

Obama's "Sex Rebel" Communist Mentor: The "Naked Truth" About Frank Marshall Davis



Frank Marshall Davis: Sex Specialist

"Frank Marshall Davis [was] an activist in Hawaii who died in 1987. Barack Obama met Davis when he was just 10 years old and sought his advice throughout his teen years...Who was he and what kind of an influence did he have on young Barack Obama?"

- Bill O'Reilly, "*The O'Reilly Factor*," September 17, 2008.

Introduction

By Cliff Kincaid*

The sexual perversion of Frank Marshall Davis -- the "sex specialist" -- adds a dramatic and alarming element to the controversy over his relationship with Barack Obama. Davis, a member of the Communist Party USA, was the subject of a 19-year FBI investigation and his FBI file, posted on www.usasurvival.org, is 600 pages long. Some information in the file suggests espionage activities on Davis's part.

Davis was part of the "Toward Soviet America" movement and greatly admired Soviet Russia.

Toby Harnden of the London *Daily Telegraph* was the first to report that Davis's sexual proclivities were documented in a 1968 pornographic novel, written just two years before Davis became Obama's mentor, which was titled, *Sex Rebel: Black (Memoirs of a Gash Gourmet)*. Davis wrote the book under a pseudonym, Bob Greene.

He [Davis] stated that "under certain circumstances I am bisexual" and that he was "a voyeur and an exhibitionist" who was "occasionally mildly interested in sado-masochism", adding: "I have often wished I had two penises to enjoy simultaneously the double – but different – sensations of oral and genital copulation."

- from Toby Harnden's August 24, 2008, story, "Frank Marshall Davis, alleged Communist, was early influence on Barack Obama."

Harnden flatly asserted that, "The book, which closely tracks Mr. Davis's life in Chicago and Hawaii and the fact that his first wife was black and his second white, describes in lurid detail a series of shockingly sordid sexual encounters, often involving group sex. One chapter concerns the seduction by Mr. Davis and his first wife of a 13-year-old girl called Anne. Mr. Davis wrote that it was the girl who had suggested he had sex with her." Harnden added, "He then described how he and his wife would have sex with the girl" many times over the course of several weeks. "On other occasions," he added, "Mr. Davis would cruise in Hawaii parks looking for couples or female tourists to have sex with. He derived sexual gratification from bondage, simulated rape and being flogged and urinated on."

Obama is not responsible for being put into close contact with this alleged child molester, who was also an alcohol abuser and pothead. Obama's growing-up years were sad and tragic, especially with his black father taking off and his mother spending much of her time elsewhere. His grandparents basically raised him. But his grandfather should never have turned Obama over to Davis.

There is no question that Davis wrote the book under the pseudonym of “Bob Greene.” John Edgar Tidwell, the editor of other books by Davis, has confirmed this is the case. But Tidwell has questioned how much of *Sex Rebel* is based on Davis’s own life experiences and describes it as “semi-autobiographical.” Harnden acknowledged to me that Davis “left himself some wiggle room, not least I suppose because of the possibility of prosecution” for statutory rape of a 13-year-old.

But in the introduction to *Livin’ the Blues*, a book by Davis that Tidwell edited, Tidwell reveals that Davis left behind after his death an uncompleted manuscript, “The Incredible Waikiki Jungle,” which describes how Davis “specialized in sex” during the period 1969-1976. No details are provided by Tidwell. He also says that Davis wrote another unpublished manuscript called “Mixed Sex Salad.”

Whether the book *Sex Rebel* is entirely based on Davis or not, the controversy certainly demonstrates that Davis had a perverted sexual interest and should not have been trusted as a mentor for any young person.

Andrew Walden, the editor of the *Hawaii Free Press* who has written about the history of the Communist Party USA in Hawaii, obtained a copy of *Sex Rebel*. We asked him to analyze the book and comment on its significance. .

Obama’s “Sex Rebel” Communist Mentor

By Andrew Walden

Sex Rebel: Black (Memoirs of a Gash Gourmet), written under the pseudonym “Bob Greene” by Barack Obama’s Honolulu mentor Frank Marshall Davis, has been dismissed as pornography by those few writers who have seen fit to investigate -- and not without reason.

A typical passage (p 274) describes Davis in November, 1958 stalking Kapiolani Park in Waikiki, Hawaii. He soon encounters two tourists--a Seattle couple he calls “Dot” and “Lloyd” The three of them sit at a picnic table. Things start innocently enough. “Dot” takes off her sunglasses to expose “gray eyes”. Lloyd brags to the complete stranger about Dot’s figure. After a few minutes of small talk to establish their mutual interest in “swinging,” Dot squeezes Frank’s crotch and exclaims, “Oooh, you’re nice size! Not too big and not too small. Lloyd and I like ‘em that way. And it feels like you’re ready.” Davis then devotes almost all of Chapter 27 to a graphic and detailed description of their three-way sexual encounters over the next few days.

Sex Rebel is Davis’s “complete sex autobiography....” (p14) He changes the names and identities but emphasizes, “all incidents I have described here have been taken from actual experiences.” Davis’s book was printed by porn publisher Greenleaf Classics. Writing an introduction under the pseudonym “Dale Gordon, PhD” Greenleaf

boss Donald H. Gilmore PhD praised *Sex Rebel* as “a non-fiction sexual self-confession, an intensely personal autobiography.” (p 5)

In a footnote to Davis’s memoir, *Living the Blues* (p350), editor John Edgar Tidwell discusses *Sex Rebel* and writes: “The potboilers don’t stop here. Discovered among (Davis’) papers were several other unpublished manuscripts. Using the pseudonym Floyd Marshall, Davis wrote ‘Mixed Sex Salad’; again using Bob Green (without the ‘e’), he wrote ‘Penguins in Paradise’; and finally, ‘In Reverse,’ a fiction bearing no identification, except for its title....” Davis acknowledges his authorship of *Sex Rebel* in an appendix to *Blues* (p 346).

Two years after *Sex Rebel* was published, Obama’s grandfather Stanley Armour Dunham—a decade-long friend of Davis--introduced him to the impressionable 9-year-old Obama. The late 60s had been the end for Davis’s family life. The year after *Sex Rebel* came out, Davis’ son left home and joined the Air Force. After years of marital difficulties described in Davis’ FBI files, his wealthy wife Helen Canfield Davis, whose own sexual escapades are described extensively in the book, finally divorced Davis in 1970.

In spite of the Obama connection, if porn were all that was to be found in *Sex Rebel*, then this would be a titillating but intellectually dull subject. But Davis’s sex book gives important clues to the history of the Communist Party, USA, in Chicago and Hawaii.

In the early 1930s, the CPUSA had faced off with the NAACP over the defense of the Scottsboro Boys. Davis, then editor of the *Atlanta Daily World* was interviewed by the NAACP’s *Crisis* magazine in 1932 as part of an article titled “Negro Editors on Communism”. He explained his attitude, not as the result of patriotic or otherwise principled beliefs, but as a practicality. The interviewer describes Davis as believing “that the violent opposition of whites to negro Communists in the South might bring trouble to an ‘already over-burdened race.’”

A decade later the practicalities had changed. According to Tidwell: “Sometime during the middle of the war, he (Davis) joined the Communist Party.” (*Black Moods* pg xxviii)

In *Sex Rebel*, Davis describes why joining had become easier: “With the Soviet Union and the United States allies in the world struggle against the Axis, it was quite respectable to join and work with many groups later labeled Communist.” Without skipping a beat, Davis continues, “Black and white mingled openly; for the first time many snow broads and spade studs could meet without fear or stigma and they made the most of this opportunity.” (p 115)

***Sex Rebel* also opens a window to the racial-sexual psychodynamics of the left—most of which emerge entirely from the sexual dynamics of the system of Jim Crow segregation. The sexual revolution of the 1960s and 70s has been**

described as a Communist plot, but looking through Davis's eyes, the Communist movement looks like a sex rebels' plot.

The interrelationship between the two is not solely an American phenomenon. So-called "Free Love" was a key element of the 19th century Russian radicalism which led to the formation of the first Russian socialist groups and eventually to the 1917 Russian Revolution. Like mid-20th century beatniks and hippies, many mid-19th century Russian radicals practiced free love and did not bathe. Many emigrated directly from Russia and other European countries in the massive wave of U.S. immigration before WWI and eventually became founders of the Communist movement in the USA.

Davis continues the timeline, writing, "I think World War II accelerated the sex revolution begun during World War I. With so many virile men in service, thousands of wives who ordinarily might never have made it with another man looked to almost any available, interested, and presentable male for sexual relief.... Thus it was that any reasonably-appealing (draft-)deferred male could, without really trying, accumulate a harem for the duration." (p108)

Davis sees himself a "Sex Rebel" against a society he caricatures as believing in "sex-for-procreation-only" and religion he caricatures as attempting to "ban sex". (p16)

Davis's rebellion is personal but is also aimed at overthrow of the existing social order. Porn publisher Gilmore (writing as Gordon) explains, "We see the progressive steps toward what many sociologists call the 'sensual society.' Sex becomes the be-all, end-all, of a restless, insecure society, whose individual members have to search further and further afield for stimulation and satisfaction." (p8)

Davis targets what he sees as "hypocrisy" in social attitudes towards sex. He writes: "I am aware that this book will be objectionable to the censors. But under their damp stones, I can envision them smacking salacious lips over its 'obscenity' and 'pornography'. Right now I want to warn them that if they object too strongly, I shall not produce any more volumes of this general type, thus diminishing the possibility of their private jollies being kicked off by this writer."

But Davis has his own hypocrisy to confront. While Gilmore/Gordon writes glowingly of the "sensual society", Davis dedicates half of Chapter 9 to describing sadomasochistic humiliation requested by a white Communist named "Gloria" (p116-129).

Davis makes no bones about where this behavior leads. He explains: "I was never again involved with Gloria, but I frequently heard about her. After hitting the hay with all the willing Negro males she met at mixed parties, and finally running out of new partners, she started going solo to South Side bars and letting herself be picked up. Eventually she contracted syphilis and dropped out of circulation. I often wonder whether she got herself medically cured or decided with masochistic logic, to suffer, and in time die painfully, as the supreme expression of her personal atonement." (p129)

In his introduction Davis firmly states: "...I feel no guilt over anything I have done..."

Like Gloria, Davis meets his second wife Helen Canfield Davis (pseudonym: Charlene) at what he describes as "a special school on the twelfth floor of an office building on West Washington Street in the Loop". (p172) This corresponds to the CPUSA-run "Abraham Lincoln School" at which Davis taught in the late 1930s and early 1940s. From page 114 to 260 Davis describes dozens of sexual encounters related to "mixed parties", "club meetings" and "fundraising affairs" all of which are likely connected to his membership in the CPUSA.

Davis also pays a price, although he does not seem to realize. After a lifetime as a "Sex Rebel," Davis explains: "Under certain circumstances I am bi-sexual. In addition to cunnilingus, at times I enjoy anilingus. I am (sic) interested in urolagnia. I'm also a voyeur and exhibitionist. Occasionally I am mildly interested in sado-masochism." (p 13-14)

Married or not, Davis's fun and games continued unabated after moving to Hawaii in 1948. After his escapade with "Dot" and "Lloyd", Davis describes group sex and voyeurism at "the Green Goose, a bar in Honolulu's 'Little Harlem' on Smith Street, then operated by one of my friends." (p280) Smith Street was Honolulu's one and only slice of the ghetto scenes so prevalent in Mainland inner cities.

In *Living the Blues* Davis spends all of pages 320 and 321 listing the black professionals who had found success in Hawaii. He then whines: "These and similar jobs and elective positions were obtained solely on merit. There are not enough souls here to wield political or economic power. There is no ghetto, hence no potential Black Power....Hawaii is not for those who can be happy only in Soul City. This is no place for those who can identify only with Afro-America. 'Little Harlem' is only a couple of blocks of bars, barbershops, and a soul food restaurant or two. When I arrived, the local establishment was trying to shunt black servicemen, gamblers, pimps, dope peddlers, and prostitutes into this area to better localize the racism by police and others imported from the mainland, but this disappeared after a confrontation between a group of us and the police chief."

Davis complains: "Unfortunately, many settling in Hawaii want to lose their black identity. To them the black revolution had little meaning. They consider themselves as achieving, on a personal level, what others want as a group, and they are satisfied."

As part of a failed Communist Party attempt to take over the Honolulu NAACP in 1949, Davis apparently pointed to Smith Street as evidence that segregation existed in multi-racial Hawaii. Communists oriented heavily to that little street with sometimes amusing results. A former Hawaii communist, interviewed by this writer, tells of a prominent white Hawaii labor leader and Communist Party member whose white wife gave birth to a black baby after partying with the pimps on Smith Street. They later divorced.

In Hawaii, at the advice of Communist Party members Paul Robeson and International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) leader Harry Bridges, Davis immediately went to work writing for the ILWU-funded *Honolulu Record*. The Record was edited by Koji Ariyoshi, a Communist Party member who had during WW2 joined the OSS (predecessor to the CIA). Working in China with Mao Zedong, Ariyoshi used his position to influence US policy in Mao's favor. The record published from 1948 until 1958 and Davis column "Frank-ly Speaking" ran in almost every edition until, according to his FBI file, marital difficulties caused Davis to suspend submission of the column shortly before the Record folded. Davis's name as well as that of "Honolulu Seven" lawyer Harriet Bouslog appear on materials promoting the CPUSA front group "American Committee for the Foreign Born" as late as 1973.

The ILWU-controlled Democratic Party took control of the territorial legislature in 1954 and has never lost control. At times Republicans have held as few as one or two legislative seats. From the 1962 gubernatorial election of ILWU leader and Democrat Jack Burns until the 2002 election of Republican Governor Linda Lingle, Hawaii was essentially a one-party Democrat state.

In 2006, Hawaii Democrats were among the first to launch a "draft Obama" movement.

Davis achieved his nirvana not on Smith Street but two miles east in the "Waikiki Jungle"—an area of low rent bungalows and tenements with a mixture of hippies and UH Manoa students as well as drug dealers and prostitutes servicing the tourist trade. Revolutions cost lives and Davis biographer Tidwell gives us another of Davis' brief moments of honesty about the cost of the sexual revolution. Tidwell explains: "In the forward to 'That Incredible Waikiki Jungle,' Davis writes: 'In popular use a Jungle is a place where people struggle fiercely to survive. That describes the Waikiki Jungle and most of its residents. What with the dominance of sex, drugs, and violence, survival was no easy task.'"

Davis continues: "Being addicted to neither drugs nor violence, I specialized in sex. I have not attempted to detail all my experiences in this unbelievable area... But I think I have presented a true picture of what it was like to live in the Waikiki Jungle between 1969 and 1976....Let me assure you this account is entirely factual." (*Blues* p350)

Children are a target of the sex "specialist." Davis explains: "Undoubtedly an individual's sexual patterns can be traced back to early childhood experiences." (p 35) Davis later writes of a threesome between himself, his first wife and a thirteen year old Jamaican girl. (p 71-78) His account begins, "Spring: warmer weather, children playing on the sidewalk in front of our building. An unusual looking child stared solemnly at me each day as I approached the entrance, then turned away when she caught my eye. I knew she was a niece of dad's former landlady, but that was all. Some day she'd be brightly beautiful; she now had it in miniature." The next seven pages are a detailed description of their sexual encounters.

“No guilt” Davis explains that years later, the Jamaican girl “became engaged several times in California and Chicago only to have her fiancés back out when they learned of her voracious sexual appetite and desire for multiple activity.”

Obama’s relationship with Davis would last from age nine to eighteen and is described in chapters four and five of Obama’s autobiography, “Dreams from my Father.” Obama describes gramp’s other black male friends but is not particularly impressed with them.

He then writes:

“There was one exception; a poet named Frank who lived in a dilapidated house in a run-down section of Waikiki....He would read us his poetry whenever we stopped by his house, sharing whiskey with gramps out of an emptied jelly jar. As the night wore on, the two of them would solicit my help in composing dirty limericks. Eventually, the conversation would turn to laments about women.

“‘They’ll drive you to drink, boy,’ Frank would tell me soberly. ‘And if you let ‘em they’ll drive you into your grave.’

“I was intrigued by old Frank, with his books and whiskey breath and the hint of hard-earned knowledge behind the hooded eyes. The visits to his house always left me feeling vaguely uncomfortable, though, as if I were witnessing some complicated, unspoken transaction between the two men, a transaction I couldn’t fully understand. The same thing I felt whenever gramps took me downtown to one of his favorite bars, in Honolulu’s red light district....usually I would sit at the bar, my legs dangling from the high stool, blowing bubbles into my drink and looking at the pornographic art on the walls—the phosphorescent women on animal skins, the Disney characters in compromising positions....”

But while Davis “specialized in sex”, the young Obama’s Smith Street adventures would eventually take a different direction. He writes: “...even then, as young as I was, I had already begun to sense that most of the people in the bar weren’t there out of choice, that what my grandfather sought there was the company of people who could help him forget his own troubles, people who believed would not judge him. Maybe the bar did help him forget, but I knew with the unerring instincts of a child that he was wrong about not being judged. Our presence there felt forced, and by the time I had reached junior high school I had learned to beg off from Gramps’s invitations, knowing that whatever it was I was after, whatever it was that I needed, would have to come from some other source.” (*Dreams* p78)

By the middle of high school Obama was “specializing” in marijuana and cocaine, a habit he would continue until arriving at Colombia University where he began attending “socialist conferences” and acquired his interest in politics.

Tidwell explains the attitude of Communist Party leader Paul Robeson when he encouraged Frank and Helen Davis to relocate in 1948. "For him Hawaii contained a veritable 'lesson in racial matters to be learned' one that could 'speed democracy in the United States,' if Hawaii were to be admitted to the Union as a state." (*Blues* xiv)

For Communists like Robeson, "democracy" was a codeword for communism.

**This report is published and distributed by America's Survival, Inc.
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**Please go to our website to see the
600-page FBI File on Frank Marshall Davis**