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## TROLLING THE LES WITH REV JEN

By Kathleen Flood



All photos by Pat O'Malley.

Rev Jen isn't your everyday clergy-lady. For one, she just released a book called *Elf Girl*, which includes anecdotes about her mis-adventures in drugs, her litany of crazy jobs—from wannabe MTV VJ to 7-Eleven employee—and her quirky activism with the Dance Liberation Front against the Cabaret Law—did you know it's been illegal to dance in New York City since the 1920s!? (Unless you have a cabaret license.)

She's also been running the Lower East Side Troll Museum out of her apartment since 2000. Her museum features very rare trolls like a freakish two-headed one she calls the "Mona Lisa" of the museum. It's open to the public by appointment, but good luck getting in.



Rev Jen just founded a movie company called ASS Studios (short for Art Star Scene) with her boyfriend and collaborator, Courtney Sell. People got Tasered at the first screening. The next screening, at the Bowery Poetry Club this Sunday, is supposed to be tamer, but we sort of doubt it.



**Your book talks a lot about the crazy jobs you used to have. Are you still working a ton on the side?**

**Rev. Jen:** I still work at the Tenement Museum two days a week. I won't say what days because I don't want anyone visiting me there! I sell paintings, I sell stuff on eBay... I just kind of scrape together a living. I write for *Penthouse* and Art Net sometimes. I used to write fan sites for Viacom and The WB. I can whip up 500 words about a shitty TV show faster than anyone on the planet.

***Elf Girl* is your third novel. How is this one different from the others?**

We really wanted the book to be about being an artist. Obviously I've had tons of romantic relationships and stuff like that that didn't make it in. My last book, *Live Nude Elf*, was all about the sexperiments that I did. I feel like people pay so much attention to sex, so it was good to leave all of that out.

The next book I'm writing is more about relationships and sex and stuff. I'm writing two books at once right now.

One day I'm going to write a book called *Being Avant-Garde Sucks*, and it'll be all about how when you're truly avant-garde you do everything first, and you never get any credit or money for it. But you don't bitch about it. Because then you wouldn't be really avant-garde.

**Now that you've finished writing *Elf Girl*, are you performing a lot?**

Well, I do the Anti-Slam, and Courtney and I are making movies. We started a motion picture studio called ASS Studios and we have made a ton of movies within the course of six months.

**Courtney Sell:** Yeah, three major ones that we've been screening, and then we've done shorts.

**R.J.:** One of the movies that we made is called *Sinful Bitches*, and I play a landlady. Faceboy and Reina Terror, the burlesque performer, play a lovely young couple looking for a place to stay in New York City, and they stumble upon the Troll Museum. I have this Bozo red wig on and I'm just a creepy close talker. Oh! And the world famous Mangina plays my son—he wears prosthetic vaginas and he's a great performer. He's in a bunch of Jonathan Ames' books, so he's also a literary figure, I suppose. When Faceboy's character, the nice young husband, goes out to look for work, we get his wife addicted to heroin and prostitute her. It's a sleaze fest.

I wrote a screenplay for a movie called *Satan's Bitches* that we're going to shoot soon. We need a budget for that. There's a Catholic schoolgirl masturbating to a Justin Bieber picture in *Teen Beat*. Faceboy and I are going to play a couple of stoned-out Satanists. It's a good, solid script. Normally, I'd just be like, "Let's just shoot something," but I want to have good costumes for this.

### **Courtney, do you act in them as well?**

**C.S.:** No, I direct. Jen and I have the same distributor, and we met up in April and just started making movies. Really just hit the ground running. We had our first screening at Bowery Poetry Club, and it ended in people getting Tasered.

CBS Local told people to come. It was number two on their list of things to do—number one was to see Michelle Obama speak—so there were old people there, and they got Tasered too. One of the bands that played after our movie had stun guns and Tasers, and they got the audience.

### **Whoa, what band was this?**

**R.J.:** **Jugger-Nut**. They're actually fabulous! I think they're going to take off. They're going to be top of the charts by the time this comes out, I'm not even kidding. I mean, you go around stun-gunning your audience and you'll get some notoriety. Well, they lost their stun-gun, so maybe it's less dangerous to see them now!

### **Jen, you've never shied away from a little civil disobedience. Have you been involved with any of the Occupy Wall Street stuff?**

I haven't, mostly because I work all the time. Even if I'm not at the bookstore, I'm working on my art. Me staying home and doing art is better than me being an extra body down there. But I like it when people shake things up. I do have many friends down there who are working very hard to do something. I don't know what the actual objectives are, so to me that's a problem. I'm very objective-oriented.

Me and Faceboy did a Occupy W. 12th Street. We wore rainbow unitards and carried signs that said things like "I'd like a sandwich" and "5 + 1 = 6," and we had a list of demands. One of them was "recognize micropenis as an independent state." Our whole thing was like, let's just make fun of everything and maybe take a little hot air out of some of the bullshit.

By Kathleen Flood | 4 months ago

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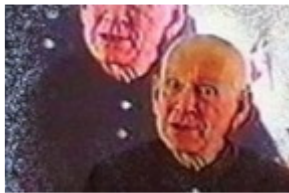
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