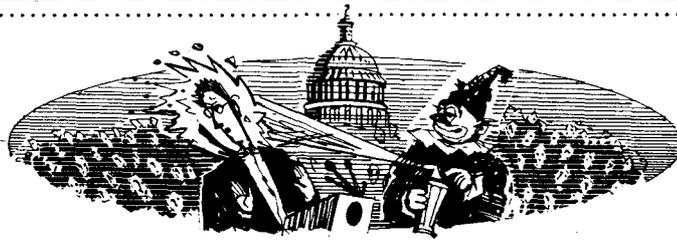




# THE WASHINGTON SPECTATOR



Peter, Paul and Mary added their names this January to the rolls of the more than 3,000 "messengers" who have been arrested at the South African embassy on Massachusetts Avenue. Several others—Peter's daughter, Mary's daughter, Mary's mother, a rabbi, and some Unitarians—went along for the ride. To kick things off, the movement held a media event *cum* rally on a tree-lined side street half a block down from the embassy. Bishop Desmond Tutu showed up to give his blessing, which brought out scores of press people—as many press people, in fact, as protesters. My own reasons for going were part personal, part professional, but mostly personal. Fulfilling a fantasy I've had since I first heard "Puff the Magic Dragon," I just wanted to see Peter, Paul and Mary get thrown in jail.

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Before the rally began, I disdained the perks and access allowed me as a highly



respected member of the media community and situated myself instead in front of a group of school girls. The day was bitter cold, but the girls were having a wonderful time. They each wore a green armband (some wore two) and most carried signs that read, "Jerry Falwell doesn't speak for me." In the manner of young girls, their conversation was rapid-fire and giggly. One, about fourteen, admired another girl's sign, a broad, garish thing with an outline of South Africa on it. On its back was stamped: "Liberation Graphix." "That has got to be the cutest one I've seen," she said. "By far. It is so cute." The girl with the sign was obviously pleased but only shrugged. "You can get them anywhere," she said. Then, distracted by a mother pushing a stroller, she cooed, "Oh, look at that baby!" Another shouted, "Babies United Against Apartheid!" They began giggling. "Speaking of babies, where's Des baby? Des baby, where are yoooooo?"

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Bishop Tutu, as he is more widely known, arrived late, driving up the side street in the Mayor's motorcade from the back way, out of the crowd's view. He sat in the limousine for several minutes, giving an exclusive interview to a reporter from the *Post*. Peter, Paul and Mary and several other celebrities—Pat Schroeder, the left-wing congressman from Colorado, Roger Wilkins from the Institute for Policy Studies, and the ubiquitous Mary Frances Berry of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission—gathered round and bowed and shuffled in front of Tutu when he finally stepped out of the limo. As is their wont, the protesters began chanting to pass the time: "Apartheid's wrong/Let's sweep it away./That's A-F-R [beat] I-C-A"; "Break the ties/[clap-clap-clap]/With Apartheid." They finally settled on a simple antiphony, probably because the white people present (they were a majority here) had no trouble following it: "Freedom Yes!/Apartheid No!" I moved to the back of the crowd, next to a young couple who looked like they were skipping classes at Georgetown.

The girl leaned with her back against a tree, her boyfriend leaned against her; she held him tight. She chanted "Freedom Yes!" and he threw his head back in a mighty grimace, bellowing, "Apartheid No!" The chant continued for a minute or two, until a frenetic climax. Loud cheers and applause followed, and the boy wheeled around, pinned the girl against the tree, and kissed her deeply. She bent her knee slightly, taking him in as her right foot edged up the trunk of the tree.

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Throughout all this the press photographers—the shooters—grew impatient. Where was the action? Where was Tutu? They stood on a platform before the clump of microphones where the bishop would speak. "Bring him out, for Chrissake!" one photographer hollered. "What the hell are you waiting for?" Tutu eventually made his way through the crush of admirers, and as he emerged the cameramen came alive. You could hear their motor drives whirring in the cold. They shouted belligerently at anyone who dared come between them and Tutu and interfere with the public's right to know. Before Tutu spoke, Mary implored everyone to sing along with "Blowing in the Wind"—"even you in the press!" A photographer behind me chuckled and in a sinister voice said, "You bet, honey." Not that it would have mattered; once the song began Mary was the only thing you could hear. The years have not been pleasant to the trio, especially Mary who, though she still sports the trademark Roman helmet of straight blond hair, has taken on a few extra wrinkles, or maybe laugh lines, and a few dozen extra pounds. As she belted out the songs she wagged her head and threw her body from side to side, while the other celebrities struggled to anchor themselves against the assault of her weight.

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After Tutu's remarks, which were witty and brief, there were some concluding chants, and then the messengers

boarded a beat-up school bus marked "First Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church" and were driven the half-block to the embassy. The cops checked our press passes and allowed us to scramble up Massachusetts Avenue where we could watch the arrest from across the street. In the embassy driveway, another dozen or so cops stood waiting by the open doors of a paddy wagon. "Hey Clarence," one of the shooters called over the traffic, "before you put them in the wagon turn 'em towards us so we can get a good shot. Parade 'em around for a little bit. I'll love ya for life." The cop gave him a blank look and turned around and patted his rear end. "You love me?" he shouted over his shoulder. "Then give me a kiss right here." The messengers stepped off the bus and huddled round the door of the embassy. Paul Stookey said some words into the call box. "Oh come on, idiot," said a guy in front of me, holding his camera aloft. "Just get it over with." "What do you care?" said another shooter. "You're probably out of film

