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## Just One More Time

Anthony Kronman  
*Yale Law School*

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## Just One More Time

ANTHONY KRONMAN†

When I joined the Minnesota faculty twenty years ago, in the summer of 1975, it was clear to me from the day I arrived that Alan Freeman was going to be my best friend. That would have been true even if Alan hadn't lived two blocks down the street, on Irving Avenue. Alan would have been my best friend even if he'd lived across town, because he was so much fun to be with. But the fact that he was close was a bonus, and it meant that our friendship formed even faster. A week after I arrived in Minneapolis, I was already in the habit of going to Alan's house almost every night. Peter Gabel was there about as often too, and the three of us spent a lot of nights talking about things that seemed adventurous and weird at the time, but that have become pretty commonplace since. I remember one night Peter spelled out a theory that later became the basis for his essay, "The Pact of the Withdrawn Selves." I wasn't sure whether Peter's ideas were amazing or mad—I'm still not sure—but there was something about Alan's house—there was something about Alan—that set the three of us loose in ways that produced as much intellectual fun as I've ever had with any friends.

I'm not sure that I can say what it was about Alan that had this effect on us three. Sometimes I thought he was a kind of *provocateur*, encouraging Peter and me to be reckless in our thinking to the point of self destruction. But the risks that we took Alan always took with us. It was as if he were always saying, "Go ahead and be reckless, but don't worry because if anything happens we'll all take our lumps together."

Alan had an undeniable wish to see conventions dismantled, habits unsettled, order disordered and the like. He had a much greater tolerance—a much greater taste—for chaos than I do. And the only times that Alan ever felt I was disloyal to our friendship was when I stuck my feet in the ground and stood by some convention or habit or fixture of legal thought. Intellectually at least, I was always too much of a stick-in-the-mud for Alan.

Eventually we followed our separate paths of thought, Alan turning his own free spiritedness into a principle of sorts, and I doing the same with my habits. But this was only an intellectual rupture. It was never, ever, a source of personal unhappi-

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† Dean, Yale Law School.

ness for either of us. In fact, we each enjoyed what we came in time to see as the other's orneriness. The reason was simple. Alan was a profoundly kind man who loved his friends and would forgive them even their gravest mistakes. The exploder of norms, the breaker of tablets, the exposor of conceits and ambitions was in his heart a sweet and gentle man, childlike, if I may use that word in a positive sense.

Twenty years have passed since those autumn nights on Irving Avenue with Alan and Peter. The professional world that Alan lived in is now filled with antic spirits who are happily taking risks that were unthinkable back then. I don't know whether this development pleased Alan or not, but I do know that he came into a gray and decidedly unadventurous world and was one of the first to bring some color to it by making it respectable to have a real adventure now and then. We are all in Alan's debt for this, and I feel the debt in a personal way because Alan encouraged me to have some adventures of my own.

But this is not what means the most to me about my friendship with Alan Freeman. What means the most is that he was kind and caring and good. My gloss on this would be: "that is one of the eternal qualities of friendship." And Alan would reply: "what a piece of ideological nonsense." Off we'd go again, round and round. How much I wish we could, just one more time!