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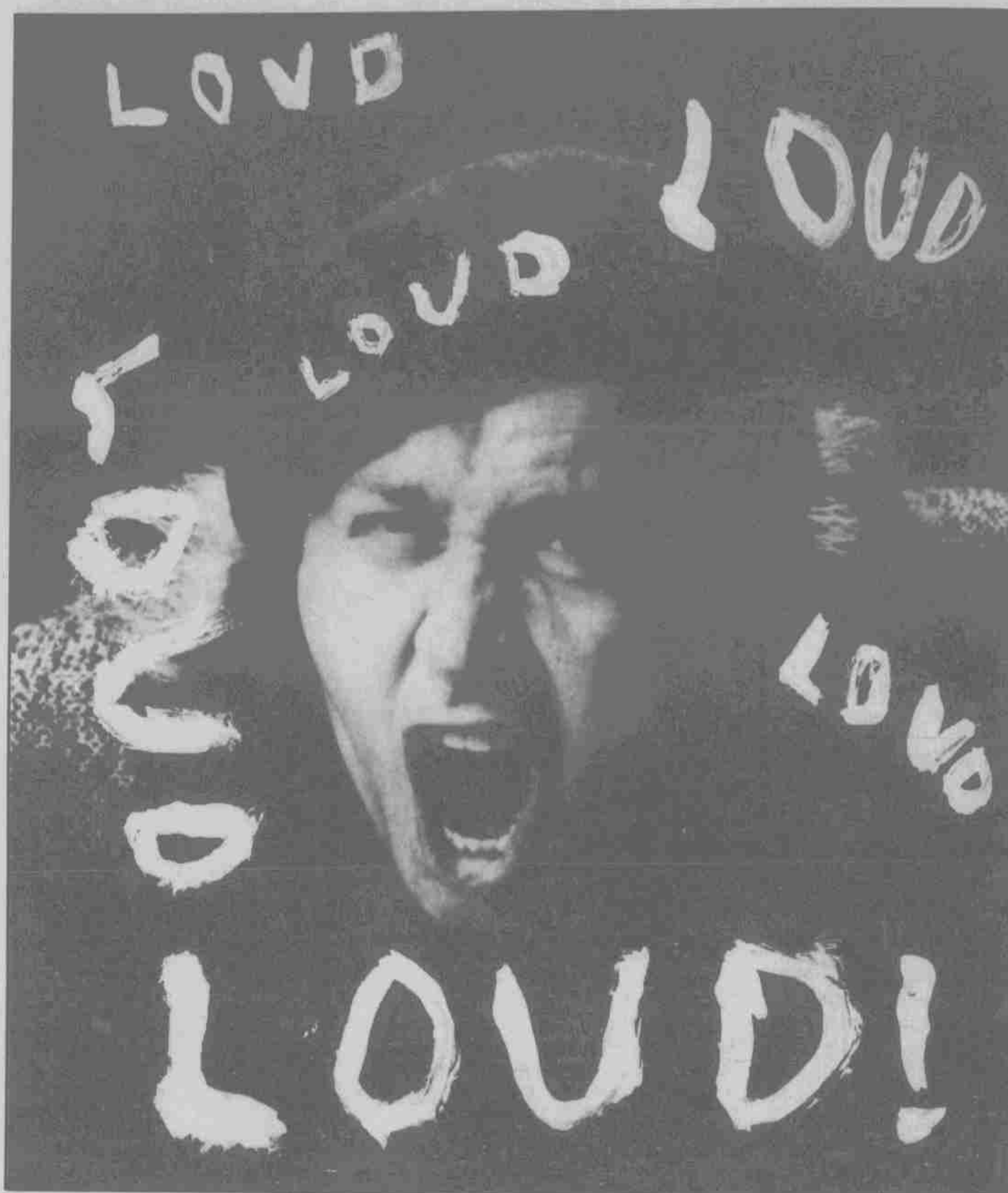
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HOURS:

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"Sound"


 By Charles Lieurance
Diversions

Welcome to "History of the Primal Scream in Popular Culture," brought to you in part by a grant from Dow Chemicals, making life comfortable, simple and genetically unpredictable for over 50 years.

(Insert the following excerpt from an early episode of "I Love Lucy.")

Lucy: Ricky, the toaster is broken!

Ricky: Well, Lucy, I'm not made of pesos, you'll have to be more careful with the household appliances . . .

Lucy: But Ricky . . .

Ricky: Donna you 'But Ricky me, Lucy . . .

Lucy: Waaaaaaahhnnah!

(End of excerpt.)

Lorne Greene: This is perhaps the first instance of the primal scream as a response and as a product of popular culture. Although this is certainly not the scream at its most primal and aggravated, more of a primal whine than a scream, really, there is a direct line from the bawl of Lucy in the Golden Age of Television to tonight's subject, the irreverent, controversial comedian, Sam Kinison.

At first the scream was simple, a primitive id reaction begun during childhood as a means to "get one's own way" or have one's needs ful-

filled. As society became more complex, an obstacle course riddled with changeling obstacles, with household appliances, McLuhan's third parent, moon landings, the Red Scare, fall-out shelters, chemical dumps, hippies, race riots, changing gender roles, deceitful presidents, secret wars, secret break-ins and secret body odors—the scream became louder, more general, less linked with childishness and more linked with survival in the twentieth century. The individual survives by screaming, by staking out his own personality through volume, a momentary conquest over the din of the social contract.

Here are some great primal screams leading up to Sam Kinison:

(Roger Daltrey screams at the end of the Who's "Won't Get Fooled Again.")

(John Lennon screams on John and Yoko's "Wedding Album.")

(Little Richard screams)

(Sam Kinison, on the studio set of "Late Night with David Letterman," screams.)

Lorne Green: The man in the beret? That's Sam Kinison . . . comedian. It used to be that comedians were funny because they told jokes. Used to be that a comedian

didn't look like he wanted to get you into a back alley, and hold you by your heels to empty your pockets and then pop your head like an over-ripe grape. Used to be that comedians would ruin their whole appeal by being filled with hate, a ravenous gnawing hatred of the squeamish. Sam Kinison is an ugly, hateful brute of a man who bullies the world into laughing. He laughs at starving children. He laughs at mass murderers. He laughs at diseases. He laughs at adultery. He laughs at sex. He laughs at God. But it isn't just a chuckle or a "joke's between you and me" grin. Sam Kinison howls and screams and terrorizes. He doesn't want just your appreciative laughter, he wants you to leave his shows half-paralyzed with paranoid fear and horror. He wants your knees to lock as you get ready to go through the exit door. Sam Kinison's effect is anatomical. Unlike the other assault comedians of the last twenty or so years (Lenny Bruce, Andy Kaufmann.) Kinison doesn't just place depth charges on your grey matter. He slaps you on the butt like an obstetrician, drains your genitalia like a urologist, plays butt poker like a proctologist, saps your spine like a neurologist and then goes in for the lobotomy.

See KINISON on 12