

Regretfully, there has been little mourning of the death of Abbie Hoffman, the founder of TAP and a profound advocate of the people and freedom fighter. I've noticed how little "the people" seem to care. In fact, there were those who wagered on his alleged suicide or possible murder. However, before the coroner's report was made public, his mother figured it might have been suicide.

A car accident he was in earlier in June of 1988 was said to have put him in a deep depression. A friend of his landlord saw him on April 11 and a neighbor found him dead at his apartment in New Hope, PA at 8:15 p.m. EDT on April 12. The autopsy showed his blood alcohol level was 0.20, twice the legal limit. Propranolol and benzodiazepine were also present in Abbie's system. Dr. Thomas Rosko indicated, on April 14, that there was no evidence that Hoffman had killed himself. When Abbie was found, he was fully clothed and covered-up in his bed. He also had a trickle of blood caked under his nostril. Despite all the fuss over the overdose, Abbie has been known to be an expert on drugs and there was no evidence of substance abuse prior to his death. Jack Hoffman (his brother) and friend Jerry Rubin just can't believe still that he's dead. They're also still convinced that he didn't commit suicide.

Abbie was a mover and a shaker. He had gotten involved with the civil rights movement and from there he went on to share in the counter-culture and peace movement. His involvement in the Chicago 7 (the conspiracy trial that set out to convict Hoffman and others of disrupting the 1968 Democratic National Convention) set the stage for numerous other activities: the founding of YIPL (for purposes of free speech and free exchange of information to all who want to use it), his anti-war involvements, visiting college campuses and camping out in Lincoln Park, getting pushed around by the gov't and by 1973, giving away over \$100,000 in book sales to political groups.

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LIGHT-HEARTED: Yipple Abbie Hoffman, making a spectacular entrance at Chicago's federal building in October 1968, when he and others were tried for conspiracy to create a riot at the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

For what it's worth, I'd like to say that despite the bad reports, his involvement in cocaine dealing and stepping out of the light for seven or eight years, Abbie always stuck to his guns. There's not too many like him left. Not even his co-horts seemed as convicted as he was. Some of them went on to Wall Street, politics, and Hollywood but he maintained the stature that he had been crowned with: an honest, tru-blue American who didn't give up when everyone else did and who didn't follow trends. He wasn't just some hippie fly-by-night making a statement that would soon be forgotten.

In showing our gratitude and unforgettable conviction to Hoffman's beliefs, we will begin a series of articles on his life and activities. Anyone who would like to help in our investigation of this information would be greatly appreciated. We were at a considerable loss before this issue was released since we were about to contact Mr. Hoffman before he died. Because he can't help us now, we are seeking anyone who could help us in contacting his brother, Jack Hoffman and anyone else who could be significant. We would also be grateful for any letters, clippings and miscellaneous info you may have to add to the article. If you wish to submit any articles of your own on Hoffman or relating to him or for that matter, anything else of interest, please do so. This is your newsletter and you're the reader/writer.

Remember, Hoffman's legacy won't be forgotten and certainly not his cause. That's what TAP's all about. Preserving our rights as Americans but part of that duty is paying homage to a great leader and individual. Again, we would appreciate any help at all.

Thanx, Helga

Small Tags Protect Big Stores

Electronic article surveillance (EAS) systems, which have been thwarting shoplifters in clothing stores for over 10 years, now appear ready for supermarkets and other mass-merchandise outlets. One supplier of EAS devices recently introduced electronic tags that are small, usable on both hard and soft packages, and-- perhaps most important-- cheap enough to be disposable. Meanwhile two other companies vying for this potentially huge, viciously competitive market are still working on their own disposable-tag systems, based on different technologies.

Most consumers know EAS as those white, hard-plastic tags that adorn clothes in many department stores and boutiques. A sales clerk removes the tag when the item is paid for; the customers must then exit the store through a special gate that sounds an alarm if it senses a tag, presumably attached to shoplifted clothing.

But as anyone who has seen these tags can attest, they are far too bulky to attach to most food and discount items. Such establishments-- where customers are allowed to freely roam the aisles making minimal contact with salespersons-- have traditionally been easy marks for shoplifters.

Many stores now use curved mirrors or closed-circuit TV cameras to deter and catch thieves. But such methods are only as good as the vigilance of the store personnel, and some consumers object to the "Big Brother" implications.

The system that may change all that, introduced in January by Checkpoint Systems Inc. (Thorofare, N.J.), is based on 3.8- by 4-centimeter adhesive labels that are dispensed from specially designed guns similar to those used to spit out price tags. Deposited on the sticky side of each label is a passive radio frequency (rf) resonator circuit that looks like nothing more than a thin piece of aluminum foil laid out in a squarish spiral. When such a tag passes

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through an rf-transmitting exit gate, the circuit interferes with the radio waves in a known way; a radio receiver at the gate senses this signal alteration and triggers an alarm.

That's essentially how most of the clothing-store tags work, too; Checkpoint's achievement has been in overcoming the problems inherent in miniaturization: as tags shrink, so do their effects on the radio signal, leading to a requirement for more sensitive detection equipment. But greater sensitivity means more false alarms, which are a nuisance at best and which have occasionally led to charges of false arrest by irate customers. "More than anything else, stores want to avoid lawsuits," comments a marketing manager at one EAS company.

To sidestep this dilemma, Checkpoint designed a digital signal-processing system that recognizes the tag's "signature" even though it's often weaker than the ambient radio frequency noise. The transmitter at the exit gate continually sweeps back and forth in frequency, with a period on the order of milliseconds. The tag's circuit-- which is equivalent to an inductor and a capacitor-- resonates somewhere in this swept range. Placed between the transmitter and receiver, the tag absorbs and reemits radio energy that varies in intensity with the transmitter's instantaneous frequency. The result is a characteristic series of peaks and valleys in the reemitted signal.

This received signal is passed through an electronic filter that rejects any rf power that doesn't match the tag's known signature; the signal that does pass through the filter is stored in a short-term memory. On each subsequent frequency sweep with the tag in the exit gate, the signature signal that the filter lets through is added to the one in memory. Thus the signal piles up to an alarm-triggering level while the rf noise, which is random, averages out in repeated scans.

Checkpoint says that it can mass produce the tags for a few cents each--



essential for the high volumes, low product prices, and razor-thin profit margins of most supermarkets. The tag's resonant frequency can vary by ± 10 percent and still be within the system's frequency sweep; such loose tolerances ease automated production.

The biggest problem with the Checkpoint system-- readily pointed out by the competition-- lies in the ability of any piece of metal to shield the tag from the radio waves. One consequence is that the tags can't protect any item in a metal package, such as canned goods. Secondly, dedicated shoplifters can beat the system by attaching their own metal-- a piece of aluminum foil, say-- to the tag before sneaking out of the store with it. Checkpoint acknowledges this, but points out that most shoplifting is done on impulse and few shoppers carry aluminum foil around with them routinely-- yet at least.

A second, compelling EAS technology is magnetic strips. Already familiar to library patrons and bookstore customers, these strips are metal with a very high magnetic permeability-- that is, they are readily magnetized in the presence of weak magnetic fields. Exit gates emit low frequency radio waves (typically a few kilohertz). As the strips become magnetized, they suck away some of the energy in the magnetic field; this reduction is sensed by the receiver at the gate. Most strips now in use are iron-nickel permalloy; recently glassy metals, such as Allied Corp.'s Melglas, have been proposed for this application because of their greater mechanical strength and flexibility.

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