

**Ace Backwards interviews Michael Hoy of
Loompanics Unlimited**

March 1991

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Ace: Well, I guess the first question is: how did you get started publishing and selling all these strange books?

Michael: Well, I wanted to figure out some way of making a living without having a job. I've always been interested in book and stuff. The first thing I thought of to publish was an index to the first 4 years of National Lampoon Magazine. From that I made up the name of the company, because it sounds sort of official. But I could see it was going to take years before I could earn a living publishing, so I figured in the meantime I'd start selling books from other publishers. So that's what I started doing. My stuff mostly is, pretty much what an individual can do to help himself kind of like practical anarchy ... armchair theorizing how a person can actually beat the system and stuff like that.

Ace: It's sort of hard to define, but there's definitely a Loompanics book' and a "book" that wouldn't be a "Loompanics book". What would you say separated the two?

Michael: It's a little tough to define. The ideal Loompanics is one where the author takes an outrageous subject, and writes a very serious, straight forward "how to" book about it. Such as "The Complete Guide to Lock Picking" or "Secrets of Methamphetamine Manufacture" or something like that. "How To Start Your Own Country", that's a Loompanics book.

Ace: What was that one essay "A Modest Proposal" where the writer went on about solving the hunger problem by eating children. How much of that do you see, in your approach, as satire...

Michael: They are serious, but the satire is that they exist. I mean a book like "Successful Armed Robbery". Ok, that's totally serious but it's still funny and outrageous that such a thing like that exists. I guess the funniest thing about it is that it is real, and straight forward and practical. There's books out there like the "Road Kill Cookbook", for example, which is not really a road kill cookbook, you know what I mean?

Ace: But reality is getting so strange these days that you never really know.

Michael: Yeah. I guess one thing that would separate a Loompanics Book with an outrageous title, with some other publishers books with outrageous titles, is that Loompanics has to do with stuff that is serious and is real. It is the subject matter that makes them strange or off the wall.

Ace: That's the first thing I notice when people thumb through your catalog and see "How To Kill" volumes one through six. It's always the same reaction. At first they're shocked, then they think it's a joke, then they start reading it, the next thing you know they start reading straight through the catalog.

Michael: We are living in a really strange reality. We just had an eight year regime where the leader of the Free World was a bad actor. Is that funny or is that serious? the craziness of Loompanics just picks up an appetite for certain things in the craziness of the reality that they see around them.

Ace: I can see how my stuff might kinda fit in because one of the Fines that I always have in my head is the fine line between reality and satire that gets thinner every day...

Michael: Really, the stuff that you've been putting out on the war, the TV / video game type of war reporting that we're getting — is that funny or is it serious? (Laughter)...

Ace: When I was being interviewed yesterday (by the Carbondale Nightlife in Illinois) the first thing this guy asked was about Loompanics, and he was sort of half joking, he said "How do those guys keep from getting arrested?" He was amazed that you could put this stuff out. I was wondering if you have had trouble along those lines?

Michael: No, we've never had any trouble. The only possible way that I could see a publisher getting busted would be if the guy actually put out something that was classified secret or something like that. Or maybe if you did something like kiddie porn or something like that.

Ace: There was the Judas Priest trial where they actually took a heavy metal band and charged them with attempted murder because the guy committed suicide while listening to their record, which supposedly urges people to commit suicide. It's absurd, but I could see as things get more repressive...

Michael: I think you're mistaken about that I think that was a civil lawsuit, not a trial by the government.

Ace: I was just wondering if somebody actually took one of these "How To Kill" books and then actually killed and then said "I learned how to kill from Loompanics, they're responsible blah blah blah..." It's a total copout but I could see how that might come up.

Michael: Yeah, a trial like that would not be a criminal trial it would be a civil suit. There was a case a couple of years ago with Soldier Of Fortune Magazine, because unbeknownst to them they had accepted an ad, a classified ad, by some guy who turned out to be a hitman. There was a 9.1 million dollar judgement awarded against Soldier Of Fortune Magazine That made headlines and it was played up in the press but what you never read about at the press was that a few months later, that judgement was appealed and it was totally over-turned Soldier Of Fortune never had to pay a penny. US Today didn't have anything on that judgement being overturned but when the judgement first came in they made it look like a big deal.

Ace: It sets an absurd precedent If someone finds a male In a personal ad and the marriage turns out bad then they could sue the paper...

Michael: Or sue the computer dating service When it comes to getting slack from the government. I think what protects Loompanics more than anything is that we see such a wide variety of stuff. If all we had in our catalog was six books on how to make pipe bombs or something, that would make it look a lot creepier or more suspicious There's a lot of violent stuff in the catalog and I seems to stand out. People seem to notice it It's really far from the majority of the stuff that's in there There's stuff like "How To Mulch Zucchini", "How To Start A Flower Shop" you know.

Ace: That's the interesting thing, in the over all context of all the different books you pull out. there's a general thing that connects all these wide ranging subjects. What about George Hayduke "The Master Of Malice" who wrote eight different volumes about revenge? I've always been curious about him.

Michael: Yeah. um. Those books are published by Paladin Press and not by Loompanics. I retail a lot of his books. Under his real name he has several books about weapons, and firearms and silencers and military matters. That's basically about all I know about him.

Ace: He's such a mysterious character. This guy coming up with all these plots about how to get back at people. I mean everybody can relate to that. Everybody thinks about that stuff but doesn't quite admit it to themselves. That somewhat of symbolizes Loompanics for me — there's a lot of stuff that people think about but for whatever reason they just don't want to admit to, but Loompanics does. That gives Loompanics a lot of it's power. The stuff is deeply ingrained In our subconscious. Would you like to talk about any of the other writers that you personally feel are along the lines of what you do. Like Bob Black or any of those other people that are noted for their connection with Loompanics.

Michael: The next supplement that is coming out March 15 Is gonna have a piece by Bob Black in there called "Bob Hopeless Desert Classic". It's a first person thing if Bob Hope were over in the Saudi Desert entertaining the troops, you know like he used to do. That's the latest thing I have from Bob Black. I think it's really good. "Where there's war, there's Hope." I don't get involved at all in Bob's personal fueds, he just loves to pick fueds with people. (Laughs).

Ace: He's gets Into more trouble than me. so I get a kick out of the guy for that. How about Bradley Smith, I've got a lot of feedback about that. People associate Bradley Smith with Loompanics since you did that interview with him in the catalog, even though you don't actually publish him. How did you get involved with doing that interview with him?

Michael: Apart from that the only Holocaust Revisionist stuff I ever had was the Arthur Butz book, "The Hoax of the Twentieth Century", I think I added that to the catalog back in 1977 or something, it's just really fascinating to me how people react to that or something that you're not supposed to ask

question about. And if you do there's something wrong with you. My interest is not so much which side is right or something. It's just the epistemology of it. They're not in a position to really know anything about it yet they're so certain that what they think they know is right. You know what I mean?

Ace: Exactly...

Michael: Like "Haler marched 6 million Jews up to the gas chambers...", the attitude if you question that is that you must be a Nazi or something is what fascinated me When I read Bradley's book. It's not so much like a revisionist book but it's like his personal experience with taking this idea seriously and how people react to it.

Ace: I was amazed at how strongly people reacted to it, like, "How dare you say this!" And then you ask them what they have to back up their opinion, you find how flimsy their own research on the subject is. Yet their opinions are so strong.

Michael: Yeah, that really is fascinating. Most people don't really know any more about it than they know about Christopher Columbus or George Washington but you can say; "I don't think George Washington ever really cut down the cherry tree" and people won't think you're a "dirty son- of-a-bitch". But if you say "Sometimes I wonder if Hitler ever really had an extermination program", then they'll say "Well you must be trying to whitewash the Nazi's or something.

Ace: It really does challenge people's basic assumptions.

Michael: That is what drew me into doing an interview.

Ace: I could imagine the response you got because I myself got compared to Hitler for just printing his letter. People were demanding that I defend this guy and all sorts of stuff...

Michael: You had mentioned to me In a letter that there were people coming up to you saying: "How could you let Loompanics publish your book because they're a bunch of anti-Semitic Nazis."

Ace: That's right The latest one I got was that supposedly there was this guy "Michael Hoy" that works for that guy David Duke the white supremacist guy...

Michael: Oh. that might be Robert Hoy, there's some guy named Robert Hoy who's active in right wing racism...

Ace: It shows how quick people are to jump to all these conclusions when they really have very little actual evidence I know very little about the Holocaust myself but there's something about that kinda symbolized Loompanics — the willingness to get in there and don't think about the stuff as taboo.

Michael: Right. I like to find loopholes in consensus ready, look at the man behind the curtain.

Ace: I'd like to ask about your own politics That's sort of an open-ended question...

Michael: I don't really have any except that I'm skeptical of any organized solution to any trumped up problem I guess I'd be pretty much of a Libertarian Anarchist, except that I've found that the Libertarians and the Anarchists are too organized. They have too many rules. I guess I'm a political solipsist, that would be the best description of my politics

Ace: Even the underground, which was supposed to be an alternative to the status quo, almost immediately congeals into it's own status quo John Crawford mentions in his Introduction to my book how tire rules of rebellion invariably become more rigid than the ones you're rebelling against. The thing I love about Loompanics is I don't see it congeal into dogma.

Michael: Yeah, I say I'm a political solipsist, and kinda that's what the Loompanics logo represents. It's a space colony, it's like an ideal world where everybody could literally have his own world If that were so then all human relations with each other would be voluntary. I think a lot of the political problems come just because people are jammed in together They can't get away from each other on this little planet.

Loompanics

POB 1197, Port Townsend, WA 98368

(\$3.00 for catalog or \$12.95 for Ace's multi-spectacular 128 page collection Ace Backward's "Twisted Image" comic strips.)



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came in they made it look like a big deal. Ace: It sets an absurd precedent. If someone finds a male in personal ad and the marriage turns out bad then they could sue the paper... Michael: Or sue the computer dating service... When it comes to getting slack from the government, I think what protects Loompanics more than anything is that we sell such a wide variety of stuff. If all we had in our catalog was six books on how to make pipe bombs or something, that would make it look a lot creepier or more suspicious. There's a bit of violent stuff in the catalog and it seems to stand out. People seem to notice it. It's really far from the majority of the stuff that's in there. There's stuff like "How To Match Suits", "How To Start A Flower Shop" you know. Ace: That's the interesting thing, in the over all content of all the different books you put out, there's a general thing that connects all these weird ranging subjects. What about George Hoptak's "The Master Of Malice" who wrote like eight different volumes about revenge? I've always been curious about him.

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The Library of Unconventional Lives

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