the Erie County's Department of Finance says that the building, which also has a storefront, is allegedly owned by a Richard White who happens to live next door at 17 Allen. White bought the property from Edward G. Koch in 1996. The building was built in 1910.

It is not known what the devices were going to be used for and an investigation is ongoing. It is not known if there are any suspects.

Because of a severe amount of garbage and dog feces, the City of Buffalo has condemned the building.

BBC Resources sale could be unprofitable

The sale of the BBC subsidiary BBC Resources Ltd., has hit a hurdle after it emerged that the BBC could be left with a loss of up to £15 million on the deal. The cost of transferring the pensions of BBC Resources staff from the BBC pension scheme to its new owners could be up to £50 million according to a Guardian Newspaper report.

Managers from the division will meet with union representatives from BECTU on Monday to discuss this and related sale issues. BECTU general secretary, Gerry Morrissey is quoted as saying: "If the BBC gets less than £50 million for BBC Resources then how can it fulfil its duty of care to licence fee payers?"

It is believed that the BBC had hoped that a surplus in its pension fund could be used to bridge the possible £50 million gap — but the trustees of the fund have said "no". A BBC source said: "This is being discussed at the highest level".

Since April 2004 members of the BBC pension scheme have seen their contributions into it increase regularly, the BBC — like many other employers — having reduced its contribution (to 4.5% of payroll) over a ten year period when the stock market was booming in the 1990s.

The Guardian is seen as a reliable source on BBC matters, having reported the proposed sale of BBC Television Centre back in January 2007, with the formal announcement finally being made by BBC Director General Mark Thompson on October 18, 2007.

Background to the sale

The Resources business-to-business unit was formed in 1998 and operates television studios, post-production and outside broadcast facilities for it's parent share-holding company, the BBC. It does not own any studios or premises, its assets being staff and equipment.

Advertised for sale on 16th August in the Financial Times, The Times and Broadcast and last year making profits of £5.2 million with a revenue of £126 million, the disposal — led by Ernst & Young — invited expressions of interest for the whole division or for each of its three operations separately. The BBC has yet to release the names of the short-listed companies.

BBC Resources was the first of the BBCs commercial business-to-business divisions to be set up as a limited company and will be the last to be sold, the BBC having previously divested itself of BBC Technology and BBC Broadcast — BBC Worldwide, formerly BBC Enterprises, will remain in-house as it earns revenue from the archive, media and licencing of

products — in the year to 31 March 2007 Worldwide had a turnover of £810.4 million, generating profits of £111 million.

The BBC wants to use any money raised to be put into international commercial expansion and content, most probably through Worldwide.

It had been intended to float Resources back in 2005, but this was postponed for two years following strike action and ACAS talks in June 2005 — the BBC giving an undertaking that there would be no preparations made to sell the company until January 2007, and no sale allowed before July of this year. The current time-scale would see its disposal by the end of the current financial year in March 2008.

Queues start to form for UK iPhone launch tomorrow

Queues have started to form today outside the London Apple store for the launch of the iPhone. The phone launches tomorrow at 6.02 p.m. UTC exclusively onto the O2 network amid controversy. The iPhone was launched five months ago in the United States and is set to launch in the United Kingdom and Germany tomorrow.

Many people have braved the poor weather and have set up camp in the street in a bid to be the first of many thousands to buy the product on the first day of it's release in the UK. Apple have already sold 1.4 million of the units in the US, some of which have already been imported into the UK un-officially. The cost of the device is set as £269 on a minimum £35 per month contract and will be sold at The Carphone Warehouse, O2 and Apple Stores across the UK.

The iPhone has a touch screen display and can act as a phone, text device, web browser, music player and email client all in one. The launch of the product onto one phone network only has caused controversy internationally and has led to many people using free and paid methods of unlocking the phone to be able to use it on other networks even though it voids the warranty. Apple replied to this move by releasing software patches that, when installed, will prevent functionality of the phone.

2007/08 UEFA Cup: Bayern Munich vs. Bolton Wanderers

Bayern Munich and Bolton Wanderers drew 2-2 today.

Bolton Wanderers opened the scoring after only 8 minutes when Ricardo Gardner scored on a deflected shot. After taking 15 minutes to settle in, Bayern Munich started to attack more frequently and it paid dividends after 30 minutes when Lukas Podolski equalized. Early in the 2nd half Bayern Munich took the lead when Podolski got his 2nd goal of the game. However, with 8 minutes left, Bolton equalized which earned Bolton's 2nd point in the group stage while Bayern lead Group F with 4 points. If Bayern Munich wins their next UEFA Cup match, they are all but assured their place in the next round.

Post-match Quotes

Ottmar Hitzfeld: "The crowd's basically been treated to a good and exciting game with plenty of chances from our team. We were unlucky to go a goal behind so early, that was exactly what Bolton wanted, because it let them sit back and defend. But we recovered well and piled on the pressure, thanks to the outstanding Ribery. After we went 2-1 up we seemed poised to get a

third, we basically had the match totally under control – apparently so much under control that some of my players thought we could relax. Then we went and conceded a totally unnecessary equaliser after a throw-in. That goes down as two points dropped, but I'm still confident we can win the group."

Oliver Kahn: "We became very careless in the last 20 minutes. We kept on attacking, but we forgot that teams in Europe are capable of scoring at any time. It was carelessness pure and simple, and a lack of total concentration. You can't afford that in Europe, you have to concentrate right to the end."

Christian Lell: "Overall, we lacked a cutting edge today. We had plenty of chances before and after the break, but we simply didn't make the most of them. Then we went to sleep for a moment. But we've got to turn our attention to the future, we're in action again the day after next. We need to come away with something from Stuttgart."

Gary Megson (Bolton): "We were missing twelve players tonight, but we still showed Bayern very little respect. But I have to say they've got world-class players all over the field, and they're a really strong side. We didn't have as many chances as our opponents, but we had a couple of good ones, and our application at the end was terrific. I especially want to single out our captain Kevin Nolan, he kept on driving us forward."

2007/08 UEFA Cup: Spartak Moscow vs. Bayer Leverkusen

Spartak Moscow defeated Bayer Leverkusen 2-1 in UEFA Cup action today.

Spartak Moscow opened the

scoring when Pavlyuchenko fired his penalty shot down the middle goal after Stefan Kießling fouled Dmitri Torbinskiy. Adler brought down Ukraine midfielder Maxym Kalynychenko. Mozart scored on the issuing penalty. Freier cut the lead in half but the Bayer Leverkusen were unable to find an equaliser.

2007/08 UEFA Cup: Nürnberg vs. Everton

Everton defeated Nürnberg 2-0 to move top of Group A in the 2007-08 UEFA Cup.

The first chance for the visiting team came just over twenty seconds into the match when Mikel Arteta saw his shot saved by Nürnberg goalkeeper Jaromír Blažek, before Tim Cahill's followup shot was tipped onto the goalposts. Nürnberg had chances from Peer Kluge and Dominik Reinhardt, but Kluge's attempt went just wide of the posts while Tim Howard saved Reinhardt's shot.

Everton opened the scoring late in the match when Berti Gláuber brought down Victor Anichebe, giving the visitors a penalty which Arteta converted. Five minutes later Anichebe scored to extend Everton's lead.

In the other Group A match of the evening, Zenit Saint Petersburg defeated Larissa 3-2. Everton lead Group A with two wins from two matches and look likely to qualify for the knockout stage. Saint Petersburg are second with four points while Dutch side AZ Alkmaar have one point with a game in hand. Nürnberg, defeated in their only match so far, are fourth in the group and Larissa are bottom with two defeats from two matches.

Trailer released for Lordi horror movie

A short trailer for the movie *Dark Floors*, a horror starring Finnish theatrical hard rock band Lordi, has been released.

The film, set in a hospital, follows a group of people left trapped by a broken lift as they are attacked by monsters, and focuses heavily on one particular patient, a little autistic girl.

Dark Floors, acted in English by a largely Finnish cast, cost €4.2 million (approximately US\$6 million) to make. It will make its full premiere in Finland on February 8, 2008, although advance screenings will begin this year.

Lordi recently attended the Cannes Film Festival to promote the movie, where the band's lead vocalist and frontman described it as a "traditional modern horror" and promised "horrific scenes."

Perpetrator of Finnish school shooting dies in hospital

Pekka-Eric Auvinen, the gunman who killed eight people in the Jokela school shooting in Finland yesterday, has died in hospital from a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head.

"He died at 22h14 of a one-bullet injury in the head," said traumatology physician Eero Hirvensalo, chief of the Helsinki University Hospital.

Auvinen, 18, murdered his headmistress, school nurse and six students, as well as wounding one other victim, before turning his gun on himself.

When police special units arrived on-scene and entered the school they were initially shot at, but

when they reached Auvinen he was already unconscious, and no rounds were fired by the police.

Auvinen had no previous criminal convictions, and had received his gun license several weeks previously. He purchased his gun on October 19.

In a text describing himself on the video sharing site YouTube, where he had posted a total of 89 videos, including some showing him firing his gun and others directly referring to the killing, he said that he was "a cynical existentialist, anti-human humanist, anti-social social-Darwinist, realistic idealist and god-like atheist."

"I am prepared to fight and die for my cause," he continued. "I, as a natural selector, will eliminate all who I see unfit, disgraces of human race and failures of natural selection."

Severe weather warnings issued in UK

The U.K. Met Office has issued a severe weather warning as very high winds are expected in Britain and the North Sea. Wind gusts could be over hurricane force, gusting up to 80 miles per hour.

North Sea oil platforms are being evacuated in the wake of the storm. BP is expecting to shut down the production on its North Sea oil platforms on Thursday. At the same time, Conoco Inc. has announced, that they will evacuate around 500 staff oil from platforms at the Ekofisk oil field.

The METAR reports from Ekofisk Oil Platform are indicating continuously intensifying winds. At 11:50 UTC on Thursday, wind gusts of 57 knots were reported

Tidal surge expected in UK

A 1.5m tidal surge is expected tonight in the United Kingdom and could lead to flooding on the Kent coast. The surge is expected to cause "severe" flooding and the Thames Barrier was closed at 2000 UTC. The Environment Agency have said that there is "extreme danger to life and property" and have evacuated 200 people on the coast. 1,300 hundred properties are thought to be in the affected area.

The Environment agency also said that they would have extra staff out to inform the public of the risks but are also asking people to check that others are aware of the potential risks, especially to the elderly.

The surge has been caused by the high wind speeds of over 80 miles per hour, high tides and low pressure over the North Sea. There are currently 42 flood warnings of various degrees, 8 of which are rated severe.

2007 Baseball World Cup Day 2: 4 teams score lots of runs

Batters overpower pitchers on this the second day of 2007 BWC. Italy, Chinese Taipei, Japan, and Canada easily won by ending early the games against their opponents as their aggressive hitting made it look like batting practice.

South Korea vs Venezuela
With both pitchers shutting down their opponents' batting, it quickly became a pitching duel. Through the 6th inning, a 0-0 double shutout was still holding. But at the top of 7th inning, with Kim Joo Chan's solo HR and Lee Seung Hwa's 2 runs HR to break the tie. With further effective batting, Korea went on to beat Venezuela with a final score of 4-0.

USA vs Panama

Last night, assisted by Mexico's errors and some key hits, USA defeated Mexico with 3-0. Today, the Americans faced Panama, who beat Spain, 5-0, in yesterday's opening match. Starting pitcher, Matt Wright, and relief pitchers, Chris Perez and Jeff Stevens, effectively closed down Panama's offense. USA scored 4 runs in the first two innings and went on to a comfortable victory at 7-0.

Netherlands vs Australia
Australia was defeated in extra innings by Cuba's 2 HRs, yesterday, even though the Aussies had the lead in the 9th. However, the Netherlands should not be overlooked. Evenly matched, it became a pitching game like Korea vs Venezuela did earlier. By the 6th inning, the teams were tied 2-2. The game was decided in the 9th inning. The Netherlands scored first in the top half, but in the bottom of the inning, the Dutch committed fielding errors. Australian player Trent Oeltjen secured the game, 4-3, for the Aussies by driving in the game-winning run.

Other results

Group A

Spain 1-11A Italy

Mexico 3-15A Japan

Chinese Taipei 16A-1 South Africa

Group B

Cuba 7-3 Germany

Canada 18A-0 Thailand

Tomorrow's fixtures

Group A

United States vs Italy

South Africa vs Spain

Mexico vs Panama

Japan vs Chinese Taipei

Group B

Thailand vs South Korea

Venezuela vs Australia

Germany vs Netherlands

Canada vs Cuba

Konami Cup Asia Series 2007 Day 1: Uni-Lions reverses China, SK Wyverns ends Japan's winning streak

Konami Cup Asia Series 2007 battled in Tokyo Dome today, with 2007 BWC in Taiwan and upcoming 2007 Asian Baseball Championship chained on the qualification of 2008 Summer Olympics, this series may varied Asian's teams recently.

Uni-President Lions (Taiwan) vs China Stars (China)

An alternative Cross-Strait battle became the routine Opening Match in the Konami Cup. For the Uni Lions, they have more actual strength than La New Bears of last year, and they try to win back title to Taiwan. In the China's way, due to the upcoming of 2008 Olympics, their players want to show their strength at this game.

Even though the starting pitcher Nelson Figueroa couldn't press China's batting with 1-4 behind before the 6th inning, with a Grand Slam HR by Chen Lien-hung and a back-to-back HR by Yang Sen, Uni Lions finally reversed China Stars with 9-5 by 3 HRs.

SK Wyverns (South Korea) vs Chunichi Dragons (Japan)

Evidentially, Dragons didn't take any advantages at their home. Instead of SK, they scored 5 RBIs at 6th and 7th innings and finally won Dragons with 6-3 even though Yung Chun Cho was hit by Kazuki Inoue's 2 RBIs HR at the bottom of 7th inning.

Tomorrow's fixtures

China Stars vs SK Wyverns

Uni-President Lions vs Chunichi

Dragons

Albanian group claims

responsibility for Macedonia clashes

A group, calling itself the Political-Military Council of the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) says it was behind yesterday's armed clash with Macedonian police forces which left at least six dead.

In a statement, the organization claims that its members, formerly of the "Albanian Territorial Liberation Army", had been "forced to assemble a regular military unit in order to protect the endangered Albanian people, and every inch of Albanian territory."

This Thursday, the situation in the Tetovo region village, the scene of yesterday's battle, is calm.

Nobel Prize winner Arthur Kornberg dies at age 89

Stanford biochemist Arthur Kornberg, winner of the 1959 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, died on October 26, 2007 of respiratory failure. He was 89. He is survived by his third wife, Carolyn Frey Dixon.

Kornberg is best known for his discovery (with Severo Ochoa) of "the mechanisms in the biological synthesis of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA)", including the isolation of DNA polymerase I, which led to his Nobel prize. He was the first scientist to make DNA in a test tube. He also studied pathways for synthesis of ATP and nucleotides, and he was the first to synthesize PRPP. In his later years, Kornberg studied inorganic polyphosphates.

Kornberg's son, Stanford structural biologist Roger D. Kornberg, won the 2006 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for work on the molecular basis of eukaryotic transcription.

List of stupidest laws in Britain revealed

The results of a survey by the UK TV station UKTV Gold has revealed the 10 most stupid laws, as determined by the 4,000 participants. It is unclear as to how many of the laws are true, or still in effect but at least one has been determined as being a myth. The ten laws are listed below.

1. It is illegal to die in the Houses of Parliament. 27%
2. It is an act of treason to place a postage stamp bearing the British monarch upside-down. 7%
3. In Liverpool, it is illegal for a woman to be topless except as a clerk in a tropical fish store. 6%
4. Mince pies cannot be eaten on Christmas Day. 5%
5. In Scotland, if someone knocks on your door and requires the use of your toilet, you must let them enter. 4%
6. A pregnant woman can legally relieve herself anywhere she wants, including in a policeman's helmet. 4%
7. The head of any dead whale found on the British coast automatically becomes the property of the king, and the tail of the queen. 3.5%
8. It is illegal to avoid telling the tax man anything you do not want him to know, but legal not to tell him information you do not mind him knowing. 3%
9. It is illegal to enter the Houses of Parliament in a suit of armour. 3%
10. In the city of York it is legal to murder a Scotsman within the ancient city walls, but only if he is carrying a bow and arrow. 2%

At least some of the items on the list have been confirmed as urban legends. A spokesman for

Liverpool City Council commenting on the third item stated "It's something that has been heard of before and does crop up from time to time, but it is absurd... It is a myth and totally made up. It has no basis in fact".

New Zealand police blocked from laying terrorism charges

Following dozens of raids across New Zealand a few weeks ago, the Solicitor General has advised the Police Commissioner, Howard Broad, the New Zealand Police may not lay charges against those arrested under the Terrorism Suppression Act 2002.

On October 15, when the raids occurred, 17 people were arrested and twelve of those were referred from the police to the Solicitor General, David Collins QC, to lay charges under the Terrorism Suppression Act. His consent was needed to lay charges relating to the act. Those arrested were charged with breaching the Firearms Act, however.

Mr Collins came to his decision due to insufficient evidence that there was planning or preparation of a terrorist act of any kind by those activist groups raided, and that the Terrorism Suppression Act is "complex and incoherent". He said that it would be difficult to currently apply the Act to a domestic terrorist. "The key reason I am not prepared to authorise prosecutions under the act is there is insufficient evidence to establish to the very high standard required that a group was preparing a terrorist act."

Those raided included various Māori and environmental activists who had been alleged to have undertaken training in terrorist camps.

Mr Collins does state though that he is not criticising the police based on his decision. "Nothing could be further from the truth. They have acted entirely appropriate in referring the evidence to me."

Some of the evidence will be made public in future firearm charges, but some will be withheld from the public Mr Collins regrettably said.

However, Mr Broad admitted that no other laws had been breached, and charges could not have been laid under the Crimes Act.

Currently, Parliament is proposing amendments to the Terrorism Suppression Act. Due to the use of the Act in the police raids, there are currently widespread protests. Parliament was briefly locked down on Thursday when a small delegation of protesters came closer than is customarily permitted.

2007 Baseball World Cup Day 1: Taichung starts prior to Taipei

The opening ceremonies for the 2007 Baseball World Cup (2007 BWC) were held Tuesday. Torrential rain, however, made Panama vs Spain the opening match of the 2007 BWC in Taichung Intercontinental Baseball Stadium. The original opening match of Chinese Taipei vs Italy was postponed until next week and will be played at Tianmu Baseball Stadium.

"Recently, we got into a sticky situation while constructing a dome due to some protests by non-governmental people, but we'll try to overcome these difficulties in order to present high-level sports to the international market." Chin-chi Wu, the Director of the Taipei City

Bureau of Education, remarked at Tuesday's opening ceremony.

Spain vs Panama

The opening match of the 2007 BWC was played in Taichung after a bad weather Wednesday at Tianmu, Taipei City. The Spanish team became contenders after winning 3rd place at the 2007 European Baseball Tournament. Several of their players hail from Venezuela.

With a single and one RBI by Angel Chavez, and the first HR of 2007 BWC yielding 3 RBIs by Joel Vega, the Panamanian team transformed this match from one of pitching to batting. In the end, Panama beat Spain 5-0. Even though Spain lost this match, their strengths were witnessed by lots of spectators.

Australia vs Cuba

This match was delayed a few hours due to uncertain weather in Taipei. The two teams also played each other in the finals of the 2004 Summer Olympics. Today, the two teams battled in an intense pitching duel.

At the bottom of 9th inning, Frederich Cepeda hit a solo HR and pushed this game into extra innings. Cuba's pitcher Pedro Lazo Iglesias saved his team at the top of 10th inning when the Aussies looked posed to score. Cuba beat Australia 3-2. Osmanis Urrutia's HR at the bottom of 10th inning was the winning run.

Edmund White on writing, incest, life and Larry Kramer

What you are about to read is an American life as lived by renowned author Edmund White. His life has been a crossroads, the fulcrum of high-brow Classicism and low-brow Brett Easton Ellisism. It is not for the faint. He has been the toast of the literary elite in New

York, London and Paris, befriending artistic luminaries such as Salman Rushdie and Sir Ian McKellen while writing about a family where he was jealous his sister was having sex with his father as he fought off his mother's amorous pursuit.

The fact is, Edmund White exists. His life exists. To the casual reader, they may find it disquieting that someone like his father existed in 1950's America and that White's work is the progeny of his intimate effort to understand his own experience.

David Shankbone understood that an interview with Edmund White, who is professor of creative writing at Princeton University, who wrote the seminal biography of Jean Genet, and who no longer can keep track of how many sex partners he has encountered, meant nothing would be off limits. Nothing was. Late in the interview they were joined by his partner Michael Carroll, who discussed White's enduring feud with influential writer and activist Larry Kramer.

On literature

David Shankbone: What questions are you tired of answering?

Edmund White: Is there a gay sensibility? People ask it all the time...the best answer to that I ever saw was somebody said, "There is no gay sensibility and it has had an enormous impact on society." Otherwise, I'm pretty easy. I try to rethink the question each time.

DS: Have you noticed your answers change much?

EW: Oh, yeah. I'm a philosophical spirit, so that means you think through everything each time, unless you're doing ten interviews a day and your own book tour.

Otherwise, if it's like this, you try to think it out.

DS: When you notice you are very flexible in your thought and change notions easily, does it have broader implications for you?

EW: Sure, I think I am often working out things that I later will write. To the degree that I write in an essayistic way, or even in my novels, I work up opinions I try out and use later.

DS: One interview I did was with a young novelist named John Reed—

EW: I know him. Cute boy.

DS: Yes, married, kids. But he feels a problem with creating a new generation of readers today is that the literary canon does not have many modern works at the grade school and high school level, and young readers feel disconnected from reading.

EW: I think he's wrong; I don't know where he is living. If you go to high schools now—because I teach 18, 19, 20 year olds—they don't know the classics. All they know is *The Color Purple* and stuff like that. They all know *The Color Purple* but they don't know *The Fairy-Queen*. They have never read Milton, but they have read Augusten Burroughs or David Sedaris. So, he's wrong. [Chuckles]

DS: But what's taught is not modern—

EW: No, it is!

DS: Augusten Burroughs is taught?

EW: Absolutely! Absolutely!

DS: That would seem like racy material for grade school or high school.

EW: I don't mean in Alabama; in America the curriculum is determined by each community,

which is unlike every other country in the western world. So, in Tuscaloosa they are not going to teach something racy, but in Darien, Connecticut they are.

On work as a gay writer

DS: Does it bother you to be considered a gay writer?

EW: Well there is a question I have asked many many times. I think it would be unrealistic to say I'm not a gay writer. I emerged with a gay literary movement—the Violet Quill—which was a group of gay writers who all started publishing in 1978, and I was labeled from the very beginning a gay writer.

DS: And you embrace that?

EW: Embrace is another thing, but it would be unrealistic to deny it or act like it is some terrible offense, because if I am known at all it is because of the idea of gay literature. Sometimes you wish you could have a wider readership, but every writer wishes that. More women and straight men, but we all wish we had a wider readership. In America, especially, everything is niche marketing and identity politics. That's not true in England, so much, and it's certainly not true in France.

DS: In England you have kids reading Afro-Caribbean literature because they don't have a sense that it's a "black thing"?

EW: Yes, that's right. For instance, most of the well known writers in England under 50 are former colonial people, whether it's Ishiguro—he's Japanese and that wasn't part of the empire, but still—or David Hogue Davies. Carl Phillips, who is a black man from the islands who lives now in New York but is one of England's most important writers. Also Salman Rushdie. In other words, the way we categorize people and dismiss

them is not true of England because in fact the major winners of the Booker Prize over the last thirty years are people who would not have been allowed in a private men's club in England fifty years ago.

DS: Do you see a generation that can assume the mantle for the Violet Quill or is there not a necessity for it?

EW: There's not a necessity for it now, but there was then. It's always been hard to get gay books published, and it's as hard as ever. It's very hard to get gay books published.

DS: Why?

EW: The market is very small. Only 3% of all people are gay and if you take a diminishing dumber-down reading public to begin with, and say you are only aiming for 3% of that market, that's awfully small. So gay novels if they are successful sell 5,000 copies.

DS: What is a gay novel?

EW: One that is marketed as gay. Usually a picture of a cute boy on the cover.

DS: Would Hollinghurst's *Swimming Pool Library* be one?

EW: Well, he's a cross-over writer. He's a little different because he did win the Booker Prize with *The Line of Beauty*, and he was the editor of *The Times Literary Supplement*, which is the most prestigious reviewing organism in the English-speaking world. He has a dark brown voice and he went to Oxford and he knows everybody. He's admired by everybody. London is such a different place because in America writers teach in different universities and they are scattered all across this huge country and they sometimes know each other, but not usually. Whereas in England they are all

journalists, they live in London, and they all know each other. It's a very small world, which is good and bad. One of the good things is that if somebody is really talented like Hollinghurst and has accumulated a bastion of power like the TLS, he'll have enormous impact, and everybody knows it. Whereas here somebody like David Leavitt is teaching in Gainesville, Florida. That's pretty far off the beaten path even though he's a wonderful writer. His last book, *The Indian Clerk*, was reviewed on the front page of *The New York Times* book review very glowingly. Nevertheless, it doesn't sell and nobody cares. It's very hard.

DS: You think that's because of a lack of a community of writers?

EW: I think there's a number of things. One of the things that is important for gay writers, gay publishers and gay academics is to try and develop a market. You can see that with something like *Harry Potter* where everybody thought the children's market had completely vanished and now it's back in a huge way because of that one book. I have a friend, Claire Robson who is a lesbian writer that lives in Vancouver, Canada, being a semi-welfare state has a lot of money for public things. She's trying to develop older lesbian audiences, younger gay male audiences. She's organizing reading groups, study groups, autobiography writing groups. All of this stuff that is paid for by the government.

DS: Earlier you were saying what makes a book a certain genre is a marketing function.

EW: Yes, but I think that what she is doing is trying to create readers who will then buy gay...I'm not saying all gay and lesbian books are cynically marketed. There were a lot of books when I was young

that weren't marketed as gay books; books by Proust, Thomas Mann and so on. Andre Gilde. They had gay themes but the "gay novel" didn't exist then. The problem is we have an awfully lot of good gay writers and very few good gay readers. I don't know why that is, but it's true.

DS: Who are some good gay writers?

EW: Vestal McIntyre, Patrick Ryan are just two.

On sex

DS: You said in an interview that the smartest people are the best sex—

EW: [Laughs]

DS: —what is sex to you?

EW: The most important thing in the world. I had a sex partner who I thought was really great sex but one day he said to me, "I really enjoy playing basketball more than having sex," and I was so offended. I thought that was like somebody saying, "I'd rather go shopping than go to church." It seemed to be so trivializing of this sacred thing of sex that it was hard to see him again after that. So what is it for me? Something very transcendent and I turn my life upside down to have it as frequently as possible. No, it's not frequency, it's quality that's important.

DS: How can something repeated so often still be considered sacred?

EW: What about the mass?

DS: Do you only have sex once a week?

EW: They have mass every day.

DS: People don't go to mass every day, typically.

EW: They can.

DS: They could.

EW: No, I'm having sex more often than once week. It's hard to defend the position logically, I just mean to me it's important.

DS: Is that the main criterion for a partner?

EW: No. I've lived with Michael for twelve years and I don't think that has ever been the key issue between us. He's a writer, compatible and he's one of the most interesting people I know. He's always unpredictable.

DS: You have an open relationship?

EW: Yes.

DS: Do you think that's a necessity in order to have a successful relationship?

EW: I wouldn't preach for anybody else; I mean, everybody's different. But for me, yes.

DS: Where do you tend to find your sexual partners?

EW: On-line, now. Silverdaddies.com; daddyhunt. That's where you go if you're older. Or Manhunt and gay.com. Or slavesformaster. Those are all sites where I've met people.

DS: Are you a slave or a master?

EW: A slave, but I'm not much of one.

DS: Why are you a bad slave?

EW: I'm not into pain and it has to strike me just right or it starts to seem ridiculous.

DS: At what point does it start to seem ridiculous?

EW: Too much leather, bad grammar on the part of the master! [Laughs]

DS: [Laughs]

EW: Like, "Lay down" instead of "Lie down."

DS: Are you always submissive?

EW: I have dominated, it's just not as pleasurable. When I was younger I had slaves, even for a whole year at a time.

DS: You had a slave relationship.

EW: Yes, for a year.

DS: What was that like?

EW: One day we were on acid down in Key West and I realized I didn't even like him, so I broke up with him. I thought it was okay to be doing it if I actually like or love him, but if I really have contempt for him, that's no good. It has to be an expression of love.

DS: What psychological issues come out in a relationship like that?

EW: Unrequited feelings for love from your father, often times. Longings for passivity. A lot of people have that.

DS: To give up the feeling they always have to be in control in their waking lives?

EW: I have a good friend who is a European novelist who was willing to literally hand over all of his belongings to this master, just signed over everything he owned to live in a cage the rest of his life. It turned out to be a fraud to fleece him of his money.

DS: That must have been disappointing for him.

EW: It's a good thing he discovered that in time, didn't lose his money and didn't live in a cage the rest of his life, because he's actually a very interesting person with a very full life.

DS: What psychological issues did you work through in your slave-master relationships?

EW: Different ones. If it's not an on-going thing then you would get tired of it and drop it all together. It's not a very major part of my life.

DS: Did it used to be more so?

EW: Yes. But it was also a fresher scene back then. Now it feels like a very tired scene and I hate people in leather, I think that's so stupid.

DS: Like they are wearing Halloween costumes?

EW: Yeah.

DS: As if the fashion never changes? It's always the same chaps, the same harness...

EW: Yeah...yeah, that's right. One of the interesting things about Robert Mapplethorpe—who was a friend of mine and I have quite a few pictures here by him, including two of me—he had leathers made for him in Amsterdam with red and blue piping, fitting in an interesting way with different kinds of leather. A patchwork effect without making it look silly. He was very elegant. They were attractive and sexy.

On incest in his family

DS: In an interview you said that you are known for the incestuous feelings that were in your family—

EW: [Laughs]

DS: —what advice would you give to couples pursuing an incestuous relationship?

EW: You mean like a father and daughter who want to have a love affair?

DS: Or a brother and sister.

EW: God, move to a more tolerant country, first of all.

DS: Do you think there is a problem with it?

EW: I think incest becomes more difficult if it's intergenerational than if it's in the same generation. And it becomes more difficult if it crosses the sex barrier. For instance, two brothers who have sex with each other when they are growing up, for instance—they're

fourteen and sixteen—it is never a very big deal. Whereas if a brother and sister have sex and are both teenagers, it is often traumatic, especially for the girl, and it will show up in her psychoanalysis later, and problems with her marriage, with frigidity and so on. If it's her father she is sleeping with, it becomes a very big problem for her psychological adjustment.

DS: Is that because there is an intrinsic problem with it, or because of societal reactions to it?

EW: I think that it probably comes to the same thing because in every society it's a problem. So whether it's genetic or societal, I don't know. But it's universal.

Anthropologists try to speculate why that would be. Some people say that it has to do with the divisions of authority and power; for instance, if a daughter is sleeping with her father then her mother has no authority over her because the daughter has in a sense replaced the mother because she's the ideal partner—she's younger, prettier, whatever. It screws up the whole family system. It's a very interesting subject. But I think I'm right: two brothers, no big deal; two sisters, no big deal. Brother-sister becomes a problem, or mother-son it becomes a huge problem.

DS: So you'd advise an incestuous couple not to pursue it?

EW: Oh, I don't give advice! [Laughs]

DS: You had mentioned particular issues about a father may arise in a slave-master relationship. You were sexually attracted to your father, so do you think you worked through your own issues with him?

EW: Yes.

DS: Where do you think that attraction came from?

EW: I don't know; I think it's very hard to explain attraction. If I'm attracted to you right now, why? I don't know why.

DS: But that's something people could perhaps explain more readily than attraction to one's father.

EW: I don't know; I wasn't really raised by my father. I lived apart from him and I would spend every summer with him, but not see him much during the year. My parents were divorced from my age of seven on. I think the incest taboo sets in and turns somebody off sexually with somebody they know very well and lives with. I think with my father he was somebody who every eye in the family was focused on and he was a sort of a tyrant and nice-looking, the source of all power, money, happiness, and he was implacable and difficult. He was always spoken of in sexual terms, in the sense he left our mother for a much younger woman who was very sexy but had nothing else going for her. He was a famous womanizer. And he slept with my sister!

DS: What you describe is power; are you still attracted to power?

EW: No. I mean, my idea of power, but not everybody's idea of power. In other words, I wouldn't want to go to bed with Bush...

DS: Would you let him blow you?

EW: No.

DS: Why not?

EW: I find him repulsive. I wouldn't even let a Republican blow me. That does cut down on a number of people I guess—

DS: What did your father's incestuous relationship with your sister do to you?

EW: I was envious of my sister. I wished I had that kind of access to him.

DS: Did you try?

EW: Yeah.

DS: And he spurned you?

EW: No, it was so subtle he probably didn't even know I was longing for him because, I mean, we're talking about the 1950's in Cincinnati, Ohio, or Texas. He didn't know I was gay until later and he would tell me he had just fired a man because he thought he might be gay, or at least he wasn't married and he wore a ring.

DS: How would you respond?

EW: You couldn't say anything.

DS: Did he ever know?

EW: About me? Yes. Fairly early on, when I was about fifteen.

DS: What was his reaction?

EW: He was horrified, because he thought it was my mother's bad influence because I had led an overly sophisticated life with her. He thought I should lead a simpler life and put in hours and hours of yard work and that would make me straight.

DS: Your mother was attracted to you, right?

EW: Or anybody that was around, I think?

DS: [Laughs] The old doorknob adage? [Laughs]

EW: [Laughs] Yeah. [Laughs]

DS: Do you think that played a role in your being gay?

EW: A classical Freudian explanation would be suffocating mother and absent father makes somebody gay. I actually had both of those elements, but I don't think that's a universal formula for creating homosexuals.

DS: I interviewed an eminent psychoanalyst named Joseph Merlino and he said it's a mixture of things—nature, nurture, both.

EW: You don't try to explain heterosexuality and yet it's extremely difficult to explain.

DS: How so?

EW: If you get beyond the simple biological fact that we want men to fuck women so we'll have babies, that doesn't explain the psychological dynamics of how men come to regard women as so attractive. I think the way advertising works in our media and movies I think it would be make more sense if all men are heterosexual and all women are lesbians, because women are held up as being so attractive and so much the focus of sexual desire, that I think that would be more logical. Especially when I was growing up. You never saw a naked man except Indians in cowboy and Indian movies. You never saw a bare-chested man.

DS: The courting rituals are similar between gays and straights.

EW: The courting rituals are very different, because heterosexual men spend a lot of time courting women before they get them; whereas gay men get them instantly if they are going to get them at all. The most romantic moment with gay men—this is something Michel Foucault said, it's not an original thought—he said the most romantic moment for a heterosexual man is the build-up to sex, and for gay men the most romantic moment is when you put your trick in a cab and you go back home alone thinking about it all. [Laughs]

On American politics

DS: Who are you supporting for President?

EW: Nobody. I guess I'll vote for

Clinton, but very reluctantly. She's more experienced and has had a lot of time to think about government and how to deal with Congress. She's learned from her own mistakes, and from her husband's mistakes, too. I think he learned from his mistakes. The way they had such a disaster with their health proposals, or their gay proposals for the army, I think they learned from that and she has benefited from all that. She was a full partner.

DS: Would we benefit from having Bill Clinton back in the White House?

EW: He's charismatic and a wonderful mind. Since he's been out of office he's been involved in a lot of public welfare interests, whether it be international poverty or AIDS. The Tsunami. I would say he's broadened his interests since he was in office.

DS: Nicolas Sarkozy: fascist or liberator?

EW: Neither, but he's better than a lot of people thought he would be. He's appointed a lot of Socialists and even Communists to his government. I think people feel he is not part of the Grandes Écoles system, even though I think he went to one, but he doesn't seem quite as much a part of the establishment.

DS: So you have no issue with him?

EW: No, not at all. Maybe I will, and we all thought we would, but he's turned out to be better than that idiot Ségolène Royal with her frozen smile.

DS: How has the Iraq War affected you?'

EW: It's very depressing. Michael is more conservative than I am and he'll get mad at me—
Michael: But it is depressing. It's

very depressing.

EW: It's depressing—this is where he'll get mad at me—I think it makes it depressing to be an American. Especially when you're abroad, because most Europeans we know are very sophisticated in that they can separate an individual from his country's politics better than most Americans can. Remember everybody talking about Freedom Fries.

Michael: It's all ridiculous. I don't get embarrassed being an American, but I definitely avoid going places where Americans aren't popular.

EW: But aside from all that, just living here year after year when you have a government that you hate, and that is systematically destroying the fabric of our society, and just taking apart everything they can think of. "Health care for children? Veto that. School system? Let's destroy that." Whatever you can think of. "Prisoners rights? Let's create Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib." Everything! I just sent a check today to the ACLU. It's really the time to be doing that.

DS: Nadine Strossen is such a believer. I guess you need to be a believer to be President of the ACLU. What trait do you deplore in yourself?

EW: It sounds ironic because I have been publishing recent years a book every year, but I actually feel I am lazy. I'm very unfocused, so I guess I get things done because I'm broke all the time, so I have to do it for money. Another trait I don't like about myself is an "I'm right and your wrong" quality. There's a slight dictatorial side, probably because I'm a teacher and I'm given that authority based upon my position. I can run roughshod over other people's opinions and not really take

enough time to tease out what they are really trying to say, what is valuable, or what I can learn from them even though I completely disagree with what they are saying.

DS: You have to choose whether to blow up China or India, and if you do not choose then they both go. They are roughly equal in population according to their last censuses; which do you choose?

EW: I think I would blow up China. I majored in Chinese in college and I was a great admirer of traditional China, but I don't really like modern China very much and I've never had a desire to go there. I feel like whatever wisdom or culture or civilization they had they pretty much destroyed through the Cultural Revolution, paradoxically, in the Seventies. I think that will end up being the worst thing that happened in the Twentieth Century, worse than the Holocaust. It killed more people and it destroyed the fabric of their society more than anything. India never really had anything comparable. They had the British, they had the Raj, and that was pretty damn bad, I guess, but it was an ambiguous thing. It preserved a lot of things and it destroyed others, but it consolidated power in India. It had been so many different little kingdoms.

DS: So is China.

EW: Yeah, that's right, although the Chinese empire is very old. There is nothing comparable in India.

DS: It's more cohesive now, but China, once the Communist Party loses its grip on power, it's going to fall apart.

EW: I don't think so. Maybe Tibet.

DS: You have Muslim provinces,

you have Tibet. You have problems in the south with the north. Hong Kong. You don't think that there will be a domino effect that when one goes, the others will go?

EW: I don't think so. You know why? China has been one country. Obviously Tibet is a different problem. Manchuria is a different problem. Mongolia is a different problem. But if you forget all those problems, and you just talk about the central provinces—which are immense—that's always been one country for almost 4,000 years with an emperor ruling it. Starting with the Han Dynasty, which is about the time of Christ, with an elaborate civil service system. That's what Confucius was about.

DS: So the age of the end of the empire won't touch China? It won't be a Soviet Union?

EW: If you look at Russia and all those places, like Georgia and Uzbekistan, those are all different little countries and it was the Soviet Union that dragged them all together and when the Soviet Union croaked they all fell apart. I think China traditionally was unified.

On his intimate relationships

DS: What do you regard as the lowest depth of misery?

EW: I think I felt it about three years ago. I was dropped by a guy I was really in love with, and it took me back to my late twenties when that had last happened. I didn't even think I was capable of that kind of suffering anymore, but I just cried every day for a month and all the time. I went to a shrink then, and he said, "I can't even work with you, you're so depressed."

DS: Why did he drop you?

EW: He found a new lover and he discovered he wasn't really a top, but a bottom.

DS: How does having a relationship like that fit in yours and Michael's?

EW: Nobody seems to understand it very well, and I'm not sure we've even articulated it. Michael has a full time boyfriend who is a German who is quite a bit younger than he is. He's a historian, he's a PhD student in history. And I have a fulltime boyfriend who is a PhD student at Harvard in philosophy. We both like each other's boyfriends.

DS: Do you think not articulating it is what makes it work?

EW: Yes. We're very very affectionate and we're both bohemian. Neither of us ever had an ideal of getting married and having a white picket fence, adopting a Korean girl or being respectable, or anything like that. When we first met we both realized we are each sluts, so we cheerfully acknowledged that and went our way. We're in it for the long haul with each other. Most couples, straight of gay—50% of all straight couples end in divorce—I think it would be even higher if people could afford to get divorced. Partly the people who stay together are limited financially. Anyway, I think that if you're really in it for the long haul, you have to give each other a tremendously long leash.

DS: Do you always practice safe sex?

EW: I do. Well, unless it's somebody who is also positive. If I'm positive, and somebody else is positive and he wants to bareback, that's fine.

DS: But there's different strains of the virus, correct?

EW: Or so they say. I don't think so.

DS: You've never known of anyone who has said, "Oh, now I have a different strain and none of the drugs are working."

EW: No. I think that's something doctors told people because they were trying to scare the ones who are already positive and weren't responsible towards their partners. They were trying to give them a personal reason for practicing safe sex. "Oh, your own health will deteriorate more if you don't watch out." I think that's bullshit. I don't always tell my partners I'm positive, but I always practice safe sex with somebody I don't know and I just assume that's enough. If they ask, I always say the truth.

DS: What difficulties have you encountered physically from being HIV positive? Has it been a difficult row to hoe?

EW: No. I found out I was positive in 1985, and I was probably positive already for five or six years at that point because I was very active sexually in the late seventies, early eighties. I would go to the St. Mark's baths, which was very close to where I lived, and get fucked twenty times in an evening, so why would I have not been positive then? The first test became available in 1984, but I moved to Paris in late 1982 and I wasn't really living near any place. So when I had the test done in 1985 in Zurich, the results had to be sent to America to be analyzed; we had to wait three months to get the results. That's when I found out I was positive. I only started taking meds a few years ago.

DS: Why did you start?

EW: My doctor advised me to because my counts had dropped below five hundred, or something. They had always been around 700 for years and years. Suddenly it seemed like they were drifting

faster and faster down. I thought if I took meds I would have more energy, and I did. I used to take two naps a day.

On Edmund White

DS: How would you like to die if you could choose your own death?

EW: A heart attack in my sleep. That's the most beautiful death. You're not conscious of it, the pain, and you're gone in a second. It's no fuss for anybody else, either.

DS: What about dying consciously makes you uncomfortable?

EW: Nothing, except that usually if you're conscious you have a long, lingering disease.

DS: You could be hit by a train.

EW: That's fine, but I that would be more painful than dying of a heart attack. Maybe not, that might be good. A lot of times when I'm in a storm in a plane, I think I wouldn't mind if it goes down.

DS: Do you believe in a higher power?

EW: No, not at all. I'm glad people do believe who are in the recovery programs. I was an alcoholic—I guess you have to say I am an alcoholic—and stopped drinking in 1983 and I never went to AA or anything. I was living in Europe where it was awfully hard to find AA in English, or even in French. It just isn't part of their mores. It was very easy for me to stop. It was impossible for me to moderate, and very easy to stop. Same thing with smoking. I smoked four packs a day for twenty-some years, and from one day to the next nothing.

DS: If you're going to sin, you're going to fuck the devil?

EW: [Laughs] Well, I think I'm very compulsive. So it's not like

I'm defiantly smoking four packs a day or defiantly drinking three bottles of wine, but it's just what happens when I start doing those things.

DS: What's your favorite curse word?

EW: I don't curse very much and everybody agrees with that. Don't you agree with that Michael?

Michael: His favorite curse word is fuck. There's a lot of fucking.

DS: Have you ever altered your opinion of somebody based upon their star sign?

EW: If they brought up their star sign that would alter my opinion of them. [Laughs]

DS: What would you find a bigger turn-off in bed: somebody who was flatulent or somebody who spoke in a baby voice?

EW: A baby voice. [Laughs] I think because flatulence I guess I could see as part of normal human physiology. It's not an affectation if you fart. If you talk in a baby voice it's a deliberate affectation and I think affectations in general are repellent.

DS: Is that one especially repellent to you?

EW: It's funny that you mention it because I have a character in my new book *Who Told A Dream* who is an androgyne, and it's based upon a real person. I wrote a book called *memoirs of androgyne*. Not only did she want men to treat her—him—as a BABY, but he would give a blow job to anybody if they would say to him, "Isn't this the cutest whittle baby that every did live," and so on, and bounce him on their knee. I suppose if somebody was really kinky and dirty and wanted to be powdered and burped I could get into it, because I tend to like things that are demented like that. But if you

were just in bed with a guy with a five o'clock shadow like you and all of a sudden he started going, "Goo goo goo goo" it would be a little alarming.

DS: What trait do you deplore in other people?

EW: Injustice. It can be anything like if it's the laundry man refusing to pay up to a little old lady, and he's lost ten of her shirts and gives her some rigmarole and gives her forms to fill out...I'll defend her. I get really hot under the collar. It's not injustice done to me, it's anybody.

DS: What do you value most in your friends.

EW: Loyalty is very important, but I'm very easy-going with people. For instance, we have a friend who really was impossible recently, but I guess if I really like the person I see why he does these things and I'm not going to reproach him. I don't give advice and I don't reproach people.

[edit]

On Larry Kramer

DS: What role do you think you play in the gay community?

EW: I don't think I'm very prominent in the gay community. A typical Ed White moment was—I was one of the six founders of the Gay Men's Health Crisis. Last summer they had the 25th anniversary of the organization. I went to the party because I was invited. There are only three of us who are still alive of the six original founders. Everybody was dressed in black, they were all in their thirties, they were all AIDS professionals, and nobody knew who I was. I just wandered around completely by myself. Hillary Clinton whizzed past me, looked at me in kind of a strange way as if she might know me, gave this very

clever, very well-informed, very rehearsed talk, and whizzed out. Then I looked in this dining room where I saw six hundred chairs where they would all be thanking each other and congratulating each other, and I thought, "Get me out of here!" and I left. And nobody noticed.

DS: Do you have a relationship with Larry Kramer at all?

EW: We're enemies.

DS: Why?

EW: We were friends and I think I stayed friends with him longer than anybody else, but even I finally gave way because he attacked me in print in the most vile and disgusting terms.

DS: What did he say?

EW: When I first moved back to America 10 years ago—

Michael: It was before that, the year before that.

EW: The year before. I had a book that came out called *The Farewell Symphony*, which I think was maybe my most important book. I sent Larry an early manuscript of it because I wanted his opinion of it. All he said to me was, "Did you really have that much sex?" and I said, "Well, Larry, everybody did in the seventies except you."

Michael: Although that's not what he was saying in that documentary last week.

EW: Yeah, there was a documentary about Fire Island where he was talking about he, too, was part of the scene. Which wasn't true because he wasn't; he's too ugly. [Chuckles] Anyway, suddenly he decided to attack my book and me months before it came out in America in these really disgusting terms. "Edmund White's mouth is busier than his toilet—"

Michael: No it was your ass. Your ass has been busier than a toilet

seat.

EW: Oh, right, that's right. And all this stuff.

Michael: It's kind of a mixed metaphor...

EW: Right, it doesn't even make sense. He's an idiot.

Michael: But before that, he denounced you in front of a live audience, before it reached print.

DS: But up until then—before that, you had been...

EW: Yeah, we had been friendly-ish

Michael: Larry was resentful that he had gone to Paris in the middle of the crisis.

EW: And he was mad that I had written a biography of Jean Genet when every gay writer should be thinking about AIDS and only about AIDS.

Michael: He thought Ed had alighted himself out of the situation. He doesn't know what real writers are, because what they do is spend their time writing and not yelling in public.

EW: I only have an issue with him because he attacked my work at a time when I was very vulnerable.

DS: Why were you so vulnerable?

EW: I was just moving back to America and it was my biggest and best book, and it was a book about the AIDS crisis... [Sighs]

Michael: And you hadn't published a novel in about ten years

EW: Yeah.

Michael: And he really did go in to attack mode at this conference in Key West, and sitting next to Ed at the table, hogging the microphone, and yelling and denouncing him to the audience and telling them,

"Where are our Tolstoys? Where are our Flauberts?" I mean, as if he were anything close to that. Using it as a platform to talk about his own novel, which he has been promising for such a long time.

EW: That was already ten, eleven

years ago.

Michael: Yeah, he was about to give the world his Tolstoy. And that summer he denounced Ed's book in print, they published part of that novel—his novel—in A&U, Art & Understanding. It was a big literary issue with Andrew Holleran and—

EW: --and his was just laughable.

Michael: His was like, "Nurse

Fuckface turned to Doctor Cuntbrain—" Literally!

EW: Names that were like out of Dickens.

Michael: But with tits, and—

EW: Vulgar.

Michael: Well, it was retarded. It was not funny. He's not funny, is the problem. If he could make that funny, which he could if he had a Monty Python kind of sensibility, but it was just embarrassing. It was kind of gooey. But of course nobody reacted like that because they like Larry because of his political dossier. So, that's just my little bit on the whole thing. He's done a lot of great stuff in terms of AIDS movement, patient rights and all that stuff. That's fine. But he's also kind of a smear artist.

EW: And everybody forgives him! He'll call Mathilde Krim, who is one of the most important people in the eighties in the fight against AIDS, and she'll say she's like Himmler. Then she'll come on television and they'll ask, "Dr. Krim, what do you think of Larry Kramer comparing you to Himmler?" and she'll say, "Oh, Larry, I love him!" And that's what they say. They all love him. I don't. I think he's an asshole.

Today in History

1872 – The Great Boston Fire began, eventually destroying over 750 buildings and causing US\$73.5 million in damages in Boston, Massachusetts.

1918 – German Emperor William II abdicated, Prince Maximilian of

Baden resigned as Chancellor, and Philipp Scheidemann proclaimed the Weimar Republic.

1953 – Cambodia gained independence from France and became a constitutional monarchy under King Norodom Sihanouk.

1967 – French comic book heroes Valérian and Laureline first appeared in the pages of *Pilote* magazine.

2005 – Suicide bombers attacked three hotels in Amman, Jordan, killing a total of about 60 people and injuring at least 115 others.

November 09 is Diwali in Hinduism, Sikhism and Jainism (2007); Muhammad Iqbal's Day in Pakistan; Inventor's Day in Germany, Austria and Switzerland; Schicksalstag in Germany.

Quote of the Day

To love another is something like prayer and it can't be planned, you just fall into its arms because your belief undoes your disbelief.

~ Anne Sexton ~

Word of the Day

blithely; adv

1. Without care, concern, or consideration.
2. In a joyful, carefree manner.

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