

Nowadays we would label this kind of act as “information suicide” or something very sophisticated, because people are much more aware of the importance of ones’ identities, but in those days we simply called it “jerktoasting” and these people on the stage were just a few jerktoasters who got caught. We were fascinated by them, because no one of us had ever thought of deleting ourselves. It seemed futuristic to do so and it seemed to exhibit willful antipathy to do so, which, in a way, somehow seems quite futuristic as well. (We were all so worried about a dystopian future at the time, a future of assimilation or a future of surveillance, and these people had assimilated themselves, lost themselves, in a style far more effective than the government could dream.)

Of course, Oprah wanted to cut right to the bottom of things and she straight up asked them, “Why do this? Why do all this work, this is years and years of work, why do this just to erase yourselves from society?”

The people in the dark shifted a bit, considering the question, and, from the movement of their silhouettes, you could see that they were motioning to each other and consulting. After a time, a woman in the group spoke and said, “We don't want to answer that question.”

The audience gave a rumble of discontent.

“Okaaay,” said Oprah. “But this is kind of a key question here! Let’s get real, I’m not going to just let you out of this question.”