

STALKING



REV.



RICH



August, 1998. I'm interviewing Ben Jones, a cartoonist who I followed for months as his semi-autobiographical character lived not-so vicariously through his mini-comic *The Violent Life Of Deathweasel*. At one point, he's telling me about another Boston area zinester named Reverend Richard J. Mackin. Consumer Defense Corporate Poet and real life reverend (of California's Universal Life Church), Mackin is the one-man-show behind his *Evidence of Active Thought (E.A.T.) Publications*. Ads for his zines adorn the back covers of Jones' first three minis. Aside from all that, Mackin was the one responsible for Jones' big leap into the zine world, all during one of their many get togethers on Sunday in Mackin's apartment in nearby Alston to watch *Simpsons* and *X-Files*.

Jones being the main subject, I didn't bother to delve into Mackin's work and how through his simple routine of writing letters to companies big and small, he's made himself, in some cases, a more ominous figure in the eyes of big business than most Naderites that marched through the streets of Boston

this past September (which would explain why Mackin even opened for Nader on the eve of voting day). Still, there was something about one unknown endorsing another unknown, as Jones had done with labeling Mackin "a local celebrity." One of the good things about alternative press is that if something artistic is being covered, even if there is a bias (as there clearly is with this piece), there isn't really any profit in being a trumpeter for an alternative artist. If a trumpeter's being blown, it's because someone really enjoys that person's work.

With those few words from Jones, I was influenced to seek out Mackin's work. Two years later, I'm still searching, but now it's mostly for new releases.

December, 1998. Mackin is holding a release party at *Flyrabbit*, the most unique thrift store in Alston and the rest of the Boston area, for his eleventh *Book of Letters and This Place Is Weird*, a black and white collection of his various art pieces.. Outside the world of comics, I haven't come across any other zinester whose work is "out there" enough to merit even a small in-store signing such as this one. I also haven't come

BY CHAD PARENTEAU

