

Story for performance #629
webcast from Sydney at 07:19PM, 11 Mar 07



Source: AFP, 'US in direct talks with Iran', *The Australian online*, 11/03/07.

Tags: [incarceration](#), [world events](#), [disenchantment](#)
Writer/s: [Susan Charlton](#)

© 2008 Barbara Campbell and the writer/s

Testimony 629

I hereby identify myself as prisoner 629 on this 11th day of March 2007. Though I stand in front of others to record my testimony, the only judge I honour is the God of History. I dedicate my testimony to the memory of my teacher and phantom lover Jean Baudrillard, whose writings predicted all of my actions. If it were not for his death I would still fight on. Without his writings to decipher my actions to the media, they no longer have meaning.

I deliver my testimony on my own terms. As a symbolic gesture of respect to my Muslim sisters in struggle—whether they be in the bloody streets of Iraq, the classrooms of Paris or the detention centres of the Australian Outback—I choose to cover my body and face. I speak to you with my sole remaining instrument of resistance—my mouth—this mouth that has been shamed into silence, this mouth that cries for its lost children, this mouth that whispers of revolution and paradise between sunset and sunrise.

I also honour my sisters in the West and capitalist East. Who can deny that our bodies are yet to find true democracy? They are but occupied zones kept alive purely for consumption. As a symbolic gesture of my respect to my sisters in Los Angeles, Monaco and Hong Kong, I wear the Revlon lipstick 'Bloody Rouge', so favoured by our comrades Angelica Huston, Catherine Deneuve and Maggie Cheung. I speak with this mouth that has been so reviled—as a receptacle for your poisonous hamburgers, as an amplifier of your insidious pop songs and as the Other for your violent cocks. We wear the red scar of lipstick as a defiant scream of rebellion.

Like all 628 prisoners before me, I am but a number. To you who rule over me, I have no name. And so it shall forever be. You will never know more of me than what you have prescribed for me. I am all that you fear and imagine and more. I wear the sign of my incarceration proudly. I have extracted my own dental fillings and painstakingly shaped them into the number 629 to brand

me forever. Here, piercing my tongue like hot lava is the sign of my incarceration. Forever glinting between my teeth for all to see as I deliver my testimony. Forever overfilling my mouth to remind me of who you are and what you have done.

J'accuse. I accuse you of using your network of writers-in-residency sites as secret detention centres. I accuse you of detaining and interrogating writers who have voiced opposition to your regimes. I accuse you of forcing written confessions from these detainees under threat and duress. I accuse you of leaking these confessions to the media through fake websites.

We may be part of your system of Extraordinary Rendition, but we will never be rendered silent. Even our false confessions contain truths within them. Thanks to our supporters, the essence of this truth has been extracted from each confession and disseminated in the form of innocent watercolours. You will discover to your eternal regret, that these simple Zen-like aphorisms, which you bought on eBay or downloaded from the internet, are in fact sleeper cells, waiting to explode. They adorn the walls of your homes or glow as screen savers from your laptops, just waiting for the words to trigger us into a beautiful new world.

It's sunset in Sydney. Felicity Davey is reading the ABC news. Expect to see the ushering in of a beautiful world, a Beau Monde. We are the Beau Monde. We are the authors of this new world. Felicity, Felicity, just say the words...

'...And finally in tonight's bulletin, rock star Courtney Love is being sued by a luxury California rehabilitation centre for not paying her bill for treatment worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. The centre offers massages, gourmet food, whale watching and absolute privacy to its celebrity clients. North American correspondent, Mark Simpkin, reports from outside the Beau Monde clinic in Newport Beach...'

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Susan Charlton.