

debating the obvious since 2002

YOU IDIOT

#3

\$2

ANTI-DRUG COMICS!

RAPPING WRESTLERS!

CRAZY BOOKS!

DRUNKEN ROBBERIES!

MORE MORE MORE!



You Idiot!

Debating the Obvious Since 2002

Hey there. Welcome to another issue of You Idiot, the fanzine that fearlessly tackles topics other publications pathetically scurry away from. Inside, you'll find an assortment of hard hitting, uncompromising exposes on subject matter you won't find anywhere else.

Ask yourself— How many other zines do you know would have the guts to run a critical review of Macho Man Randy Savage's album? How many other zines would dare write a scathing attack on 15 year old anti-drug comic books? Who else can you trust to expose the mediocrity of Arsenio Hall's rap record? No one else, that's who. No one.

A few notes on this issue's contents before we begin. Readers familiar with the first two issues of You Idiot will remember that we also examined anti-drug propaganda in those installments. In issue one, we took a look at anti-drug video games such as Wally Bear and the No Gang, Raid 2020, and NARC, playing them while absurdly stoned to see if they made us want to stop doing drugs. They did not. In issue two, we turned our attention to anti-drug commercials and pondered the viability of some of their claims. Like, for instance, that smoking pot will cause you to: kill your friends, plow your car into innocent children, rape people, and fund international terrorists. We laughed and cried!

Now, we flog the proverbial horse further by examining a myriad of other youth drug prevention techniques like comic books, rap songs, cartoons, school programs, even pencils. We'll see if these strategies are as insultingly stupid as the efforts already studied. My guess? Yes!

Critics may whine "Well, at least they're trying. What, do you think little kids should be banging horse tranquilizers or

something? Huh, commie?" Well, no. Let me make this clear: I'm not necessarily ridiculing the *goals* of these things, although I see nothing wrong with a kid trying pot. What I'm getting at are the *techniques*, and the effectiveness of them. As I said last issue, my idea would be to educate children honestly about the cons and pros of drug use, but to mainly concentrate on those who actually have a drug problem. IE, help out a heroin addict rather than tell a seven year old that "Pot is naaasty!"

To use another example, we can all agree that the existence of poverty sucks, but if my solution to wipe it out consists of creating a loveable cartoon bear who raps things like "It ain't that hip/to be poor/so go get some money/then go get some more", is that really a good approach? Should I be commended for my efforts? No! I should be ridiculed. And ridicule is what we're going to do.

I'll be the first to admit that the topic is getting a little stale, but America's youth drug prevention strategy (attack the problem early by unleashing torrents of propaganda, and then if the kids ignore us and fall prey to marijuana anyway, strip away their financial aid and occasionally lock them in cells) is always worth looking at. That being said, this is the final drug-themed You Idiot issue. Upcoming installments will have other, equally stirring, subject matter like celebrity musicians and christian movie reviews.

We also have a few other, non-drug-war-related articles this time around. A quick review of Macho Man Randy Savage's rap album, a look at some dubious get rich quick schemes, and a brief history of drunken robberies. All are self-explanatory, but I wanted to drop a couple of quick notes about the robbery article.

All of the incidents in it are real, but



Well, I'm convinced

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the names have been changed to allow the drunken robbers to shed their boozy, crime-filled pasts and move on with life. Well, OK, actually it's mostly to prevent me from getting sued. I wouldn't assume reporting facts gleaned from newspapers could get one hauled to court, but I was reading one of those "Stupid, Wacky Crooks" books, and the author changed the names within for precisely that reason. So, I'm taking a cue from him, since he's obviously a professional.

Which brings me to my minor concern with the article—that it might come across as one of the aforementioned "Goofy Criminal" books you see everywhere. Generally the stories in these books are OK, sometimes funny, but the writing is fucking dreadful, sounding like it oozed from the mind of an America's Funniest Home Videos writer. Like, they'll relate an incident where an incompetent thief gets busted trying to nab a candy bar, and then drop a line like "It's a good thing this crook likes bars.... Because he's going to be behind a whole row of them. For a long time" Uggghhh. So, I've tried my best to avoid that sort of thing.

Alright! Enough bullshit; lets get started

Later
-Nate

Want to buy You Idiot but don't want to deal with me? Try one of these fine distributors! Arcade Distro, Armadillo Distro, Atomic Books, Basement Freak, Cafesme, Choking Hazard, City Lights, Clovis, Dreamer's Distro, Echo Distro, Fiend or Faux, Five Minute Romance, Frenzy Distro, Independent Thought Brigade, Girl Plus, Knucklehead Press, Last Gasp, Loop Distro, Mad People, Microcosm, Moon Potatoes, Moxie Distro, Muckrakers, Nova Recordings, Otso (Finland), Powells, Rainbow Collective, Razorcake, Redcore, Rocket Strip, Spy Kids, Stickfigure, Sticky (Australia), Sweet Cherry, Tastes Like Newsprint, Tower Records, Vox Populis (Australia), Youth in Revolt, and more. It's also available at stores like Quimby's in Chicago, Reading Frenzy in Portland, See Hear and St. Mark's Bookshop in New York, Extreme Noise in Minneapolis, and various Tower Records stores

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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. The second issue explored anti-drug commercials, Hulk Hogan's rap album, an attempt to get kicked off of the He-Man Message Board, and much more. My other zine is Pick Your Poison, which is more just general stories about my life. There's four issues available of that one. It'll only cost ya a couple bucks a zine, and if you want you can check out samples at the website too.

HERE THEY COME TO SAVE THE DAY!

comic books that fight drugs



SMACK DAB IN the middle of that gloriously radical decade known as the 80's, the Tandy Computer corporation half-heartedly flung their two cents into the raging drug-use debate by releasing a comic book entitled "The Computer That Said No To Drugs"

The comic starred a pair of youths called "the Whiz Kids" who went around thwarting international drug smugglers, terrorists, and kidnappers while at the same time enthusiastically pitching Tandy and Radio Shack products. This somewhat bizarre product placement was not of a subtle nature, either— the kids transform into buggy-eyed lunatics at the sight of a Tandy computer, practically salivating whenever someone says things like "Program Pak" or "TS3-210"

It's pretty over the top. I mean, you go in knowing they're peddling a product, but the dialogue nevertheless quickly borders on unintentional self-parody. Take, for example, the beginning of the comic, when the teacher unveils their "new classmate":

"...Our new Tandy color computer with color disk drive... a DWP-210 daisy wheel printer and color scripsit...an RS232 program pak and DC-1 modem!",

The Kids, Shanna and Alec, respond to this garbled computer jargon with:

"Oh, Ms. Wilson that's so exciting!" and

"I'll say! That's the *neatest* thing I've seen in a *long* time!" The dialogue is so phony sounding, the first time I read through it, I assumed they were simply distracting the hapless Ms. Wilson while a third Whiz Kid rifled through her purse. But no, they're actually that creepily weird about electronics.

After showcasing the DWP-210/RS232/DC-1 super-trinity, the teacher introduces a local copper who's there to "talk about the dangers of drug use!" A beaming Shanna recognizes him immediately, exclaiming "We haven't seen him since we captured that terrorist group a few months ago!" (a heroic act that was of course made possible by using a Tandy computer)

The detective proceeds to deliver a stirring speech, explaining to his rapt audience that the use of drugs is a serious matter. "It's not a problem confined to so called 'junkies' and 'poor people'" he says, later reminding the horrified looking students that "even so called 'cool drugs' like marijuana... are deadly"

It feels odd that an entire page has passed without mention of a Tandy product, but then the detective's pager goes off and Shanna exclaims "I recognize *that*... it's a **Tandy Pocket Pager!**" "It sure is!" says the detective.



That more or less sums up the comic: Drugs are bad, and Tandy is good. And the goodness of the latter can be utilized to top-ple the badness of the former, which is what happens when a group of shamefully inept drug dealers attempt to smuggle their narcotics inside of Daisy Wheel Printer Cartons and are busted by keen use of the Briefcase-Size Model 200 Computer and Tandy Color Computer 2. The Whiz Kids are then honored by the city for their heroic role in the bust. "The best way for anyone to fight drug smuggling is to say 'No!' to drug use!" they tell the cheering crowd. Hip hip hooray!

THE OPERATION may have been thwarted, but Tandy was not done denouncing drug smuggling quite yet, returning later with an even more ridiculous comic entitled "A Deadly Choice".

A Deadly Choice was unleashed on the world in 1990, a full five years after the encounter with the computer that said no. Things have changed. Alec and Shanna are drawn more poorly, and Tandy has introduced a whole slew of rockin' new items. But one thing that hasn't changed is the existence of incompetent, scowling drug runners.

The comic begins on a stormy (and dark!) night, as a shipment of dope arrives at a sinister looking lab. Inside the sinister lab is a sinister looking scientist surrounded by beakers that are probably brimming with a sinister new street drug called something like "HeadFuck". The scientist, grinning evilly, is delighted that the drugs have arrived. "After all", he says "We don't want to keep our eager customers waiting do we?" The thuggish looking character who has delivered the goods laughs heartedly. "Right, Mr. Clayton! Those dummies are willing to pay.... And pay big for what we have to offer!"

Clayton then looks directly at the reader with a diabolical grin, sprouting a thought bubble that exclaims "A few more shipments like this and I'll be on easy street for life!" This is meant to cause the reader to go "Grrrr"



Clayton, it turns out, is funneling his dope to a punkish looking fellow named "Buzz", who in turn passes it along to a pair of high schoolers named Bobby and Tommy. The scowling Buzz meets the duo of dopers at a playground and tells them that new customers are needed, pronto. "Give the stuff away if you have to! Once the kids are hooked... they'll pay and they'll pay plenty! Now beat it! Remember, more customers..... or else!"

Gulp! The first unsuspecting victim is Big Jim, an oafish looking jock who is happily dribbling a basketball when confronted by Bobby and Tommy. They tell him about "an offer you can't refuse!" Cha-ching! New customer!

The next day Tommy, who is already second-guessing his drug dealin' ways, is walking home when he sees a cop car parked outside of his house. He plays it cool by screaming "OH NO! POLICE! They're in front of my house! They've come



Big Jim before.....



....and after!

for me! Out of my way! I've gotta run for it!"

However, it turns out that the cops aren't there to haul his ass away, but, rather, because "an addict high on drugs" just robbed his house and beat the living fuck out of his parents. Luckily they caught the addict, who happens to be.... Big Jim!

Yep, the basketball player who bought his first bag of drugs 24 hours ago is now a crazed lunatic breaking into peoples houses and thrashing them senseless in an attempt to feed his crippling addiction.

That's it for Tommy: no more drugs. He tells the cops everything. Bobby doesn't cave quite as easily and keeps trying to hook other students, but unfortunately for him he is classmates with the Whiz Kids, who quickly topple the operation by using a Tandy Camcorder. Yes!

PS- As a side note, there was actually a THIRD issue of the Whiz Kids that clumsily attempted to tackle the scourge of drug smuggling. The issue, entitled "Fit to Win", is remarkably similar to the two other pieces of shit we just wasted a couple pages examining. For example:

— It begins with the Whiz Kids talking about what they did over the summer: start a group called "Fit to Win" which aims to realize "the success we can have in helping to build an even better America!", as Alec puts it. It's a painfully bland speech, but you can tell Alec is destined to be a future politician as he masterfully dishes up spoonfuls of empty rhetoric, and his classmates are destined to be future voters, as they leap up from their desks and whoop en masse "Yeahhh, Alec! Wow, that's cool!". The teacher, for her part, proves what a swell teacher she is by saying "Alec, I've got one word for that vacation activity: it's super!" —The comic, like the first two, has hopelessly stupid drug smugglers who brag about how easy and profitable their work is. The crooks say "HA HA!" a lot, cackling in their evilness. They're smuggling drugs, but they keep joking that they're actually smuggling *fish*, a joke the captain finds more amusing with each telling. "Yeah, I guess you could call it that! HA HA! For EXPENSIVE fish! HA HA!" Later, it cracks him up again: "Maybe we'll go "fishing" again sometime" he says. "HA HA!" —The same detective drops ridiculous pitches for Tandy and Radio Shack into his everyday speech: when chasing down the smugglers he says "Here's where I'm going to use my new CT-300 Cellular Phone—with it's Speed Dialing!" His partner then asks "Didn't I hear you say that new CT-300 has a memory for speed-dialing as many as forty numbers!"

PPS- One more side note. There was a fucking FOURTH anti-drug smuggling Whiz Kids issue. Jesus! This one, entitled "The Answer to a Riddle", began with – hold onto your seat or you're going

“ Didn't I hear you say that new CT-300 has a memory for speed-dialing as many as forty numbers! ”

--SOME GUY

to fall over from pissing your pants in shock—some sinister looking folks planning a drug deal, followed by the Whiz Kids getting in front of their class and explaining what they did over the summer! After that, the teacher says she has some

surprises for the class, which include a Tandy Color Computer 3 with a Program Pak, and a guest speaker who tells them how terrible marijuana is! And then, in the end, Tandy triumphs over drugs! Holy shit!



RELEASED IN 1986, Crackbusters told the gripping story of a man who went around beating up drug users and dealers. His name? Well, you probably figured that out.

Fun drug-fightin' Quote: "Your boss better stop this Crackbuster. These crack shipments are slowing down!"

I was unable to track down an issue of this comic, which leads me to believe that all copies were destroyed by worried crack dealers.



DURING ONE OF the many valleys of his career, Mr. T somehow convinced a company to produce a comic book about him fighting crime. "Sure, why not!" they said. "Life is fucking meaningless anyways!" The result of this fiscally suicidal decision was a series called "Mr. T and the T-Force", published by Now Comics for a few months in the early 90's.

The T-Force featured Mr. T beating up criminals, fighting the terrible scourge of violence by using excessive violence, saying things like "Bustya upside the head, fool! Never thought I'd be closin' down a school! Cause knowledge is power! Lift a man up outta the grime! But what you teach here is crime! Gonna shut you down, on the double-time!" as he pounds hapless drug pushers senseless. And between all of the flying fists of justice, he drops some shiny nuggets of inspiring wisdom like "You know what I always say— 'Don't be a fool. Stay in School'".

It's a pretty sweet comic book. To get a better sense of it's greatness, here is a brief, one paragraph synopsis of Mr. T and the T-Force #1:

The comic begins with Mr. T smashing his fist into a car as he roars "It's over, punks! I'm gonna run you AND your drugs outta this hood! 'Cause MR. T IS IN THE HOUSE!" The kids in the car seem somewhat baffled that this man has



A Scene from Mr. T's Trip

thugs. He suddenly hears a crack baby crying from a nearby dumpster, and drags the remaining punk over to it. Mr. T blames him for the child's condition (apparently, T knows that his crew sold the mother drugs. Or something) and then hands him the baby. "Take it, punk. Take it! You're responsible for it now!" Although he's mad the kid sold crack to a pregnant woman, T can see he possesses the qualities needed to raise a child. He tells the baffled thug that he'll be keeping tabs on his child-rearing progress, and then runs off and jumps through the roof of a building, where he lands face to face with an Incan drug runner who blames T for slowing the drug trade and depriving his people of much-needed money. End of issue.

Whew! Pretty sweet, huh? People loved it, as evident by reader mail like "When I saw Mr. T on the Home Shopping Club selling his first issue, I loved what he said about not using any weapons in his comic, and I decided to buy it from the store..... I love the message that it sends about drugs" I agree—"If you do drugs I will beat you up" is indeed an excellent message.

But the best storyline comes along in issue #2, when Mr. T hallucinates! Yep, if you've ever wondered what would happen if Mr. T ingested an Incan hallucinogen, you need to run to the nearest comic book store and rummage through their dumpsters for a copy of Mr. T and T-Force #2 *right now!*

It all starts when the angry Incan from issue #1 shoots syringes out of his fists at Mr. T, who has "no place ta move" and is hit. "Oh no!" he yells "I been SMOKED!"

The resulting experience can safely be categorized as a "bad trip". They always say to choose your surroundings carefully when taking acid, and for most people fighting a nine foot tall syringe-shooting Incan drug lord in an abandoned warehouse is not a "Safe environment". Poor Mr. T is in for the ride of his life.

Immediately, the background twists into a trippy purple and Mr. T is surrounded by flying boulders and grotesque dinosaur-demons. "NO!" he yells "This ain't real... NOT REAL! None of it! I gotta hold it...togeth...er..."



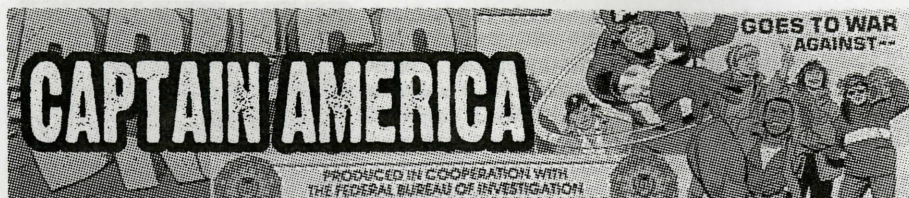
Another shot of Mr. T on acid

An intense, psychedelic battle ensues, as an assortment of grinning dinosaurs, green tentacles, and wart-hogs try to convince Mr. T to give in and "party" with them. He refuses, fighting back valiantly while dodging flying rocks and roaring things like "This— is— WRONG!! WRONG!! ARG! HUMANS—DO— NOT—LIVE—LIKE—THIS!"

He eventually gets away, luckily—from both the Columbian drug lords who suddenly burst into the room, and from the dinosaurs-of-doom acid-casualty experience. "Ooooooooo.... My head's splittin" he complains from a rooftop across town. Beating up drug dealers is one thing—but beating up your hallucinations? Now that's impressive.

(Check it out! I think I'm the first person to ever write an ironic piece on Mr. T without employing some kind of "Pity the fool" joke! Ha!)





CAPTAIN AMERICA Goes to War Against Drugs is for the most part a ploddingly dull and ridiculously predictable anti-drug comic book. In it, the following things happen: a star baseball player starts doing drugs in order to feel cool, his baseball game prowess plummets dramatically as result, he beans a batter in a big game, the opposing team chases him down and beats the crap out of him, Captain America saves his hide and tells him drugs are bad. Yawn!

But here's the weird part: the drugs are coming not from shady teenagers or diabolical scientists, but from fucking *aliens*. Yep. You see, an alien race known as the Tzin is studying earth, devising a strategy to conquer humanity. They're initially worried about their prospects of doing this due to the humans' greatness. "We might never crush their *spirit*" they muse from their spaceship. But then they realize that humanity has one weakness: the fact that some of its members do drugs. The wily Tzin attempt to exploit this glaring Achilles heel by getting various humans hooked on their alien-dope, including the aforementioned baseball player.

What the fuck? Aliens?! The comic was produced in cooperation with the FBI, so they obviously signed off on it. Weird.

The other funny thing is that the character of Captain America obtained his powers by taking a government-created drug. So here is a guy who owes his entire *existence* to dope, meaning a more appropriate comic would have been "Captain America Pays Tribute to the Sweetness of Drugs"



IN THE EARLY 70'S, the US government contacted Marvel Comics founder Stan Lee to see if he'd be interested in doing a series on the horrors of drug use. Of course he would! He responded by introducing an anti-drug plotline to the popular Spiderman series, devoting all of issue #92 to the cause. Unfortunately, unlike the Whiz Kids and Wally Bear and the No Gang, people seem to actually read, and enjoy, Spiderman, therefore this issue is worth some money due to it's age, and I was unable to obtain a copy.

However, based on what I've read *about* the issue, here are some sterling scenes it contains:

—A marijuana addict prances around along the edge of a building, deliriously shouting "I can float— fly like a bird!" He is saved from his death by an alert Spidey, who snatches him from falling.

—Spiderman's buddy Harry Osbourne likewise succumbs to drug use, popping pills to make him feel "zingy"

—Luckily, the webbed wonder tracks down the dope dealers and thrashes them senseless

Pretty sweet, huh? Years passed, and although people still did drugs, Spiderman concentrated on other matters until the late 90's when the Clinton Administration's anti-drug initiative (known internally as the catchy "surround communications strategy") gave Marvel \$2.5 million to whip up some more propaganda for them.

Drug Czar Barry McCaffrey immediately held a news conference to make the announcement that "our nation's most loved web-head" had resumed the fight. Some guy dressed in a Spiderman costume then took to the podium and expressed his delight. "I've got to tell you I'm thrilled right down to my web-slinging toes this morning to take a day off from fighting the bad guys in New York and web my way down to Washington, D.C."

The triumphant press conference came to a close and Marvel went to work on the comic. The end result was a four-part series entitled "The Fast Lane", where Spidey fights usual bad guys like "Mysterio", but it turns out that the *real* villain is a pot-leaf-t-shirt-wearin' movie star named Zane Whelan. Zane, you see, is wild and reckless (livin' in the 'fast lane', as it were), and he not only doesn't play by the rules, he actually *breaks* them.

One of the newspaper interns who works with Spidey's alter-ego Peter Parker is highly influenced by Whelan's awesomeness, and decides to pick up a marijuana habit himself. BAD IDEA. After getting all doped up on the demon weed, he crashes a van and partakes in other high-risk behavior common among pot smokers. Later, as in the first anti-drug Spiderman comic, he teeters along the edge of a bridge, only to be snatched up at the last second by Spidey. The daring rescue is depicted in the beginning of issue #2, where he see him screaming not something like "Yeearrrgh!", but "My bowl! Whoaaaaa!" See? He actually values *pot more than his life*. Good god.



GREEN LANTERN & GREEN ARROW' numbers 85 and 86 (featuring an assortment of headlines like "the shocking truth about drugs"; "DC Attacks Youths' Greatest Problem.... DRUGS!"; "They Say It'll Kill Me....But They Won't Say When!"; and the particularly level-headed "More deadly than the atom bomb!") has the Green Arrow discovering his sidekick is delving in drugs. The fact that his sidekick's name is Speedy might have been a clue, but the Arrow is caught completely off-guard. "You're a lousy junkie!" he yells, thrashing Speedy after walking in on him shooting up. He kicks him out of the house and then leaves in search of the dealer, who he hopes to similarly pound the piss out of. While he's gone, one of Speedy's friends stumbles upon his stash of drugs, takes some, and dies.

By the end of the issue Speedy has kicked his heroin habit, but the damage has already been done, and him and Arrow split ways. A pretty unremarkable issue overall, although it did con-



tain what I assumed would be the most common reaction in these comics: beat up the users!

Surprisingly, though, Speedy delivers the only reasonable statement I found in all of the comics I looked at: "Drugs are a symptom, and you, like the rest of society, attack the symptom, not the disease." This is slightly offset by the atom bomb comment on the cover, but still.

An interesting side note is that this comic almost didn't get the Comic Code Authority seal since it had two syringes on the cover. DC took out one of them and were given the green light. One needle good, two needles bad, I guess. (Oddly enough, the aforementioned Spiderman comic was the first to ever **not** get the seal, due to its depiction of casual drug use)



FREEVIBE.COM IS the unholy demon-child of the ONDCP, an anti-drug government agency. The goal of Freevibe is to be "hip" with the kids, hipper than drugs, even. Of course, in the entire history of the government it has never once succeeded in looking even remotely cool (and generally misfires badly and ends up somewhere on the opposite side of the spectrum when it tries), and Freevibe is no exception.

One of its many ridiculous features is Summit High, an online comic that follows a group of teens through their high school experiences, crushes and bouts of boredom, along with scary encounters with marijuana cigarettes. In my opinion, it does not come across as an accurate portrayal of life in high school. I am no longer a teenager so perhaps I'm out of touch and people aged 13-19 have recently become cheezeball morons, but I still believe that no kid has ever delivered a line like "I'm just trying to make sure I am in control of my own future when it comes to college, you know?" I mean, some people obviously hold that sentiment—it's not a bad one—but no one *talks* like that. And when a comic contains dialogue like that, it's instantly suspect. To me, it conjures up images of some suited gov worker typing away in the bowels of a gray building, scratching his head: "Wait, is 'tubular' still an acceptable word among the youth demographic? Yes, it must be"

Most of the strip isn't drug related, and instead focuses on other aspects of the high school experience. They slip in the drug stuff quietly, every now and then. My guess this is done to avoid coming across as 'preachy', and to instead project an aura of legitimacy. Ha! Nice try.

The comic begins with Casey, the star of Summit High, wondering where her friend Kedma was the night before, as she IM'd her countless times to no response. Turns out she was on the phone with Adam.

"That jerk from the summer?" Casey asks incredulously. "The one who wanted to get you high and take you home?" We see a flashback of a "HANDSOME-LOOKING, WELL-DRESSED RICH KID SITTING ON RETRO-MODERN COUCH", as the script puts it, showing Kedma a few joints tucked inside of an Altoids case.

"I seriously don't know why I gave him my



number” admits Kedma. “He is actually almost tolerable when he’s straight. No such luck last night. I don’t know if he was high or what, but it was like talking to a baby. He’s off the list... officially!”

Soon after this, Casey runs into Ethan, who she has a crush on. He’s explaining to a group of admirers how he saved the life of one of his friends over the summer. His buddy made the mistake of trying to surf after smoking pot, which nearly lead to his death. “He must have been pretty wasted” Ethan recalls. Luckily, he was there to administer CPR and save the day.

Later that day, after modestly retelling his heroics, Ethan notices his friend Kenji is carrying a copy of Kerouac’s *On the Road*.

“On the Road?” He observes. “Hey wasn’t that guy Jack Kerouac a drug addict?”

“No, he was not a drug addict” Kenji maintains “One of my classmates last summer told me Kerouac just used drugs occasionally, to gain access to unexplored areas of his creativity”

“Do you really believe that?” Ethan asks skeptically.

Their friend Ferg interrupts. “Are you kidding me? Have you ever seen someone when they’re high? Not exactly genius material. Maybe you’re the one with a drug problem, Kenji”

Etc!

AN EQUALLY MORONIC but somewhat unique feature of Freevibe is interactive comics, where they show you a scenario in which a kid is offered a joint, and you pick how he should react. For example, you can agree to try the weed, but selecting that option causes parental figures to suddenly bust into the room and ship your sorry ass off to rehab. A better choice is to tell the joint-pusher “No deal. I’ve wanted to be a pro baseball player since I could walk, man. That stuff has got no place in my life... not to mention you can go to jail if you get caught. It’s illegal and a lot of people got murdered and hurt because of it” Delivering a reasoned speech like that will, of course, cause the pushy pothead to realize he has blood on his hands and say “You know, maybe you’re right. Okay, lets flush this thing and go catch the new Vin Diesel flick!”

“**Maybe you’re right. Okay, let’s flush this thing and go catch the new Vin Diesel flick!**”

--BRENT

Whew! I am SO glad by tax money is supporting such a useful website!

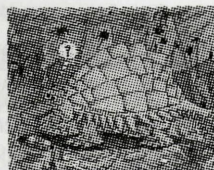


THE COMIC BOOK *The Drugosaurs* takes anti-drug rhetoric to an all-new level, saying that doing drugs won’t just make your brain feel like a fried egg, it will actually lead to *extinction*. Yow.

The *Drugosaurs*, you see, were wiped out because they did too much marijuana (and crack, and ecstasy, and so on), and the heart-warming message for little kids is that they too will be eradicated if they try these drugs. “Don’t Go Extinct!” is the slogan.

Talk about “Scared Straight”, eh? Who knows, maybe it works. Any elementary

schoolchild thinking about huffing paint for kicks will surely be terrified into a life of sobriety by the story of the Huffadons, a group of "foolish beasts who put their heads in bags filled with poisonous fumes or gases. Many lost their minds. They are all extinct now" Similar species-ending fates were met by Boozitupacus (alcohol), Teracracktyl (crack) Velociraver (ecstasy), and poor Cannibisaur, who made the fatal mistake of thinking "that marijuana's only effect was making it stupid and lazy" Dummy! "The Cannibisaur was too 'doped up' to see that marijuana was really hurting its brain and its lungs. The cannibisaur went extinct from smoking pot"



Above: the Mighty Huffadon

Oh, come on. *Extinction*, from smoking pot? With Huffadon, I can at least somewhat see the hysteria. But pot can't kill you! They could have at least been vaguely honest and said something like "Cannibisaur went extinct after he choked on a mouthful of cheetos"

OTHERS

There have been other similar comics, like **The New Teen Titans** (the result of an unholy trinity between Nabisco, DC Comics, and the Reagan Administration), **Wally Bear & the No Gang** (ridiculed in *You Idiot* #1), and **The Insiders in: Marijuana Mystery** (girl misses her gymnastic championship because she foolishly smokes a joint and breaks her ankle. Her friends summon a robot to tell her the truth about dope. He says "Marijuana takes control of your body. Even if you do not do use the drug yourself, being in the presence of someone using it is also wrong" She says "I'm never going to do drugs again! Then I'll be a winner for sure!" The robot smiles. Etc!) but you probably get the idea.

A FEW OF THE MORE hysterical examples aside, all of the stories in the comics examined above could theoretically happen. I suppose if you sucked down a joint, there is a statistical chance you might plunge your van off of a bridge, or trip and fall and shatter your ankle, or act like a cretin towards the opposite sex (but if so you'd probably act that way sober too), or fuck up and almost die surfing, or start mugging people. It's possible.

But what are the odds? Are these realistic portrayals of the effects of drug use? Not really, no. Showcasing only the extreme-worst-examples is a ridiculous method of education. You might scare 'em straight in the short-term, but they'll smell the bullshit at some point down the road.

Although the metaphor isn't perfect, here's a quick example of how we could apply the same logic to something like cars.

CARS: METAL BEASTS OF UNCOOL DOOM

Jinny: Hey, whats up?

Alice: Nothin'. Just studying, because I take my future seriously

Jinny: Totally

Chad: Hey whats up ladies

Jinny: Nuthin'

Alice: Not much

Chad: You girls want to... go for a ride in my car?

Alice: Car?? That's dangerous! Thousands and thousands of people die every year from getting into cars!

Chad: (laughs)

Jinny: Oh c'mon Alice, its just a *car*, everyone's doing it! It'll be fun.... wind in our hair, music bumpin'....

Alice: I don't know.... I heard that people who ride in cars get carjacked

Chad: What's life without some *risks*, babe? I live on the edge
(*enter Notto Otto, the anti-automobile hippopotamus*)

Alice: Otto!

Otto: Heeeey kids! I'm here to tell you that if you get in a car, you won't get very far!

Chad: Nuts to you, hippo. Let's go Jinny. Have fun *walking*, Alice. Hope you don't *trip*

Alice: Ohh...

Otto: Don't worry, Alice. Some people have to learn.... the hard way
(*in Chad's car*)

Chad: Pretty sweet, huh? Makes you feel like a million bucks!

Jinny: Cars RULE!

Chad: Ahh! My hands... slipping off of the steering wheel... n-no!!!
CRASH!

Chad: Ohhhh.... My....inner...organs....

Jinny: Why was I so *stupid*? I just wanted to look cool!

Scary Looking Thug (approaching Car): This is a carjack, motherfucker!

Chad: No!

Jinny: W-wait! Look! The gas tank.... It's about to explode!

BOOOOOM

Otto: Remember kids, if you get asked to get into an auto, just say—

Otto and Alice: NOTTO!

See how fucking stupid that is? Cars DO kill people (obviously), and it makes sense to teach people how to drive them correctly, and to warn them about the inherent dangers involved in operating them and so forth. But to go over the top with something like the preceding example is insulting to the kids watching it. Nothing but the worst possible scenarios... idiotic "catch phrases"... ridiculous stereotypical teens.... Who would take it seriously? If anything, it would achieve the opposite effect and kids who viewed it would, I dunno, guzzle bottles of vodka and try to jump their cars over rivers. Or something.

But that's what the crop of anti-drug comic books we just looked at amount to. I wonder if the people writing them believe the shit they spew, or if they're well-aware it's fucking nonsense, but either figure "It's for their own good", or "the government offered me money to write this and I need to eat goddamnit" and churn it out anyway.

Critics might say "Well, millions of kids read those comic books, so don't you think it's possible that the messages had a positive effect on at least *some* of them? Don't you think that a few kids never stumbled down the dark, winding road of marijuana use as a direct result of reading one of them? And if so, doesn't that make it all worth it?" Good point. I will concede that of all the millions of children who read the preceding comic books, it's probable that, I don't know—three of them never tried dope as a result. Maybe four. That sounds about right.

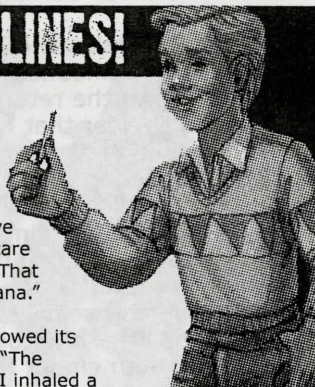
FUN FACTS FROM THE FRONTLINES!

Older Comics

ANTI-DRUG MESSAGES in comic books can be traced way back to the thirties, when Reefer Madness was in full swing and the messages were a tad more hysterical. They contained lines like "Do you want to buy Madness, Pain, and Horror? Do you want to join the ranks of pitiful fools who have blazed the trail to destruction? Then come closer and have a cigarette. A SPECIAL kind of cigarette..." and "Chief, I don't care how we do it, but we must stop this peddling of dope to kids! That kid that did the shooting this afternoon was a victim of marihuana." (from 'More Fun Comics', #39 Oct 1937)

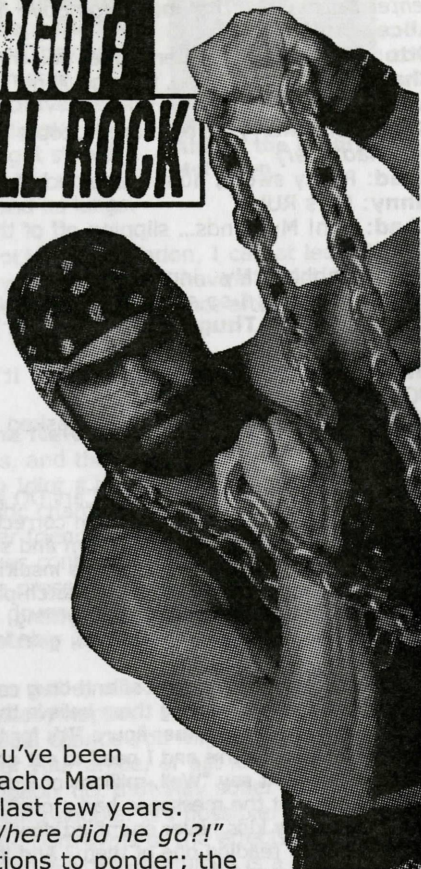
Or how about Realistic Romances, from the 50's, which showed its realism in describing a girl's terrible experience at a pot party: "The taste was bitter and it choked me....the room began to spin I inhaled a few more puffs and began to grow deathly sick!". After that, her stoned boyfriend tries to kill her, and she ends up in an insane asylum.

The superhero Plastic Man was forced to smoke weed by a villain in Police Comics #5, which had the predictable effect of causing him to shoot a gun and yell "Whee!! I'm a killer!"



FOR THOSE WHO FORGOT: I STILL ROCK, I STILL ROCK

In issue #2 of You Idiot, we examined Hulk Hogan's rap album (the modestly titled "Hulk Rules") and made the startling discovery that it was not very good. Now, in 2003, a full eight years after the Hulkster clumsily stumbled his way through an attempt at rapping, his arch-nemesis Randy "Macho Man" Savage has followed suit with a new record called "Be a Man". Is it similarly wretched? Let's take a look.



If you're like most Americans, you've been losing sleep wondering where Macho Man Randy Savage has been for the last few years. "Where did he go?" you wonder. *"Where did he go?!"*

It's certainly a scary set of questions to ponder; the sort of thoughts that make your mind race and your stomach queasy: Where Has Macho Man Been? Will He Be Back? We seek closure to these burning unknowns, but the answers have eluded us—until now.

With the release of his debut rap album 'Be a Man', Randy Savage reassuringly announces his return. Whew. True, the record's existence sort of makes the return self-evident, but Macho Man wants to explicitly make it clear that he has indeed risen from the ashes of obscurity. His first line, about a minute into the record (after an introduction that has a female fan purring "Girl, he look good for an old man—I would date him. He look so good... he had on these tight black pants, and his muscles was all bulging...") is a croaked "I'm ba-ack", which echoes on and on as the generic hip-hop beats kick in. "I'm ba-ack. I'm ba-ack. I'm ba-ack. I'm ba-ack. I'm ba-ack. I'm ba-ack." And — just in case the listener is not fully convinced of the "No, I'm not dead" message by that point — he proceeds to drill it home even further with song titles like "Remember Me", "I'm Back", and lyrical passages such as "For those who forgot I still rock - I still rock"; "I'm back on the scene.... I'm still real mean"; "I'm a tell ya right now Randy Savage is

back"; "I'm back with vengeance and got good chemistry", and so on and so forth.

The concept that Macho Man has indeed returned is an easy one to grasp, but the larger question that probably strikes all but the most deranged listener is "Wait, is that a good thing?"

The answer to that question, my friends, is Not Fucking Really. It doesn't particularly bother me that Macho Man has re-emerged from wherever he was, but the guy probably should have headed to a wrestling ring rather than a recording studio. I mean, I'd like to see J.D Salinger come out of isolation, but if instead of writing he decided to return by launching his own line of barbeque sauces, it wouldn't mean as much. Ya gotta stick to what you know.

This particular lesson should have been excruciatingly clear to Macho Man since his peer Hulk Hogan tried the same thing eight years prior, reacting to a slump in his career by penning a rap album. The result was predictably terrible, and Macho should have realized the same embarrassing defeat would befall him should he attempt something similar.

But not only did he do it anyway, he actually seemed to record "Be a Man" in *direct response* to his old nemesis Hulk's effort. It's as if Macho first heard the tune "Hulkster's Back" in 1995 and since that point has been seething with anger, devoting every waking moment to crafting a devastating response, finally delivering the goods eight years later.

This is puzzling—it's been nearly a decade, and it's not as if the first stone thrown was a very powerful one anyway. Sure, Hogan rapped the ominous "this homeboy can lose control", but as a whole, *Hulk Rules* does not come across as the least bit threatening, unless you are scared and intimidated by things like tissue paper and oxygen. Macho Man's vehement response album thusly feels like an overreaction on a grand scale, especially because Hogan didn't even mention him in any of his songs.

But if not revenge, what else could have stirred Macho into action? Jealousy? It's equally hard to comprehend the concept of someone being jealous of Hulk Hogan's rap album, but perhaps Macho Man simply wanted to one-up him. Maybe he didn't feel dissed by 'Hulk Rules'; he just felt upstaged and figured "rap album, eh? Two can play at that game, Hogan"

Regardless of the reasoning behind its existence, "Be a Man" is brutal towards the Hulkster, pulling no punches in staking Macho's claim as the premier wrestler-turned-rapper. The album's title track is actually meant as a direct challenge to Hogan, requesting that he take up Macho's offer to duke it out in the ring. The song is relentless in its mocking, dropping devastating lines like "Dude, please, your pay-per-view event was a joke/ You're avoiding Randy Savage cause ya know you'll get



Above: the pair in happier times

smoked" and "Hollywood Hulkster, you're at the end of your rope / And I'm gonna kick you in the butt and wash your mouth out with soap".

He even chastises Hogan for appearing in 1-800-Collect commercials, which is a bit ironic coming from a man who for years did nothing but film obnoxious Beef Jerky spots. Needling further, he ridicules Hogan's acting career (which consisted of sterling efforts such as Santa With Muscles and Three Ninjas: High Noon at Mega Mountain) with the following passage: "Your movies and your actin' skills are both trash / Your movies straight to video the box office can't stand / While I got myself a feature role in Spider Man"

Rap Battle!

*The world continues to wait breathlessly to see if Hogan will respond to the gauntlet thrown down by Savage and meet him in the ring. But perhaps a more apt contest would be a rap battle between the two. Can you imagine how fucking cool that would be? We can only speculate, and hope, but in the meantime here's a mock battle between the two, using **actual lyrics** culled from their respective albums. These sorts of things usually work in a "30 seconds each" sort of format, but I think in this case things would go better as a rapid-fire back and forth, with each party getting in a line or two at a time. As you read, try to picture the two of them squared off on stage, a DJ laying down the beat behind them as they attack and parry with the lyrical acrobatics they're both known for.*

And yet, for all his Hogan-bashing, Macho Man steals more than a few pages from the Hulk Rules album. In many ways, the efforts are remarkably similar. Most obviously, both records come from washed-up wrestlers who have no fucking clue how to rap and evidently are only familiar with the genre through Saturday morning cartoon commercials (I speak quite literally: it seems as if both men saw, for example, a spot like "So hot they're cool/ So cool they're hot/ Pop-tarts are popping up/ Pop, pop, pop" and immediately pointed at their back-up bands, declaring "That's the sound we're going for on this record"). But beyond that, we can see numerous examples where Macho emulates specific aspects of Hulk Rules.

For example, both records contain moments of pathetic nostalgia where a past moment of glorious conquest in the ring is recalled. Hogan brags "I took a belt, it was Flair's, I don't really care", whereas Savage muses "Remember Trump Plaza in Atlantic City? That's where I took the belt and didn't take no pity".

They also both have moments that are shittily catchy. Meaning, some of their awful, generic melodies somehow burrow themselves into your head and stick around for days after you've suffered through a listen of the actual record. After cringing my way through Be a Man and jotting down a few notes about it, I found myself humming an unfamiliar melody the following day while slumped at a bus stop. "Wait, what is that?" I wondered, realizing I didn't recognize it. I paused for a beat and then suddenly understood with a sense of dread that I had been humming "Remember Me/ I'm the same old Macho that I used to be". I shuddered with shame. The same thing had happened with the Hulk record: "I want to be a hulkamaniac/ Have fun with my family and

THE HULKSTER VS MACHO MAN

RAP BATTLE

Hogan:

The Hulkster's in the house
Check him out, check him out
Get up off your seat
He's got a brand new beat

Macho:

Hulk Hogan, Hollywood Hulkster, whatever they call you
I'm coming after you, coward
Hot diggity damn Hulk, you set it off
Used to be hard, Hulk, now ya done turned soft
I knew all along you had those tendencies
Cause you been runnin' from Macho like I got a disease

Hogan:

The Hulkster's in the room
You know he's on the move
I can feel it in my feet
We're moving to the beat

Macho:

Be a man Hogan Come on don't be a chump / I never thought Hulk would go out like a punk
Be a man Hulk Come on don't be scared / You're runnin' from Macho that's what I heard
I smell a coward mmmm is that you Hogan? / "Macho's gonna kick ya butt" is the slogan
You try to ignore me thinkin' I'll go away / But I'm a keep on messin' wit ya dude, day after day

Hogan:

With the trainin'
and the prayers
and the vitamins too
Don't mess with us
or we'll beat you too

Macho:

Yo dude you really think I'm shakin' in my boots?
Hey dude you really think that I'm afraid of you?
Let me tell you Randy Savage don't fear no man
Come to close watch out cuz you're gonna get slammed
When I hit ya with my power your body'll start shiverin'
Hit ya to the head to the gut damage your liver

Hogan:

We are the Beach Patrol
We want to party, party, party

Macho:

Macho Man's got yo head in a daze and
I'm bout to start a brand new rap craze cuz
I'll crush ya in the ring as well as the stage
So everybody come on put ya hands up high
Cuz we're coming with a sound /
that you can't deny
It's the M-A-C-H-O-M-A-N
No I'm not playin'
I got the place in mayhem

Hogan:

You know this homeboy can lose control
You just don't mess with the Beach Patrol

Macho:

And I'm a tell you again I'm bout ta Kick Some Butt
So don't sleep I'm constantly droppin' a bomb
Like on ya CD-ROM it's MachoMan.Com
OOOH Yeah we're about to put this thing in motion
We'll hit ya so hard you'll have a body convulsion
OOOH Yeah We've been kickin' butt way too long
So don't get us wrong cuz we're way too strong
OOOH Yeah you don't believe me bring it on dude
I'd advise that you don't cuz I'm not in the mood
The joke's on you so Hulk what you gonna do
Probably nothing cuz you're a real big punk
You called my dad up on the phone man you's a chump

Hogan:

Take it from me
don't lose control
'Cause you're gonna have to deal
with the Beach Patrol

friends" ran through my head for two or three agonizing days after I first heard the tune.

And, just as with Hulk Rules, *Be a Man* contains a tribute/eulogy tune. Hulk delivered the passionate "Hulkster Goes to Heaven", an ode to a dead fan that contained out of key warbles like "I used to tear my shirt/But now you've torn my heart". For his part, Macho Man has "Perfect Friend", a stirring, croaked tribute to former wrestler Mr. Perfect.

Both tunes are obviously heartfelt, and yet in both cases I found myself doubled over in laughter upon hearing them. I felt a slight tinge of guilt at cracking up at something that's supposed to be somber, but hey—the songs ARE fucking terrible!

'Mr. Perfect' is interesting because for the duration of the chorus, featuring legitimate singers, it sounds like an actual song; the kind of thing you could hear on the radio and not think twice about. "You were my perfect friend/ Right there until the end / I'm forever missin' you / Until we meet again". Bland yes, but sung competently: just another tune.

But then Macho Man steps up to bat and delivers the verses, and the song suddenly plunges into something entirely different. It sounds literally like Macho Man is delivering a eulogy at Mr. Perfect's funeral while under the influence of some near-paralysis-inducing amphetamines - not singing or rapping but speaking quickly in a grunted staccato-style because he knows he has only a few seconds left - as he delivers cringers like "You were all about perfection/ It's not a mystery that wrestling was the right selection.... He brightened up a locker room / He made the time go by / He had personality / Gregarious, not shy" Again—it's obviously heartfelt, but as a song it's awful; almost as awful as "Hulkster Goes to Heaven" (which is, believe me, goddamn awful).

Of course, for all their similarities, there are still a few differences between the albums. To give Macho Man credit, his back-up music may suck, but it at least sounds a *little* less laughable than his rival's. Unlike the pathetic strains of Hulk Rules, the music on *Be a Man* pulls off a (somewhat) legitimate hip-hop feel, albeit one coupled with shitty, sludgy metal touches that make you picture the band banging their heads up and down in some sort of gray bunker with chains whipping about. If you ignore Macho's bizarre, constipated delivery and pay attention to the beats, you think "Well, this sort of sucks, but I guess it sounds like a real song", a reaction that is impossible to get upon hearing the instrumentation on Hulk's record.

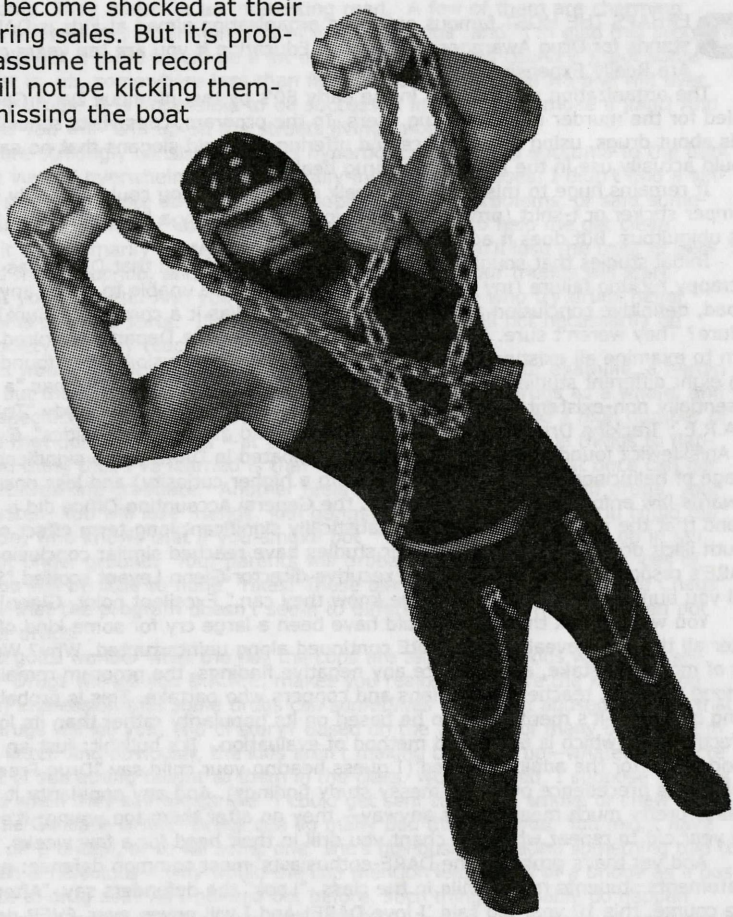
Another difference is that there is literally no positivity in *Be a Man*, whereas Hulk Rules constantly stressed the virtues of vitamins, prayers, and biceps, and encouraged listeners to "always go swimming with a buddy". Macho Man has no time for such banality, preferring instead to simply repeat variations of the premise "Oooh Yeeeah, I'm back, and I kick butt" (which, believe or not, *does* get old after awhile). You could even describe *Be a Man* as "darker and more introspective", which is my all-time favorite description of sound.

So the musical execution approaches the general direction of competence, and unlike Hulk Rules, the rhymes don't *all* seem like they were lifted from a Saturday Morning cartoon advertisement, but *Be a Man* is still by no means a solid record. On the contrary, it resides in that massive category known as "Bad, but not in a good way" that encompasses the majority of recorded music. When listening to Hulk Rules, you stare

open-mouthed at the stereo and think "What the fuck is going on here?! This is terribly.... awesome!" whereas a listen to Be a Man causes you to chuckle occasionally but mostly just apply pressure to your temples in an attempt to stop the encroaching headache.

But then again, who gives a shit what I think? Macho dismisses record reviewers with the couplet "Critics I'm ignoring' ya / to ladies it's euphoria". He doesn't give a rat's ass what some snooty critics think - it's a hearty "Ooooh Yeahhh!" from the pubic that he's looking for.

And how will the masses greet "Be a Man"? It's tough to say. Inexplicably, Hulk Rules briefly resided on the Billboard Kids top ten list when it first came out (before eventually settling into its permanent resting place in dollar bins across the nation). Will similar chart-topping success meet Be a Man? Macho certainly seems to think so, declaring that he's "bout to shock the whole industry". Perhaps. But which industry? As the public chooses different methods for dealing with the existence of this album, the earplug, shotgun, and sleeping pill industries could indeed become shocked at their suddenly soaring sales. But it's probably safe to assume that record companies will not be kicking themselves over missing the boat on this one.



the very best of **DARE.**

essays



PERHAPS THE MOST famous anti-drug organization aimed at kids is DARE, which stands for Drug Awareness Resistance Education if you are ten years old, and Drugs Are Really Expensive if you are fifteen.

The organization was created in the early 80's by the infamous Daryl Gates, who once called for the murder of casual drug users. In the program, cops visits school and talk to kids about drugs, using scare tactics and offering up vapid slogans that no sane child would actually use in the presence of drug dealers.

It remains huge to this day. Fuck, walk outside, and you could probably spot a DARE bumper sticker or t-shirt (probably being worn ironically by a hipster) within 10 minutes. It's ubiquitous. But does it actually *work*?

Initial studies that sought to answer that question found that DARE was more or less a crappy fucking failure (my words, not theirs), but were unable to reach any sort of broad, definitive conclusion as to its overall effects. Was it a *complete* failure? About 80% failure? They weren't sure. So, in the early 90's the Justice Department hired a research firm to examine all existing DARE studies and reach a conclusion. They found, after analyzing eight different studies involving nearly 10,000 children, that DARE has "a limited to essentially non-existent effect" on drug use. Hmm. Later, in their study "Truth and D.A.R.E.: Tracking Drug Education to Graduation and as Symbolic Politics", E. Wysong and R. Aniskiewicz found that those who had participated in DARE had a significantly higher usage of hallucinogenic drugs (maybe due to a higher curiosity) and less positive attitudes towards law enforcement. More recently, the General Accounting Office did a study which found that the program has had "no statistically significant long-term effect on preventing youth illicit drug use." Dozens of other studies have reached similar conclusions. What was DARE's response to these findings? Executive director Glenn Levant scoffed "Scientists will tell you bumble bees can't fly, but we know they can." Excellent point, Glenn!

You would think that there would have been a large cry for some kind of "Plan B" after all this was revealed, but DARE continued along uninterrupted. Why? Well, there's a lot of money at stake, and, despite any negative findings, the program remains popular among the kids, teachers, politicians and coppers who partake. This is probably the underlying problem—it's merits tend to be based on its popularity rather than its long-term effectiveness, which is an absurd method of evaluation. It's bullshit; just an easy feel-good cause for the adults involved (I guess hearing your child say "Drug Free is the Way to Be!" takes precedence over any messy study findings). And any popularity it has among kids is pretty much meaningless anyway— they go after them too young; it's easy to get a 10 year old to repeat whatever chant you drill in their head for a few weeks.

And yet that's probably the DARE-enthusiasts' most common defense: pointing to the statements students make while in the class. "Look" the defenders say. "After completing the course, this 10 year old said 'I love DARE! And I will never, ever, EVER do Ice!' Case closed—it works!

Well, so fucking what? I bet I could get a classroom of Kindergarteners to vow to

never, ever cheat on their taxes. In fact, I'm fairly confident I could get an auditorium full of the little bastards to chant "IRS is A-OK!". The government would heap praise on me, and by the time the kids have reached the age where they actually file taxes and realize "Cheating is easy—and fun!", I could shrug and blame their moral decay on other factors, adding "That's too bad, but my *current* class has made a vow to never misstate their capital gains—what do you think about *that*?"

Another common defense of DARE comes in the form of "Well, if even one kid doesn't start using drugs because of us, it'll all be worth it" Really? One kid out of millions, at a price tag of hundreds of millions of dollars is worth it? Sweet! This logic should be applied to other educational programs that might want to get off the hook. "Sure, 99% of the graduates from our Drivers Ed class have no fucking idea how to drive a car, but little Bobby is a real whiz behind the wheel now—all because of us! It was all worth it!"

Anyway, you might not believe me – after all, just look at what they try to tell us about bumblebees – so let's take a look at what sort of knowledge and lessons kids are leaving with upon graduating from DARE class.

To do this, I poured through a couple hundred DARE essays, which kids are required to write upon completion of the course. They're supposed to use them to say how great the program was, relate what they learned, and make a pledge to steer clear of narcotics in the years to come. They make for an interesting read. A few of them are charming ("D.A.R.E. means a lot to me, even more than I love hot wings" and "I'm glad this program is in this school without it there would be a lot of drug addicts in this country"), but some recite wisdom that is, uh, somewhere less than factual. Pot will kill you! No one will ever love you if you try drugs! It is impossible to be successful in life if you smoke a joint! And if you do try weed you will "end up on the streets living in boxes"!

The essays are strikingly consistent in this hyperbole. Those who succumb to the dark side of drugs are viewed overwhelmingly as morally inferior lost causes. I didn't find a single essay where someone wrote about helping people with drug problems, or said something like "even if I got hooked, I know my friends will be there to help me get clean again". Instead, it was primarily hysteria like "if you do drugs, you'll lose the trust of people, and get fired from your job, and run out of money, and all your friends will start throwing rocks at you", etc etc. And you know what? Most people who try drugs never encounter problems of these sorts. If you take a bong hit, you will not necessarily be abandoned by society. So why teach kids that you (definitely) will?

Some of this would *maybe* be close-to-reasonable if DARE was, for example, a heroin education class, but that's not the case— the curriculum focuses on drugs as a whole, and pot and alcohol specifically. Because of this, it's a little distressing to see a high number of the essays opine that doing any drugs —at all— will cause terrible, terrible things to happen to you. "One thing that I've learned is that trying any kind of drug just once can get you addicted" declares one graduate. Another feels that "if you don't stay off drugs, your life will be a disaster. You will lose friends, join gangs, get bad grades, and you could die". Don't forget Justin, who knows that if you smoke pot "Eventually you will end up in jail, prison, or six foot under ground. Your parents will probably disown you and chances of getting a good job will be little to none" Yikes! These blanket "All Drugs Will Cause Chaos" statements show that the program doesn't seem to differentiate very much between pot and other, harder drugs.

I mean, you gotta wonder what the hell the cops are telling these kids when you see essays that yelp "Drugs will kill you D.A.R.E. makes you realize that". Are the kids leaving with the (correct) impression that *some* drugs can *sometimes* kill you, if abused, or with that idea that using drugs will kill you, end of story? Based on the wording of many of them, I'm guessing it's the latter. And obviously, the kids aren't making this stuff up—whatever they're saying is a result of something taught to them in the class. Well, granted, I suppose the kids are just confused when they say things like "I could get sent to jail if I smoke or chew tobacco". But when little Candace writes "Drugs can do many bad things to you. You might have an urge to jump off a bridge, or to kill some one" she's obviously repeating something told to her in class, which is ridiculous— why would the cop mention leaping off of a bridge as a possible consequence of drug use? As I pointed out before, such things probably do happen every now and then — maybe if someone's really, really fucked up on angel dust and happens to be on a bridge — but it's absurd that such examples are being used in a drug "education" class. It's like bringing up Lorena Bobbitt in a sex-ed class.

Again: why? Well, perhaps they're using a facts-be-damned "scared straight"

approach, an ends-justify-the-means strategy where the goal is to prevent drug use at any cost. You could argue the merits of this, but I tend to believe that within a few years of DARE graduation, most kids will see that the absolute-worst-case scenarios taught to them quite simply rarely happen. ("Look—Freddy smokes pot and he can still read, and walk and stuff!") This would lead to the higher level of distrust in police officers referenced above, and, presumably, a feeling of "What else were they lying about?"

And all of the essays I read were basically the same (although some were more hysterical and off-balance than others)—none held any realistic conception of what using drugs entails. Which makes sense, I suppose, based on what they're being taught. (I guess I should drop a quick note to any excruciatingly idiotic people reading this: I'm not making fun of the kids here. They don't know any better; they're just reciting what they've been told. The point here is to look at what sort of impressions towards drugs kids have after completing the DARE course).

Interestingly, most of the essays I read were "award winners", which makes me wonder what the hell the losers wrote. Probably something like "I learned in DARE that if you ever smell marijuana smoke you will think you are a purple elephant and you will try to kill people, even your friends. You will then be addicted and will proly kidnap and torture people to get money. Then you will die, and there's no way God will let you into heaven. Instead, you'll roast in a bubbling pool of flames while Satan, the great deceiver, dangles a joint over your feeble head. And it'll serve you right. DARE rules! Thanks Officer McCormick!" And I bet they were given a gold star and allowed to graduate anyway.

**“ If you take drugs
none of your
dreams will ever
come true ”**

--Emily

FUN FACTS FROM THE FRONTLINES!

The Too Cool to Do Drugs Pencil

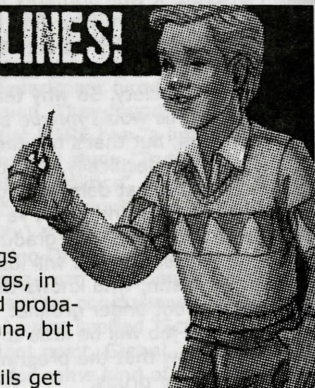
A business from Plainview, NY called the Bureau for At-Risk Youth did their part to fight narcotics by producing a pencil that said "Too Cool to Do Drugs". It seemed like a great idea: fourth graders could do their arithmetic assignments while simultaneously being reminded that A: they are Cool, and B: they don't do drugs (unless they were one of those fourth graders who do drugs, in which case the pencil would be a joke to them, and they'd probably use it to stab someone in the eye in search of marijuana, but this was a risk the Bureau was willing to take)

An unforeseen problem quickly arose, however: pencils get sharpened. And when you sharpen a pencil, you see, it gets smaller and smaller until it's just a little nub, and any messages printed on it get slowly and steadily turned into dust at the bottom of a sharpener. And thus, the Bureau's pencil soon read "Cool to Do Drugs", and then simply "Do Drugs".

This was not the result they were shooting for: an easily impressionable youth doing his homework while constantly seeing "Do Drugs. Do Drugs. Do Drugs" out of the corner of his eye. "We're actually a little embarrassed that we didn't notice that sooner," spokeswoman Darlene Clai admitted sheepishly.

The solution was obvious enough: the company simply reversed the slogan so after sharpening it revealed the still-safe sentiment "Too Cool"

Kodi Mosier, the 10 year old who first spotted the problem, won a free batch of t-shirts for his class and a written apology from the company. When asked why he thought the Bureau didn't notice the fuck-up themselves, Kodi replied "I guess they didn't sharpen their pencils"





PERMANENT INSANITY

& POSSIBLE DEATH

*the truth about marijuana
and goofballs!*



I'VE ALWAYS WONDERED what it would have been like to go to a Christian School. Not in an envious, aw shucks sort of way, but more in the manner of "Dude— I wonder what it would feel like to get your foot stuck in a bear trap?". Meaning, I'm glad I never experienced it, but I still wonder what it would have entailed. What would the curriculum have been like? What kind of things would I have been taught? Would I have gotten along with my fellow classmates? These are the questions that plague me for a second or two every couple of months while I'm waiting for a bus.

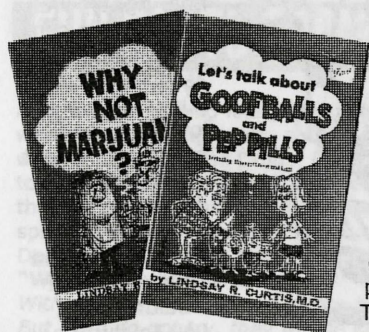
So when I found out that a Christian school in Omaha was selling off some of their educational materials, I leapt at the opportunity to snatch them up. Soon enough, for the low, low price of ten dollars, I was the proud owner of a gigantic orange binder entitled "Project Drugs: the Let's Get Hip Kit".

The binder was basically a training guide for teaching an absurdly inaccurate anti-drug class, bursting with books, pamphlets, overhead projector slides, quizzes (containing trickily worded True or False questions like: Marijuana Will Not Cause Insanity. The answer, of course, is False), handouts— all sorts of stuff. Other literature outlines for the prospective teacher how they should go about teaching the material—dividing the class into groups, organizing debates, and so on and so forth. Holy shit, I thought as I looked at all of the ridiculous illustrations and quotes contained within— this would have been the *best class ever!*

Most of the crazy curriculum is derived from two of the books contained in the package called "Why Marijuana?" and "Let's Talk About Goofballs and Pep Pills". Both are written by the esteemed Lindsay R.

Curtis, MD, who also penned the classic "Glue Sniffing: Big Trouble in a Tube".

Although mostly containing over-the-top propaganda and fear-mongering, the books also display a charming naiveté, seen in passages like "Since it is illegal in America, marijuana must come from elsewhere". It's good stuff.



Since their target audience is young, hopefully gullible kids, the books are full of short, simple paragraphs and goofy looking cartoon characters. The use of these cartoons allows for easy communication on the dangers of drug use. You see what the characters do, and realize the some sort of things could happen to you if you smoke pot, or

take goofballs. I mean, a bland block of text declaring that "Inhaling marijuana vapors before operating a vehicle is potentially dangerous" is a real yawner that won't click with the typical young reader. But kick ass drawings vividly show the true dangers of getting high behind the wheel—you'll do things like:

—Cockily drive your car straight towards a semi truck on a narrow road, laughing "I can make it EASY!"

—Speed around without utilizing the steering wheel, all while yelling "Look Ma, No Hands!"

—Slam your vehicle into innocent bystanders, yelling "Smoking pot is my own business!" as you do so.

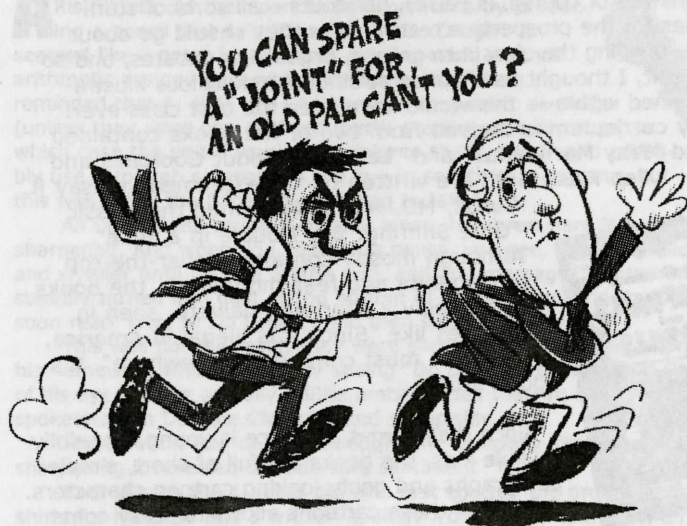
—See scary monsters including purple dinosaurs and evil anthropomorphic cubes of acid while you drive

And if you somehow survive the drive, you'll probably climb to the top of a skyscraper and then walk off the ledge with a dopey grin on your face. If you somehow survive *that*, you'll likely be out of weed by that point and will be forced to start attacking your friends with an axe. Yikes! Scary stuff. Luckily, all of these consequences are made clear for the reader through the colorful cartoons.

The books' brief text isn't too shabby either. Important questions are posed like "Does Marijuana Cause a Person to Commit Sex Crimes?" (Answer: Quite possibly!) and "Does Marijuana Ever Cause Insanity or Even Death?" (Answer: Yes!) And the examples they use when describing the effects of pot and pills are some of the all-time classic stereotypes. When explaining the delirium that comes hand in hand with popping goofballs, the book explains that you will be "imagining things—pink elephants, etc" Holy shit! They actually use the *Pink Elephant example*!

In addition, the books outline the dangers pot smoking poses to society as a whole. Those who inhale cannabis vapors may "become homicidal or suicidal". And that's just normal weed we're talking about—if they're puffing particularly potent pot, they "may even kill someone that (they) love". I know what you're

thinking—"Sure, smoking pot may turn me into a raging, loved-one-killing lunatic, but what if I eat the weed? That'd be fine, right?" Well, I've got one sentence for you, asshole: "If marijuana is swallowed, it can cause permanent insanity or death" I'd tell you to put that in your pipe and smoke it, but I wouldn't want you to run me down with your





I have driven stoned on a number of occasions, but I luckily never saw any purple brontosaurus while doing so.

screwed up! Whatever you come up with—that's what pot makes you see!—you're going to end up with some goofy shit. Some kid will draw a picture of a gigantic, wisecracking purple monkey with eight arms, and think smoking a hit of pot will cause such a thing to come to life. Not only would this cause more kids to smoke pot, it would cause more kids to smoke pot and become extremely disappointed and angry upon doing so.



SMOKING POT IS MY OWN BUSINESS

car and bury an axe in my back.

Learning all of the above is important, but the class curriculum also allows for some fun and games. One activity instructs the children to "Draw a picture of something real that is distorted in shape and color to illustrate the hallucinatory effects of marijuana".

Now — I gotta say— this is a weird game that would give the students strange impressions of what pot is capable of. I mean, it would make sense if they had a reformed marijuana user come in and draw a picture of what his "trips" were like, but when you tell the kids: "Draw something

IMPORTANT LESSONS and super-sweet games—what more could you ask for in a drug education class? Shit, when we learned about drugs in my high school half the class fell asleep, which was only partly due to most of the students being high at the time. If we had been exposed to the Get Hip Kit, attendance and alertness would've been through the roof. And local goofball dealers would have profited handsomely off of our new-found interest.

FUN FACTS FROM THE FRONTLINES!

Christian Poetry

Ahh, there's nothing like good Christian poetry, especially when they're being poetic about drugs. Here's one from a website called "Loose Drugs! Choose Jesus!" (I was going to put a [sic] after 'Loose', but then I realized maybe they meant it literally, like if a bunch of drugs suddenly spill on the floor, your reaction should be 'Loose drugs! Don't pick them up! Choose Jesus and walk away quickly!')

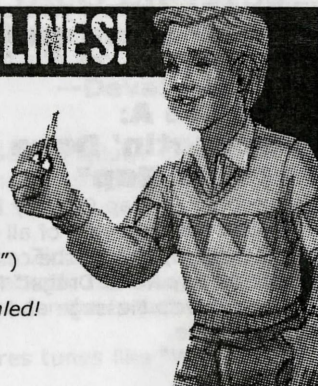
"Where Are All the Children?"

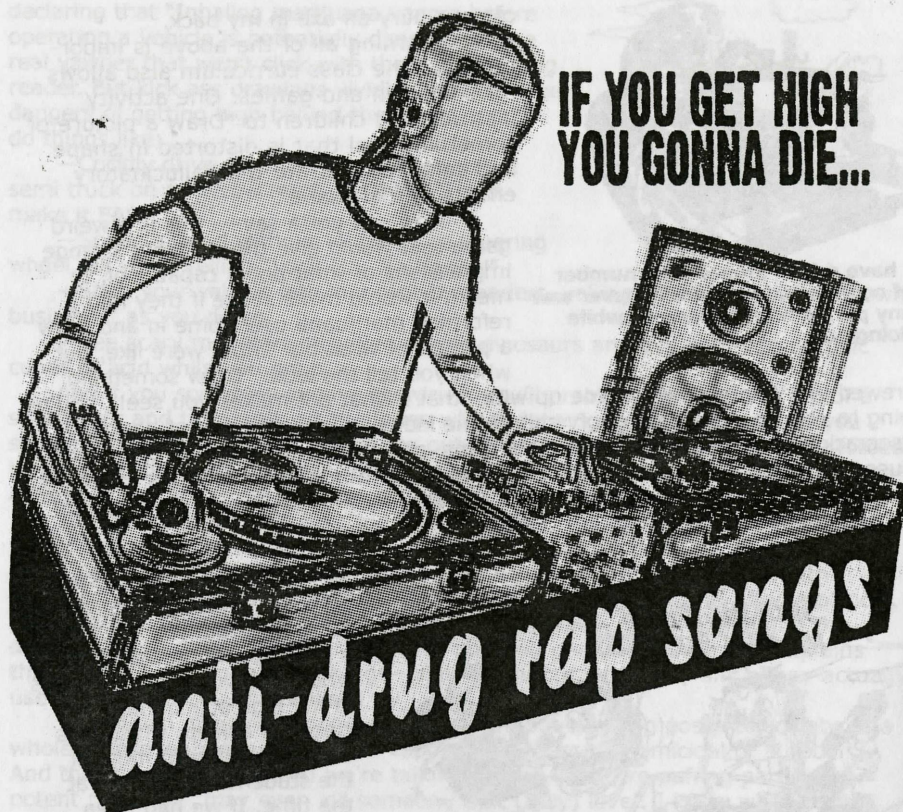
With prayers and praise our true happiness shall be revealed!

But if we do not try, they will be lost without a way

Where are all the children?

Satan's drugs are taking them away





Anti-drug rap songs seem at first glance to be an excellent way of influencing children. After all, if a kid smokes a blunt after hearing a song about smoking blunts, perhaps if he hears a song about *not* smoking blunts, he....um... well, you get the idea!

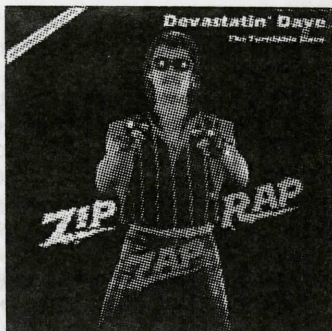
The underlying problem with this method is that most of the songs, regardless of when they were recorded, utilize a form of rapping that reached its apex in about 1983. And, on top of that, their lyrics and messages appear to be ripped from a kindergartner's activity book, containing simplistic sentiments that never wander too far from a general theme of "Yo, kids! Drugs are not cool! Don't do them; instead, stay in school!". Thus, they sound utterly out of both date and touch. Lets take a look at a few examples:

Example A: Devastatin' Dave the Turntable Slave - "Zip Zap Rap"

The record "Zip Zap Rap" by Devastatin' Dave has been voted as having one of the worst album covers of all time. This could very well be empirically proven true: However, look at the corner of the record, where we see printed "Hear our message: Say No to Drugs!" Plenty of good albums have terrible covers, so let's listen to Dave's Message and judge him on the merit of his words rather than his fashion sense.

Lyrics to 'Zip Zap Rap'

Say No (No!)
Say No to Drugs! (No to drugs!)
Wip dibby zap a zip dibby wap
This is what I call the Zip Zap Rap
Hah jibby wah be back in a sec
A zibba-zabba-zubba gonna spend your whole check
Zip dip zap a zip wit a rabbit
A zibba dibba wibba got a cocaine habit
Scooby doo rock a zip blop blam
It started with a quarter now it is a gram
Zoom zoom with the scooby doo bop
Find yourself in the projects trying to cop
A rip and a rappin a rope with a rhyme
I think you better call the cocaine hotline
Zip dibba wip you call them on the phone
A zibba dibba wip but you have an acorn
Vip vlop vase and you have it, eight
I could see it in your face you were losing weight
Rip rap rock smoking back to back
A zibba dib dip and you had a heart attack
From playing baseball like Willie Mays
Had you in the hospital for thirty days
Blip blop blam but now you're back
A zibba bibba wip in your new cadillac
Ah chilly-cha like chokin' on a bone
A zippa dippa zem you better leave them drugs alone
Kids Rap!
Don't be a fool!
Stay in School!
Don't get high and drive a car!
You will not get very far!



Yikes. Hearing 'Zip Zap Rap' feels a little like listening to a lunatic with a bucket of gasoline and a lit match cackling the advice "Only yooooo can prevent forest fires!" The Turntable Slave was obviously not sober for the recording of this song, which means he is either a hyp-ocrite, or does not consider paint a drug, which allowed him to drink a bucket of it before entering the recording studio.

But the funny thing is, other than the mysterious bone comment, the song ends with the drug dealer driving around unscathed in a cadillac, which is a little bit higher up the scale of success than slurping from a paint bucket. Whose lead would you follow? Children evidently chose the former as in the years to come America saw more cocaine users than Devastatin' Dave album-purchasers.

“Time to drop that crack/Time to face that fact/Christ is coming back”

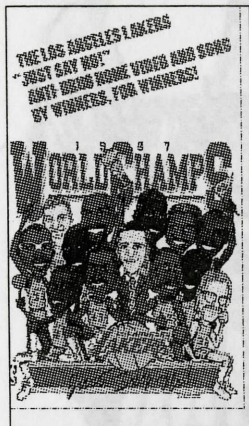
--Devastatin' Dave

Released in 1986 on Superstar International records, Zip Zap Rap was Dave's first record. After lying low for about 15 years, he has recently returned, updating his moniker by ditching the outdated turntable addiction for the hi-tech "Devastatin' Dave the Cyberslave"

His comeback record, *Havin' a Dream*, features tunes like "Why 2K (It's

the Millennium)" and "You Don't Have to be a Gangster" which contains lines like "Now I'm not gonna sit here and glorify gangs/I glorify God/He's about other thangs".

It's a very hard record to sit through, but it was in a way rewarding. "Why 2K", for example, is probably one of the worst songs I have ever heard, but it made for an excellent addition to my Party Crashers CD compilation. See, you go to a party and put in the CD a couple of spots up in the disc changer rotation, so later in the evening people go from listening to 50 Cent to something like the Teen Wolf soundtrack ("Well he sure don't look like his grandma/But his teeth are pearly white") It's pretty funny. And Why 2K will allow the unsuspecting partygoers to solemnly reflect on the wild new millennium we're all in, with lines like "Time to drop that crack/time to face that fact/Christ is coming back"



Example B: 1987 Los Angeles Lakers: "Just Say No!"

After they defeated Boston to win the 1987 NBA championship, the LA Lakers didn't rest on their laurels. They could have spent the off-season leisurely basking in the sweet glow of victory, rolling around in mounds of money, but instead they decided to take on a foe even more powerful than Larry Bird and the Celtics: dope.

Athletes usually do things like this by youth mentoring, or maybe filming a "The More You Know" commercial, but the Lakers took a different path and composed an awkward rap song. Good deed aside, this was obviously also an attempt to upstage the 1985 Chicago Bears, who had recently scored a hit with their rap song "The Superbowl Shuffle". The fact that a song as horrific as the Superbowl Shuffle performed well in the charts is further evidence

that the 80's were truly a bleak and deranged decade, and the Lakers logically sought to capitalize on this bleakness and score themselves a hit.

The resulting song was "Just Say No to Drugs", which, with its excellent chorus "Just say no, Just say no to drugs. Just say no, Just say no to drugs. Just say no, Just say no to drugs. Just say no, JUST-SAY-NO-TO-DRUGS!", taught kids that they could just say no to drugs.

The verses are strong as well, displaying some truly stunning, unpredictable rhyming. And, showing the same teamwork they displayed on the court, the Lakers divide the song up equally, each member of the team getting a few lines. It mixes things up, and you get to learn a lot about each player. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, for instance, is the captain of the team, and he doesn't need to use drugs because he's got a higher theme. His sky hook may make the team look good, but there's a hook he wants to shake from the neighborhood. Byron Scott has the jump shot, and he likes the i-dea of being on top. Forward AC Green says he has the word, and he knows that you can't play the game with your vision blurred. James Worthy, on the other hand, has a sweet slam dunk, and he can make a basket without that junk. Billy and Mychael Thompson are of no relation, but they both stand together for a drug-free nation. Take that, drugs! And take that, 1985 Chicago Bears!



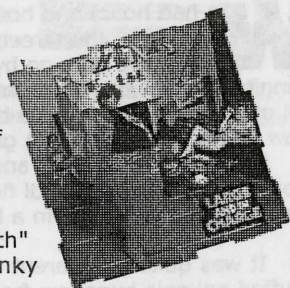
the Lakers in the Studio

Example C: the DARE Song

The DARE program has a rap song it teaches kids that shows them how to respond to persistent drug dealers. If they are asked to take a hit, the kids are instructed to say "No thanks, I got to split". But if the toothless degenerate is trying to make them try some crack, they instead say "No way Jack!". If he then croaks "No crack? Well, wanna pop a lude?" They are supposed to yell in response "No way, dude!" If the guy still won't give up and cackles "PCP will thrill you", the correct response is "Man that stuff can kill you!" And so on and so forth. The song strangely neglects Peyote, but I imagine kids these days are resourceful and will be able to yell "That's not for me!" or maybe "Go climb up a tree!"

Example D: Chunky A -- "Dope, the Big Lie"

Before his bright, shining fame fizzled out, Arsenio Hall created a morbidly obese rapping alter-ego named "Chunky A", which I assume was some sort of witty take off on "Heavy D". He made a record under this pseudonym called "Large and in Charge" that's full of grab-a-bucket-cause-you're-going-to-puke-up-your-funny-bone hilarity, with songs like "Stank Breath" and "Ho is Lazy". But on the record's final track, Chunky gets serious.



The song, "Dope, the Big Lie" is without doubt the greatest indictment of drug use ever recorded. Its chorus offers the most obvious, compelling reason ever given for humanity to collectively cease the use of conscious-altering substances. It is: "God Would've Given Us Wings If He Wanted Us High". He would've, wouldn't he? Think about that one for awhile, you filthy pothead.

The tune also expertly uses celebrity guests to add extra credibility to the potent message. Ice T pops in during the bridge to let us all know that "Dope is for losers. Don't go out like no sucker". After that, we're treated to a few more stirring endorsements like "This is Paula Abdul, and I'm down with Chunky. Never had it, never will, and I'm dancing", and "Hi, this is Will Wheaton of Star Trek: the Next Generation. Just Say No. Avoid the temptation".

After the cameos end, Chunky finishes out the song with an angry tirade. "You junkies make me sick!" he snarls. "Make me nauseous! Dope ALWAYS wins! It'll make you rob your Momma!"

The synthesizer drums and turntable scratches suddenly stop, and Chunky then addresses drug dealers directly with the song's devastating final line: "Dope ain't dope.... dope"

Make Your Own!

After reading the above examples you probably felt two things, two 'twangs', if you will. One, to never do PCP, 'cause that's not the way to be; and two, a feeling of envy—a dejected sense that you will never be able to pen such wicked rhymes of wisdom yourself.

Well, lucky for you, there's the "You Idiot Guide to Making Your Own Anti-Drug Rap Song", which shows you how to easily rhyme about a whole assortment of different narcotics. Unfortunately, though, after writing it, I looked it over and realized "Man, this is so fucking stupid". Thus, it will not be included here. However, that wild virtual highway known as the internet is perfect for things that are fucking stupid, so the Guide is instead available at the You Idiot website. See the intro for the web address.

OMNIPOTENCE through pseudo-science

We had hours and hours of a gray afternoon to kill in Dayton, Ohio, so up and down the streets we drove, aimlessly searching for something to make the time go by. The music store we soon stumbled upon had Sean Hannity audio books on prominent display and was littered with troughs packed full of obscure movies from the 80's that you could tell would eventually die a slow death in some rotting garbage dump.

Disappointed, we left and headed up the road a bit, passing non-descript storefronts and shops until finally spotting a bookstore on the corner. Perfect: it's always easy to kill time in a bookstore. We walked in, out of the rain.

It was quickly apparent that this was a strange store we had stumbled upon. Stuffed animals hung low from the ceiling and the first few shelves were all full of children's novels, so I initially assumed it was a "family-friendly" establishment or something along those lines, stuffed with inane fare running the gamut from Goosebumps to "Chicken Soup for the Corporate Lawyer's Soul". But then, right next to all the kid books began an extensive porn section, including scores of weird, worn dirty paperbacks that appeared to hark from the 60's or 70's. There was no significant division between the sections, so "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" rubbed covers with "Slutty Leather-Clad Hooker Bitches". Weird, I thought, ducking my head to avoid a dangling teddy bear.

A nutty book store was a good sign. My main goal was to find bizarre books to ridicule in *You Idiot*, and I hit pay dirt a few aisles over in the "New Age" section, when my eyes spied a battered, frayed copy of a book that looked to fit the bill nicely.

"The Magick of Chant-o-Matics" I said aloud as I pulled it out, immediately recognizing that this could be good stuff—weird, obsolete pseudo-science (if you could even call it *that*) peddled to the desperate many years ago, now a neglected artifact tucked away in a fucked-up bookstore. The book promised to "enable you to obtain power, money, health and protection at any time, any place and with a minimum of effort". Hey, sign me up!

Next to it were two other similarly-themed tomes entitled "The Miracle of Psycho-Command Power" and "The Magic of New Ishtar Power". I picked up all three, assuming it would be six dollars well spent.

Once I got to the club we were playing at that night, I flipped through the trio and began cracking up uncontrollably at the contents. The common theme between them was "GET ANYTHING YOU WANT BY DOING ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!", which is silly enough in itself, but the specific methods they preached to obtain this omnipotence were fucking insane. Let's take a look.

THE MAGICK OF CHANT-O-MATICS

The key to obtaining your wildest desires is, according to this effort by Raymond Buckland, chanting. If you need a quick \$30,000, or want to trick someone into fucking you, you have to know the correct series of words to say out loud. Then,

you — well, actually, that's it. Just say the words.

It's a pretty bold claim, and Buckland definitely runs with it. According to him, nothing, absolutely nothing, is impossible when you chant. He explains, for example, that although the odds for winning the lottery are pitiful, they "can be ignored... when you practice chant-o-matics"

Goofy shit, right? But what makes the book even more ridiculous is the fact that Buckland is an utterly incompetent writer, penning prose that sounds like it flowed from the pen of a half-asleep, high on fumes seven year old with a very shaky grasp of the language. You would expect his chants to at least sound a little, you know, "spell-like"— the sort of things you could picture an ancient wizard mumbling, or at least imagine a modern occultist reciting in front of a candle through wisps of incense smoke. Basically, shit that at least *sounds like a fucking chant*.

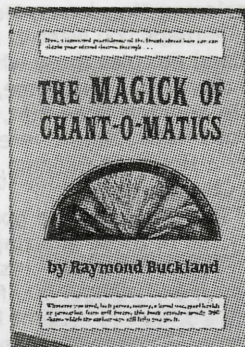
But no. Take a look at one of Buckland's money chants— the magical verses that supposedly guarantee you lottery victories:

Need, need, need
Money, money, money!
Me, me, me
Money, money, money!
Now, now, now
Money, money, money!

Wow. That's not the only one, either—he spends about six chapters giddily explaining all of his various wealth-through-chanting techniques. For example, the *Magick of Chant-o-matics* can not only win you the Powerball, it can also lead you to buried treasure (Which begs the question— why is that even necessary? Why not just chant a fucking lottery win and spare yourself the hassle of digging?). In the chapter "A Chant Not a Chart, Will Lead You to Treasure!", Buckland launches into an odd tirade unironically denouncing metal detectors as the work of scam artists. Chanting, of course, is the logical way to find the loot: "Let all the others wave their metal detectors laboriously over the ground. Let them pace up and down, their eyes glued to their meters or their ears encased in their headphones. Let them search, — *you* are the one who will find!" Yep—let the gullible bastards trudge up and down the beach with their lunky detectors, confused looks on their faces, while you lie back on your beach blanket and chant:

Bring me to treasure!
Bring me to treasure!
Bring me to treasure!
Steady, steady, steady, steady
Let my future be soon ready
Steady, steady, steady, steady
Let my future life be steady
Bring me to the 'lusive treasure
Yinkata, Yankata
Yeh! Yeh! Yeh! Yeh!
YAAARH_____! (*long and drawn out*)

The land-you-in-the-loony-bin chants can do more than pass out free dough, too. Want a new job? Chuck your resume in the trash and chant aloud: "From crysalis to butterfly/The change is very certain/ My change of a job, though not so high/ Will be the opening curtain". Want to Gain Admiration and Respect? Just say



"Megelemer, Megelemer, Megelemer, Megelemer..." and people will suddenly respect you! Perhaps you want to stay in shape? Chants are the answer for that, too. Buckland ridicules those who waste 20 minutes or more a day working out in a gym: "The chanters, I guarantee, look in better shape than the weight lifters!"

In addition to all that, the book explains how you can also easily Overcome a Nervous Habit, Stop Overeating, Mend a Broken Limb, Fight Psychic Vampires, Purify a House or Building, Protect Yourself From Legal Proceedings, and more—all with Chant-o-matics!

"That's all well and good," you grumble "but where's the fucking proof?" Don't worry; all of these amazing claims are solidly backed-up with stirring testimonials from Chant-o-matics users. Charlie B., for example, accidentally fell out of a plane with no parachute, 8,000 feet high. As he plummeted towards his certain death, he suddenly recalled a chant he had learned from Chant-o-matics, rattled it off, and landed safely on the ground, suffering absolutely no injuries except for the fact that he had shrunk by an inch and a half. Whew!

Or take the case of Curtis F. He loved animals, and had eight beautiful pet rabbits that he cared for deeply. But then one day "for no apparent reason, he took them one by one, killed them, and skinned them for their pelts! Tears ran down his face as he did it, but he could not stop himself" He realized instantly what the problem and solution were. The problem was, he was possessed by a demon, and the solution—why, Chant-o-matics, of course! He chanted and then exclaimed "I feel as though I have been thoroughly cleansed. I feel great!" So long, demon!

Now that you've been convinced, you're probably thinking "Wow, if Chant-o-matics really can do, um, ANYTHING, then I can accomplish some pretty fucked-up, diabolical things with it!" Yep, you most certainly can. But surely Buckland would never advocate using Chant-o-matics for evil, right?

Fat fucking chance! The guy outright encourages it, showing how chanting can help you achieve ethically abhorrent things.

In the second paragraph of the book, Buckland writes "Perhaps you wish to control others; to have them do your bidding? (This) can be yours" Elsewhere, he notes that with Chant-o-matics "you can influence anyone to do virtually anything at any time". Later, he poses a scenario: "suppose the girl you want is in love with another". Don't shrug and say "win some, lose some"— chant them apart! Once you do, "she will automatically drop the other guy!". Chant aloud as follows:

Divide, divide, divide the two; each one, each one, each one anew
Swettle mettlet voo ragom, swettle mettlet voo ragom
Nar, nar, noo, noo; nar, nar, noo noo

And just like that, the object of your affections will turn to her companion and say "Honey, I know we've been together for six years, but I am suddenly and inexplicably drawn to that naked guy across the street who's chanting 'nar nar noo noo'. He is my new love, and I will do as he commands. So long!"

To sum up, it's a nutty fucking thrill ride of a book, written in a style several rungs lower than "utterly half-assed". Reading the book, you can actually imagine the phone call Buckland got one day from Parker Publishing: "Raymond! The chanting book is *due tomorrow*! What's the hold up?!", and then Buckland mouthing the words "Oh *Fuck*." as his eyes widen, running to his typewriter and pounding out bullshit as fast as possible.

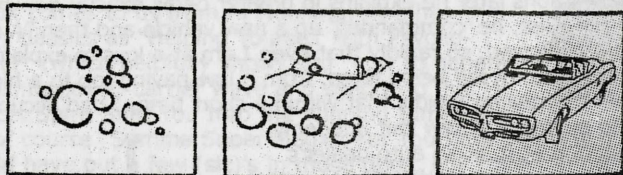
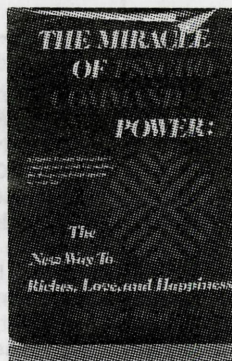
Actually, what am I saying? He wouldn't have panicked; he would have simply smiled, lit a candle, and chanted away:

Screwed, screwed, screwed
Me, me, me
Write, write, write
Book, Book, Book!
Neblor el na noo!!

And POOF! appeared the completed manuscript for Chant-o-Matics.

THE MIRACLE OF PSYCHO-COMMAND POWER

Putting the rantings of Buckland aside, I turned my attention to *The Miracle of Psycho-Command Power*. This one seemed to take things a step further, making the art of Chant-o-matics look like grueling labor. With Psycho-Command Power, if you want to rule the planet you don't have to waste precious seconds burning incense and mumbling some gibberish—you just say the "Supreme Command" and all you wish for is —Presto — yours! I speak quite literally—author Scott Reed claims that if you want a new car, for example, you just say his "command" and a car will suddenly appear out of thin air. Well, out of bubbles, to be precise. Take a look at this illustration:



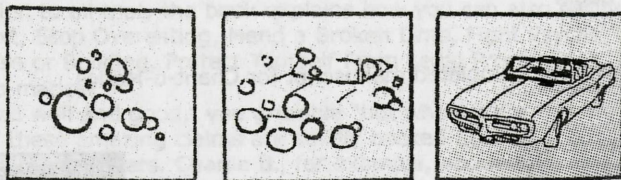
I was taken aback the first time I came across this picture, wondering if Reed was being literal with his claims. Was he actually saying he could create a fucking 2,000 pound vehicle out of bubbles simply by saying a few words? It was hard to tell based on the crazy, haphazard writing. But I had to know. I flipped through the book, trying to find out exactly what he meant by "Psycho-command Power", and how precisely this power went about creating steel out of bubbles.

The answer was difficult to pinpoint. Reed describes the Power in many colorful ways (a "Pocket Insta-Commander", a "cosmic bank account", an "Automatic Genius Maker", a "a Psychic Window More Powerful than a Crystal Ball, and a "Speed-O-Matic Desire Bringer - More Powerful Than a Billion Atom Bombs!"), SUDDENLY SWITCHING TO ALL CAPITAL LETTERS FOR NO REASON as he writes and then ending with a barrage of exclamation points!!!, but offers nothing that actually sheds any light onto what the fuck he's talking about. In his chapter headlines he promises to help you "FIND MAILBOX BULGING WITH MONEY!" and show you "HOW TO MAKE OTHERS 'LOVE SLAVES' TO YOUR MAGNETIC 'LOVE PULL'", but the actual text is just random craziness.

But then I finally came across a description for what psycho-command power is (well, sort of). Reed explains the Power thusly: "it's like having an 'astral army' — phantom legions of thousands upon thousands of 'invisible helpers' at your beck and call.... This army consists of leprechauns, 'little people', mental brownies, and more"

So *that's* how it works. Ahhh. To sum up — I just want to repeat this so

we're all clear – he is claiming that if you say the "supreme command", Psycho-Command Power is unleashed and suddenly a legion of invisible leprechauns will swoop down and MAKE YOU A CAR OUT OF BUBBLES. Once again:



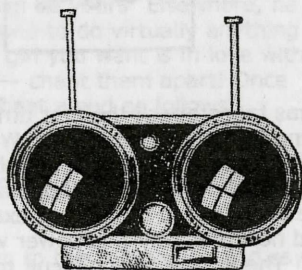
It was the absolute craziest 'keys to success' theory I had ever read. But as I ventured further into the text, I was once again confused as to what Reed was claiming. He was clearly borderline insane (evident by passages like "All successful people use Psycho-Command Pictures, although they may call them by different names, such as "ideas". I prefer to call them Psycho-Command Pictures". Whatever you say, buddy), but I could no longer tell if he was actually saying that he could literally make cars, houses, money, and women form out of bubbles, or if he was writing from behind a shield of bizarre metaphors and exaggerations.

For example: In one passage, he'll say "Now, you may say that no one has ever made a house out of nothingness. You may point out that a house never extruded from someone's mind—like *ectoplasm* from a *medium*. **But that is exactly what I am saying!**" (emphasis in original). Which makes you think, OK, yes: he does believe he can create objects out of thin air.

But then, paragraphs later he explains in greater detail exactly *how* he got his car "out of thin air". See, he 'commanded' up a new vehicle and then "A strange sequence of events followed, so rapidly that even I am at a loss to explain exactly what happened. I found myself being lifted, from a low-paying job to a higher one... My savings began to grow so rapidly that within a short time, I had accumulated enough money to purchase a new car. Suddenly, I found myself staring at it, in an auto dealer's showroom. I felt numb – and a little dizzy – with the wonder of it". It was "seemingly out of thin air" he exclaims.

OK— That's NOT out of thin air, OR fucking bubbles for that matter. Jesus, the dude worked for two fucking years, went to a goddamn car dealership, blows a bunch of money—essentially trading hundreds of hours of his time for a vehicle – and actually muses "Wow, that was like—out of thin air!"

Bizarre. As I read further, I realized that his Psycho-Command "system" could essentially be boiled down to a new-agey "Have ideas, or goals, work hard, and suddenly you will begin to achieve the goals you have set, one by one", but he decided to package it more like:

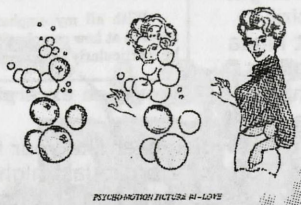


PSYCHIC TELEVIEWER OR
INSTA-VU COMMANDER

The mind is like a "Secret Seeing Device" (see above) that lets you see and hear what others are really doing—across a room, a city, or a continent—through actual physical barriers, such as walls, floors, ceilings, and doors. It likewise lets you broadcast commands which must be obeyed.

"BY USING YOUR POCKET INSTA-COMMANDER, FORM PSYCHO-COMMAND PICTURES, CONCENTRATING ON ALL THE RICHES AND DESIRES THAT YOU CAN COME UP WITH. SOON, SEEMINGLY OUT OF THIN AIR, THE SPEED-O-MATIC DESIRE BRINGER WILL MAKE THEM ALL MATERIALIZE OUT OF WANT-BUBBLES!!!"

Just a bland old self-help book that employed a creative lexicon, apparently. But then he'll show you another picture like this:



and you're left scratching your head, back at square one. Scott Reed: an outlandish huckster trying to psycho-command his way into the pockets of the population's most utterly naïve and desperate, or some crazy dude who landed a publication deal? The world may never know.

THE MAGIC OF NEW ISHTAR POWER

My head was beginning to hurt by the time I got to *The Magic of New Ishtar Power*, which appeared very similar in theme to the first two.

"What is the Magic Ishtar Power Star?" asks the introduction. Why, it's "the vortex of unlimited psychic energy!" Touch the Power Star and you get "the power to see all, know all, and command all". Once again: Fucking Sweet.

The book comes to us from Al Manning, who has penned such classics as "Helping Yourself With Psycho-Cosmic Power" (which helpfully shows you "how to generate a psycho-cosmic power carrier wave and send it to the Infinite"), "Let Spirit Shift You Into the Winning Dimension Now!" and of course "Summa Super Magick For You With Ectoplasm". (Yes, I'm sure I should have put a few (sic)'s in those titles, but I don't know exactly where). Although it's basic premise is similar to the other two guides we just looked at, it doesn't start off quite as boldly.

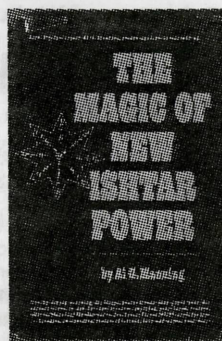
See, the other two blasted off with outlandish claims as to their powers: Untold riches! Love Slaves! Phantom leprechauns! Etc! 'Ishtar' doesn't quite knock you out in the same way, beginning with an underwhelming anecdote about C.A.

C.A. (just as in the other two books, authors of testimonials are identified only by first name and initials, or just initials), you see, had a broken television. The knob was busted, the picture was blurry—all hope seemed lost in a swirl of static and streaky ghost images. Usually C.A. would have put her foot through the set, or wallowed in wine-soaked misery, but this time she called upon Ishtar "for help to see her favorite program". Ishtar came through, and the TV worked perfectly for 'many months afterwards'!

Holy shit! A cosmic power capable of fixing a broken television set for many months! How does one go about unleashing this awe-inspiring, god-like ability?!

Luckily, utilizing Ishtar power is as easy as Chanto-o-matics or Psycho-command power. You just sit down, and start saying "Ishtar, Ishtar, Ishtar, Ishtar" ("with rhythm and harmony") until you start to feel "goose pimply". Soon, you will feel energy flow into your aura and down your spine, and will know that Ishtar has taken hold.

This is the one difference between the other two "systems" we examined: the power here comes from actually being taken over by a spirit. See, one day while Manning was working in his ESP Laboratory, a powerful spirit swooped down and asked for use of his body. Realizing the spirit's "goodness was so apparent",



Manning gave it the go-ahead. The spirit declared his name was ISHTAR.

So, you have to be willing to get possessed by some sketchy spirit in order to utilize the Power. That kinda sucks, but whatever works, I guess.

Manning adds "You can call Ishtar anything you like, but I'm sure it will

be something like Mr. Wonderful" (If you'd ever like your friends to think you're insane, just say something like "So my TV broke last night, but I played it cool. I just started chantin' till I felt all goose-pimply and shit, and just like that Mr. Wonderful was flowing through me and the TV was back in action!")

The book then wanders off into some nonsense about making a medallion and touching each of its points while saying things like "Marduk, marduk, marduk, thank you for your love, friendship and help", but by that point I was losing interest and my headache had multiplied in its intensity. I had to put it down. I was, however, relieved to discover that if I ever lose my job there is nothing to worry about because "Job Hunting is Easy with the Ishtar Job-Attracting Fertility Rite".

PUTTING THEM TO THE TEST:

After ridiculing the ludicrous trio of books, I realized that I hadn't truly given them a fair chance. I mean, without attempting it, how could I conclusively say that Chant-o-matics wasn't the key to... um... everything? If I didn't at least give the Supreme Command a shot, could I confidently say it was impossible to create a Hummer out of bubbles? Sure, the books were silly, but without at least attempting their techniques, I could not ridicule them with complete confidence. So, in the spirit of journalistic integrity, I tried one example from each book to test their merits.

Money seemed like the easiest thing to shoot for since it was the one thing all three books concentrated on. The simplest test, I figured, would be to buy a couple of lottery tickets at the corner store after trying the books' varied techniques. If their claims were even remotely correct, I would be obscenely wealthy within the hour.

Feeling about as stupid and pathetic as I have ever felt in my life, I burned a stick of my girlfriend's incense and quietly recited Buckland's "need need need money money money" chant. This was followed by saying the "supreme command" from Psycho-Command Power, and muttering "Ishtar ishtar ishtar" a handful of times.

I stared at the table for a little bit, waiting for a lottery ticket to suddenly appear out of bubbles. Nothing. Grumbling, I headed up to the gas station to buy the tickets.

Results:

I returned to my apartment with a bottle of wine and two tickets: "Three in a Row" and "Cash Craze". I put the tickets aside and forgot about them until the bottle was half drained. "Oh YEAH!" I thought eagerly, taking a penny to the two scratch-offs, which, flashy names aside, BOTH turned out to be fucking tic-tac-toe.

Scraping away the gunk on Cash Craze, I saw that the X's and O's were not lining up in my favor and realized right away that I had a losing ticket. Uh-oh. Tossing it aside, I thought "Psycho-Command Power, don't fail me now!" and scratched off Three in a Row. Same thing. I got a few Two in a Rows, but no threes. A losing ticket.

Unbelievable-- the books lied to me! I had done exactly as they had instructed and it still didn't work! Hell, they even specifically *promised lottery wins!* That's a pretty fucking bold claim!

Oh well. Perhaps I did not chant with enough conviction. Perhaps Ishtar sensed I was not being serious and decided not to possess me and shower me with wealth. Or, maybe, we're just dealing with some sort of Psycho-cosmic, escro-plasmic delayed reaction, and untold riches will head my way soon. Yeah!

Step 2: Apply the Power of Positive Stupidity to a complete cleansing of your psychic atmosphere—perfect your psychic ecology

With all my emphasis on psychic ecology, I am regularly amazed at how completely negative a human being's attitude can be, particularly as he screams, "Why doesn't any of this junk work

Above: an excerpt from the Ishtar book





A Brief History of **DRUNKEN ROBBERIES**

"I might get drunk and rob a bank"

- Hank Williams III, "I Don't Know"

In most situations, the decision to get intoxicated is a wise one. The most painfully dull and inane environment can be brought to blazing life by utilizing the simple equation of alcohol + blood stream. It's almost uncanny—whether it be a lecture, a job, a concert, or sitting on a goddamn couch – the majority of experiences tend to be markedly improved by the arrival of booze. Ahhh, yes: drunkenness.

But wait— hold on for a second and put the cap back on your jug of Early Times. Notice I said *most* situations. Most. There are – and this may surprise you — plenty of instances where transforming yourself into a hooting alcoholic mess is a recipe for trouble rather than excellence. Performing surgery, driving a tractor—the list goes on and on. You have to use your head, and know when to keep the booze at arms length.

And one of the instances where it's best to leave the bottle behind is when you're committing a robbery. I will mince no words: Getting loaded before robbing someone is a flat-out terrible, terrible idea. Yeah, it seems obvious, but yet people make the same mistake time and time again. Which is why, as a public service, we're going to take a look at a brief history of drunken robberies, and the little lessons that come with them.

1. WHAT WILL YOUR DEFENSE BE?

The day began with a bottle of Jack and ended in the backseat of a squad car, a long, confusing haze in-between.

As you stare out the backseat window, watching the street roll by in double, you begin to reconstruct what has just transpired and realize that for some reason you tried to rob a bank. The attempt was a far cry from successful. They nabbed you almost immediately, and they have you on camera pointing a gun at the doe-eyed teller, screaming like a lunatic. Shit.

You're pretty fucked. You know it. But regardless of the staggering odds you face in beating the rap, you *have* to craft yourself some form of a defense. There's no reason to go down without a fight. The only problem is, well, what the fuck is your defense going to *be*? You're on camera. There were multiple witnesses. They found the goddamned money on you.

And then, like a light bulb over your aching head, it comes to you. Of course— you were drunk. That's the defense.

This strategy, or epiphany, if you will, has occurred to many an unsuccessful thief.

In September of 2000, a drunk New Mexico man named Ray Ramirez entered a bank and attempted to cash a check, but was turned away since he didn't have an account. Ray left the bank, but returned mere minutes later, unmasked, and voiced his opinion of the bank's check policy by robbing the very same teller for \$2717. "Sticking it to the man", as the kids say. He walked out untouched, much richer for his efforts.

So far, so good. Almost immediately after he made it outside, however, the red dye packs exploded, sending most of his hard-earned money fluttering off in the cruel wind.

Now covered in dye, Ray managed to stay calm and drove up to the nearby Old Road Café where he "bought a hamburger with red money", according to a district attorney working on the case. Luckily, "The crack staff at the Old Road Cafe knew something was amiss."

Soon enough the cops arrived at the café and put an end to the fun. Ray was subsequently charged with robbery and disposing of stolen property (since he had given some of the splattered bills to his daughter, who was along for the ride).

These were stiff charges that carried serious consequences, so Ray came up with a solid, three pronged defense:

1. The stupidity of his actions proved he was too drunk to know what he was doing
2. He did not dispose of any stolen property because money is not property
3. He did not rob anything since he didn't threaten to use force

Ironclad, right? Seems like some pretty irrefutable logic, the sort of arguments that could keep a prosecutor up all night sweating. But, in a decision that legal scholars will surely debate for years to come, the judge dismissed all three of Ray's arguments. Money is obviously property, the judge ruled, and a robbery had clearly taken place, force or no force. The "I was drunk, your honor. *Drunk*" defense didn't hold up either. Being too intoxicated *is* actually a valid defense in certain criminal cases, but only when the defendant can show they were incapable of forming the intent to commit the crime. Ray, unfortunately, couldn't even prove he was drunk. He had argued that doing something "impulsive or irrational" was proof of intoxication, but if this were true, you wouldn't even need to drink to be considered drunk.

He received nearly 20 years, but none could deny the ballsiness and 'thinking outside the box' appeal of his defense. His success would have if nothing else set a pretty fucking awesome legal precedent. Do whatever you want – run amok and cause chaos – and shrug it off the next morning: "Dude, I was *loaded*. What did you expect?" Even if you did get dragged to court after your boozy exploits, the judge would be forced to sigh and say "Yes, the defendant did steal a car and piss on the mayor before robbing a blind folk singer, but he was drunk, which makes the behavior acceptable per Ramirez Vs State of New Mexico. And no, he doesn't have to give the money back, because money is not property. Case dismissed"

Ray's case was not unique, either. A remarkably similar incident had unfolded two years earlier in Buffalo. A man named Hugo Janke had walked into a bank, threatened tellers, and successfully scored some cash that promptly exploded red dye as soon as he made his exit. Undeterred, Janke headed straight for a bar about 100 yards away, where he triumphantly announced that he was buying everyone a round, paying with his stained bills. His philanthropy went unappreciated, as police quickly descended on the scene and broke up the victory celebration.

Janke admitted all of this happened, but argued that he was drunk. Wasted, to be precise. His lawyer further argued that it was just a "bad joke" when he had threatened to shoot one of the tellers if she didn't give him money.

U.S. Attorney Gregory Brown didn't buy this argument, pointing out that "One of the tellers even asked him, 'Is this a joke?' And his response was, 'No, give me the money or I'll shoot.'" Hmmm.... Yes, well, perhaps that too was a joke. Part of a monologue, if you will.

Brown summarized the case thusly: "Defense counsel says the defendant was drunk. So what? He probably was. Voluntary intoxication is not a defense for bank robbery," which is admittedly not a bad counter-argument. The jury agreed, and Janke was convicted.

Others have tried this blame-the-booze tactic, but there have been no reports of success thus far. A Florida man gave it a shot in 1998 and received a 15 year sentence. In Ireland, a 29 year old man drunkenly threatened store employees with a baseball bat and later said he had no recollection of the incident due to being out of his head on drink and drugs at the time. Three years, the judge replied. Similarly, a Vermont man named Ronnie Kabe robbed a store clerk at knifepoint for a whopping \$180 and argued after his apprehension that since he had been too loaded to remember doing it, the incident should be shrugged off. He too received a cold stare from the court.

Maybe the judicial system will come around on this someday, but for now the message is clear: when it comes to robbing your fellow man, alcohol abuse will not be tolerated.

2. GETTING TOO BOMBED ON THE JOB

The biggest problem with drunken robberies is the most obvious: you're fucking drunk, dummy! Whether or not alcohol convinced you to commit the crime in the first place, once you're in the middle of the actual act, being sloshed is a massive hindrance to your success.

The main reason for this is that intoxication opens up a chasm of potential error, and there is very little room for mistakes in the art of the robbery. Scores of things that would never happen while sober can easily occur after a few drinks, and any of them might land you behind bars. Now, granted, if you hadn't guzzled those three bottles of Mad Dog, you probably wouldn't be standing in front of a jewelry store with a brick in your hand in the first place, but by that point there's no turning back. You've made your bed, and you're going to sleep in it. And this might happen literally: you could pass out and fall asleep once you bust in, a danger that would be non-existent if you weren't loaded.

Pass out? That could never happen, you say. No matter how bombed you are, the adrenaline, and the sound of the wailing alarm, would keep you going long enough to get in, and get out.

Wrong. Simply passing out during a robbery attempt is a more common problem than you might guess. In one case, an 18 year old was so delighted after finding a laptop computer while robbing a restaurant that he decided to celebrate by cracking open some of the place's expensive wine before leaving with the loot. From there the celebration continued as he moved on to a few glasses of cognac, but he went overboard and passed out. Needless to say, he did not end up getting the laptop.

Similarly, a man named Jon Lothan ate ten bucks worth of pizza after breaking into a Parkridge Court, Georgia home. Drunk, he fell over while scarfing away and crashed into a glass table, cutting his arm. The homeowners then returned and called an ambulance for him. After being treated, he was arrested.

Or take the trio of Edmonton men who tried to rob a video store with a hammer and knife. Soon into the attempted robbery, they realized there was no cash to be had. One of them wisely bolted the scene, but the other two stayed behind to stock up on video games. One of the two remaining men threw a few in his bag, but was too drunk to continue and passed out on the floor, still out cold when the police arrived.

After robbing a vaguely impressive three convenience stores in one night, a Utah man slipped into an unlocked apartment and held the six residents inside hostage. Then, for his next move, he started downing the beers he had stolen earlier and, after apparently consuming one too many, passed out in the middle of the tense hostage situation. His pleasantly surprised captives took away his gun and called the police. See? If he had just called it a night, he would have been fine, but noooo—he just had to throw a booze-fueled hostage situation into the mix.

Perhaps worst of all was the thief who got so bombed before heading to a bank robbery that he passed out on the way. Inexplicably, his accomplice then *dragged him into the goddamn bank*. They were swiftly busted. Seriously, folks—if your sidekick passes out, leave the bastard behind. What possible help did he expect him to be?

And heavy drinking might not just lead to unconsciousness, it could also deal you a plain old complete what-the-fuck blackout. This happened to a 47 year old drunk who charged into an Oslo post office with a pair of underpants over his head, handing an employee a note reading "This is a robbery". He left unscathed, but unfortunately his wife's name and personal information were written on the back of the note. Whoops.

The man had completely blacked-out and remembered nothing of the incident, but "admitted he had a suspicion of having been up to no good" when he found a large pile of money in his room and saw a picture of himself in the newspaper the next morning.

And even if you're not passed out, blacked out, or otherwise immobilized by the booze, the simple incompetence that can come with drinking might be enough to trip your robbery aspirations up.

Case in point: Lonnie Aberg was nearly out of money and thusly decided to rob a store to remedy his financial ills. He used his last couple of dollars on a can of Big Bear beer, which he downed in preparation of the crime.

Beer drained, he then put a plastic bag over his head and headed down to the local Kwik Mart. After threatening an employee with a knife, he grabbed a few packs of cigarettes and fled the store. Drunk, he fell over and lost his keys, and was soon apprehended by police. "There were certainly deficiencies in his style" noted a police spokesman afterwards. Lesson learned: if you're going to get drunk before holding up a convenience store, at least remain sober enough to walk home. It's a good rule to live by.

An even worse case of incompetence occurred in 1984, when a Nova Scotia man successfully made off with \$490 from a bank, but was so drunk he accidentally left the loot on a bus on his way home. Two days later, sobered up, he called the cops and turned himself in.

Sometimes the crime seems pretty straightforward, but the technique is fatally blunted by the participants' drunken stupidity. In 1899, for example, a trio of men decided to hold up the Bank of Sevierville in Tennessee. It was a doable plan, especially since robberies were considerably easier to pull off back in those days. But then they decided to drink a bunch of whiskey (or, "that stuff which ruins the body and destroys the soul", according to the initial newspaper report) before leaving. Nice and sauced, they rode into town, stopped in front of the bank, and began firing inside.

I don't really get this— wouldn't you want to get inside of the bank first? Did they think the employees were going to toss bags of money out the windows in an effort to stop the barrage of bullets?

The reports are fuzzy, but apparently at that point people in a neighboring building opened fire on the three men. One fled and killed himself, one escaped but was badly wounded, and the third ended up in jail. An utter failure. And I bet

if they had held off on the whiskey, they would have ended up wealthy men.

Scott Messenger was obviously a competent bank robber, as he pulled off four heists without a hitch that netted him a healthy \$13,000. Not bad, especially considering he completed at least one of them while drunk. But his eventual downfall was – as we have seen in the examples above – his incompetence. First, at one of the banks he left behind a Western Union transfer receipt with his name on it. This was a, as they say, “tantalizing clue” for the police, but evidently not quite enough as Messenger pulled off another robbery five days later. This time, though, he left behind *his fucking resume*, which included a past address that the cops used to finally track him down. San Francisco Police Lt Bruce Marovich used the occasion to drop some moral wisdom. “You shouldn’t drink or take drugs and drive. You shouldn’t rob banks and do the same thing” he remarked. “That’s what he was doing”

For another excellent example of utter drunken ineptitude, we can look back to 1903 and the case of two moronic train robbers. It all began when an unemployed man named George Howard struck up a conversation at a local pub with a 24 year old named George Cole, and suggested that they stage a robbery. Cole agreed this sounded like a swell idea, and together they decided that a train seemed like the best target. Their plan was to set a blanket on fire and use it to wave down the train, at which point they would storm aboard, unhook the express car and blow the safe inside.

A few days later, after buying guns and stealing dynamite, they headed west of town, tied up their horse and buggy, and began the waiting game. It was a frigid February night, so the pair slugged away at a bottle of whiskey to warm up and kill time as they waited for the train to show. Especially nervous, Howard downed most of it himself. When the train finally arrived they began waving the flaming blanket and, as expected, the train slowed down. Howard then for some reason fired his pistol, nearly hitting the engineer.

Undaunted by this shaky start, the duo stuck to their plan and stormed on board, ordering the crew to put up their hands. Once the train came to a complete stop, they began to place the dynamite they had stolen earlier underneath the safe. Howard was still too bombed to be doing something that complicated and accidentally fired his pistol again, nearly wounding another crewmember. While all of this was going on, a few other crewmembers, unrestrained, fled the train and headed towards town for help.

While the men stood outside waiting for the dynamite to go off, they came under shotgun fire from a train worker who had just woken up in a different rail car and learned of the situation. Both of the robbers ran for cover. The explosion went off, but the safe was unharmed. The pair grabbed a bag from the train that they assumed was full of money (it had about eight bucks) and split the scene. Howard was not yet sober and tripped, rolling down a hill “like a snowball” according to reports. Finally getting back to their horse and buggy they rode off, still under fire. They escaped unharmed, but Howard was not pleased at the speed of the getaway. “Whip the horse and get moving” he told Cole, jabbing a gun into his side as they sped off. “If you don’t whip that horse I’ll pull the trigger.” he added. “So, I whipped up again,” Cole recalled later.

They split ways once they got back to town; Cole to a casino and Howard to a tavern to continue drinking.

It seemed as if they had pulled the eight dollar robbery off, but since they had told numerous people of their plans beforehand, word spread and both were arrested the next day. “The hold up would have been successful if Howard hadn’t got drunk and messed up everything.” Cole lamented in an interview. “Besides that, I think he’s crazy.”

As we have seen, if there’s one lesson to be learned from all of this, it’s “Save the

booze for the victory celebration". But even if you do wisely postpone the alcohol-guzzling until afterwards, don't be stupid with that, either. Consider the case of William Nutman. After robbing a local Bank of America, Nutman crossed the street and hailed a cab, which he had bring him to a liquor store. Although Nutman now had plenty of money and could easily buy his booze, he instead hid in the back of the store and drank for free for two hours, at which point the police arrived and grabbed him as he attempted to flee out the back.

Similarly, a Colorado man successfully held up a bank and then immediately went up to the road to a bar called Whiskey Bills where he enjoyed a few drinks before taking off. Probably a risky move, since it was so soon after the crime, and since witnesses saw him, but hey—he got away, right? Who am I to criticize him?

But then the next day the man robbed a different bank and again headed straight for the same exact bar, which was three blocks away. When the police heard about the robbery, they told everyone to get over to Whiskey Bills right away, without having any evidence the suspect even went there. But the hunch proved to be correct, as officers walked in and saw the suspect drinking a beer at the end of the bar.

Seriously! If you're going to rob two banks in two days and absolutely *have* to get a drink right away after both of them, at least pick a different bar the second time! Come on, people!

3. WHAT ABOUT HOUSES?

Robbing someone's house is a markedly different procedure than robbing a bank, or store, and although it involves a whole separate set of considerations, in a lot of ways it is a less risky venture. Typically, a bank heist is attempted during working hours when the place is full of employees and customers. Cameras are everywhere—you need to get in and get out, fast, and as soon as you hit the streets the cops will have been alerted and the clock will be ticking.

But someone's house—shit, you could have hours to do your work. The homeowners are (hopefully) either out, or sleeping in bed, so you can take your time to get every detail right, and, unlike a bank heist, you can also take a break if you feel like it. Make yourself a sandwich. Pour yourself a drink. After all, you've earned it.

A drunken 28 year old burglar realized this after making his way into a German home. Spotting a bottle of rare scotch whiskey, he helped himself. And why not? Without any pesky security guards or cameras around, a quick drink or two before getting back to the thievery at hand must have seemed like no big deal.

But after downing half the bottle, there were things on the robber's mind more than finishing the heist. Like sleep. So, after using the toilet, he took off all his clothes, crawled into bed with the couple who lived there, and passed out.

The homeowner was startled later in the evening when he awoke to the sound of heavy snoring and realized it wasn't coming from his wife. He rolled out of bed and called the cops, who arrived soon after to find the robber still passed out and wheezing away.

Approaching that level of stupidity was a Texas burglar who had stacked up everything inside the house he wanted to take and was ready to go when he spotted a bottle of Crown Royal Canadian Whiskey. Instead of taking it to go, he jumped right in and was still sitting in a chair, drunk, when police arrived.

So yes, you can afford to be a little dumber, and drunker, when you're robbing a house, but there are still limits.

4. CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON WISELY

One unfortunate reality of robbery is the fact that you need a weapon. Simply

saying "Hey, I want your money" is not enough; you have to be at least vaguely menacing, and hold the threat of bodily harm over your audience's head. Often, a gun is used as the means of intimidation.

I'm sure this is troubling to at least a few robbers—they don't want to hurt anybody; they just want to score themselves some sweet, easy money. Sure, they may have to scare the living piss out of whoever they're trying to rob, but they'd rather do it with something less severe than a pistol. So, these thieves either *pretend* they have a gun (finger under the shirt) or simply use something else to strike fear in the cashier's heart.

So, then, what else scares people? What else besides a pistol would cause someone to hand over the money, no questions asked? Fucking vampires, that's what! People are downright terrified of them.

A heavily drunk 45 year old man realized this truism one day and dressed up as a vampire before attempting a robbery. Baring a pair of plastic dracula fangs, he grabbed a toy gun and set off for a local bank.

His first problem was the fact that he attempted the heist in broad daylight. Moron! Obviously, vampires can't walk around in sunlight, so people would realize immediately that he was a fake. His second tactical error occurred as he approached the bank and noticed a police car parked in front. At that point, he could have stormed inside and bravely continued with the robbery, or he could have strolled past and tried a different establishment, but instead he walked up to the car and pointed his toy pistol at the officers. They sprung up and overpowered him. (If this was a cheesy 'Stupid Crook' book, this is where the line "And they didn't even have to use any garlic!" would go)

Three fellows in Belfast tried a different approach in weaponry when they decided to rob a local McDonalds. After getting loaded in the alleyway beside the restaurant, they armed themselves with a brush and snuck in a side door that an employee had left open.

Menacingly brandishing the brush, they accosted employees and demanded that the store's safe be opened. It may sound fairly harmless, but according to reports they did bang the brush against desks and used "threatening language". Unfortunately for them, they allowed employees to wander around the store during all of this, and soon enough the police were summoned. After a brief chase, the men were apprehended and subsequently dealt three year sentences. Newspapers had a field day reporting the case, delivering knee-slapping quips like "DRUNKS BID TO BRUSH UP A ROBBERY".

Mathew Hamill employed a similarly threatening weapon in his robbery attempt. After drinking twenty pints of beer, vodka and whiskey, he staggered down to a liquor store armed with a courgette inside of a bag. Claiming it was a gun, he demanded the employee get him money and beer. This arrangement was working fine, but Hamill was so drunk he kept dropping the beer handed to him. He eventually dropped the bag (exposing the hidden courgette) and the employee — realizing he was up against a vegetable, not a gun — chased him out of the store with a hammer.

Hamill was not alone. Others have ventured deep enough into scummy alcoholic delirium so that a piece of food seemed like a formidable weapon to them. An Australian man, for example, was out drunk, celebrating his birthday when he entered a local convenience store. He grabbed a bar of chocolate and headed to the counter, but then changed his mind and instead demanded \$50 from the store manager. The manager denied this request, so the man grabbed a bread stick and attacked him, yelling "Give me your money!" The manager quickly locked the register and fled the store, but the thief gave chase, shouting "If you do not give me your money I'll kill you" as he waved the bread stick.

5. THE POSSIBILITY OF REMORSE

Some peoples' emotions seem to get fed through a blender when they drink. One minute they'll be jabbing their fists at strangers, face red with fury, and then the next thing you know they're huddled on a couch, sobbing like a pathetic goon. This roller coaster-like reaction can occasionally work to a drunken thief's advantage. As they approach the scene of the crime, the gears could shift, pulling them away from a potential train wreck with a sudden flash of sobriety and clarity: "Wait a minute... I don't want a box of beef jerky that bad... I'm going home".

But sometimes the pendulum can swing too far, past the point of clear thought and into the realm of irrational remorse. Rather than stumbling home, the thief might start bawling with regret and call the police, crying "I was about to hold-up a convenience store! I'm so fucking sorry!"

An Oregon man, for example, got drunk and broke into a house with an axe, but then decided it wasn't such a great idea once he actually got inside. Instead of muttering "What the fuck is wrong with me lately?" and running away, he phoned the police and told them what he had done. Patiently standing in the driveway when a state trooper arrived, he was eventually charged with burglary and criminal mischief.

Sometimes remorse hits before the person even *does* anything. In Japan, an intoxicated man was about to commit a robbery, but then changed his mind. Instead of thinking "Well, that was an odd thought! I guess I'll go do something else", he approached a taxi and told the driver "I was going to commit a robbery but I decided not to. I've got no money. Take me to the Tobata Police Station." Thinking about committing a crime isn't a crime itself, obviously, but the police were able to arrest him for carrying a knife. And the cab driver filed a complaint since he didn't pay his fare.

Even worse was the case of Mark Sisson. While riding on a bus, he noticed a fellow passenger had a bag by his side. Drunk, he leaned in and said "You had best give me what's in that bag or I'll kill you." The frightened man immediately handed it over, and Sisson promptly departed the bus without bothering to look inside. Must be a big ole bag of money, right?

The bag contained, in fact, two gray albino mice inside of a cage. When he opened it and realized what he had done, Sisson was 'so utterly dismayed', according to prosecutors, that he phoned the police and fessed up.

6. AN ASSORTMENT OF OTHER POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

A: Blabbermouth

Another problem that can go hand in hand with intoxication is the inability to shut up. Blah blah blah you go, blathering and blabbering on as if the room is in rapt attention rather than flashing grimacing looks. Usually this isn't a huge deal—you'll eventually carry the incoherent rant too long and be told to shut up, or get punched, or whatever. But if the urge to ramble on pointlessly strikes while you're in the middle of a robbery, the results could downright doom you.

That was the problem that befell one Ferd Kramel, a convict who escaped from Missouri State Prison on September 3rd, 1931. It's unclear what he did after that, but on January 10th, 1936, he got drunk with a companion and broke into the middle of a party, demanding money from all present. The side kick, who was either smoother, or just less drunk, slipped away after robbing guests for \$58. Kramel, however, stayed behind and continued to menace the partygoers with his shotgun. This continued for a half an hour until a woman finally decked him with a table lamp. Other guests then began pounding on him, roughing him up and blackening his eyes. Kramel was eventually able to pry himself up and flee the house, but one of the partygoers shot him in the back as he ran off. The police arrived shortly after that and brought him to the hospital and then, presumably,

back to the jail. If he had left with his buddy, he would have been able to drink through another \$58, but he just couldn't shut up. Let that be a lesson to you.

B. The Smell

A Missouri man ran out of money while drinking at a bar, and was unable to get anyone to loan him enough for another round. Bunch of bastards! He asked the waitress if he could start up a tab, and was denied there too. Bloodied but unbowed, he announced that he was going to borrow money from a friend, and left the bar.

Returning 10 minutes later, he raced back inside, slapped down a fiver and got back to drinking. Although he didn't let the waitress know, he hadn't borrowed the cash from a friend—he had robbed a bank for over \$1000!

Quite a resourceful fellow, but unfortunately the bank tellers had noticed the stench of alcohol on him and reported it to police. Acting on a hunch, the cops checked out a nearby bar, looking for someone who matched the description of the suspect. Sure enough, there was a man at the end of the bar, dripping beads of sweat as he intently read a newspaper. The cops moved in closer and realized the man was "reading" a lingerie ad. Soon enough the gig was up, and the \$1054 stuffed in his sock was retrieved.

C. The Getaway

Even if you're not too drunk to pull off a robbery, you might be too drunk to drive the getaway car. That's what happened to George Gravely of Chicago. After getting loaded, he slapped on a fake beard and robbed a bank. The heist was successful, but minutes later he crashed his car and was arrested. "He's still a little bit inebriated," noted an FBI spokesman after the robbery. "They just took him out of here, smiling and happy."

Likewise, a police officer on the Greek island of Rhodes got heavily drunk, robbed a bank, made off with \$28,000, crashed his vehicle, and then went to work, still intoxicated. His fellow policeman was already waiting for him, as they had matched the license plate of the getaway car to him. The officer admitted to the crime, explaining that he was so drunk he didn't know what he was doing.

D. Loss of Logical Thought

Coked up, unmasked, and drunk, a man named Bobby Arlington entered a Chase bank with the intention of robbing it. As he entered, he noticed and waved at a bank guard who he had known since childhood. If there was a little angel perched on his shoulder yelling "Wait, that guy's known you since childhood! Go rob a different bank!", Arlington ignored it.

Instead, he went up to a teller and demanded money, sticking his hand under his shirt to make it look like he had a gun. The teller complied and handed over a bundle of bills with a dye pack hidden inside, which immediately exploded as Arlington began to leave. Startled and now soaked in dye, he grabbed the nearest customer and stuck his gun against their neck. The only problem was, he didn't have a gun, and was now instead pointing his finger at a confused bystander's neck.

The guard liked his odds against that finger and bashed Arlington across the head with his nightstick.

His mother, when asked later, professed the belief that her son had a death wish "What kind of person uses his finger for a gun and tries to rob a bank where the guard is somebody he knew since he was a baby?" she wondered.

Also, you are more susceptible to getting tricked if you're inebriated. Take the case of the three drunken 50 year olds who stormed into a bank and began yelling that they were robbing the joint. The bank manager took advantage of their sloshy state and convinced them to take out a loan instead of holding the

place up. He even gave them a ten dollar advance, instructing them to return in ten minutes to sign the necessary papers.

They (wisely, but probably inadvertently) didn't come back, but were arrested at home later that day anyway.

7. YES, SOMETIMES IT WORKS

It would be unfair of me to insinuate that drunken robberies are never successful. Indeed, sometimes they work surprisingly smoothly. A Louisiana man who according to reports "reeked of alcohol", for example, walked into a bank with a box that he said contained a bomb. The teller promptly handed him a bag of money, and he left. Simple as that.

Indeed— occasionally, the drunks pull it off, and they usually make it look easy. A loaded Boston man tossed a rock through an art gallery window and made off with two paintings worth \$8,000, dropping his Chinese food as he ran off. Stealing art is supposed to be a little more, I dunno, graceful, but if it works it works I guess.

Likewise, a Spokane man who was "highly intoxicated" according to reports, went into a local credit union with a red backpack that he said contained a bomb. He was given the money he requested, and then took off on his bike, almost falling over as he sped away. "Drunk, and he hits it on payday and nobody is in there. Go figure" lamented Sgt. Gary Warren "One of my guys had just (left the bank) before this happened." Another cop vowed revenge, declaring "This guy is toast".

Other times, the thieves benefit from what appears to be pure luck. In Britain, police suspected three robbers were inside of a pub, but they couldn't check because patrons locked the doors and refused to let them in. They continued to drink away as the cops pleaded to be let in, and by the time the doors were finally opened nine hours later, everyone inside was so intoxicated police were unable to interview any of them to determine if the suspected robbers had indeed been inside. The incident marked one of the few times alcohol worked to a robber's advantage.

Even luckier (in a way) was Damien Kenner. Kenner chased a taxi driver with a knife after being refused money and the keys to the cab. When the chase spilled over into a nearby yard, the cabbie grabbed a broken fence paling and defended himself by bashing Keller over the head.

When the police and ambulance arrived shortly thereafter, they determined that Kenner was drunk and not significantly injured. But once he made it to jail, his condition took a turn for the worse, with a swollen face and fractured skull. Kenner, logically, sued the bastards. His drunken exploits ended up winning him \$550,000 from the police force and ambulance service for not treating him properly.

Still, some get amazing luck in the middle of their drunken robberies and then end up squandering it. Consider the case of Billy Krebs.

Two elderly women were watching TV in their Florida home one night when Krebs crashed through their kitchen window and stormed in the room, pointing a shotgun at them. "He said he wouldn't harm us unless we did something smart," one of the women recalled later. So, they fixed him a ham sandwich and offered him a bottle of rum, both of which he consumed. Later, they suggested he take a shower, which he did, poking his head out every few minutes to make sure they weren't calling the cops.

After sitting around and chatting with the women for awhile longer, shotgun in his hands, he told them to call him a cab, which they dutifully did. When the cabbie called soon after because he was having difficulties finding the address, Krebs told one of the women to go outside and flag it down. When she returned, he was passed out and snoring, evidently from all the rum. Once the cabbie found out what was going on, he convinced them to call the police.

See? Krebs was unbelievably lucky – how often do you break into someone's house, and then get fed and showered by them? – but he still fucked it up, passing out and getting arrested.

Another lucky crook was Patrick Rosati, who proved that sometimes not even a prison sentence can get in the way of a good drunken robbery.

Rosati was in the process of serving a 24 year sentence for robbery when he received an excellent perk: a six hour 'escorted pass' back into society.

He was halfway through his sentence at that point, so it would be the first time he had ventured outside of prison walls in a whopping 12 years. And then, once the six hours were up, he would return to finish the second 12.

Mind-boggling! I can't even imagine how hard it would be to decide what to do in such a small window of time—how you would choose to spend your brief break from a quarter-century long imprisonment. Under the rules of the "resocialization program", the inmate had to stay within an escort's sight at all times, but were still allowed a fair range of activities— they could have a bite to eat, check out a museum, or just walk around town and appreciate the trees and sunlight.

Rosati had no time for such silliness, however. He made the most of his six hour getaway by first getting drunk with his escort. It's unclear if this was arranged beforehand, or if Rosati simply turned on the charm, but either way they headed straight to a hotel after leaving the prison and started boozing.

In the middle of the drinking session, Rosati then somehow convinced his escort to let him run across the street for a second. The escort gave him the go ahead, ignoring the rules of the program. Was he just drunk? Or was he the Coolest Escort Guy Ever?

Rosati then crossed the street and successfully robbed a bank, making off with several thousand dollars. Damn! At that point, for some reason, he returned to the hotel. This I don't get: you are given a six hour pass, and in the course of those six hours you get your guard drunk and successfully rob a fucking bank, and you don't hit the road? Crazy. The pair were arrested soon after, sitting in a car in the hotel parking lot. Rosati received another robbery charge and the escort was forced to resign. Again—an amazing bit of luck (or skill, maybe), squandered. What a shame.

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I'VE BEEN PRETTY STONED before. I've been so high that I thought the sound of the wind was a gigantic river in my friend's back yard. I've been so glassy-eyed and terrified at work I was forced to hide in a closet for an entire shift. I've collapsed into sustained hysteria in the middle of a mall because I thought it was hilarious how people move their arms when they walk. But I've never experienced anything like the stuff that happens in *Cartoon All Stars to the Rescue*. Not even close.

Michael, the main character in *All-stars*, evidently has access to the most mind-blowing weed ever put into a pipe. It's so good that every time he gets high a smooth-talking villain named Smoke voiced by George C. Scott floats around him, yelling things like "Try it! TRY IT!" and "Oh yeah! Crack! Now we're talking!" His pot is so powerful he passes out in parks and wakes up to hallucinations of cartoon ducks yelling at him to sober up. It's such awesome, drool-inducing weed that he's actually forced to *steal money* to keep up with his habit.

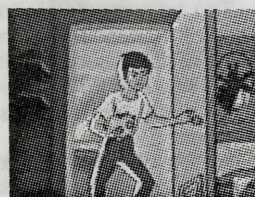
And that's how our story begins (after an awkward, croaking introduction by former president George Bush), with Michael snatching his little sister Corey's piggy bank while she sleeps. "Alright! There must be twenty bucks in here easy!" he says after bringing it back to his room and smashing it open.

Unfortunately for Michael, the cartoon characters in Corey's books and posters are capable of coming to life, and they are not fans of theft or marijuana. Alf, Garfield, Slimer, Papa Smurf, Kermit the Frog—they all feel that smoking dope is "a major no-no!", and are furious when they realize Mikey is a thieving, strung-out pot-head. "That kids got a one-way ticket to nowheresville" observes Alf grimly as Michael races off to puff some smoke with his new money.

So they set out to rescue the poor kid, who is obviously far gone based on his sunken, gloomy eyes and fits of rage at his sister. He hangs out in sleazy parts of town (evident by the "sleazy part of town" guitar wails in the background) puffing joints with some sorry-looking fourth-graders, and it looks like the only thing that's going to snap some sense into him is a series of humbling encounters with enraged animated Saturday-Morning cartoons.

That more or less sums up the cartoon: Michael goes from scene to scene stridently defending his pot usage, getting harassed by various cartoon characters who tell him he's gotta quit the grass or a life of misery awaits.

First up is Bugs Bunny, who is a particularly vicious cocksucker. Hearing Bugs say "What's this? A joint?!" is pretty surreal, but it's just annoying when he launches into his snide speeches, telling Michael he's "not very bright". Bugs also compares trying drugs to jumping off a cliff, and shows how pot will make you explode (metaphorically... I think).



Bugs then summons a time machine and shows Michael footage of his first joint smoking, berating him the whole time. But, his scared-straight approach fails, as hours later we see Mikey sucking down some more dope with a few buddies in a park.

"You know, for only ten bucks, I could score us some crack!" a little girl by his side exclaims as they pass the joint around. "You've got money, Michael"

"But.....crack? That's serious stuff!"

"C'mon Michael— you're not going to chicken out on your friends, are you?" asks another kid.

"What are you, a baby?" scolds Smoke, floating behind Michael, flashing an evil grin.

The girl wants crack *now* and has no time for this tedious debate, so she snatches Michael's wallet and runs off.

He chases after, but is pulled into a manhole by a member of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, who sarcastically greets him with "Cowabunga dude. How did you ever get so totally cool?"

Michael would logically be thinking "That was some fucking POWERFUL weed we were just smoking. I'm talking to a goddamn turtle!", but he seems unphazed. He even gets defensive when the turtle tells him he has a problem.

"What problem?" he snaps

"DRUGS, bud. Your brain must be, like, really messed up"

To illustrate his "drugs are not bodacious" point, the turtle pushes Mikey down a drain, which causes him to fall into a train alongside Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy.

"You're about to take a trip through the human brain!" Kermit announces as they take off on the roller coaster ride. "Drugs can take you up and make you feel good for awhile—" he continues as they go up, up, up.

"Yeah, I'll say! HAHAAHA" cackles Smoke

"—but for every up, there's a down!" Kermit finishes predictably as they plummet downwards.

The ensuing ride is intense, but kind of fun looking. "This is what drugs do to your brain!" Kermit yells as they careen around, lightning crashing everywhere. I never realized that smoking pot causes skull-shaped jellyfishes and fearsome looking dragons to fly around amidst one's brain tissue, but now I know.

Michael is shocked as the ride comes to a halt. "This is what's happening inside me?!!"

He suddenly comes to in a park, obviously disoriented. "Somebody help me..." he moans, trying to get up "Man, I've gotta get off of these drugs..." He looks up and sees that he's surrounded by three cartoon ducks. They look very mad at him. Fuck— when you pass out in public parks and start hallucinating about angry ducks belittling you, your marijuana habit has perhaps gone too far.

"Drugs?? Ohhh..... Bad news Michael" says one of the frowning ducks.

"Why don't you just say no?" offers another, giving some timeless advice. They then illustrate exactly how he can say No by launching into one of the most atrocious songs I've ever heard, called "There's a Million Wonderful Ways to Say No", which contains couplets like "When your pals say 'Let's Get Wrecked!'/Preserve your self-respect"

Some of the Wonderful Ways to say No are, according to the song:



"Oh yeah! Crack! Now we're talking!"

"No way!"
 "Spit right in his eye and say no!"
 "Those drugs are so boring!"
 "I'm in training for football!"
 "Get out of my way with that stuff!"
 "My hamster died!"
 "I've got too much homework, it's rough!"
 "I'm allergic!"
 "It's bad for my complexion!"

Or Miss Piggy's approach, which is to simply kick the drug-pusher in the face.

Again— can you IMAGINE the results if kids actually used some of these suggestions?! SPITTING in the dealer's eye?! Saying "My hamster died" when offered a bong hit at a party?!

After the song ends, Michael wakes up in his bed. "What a nightmare!" he gasps, reaching immediately for his comforting box-o-drugs. His sister enters the room "I thought I told you never to come in here!" he yells, grabbing and twisting her arm. She flees; he starts crying.

"Pesky brat. You did the right thing" consoles Smoke, floating behind him.

"I don't know.... she is my sister" he says. The cartoons are obviously starting to get to him. Maybe drugs ARE bad, after all. First marijuana made him steal from his sister—now it's making him beat her!

Suddenly Alf appears in the drug box and pulls Michael inside. As they walk through a hall of mirrors, Alf explains that he's going to show Michael what drug use makes him look like.

"This is you!" he says suddenly, showing Michael the reflection of a rotting zombie that looks vaguely like an extra from Michael Jackson's Thriller video. "Pretty pitiful, huh?" he continues "Drugs aren't your pal, pal! They're your enemy! Trying to take control!"

"I can quit if I want to!" protests a rattled Michael "I'm in control of my life!"

"WRONG!" corrects Alf "Not if you're on drugs!" He takes him through another door and informs him that the thing that's *really* in control of his life is Marijuana.

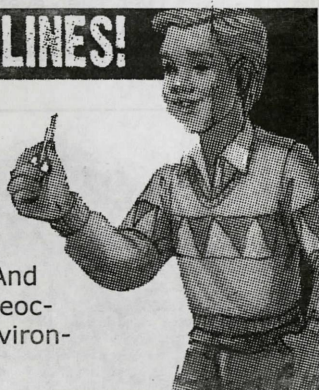


Above: Michael discovers what pot has made him look like

FUN FACTS FROM THE FRONTLINES!

The Tell-Tale Signs of a Pothead

SENATOR ORIN HATCH leant his name to and wrote the forward for a pamphlet entitled "How Parents Can Help Children Live Marijuana Free,.". Inside was a list of warning signs a parent should be on the look-out for to tell their if kids were smoking pot. And what were some of these signs? "excessive preoccupation with social causes, race relations, environmental issues, etc." That wacky dope!



After learning this sobering truth, Michael is suddenly dropped off in a demented looking amusement park. "Someone help me!" he wails "How do I get out of here?!" I think the ensuing scene is the scriptwriter's attempt at showing the viewer what a "marijuana trip" is really like. It goes like this:

He runs down a roller coaster track, chased by an angry duck, as he hears the voice of Smoke in the background yelling "Try it! TRY IT!" Terrified, he falls off and narrowly avoids landing on some spinning blades, instead bouncing off the ground and spiraling into the mouth of a demon statue, where he tumbles down the throat into a puddle of the Demon's stomach acids, seeing Tigger and Miss Piggy float by on a rowboat. Tigger tosses him a raft, but it's too late and he suddenly plunges down a waterfall where he's hit by a gigantic rotating ball, which sends him crashing through a plate of glass, after which he smashes into a huge eyeball, landing in a bucket of water that suddenly bursts, causing the amusement park's streets to fill up, Venice-style. He's helpless, swept up by the roaring waters, as Smoke bellows in the background "DO IT!!!" He plunges down another whirlpool, which turns out to be a straw that Miss Piggy is drinking out of. She spits him out instantly.

Michael finally lands upright, in control of himself, and takes off running. He immediately sees a Fortune Teller's Booth. "See Your Future" he reads. "My future?" Hmmm.... Where do you think this is heading?

Inside, Daffy Duck shows him a crystal ball that contains his future, which is evidently turning into a rotting zombie and being tied down on a gigantic pedestal underneath a beam of light, with a syringe sticking out of his arm. Michael isn't too keen on this.

"This... is my future?!"

"It is if you don't get off those drugs!" snaps Daffy

Suddenly all of the other All-stars appear.

"You use, you lose!" rhymes Alf ominously.

"What's up doc.... is your life!" scolds Bugs.

"There's nothing cool about a fool on drugs!" chimes in Kermit

"You're excellent just the way you are!" praises the ninja turtle, adding quickly "—without the drugs!"

These snappy slogans have convinced Michael: No More Marijuana! He spots a door and heads out.

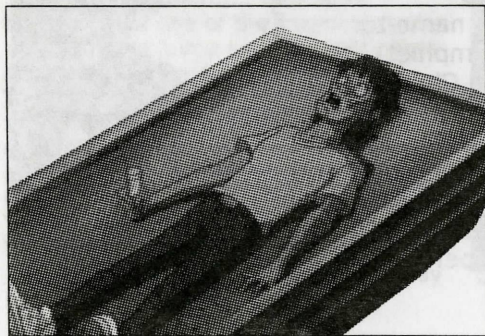
However, while he was gone battling his resin-soaked demons, his sister Corey opened his drug box, and after some prodding from Smoke, has decided to try some of the evil pot. "If I do what Michael does, maybe we can be friends again!" she exclaims happily.

Michael returns just in time, and knocks the box out of her hands, scolding her to "never, ever, ever do that stuff"

"But YOU did it!"

"I was a dope" he explains.

"Then stop!"



Below and to left: Scenes from Michael's future (if he continues to smoke marijuana)



"I don't know if I can..." he admits
Smoke wraps his arms around him
"Face it, kid. We're buddies for life. Whether you like it or not"

Corey says there's still hope— the whole family will chip in to help him conquer his marijuana addiction.

"Listen to me Mikey" says Smoke firmly

"I think I've listened to *you* long enough" he says, grabbing Smoke and tossing him outside into a garbage truck.

"C'mon sis" Michael says "Let's go talk to mom and dad". They walk off as the cartoons cheer, launching into another terrible song. Poor Michael doesn't realize

that when he tells his folks what he went through, he'll be heading straight for shock therapy. "I quit smoking pot, mom!" is negated by "These talking ducks told me I would turn into a zombie, see?"



Above: the sinister Smoke

RELEASED IN 1990, Cartoon All-stars to the Rescue (subtitled "Drugs Don't Stand A Chance Against These Guys!") was a collaborative propaganda effort between various animation studios, McDonalds, and the major networks. It was broadcast simultaneously on every channel, so any kids watching TV were *forced* to sit through it.

I missed it, and I'm glad. See, it would have sucked if I had viewed Cartoon All-Stars to the Rescue before I tried pot. Not because it would have deterred me from trying something that's given me good times, but because it would have made the eventual experience thoroughly disappointing. I would have held in my first hit and expected to suddenly plunge down a roller coaster ride packed with talking clouds of smoke who tell me I'm cool, lightning crashes, daredevil escapes from spinning blades, time machines— things like that. Then, when I exhaled, I would have felt a little goofy, maybe said something like "Whoa, that wallpaper looks goofy as hell", but I would have thought "This is it?! What's the big deal? Where the fuck are the talking ducks?!"

It just wouldn't have lived up.

**ALL THIS ANTI-
DRUG TALK
MAKES ME
NERVOUS,
BOBBY!**

**YEAH! IT COULD
BE BAD FOR
BUSINESS, WE'D
BETTER LET
YOU IDIOT KNOW
ABOUT THIS!**

