

## DAVID LIEBE HART AND ADAM PAPAGAN: IF YOU RULE YOUR MIND

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Download: David Liebe Hart & Adam Papagan “Korendian Honk”

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The extinct Los Angeles Public Access studio brought David Liebe Hart and Adam Papagan together. David (and his many puppets) hosted the Junior Christian Science Bible Lesson Show, and Adam—then only fifteen years old—hosted the Del Talk Show. They are now known for their musical collaboration, a project which merges Adam’s multi-instrumentalist pop compositions with David’s soulful narratives about women and trains and extra-terrestrials. They met Drew Denny at the Echo Park Lake to discuss religion, UFOs and lotus flowers.

Jim Henson was your Sunday School teacher?

David Liebe Hart: Yeah, in the Christian Science church. He wanted me to do a puppet show teaching kids to say no to drugs and Bible stories. At first I didn’t want to do it, and he said it would help me advance my career... I first did my first three shows from a woman who was a Christian Science practitioner in Yucaipa, California. And then we sent them to Boston to be used for the Monitor Channel, but the Monitor Channel went out of business and they sold the Monitor Channel to the Discovery Channel—all the equipment and all the stuff. And so they told me to continue with the show on Public Access and the Christian Science church was okay until I started doing more contemporary music and I started mixing in Asian priests. And —

They didn’t like that?

DLH: They didn’t like that—they’re very conservative. Very Republican—And I just had a horrible thing happen to me. There’s a lot of racism towards me in the Christian Science church since I’m African-American. Um, they had me to do a concert—they had me to practice, I guess —I was supposed to do the organ playing but they changed their mind because the board didn’t want an African-American organist. My music teacher was the organist... and she wanted me to be the substitute organist for the Christmas service. She gave me all the Christmas carols and everything. They said they didn’t want the church to become a ghetto with a black playing organ. And then they pulled me off the organ and said ‘all the colored people and Latino people —had a behavior problem.’ Threw me out of the church and told me I had a behavior problem. What?

DLH: And then when I called the mother church and called the unemployment office to look into what they were doing, they accused me of suing them. And I didn’t sue them—I just had told the unemployment office what they were discriminating, which they were!

Was there some kind of backlash after that happened?

DLH: They had Nazi members threatening to kill me and knock me off. I found out a lot of the ministers in the Christian Science church—well, they have the first and second readers. A lot of ministers of different churches belong to the Ku Klux Klan and Nazi organizations.

I had no idea.

DLH: I love Christian Science. The teachings are good. But the people aren’t practicing what they preach. Like they have a Bible lesson on love, and they discriminate against interracial

dating or people that want to join their church who are colored. Now they'll cover it up by having a token one and refusing anyone else that's joining.

But it's the ideology that you agree with?

DLH: I agree with Christian Science teachings—they're wonderful teachings and positive thinkings. You can do anything through positive thinking—evil see no person, place nor thing. They teach you prosperity classes, like divine love always has met and always will meet every human need. And if you wait never doubting you have all you need at every moment, and I put that in practice when I'm working as a street musician. When I think positive, I get a lot of customers. When I think negative, I don't get any customers. So it does work.

Adam Papagan: If you rule your mind, you rule the world.

DLH: Yeah, that's positive thinking.

Are you a Christian Scientist as well?

AP: I'm not.

DLH: He was raised Catholic. Him and I are—he's like Archie Bunker and I'm like Gene Stapleton. And the reason why I say that is because Gene Stapleton was Christian Science. Carol Conner was Catholic. My family used to be Catholic but they left Catholicism because Catholic priests back then would take advantage of women—not boys like they do today. My grandmother was raped by a Catholic priest—my family sued the Catholic Church and left the Catholic Church and all became Lutheran after that. And then my family that were white got involved with the underground railroad freeing blacks and slaves through the underground railroad. One of them decided to marry a runaway slave and the family and my family became mulatto after that. Part black and part white. And then my family became Quakers.

Oh, really? Quakers are very interesting.

DLH: Now Quakers have become liberal. When I go to the Quaker church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where my family comes from—they don't have music in there, they just pray like a Muslim church—they pray and meditate without any music. Now they have music in the Quaker church. So it's interesting. I used to go to the Quaker church in Arcadia—my dad told me the family used to be Quakers, so I visited the Quaker church. And so I went to the Quaker church near Glendale and I almost wanted to study to be a minister. But I went back to Christian Science. I gave it up.

Have you ever been to the Angelus Temple?

DLH: They use my music in that church. Through Christian Copyright Licensing. Don't tell this church that you date women cause they're very conservative—they're very Republican.

I don't really tell them much about my romantic life—I'm studying the act of speaking in tongues.

DLH: Ooh. The Foursquare, they do speak in tongues. And they believe in being baptized by the Spirit. Yeah, that's the way the Baptist church was. I had some relatives that were Baptist. I used to play at my grandmother's church—my grandmother was converted from Catholicism to Lutheran, an ELCA Lutheran to a Southern Baptist. But the Baptists were terrible. They would give blacks churches and then burn them to the ground with them in them. They did some horrible things in the south to black people. The white guys would rape the black women too. I'm from Texas.

DLH: It's kind of racist down there.

AP: You have family down in Texas, don't you, Dave?

DLH: My sister lives in Lancaster. I got my sister to take my mother in there after my mother's home went into foreclosure. I tried to save my mother's home. Mutual Washington at that time owned the bank, Fanny Mae at that time owned Mutual Washington. They said if I opened an account—pay 250 dollars on the back mortgage—they said they would keep the agreement. But guess who bought them? Chase. And Chase was not kind—they wanted my mother out of the house. They threw her out! And I have recently had to put my mother up—first in Motel 6 then I

had my sister in Texas come and get her. Every time I try to buy a car something happens. First, my dad died. I had to pay for his funeral. He didn't have any insurance because he's Christian Science. Then my mother had a stroke. She had never been to a hospital before because she was Christian Science. I felt like prayer wasn't working. If you can't solve the problem with prayer you have to take the human footsteps to go to a doctor. Some Christian Scientists overlook that. I took my mother to the Kaiser Hospital. I am now paying off—the bill was originally 12,000 dollars. If you travel, don't ever travel in an ambulance. My mother on Christmas Day had a heart attack. We called an ambulance immediately. It was 5,000 dollars! Look at that woman chasing that song bird!

AP: That's the kind of bird you'd send into a coal mine.

DLH: People are so mean to animals! That bird is gay, and you wouldn't want anyone discriminating against him for that! I can read souls and spirits. People are so mean to animals! I work at La Brea Tar Pits where I sell my portraits and I see kids—they stomp on birds! I told one kid to stop stomping on the birds and his mother pulled out a gun on me! A .32 gun. That mother said, 'My daughter can beat anyone she wants!' The police came—they just told her to put the gun away. I was taught to respect nature. But these kids will just stomp an innocent bird to death. These kids are influenced by the violence on TV!

Your show doesn't have any violence, right?

DLH: No, it does not. I try to teach children to get along and to say no to racism and to treat all people equally. That's what I teach on my Junior Christian Science Bible Lesson program.

Adam's hosted my show and I've hosted his show—

What's your show called?

AP: Neither of us have shows anymore because they don't have public access in Los Angeles anymore. But my show was called the Del Talk Show.

How long was your show on?

AP: Five years.

DLH: I hosted his show, and Adam Papagan hosted my show when he was a young boy—and he won't let me air those shows. You were so cute!

AP: Give me a copy, Dave, I'll put 'em up. I have my ¾-inch tape machine hooked up to my computer now.

DLH: You were so cute! I'm not trying to say this to be gay—I'm saying this as a big brother to you. You were cute and everybody liked you.

AP: I'll take that under advisement.

When did you start this music project?

AP: A year and half ago.

DLH: First we did a CD about my life called Public Access. I talked about all my ex-wives and ex-girlfriends. And I want to do a CD about your life.

AP: That's not interesting! I don't know any extra-terrestrials. I've never been on any trains. You know extra-terrestrials?

AP: He knows quite a few.

DLH: They haven't contacted me recently, but I know Alex and Meldronum and Jesedel Ordus.

AP: Elder Master Latan?

DLH: Yes, Elder Master Latan. I have to be careful because they don't want me talking about them. But I'll tell you what—I'll tell you how this happened. On my Caucasian side I'm related to Orville and Wilbur Wright. Orville and Wilbur Wright were Presbyterian ministers, they were first from Ohio then they moved to South Carolina. They were Scotch Irish and German and English and French. They inter-married into my family. My family were first cousins to them. They got help from a race called the Korendians to help build their airplanes. My grandmother waited to tell me until she was on her deathbed. That they had gotten help. My grandmother was very fair

skinned. I thought she was senile. She died when she was 110 years old. At that time, I really didn't believe in UFOs. She told me if it hadn't been for the extra-terrestrials teaching Orville and Wilburn Wright they wouldn't have their airplane. So she said you are going to meet a descendant of the extraterrestrials that taught Orville and Wilbur Wright how to make the airplane and lo and behold I met Jesedel at MacArthur park. I'm planting lotuses in the lake because the gardeners put a poison in there and killed them all out. This park was famous for the lotuses! If you buy them from a garden store they're fifty dollars a bulb but I got them at a Korean store for three dollars. I've been planting them for months but nothing has taken. Another thing I want to put on the interview that I wrote the words and music to 'All My Friends Love Asian Girls' but Adam has not put that on the tape. Adam Papagan has put his music on my words, and we have a team. We used his music instead of my music on 'No More Blues.' We used his music instead of my music on a song I wrote—'Chicago Northwestern Railroad,' which I hope we can record together someday.

AP: Maybe on the train album.

DLH: My favorite trains were the Chicago North Shore and the Milwaukee Railroad and they were taken out because of General Motors and Good Year tires. They wanted people to buy cars. And another railroad I like but it's a bully—it's now been taken down by the Union Pacific—is the Chicago Northwestern. It was a tough railroad. They bought out Southern Pacific. Any railroad they couldn't buy out, they would get the mayors to do something to demise that railroad. There was a train called the Chicago Aurora and Elgin that ran from Wheaton to Aurora to Batavia to Elgin and it paralleled the Northwestern, the Milwaukee Railroad and the Burlington Northern. Because Mayor Daly belonged to the same Mason Lodge that the president of the Northwestern belonged to, they did crooked politics like President Bush did in cheating out the—now I respect the Masons because my dad was a Mason and my grandfather was a Mason, and the Masons do a lot of good work to help kids that can't afford to go to the hospital. The Shriner hospital. Used to be an organization that would protect the poor and the innocent that were facing persecution—just like the mafia used to be a group that would protect the poor Italians that were being persecuted, then it grew into something bigger. But anyway, President Bush misused his Mason authority by cheating at the voting polls and so did Mayor Daly. Mayor Daly said to the Chicago Northwestern president, 'We gotta get rid of this Aurora and Elgin—they have more riders than we do and they have more freight than we do.' They were a smaller railroad. So he says to the Burlington Northern and the Milwaukee Railroad, 'Mayor Daly why don't you put an Eisenhower expressway right on the Aurora Elgin right of way and make an ordinance that they can't go any farther than the outskirts of Chicago. To Forest Park.' So, all the riders went to the Northwestern, the Milwaukee, and the Burlington Northern. They did it purposefully cause they wanted that business, and I think that's dirty!

You write songs about this story?

DLH: I do. I wrote a song about the Chicago Northwestern and the Great Third Rail. I wanted Adam to use the long version of it, but he won't.

AP: The long version is very long. It's like eight-and-a-half minutes long. It's that story he just told you. I think the five-and-a-half minute cut does it justice.

DLH: I think the people need to know—

AP: We'll do a 12-inch single then—how's that?

DLH: Okay, I'd appreciate that. Because I would like the people to know what happened. You know you kind of remind me of Farrah Fawcett, too! You look exactly like June Lockhart who was one of my favorite movie stars. Now she's all shriveled up like a raisin but when she was young she was very pretty like you.

What was the Navy like?

DLH: It was like getting kicked in the rear. You had to get up early in the morning. A lot of conservative rednecks. If you didn't do right, you were fined. You had to follow orders. You had to do everything to perfection. You had to make your bed envelope style that you could throw a quarter on. 'Yes sir, No sir.' You had to do push ups. You were constantly around nothing but men. A lot of men ended up becoming gay because of being around nothing but men.

And they were very well-muscled men, right?

DLH: Well, you got football players and baseball players who are married and have kids that are bisexual. They had a weird thing in the military—if they picked up a girl on the weekend, they would have a penis fight and the guy—what I thought was the weirdest thing—a dickhead, a penis fight—and the guy that shot the—the guy that didn't shoot the sperm out from the penis fight got to be have sex with a woman.

And what would the woman be doing during this?

DLH: Well, they'd be looking! It was like the bulls would fight—the elephants and the deer would fight and the one that defeated the other one got to walk away with the female. And the same thing happened in the military.

With penises.

DLH: With penises! Another thing is—I don't appreciate the fans spreading gossips!

What's it like working on the show with Tim and Eric?

DLH: Oh, I have a wonderful time with Tim and Eric. They're very creative people—they're great comedians. They're good people. And I've been lucky to be on their show for five seasons. We just finished season five. I played a police officer on season five with James Quall. I wrote a song about being in love with an insect woman from outer space. I wrote a song about—Salame?

DLH: Yes, two extra-terrestrials. First it started with the Korendians then the Paladians. When ships pass they say, 'Salame, go into the light until we meet again'. They communicate telepathically.

That's really pretty.

DLH: It's almost like 'shalom' that the Jewish people say.

AP: What language do the Omegans speak?

DLH: The Omegans are from Star Kaladan. And all Irish and Scottish and Welsh people come from the Omegan race.

Oh, then I'm part Omegan!

DLH: Yes, you are. Now, I like the Omegans. They brought mushrooms and cows to earth. Their planet is dark—they're from Star Kaladan. Everything about the Omegans is Irish! Their main commander who calls me sometimes, his name is Monahan—

On the phone?

DLH: Yeah, and the other one who calls me is Ron Kelley, but I love the Omegans! But I don't like it that the Omegans and Korendians are at war with each other. Because the Omegans are very talented people too—very creative and artistic. They brought all the meat products to this planet earth and mushrooms and sheep—they're meat eaters. They're Vikings—good fighters. The Korendians are all vegetarians and into philosophy. They're very peaceful people. And very talented people, too. But, I'm against war. I'm against the war here on earth, I'm against the war in outer space. I've had both races contact me. They're at war with each other over space territory which is ridiculous.

You should host a peace talk.

DLH: I'm trying! I wrote a song with Adam Papagan called 'Peace on Earth and Peace in the Universe' about how the Omegans taught the Mayas and how the Korendians taught the Egyptians, and many other cultures are similar—building pyramids. They built pyramids so that

they could come into our space atmosphere through the anti-gravity. I love them both, but I'm heartbroken that they're at war with each other.

What kind of weaponry do they use?

DLH: I haven't gotten into it. All I know is they use the same kind of weaponry—Jesedel told me Lucas had an insight of the Omegans and Korendians and that's what inspired him to write Star Wars because the Omegans and Korendians have been having a war for two hundred years. The mask that Omegans use to fight with is identical to the mask that Darth Vader used. And the Omegans' eyes glow in the dark, too. The Omegans told me not to contact the Korendians—that they're oversexed. I'm not going to be on either side about the damn war! The government knows. They're having wars on the other side of the moon and in the desert, too.

Do you like Battlestar Galactica? I'm gonna be Kara Thrace for Halloween this year.

DLH: The main star on that show is an Omegan. Some of the best actors are Omegans. In fact, since I'm part Irish, a beautiful Irish aristocratic woman came up to me and said, 'A black man that's part Omegan will become president'. She told me this 15 years ago. 'And he's going to try to end the war and end poverty.' She could tell I'm part Irish, and I didn't believe her but my mother told me that the Kelleys and the Shockleys and the O'Neils and the McKenons and the McDonalds, McGees, Bugles married into my family that were Irish. The Irish came here mainly because of the potato famine. They faced discrimination just like black people and just like the Italians. My dad was very liberal—he worked with the Civil Rights movement. I remember seeing my dad get beat up when I was young. It was terrible.

Do you write about that?

DLH: I'm gonna start writing songs about how I feel racism is unfair. The first song I wrote about that was the war about the Omegans and Korenians.

AP: You have other songs about racism—like 'Kicked out of Church'.

DLH: I've seen this problem not only in the Christian Science but in the Lutheran Church as well. I got kicked out of a Lutheran church because I was dating a white woman, and they told her it was a sin to date me and that she'd burn in Hell. Wanna plant the lotuses now?

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