

MARCELINE JONES

It was not until we came to California that J:m began actually preaching that there was no God--you know, a materialist perspective-more openly. Prior to that he did, however, point out the inconsistencies in the Bible. People left, outraged when he began this. And he was forced off the air for teaching this on his radio broadcast.

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We had a wire-haired terrier dog who was really in bad condition-- the fur was all stuck together, and Jim chose that time-- when all these starchy ministers were sitting in the house, eating, to clip the dogs hair short and lather him with this foul smelling ointment, and he turned the dog loose in the ~~six~~ middle of the living room. God, what a stink. ~~He~~ Everybody was so horrified by the whole thing, and I don't think he planned to disrupt ~~any~~ everything, but with Jim you never know; ~~h~~ He was just so unconventional, such a non-conformist-- ~~and~~ that rather than him conforming to their notions of propriety, they in a sense, especially my mother, were forced to conform to him.

Right after we were married we had gone back to spend the summer, we were working and living with my parents, so we could get money for the university next fall. Jim wasn't nineteen yet, and my mother made some remark about it not being Christian to intermarry. Well. Jim stated throwing our stuff in bags and ~~suitcases~~ suitcases, and we got in the car and went to Indianapolis and they didn't know where we were for a long time. And when we went back to Richmond, we'd go to his mother's place. If my parents walked in the front door, he walked out the back door. And this went on for months, until finally they had to bend. There was no compromise in him. I would speak, but he would not. They came his way.

We were students at Indiana University during the peak of the McCarthy years, and the FBI sat right in the social studies classes listening to what the professors were saying. There was a peace convention being held in Chicago, and Jim, out of curiosity, called the FBI from his mother's phone-- sort of trying to feel out their attitude about it. ~~He~~ He didn't give the phone number, nor his name, but the next day the FBI came to his mother's job and grilled her for four hours in a glass enclosed office, in the middle of the work area, where everyone could see. She didn't know what it was about, but she took the fifth, and they said it was "Commie talk." But they finally let her go.

When I met him in the hospital and he was just an orderly, he became upset over an aide who was not being treated right by the hospital, and he got me interested in the case. I think that was the first real issue I ever got interested in, and went to the administration. Jim made me know the importance of fighting each ~~xxxx~~ injustice as you came to it-- ~~xxxx~~ whether it was one person or a hundred people. I was aware of injustice but he gave me the courage and showed me the vehicles for fighting it, by example. There were many many times his life was threatened-- it sort of became a way of life. Right around the time he became director of the ~~Rayors~~ <sup>Rayors</sup> Commission on Human rights he decided to tear down the Bible. ~~xxxxxx~~ <sup>He</sup> had a radio broadcast, and he stared on the radio,

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he began to tear the Bible apart. ~~Max~~ The campaign against him was horrendous-- not only did he get telephone calls around the clock, threatening his life, but the radio station contributors and advertisers, said if you dont get rid of Jim ones were going to cut off your funds which, as a matter of fact, they did. People would call and say "WE know where your child n are, we know which way Suzanne walks to school." There were a lot of incidents-- police called on him because he refused to eat in a place where a black had to carry his lunch out, almost daily things. One of the things, he went through a period--- he never wanted to be a part of the capitalist system, and he'd beat that system any way he could. I remember we had a car that we'd bought on time, this was when we were first married, and even if he had the money for the payments, when ~~they'd knock on the door to collect--he'd pretend~~ they'd knock on the door to collect--he'd pretend he wasnt home. I think they finally repossessed the car, but not before we'd gotten a lot of use out of it. Our life has been one crisis after another, so its hard to recall separate incidents.

I was still pretty bourgeois, even after years of marriage, but the two years that I went with Jim before we got married prepared me some. I knew he was a nonconformist when I married him. There were times when I would say to him, after the kids, "Youre going to die. Theyre going to kill you and lets take the children, and rear these boys, they need a father, lets rear them to know what we stand for and what we believe in. And of course, he was right, you couldnt do that. In the first place, he could never leave his people, and in the second place how could our children learn what we believed in if we didnt live it-- if we went off and did our own thing and saved our hide, ~~xxxx~~. But I never wanted him to ever compromise. It all made sense to me, ~~xxxx~~ even though before I'd met him, it'd never been introduced to me. My father and mother were Republicans. My father ran ~~me~~ on the Republican ticket for City Council. The most rebellious thing I ever did before I met Jim was to walk in and say I was ggoing to vote a straight Democratic ticket in front of a group of people who knew my ~~me~~ father was a dyed in ~~the~~ wool Republican.

I met a woman at Richmond State Hospital, who met Jim before I married him, and she gave me some counsel at the right time. She said he's something special, dont expect him to sit down for a meal at the same time every day, I wrecked a marriage that way. I had a mad and it wrecked it because I tried to make him conform to what I thought he should be, and he's gone. Dont do that with Jim. Dont expect him to be there at the same time everyday." ~~xxxx~~ And that was a little hard for me at first...

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He drew crowds and crowds. There were meetings in Cincinnati, Ohio, where people would come at two o'clock in the afternoon to get a seat at seven thirty at night and then crawl in the windows. They'd want his shadow to fall on them. They were begging for him to evangelize around the world. He could've taken that Oral Roberts trip but he wouldn't do it. And I would try to encourage it, I'd say this would be a great opportunity. But he would say, no I've got to stay put and live the life in front of the people. It's easy to hop from one place to the next, and collect their offerings and not have to set an example.

I remember one time I went to a restaurant with some black friends and the maitre d said we needed a reservation and I said, Wait a minute I've eaten here many times before without a reservation. They finally gave us a table, but they salted our food so badly that it was impossible to eat. Jim had a television show then and he <sup>went on the air and</sup> fasted publicly ~~and~~ until this one restaurant changed its racist policy.

Jim always tried to be in a position of taking the starch out of people. He attracted the working class people because he was so unaffected. Some of the older members had been very starchy, social climbers, and this one day a week religion suited them fine. But I remember a man coming in in his work clothes, and he stood up and he said I didn't know whether or not to come to church because if I went home to change I'd miss the service and I didn't know if I should come like this. He had on overalls and he was dirty. And Jim said "that's quite alright, I want you to feel completely comfortable. I want you to know that I have a huge hole in the seat of my pants, right now." And the religious mentality. God, they were Methodists so they baptised people in this little bowl, and well, baptism didn't mean one thing to Jim, but he thought "if I'm going to have to baptise people then I'm going to baptise them." So he drug a huge horse trough into the church. That whole church had to go through that same thing my parents did, only my parents couldn't escape because he was going to be their son-in-law. But the church people could escape and a lot of them fled, he was just too much for them. He tugged this huge horse tank up on the platform, and he immersed them. Probably wanted to drown them. And I'd been in the Methodist church, so all day Saturday I'd get the hymns together and work out a program... hymn number so and so, Doxology, stand, sit, sing, pray, ... and he'd spend all day Sunday ignoring the whole thing. He wouldn't even look at it. And the first Easter we had service, we had children there and he asked them in service "Now what do you want to sing?" And they said we want to sing "here comes Peter Cottontail, Hopping down the Bunny Trail" to the whole congregation, this very starry congregation sang "Here Comes Peter Cottontail..." God, they didn't know what to make of him....

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The next ~~E~~aster, one month before Easter, ~~he~~ he comes home with twenty-six little chicks that he said he was going to give to the children at Easter. And I said, ~~x~~ Jim, in one month they'll be a pretty good size! ~~And~~ he said Well, they'll be big enough to defend themselves. So we had a bathroom that was about four by four, it was a really tiny thing, and he put all twenty six of them in that bathroom. And you know, I'd never really prayed for anything to die before, but I thought now out of twenty six, so many is bound to die... All night, chirp, chirp, chirp... Not one of those chicks died. And when it comes Eastertime, he couldn't give any of them away So he'd transport those chirckens around to various chutch members and he'd pay board for them. He'd ~~buy~~ buy the feed. And when they got tired of caring for them he'd pick those chickens up and lug them someplace else. We lived out near the edge of town, where there were some people in a rural area. Until finally they got pretty old and big and there wasnt anykawe else to move them, and he took them to the person that he thought would kill them most humanely and he gave them out to ~~the~~ the poor. He loved animals so much.

He took an awful lot of the stmach out of me. I was too proud of being "clean" and "dignified." I got over worrying about what people thought. One time in Indianapolis we had a slumber party and we invited children from all the poor districts to our party. We got out and knocked on doors to bring the porr into the church. Anyway, we had this slumber party and that mustve been when we had bedbugs introduced inot our house. ~~And~~ they were everywhere and I was horrified. We had to redo the whole house, paint i t and everything and we finally got rid of them. I was keeping it a dark secret that we'd ever had anything ~~like~~ like bedbugs in our family. I had never seen one in my life and with my background I thought it was a great source of shame. I didnt want anyone to know about it, but Jim got up in front of the whole church and announced " I want all of you to feel welcome to come visit us anytime, because now we've rid ourselves of our bedbugs."

When we were first married we ~~found~~ moved into this papartment in Bloomington, Indiana and I was a registered nurse and I worked in the operating room. The place, the apartment, was alive with roaches and that was something else. We'd never had roaches where I grew up and you know, my God, what a disgrace to have roaches! And I was trying to get rid of them and I came up on Jim one time and he was talking to those raaches: "e said, "ou better get down in that crack, if you dont, sh'll kill ya." And he would put food down in the cracks to feed the ~~roaches~~ roaches, so they wouldnt have to come up where I was... He was the only man I ever knew who would rescue baby mice, feed them and turn them loose when

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they were strong enough to make it on their own. He loved animals. Anytime he'd come home and say "guess what?" I knew he had another ~~socioc~~ animal. One time he came in, in Indianapolis with this huge St. Bernard dog. And I said "where did you get this dog?" And he said "I was driving down right in the middle of Indianapolis, and this big dog just put his paws right up on the windows and the traffic was going by, and I just opened the door and the dog got in." We had monkeys. He sold monkeys to build a community center, got land for a community center in the South part of the city. "s was just twenty one or twenty two. We had an antester, climbing up the side of our house in Indiana. Neighbors would say "Goddamnit Rev. Jones we dont live in a jungle!" He always had a way with ~~socioc~~ animals.

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