

Spiritually Incorrect



The Subversive Comedy of Alan Clements By Brock Noyes for Alternative Magazine Spring Issue

I first encountered Alan Clements' work here in "Alternatives" which excerpted his classic book, "Instinct For Freedom." Generally I read spiritual tracts for their tranquility, but Alan's book was high-voltage; stripped free of clutter, it was raw, vulnerable, and profound. He compassionately refused to lead the reader to safety; I loved it, bought nine copies, gave eight away.

One of the great scenes from the book (which is as entertaining as it is haunting), is when Alan is deported from Burma by the military regime, (an Orwellian nightmare, as Alan describes it) for his strident calls for freedom and for being an all-around rebel with a cause. Given a one way ticket to anywhere in Asia and with no cash, Clements chooses Calcutta and lives on the streets as a Buddhist monk. I suppose with a gun in my mouth I would have followed him.

With his radical propensity for action, it is no surprise that he would walk away from his career as a leading dharma teacher, and re-invent himself five times over; an author, human rights activist, screen writer, war correspondent, and now, "a revolutionary satirist and the most spiritually astute humorist in America today," described as a cross between, "Noam Chomsky, Lenny Bruce, and a hyper-spiritual Terrence McKenna."

What is astonishing is that Alan's live act, which I caught at Portland's Center for the Performing Arts, is as brilliant as his book. "Spiritually Incorrect: In Defense of Being, Human," is an edgy, hilarious look into the human condition. He deconstructs with surgical satire and daring wit the pantheon of contemporary sacred spiritual and political cows. In so doing, he takes no prisoners, and even offers himself up to the firing squad.

His ninety-minute show is a thrill ride that careens down a hall of mirrors (reflecting your own shadow) and then surfaces as a multi-dimensional deity laughing through the tears. It's comedy of the best kind, textured, intelligent, and unapologetically edgy. It's comedy that ignites conscience, delivered with the anguish of a broken heart howling about propaganda and the awe-full world of paradox. While offering up laughter as redemption. It's a drive-by-shooting that stops in for a milk shake and a hug; and at the heart of it all is compassion. It's comic tragedy at its finest.

If you can't catch one of Alan's live shows, his just-released DVD is a must, buy it online from Alan's web site at: <http://www.AlanClements.com>

"Spiritually Incorrect" is remarkable art — radical, real, uncensored.
Join the revolution and help free minds...spread the word to everyone.

Additional books by Alan Clements
The Voice of Hope - Conversations with Aung San Suu Kyi,
Burma's imprisoned Nobel peace laureate (Seven Stories, NY).