



INSIDE!
HULK HOGAN RAPS!
SMOKING POT - TERRORISM?
MUCH MORE!

don't be a chicken! try

you idiot

#2



the first one
only

\$1

You Idiot!

Debating the Obvious Since 2002

Like the first issue of this zine, the articles contained within examine rather absurd topics that are seemingly not worth even pondering. Weird, crappy video games, terrible celebrity albums, ludicrous commercials, washed-up bands, etc etc. Thus, "Debating the Obvious". There is no brave investigating reporting (ie, "You Idiot exposes the Hulk Hogan rap album as being less than stellar; a position most publications have feared to take" etc) or startling revelations here--just observations on goofy things that interested me. Hopefully, they'll interest you as well, but I promise nothing.

So read on, and enjoy.

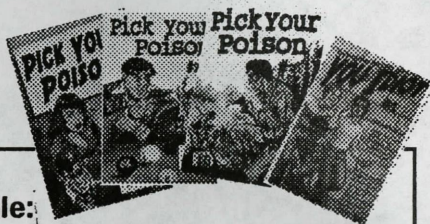
-Nate

Want to buy You Idiot but don't want to deal with me? Try one of these fine distributors! Tower Records, Microcosm, Basement Freak, Fiend or Faux, Five Minute Romance, Frenzy Distro, Loop Distro, Moon Potatoes, Otso Lapila, Rocket Strip, Spy Kids, plus more. Stores you can pick it up at include Quimby's in Chicago, Reading Frenzy in Portland, Extreme Noise in Minneapolis, Sticky in Melbourne, Australia, and various Tower Records stores.

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Credit where credit is due dept: I made a terrible mistake last issue by not crediting Gerty with finding the book "It's OK To Say No to Drugs" in a dumpster. I used the drawings from that priceless tome to create last issues cover, as well as this ones. So, thanks goes out to him.



Also Available:

I've got some other zines you can blow your money on if you'd like. The first issue of You Idiot took a look at fucked-up religious and anti-drug video games; preachers who burn Journey albums, the strange science of Cat Astrology, and more. My other zine is Pick Your Poison, which is more just general stories about my life. There's three issues available of that one. It'll only cost ya a buck a zine, and if you can check out samples at the website too.

Didn't You Hear Your Television?

It Told You to Stop Doing Those Drugs!

In the last fun-filled issue of *You Idiot* we examined the phenomenon of anti-drug video games such as *Narc* and *Wally Bear* and the *No Gang* to determine their effectiveness in eradicating narcotic use. After exhaustive research on this matter, we reached the startling, sobering conclusion that they did not, in fact, make a dent in the War on Drugs: people in America continued to get high even after they were released.

But perhaps this was to be expected; after all, video-gamers comprise a relatively minute demographic in this country. Could it be that simply not enough junkies and joint puffers had been exposed to sobriety-encouraging efforts such as *Wally Bear*? Sadly, we will never know the answer as these games have drifted off into obscurity.

Television, however, is something that practically every American is exposed to on at least a semi-regular basis. And rather than disappear as with the video-gaming efforts, anti-drug messages on the boob tube have exploded in recent months. The budget allocated for these spots is massive, dwarfing the average private company's advertising campaign. Odds are, they will be viewed at least a few times by the typical television viewer, including drooling potheads who never got a chance to get their hands on the game *Raid 2020* and its heartening "Winners Fight Drugs" rallying cry.

Getting the message from the White House planning rooms to inside the scrambled, resin-soaked brains of slouchy stoners will not be a problem this time around. But will these messages be effective? Is it time to begin planning for the War On Drugs victory parade quite yet? Or will the ads be met with a collective stoned stare from the nation's youth as the video games (and pretty much every other effort) were? Let us take a look to find out.

A Quick History

Anti-drug propaganda in the American media has been around for years, dating back to the *Reefer Madness* type movies from the 1930's (where pot smokers became axe-wielding lunatics after taking a puff of the *Devil Harvest* and so on), but the current crop of televised spots didn't become prominent until the mid 1980's when first lady Nancy Reagan unleashed her *Just Say No* campaign.

Soon after, in 1986, a group of like-minded advertising executives formed the *Partnership For A Drug Free America*, with the stated goal of conditioning kids to reject drugs by using the same branding and marketing techniques they had honed in their advertising jobs. Basically, the idea was, if we were able to convince kids to garb themselves in corporate logos, then we can surely convince them to not do drugs.

These groups released a flurry of anti-drug commercials during the late 80's (see sidebar: *Oldies But Goodies*), but as the decade changed they tapered off, leaving the airwaves relatively silent on the topic of drug use prevention. Oh, sure, you might have heard someone on a cartoon opine that "crack is wack" every now and then, but for the most part the sentiment had faded away from the public spotlight.

All of that changed in 1998 when the Office for National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and the *Partnership For a Drug Free America* joined forces. Together, they launched the *National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign* (such catchy names!), which

received a billion dollar blessing from Congress. Soon enough, a wave of new anti-drug commercials were flooding the airwaves, seemingly making up for lost time.

These new campaigns can be divided into three main groups, as we will see below.

The Anti-Logic



the Dixie Chicks

The group's first batch of efforts were mostly inspirational spots featuring athletes and celebrities. Folks such as Michael Johnson, Mary J Blige, Venus and Serena Williams, Carol O'Connor, Lauren Hill, Everclear, and the Dixie Chicks appeared on camera to tell the teens at home that their varied successes would not have been possible had they been dope fiends.

Other commercials showed teens things they could do instead of drugs, and things they would supposedly be unable to do if on drugs: swimming, drawing, boxing, and so forth. The theme here was "The Anti-Drug" (I don't know why, but it really cracks me up to see a commercial with the tagline "Boxing. The Anti-Drug".... I can't help but picture some kid mugging people with a shrug: "Hey, it's my Anti-Drug. I ain't smoking reefer, am I?" Furthermore, I wish I was in elementary school right now so I could somehow get trumpeted out by officials at some meeting with the promise to renounce dope on stage, only to cheerily announce "Alcohol is my anti-drug!" That'd be goddamn hilarious. But I digress...).

A lot of other spots were fluffy pieces that didn't even directly mention drugs. Here, as an example, is a transcript from one of this campaign's commercials, entitled simply "Love":

Voiceover:

My cat's name is Sassy. And Sassy loves me.

Unconditionally.

I mean, I know that she needs me.

Umm... ok. I mean, that's nice and all. I like cats, a lot actually. But with the thousands of dollars spent on creating and then airing this ad, what is the message? Cats are a deterrent to drugs? If you're thinking about cooking up some meth in your parent's bathtub, try petting a kitty first?

I guess I can't rag on these ads too hard though... they're bland and ineffective and annoying, but their premise isn't as ridiculous as the other commercials we'll look at later. Regardless, I honestly can't picture the average kid walking away from viewing one of them with anything other than indifference or slight annoyance. This "put down the pipe and pick up the tennis racket" approach comes across as, at best, hopelessly ineffective.

So, predictably, the commercials ended up being miserable failures. The organization admitted the effect on teens was negligible, but eagerly pointed out that the commercials had made a slightly positive impression on adults who had viewed them: "A comprehensive study completed in October 2001 found that the cam-



Check it OUT! Jessica Simpson DOESN'T SMOKE WEED! I bet legions of potheads tossed their pipes in the garbage upon learning this!

paign - with spots that include music and sports stars - had no significant effect on young people. However, the study did find evidence that parents who watched the ads were more likely to talk with their children about drug use and monitor their children's behavior."

Right. All that means is a few parents are going to be more likely to say "Hmmm, I think I WILL go talk to little Bobby about how pot is bad, and if he doesn't smoke it, he can be just like the Dixie Chicks", and the kids will react with a "oh, geez, looks like dad's been watching those stupid commercials"

George W. Bush's recently appointed Drug Czar John Walters concurred with the report. The first batch of commercials had been "ineffective" he declared, and it was therefore time to bring out the big guns in the advertising drive against drugs. Yup: terrorism.



If You Hadn't Bought That Dime Bag, There Would Be No Terrorism Right Now

"If you quit drugs, you join the fight against terror in America" - George W. Bush.

When the aforementioned John Walters was appointed Drug Czar, the assumption was that the office's strategy would shift back to a more hawkish approach: less treatment, more punishment. Advertising-wise, the Dixie Chicks would be shelved for something a bit more hard-hitting.

This prediction proved to be correct, and within months a completely new message had emerged. Doing drugs was no longer just an unacceptable alternative to tennis, it was now a terrorist activity. Oh, to be a fly on the wall during the brainstorming session that came up with this chasm-clearing leap of logic: "Yes, that's it! We will blame pot-smoking teenagers for international terrorism!"

This lunacy is a significant change from previous efforts. These ads are designed to make you feel guilty, responsible for horrible things. It's distinct because it's the first time the commercials attempt to blame the users. Before, blame was doled out towards the dealers and drug lords, those high up the chain, while purchasers of drugs were told "This is bad for your health, this will make your brain the equivalent of a fried egg, blah blah"

But no more. With the new set of commercials, the White House shifted their stance sharply, from "I love you, you love me, how 'bout some baseball instead of PCP?" to a growling "Alright, you little shits, we employed the use of the Dixie Chicks, and yet **you're still doing drugs**. No more mister nice guy. You butchers are abetting terrorists. Don't you forget it". One of the most striking examples of this change can be seen in the ad "Tennis". Now, originally you may have thought that tennis was a perfectly acceptable Anti-Drug; after all, Venus and Serena Williams did a spot telling us so. But the new ad reads as follows: "On Wednesday, I played tennis, went shoe shopping, and helped smuggle a load of AK-47s into Columbia" Uh-oh!

The ads were showcased during the 2002 Super Bowl, and have proliferated since with quite a few different variations. As far as I can tell, kids seem to still be smoking pot, and terrorists don't seem to be broke, but nevertheless lets examine a few of these commercials to get a better understanding of the government's position.

The First Batch

A commercial known as "AK-47" runs through a list of items used by terrorists, done in the same format as the "Mastercard: Priceless" spots. Fake IDs: \$3000. Box Cutters: \$2 Explosives: \$1200. Ski Masks: \$4. Bribes: \$4000. Etc etc. It concludes with "Where do terrorists get their money?" And the sobering, terror-fying answer: "If you buy drugs, some of it might come from you." This whole time, I thought my pot-growing friends were funneling their profits into food and rent! Guess they've got some explaining to do! Fucking terrorists.



Stacy

A similar commercial is entitled simply "Stacy". First we see the carefree Stacy hanging out in a coffee shop. From there, we are treated to, in order, The Dime Bag That Stacey Bought; The Dealer Who Sold the Dime Bag That Stacey Bought; The Supplier That Smuggled the Pot To The Dealer Who Sold the Dime Bag That Stacey Bought; and, finally, Carla, Who Was Hit By a Stray Bullet From Stacey's Supplier and Paralyzed For Life. Yeah, sip away at your Café Mocha, you butcher.

Yet another like-minded effort was a commercial called "I Helped", which shows a series of people casually saying "I helped kids learn how to kill. I was just having some fun ya know" and "I helped kill a policeman. I was just having fun" and "I helped blow up buildings. My life, my body" etc etc etc.

Also, we have a more recent offering entitled "You Killed Me", in which a busy businesswoman working on some papers is approached by what appears to be an 8 year old ghost.

"You killed me" the little ghost girl whispers to her

"What?" she asks, confused.

"There was a bomb. I was going to school"

"What did that have to do with me?"

"You bought drugs. You gave them money. They can't do things like that without money. It's the money"

And then, of course, the superimposed text appears to again remind us that "Drug money supports terrible things"



Have you ever bought a dime bag before? Well, then you helped kill this little girl. Have fun sleeping tonight.

These commercials are completely ludicrous for a whole myriad of reasons. For one thing, they're predominantly directed at marijuana, the vast majority of which comes from within the US border and Mexico-not any group associated with terrorism.

But I suppose that's missing the broader point: obviously, the drugs are profitable **BECAUSE THEY ARE ILLEGAL**. Take pot--it's just a plant. It's not hard to grow. It's not rare, or hard to come by or anything, but yet it's highly profitable. This is, again, **because it is illegal**. If a terrorist tried to raise money by growing tobacco, or home brewing, he's going to have less luck. Thus, if your goal is to prevent terrorists from profiting off the drug trade, simply make drugs legal. Poof. Black market disappears. Or, I suppose, you could try the alternate approach of spending millions of dollars to flood the airwaves with the intonation "Kids. Don't Do Drugs.", and hope the nation's youth collectively smile and say "Ok!", running up to hug their savior DEA agents with a "Hey, mister, you wanna play a game of baseball? That's my anti-drug--- what's yours?"

Or, we could look at it this way: If I buy a light bulb made by defense contractor General Electric, am I therefore partly responsible if one of their missiles

strikes and kills innocent civilians? Gee, I hope not, I really want to be able to go to bed tonight. Or how about this: every time you buy a CD, a slight portion of the money goes to Sony, because they own the copyright on the format. Celine Dion is on Sony records. So, by buying a blank CD are you partly to blame for helping to fund the media campaign that brought her into the spotlight?

But perhaps the best analogy for these ads is comparing them to blaming Al Capone's violence in the 20's on alcohol drinkers. That pretty much sums up the logic behind these things.

Nick and Norm

The government's next batch of terrorism-themed ads toned down the harsh imagery and accusations a little bit. Entitled Nick and Norm, this set of four commercials treats us to a deep, rich, fact-filled examination of the multi-faceted Drug War through the conversations of two restaurant employees. Let's take a look at one of their exchanges:



Norm: It's a ploy.

Nick: What?

Norm: This "Drug money funds terror". It's a ploy.

Nick: A ploy.

Norm: A manipulation.

Nick: Ploy.

Norm: "Drug money funds terror." I mean, why should I believe that?

Nick: Because...it's a fact?

Norm: A fact?

Nick: F.A.C.T. Fact.

Norm: So, you're saying that I should believe it because... it's... true. That's... that's your argument.

Nick: It is true.



And with this stunning display of evidence, Norm is rendered speechless. No need for Nick back himself up-he spells the word Fact, and that should be proof enough. The above exchange boils down to "Drug's aren't bad, man" "Drugs ARE bad" ".... Really? Fuck." Way to hold up your end of the debate, there, Norm.

Having an annoying government-paid actor say "It's a fact" would presumably be enough proof of the drug-terror link to end the skepticism of the American populace, but just in case a follow-up commercial was released, entitled "The Moral Loophole"

Norm: I got it.

Nick: Got what?

Norm: The moral loophole.

Nick: The moral loophole?

Norm: Um hm. I buy drugs, I *might* be supporting terror. Might is the moral loophole.

Nick: So you might be helping drug dealers shoot little kids, and you might be helping drug cartels slaughter innocent families, and you might be helping terrorists do things so awful that we can't even conceive of them yet

Norm again displays a frustrated and resigned "got me again" look. Man, they sure picked a dimwit for the counter-argument here.

Finally, we have "Not That Complicated"

Norm: This drugs and terror thing. I mean, it's a very complicated issue.

Nick: A complicated issue?

Norm: Complicated.... very complicated.

Nick: No drug buyers, no drug money. No drug money, no drug dealers. No drug dealers, no drug murders, shootings, bribery, corruption.

Norm: Not that complicated.



As he delivers this last line, Norm cracks a smile for the first time and looks directly into the camera, seemingly saying "Well, I came around and realized the error of my ways."

You can, too, Junkie At Home On The Couch Who Is Supporting Terrorism"

Marijuana Makes You Do Terrible, Terrible Things

At the same time the Terrorist themed spots were airing, we were also treated to a series that explained to us how terrible and cataclysmically dangerous of a drug marijuana is. Let's take a look

"Drive Thru"

Here we see some stoners pull up to a drive-thru window as smoke billows out of their car.

"Can I take your order?"

"Gimmie 15 cheeseburgers" the driver manages before breaking into a spasm of coughing. After some laughter from the dope-mobile, the cashier girl repeats herself.

"Man, I don't have any money" the driver laments

"I don't have no money" the first passenger agrees.

At this point in viewing the commercial for the first time, I had no idea it was an anti-drug spot; I groaned and figured it was the trailer for a bottom-of-the-barrel movie attempting to update Cheech and Chong for my pitiful generation. Oh, how wrong I was.

"All right, well, go! Go!" the kid in the back says. And so they pull away, when suddenly we see a little girl on a bicycle appear off camera.



Sidebar: the Paycheck

Let's take a look at how Nick's just-the-facts speaking style and Norm's eternal skepticism might play out in other conversations:

Norm: Man, fuck this restaurant! This paycheck is bullshit.

Nick: Bullshit.

Norm: ... yeah, that's what I said. Bullshit

Nick: Bullshit

Norm: Dude, fuck off with that repeating-every-thing-I-say shit. You sound like a fucking two year old.

Nick: (chewing) Two year old.

Norm: Ah, fuck you. I'm going to go cash this check.

Nick: You owe me your paycheck

Norm: ... what? Why the fuck would I owe you my check?

Nick: Because it's a fact.

Norm: (stunned silence as he realizes he will be broke yet again)

the Dangers of Head Shops

This misguided 'blame terrorism on pot' stuff reminds me of something. Recently, the lunatic administration that rules over this country decided to crack down on drug paraphernalia operations. That's right, money and manpower were exerted in the goal of busting hippies who blow glass pipes. What's the fucking point?! "Gee, I've got this gigantic mound of pot but now that 'Harmonious Glassware' closed down, I have no way to make use of it. Guess I better toss it in the garbage and join the war on terror" Nol You fucking idiots! People will utilize a pop can! Or eat the weed! Yeah, keep up the good work there, Ashcroft. (Besides, I've been to those stores before-- the signs clearly state the 12 foot bong is intended for tobacco use)

"Man watch out!" one of the stoners yelps, a crashing noise is heard, and the screen goes black as, presumably, they plow into the little girl. You assume the lesson learned is 'Watch where you're going on your bike', but then the super imposed text lets us know what they're getting at: "Marijuana can slow your reaction time. Harmless? Facts: the anti-drug"

Okeeee. Now, obviously, if we apply the same logic, we can show a commercial of a guy eating thanksgiving dinner, yawning, falling off his chair where he lands on and crushes his infant daughter, and say "Turkey can make you sleepy. Harmless? Facts: the anti-poultry" But, lets put that aside and examine their direct claim: Pot can make you react slowly in situations, which in turn may cause your driving abilities to be off, which in turn may cause your car to hit kids riding bicycles.

Yes, it may seem like an iron-clad argument, but I'm not sure I buy it. I mean, fuck, I used to drive around stoned out of my fucking gourd all the time and it actually made my driving considerably better. I was so paranoid about getting pulled over or hitting an oil slick or whatever that my eyes were glued onto the road in fierce concentration. Had some little girl biked in front of me, I would have swerved out of the way, no problem. If I, on the other hand, had been drunk, or guffawing with laughter at the simpletons who designed these commercials, than my driving would have been exceedingly erratic and potentially harmful to biking kids. But pot? No way.



"The Den"

Another commercial in this line of propaganda (if I was a witty hippy, I'd call it propaganja - get it? Propaganja,- but alas I'm not so I won't) informs us that pot can make you kill your friends, as well. To illustrate this, they show us two stoned kids sitting in what appears to be one of their parents' dens.

One of the teenagers eyes a fish hung on the wall and asks "Hey, if your parents get divorced, who gets the fish?" It's a funny line, and the kids both break out laughing. Then one of them burps and laughter breaks out again. Some time passes and the one kid confides that "Dude, your sisters hot" "That's not cool" the other kid says dismissively.

Then, of course, one of the kids pulls out a gun. "Hey man, check this out" "Cool is it loaded?" "Nah" he replies, and then BANG the screen goes blank. The screen says "Marijuana can distort your sense of reality. Harmless? Facts: the anti-drug" Pretty scary, huh? All those teenage years spent smoking dope... I'm truly lucky to still be alive.

Others

Other commercials in this line include a boy smoking pot and then date raping a girl, and a couple of kids smoking pot at a concert, getting so stoned that one of them remarks "I am so stoned. Do you remember where we were sitting", at which point a cop busts them (I suppose this one has a feasible argument. If you smoke pot in front of cops, you might get in trouble. Fair enough. Thanks for wasting my tax money on that you fuckers).

Conclusion

I would assume it must be frustrating to be one of these drug battlers. The War On Drugs has been raging for some years now, and the drugs seem to be holding up pretty well. Do the creators of these commercials hold their breaths with the

airing of each new ad, thinking this will be the breakthrough?

It almost makes me sad, a little: the relative futility of what they're doing. I know saying that would get these DEA agents and advertising execs in a huff "Futile?! We don't think educating our youths about the dangers of drugs is futile one bit. No siree Bob" But I'm sorry, I think kids are going to try drugs, and having government officials and figures of authority tell them "No no no!! Don't do that. Do not do that. Stop. Don't. No. Don't" ain't gonna stop them; if anything it will encourage them (which studies have shown).

And I don't think this is necessarily a bad thing. Pot might make you lazy and into bad music, but it can also be a lot of fucking fun. Sure, it's not for everyone, but neither are a lot of prescription drugs that are legally peddled. And besides, I don't think anyone could argue that alcohol is a fuck of a lot worse than pot when it comes to negative side-effects. The hypocrisy of this is evident when you watch a commercial with the message "Smoking pot will lead to you killing children, shooting your friends,

Sidebar: Oldies But Goodies

Before this current crop of ludicrous campaigns, the drug commercials boiled down to more simplistic ways of saying "drugs are bad" rather than the broad accusations employed now.

The most famous was surely Nancy Regan's brainchild, the "Just Say No" series. Equally memorable was the "This is your brain. This is your brain on drugs. Any questions?" And who could forget the one where a father confronts his son with some drugs he has found? "Who taught you how to do this stuff?" the father yells "Who?" And then the shocker: "You, alright? I learned it from watching you!" Yes- "Parents who do drugs have children who do drugs". I tried that line on my parents a couple times with limited success.

But how about the lesser-known commercials from that Golden Era? Remember the cartoon spot that said "I'd rather eat a big ole bug... than do some nasty drug" Whoo-hoo! Yeah, bra-fucking-vo to whatever nimwit scripted that doozy of a slogan. Something like that is aimed at 6 year olds, and 6 year olds do not do drugs (Or, if they do, that probably means they're embarked on a sketchy path that Saturday morning cartoon commercials will be unable to wrest them from). I'd guess that the age of 12 to about 15 is when most kids will get exposed to drugs. Let's picture: a fifteen-year old kid is at a party when suddenly someone coughs mightily and sticks a joint in his face. What should he do? Lets say it together! "I'd rather eat a big ole bug... than do some nasty drug!"

Advertising executives had other brilliant suggestions for what the kiddies should say to dope peddlers, such as the famous "I'm not a chicken you're a turkey". The idea was, if you followed Nancy Reagan's advice and Just Said No, the persistent kid with the bag of oregano might follow-up with "What, are you chicken? Baww baww baww!" What could you possibly say in response to such a taunt?! Ah, of course: "I'm not a chicken you're a turkey!". Brilliant! These commercials were funny because the dealer would always look deeply hurt when the line was delivered, and walk away with his head down.

Another common theme was to show a group of hip-looking kids walking around, laughing, presumably on their way to play basketball and then mentor some disadvantaged youth. They are approached by a solitary, hunched over teen who flashes a joint, or some other drug, their direction. In some versions, the kids simply ignore him and continue on towards their basketball game, still a giddy mob. In others, they say "no thanks" and move on. In others, they get mad and say something like "Drugs?! Are you crazy?" and then, as they walk away one of the 12 year old girls in the pack snorts dismissively "Loser!" This rings in the rejected dope peddler's ears, and he looks hurt. Alone, he walks through some dimly lit streets, ending up on a rooftop; putting his head in his hands as the sun sets in the background. What a lonely scene. But at least he's got some pot to keep him company.

All of these aired in the late 80's, when I was still in elementary school, and guess what? They didn't work! The cool kids still smoked pot! Oh well, Keep trying, Advertising Gurus, you'll get it eventually!



raping people, and stuffing the pockets of terrorists", followed by a spot saying "Yo, dude! Drinkin' Budweiser will get you LAID!"

Now, I'm not saying preschoolers should be encouraged to delve in angel dust or anything like that. I'm just saying that, if your intent is to keep kids from trying drugs, than *maybe you shouldn't fucking lie to them*. Kids are not that stupid. As soon as they start being around marijuana, they will realize that it does not, in face, cause people to shoot each other and start slamming syringes of heroin into their eyeballs and so forth.

So what's the solution? (If "solution" is the appropriate word). Well, my loony idea would be to educate kids on the cons AND PROS of drug use WITHOUT LYING to them, but to mainly concentrate efforts on kids who are already doing drugs and actually have a problem. I mean, for fucks sake, why are they focusing on POT?! I think I'd focus the attention on helping a shaky meth-head get his life together rather than admonishing kids who might someday try a joint. (And if you ARE terrified of your kid smoking dope, sit down and have an honest talk with him or her. Say "Pot is not going to do the things those commercials are saying. But, if you smoke enough of it, it might make the Grateful Dead sound good to you. We don't want to have to watch that happen")

Look at it this way: 20 million Americans have tried cocaine. However, there are not 20 million cocaine addicts in America. So why not focus on the relatively small amount of people who have a genuine problem with cocaine instead of yelling at the whole country "Don't do coke! Don't do coke!?". Basically, provide treatment and support to the people who actually need it, educate kids honestly, and quit annoying the rest of us with stupid commercials. Sounds logical to me. Then again, maybe my brain is so clouded from marijuana that I can no longer think straight.

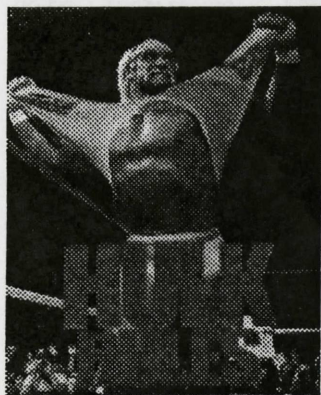
But you know what the most ironic part of all this is? Not only are these commercials failing to deter kids from doing drugs, they're actually ENCOURAGING them to do drugs. An evaluation released by Westat Inc. and the Annenberg Public Policy Center found the following: "Those who were more exposed to the Campaign tended to move more markedly in a 'pro-drug' direction as they aged than those who were exposed less."

Think about what that means! The government blew a billion bucks on commercials that 'MOVE KIDS IN A PRO-DRUG DIRECTION'. And they're still airing them! They're still charging us for them! Fuck, if you hired me to fix your toilet, and then when you check on me five minutes later find me shitting in your sink, would you nod and say "Keep up the good work"?

It's not surprising, if you think about it. These commercials aren't even offering solutions; they're just fanning hysteria. And the logic used is so ridiculous, the claims so outlandish, that anyone with half a brain would reject it. Can you blame kids for thinking "Well, they're obviously lying. I guess I'm going to find out the truth for myself"?

Yes, you would think that by now they would realize the "Don't Do Drugs Because They Are Bad And We Told You Not To" approach has failed. I have little faith that the establishment will embrace any sort of rational idea or program, however. In fact, just wait for the next batch: "Do you want to know why the economy is in the shitter? It's because people who smoke pot are not productive. So the next time you hear about someone losing their job, take a good long hard look at the joint in your hand. It's all your fault."

If You Want to Be Real Real Cool, Don't Be Stupid and Play the Fool:



the story of "Hulk Rules" by Hulk Hogan & the Wrestling Boot Band

It has been said that writing about music is like dancing about architecture. If this is the case, then I am about to metaphorically dance to the beats of a dilapidated maggot-infested shed missing a wall. So be it.

The rotting shed in question is "Hulk rules" by Hulk Hogan and The Wrestling Boot Band, a perfect example of the "if I am wildly popular at A, it stands to reason that I will be wildly popular at B" line of thought employed by many celebrities. Hulk surely thought to himself "if people pay good money to watch me jump off of turnbuckles, they'll pay to listen to me awkwardly rap, too".

Sure, it sounds like a pretty fucking atrocious album. No doubt about it. But aren't you just a little tiny bit curious? Haven't you, like me, lied awake at night, wondering what it sounds like when Hulk Hogan raps? If so, my friend, then here it the cure to your sleepless eves.

However, even with this burning curiosity, I wouldn't expect the majority of you to rush out and purchase this album. It would be understandably degrading to plop this down on a record store counter and have to listen to some lowly hipster snicker as he rings it up. So, for those who are not bold enough to get it, or who do not have the necessary dollar to spend, I will try to describe the experience for you.

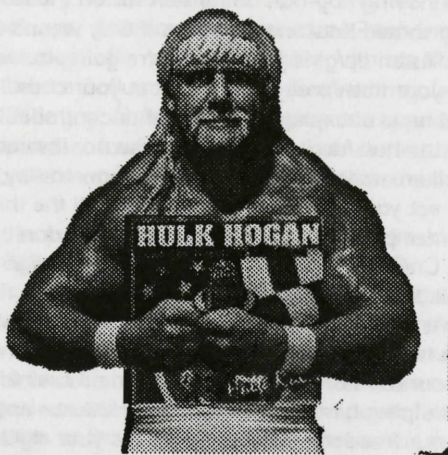
Really, though, it's rather self-explanatory. Hulk Hogan rapping sounds like Hulk Hogan rapping. Just like fingernails on a chalkboard sound like fingernails on a chalkboard or shrieking puppies being dipped in cauldrons of boiling lard sound like shrieking puppies being dipped in cauldrons of boiling lard. That is, exactly what you'd expect and not altogether pleasing on the ears.

The puncture-your-ear-drums-in-self-defense-and-run-for-the-hills rapping that appears on this album is a type I refer to as the Stay-In-School strain. Meaning, the type that sounds like it was penned by some freak in a suit trying to sound "hip" and "dudical" in tricking kids to like school or not smoke dope. It's a repetitious cadence constructed in the format of "duh duh duh/duh duh, duh duh" For example: "stay in school/cuz it is cool" or a slightly longer version: "hey there kids/if you do drugs/your skin will feel like/it's covered in bugs". That sort of thing. The Hulkster is a huge proponent of this style and doesn't really stray from it in any of his rap songs. It's a comical interpretation of the genre, a dead giveaway that the singer doesn't even understand what he's trying to imitate (this is furthered by Hulk singing the line "I was walkin' down the beach lookin' for some action/Had my radio set on a rap rap station" 'Rap rap'? Huh?) Hulk does it well, for what it's worth, as we can see in catchy verses such as: "Try to do good each and every day/Don't give up nothin' bad to say/Always go swimming with a buddy/Work real

hard and always study/If you want to be real real cool/Don't be so stupid and play the fool" (As you can see, many of the rhyming schemes were obviously formed using the counting on fingers method.

"Hmm, brutha, what rhymes with tough? A-uff, buff, cuff," etc, until "rough! Yeah!")

Of course, "Hulk Rules" is not strictly a rap album. Lest you think the Hulkster is a one trick pony, he effortlessly slaughters a wide swath of genres, clumsily diving into the deep waters of country, rock, synthesizer jams, and even somber ballads. Or, as the liner notes put it "Hulk rocks, Hulk raps, Hulk delivers a poignant ballad."



Hulk Holding a copy of his album

The musical style may awkwardly lurch back and forth between types, but the lyrical message remains consistent: "I'm Hulk, and I Rule. I have some advice for you little hulkamaniacs, and if you listen, you will Rule too". At one point he warns about the dangers of drugs and instructs his legions of fans on how to react to being offered some: "Can you feel the music, can you feel the beat/ You don't need drugs to move your feet/ When the dealer tries to push on you/ Just tell him what you're gonna do" Which leaves you wondering, OK, what am I going to tell him I'm going to do?, and then the chorus arrives with your answer: "I want to be a hulkamaniac" So, apparently, when offered drugs, you're supposed to reply to the shady dope-peddler "I want to be a hulkamaniac"

Let's ponder for a moment the wisdom of such a response. If you simply take the drugs offered, you'll probably get high and feel good for a little bit. If you say "naw" and walk away, the worst you'll get is a snarled "Little bitch!" or something. No harm done. However, if you look down at the baggie curled up in the dealers hand, then look up, lock eyes and tell him "I want to be a hulkamaniac", you will likely be pounded into a bloody union of facial tissue and cement.

The Hulkster offers up plenty of other tips to the kiddies, too. The importance of friends, America, Harley Davidsons, and biceps are all stressed. In particular, the virtues of taking your vitamins is extolled on a number of occasions: "With the trainin' and the prayers and the vitamins too/Don't mess with us or we'll beat you too" he sings. Other, more oblique references to the results of taking these vitamins can be found, like "When he steps into the ring he's ready for a fight/His twenty-four inch pythons are loaded up tonight" At one point Hulk even says, and I quote "Oooh...look at that new vein in my tricep"

But you see, the thing is, Hulk eventually admitted to steroid use, and I'm guessing that had a bit more to do with the python-puffing than a few tablets of Vitamin C did. Thus,



it's an annoying cop-out, doing steroids on the side to bulk up and then telling kids to gnaw on some Flintstones vitamins if they wanna be like him. I wish he'd be honest and rap "listen up/girls and boys/we're going to learn/about ster-oids/ plunge the needle/into your flesh/pretty soon/ look at your chest/ you'll be the toughest/ for your age/ and have unexplained bouts/ of uncontrollable rage *Chorus*: so if you wanna be just like the hulk/do it up, do it up" But no, instead he insults us with "If you want to be a Hulkamaniac/ I can sure tell you how to stay on track / You gotta train, say your prayers, eat your vitamins too/ These are all the things that Maniacs do" (And as a side note, I must point out the obvious--maniacs don't do shit like that! "Ooh I'm takin' Vitamin C and lovin' God, I'm so wild and dangerous")

Hulk's steroid-gobbling might also explain the mood swings evident on the album. At one point he will 'rap' (ahem) "Everybody's talking trash, but he knows that talk is cheap/If you mess with the Hulkster he'll rearrange your teeth", and then mere seconds later the mood has spun around to "If you ever get in trouble and you need a helping hand/Just call on the Hulkster and he will be your friend/He'll stand up for your freedom, he'll stand up for your rights/United you both will stand, together you will fight"

Beyond that, a few lines of odd, bordering-on-psychosis lyrics pop up at strange points in the middle of all the 'yea for america, yea for my biceps' stuff, like "You'll be six feet deep if you touch my girlfriend/You know this homeboy can lose control"

Particularly creepy is the song "Hulk's the One", sung and presumably written by the Hulkster's wife. The song title would lead you to believe it's a stand-by-your-man ode, but the lyrics reveal something else entirely, a "what have I done, I'm trapped with this psycho" plea, with lines like "My friends all tell me I'm under your spell/But I'm too blind to see" and "When you turned on the charm, I heard the alarm/I should have called the police" Shucks, how romantic. I half-expected her to begin singing something like "when you slammed your pythons into my face/I thought I should have run/but through the blood covering up my eyes/I knew that this was love"

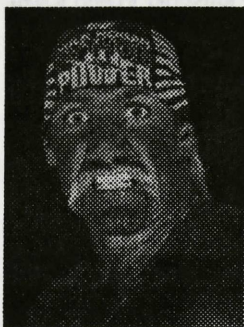
During other sections of the recording, Hulk doesn't seem psychotic, he just seems, well, weird. This is particularly evident in the various "fade out" endings to the songs, where the music decreases in volume as Hulk delivers some bizarre one-liners. To illustrate, here is the ending to "Hulkster's Back", verbatim: "Yo Ted Turner, you wanna arm wrestle?/ What's up, dawg? / Check out the pump, chump! / Riding my Harley D in the wind, brother / Test the power! / Training, prayers, and vitamins" Or, the fadeout to "Beach Patrol": "Hey girlfriend! / Yo dudes, should we call 911? /

Whoops there it is, slam into it baby, slam into it, slam into it...homeboy / Backseat baby...when you're ready/ Yo dudes! / Hey girlfriend / Whoop there it is, whoop there it is, whoo-who-who-who-whoop there it is"

You get quite the vivid mental image if you try to picture Hulk delivering these lines in a recording studio; I can't help but think he ran into the room and belted them out in a semi-coherent steroid-induced rage, that initially sounded like "YO DUDES HOMEBOY WHOOPS SLAM INTO IT VITAMINS BACKSEAT TED TURNER BABY", and was later edited into the vaguely more coherent final version. Upon completing his parts, Hulk



"If you mess with the flag, it's like a slap in his face"



"Take Your Vitamins!"

probably got a weary nod from the recording engineer, and next up was back-ups, delivered by some meek, starving, desperate-for-a-buck studio musician singing with his head down: "I want to be a hulkamaniac, have fun with my family and friends" Poor guy. One would imagine this appearance will appear rather low on his resume, somewhere after "I spent two months mugging blind people on the street with my flute".

As I listened to the last song play out with its refreshingly modest refrain "Whoa... whoa...the Hulkster rules! Oh yeah!", I read through the liner notes with a chuckle, thinking "Boy, I'm glad it's not the 80's anymore" as the synthesizers blared in the background. The notes were hilarious:

"Millions of adults and children in the United States and around the world know that Hulk Hogan is the most powerful force in the universe." Ha! Next page: "Hulk Hogan: Hulk Rules brings a new dimension to the Hulkmania phenomenon, as the huge pythons wrap themselves around the world of music and bring it into Hulk's control." Ba ha ha! Sure thing, brutha! And then I saw the copyright, the year this fiasco was slapped together and released to the world: 1995. 1995?!? That'd be like Joe Piscopo deciding that the time is now ripe for him to enter the rap world. Or for Kriss Kross to go to a Hollywood studio tomorrow and pitch their idea for a new major motion picture about themselves. 1995! Hulkmania at that time had wilted into a condition that was about as socially acceptable as Pyromania

Unbelievable. See, I was of the mindset that most celebrity albums were done at the peak of fame before the star burns out, ideas sprung forth from humongous egos thinking their talents were limitless, knowing no boundaries. In the case of Hulk, though, the album was put out at the lowest point of his wrestling career, so perhaps it was a panicky, "Gotta try something else". Thus, I wouldn't be surprised to find out that 1997 brought us the Hulk Ballet concert, and 1999 saw the release of Hulk Hogan Performs Open Heart Surgery, Brutha! on video.

Dollar Store Review\$

The Dollar Store down the road from my apartment, ingeniously named "Dollar Store", is a splendid place where you can score a whole assortment of useful things for insanely cheap prices like 33 cents, 50 cents, and of course \$1.00. Although many of the products should be avoided, and many of them will never, ever be purchased by even the most lunatic consumer, there's a plethora of downright steals that make it a worthwhile visit.

From a consumer standpoint, it's great. I mean, why spend 2 or 3 bucks on garbage bags when you can score a whole box here for 50 cents? For the producers of these goods, however, it's a bit of a downer. If your product winds up here, odds are Something Has Gone Wrong. It's not the sort of market you can picture executives losing sleep over trying to penetrate: "Gentlemen, we **MUST** break into the Dollar-store market". No, if you end up here, in the graveyard of overproduction, bizarre concepts and gloomy flops, you probably fucked up.

As I walked down the aisles of disorganized discounts, boxes of stuff apparently thrown in randomly, or perhaps pulled off a hanger by a customer and then tossed in with a "What the fuck is that?", I looked for these loser products. Now, not everything in a typical dollar store fits that description, of course. There a good share of generic brands like Soup brand soup and Pasta brand pasta that probably cost a few thousands of a cent to make and are thus priced legitimately. Or, food that at one point was sold for a normal price and is now here, conspicuously sporting a famous brand name. "Why is this mayonnaise 20 cents?" you wonder. After peeling off the bright orange DEAL! Sticker, you see beneath it an expiration date from a previous millennium and get your stomach-wringing answer. And, there are of course Downright Steals like the garbage bags mentioned above and so forth, which is the main reason to bother frequenting such stores. But besides all of this, the failed products make-up a sizeable percentage, and it was them I was interested in.

As I searched, a police officer sat in the store, coolly casting his icy eyes across the scurrying customers. It struck me as odd that there was a cop in here; this ain't exactly Fort Knox we're talking about. In fact, I wondered if anyone would have tried stealing in the first place... it seemed a bit unnecessary, and hadn't even occurred to me. I was tempted to purposely get arrested stealing a 33 cent **Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers Icing Decorations**, just to see what would happen, but opted against it.

The Power Rangers are a good example of cocky overproduction, where a company has a popular brand, or anticipates having a popular brand, and then floods the market indiscriminately with every possible product imaginable, stupidly thinking they will sell like hot cakes, regardless of quality or usefulness, simply by having the brand name attached to it. Of course, the brand eventually bottoms out and the product doesn't fly off the shelf, it instead falls off the shelf like the Power Rangers Icing Decorations, into a lonely box at a dollar store.

Another example of this phenomenon is the **Godzilla Killer Key Chain**. If you remember, the movie Godzilla came out in the summer of 1998 with much fanfare and hoopla, and a downright ridiculous product push. Unsurprisingly, the movie stank

like a pile of Godzilla shit and tanked accordingly. Left behind once the smoke cleared were thousands of now un-sellable products like this key chain.

Looking at it, it begs the question-even if the Godzilla movie had been a hit, who the fuck would have bought this? Or, if a parent had bought it for their kid-what fucking kid would *like* this? A clunky, crappy-looking Godzilla head attached to a key ring-yeah, just what we've all been waiting for. The attempted selling point is made clear by a red-and-yellow exploding star logo on top that screams "Try Me! Biting Action Jaw!" By using a tiny lever that protrudes from Zilla's skull, you can make his mouth move from Open position to Clamped position. Killer! Definite Biting Action! But, unfortunately, the transition between the two is so stiff and awkward that it resembles a decaying, dazed individual rotting away in a nursing home trying to spoon oatmeal into their ruined mouth more than it does a fearsome gigantic lizard.

Also appearing on the packaging in a couple places is another logo assuring us that we are indeed in possession of a toy that is "Genuine Godzilla". My guess is that back when the movie seemed like a sure-fire hit, before it was finally released to a collective yawn far louder than Godzilla's signature scream, an advertising meeting was held that went something like this:

"Alright, status update. Everything's moving along fine with the Godzilla Ferocious Floss and Godzilla Rockin' Rat Poison. The Mothra Mole Remover still needs some testing, but we're confident. Overall, things are looking up, and I bet by the end of this summer we'll all be rolling around in mounds of hard-earned cash. But if anyone has any concerns, I'd like to hear them now"

"Well, I've got one Sir"

"Go ahead, Percy"

"Well, I was just thinking that since this movie is going to probably be the highest-grossing film of all time, it might make other companies jealous. They might create their own third-party Godzilla products to capitalize on our fame. So how are consumers supposed to differentiate between shoddy knock-offs and our superior offerings?"

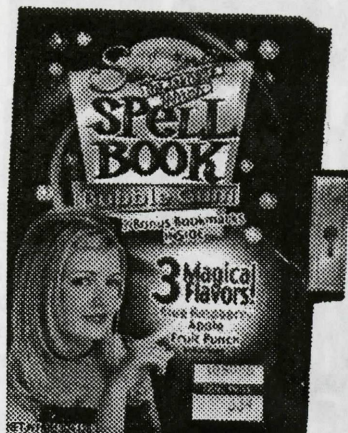
After a stunned silence, the Genuine Godzilla logo was agreed upon. Now, of course, it seems silly, akin to sticking a "Genuine Shit" sticker on a toilet or something.

Other Godzilla-themed items left for dead there in the dollar store were equally ridiculous. The "Vicious Sipper" is a goofy looking straw with a lizard perched atop it. The "Biter Writer Pen" is--- you guessed it, a pen with a lizard attached to it. Do you know what the most crushingly depressing suicide would be? Drink cheap vodka out of your Vicious Sipper to dull the pain, while writing a sloppy incoherent note with your Biter Writer Pen, after which you retreat to the garage and turn on your car using your Killer Key Chain, hoping there's no Godzilla Monstrous Carbon Monoxide Detector to alert someone to your presence. Yup, that would be a damn low way to go out.

Sabrina The Teenage Witch was, if I remember correctly, a tv show with decent



Above: Pretty Killer, eh?



Behold the magical flavor "apple"

ratings, so it wasn't a Godzilla-level flop by any means. But the **Sabrina the Teenage Witch Spell Book BubbleGum** still seems a bit excessive, which is probably why it ended up here in the dollar store wasteland.

The packaging, however, is somewhat nifty compared to the scores of lazy efforts that line the aisles. It's made to look like a book, more specifically a diary, with a little strap of cardboard bearing a key-hole drawing running from front to back. Thus, the impression that it's locked. Huh, not a bad concept I thought as I pulled on the little flap to open it. It didn't budge and the Spell Book remained clamped, stubbornly hiding its "3 Magical Flavors" inside. What the fuck. I tried again, but no luck. I started simply tearing the side of the box

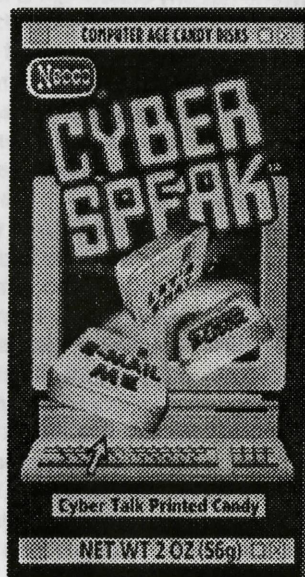
open, but then realized that there was no way that was the intended method. I was doing something wrong. "Damn, this thing is actually locked!" I thought "That's fucking crazy! What, are you supposed to buy a separate key?" Then I realized the truth--I was drunk enough where I didn't notice the thin strip of scotch tape that was affixed on top of the key hole flap. I tore it off, shaking my head stupidly.

Inside was a flap that contained the aforementioned magical gum (gee, I had no idea that "apple" and "fruit punch" are magical), and two one-sided Sabrina book-marks you can tear out. I was briefly mulling the idea of buying out the entire stock of these things and then including a bookmark with each issue of *You Idiot* so readers wouldn't lose their place. Convenient for you, dear reader, but of course the best part would be to anonymously send a copy to the producers of *Sabrina* in an attempt to get involved in a hilarious lawsuit. I'm all about a good hilarious lawsuit. But, in the end, it seemed like too much work, so you'll have to find your own fucking bookmark.

Another hilarious lawsuit could perhaps be brought against Necco for their product **Cyber Speak**, the "Cyber Talk Printed Candy". This one falls deep into the Baffling category. Apparently, it's just candy in the shape of a disk with vapid slogans like "E-mail Me" "Let's Chat" and "Cyber Punk". What a wonder this one didn't fly off the shelves with an accompanying whizzing noise, eh?

For a moment, I was concerned that this was supposed to be some sort of a valentine-themed candy. When I was in elementary school, valentine's day consisted of exchanging cards, and of course passing out a few of the little candies that said "Be Mine" "I Heart You", and so forth. Pretty silly, but innocent fun nonetheless. You were often forced to go to every kid in the class, so sometimes you met someone new, or perhaps even begin a budding elementary school romance. "You heart me? Really?" "Uh, sure"

So, if Cyber Speak is the new millennium's version of this, that fucking sucks and speaks volumes about



how distant and removed our society has become. I can picture the pale, sun deprived little children walking from desk to desk dropping off these candies, their eyes (ruined from monitor staring) glued to the floor, terrified of any real human contact. No, don't talk to each other, better to do it "virtually"-do as the candy says and "Email Me". Or hey, "Let's Chat". Yeah, chat it up, chatties, let your conception of human contact wilt away as you barricade yourself in vapid chat-rooms and inane instant-messaging sessions. This is what we're teaching our kids?! Damn you, Necco! Damn you!

Ok, ok, a bit overboard and I'm not even sure this is supposed to have anything to do with valentines day. But a stupid, baffling product nonetheless. And that's not the reason this is potential lawsuit material anyway-what I'm talking about is the slogan on the back that says "Candy Disks For Your Drive". You see what I'm getting at? Stick some of these stupid candies into your computer's floppy disk drive, let it break, and then raise hell with the Necco corporation. Let hilarity ensue! So, that's exactly what I did. See the article "You Idiot versus Necco" later this issue for the lowdown.

Anyway, back to the product itself. When it was unveiled at the 1998 National Confectioner Association's All Candy Expo, Necco president Domenic M. Antonellis gushed "Cyberspeak is truly a candy for the next millennium. This is a unique product that will appeal to today's kids, who are sophisticated users of the new technology. We know they will enjoy collecting all the computer-related messages, just like they enjoy collecting the messages from our enormously popular Sweethearts Brand Conversation Hearts" Well, you sorta fucked up in that assumption there, Domenic, because I got mine for 33 cents, and it was half-crushed beneath a jar of generic spaghetti sauce in a dimly lit dollar store.

Upon opening the box, I quickly discovered that there are many more slogans besides the ones on the packaging: things like "2000!", "Hard Drive" "Mega Hertz" "32 Bit" "Inter Net", "Data Rules" "Pixels", etc etc etc. Really, what the fuck are you supposed to say when you hand someone a piece of candy that says "Data Rules"?

What sentiment can accompany that?

A few of them get a little, how should I say, Racy: "Boot Me Up" "Debug Me" "Let's Chat" "Whats Hot". Ah, yes. Or how about "Click Here"? I can totally picture a drunk bus-stop dweller taping some of those to various parts of his body and loudly instructing passersby to do as instructed.

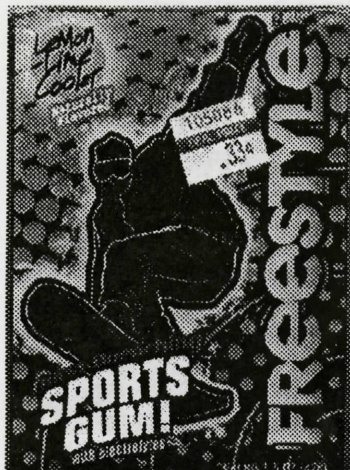
Magnetic Locker Lingo describes itself as "Magnets that make a statement" but they neglect to tell you that the statement made is something like "I should be locked in a cage and beaten with lead pipes"

Each tiny magnet contained within has a word or short phrase on top of a colorful background. The design of each looks like it was done by placing a blind gorilla in front of Photoshop and saying "knock yourself out, Koko". The phrases (or "statements" I guess) are things like "Sizzle!" "Oh, boy!" "Swoosh!" "Gurggle!" "Duh?!" "Moogily!" "Woof!" "Reck!" and so forth.

What the FUCK?! Am I that out of touch with



What an eye-pleasing layout!



Fuckin' GNARLY, dude!

today's slang?! I like to think the phrases were picked by some clueless advertising fuck after interviewing a couple of smartass 12 year olds:

"So, kids, what sort of things do you and your friends say nowadays? What sort of phrases are 'hip', or should I say 'tubular', at your school?"

"Man, everyone says Gurgle at my school, it's totally Reck"

"So... that is a popular phrase?"

"Oh yeah, everyone knows it's Swoosh as hell"

"Great! Thanks for your help, kids"

"Woof!"

But regardless, I seriously cannot picture a single kid on the planet placing one of these on their lockers, or fridges, or anywhere (I now have a "Chukka! Boink!" magnet on my fridge, so perhaps I am the first one). Even the dumbest kid wouldn't think for a

second that these were cool, or even that they made sense. And if they did, well, someone would spot the "Umph!" sticker on their locker and then bash their face into it for a minute solid. I'm no proponent of violence, but in that case I'd have to say "Man, you had it coming"

Freestyle Thirst Quenching Sports Gum is pretty funny. If there's a Nobel prize for Pseudoscience, I think we have a winner. Not only is it "specially formulated for your freestyle", but it helps "keep your body in balance". Yeah, after running a few grueling laps there's nothing like *chewing on a fucking piece of gum* to get your body back in balance.

I didn't actually buy the final item that caught my eye, but I do remember what it billed itself as: The First Baseball Card Inside of a Can! Wow! That's AWESOME! I can't wait for, I dunno, "The First Screwdriver Inside of a Jug!"

So, the next time you've got a bucks worth of change burning a hole in your pocket, head on down to your local dollar store, where you'll be treated to all sorts of useful products like the ones we just looked at. You won't regret it. In fact, you almost can't regret it. I mean, right now I'm sitting back twirling my Godzilla Key Chain and nearly breaking my teeth on some Sabrina Gum, and yeah I feel sorta fucking stupid, but the worst I can do is shrug: 'twas only \$1.65 total. And that, my friend, is a Deal.

You Idiot Vs Necco

As we just learned, the candy company Necco released a product called "Cyber Speak", which billed itself as "Candy Disks For Your Drive". Here's a letter I sent them voicing my concerns with this claim.



Dear Necco:

I am writing to you with a very serious complaint about your product "Cyber Speak" I purchased one of them here in Minneapolis on March 28th, intrigued by the fancy-looking box. You see, I'm a big computer user and whenever I see a new gadget for my PC, I pick it up and give it a try. I've found a number of useful programs and add-ons this way. It's made me realize that a number of nifty computer products slip under the radar, unnoticed by PC World and the likes. Thus, when I saw "Cyber Speak", I thought that it was another relatively obscure add-on that I could use to soup up my hard drive, like I had done many times before with other products.

This time, though, I was wrong. Let's look at the facts.

1. There is a picture of a computer on the box for "Cyber Speak"
2. There is a picture of a tool-bar that says "You have mail" on it as well
3. The box claims it contains both "Computer Disk Printed Candy" and "Cyber Talk Printed Candy"
4. Slogans such as "Mega Byte", "Net Surf", "E-mail Me", "Let's Chat" and so forth can be found on the packaging.

So far, I think everyone would agree that this is some sort of candy that is meant for a computer. The imagery, the language, even the product's name all imply this. But the most telling thing is:

5. The packaging specifically describes the contents as "**Candy Disks For Your Drive**". If someone told you "here is a disk for your drive", what would you do? I hate to state the obvious, but **you'd stick the disk in your drive.**

So with all of that in mind, that's exactly what I did when I got home. The box makes no specific mention of what Cyber Speak does exactly, but I figured it would launch a program that would walk you through it. Would it be some sort of candy-based game? Perhaps a searchable database of candy-related information? Or maybe something truly revolutionary—a program that allows you to lick your screen and taste different candy flavors.

I must say, I was quite intrigued as I stuffed a few of the candies into my disk drive (**as I had been instructed to do on the packaging**). I waited, and nothing happened. No new program started up, and my computer did nothing out of the ordinary. I assumed I had purchased a defective batch and vowed to return it for a new one the following day.

I forgot about it all until later that evening. I put in a disk to load up some of my family's vacation photos. The second it went in, I heard a very unusual groaning noise come from within my computer. The monitor flickered, and then went out. I tried all night to reboot it, but to no avail. I brought it to three different computer repair shops and not a single one of them could fix it.

My computer was broken. Gone were my financial records. Gone were my bookmarked web pages. Gone were my minesweeper high scores. All of it gone, and all of it gone for one reason--- your product "Cyber Speak".

If there had been a warning advising me this sort of thing could have happened, I would be able to accept it. Had there been any doubt as to the intent of the product, I would be able to accept it. But there it is, clear as day, right beneath a picture of a computer: "**Candy Disks For Your Drive**". How can you explain yourself? How can you sleep at night?

My computer and all that was with it may be gone forever, but I'd like to think the Necco Corporation can do something to make me feel better. I would hate to have to take this any further, if you know what I mean.

Awaiting your immediate reply,

Alfred Tonengson

Selling Your Product Through Video Games



Drac's Night Out: Featuring Reebok's The Pump

I've always felt that while Bram Stoker's 1897 novel *Dracula* is a riveting read, it seemed to be lacking a certain something. I couldn't help but think that if Mr. Stoker had been alive in later decades, he would have been able to draw from his surroundings and utilize current technologies and concepts to richen the story even more. But what was the missing ingredient? It was puzzling... I could not pin it down.

Perhaps an airplane? An airborne Drac, flying under the cover of dark, would have been deliciously spooky. Or a machine gun wielding Count-- that would certainly cause more than a few nightmares. And who knows what sinister things he would have been capable of with a palm pilot.

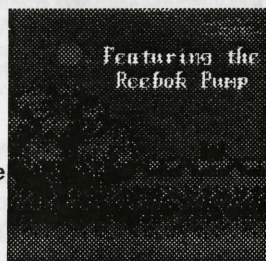
None of these seemed like the perfect fit, though, that would carry the novel from the ranks of a standard classic to the truly vaunted league of a bona fide Super-classic. Then, one day as I stared at the ground pondering this while stopped at an intersection, I realized the answer: footwear. This is what the Count had been lacking all along: a cool pair of shoes. And as anyone with two feet and half a brain knows, the greatest shoe that ever was is the Reebok Pump.

Imagine how the passages would have been improved: "I raised the lid, and laid it back against the wall. And then I saw something which filled my very soul with horror. There lay the Count, but looking as if his youth had been half restored. For the white hair and moustache were changed to dark irongrey. The cheeks were fuller, and

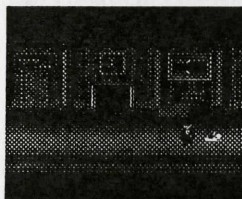
the white skin seemed ruby-red underneath. Most terrifying of all was a pair of Reebok's The Pump® shoes upon his feet. He rose from the box suddenly and intoned, 'Allow me to Pump® it up', and I was engulfed with a wave of dread at the thought of what this awful creature was about to do"

Drac's Night Out: Featuring Reebok's the Pump® by Parker Brothers gets everything right: this is truly how the story was meant to be told. If Bram Stoker were alive today, he would surely raise a hearty thumbs up from within his coffin.

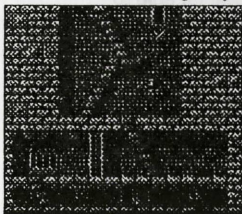
The plot of the game follows the novel closely, as you walk around a village sucking the blood of townspeople while searching for your long lost sweetheart. One would assume this faithful retelling would grip the hearts and minds of Dracula buffs and shoe fans alike, but oddly enough *Drac's Night Out* was greeted with general indifference. Don't count it out yet, though. Someday, perhaps someday soon, it shall rise from its premature coffin, kneel down to pump up its shoes, and then with a mighty leap sink its fangs into the pub-



the count before....



and after! What a jump!





Nosferatu guarding his prized Pumps©

Straight from the Manual

The phenomenon of Drac's Night Out explained: "You have three secret 'weapons' at your disposal. You can turn into a bat within your castle, a wolf inside the town walls, - and you're wearing a pair of Reebok's The Pump trainers, which gives you powers all their own" The magazine "Pro-Gt" explains the appeal: "What do you get when you combine everybody's favorite Count with America's hottest athletic shoe, the Reebok Pump? Why, the wackiest ghoulish adventure yet for the NES" Yippee! All those other wacky ghoulish adventures were SHIT!

lic's heart and become the beloved hit it deserves to be.

Regardless of Drac's Night Out's current state of relative obscurity, the company has continued with it's goal of presenting even better versions of classic novels. Rumors of a new game they're working on, "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and Windows XP" continue to abound. And the long awaited "For Whom the Taco Bell Tolls" promises to deliver the stunning version we all knew Papa could have delivered had he had access to Chalupas.

McDonalds Games

McDonald's has tried to stick its grease-drenched clown hands into the world of video games on a number of occasions, with limited success. I think it comes off as a little suspect, even to kids. Even the dimmest child would be able to gather that the intent of the games is not to entertain, but, rather, to subliminally suggest you gorge yourself with artery-bursting meals from the Golden Arches. Nevertheless, McDonalds has tried time and time again to produce a popular game that prominently displayed their fatty products. And



why not? They've got fucking money to burn.

The game MC Kids begins with a shot of a tent underneath the nighttime sky with a smiling moon looking down. Inside the tent, two kids with creepy smiles read a book. The children look mutated, as if they've been mainlining McDonalds Triple Thick Shakes for a couple hours or something.

The freaks are either reading a book about themselves or have become delusional from one too many McRibbs, because on the second page one of them is talking to Ronald McDonald. He frantically explains to the grinning kid that the Hamburglar has stolen some shit from him. "Help me find my magic bag!" he pleads.

But, before you can go after this mysterious "magic bag", Ronald, in typical video game fashion, forces you to find some of his "puzzle cards". You want to say "Well, look jerk, if you want your fucking magic bag so much, why are you making me jump through tedious hoops to get at it?", but instead your perpetually-grinning character nods and is on his way to level one.

Since I hardly ever play video games and thus am a poor "gamer", I didn't get far enough to learn how the story plays out beyond that. I assume, however, that the end-

Sidebar: Q & A

All of your burning questions answered by.... the McDonaldLand Instruction manual!

Q: Ok, so what exactly is the plot behind this mess?

A: One sunny day Ronald McDonald™ was performing magic tricks at a picnic in the meadow when all of a sudden... the Hamburglar™ appeared and ran off with Ronald's™ Magic Bag! Luckily, Ronald™ has many friends, among them Mick™ and Mack™, the M.C. Kids™ (that's pronounced "EmCee" Kids, by the way). He calls upon them to help find his Magic Bag. And they will! Hoorah!

Q: What'd he do that for? I thought he was the Hamburglar, not the.... uh.... MagicBagurglar. Or actually, wait a minute, are you saying that Ronald's "magic bag" is just a sack of burgers? A sack of fucking burgers?! And Ronald is sending two little kids into harm's way to go after it? The audacity! Who are these poor Mick and Mack kids, anyway? What did they do to deserve this?

A: Mick™ and Mack™ went to sleep and were magically transformed into the M.C. Kids™. Being Ronald's™ friends, they want to catch the Hamburglar™ as much as you do!

Q: As much as I do? Do you think I give a FUCK if some guy who calls himself the "Hamburglar" steals a "magic bag" from a clown? Hal! Now, is there a difference between Mick and Mack?

A: Mick™'s best mate can't wait to get his hands on Ronald™'s Magic Bag. Mack™'s best mate loves having fun in McDonaldland™.

Q: Wow, that's great. Hey, you know Instruction Manual, I was just playing this game and it's damn hard. I just died. Game over. Fuck... I kinda feel depressed now.

A: When there are no more Mick™ or Mack™ characters to play, don't despair.

Q: You know, you're right. I should be thinking positively. Hey, Instruction Manual, what do you think about Daffodils?

A: It's a harmless pretty flower, yes? Don't you believe it - it causes distress.

Q:Damn, that was a rhyme! Rhyme for us again, Instruction Manual!

A: Watch out for this batty bird, it's flight path is quite absurd.

Q: Fuck yeah! That was pretty good! Got any more?

A: Goforit's distant relative can withstand the cold, but not a well-placed Super-Shot, so be bold!

Q: MC Kids? More like MC Instruction Manual! Let's hear one more!

A: Ronald's™ magic is at work here, so hit this rod often, it's clear!

Q: Yeah! Any parting words of advice?

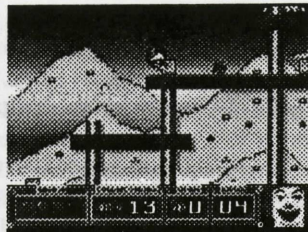
A: Don't abuse the machines in the lava or they might stop working!

Q: You got that right!

ing involves the rescue of the bag and the eating of hamburgers. Mmmm.

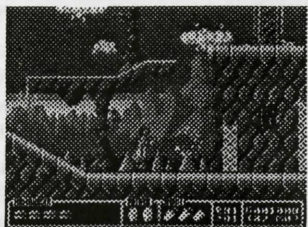
While conducting research on MC Kids (an act that admittedly made me feel a bit ridiculous), I came across a lengthy diatribe penned by one of the game's programmers, bitterly complaining about MC Kids' failure to catch on. He whines about not getting a promised Happy Meal promotion. He talks smack about another, more successful McDonalds game called Global Gladiators. It's pretty funny. We do get a bit of insight into what sort of rules are laid down for something like this: "The only major guidelines McDonald's Corp gave was that there should be absolutely no food in the game. They didn't want it to be perceived as an advertisement" Thus, no game where "if you eat three cheeseburgers you become super powered up." Also, McDonalds denounced the characters' original names, MC Kid and Micky D, as being racist, and forced a change to Mick and Mack.

McDonald's SuperSized their stupidity and released other games, including McDonalds Treasure Land Adventure (in which, according to the manual, "if you can find the treasure, you can retire". Does this mean Ronald hates his job? Fuck, I would) McDonaldLand, McDonalds Magical Worlds, and the aforementioned recycling-themed Global Gladiators, where you collect Golden Arches for points.



Above: Look how creepy Ronald looks in the corner

Huh. I don't get the appeal. Maybe it's as one of the instruction manuals describes: "Sure, you've eaten his hamburgers, played in his Playland, and collected his Happy Meal toys, but now's your chance to actually be Ronald McDonald" And haven't all of us, at one time or another, in our worst drugged-out hallucinatory states, wanted to be Ronald McDonald?



Home Improvement

Once upon a time, a group of Nintendo executives gathered in a board room to discuss what the theme for their next blockbuster game was going to be.

"Hey, look what I brought" one of them spoke up "A jug of grain alcohol!"

A few minutes later someone wiped a few globs of puke away from their mouth and slurred "You know what we should do? Make a game based on the TV show Home Improvement! That'd be cool and shit.... Oh holy fuck, I almost forgot, I brought some peyote you guys!"

A half an hour later one of the executives, curled up on the floor in a fetal position, mumbled "dinosaurs... we'll have him fight....dinosaurs"

"Dino?" someone murmured in response "dino...dino.....dino.... might.... Dynamite... dinosaurs with dynamite..."

"Can you guys feel your brain?" someone asked "like, really feel it? I can feel it... I can feel my spinal cord and my nerves and all that shit. This is fucked up. I'm fucking freaking out you guys"

And so, this game was born.

Ostensibly, the plot is that you, hosting your TV show called "Tool Time", are so eager to find a new toolbox that you wander through the sets of other shows in an effort to find it. Nice try. I don't buy it. No matter how you package it, this game boils down to You as Tim Allen From Home Improvement Fighting Dynamite Dropping Dinosaurs. Yech.

Pepsi Invaders/Coke Wins

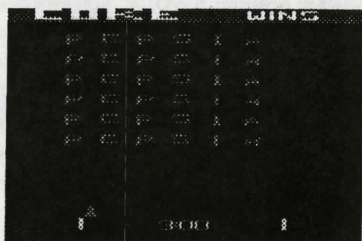
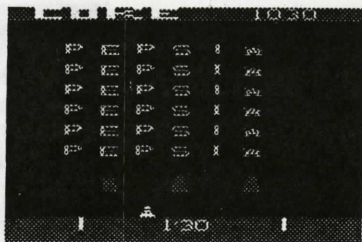
In 1983, things were bleak at Coke headquarters. Their arch-rival Pepsi had for the first time surpassed them in sales, ushering in the historical era known as "The Pepsi Generation". This dire situation would lead Coke to disband their product and release New Coke a couple years later, which ended up being a colossal flop.

It was hard to keep morale up in those days if you were on the Coca Cola side of the Cola Wars, but they tried their best. One method of rallying the troops was unveiled at the '83 Coca-Cola Sales Convention. All of the executives who attended were given a brand new Atari 2600 and a game called Pepsi Invaders.

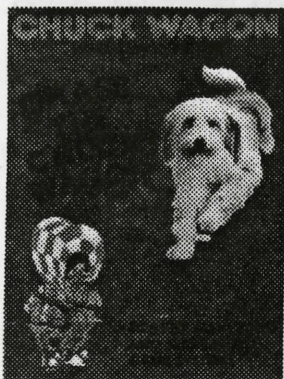
The game was, of course, a simple Space Invaders rip-off. But in this version the descending spaceships form the word PEPSI, which the valiant Coke Fighter on the bottom of the screen attempts to break apart.

Oh, how I wish I could have been in attendance for that convention. My guess would be that the executives were not familiar with video games and probably sucked at them. It would be hilarious to watch lines of them playing this game as the gigantic, ominous word PEPSI slowly moved its way down the screen: massive, unstoppable, inevitable. Fumbling with the controls, the execs would lose time and time again, their rage and frustration with the war against Pepsi amplified as they left the conference.

Because of this, the name changed over time to Coke Wins, which is what the game announces if you happen to beat it. I guess Pepsi Invaders sounded a bit too fatalistic. Or accurate.



Above: The Front Lines of the Cola Wars



Chase The Chuckwagon

During the 1980's, Purina dog food had a hit commercial on its hands. In it, a dog chased a tiny chuckwagon across the floor. How fucking cute is that?

Adhering to the time-tested marketing strategy of "If the public shows any sort of reaction, immediately cram it down their throats in as many formats as possible", Purina contacted the company Spectravision and had them make a game based on the commercial.

The resulting game would only be available if you mailed in enough proof of purchases. This strategy was two-fold. On one hand, Purina executives assumed the game would be so well-crafted that any slouchy teenagers playing it would give each other high-fives and

exclaim "This dog food is fucking rad!" Also, rabid fans of the commercial would go into a Purina-purchasing frenzy as they attempted to be the first person to obtain the necessary proof of purchases to get the game. And, many of these people would not even own dogs—they would just happen to like the commercial. So, surrounded by cans of unopened dog food, and, broke and hungry from spending all their money buying them, they would have no choice but to begin eating it. Purina would thus succeed in becoming the first dog food maker to successfully break into the coveted Human market.



Wow. I suddenly feel like eating dog food.

Well, this two-pronged strategy didn't work; the game was miserably fucking terrible. America lost interest in the Chase the Chuckwagon commercial, shifting their collective attention to the uproarious "Where's the Beef?" spots. It appeared that the commercial, along with the video game and the Purina executive now encased in cement at the bottom of a river were all relegated to the dustbin of history.

But then something curious happened. After Atari crumbled from being the premier video game system to the laughingstock of the industry, its status transformed yet again; to being cool when viewed through the deceiving lenses of nostalgia. Atari was back in. And, now that it was cool in an ironic/hipster sort of way, people took to collecting all of their old favorites. Chase the Chuckwagon, due to its incredible rarity, became one of the most sought-after cartridges.

Reportedly, the game has sold for up to \$300. This seems very strange to me. I mean, everyone agrees that this game is a pitiful pile of shit. There is no debate over this. You play a dog running through a simplistic maze trying to get to a chuckwagon before a block that is supposed to represent a dogcatcher gets to you; if you succeed in this you are treated to a bonus game in which you attempt to line up a dog with a food bowl. Does this sound fun to you? Does this sound like the sort of thing you would track down and spend a paycheck on? Fuck, I wouldn't spend 3 bucks on this thing let alone 3 hundred.

But apparently its status as a "collector's item" allows one to disregard quality. Either way, what does a person do with this game after tracking it down and blowing 300 bucks on it? I mean, if they played it, they'd just feel stupid. I suppose they probably just mutter "Well, I did it" and then toss it into a box.

Pepsiman

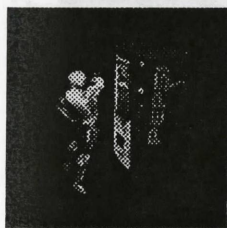
Coke's entry into the video gaming world was the aforementioned "Pepsi Invaders", a weak and paranoid effort that attempted to portray Coke as a valiant underdog under attack. Pepsi didn't bother with such nonsense, releasing the far superior Pepsiman (albeit about 20 years later)

Wait a minute, you say. I drink Pepsi all the time, and

I constantly see their stupid commercials, but I've never heard of Pepsiman before. You, my friend, are missing out.

The reason you've probably never heard of Pepsiman before is because he only appears in Japanese commercials. His ads are very slapstick, and were apparently deemed too goofy for western culture. We, apparently, are better-suited to watch Britney Spears gyrate and sing "Ba ba ba-ba-ba".

And it's a shame, because Pepsiman is fucking cool. Take a look at some of the things you get to do in the game: If you go too long without drinking Pepsi, you will simply collapse, meaning you need to constantly be on the lookout for a Pepsi





Vending Machine, collecting the occasional stray can as you go. Awesome! In the first level, you have to run to the scene of a riot that was started by thirsty customers when a store ran out Pepsi! At one point, you get hit by a Pepsi Delivery Truck and then chased by a gigantic Pepsi can ala Indiana Jones! You have to at one point run to the scene of a fire and pour Pepsi over it to put it out! That is fucking awesome!

Obviously, Pepsiman has the most blatant examples of product placement out of any of the games we look at it. As far as I can tell, there isn't a single second in the entire game where you don't see a Pepsi logo. But for some reason, maybe because its so over the top, it's really cool. Some of the other games attempt to be sneaky about their intentions (McDonalds' efforts come to mind), but Pepsiman is refreshingly blunt in its purpose: they want you to **Drink Fucking Pepsi**. Plus, the theme song is rad: "Pepsimaaaaaan!"

There's plenty of other fascinating Pepsiman merchandise out there besides this game, too. Check out the description for something called "THE FUCT OF PEPSIMAN: ULTRA FREE POSE FIGURE" (which translates to 'The Smell of Pepsiman', I believe): "Pepsiman is such a refreshing guy that he delivers Pepsi Cola to thirsty people. He can pop up Pepsi Cola with "Schwaaa!" action and deliver them around everywhere. According to reliable sources, he is a promoter of Pepsi-Cola company. And Pepsiman is also such an athlete that he is good at all kinds of sports. Especially, he is so into side-ways-riding-sports such as surfing, snowboarding, skateboarding, etc. He is very confident of his physical ability". Sweet!

Noid Games

During the 1980's, Dominos Pizza used a devilish villain known as the Noid for their mascot. The pesty Noid would interfere with the creation and delivery of Dominos pizza, much to the chagrin of the bleary eyed delivery drivers in the commercials and to the supposed delight of viewers at home. Sometimes he would make pizzas go cold with his "freeze ray". On other occasions he





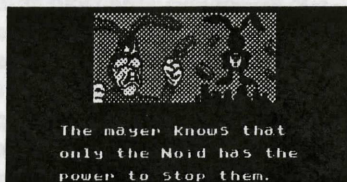
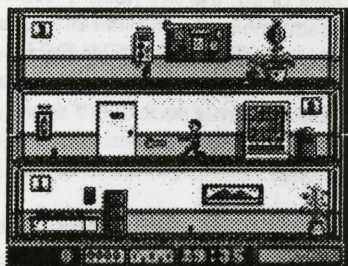
would crush it with a jackhammer. Punch it. Use his "Noid Bomb" to blow it up. You get the idea. It was one of the first examples of a mascot being against the product it's advertising. For some reason America embraced the stupid little gremlin, and it became a highly successful promotion. As result, Dominos inevitably rolled out tons of products baring the Noid (including a toy whose slogan was, reportedly, "Imagine an infinite amount scenarios for The Noid, and act them out using your figurines for an unlimited amount of fun!")

Catchy!) including a couple of hastily-conceived video games.

The first was a computer game called **Avoid the Noid** where you assume the role of a pizza delivery boy who is trying to get an order to "Doom Industries" within 30 minutes or less. If you fail to deliver the pizza in this timeframe, the customer gets a discount and you lose your job. Simple enough? Ah, but of course the Noid attempts to trip you up and you must do what you can to, as the game says, Avoid him.

The second game, **Yo! Noid** for the Nintendo, differs from the first in that you now assume the role of the villainous Noid. The plot is hazy; something to do with your arch rival Mr. Green unleashing a wave of crime upon the city. In order to stop this, you need to track down Mr. Green and defeat him in a pizza eating contest.

The game begins with a declaration of this above-mentioned crime wave: "Wild creatures led by Mr. Green are assailing New York City" Furthermore, we learn that "The mayer knows that only the Noid has the power to stop them" Well, if the "mayer" is such a degenerate that he can't even spell his own title right, then I suppose it stands to reason he would delegate his city's crime fighting to a yo-yo wielding pizza mascot.



So, off you go to do the "mayer's" bidding, warding off bizarre enemies with your yo-yo. You collect 'magic scrolls' to increase your abilities in the pizza eating contest. And, of course, you see a lot of Dominos logos.

While looking up these games, I made the startling discovery that the Noid has a rabid, somewhat scary, cult following. Some kid on the internet actually created a "shrine" to this game, complete with a step-by-step guide on how to complete it. In addition, there's an Unofficial Noid Homepage, whose mission statement is "To make people Aware of the Noid, to Educate people about the Noid, to allow fellow Noid fans to meet and communicate with each other, and to hopefully BRING BACK THE NOID HIMSELF TO TV!" Ha! "Educate people about the noid"... that cracks me up. To make this bold dream a reality, the site lets you sign the "Bring Back the Noid" petition.

Weird. I suppose that is one effect of the internet, to allow people with seemingly bizarre and isolated interests to band together. Here's an excerpt from one of the web-sites' retelling of the Noid's demise and the subsequent attempts at bringing him back:



**Awesome! Let's
bring him back!**

"Why did The Noid leave, and where did he go? There are many theories, but so far they are all purely speculation. But there's one thing for sure: fans were outraged, and most blamed Domino's. This led to more than 14 individuals participating in a boycott of Domino's Pizza. Unfortunately, the boycott was ultimately a failure. One reason it failed to work is because more than half of the participants had never even eaten at Domino's anyway--they only enjoyed The Noid himself. The fans ended the boycott and regrouped, to decide on another strategy to get The Noid back on the airwaves. So far, all further attempts have swiftly failed" So, sign that petition and lets make

the Noid's return a reality!

Best of all, the site hosts a "Noid chat" every Saturday and Sunday at 9:00 pm This made me curious; what in the fuck could they possibly find to talk about the fucking Noid TWICE A WEEK EVERY WERK?! My guess was, it was just the one guy by himself every weekend, chatting to nobody:

"the noid was cool."

"....."

"hello?"

"....."

"Anyone ever think about a Noid movie? That'd be rad!!"

"....."

Nevertheless, I decided it'd be fun to check it out for myself; perhaps I could "Educate" myself about the Noid as the site promises. However, in the end I could not make myself sacrifice my weekend to do such a thing. I vowed that the next time I was bed ridden with a ravaging flu on a weekend night, I would crawl over to the computer and partake; hopefully my feverish hallucinations would allow me to better comprehend the noid-heads, and approach their level of reality

Elsewhere on the internet, we find dedicated fans who are fast at work creating a game called "Yo Noid 2: Noids Never Die" (seriously). It promises "Many new weapons, one of which the "Noid Laserball" But don't worry; it will also stay faithful to the classic original: "The Noid will return with his Pizza Crusher, the YoYo, the Skateboard--- and of course the "NoidCopter"

Fun fact about the Noid! In 1989, Noid hysteria was at its peak, with seemingly the whole country enthralled by his ingenious and funny attempts at thwarting the safe and timely delivery of delicious Dominos Pizza. Mm-mm! Makes me want one right now.. .. maybe with a side of Cinnasticks!

However, a man named Kenneth Lamar Noid was not amused by all of this. He had been relentlessly taunted for his last name for long enough. He was sick and tired of having stinging insults such as "Avoid the Noid!!" hurled at him. Believing the anti-Noid commercials were aimed at him, he took action and strolled into a Chamblee, Georgia Dominos with a .357 Magnum revolver. He proceeded to hold two Domino's employees hostage for close to six hours, even forcing them to cook him a pizza at gunpoint. When the cops showed up he, according to the Feb 13, 1989 issue of Time, "demanded \$100,000 in cash, a getaway car and a copy of The Widow's Son, a 1985 novel about secret societies in an 18th century Parisian prison." When these demands were not met, he surrendered and was found not guilty by reason of insanity. Just like in the commercials, the Noid never wins.

Taco Bell Tasty Temple Challenge

The intro picture for this game shows a delighted looking man named Baja Bill about to grab a Taco Bell Grande Meal in the middle of a jungle, while a sinister looking scorpion and snake lurk behind him, poised to strike. This sums up the game pretty well: you attempt to eat Taco Bell food (the grand prize being the Grande Meal) while avoiding death by scorpion. You get to spray these scorpions with Hot Sauce and say things like "A cinnamon twist! The cure I've been looking for!" and "A chulupa! I feel better already!"

OK. Now, If you ever find yourself wandering through the brutal jungle with the express goal of finding a Taco Bell Grande Meal on your mind, than odds are you've been bitten by a very, very bad insect of some sort and are going through an intense delusional period before your impending demise. So, make the best of it. Grab the chulupa that appears to be floating in front of you. Squirt your imaginary Fire Sauce at the scorpions that are surrounding you. Keep looking for the cinnamon twists, and move towards the light.

The Tasty Temple Challenge was actually one of four promotional games released by Taco Bell at the same time. The others were Jumping Bean Jamboree, Taco Maker Marathon, and Moon Eater. A brief run-down:

Jumping Bean Jamboree is a blatant Arkanoid rip-off where you bounce off of a trampoline and try to grab nachos, tacos and gorditas. Cinnamon Twists are, of course, worth double points. In **Taco Maker Marathon** we learn how Taco Bell tacos are made: by dodging fire-breathing peppers while sliding tomatoes, lettuce, meat, sour cream and taco shells down a conveyor belt in order to, as the instructions put it, "make the perfect Taco Supreme" This can be accomplished by using the arrow keys to "move the Taco Bell® employee across the platforms and up and down the ladders". So THAT'S how they do it! Finally, in **Moon**

Eater you assume the role of an astronaut running around the moon eating tacos. May sound simple, but a quick look at the instructions reminds us to "Be careful, the Moon can be full of danger!" It sure can be, Taco Bell®!

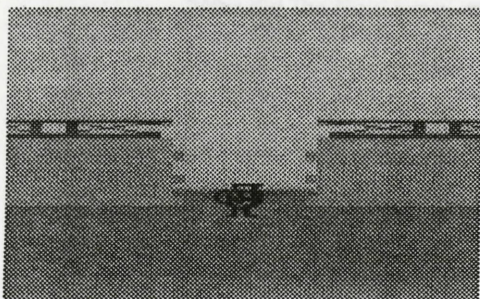
Kool-Aid Man

Kool Aid unveiled their new mascot in 1975, originally dubbed "Pitcher Man", a name that resulted from a surely furious brainstorming session "Well... he's kind of like a pitcher.... But he's kind of like a man.... Uh..." "Fuck it. His name is fucking Pitcher Man. I'm going home"

The anthropomorphic pitcher eventually got his moniker changed to the similarly inventive Kool-Aid Man. His catch phrase was "Oh yeaahh", delivered as he broke through brick walls, coming to the rescue when kids were thirsty.

Kool-Aid Man quickly became a hit among children, and it was only a matter of





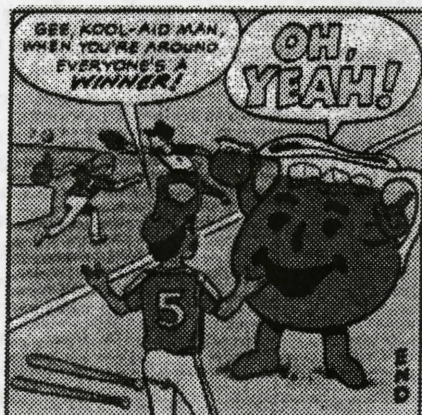
Fucking. Awesome.

whatever concepts for these games they chose, besides one stern warning from manager Russ Haft: "No Jonestown References" (referring to the 1979 Jim Jones clan's mass suicide by cyanide-laced Kool Aid)

And it's too bad, because a Jonestown-inspired game would have been considerably more entertaining than the moronic themes they came up with, both of which have something to do with making and then drinking Kool-Aid. Yawn!

Fun fact! Other Kool-Aid Man Merch!

If you couldn't force yourself to drink enough Kool-Aid to get the necessary proof of purchases for this game, you had other options. The **Inflatable Kool Aid Man**, which was "made of heavy gauge vinyl plastic", and was available for a more easily attainable 45 proof of purchases. However, they caution that it is "not to be used as a life preserver". Ha! That'd be funny. "We're going down! You're my only hope, Kool Aid Man! Kool Aid Man? Oh fuck!"



A Few Brief Honorable Mentions

Here's a run-down of some other product-placement ridden games that have been released over the years.

Most successful of all was probably **Chex Quest**, which

has about 5 million copies floating around (due to its getting released for free with boxes of Chex). A

beyond-blattant rip-off of a popular game called Doom, Chex Quest is actually by most accounts well-done and fun to play.

In another cereal-themed game called **Cap'n Crunch's Crunchling**, evil pirates are stealing all the Crunchium from the poor crunchlings. Cap'n Crunch shows up and proposes



that these two warring groups solve their differences through a series of athletic events. If only the Cap'n were real, perhaps this world would be a peaceful place. The game also includes a "Virtual Pet Crunchling", where you feed your pet three different varieties of Cap'n Crunch to make him stronger. Hmm. This teaches kids a rather questionable lesson: "If you want your dog to be super-strong, feed him nothing but "Oops! All Berries! Cap'n Crunch!"

Not to be outdone, Kellogg's released **Tony and Friends in Kellogg's Land**. I couldn't find out much about this game, but I did learn that if you type "ilovekelloggs" during the game, you are treated to a music test!

Alas, there is a definite lack of beer-related games. I did find a couple, though. There's **Bier Revier**, a game produced by a German brewery where you try to collect as much beer as possible. Your score is measured in liters rather than points. Also, Coors put out a game called **Coors Bowling**.

Aria Milkout is a blatant Arkanoid ripoff where you bounce around a ball to break blocks. Only with this game, there's the extra addition of milk droplets!

There was a game called **Duracell: Run the Bunny** which is supposed to be atrocious, but I was unable to find a copy to play myself. But, any game where the goal is to find two drumsticks, a drum, and a battery so you can bring a bunny to life can't be too good. The weird thing is, I could have sworn that it was Energizer who had the bunny mascot, not Duracell. So what are they saying? "Bunny mascot, eh? Well, two can play at that game"



Chester Cheetah, the mascot for Cheetos, landed himself a starring role in the game **Chester Cheetah: Too Cool to Fool**. Sales of Cheetos did not, evidently, skyrocket upon its release, so the company took the logical step of releasing ANOTHER game that even more blatantly peddled their product: **Chester Cheetah: Wild Wild Quest**.



From the instruction manual: "If you're in the mood for some wild platforming action with one of the smoothest dudes around, then you need CHESTER CHEETAH: Wild, Wild Quest" Huh, that's funny. Just this afternoon I remarked to one of my friends "You know what I'm in the mood for?"

"What's that?" "Some wild platforming action with some smooth dudes" He put his hand on my shoulder with a smile and said "I think I've got just the game for you"

If you ever reach a low enough point in your life where you find yourself actually playing this game, be sure to remember the code AG2A-AAER, which will get you "Infinite cheese puffs on pickup--EXCEPT RALLY LEVEL".

Also put out were games by 7-Up, M&M's, Colgate and countless others that are too bland and annoying to justify a paragraph of sarcastic observations.



And so, after playing all of these games, if they were successful, you will: dye your hair with Kool-Aid, put on a pair of Reebok Pump sneakers, run to Taco Bell and then McDonalds where you gorge yourself and drink gallons of Pepsi, then run back home where you will lay on the couch eating spoonfuls of dog food while watching Home Improvement and waiting for your Dominos Pizza to arrive. That's what I did, at least.

To Live and Die on the He-Man Message Board



When we were 5 or 6 years old, me and my friends were pretty into He-Man and amassed a sizeable collection of his action figures. By the time we were 7 or 8, we still played with these Masters of the Universe toys, but now the games involved He-Man getting stoned to death by angry villagers and things like that. By the time we were 9 or 10, we began breaking, melting, and otherwise destroying the action figures, tossing the remains in local dumpsters.

We walked away, the melting remains were hauled off to some dump, and I did not think of He-Man again for a very long time. Then, in 1998, while I was a senior in high school, we crossed paths again. At the time I was doing a zine called Cholesterol Junkie, and for some reason, during a particularly crushing bout of writer's block, I came up with the idea to do a scholarly article on He-Man.

This bizarre notion probably occurred to me while stoned, and faded away rather quickly. However, while I was still doing "research" on it, I stumbled across something called The He-Man Mailing List, and with a cynical laugh signed up. Who the fuck would be on something like that? I assumed the experience would amount to me watching the mental breakdowns of 3 or 4 degenerates in the form of diatribes about a long-since-faded cartoon.

Big mistake. The He-Man Mailing List was, in fact, a bustling medium consisting of hundreds of members, all dissecting seemingly meaningless details of the cancelled cartoon and its accompanying line of toys. So, I stayed on the list for awhile, an experience which resulted in the article "He-Man VS Cholesterol Junkie", which appeared in the 8th and final issue of that zine.

Cholesterol Junkie was a fairly awful zine and has since fallen out of print, but I always liked the He-Man article. And since the content fits the spirit of You Idiot fairly well, and I wanted to fill a few more pages for this issue, here it is again. All the text between me and the other members is culled from the original mailing list and presented verbatim. The commentary in-between is updated slightly from the Cholesterol Junkie version.

And so, read on and learn more than you ever wanted to know about the rabid fans of He-Man and The Masters of the Universe.

After joining the mailing list, I silently watched the conversation for about a week before it dawned on me that these people were complete idiots. I decided to spice it up a little. Some people wrote and shared their own He-Man stories (they were BAD), so I decided to add my own:

He-Man was sitting in his room, trying to keep his head straight. Lately, it had been hard for him to concentrate on any one thing for more than a few seconds at a time. Of course, the huge joint in his right hand wasn't helping matters any. He inhaled sharply, and held it in for as long as his mighty lungs would permit. After a minute or so, he burst out coughing and let it out.

"Dats da chronic, Orko" he said, grinning at Orko, who was busy trying to find a mainline across the room. He found it a few seconds later.

"Mmm...yah...mghher" me mumbled in response, his head slinking over to one side. He-Man continued to grin, eyeing Orko a little closer. You know, he thought, Orko wasn't that bad looking. A little mysterious, even, under that dark cloak. Two little eyes peering out like lanterns in the dark... And plus, Teela wasn't fun anymore, now that she had fallen in with that biker crowd. Orko was looking pretty tasty.

It was decided. He-Man stumbled off the bed and lumbered over to the slumped over Orko. Slowly lifting up the cloak, He-Man began to gently kiss Orko's neck. Orko, too bombed to notice, just muttered.

"This is FUN!" He-Man exclaimed, backing away. Just as he was about to light up another joint, though, Skeletor suddenly appeared at the door.

"Skeletor! How'd YOU get up here?" He carefully moved away from the door. Where was his sword??

"Mwahaha, He-Man! It's very easy when Man-At-Arms can be bribed with hardcore porno mags!!"

"Blast-it!" He-Man muttered, still glancing around for his sword. Oh yeah! He had sold it for all that cocaine last week! Uh-oh! He grabbed Orko's needle... it would have to serve as his weapon for the inevitable fight.

Skeletor slowly paced around the room, his eyes glued on He-Man. "Well, He-man.... it's very unfortunate for you that I know who you really are, and I've sold it to the local tabloid"

"You lie!"

"Oh really... Prince Adam?"

He-Man was shocked. "N-no" he managed "I'm not Prince Adam!"

"Cut the crap, Princy. The tabloid has also been informed that you've blown the kingdom's money on hookers and hard drugs.... I don't think the public will be happy! Mwahahaha!"

"NO!!!!!!" He-Man shrieked, lunging forward at the unprepared Skeletor. He plunged the needle deep into Skeletor's upper arm, and was pleased to discover that there was still junk inside it. Skeletor, not used to heroin, fell backwards from the initial rush and landed on top of the passed out, drooling Orko.

"He'll be out for awhile" He-Man said, looking around. "Now I have to get down to that tabloid paper's printers and stop them from getting out that stuff about me!" He ran out the door, feeling for the first time a strong sense of pure panic.

To Be Continued...

I only got two fucking responses to it, which really pissed me off. I had had enough of this stupid list. I had to change my email address for other reasons, and I figured that would get me off the list, too. However, I was still getting mail at my new address. I then tried to unsubscribe, but that didn't work either. Uh-oh. I asked the people on the list for tips, but none of them worked either. It appeared I was stuck on the god-damn He-Man Mailing List. There was only one option left-get kicked off. I figured it would be easy-just break the rules of email, or "netiquette". Simple stuff, like making pointless one-line responses to everything, or correcting basic spelling mistakes of other people. I'd be off the list in one day. I began by making stupid replies to every message I got-which you can see below: their messages in plain, mine in bold.

What was the name of the MOTU Mosquito guy? I just found him when I was clean-

ing out old boxed the other day... he was sort of weird. :)

Ahh, good ole "Zernoll the Bitter Alcoholic Mosquito". Truly a great character, it's unfortunate they had to take him off the market because he came with a little flask of whiskey that kids started drinking themselves.

We wish we knew where to find all of the episodes, but we don't. A lot of people collectively have most of them, though. I, personally, don't. - Patric

I have 14 copies of every episode ever. I keep them in a large fire-proof vault in a bunker in my back yard.

Was elephant guy good or bad? - Joe

That really depends on how we define good and bad. Although elephant guy had a "mean" streak, it could also be argued that his heart was in the right place, as evident by the time he stopped He-Man from beating on crippled child. So I would say he is basically good, with occasional bouts of evil.

Does anyone have any ideas for the next He-Man newsletter? I'm going to start working on it this weekend. I think some of your stories would be good! So let me know if you have any ideas. -Dave

I have no ideas for the next newsletter.

I did these above ones plus about twenty more. A couple people got mad, a couple people praised my psychotic interest in He-Man, but no one kicked me off. Here's something Adam, or "Beast Man" as he called himself, wrote in response to my initial flurry of stupid messages:

Normally I would never do this, but something has gotten out of hand. It is the massive amount of one-line responses filling my mailbox from a certain natecj@earthlink.net (Nate Gangelhoff). If anybody else agrees, please let me know. And Nate, please stop sending so many one-line responses. Think of something significant to say, then post it. Here are the messages I have received so far, with surely more to come: "Well, let us all know when it is"; "Hooray! Now all the AOL fans can join in the fun!"; "No, I don't remember that"; (isn't that personal mail, anyway?); "Yeah, that's what I'm saying too. Comics should prove as an invaluable lesson to all of us"; "Oh yeah. That's right" (That one too...); "I don't think so"; "Yeah, lets keep the flame going, folks"; "Hmmm... well, no"; "Go for it. Shoot for glory"; "That's good"; "Snout snout was the best character!"; "Good ole Snout Snout"; "Yes! Finally!"; "No, I do not have that tape"; "You missed a LOT!"; "Yeah, me too";

I left out the 2 or 3 that actually had a little content. I counted at least 24 posts in the past 2 days. I haven't posted that much in 2 months! Is there any way we can ban this dork from sending the list mail?

Later,

Beast Man

Undaunted by Beast Man's vicious slander, I continued my stupid comments, assuming these people would give me the boot soon enough.

I am looking at figures, Inc's selection and I would like to know something. Is Blast Attack good or evil? - Rod (Moss Man)

What in tarnation do you THINK? He BLASTS. He ATTACKS. He's EVIL. Down with Blast Attack! I know many children who were corrupted by Blast Attack, and now roam alley ways, blasting and attacking passersby.

Does anyone have a complete list of mini comics that say which guy they came with, also does anyone have any you might want to sell-Mantenna

Yes, I had one but I was recently mugged for it. They guy looked at my wallet, left the money in, and grabbed the list of mini comics I had so carefully hidden within. Shrieking with joy, he took off down the alley. I threw a garbage can at him, but, alas, it missed.

I just ordered the Christmas special from Media Play.... To whoever sent the original post that you could do that about how long did it take for them to get it in. I wish it would come in before I go back to school at the end of august. - Castaspella

It took me 14 hours. I ordered a private jet that I use specifically for he-man merchandise ordering purposes. Quite convenient. Right now its heading to Ethiopia to pick up the rare naked orko action figure.

The hate mail slowly started picking up at this point. People were beginning to realize that my ridiculous comments were not those of an oddball he-man fan but, rather, of a bored cynic. Here's a few of them, spelling errors and grammatical manglings intact

Look man stop stop acting like a little bitch. It ain't my problme you can't get off this list Im sick of this constant e-mail of yours I understand you don't like receiving all these e-mails. But it ain't my fault.So please stop doing this.

I'm with century on this one....I know I spelt that wrong again...sorry...Please please-please take this guy off the list... I really enjoy this list and am contemplating unsubscribing to get away from his stupid posts.... we obviously can't believe a word he says anyway. The Pong game and Nintendo/Genesis remark was all I could take. - Desperately, Josh

Nate I am so sick of you! Your stupid. So damn stupid! Someone please get him off of the list!!!

look NATE im sick and tired of you and your stupid comments it really starting to piss me off why don't you just ignore the mail and delete it you moron I doubt you know how though seeing as your only probably six or seven from what it seems like! --- a very pissed off mantenna

So, Natey, you're turnin' tricks again, huh? Listen, I don't know what the h#\$\$@:s

wrong with w/you, but you need to stop this sh\$#, or I'll take drastic measures on you're freaking crap, got it?

Look you a-hole

DON'T EVEN GET STARTED PULLING YOUR BAD ATTITUDE ON ME I WILL PUMP IT RIGHT BACK TO YOU. I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT TO BE HERE BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE LIFE MISERABLE FOR THE REST OF US. THAT IS BOTH IGNORANT AND IMPUDENT. YOU HAVE NOTHING INTELLIGENT TO SAY TO US, AND ALL YOU ARE DOING IS FLOODING OUR INBOXES AND GETTING SOME OF US BOUNCED OFF THE LIST.

Shut yer' friggin' hole, 'Natie'. I, personally, congratulate Casta for the censoring of certain words. I do the same on my notes. You should know that by all the mail you've received from your's untruly!

But, I still remained on the list. These people were rightfully pissed and had some good ideas-just ignore the mail, for example. But COME ON. I was getting OVER A HUNDRED emails A DAY about HE-MAN. Wouldn't you go crazy and start acting like an asshole? Yeah you would. Anyway, at this point somebody had the bright idea of petitioning Hallmark to start re-running He-Man episodes. "If we can get enough letters to represent just even a portion of this country's 250,000 people, Hallmark will go for it." Here was my reply:

Hey man, this country has more than 250,000 citizens. But that's besides the point. Petitions don't mean shit to a company unless they get a LOT of them, like in the millions. So heres the plan:

1. Everyone on this list buy ten different po boxes from ten different cities.
2. From each mailbox, everyone send 10 letters to them.
3. If 100 people do it, then that will be 100,000 right there.
4. Then, repeat the process only this time do 100 letters from each mailbox. This will put us over a million.
5. Then we can all watch He-Man again!

*That one pushed dear old "Beast Man" over the edge. He removed himself from the list, vowing not to return until I was gone. I was kind of proud of that. A couple days later, he emailed the list, asking "Is Nate gone yet? I feel like coming back." I mean, jeez! I **scared** the guy!! But fortunately, not everyone feared my He-Man bashing--- I did receive some mail of encouragement throughout all of this. I had some fans! Here's one of them:*

Hello I'm Gabrielle from the Mailinglist.. Don't listen to them there just mad you have such a great opinion and a open mind on these subjects you don't need to listen to them I like to hear what everyone has to say they shouldn't get mad at you for voicing your opinions thats what this list if for after all right?..Anyways you don't need to Unsubscribe just because they tell you to... Hope to hear from you. Sincerely ~Gabrielle Amazon Princess~

But most of the people still hated me. However, they STILL wouldn't kick me off. So I sent off a final round of comments.

I have sat in silence for recent days, amazed at the worthless stuff that has been posted. I must say we all get on little tangents now and again don't we?

You actually sat in silence? Hey man, its just a mailing list, you shouldn't get DEPRESSED over it. I mean, sure, we've all thought about slitting our wrists on days when there wasn't much he-man mail, but its silly to make it a habit! Cheer up!

Are any of you having problems accessing Cringer's He-Man and She-Ra page? I get to the new site but can't get any further. Also, what is the address for the new page Busta and Zadoc got together? I went to the Sorceress' page but nothing seemed new. Any help would be great!

Here are two answers for your two questions:

1. No
 2. I dunno
- hope that helped,

That is why I think no one ever suspected battlecat and cringer to be one and the same: Who's to say there weren't more tigers that looked like cringer on eternia?

Hmmm... interesting theory. (Let me light my pipe for a second and stroke my chin while in deep thought) I believe there theoretically **COULD** have been more tigers in eternia, but there's some doubt. We all know he-man routinely sent out squads to raid the local zoos, so there's a good possibility that all, or at least most, of the tigers were killed off. So maybe cringer stood out. Of course, if some evil dude suspected that cringer was battle cat, then how could they prove it anyway? Eternia's DNA lab is shoddy to say the least. Sneaky undercover detective work could feasibly be used to discover battlecats identity, but I doubt anyone would bother. So I think it's safe to say that cringers identity was safe as result of a number of different factors.

I think a lot had to do with their personalities. You'd NEVER in ONE MILLION YEARS expect Cringer to do the things Battle Cat does, and vice versa.

Actually, if I was sitting in a cave for a million years, pondering he-man, I think that somewhere along the line I'd think "You know what? Damn! Maybe cringer is battle cat!" Ya know, a million years is a long time. Of course, I'd soon go "Why the hell have I been thinking about he-man for the last million years?!? WHAT ABOUT SHE-RA?!?"

What books/episodes was the Land of Legends mentioned in?

Hmmm.... well, let me think. Episode 24, for sure. It's debatable whether or not they're mentioned in episode 45... you see, in that episode he-man was reading a copy of "Girls With Shockingly Large Breasts", and if you photo-enhance the screen, you see that one of the ads is for Land of Legends. But is that really considered "mentioning"? Hard to say... hard to say, indeed. My He-Man research lab is hard at work on finding more hidden Land of Legends references. I'll let you know what we find.

Alas, no progress. But some people were getting mad (and, looking back, I don't really blame them. I was being a fucking prick!) especially 'Queen Marlana'. Here's an example of one of our exchanges.

I have Star Trek (original series) checks, and as I'm ready to order Next Generation checks, I wish for this one kind of check to be available-those with scenes from the He-Man and She-Ra cartoons! Wouldn't it be awesome to write out a check with, say, Adora transforming to She-Ra on it? It would show our support! And if anyone's interested, I have the address to the Anthony Grandio Company, which prints Star Trek (and others) checks. They may have to get permission from Hallmark, though. I had this idea quite awhile back, and I'm repeating it mainly for the newer people on the list, run it by them, see what they think-no, not you Nate, so shut up! - Queen Marlana

Yah! That'd be awesome, marlena! Man, I'd write out checks until I was out of money if I could see that! I mean, I bet if the guy at the local 7-11 saw that my check had a picture of a naked Teela on it, he'd freak out. "He-Man!" he'd say "I forgot about him! Damn! I'm going to march up to Hallmark's offices right now with a few pounds of explosives taped to my chest and demand that they re-air he-man episodes!" Then he'd run off and I'd steal a shitload of beef jerky. But yes-it would show our support! No one would thing we're FREAKS! They'd ADMIRE our rabid and slightly scary love for he-man, a decade after he got cancelled and everyone forgot about him! About your last sentence-whoops! Too late now I guess. -Nate

Unfortunately, there was no dramatic conclusion to this whole mess. Some guy just sent me some weird technique to unsubscribe, and it worked. So, just like that, I was off the list. Looking back, I kind of miss all of those idiots. Beast man, Queen Marlana--- yes, even Moss Man. Maybe I'll join again some day to see what they're up to. If you'd like to drop the he-man list a line, the address is, I think: heman-list@hypenet.com

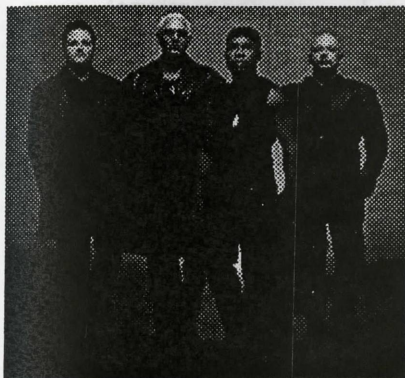
Letters to Laughably Washed up Bands

this issue: All-4-One and Kriss Kross!

The plan was this: to write stupid sarcastic letters to stupid bands and wait for their surely stupid replies to return. Oh, what a plan it was.

The flaw was this: most currently popular bands probably get buckets and buckets of legitimate mail and the only response I'd get would be a bland form letter. Besides, the bands themselves were most likely off doing coke and wouldn't read the letters anyway.

The solution was this: How about washed-up bands whose luck had long since run out, revealing an utter lack of talent, sending a shudder of embarrassment through their former fans? They'd probably be pretty god-damned surprised to get something in the mail other than pitifully dwindling royalty checks or creditors looking for payments on their diamond homes purchased ala MC Hammer. Thus, pleasantly surprised and bewildered, they might write back. Perfect! Unfortunately, the only thing that would be funny would be the responses, which (for some strange reason) I have not received yet. As is, the letters seem sort of....um, stupid. But nevertheless here they are, and hopefully next issue I'll have some feisty rebuttals to print.



Dear All-4-One:

My name is Phyllis Davenlilly. I am the mother of three here in Applemont, South Carolina. I have a strong connection to God, which is something I'm making sure all my kids grow up with as well.

I am writing in regards to your song "I Swear". I was putting my son Jimmy to bed a few days ago and as I tucked him in and leaned down to kiss him goodnight, he looked up at me

and snarled "Fuck you mom, you shit whore" Once my shock had subsided and the spanking was over, I asked him why on earth he would use such language. He replied that he had heard your song, and since you swear, he figured he could too.

I slept uneasily that night, partly out of disgust that such filth is heard on our airwaves by easily impressionable youth, and partly because I was deeply hoping that Jimmy's descent into potty-mouth

would be a one-time event.

No such luck. The next morning it continued: "Hey nice fucking scrambled eggs mom, you fucking cocksucker. Did you fucking take a fucking shit in them? Fuckin' answer me you fuck! Am I eating your filthy fucking shit?!"

Jimmy has since been muzzled by mouthfuls of sedatives, but the damage has been done. Every time I hear your "song" (I think "pile of filth" is more accurate) on the radio, I burst into tears.

Shame on you All-4-One! In order to rectify this terrible situation, I demand two things. One, a written apology to the nation's youth. Two, a change in the lyrics for all future versions of your song. 'I Care' would be fine. 'I Dare' would probably be OK too. Or how about 'I, Bear'-the story of a heart-warming teddy bear who loves Jesus? "And I, Bear/ Pledge My Life to the Savior One" Or is that not filthy enough for you degenerates?

Awaiting your immediate reply,

Phyllis Deavenlilly

No reply as of 'press time'. (Real surprising, huh?)

Dear Kriss Kross:

Hi Kriss. Hi Kross. I hope you are doing well. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Donald Ackelberry. I am the Promotional Manager for Oatmeal Pockets, a new product soon to be released by Splendor Foods, a multinational Fortune-500 company with over 200 beloved food products.

The reason you probably haven't heard of Oatmeal Pockets yet is because we are currently still in the pre-release marketing-design phase of the rollout. Which brings me to why I'm writing you.

You see, the slogan that we feel is perfect for Oatmeal Pockets is "Warm It Up", which of course is also the title for one of your hit songs off the acclaimed album "Totally Krossed Out". How would you two feel about not only having your song get used in our commercials, but for you to actually appear in them as well?

You want to know more about Oatmeal Pockets first, you say? No problem! Oatmeal Pockets are designed for the large and growing segment of Americans who love the rich, nourishing taste of oatmeal but simply do not have time in their busy schedules to prepare it. Oatmeal Pockets allow them to enjoy the taste in just 2 minutes. Simply place the golden crust and oh-so-yummy filling into your toaster, and you'll be oat-mealin' in no time. As you might expect, Oatmeal Pockets are one of the most exciting products we've ever released, and we're planning a mas-

sive media launch accordingly, a launch that will be made even more effective with the use of your song.

Obviously, the main section we wish to use is the chorus: "Warm it up, Kriss/ I'm about to/Warm it up Kriss/ 'Cause that's what I was born to do". The plan is for you two to be dancing and pointing at a toaster as you deliver this refrain. At the end of the commercial, the pocket pops out, and you grab it with a heart-warming smile as you deliver the line "Showin' suckas how its done"

We would like to use other parts of the song as well, but unfortunately there are a couple of passages that are not in line with the positive message we aim to project with Oatmeal Pockets. The couplet "So all y'all with the Dr. Seuss riddles / You can get the finger... the middle" will not be able to be included in the commercial. We can either omit that section of the song, or alter the lyrics to a version we had in mind: "So all y'all with the hungry tummys/ You can get the Pocket... yo, it's 'yummy'" Likewise, the lines "You little cream puff Mac Daddy wannabe / Keep dreaming cause the Mac you will never be" are a tad harsh. How about "An oatmeal eater is what I wanna be/ Oatmeal Pockets make this dream a reality" And, we would similarly like to adjust the line "The fire's what I pack and what I pack is real bad" to "The oatmeal's in the pack, yo the pack is in the toa-ster".

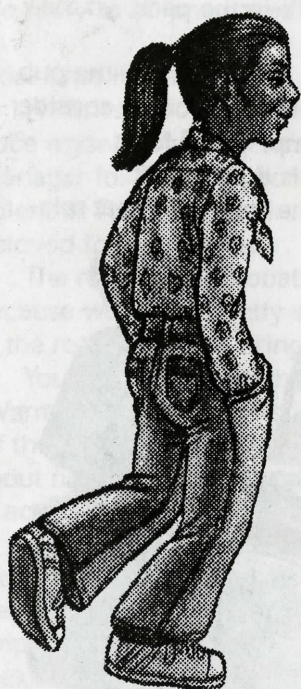
This is just the beginning, too. Once Oatmeal Pockets are in the public eye, we plan to launch a second commercial. We're strongly considering the use of another one of your hit singles, "Jump, Jump" for it. Changed to "Lump, Lump (of oatmeal)", the song is a perfect fit.

We at Splendor Foods believe this could be the start of a great relationship. Please let me know if you're interested at your soonest convenience.

Sincerely,

Donald Ackleberry





**I used my copy
of You Idiot
to roll this joint!**

