

KEYNOTE SPEECH FOR A CONVENTION OF ARSONISTS

Ladies and gentlemen: under the sponsorship
of the Diamond Match Company;

And through the courtesy of Lucifer, first among angels, the far-fallen, star of the morning, everlastingly cast into darkness, the Prince of Light;

And under the auspices of the Central Committee
of the Progressive Apocalypse Party,

I am empowered to extend to you the warmest regards of this organization and to ask for your continued cooperation and your most fiery zeal.

Dearly beloved we are gathered together in a dark--excuse me--a dark hour; and the Committee of the Whole and the Committee of the Parts and the secretaries thereunto ask that you keep calm.

It is not true that the doors have been barred on the outside; if anyone yells Water he is a provocateur;

And be easy, gentle people: It is not true that the Almighty, who is the Destroyer, has wrapped himself in the eternal asbestos of absenteeism;

Our Committee on God has conducted an investigation and determined that He is definitely on our side: our little activities are part of the Big Picture.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Works Project Administration of this organization has been most active.

We have passed ordinances that no entropy shall become maximum;

The energy gradient has been abolished; we are working on a means for abolishing the dew-point and the continental excesses of the seasonal rains;

We have invented a new kind of water which shall be required by all fire departments and which is called gasoline;

We are perfecting a means for introducing napalm into breakfast food which at the first crackle and pop will ignite the sour apple tree of the national tradition;

A boat-load of boy scouts and dry faggots is heading up the old mill stream for Medicine Hat and all points West;

And, finally: your Committee on Escatology has arranged for the end of the world--it shall be signed out in fire!

Nevertheless, dearly beloved, we must not become complaisant.

It is not enough to keep the home fires burning--we must constitute ourselves a central quorum of purest light in the patriotic darkness of the national catastrophe.

For while you have been out walking the wild roads of the multiple illusion of the 51 states, preaching the hot gospel yea unto thither Asia, yea unto the farthest reaches--forgive the expression--of the night--

Even now I say there have come among us pretenders to the pure papacy of flame:

Even lost dauphins of the mass production of hellfire, false prophets who pretend to do the holy offices of disinterested arson;

And I point to you those betrayers of our holy work: who have not the principle of cultural phlogiston nor the secret of the One and Incandescent Name.

He is the Senator of Amalgamated Death and the Congressman from North Confusion;

He is the hundred-headed scientist who has been washed in the absolute uterine water of an equation of cold;

He is the President of presidents though his name be Eisenhower he is not a true man, nor one who can aid ye.

Though he has burnt Hiroshima--it was only an experiment.

Though he has anointed with phosphor and napalm--it was in the name of power.

Though he has hurried to heaven the immaculate ascensions of six million Jews--it was to ward off deflation.

Though he placed two on the burning throne and shot them with six billion electric dollars--it was to show he had money to burn.

Yea verily I say unto you that these are no true apostles of the Combustible Negation of the Pure Destructive Act. . .

Dearly beloved we are met in a time when amateurs have become incendiaries.

We are met in a time when the Secretary, awakened from prayer has prepared to drop down your décolletage the eternal, essential icicle of the status quo.

Time when the simplest idiot with an H-bomb can turn you into a nova in the time that it would take you to vote for either of the Grand Old Phony Parties.

Allons! --let us be off to our hot-shot and damn-all destiny!
Allons! --for the warm Coast!

Dearly beloved, let it be known among us that there is
a place known as the City of the Lost Angels;

In the city of Lost Angels-by-the-sea the citizens cry out
all night long in a speech of fire;

In Lost Angels, in a suburb known as the Hells of Beverly,
the wild oats ripen in July and prepare for an august flame!

Come on! To Lost Angels! The chaparral is dry as tinder
and in the chaparral are the ignitable poets with three names
to one skin!

Come on to New York while commercial mistrals are warming
the planetary phosphorus in the Rolandic Fissures of Madison
Avenue!

Chicago is waiting for another O'Leary Come On! Come On!!

And let us not forget the magnolia scented and Negro burning
cities of the South, dreaming over their hot flashes of new
ways to braise a julep!

HURRY UP before the H-bomb amateurs have cooled
the whole scene!

RUN FOR THE IGNITABLE HILLS! The sky is falling!
I have a piece of the Coal Sack in my left eye; I have a chunk
of the Central Galaxy of Discontent under my left ventricle!

ALLONS! EN AVANT! to the holy order of Fire--for if fire
will not burn stick, how shall stick beat Man?

O professionals of disinterested arson, It is later than I
think you think!

Citizens of United Disaster, VORWORTS! On to the cities of the
Plains! --before the enduring cold that shall wrap us all in its time.