

The Last Word™

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Trump probably chewed gum after all

But he still didn't bubble!

Back on December 6, so-called President Trump (R-Loompaland) opened his stupid mouth and hardly anyone listened, because he lies all the time. Those who did watch his speech, however, noticed something very strange.

I think we've established that the Donald probably does not know how to blow a bubble with bubble gum. But does he chomp beegee? In doing so, doesn't he waste it by not bubbling? What's the point of chewing gum if you don't blow bubbles? But he's a wasteful guy, so he doesn't care if he wastes gum by not blowing bubbles.

Near the end of President Big Boy's appearance, viewers noticed that his speech was becoming slurred. It was especially noticeable during the closing remark, "God bless the United States."

His slurred speech has been attributed to an assortment of factors. Some say he was drunk or stoned. Others say his dentures were slipping. It's eminently possible that the boring billionaire wears dentures, for I can't imagine him actually brushing his teeth. Some folks practice good oral hygiene but still need dentures—but bad hygiene makes it all the more likely. He can certainly afford to replace missing teeth with implants instead, but he's so fidgety as to rule that out. Maybe his dentures were trying to leap out of his mouth to avoid being a part of that idiotic speech.

But I think it was beegee.

I think he had a big ol' wad of bubble gum stored somewhere in his cavernous maw. Much like how Richard Nixon appeared to store bananas in his mouth like a squirrel, Trump seems to store gum in his mouth. But—because of his inability to bubble—this could not be proven.

Now all he needs to do is mention *Sesame Street* or toilets.



Odds were against Jimmy the Greek cutout

Someone who used to work at a local sporting goods store sent me a funny story about a cardboard Jimmy the Greek cutout!

The late Jimmy Snyder—better known by his nickname Jimmy the Greek—was an oddsmaker who appeared on CBS as a sports commentator for years. Snyder would predict the score of each week's NFL games. Although his appearances didn't *openly* condone illegal gambling on football, folks who bet on games used his predictions. It was sort of a wink and nod to sports betting.

Ol' Jimmy's career came crashing down in 1988 when he made racially insensitive comments that resulted in CBS firing him. (Nowadays, they'd probably promote him, since CBS is indistinguishable from Fox News now.) Inevitably, some people complained that they thought CBS gave Jimmy the Greek a raw deal. But even around here, some folks felt Snyder had to go. That was the sentiment at the sporting goods shop.

It just so happened that this store had a life-size cardboard

cutout of Jimmy the Greek on display for some sort of promotion. It's believed that it had a sign next to it telling customers, "Take it from me, Jimmy the Greek." After Jimmy's fall from grace, employees decided to break the head off his cutout, poke a big hole where his mouth was, and place his detached noggin over the garbage can—allowing the shop's patrons to discard their trash by throwing it through his mouth.

When the store manager saw it, he thundered at his employees, "**WHAT THE HELL DID YOU DO?!?!?!?!?!**" Apparently, Snyder had actually posed for that cutout just for this store, and his publicist flew into town to present the cutout to the store as a special gift from the man himself. (The inspector at the airport probably wondered why the publicist's suitcase contained a folded-up Jimmy the Greek cardboard cutout.) And now it was ruined. Completely roodledy-doodledy! The manager was heard mumbling from his office, "Don't expect Jimmy the Greek to do anything nice for us again."

It reminds me of when Brossart got the fancy deer bookends—supposedly a donation from the Knights of Columbus—and one of the antlers got broken off of one of them, causing the school to throw away the whole set.

A person wasted pastry flour in public

I have some weird friends who have some even weirder friends.

A woman e-mailed me about the spectacle that one of her pals created at a shopping mall. One day, the pair did some shopping together at the mall and bipped over to the food court. They devoured some delish pastries. In fact, they were so delish that her friend opted to buy a package of pastry ingredients, which the pastry stand sold. It included the flour and other goodies.

Her friend wasn't exactly the most agile person around. The duo was already lugging around full shopping bags, and now they had the pastry flour to contend with.

Her friend made it about 20 feet. She kept having to juggle the bag of pastry flour to keep from losing her other items. After about 30 seconds, she could hold out no longer. The poke of flour slipped out of her hands and onto the floor of the mall.

It was over. That bag of flour was no more. It landed on the floor with a thud, split open, and released a cloud of flour. There was nothing left of it but a big pile of flour on the floor. Suffice it to say, it was wosted. All that flour, wastage bastage!

It's unclear what happened to the other pastry ingredients in the package. They were probably useless without the flour. Maybe they included some berries or something that could be eaten plain.

Reminds me of the mugs getting smashed at our yard sale.

Meanwhile, the pile of flour rested on the floor in the middle of a mall food court as a monument to unchecked clumsiness.



Whiner says gum made teeth crooked

When people tell me they want me to write about gum, they mean they want me to write about gum.

When people tell me they *don't* want me to write about gum—they mean they want me to write about gum!

This makes each group of people cool, because each group wants me to write about gum. The latter group has a higher per capita income, but I don't need to worry about pleasing the group that has more money, because both groups want me to write about the same thing. You'd think the reason our money demos would pretend they don't want any more gum articles is that they don't know how to blow bubbles—except that *our* money demos aren't money demos anywhere else.

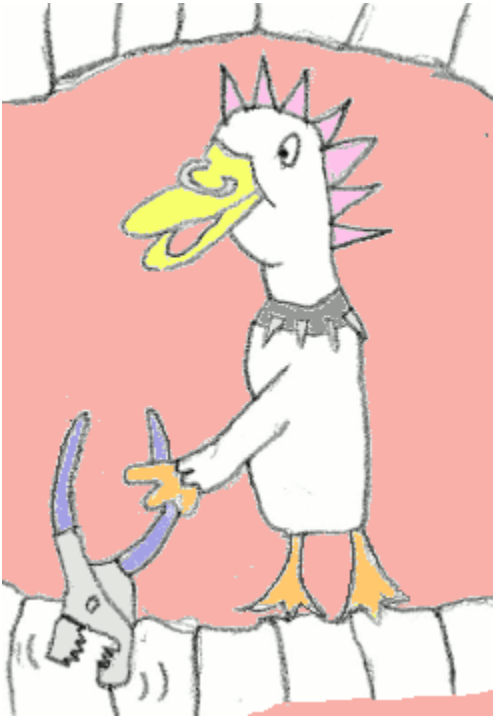
This brings us to one of the most pompous displays to appear online in recent years.

My awe-inspiring business partner stumbled upon this embarrassing piece a long time ago, and she told me about it then. I felt it was so self-indulgent that I'd be besmirching my dignity if I mentioned it without taking the time to hone the wit to shoot it down effectively.

The article appears to be written by some journalist who is supposed to be famous. But I've never heard of her anywhere else, and can't find anything else about her. In this column, she says chewing Bubble Yum as a kid caused her to develop crooked teeth for decades thereafter—which ruined her life thoroughly. It's an outrage.

She goes on and on about it. It's framed as an article about "how I learned to love" crooked teeth—but my friend pointed out that the writer hadn't "learned to love" them. If the writer truly adored her jagged chompers, she wouldn't have squandered thousands of dollars on cosmetic dentistry to "fix" them. She talks about how she

was promoted through a succession of cushy jobs not long after college—even as she spent most of her time grumbling about her irregular dentition.



The writer also talks about how she sneaks at her son when he chews gum—so he doesn't get crooked teeth too. Heaven forbid! People chew gum all the time, and cool people all agree that it's far more important to blow a bubble than to have perfectly aligned gnashers.

My bizbud and I wondered about who that article is supposed to appeal to. It doesn't contain any useful information. We think it's just the writer's way of flashing money around and flaunting how rich she is. "Ha-ha!" the journalist seems to be saying. "I'm not the one who has to ride broken-down TANK buses 20 miles each day to work at Booger Burger for minimum wage." You can just see her sticking out her tongue.

How self-indulgent is that screed? It almost sounds like it's straight from the fiery pits of Brossart. I know it's not quite *that* bad—since at least the article doesn't openly encourage harassment—but there's enough pomposity there for dozens of solid gold calculators. Some of my schoolmates at Brossart bragged about how rich they were, and it's bad manners. It's at odds with the decorum expected in a civilized society. It wasn't nearly as bad as the rest of the things they did—like chase people into traffic or follow them home from school to harass them—but it was bad enough.

Also worse than this article were the gnawingly self-indulgent newspaper supplements that used to promote new subdivisions for the rich. These were worse because they actually encouraged overdevelopment, and appeared in publications that people actually read. The piece about Bubble Yum's alleged jackhammering of someone's previously perfect pearlies doesn't encourage *anything*, and probably not many people have seen it. It just sits there and festers. So what was the point of writing it? The writer is waving her money around but nobody can see it.

Scribbles and crumbs

Republicans in the Senate approved an unpopular tax bill that was made up predominantly of illegible handwritten notes scribbled in the margins. That's like giving a 3-year-old a Magic Slate to write bills.

Senate Republicans must have never made it to 6th grade, because I knew by that stage in life it wasn't acceptable to hand in a school paper like that. Ever the rebel, I did anyway.

My parents once stated that my school performance was at its absolute nadir in 6th grade at Cline Middle School. St. Joe's and Brossart were worse *for me* than Cline was—by far—but the oldsters didn't see it that way, probably because sending me to St. Joe's and Brossart helped fulfill their dream of impressing people who had much more money than us. Class consciousness wasn't in their vocabulary, unfortunately.

A major source of botheration back then was the school system's insistence that if you did well on an IQ test, you were gifted in every field. Once this assumption was made, the school automatically enrolled you in a gifted class. I didn't know until I was about 30 that I had dyslexia, and I realized it when The Media kept letting George W. Bush use his dyslexia as an excuse for everything—which I won't do. I work around it. But in 6th grade, I didn't know yet how I could ace an IQ test but fail in school.

The school considered you to be either smart or crazy, depending on which label suited the purpose at hand. That's how they think they can justify drugging you while putting you in a gifted class.

The gifted class in 6th grade at Cline—known as OASIS—didn't seem to develop my talents. It also didn't count for a grade, so there was no incentive to take it seriously. Plus, that's when the school started prescribing me heavy psychotropics to control alleged ADHD, so I zombie-walked through much of it.

I got along with the teacher at first, but at some point, he decided he hated me. One day, he assigned us a lengthy report. I was in such a stupor from the ADHD drugs that I just churned out a few pages with scribbles in the margins and improper punctuation. When I got the paper back, the teacher included a lengthy harangue about the punctuation and little else.

Sometime later, he assigned us another report. I was so disconnected from this assignment that the report I handed in rambled aimlessly. When we all gathered to get our reports back, the teacher didn't give me mine. I asked him for it repeatedly, and he kept ignoring me.

These reports wasted as much paper as the oaptag incident—but lacked the humor. I didn't even get to wad the pages inside my desk or be threatened with a \$60 fine for each ruined sheet. (Later information about the

oaptag episode: One of the boys who wosted the school's prized oaptag apparently grew up to become a cop. The other kid though ended up on the other side of the law and has used his mugshot as a Facebook profile photo.)

What's the point of a class that doesn't count for a grade and doesn't offer any ennoblement? Sophomore year at Brossart was even more discouraging, for the principal told me I was going to fail the whole year—and it was only November. So what was the point of even showing up at school at all for the rest of the year?

In college, there was sort of an encore of my treatment of the OASIS reports. NKU required me to take a literature class that was useless for my major of radio/TV. NKU has a history of mollycoddling student athletes who commit crimes—and a university official blew up at *me* during a meeting that *he* called regarding harassment carried out against me by a star basketball player. (I walked out of the meeting because of this tirade.) The entire experience doomed the semester and my whole college education. I don't remember if it was before or after that meeting that I handed in a paper for literature class that was more suited for a booger wall. The report was short, but went off on a tangent about a man in a Doublemint commercial who "chews a stick of gum and makes a funny face", which had absolutely nothing to do with what the assignment was supposed to be about—namely the short story "Araby." I *could* have officially withdrawn from all my classes, but it was late enough in the semester that it would have gone on my permanent record.

Tough toilets, NKU. You earned it. Did the school actually expect a positive response from me after the way I was treated there? To quote an intelligent person: Logic, people!

BP means Bubble Popping

BP stands for British Petroleum, but at one area location, it might as well mean Bubble Popping.

As Operation KroGum continues to disappoint local bubble gum chewers, the food mart at a BP gas station in Fort Thomas comes through. I took the Road Ruiner on a little jaunt to the mean streets of Fort Thomas in late November and took a little detour to get lunch. I'm pretty sure the neighborhood I detoured to had competing food sources not too long ago, but I was chagrined to find only BP remaining. BP doesn't need my business after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill netted the company a taxpayer-funded \$9.9 billion bailout. But if it's any consolation, the Road Ruiner doesn't run on gasoline, so I was only buying food. If I only wanted something to drink, I could have taken a chance at a former gas station across the street that had a decaying soft drink machine with the old Pepsi logo that went away with mullets and Vanilla Ice, but I doubt this machine still worked.

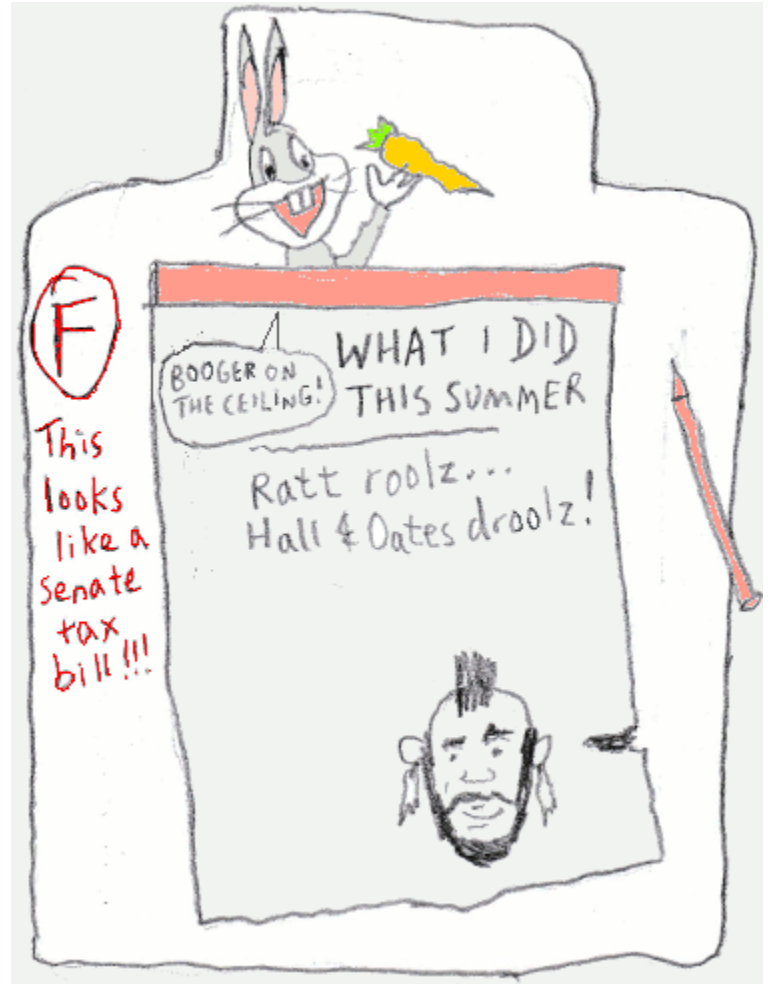
By not buying anything at BP the rest of the time, I get accused of destroying "American small business." But British Petroleum is neither an American company nor "small business."

Suffice it say, however, this BP location has the widest bubble gum selection I've seen at such a small store in the past few years. It ranged from the little baggies of good ol' Dubble Bubble, to Fruit Stripe, to Juicy Fruit's relatively new bubble bustin' variant. In case you're younger than 10, this store even sells some flavor of Bubble Tape I'd never seen before. A bubble poppin' peep could spend all day there—and many months mixing and matching their haul to see what combination is best for bubbling.

Too bad it's a BP.

Plus, this store is only a few buildings away from an orthodontist, in case you're like the journalist who blames Bubble Yum for her teeth becoming crooked.

The neighborhood isn't filthy rich, but it's certainly affluent suburbia by our standards. So the store's bourgeoisie patrons probably don't possess as much bubbling knowhow as the proletarian customers of stores



elsewhere that have a pathetic gum selection. It's a cruel irony that the best bubblers don't get as many places to buy beegie (or most other goods, for that matter).

A person broke their disco-era glasses

When the Road Ruiner and I sped away from the BP station in Fort Thomas recently, I found an interesting ancient artifact laying on the curb...



Yes, friends and enemies, it's a broken frame from an old pair of eyeglasses—probably from 35 to 40 years ago. It was probably sitting on the curb buried in sand and debris for that long.

I'd love to hear the story behind it! I've written a narrative in my mind of what probably went down. One day—in the 1970s or 1980s—some kid probably got glasses and hated them. I don't know whether they were a little boy or a little girl, because disco glasses with the big lenses were prevalent regardless of gender. But I bet they hated them because they couldn't see any better with them. They probably would have thought these glasses were just the Bee Gees' knees if they improved their sight.

But I assume the glasses *didn't* improve their sight—which is why, evidently, they threw them out the window of their parents' car the day they got them. Judging by the era that these specs seem to hail from, their parents may have driven an AMC Pacer or Chrysler K-car. One theory is that they had just left the bank on the corner to withdraw money for the next few weeks' expenses after paying for the glasses ate up what they had. That's unlikely, because health insurers usually get everything backwards: Insurance probably would have covered the oversized gafas only if they weren't necessary. I posted the above photo on my favorite road transport message board, and someone replied that it was “standard insurance company approved eyeglass frames circa 1981.” In other words, probably unnecessary, for insurance covered it.

Perhaps the child was resigned to wearing these useless spectacles for quite some time before they finally had their fill. The BP station was probably a Boron back then, and the kid probably planned on buying some bubble gum there—before the oldsters told them they weren't “allowed” to chew gum because they might blow a bubble. It could bust all over their glasses, ruining them. I bet it was at that precise moment that the eyewear went flying out the car window. Who wouldn't do the same?

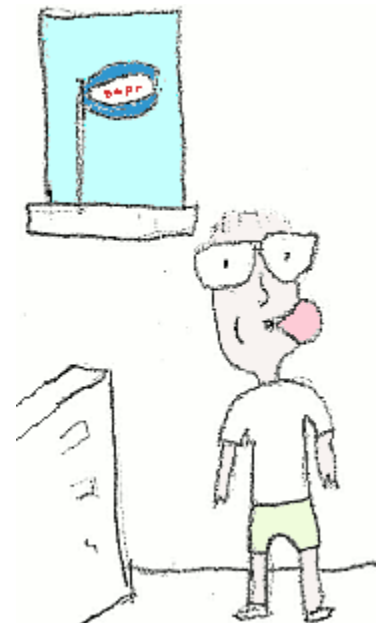
The idea of it being a Boron is an added element of humor. The notion of a kid with oversized specs—like the boy in the optician ad in the Yellow Pages—standing inside a Boron convenience store and bubbling seems more comical than if it was at a Shell or a Marathon. I guess it's because the oval sign Boron used was funnier. Or maybe it's because you hadn't thought about Boron in years. But I would have thought it was just as hilarious when I was 8, when Boron still proliferated wildly.

Disco-era glasses are glasses for the disco era.

A person chewed ABC gum off the floor of a bus

You're gonna laugh because I'm about to mention bubble gum.

My close family members know this story, or at least they should, because I've told it to them before. Also, I started to tell this story at my class reunion, and my school pals thought it was both disgusting and



hilarious. But I didn't finish the story, because we got distracted. I'm not sure I've told it to anyone else.

When I was forced to attend the alt-right Bishop Brossart High School, I got banned from one of the school buses repeatedly. This bus was full of pampered brats who'd crawl under the seats and tie your shoes together, but if anyone would dare to fight back against them, guess who'd get banned? Fighting back is never allowed. You so much as look at one of these little criminals cockeyed, and it's you who pays the consequences.

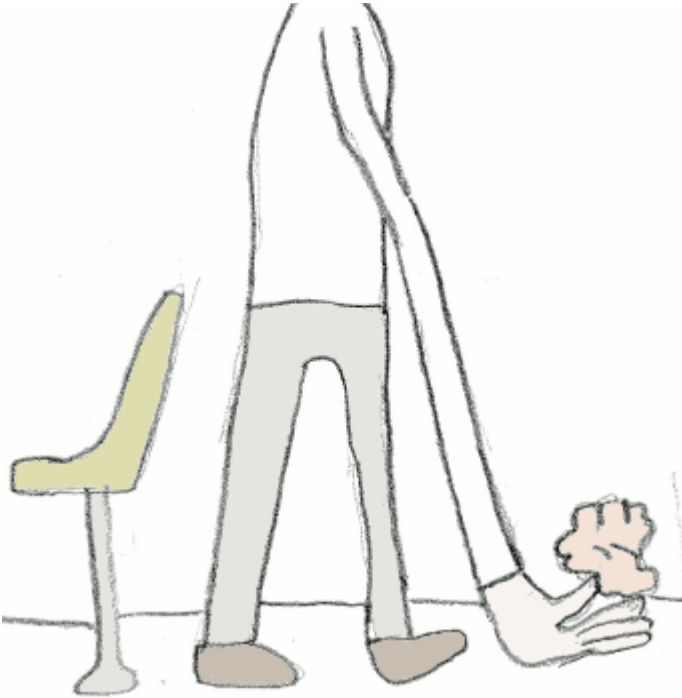
This caused me to regularly take a TANK bus home from school instead. A strange thing, that TANK. Those in the know call it Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky. When the thugs from Brossart—plus one from Campbell County High School who they were allied with and threw things a lot—discovered I was taking this bus, they began riding this bus too so they could attack me.

The bus would always idle on Washington Street at the end of each school day. One afternoon, I was the first passenger on. The only other person on the bus was the driver. I noticed there was a *humongous* wad of bubble gum on the floor in the aisle of the bus. It was ABC gum—"already been chewed." It was a shade of beige usually not seen in gum. I sat down in the very back row of seats.

Then, one of the Bro\$\$art hoodlums got on the bus. As expected, he marched towards me. The unexpected part is that, in doing so, he reached down and scooped the chewed wad of gum off the floor without even pausing his march. He then crammed the quid of gum into his gaping mouth and began to chomp away.

I thought for sure the driver saw him doing this through her mirror. But she didn't say anything.

It's unknown whether the student bubbled. He probably didn't know how, because economic elites usually don't. Then again, bubbling requires lung capacity, which many Brossart folks probably didn't have, because of all the asbestos, or the respiratory infections like the ones I caught there about once every 2 weeks. Strangely, those who masticated ABC gum (which was surely covered with germs) seemed to be immune from picking up contagious ailments, but I think they did so much drugs (probably goofballs) that they just couldn't feel the effects.



Church fart leaves egg on everyone's face

I caught an *American Top 40* countdown from 1982, and someone in a chat room said the song "Dirty Laundry" sounds like it's about "a poeing mishap."

In 1982, we still went to church weekly, since that was before we discovered *AT40* had returned to local airwaves on Sunday mornings. During football season, congregants always left in the middle of mass so they could get home in time for kickoff. Why should *AT40* be any diff?

I found an *uproarious* story on the Internet about an incident in church that may have been "a poeing mishap", and if it wasn't, it came damn close! In fact, it's described as "the single best farting-in-church thing that has ever happened." This story is from a person who grew up in Rhode Island in the '90s. His family were strict Catholics.

One Sunday, they all got breakfast at a restaurant just before church. This place served what were supposedly the best huevos rancheros—a dish consisting of eggs with chili sauce. This dish is sometimes accompanied by a generous helping of beans.

You can see where this is headed.

The family's middle son—age 11—wolfed down a huge plate of huevos rancheros like it was an eating day. The payoff started in the car on the way to church, when he let loose with a loud-and-proud bunker blast that was potent enough that it would have stopped a chainsaw. The other kids burst into laughter, but the parents were gagging from the stench. The farter just sat there smirking his ass off. The kids were still giggling when they entered the church, and their dad admonished them to not "be disgusting" during mass.

During a Catholic service, there's a part where the priest recites the Lord's Prayer and usually chants at the end, "Forever and ever." Churchgoers follow with an "amen." Now, the farter in this story had planned to time his next air biscuit so it would coincide with the "amen", so the sound of the trouser sneeze would be drowned out, and nobody would know the source of the stinkage.

But he had bad timing. He was about a second too late. Not that this mattered, since the audio of the bunker blast lasted a full 5 seconds. Not only was the silence after the “amen” pierced, but the aroma was awful. Plus, little squeakers were heard as aftershocks.

After mass was over, the whole family laughed uncontrollably about the incident until dinner.

Now we know why the seats in church are called pews!

A user of another Internet forum says they frown upon chewing gum in church because “bubbles are being blown and popped.” I only mention that because you demanded I talk about gum.

The day the drugging stopped

By my late teens, I wasn’t exactly a profile in courage, since the Far Right feudalists had me browbeaten so much. I learned by then that fighting back is not allowed, and that complaining about abuse leads to retaliation against the victim by the community. With every new disappointment in life, I was required to resign myself to it—no matter how much humiliation came with it.

Not everyone was cajoled so much. My magnificent business partner says she had experiences similar to mine, but she at least had a refuge from unending control. I didn’t have that during my later youth. My home was a bit strange in that I had fewer and fewer privileges as I got older. At the end of 4th grade, a few months after a teacher tied me to a chair, my parents actually let me switch schools—but in high school, I was forced to attend the schools they chose for me “and that’s final.”

The now-obscure commercial reference in the “Araby” report in college was one of few times in the course of many years I truly fought back. Even then, it shouldn’t have gotten to that point. Everyone keeps extolling what a fighter I am, but that’s the earlier me *and* the later me—not the me that slogged along for years in-between.

But there was one occasion in that era when I *really* fought back. At the time, I was being drugged worse than ever. Shrinks like to argue, and anyone who disagrees with them suffers the consequences. My current social worker says I’m lucky there doesn’t *appear* to be any permanent damage from *that* prescription. I *know* there is, but I just can’t prove it. Anyway, as soon as I got old enough to be allowed to decide what I wanted, I stopped taking this prescription. I went cold turkey.

That’s how I fought back. Gasps were heard.

My shrink strenuously warned against this. I did it anyway—thus violating an Allowed Cloud. I read later that it’s not a good idea to suddenly stop taking a prescription like that, because it’s a shock for the body. The quack psychiatrist I visited at the time warned me because he wanted me to take this drug forever—not because of the suddenness of how I stopped.

The oldsters probably even asked me, “You’re gonna waste all those pills?” Yes. I am.

My college aid was actually threatened because I refused to be drugged. Cue the alt-right town criers who will howl about how I “ruined” taxpayer money by “letting” my time at NKU end in the dumpster fire that it later did—even though it wasn’t my fault. I hear the world’s smallest violin playing—just for them!

If the CPH gulag could hold me to a contract I signed at 16 without being allowed to read it first, why shouldn’t I be allowed to make my own decisions at 18? Plus, if I had a psychiatric disorder as they claimed, wouldn’t that mean I lacked the capacity to enter into a contract? Gotcha on that! Notice also how the Evil Empire only recognizes the mature minor doctrine when it suits their purposes. Besides, I was no longer a minor at 18!

Let’s try to count the ways we’ve been forced to resign ourselves to misfortunes that caused real harm. We can start with educational and medical decisions foisted upon us in youth. For me, that includes St. Joe’s, Brossart, and the alternative class that coincided with the last round of forced druggings. I vowed defiance at the start of each but was always muscled into compliance. It’s as if they called my bluff just for its own sake. My bizbud says this didn’t happen to her nearly as much, because she was allowed to follow through on her warnings. But in the adult world, we’ve been stuck with bad political leaders—who usually took power illegitimately—and bad laws. Rarely are these laws repealed, nor are the politicians’ messes cleaned up. So, time after time, we’ve been browbeaten into tolerating it. They’re always coming for you. They never get it out of their system. Every time we’re confronted with these developments, everyone blusters about how they’re gonna fight it, but when push comes to shove, they come up empty and slink away. I’m talking about people who make Harry Reid look like Alan Grayson in comparison.

The way we’re bullied into accepting new hardships is kind of like when a child keeps grabbing cookies



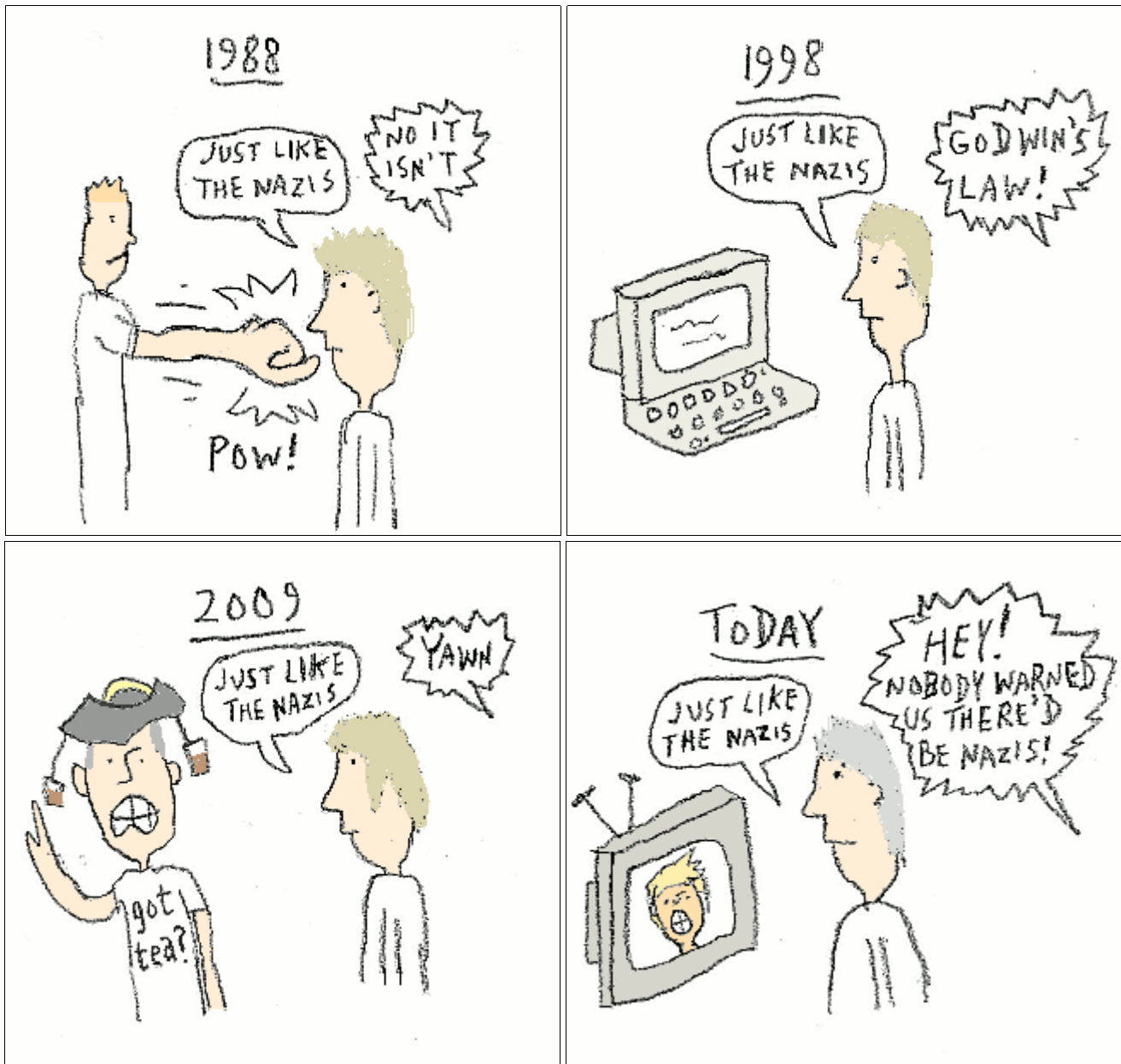
and a parent keeps telling them to stop—but doesn't actually put a stop to it.

Society has a whole system built on breaking people. I'd love to see what excuses people use to justify it. Most upbeats gave up on that, so nobody today eggs it on except the truly uneducated clods who somehow become zillionaires. Maybe now the Far Right knows they can't call my bluff, which is why now I'm able to get away with more. Example: the Road Ruiner (apparently illegal in Kentucky but I use it anyway). Another example: mailing spoiled bread crusts to a company that sent me junk mail. Why should I follow capitalist rules when I'm not a capitalist?

Team Tyranny claims to be such good Christians, but have they even read the Bible? The Bible says God gave us a free will—the ability to reason and make our own choices.

Once I decided for good I wasn't paying any allegiance to the diktats of fascist regimes, who's really coming for who?

Think. Do. Be.



Going around in circles about styrene records

In our April 2016 ish, I warned you about the "Columbia curse", which afflicts records, especially 7-inch singles. We're in the midst of a vinyl revival! But cursed records are made of polystyrene, not real vinyl. You could tell because playing them more than about 3 times with the wrong stylus made them sound scratchy. This was partly the fault of companies like Panasonic that sold turntables with styluses that they knew would prematurely fry styrene records. It's also the fault of record companies for skimping on materials. One way to tell if a record is styrene is if it appears to be a transparent dark red, brown, or purple when held up to light. (I'll warn

you again: Don't get the record too close to the light, because it will melt a hole in it. I'm careful not to do this, but I've heard stories.)

I've finally sorted my old 45's and classified them as either "hard" vinyl or "soft" styrene. Out of all the records I have that resemble a standard 7-inch single, what percentage do you think I have that are styrene? It's 37%.

I have a *few* records from before the 1970s, and those aren't cursed. But we call it the "Columbia curse" for a reason. Columbia wasn't the only record label to use styrene, but it was the biggest label in the '70s and '80s, and it's one of the biggest offenders. It appears to be one of few labels using styrene in the '70s. Many of the other record companies that used styrene back then were ones where many of the execs regularly snorted coke.

Then we get into the '80s. Whoo, man! That's when the styrene *really* starts bombarding us! It's as if Ronald Reagan came along and peed on your record collection. The Republican Right is closer to Soviet-style communism than they think: Holding some of these records up to light, they're as transparent as the bootleg Soviet records made from discarded x-rays—and probably worse quality. They look like the sound discs on old View-Master reels!

As if that wasn't bad enough, there's the '90s. I've heard strong speculation that styrene started invading albums in the decade of incoherence, but I don't think I bought any new albums in *record* form anymore then—though I still purchased singles.

Record kerpowin' websites say that although styrene records are less durable overall than real vinyl, they're less likely to warp. I'm skeptical of this, because the most warped record in my collection is styrene. (I was so excited to get the record store's last copy though!)

I still play even the scratchiest styrenes, of course.



Archie Bunker had no class consciousness

Archie Bunker. Now there's a man who wouldn't know class consciousness if it jumped up and bit his ass off in public (as a wise man would say).

Mr. Bunker was a fictional character in the 1970s sitcom *All In The Family* played by the legendary Carroll O'Connor. The cable channel Bravo once ranked Archie as the greatest TV character of all-time. Ol' Bunks was a hard-working guy. He busted his ass at the loading dock daily and had nothing to show for it except a tiny house with a broken toilet.

So you'd think ol' Arch would be a champion of left-wing populism. Most working people are. After all, what has the Right ever done that improves working-class lives? We all know working people whose political views don't match their economic interests, but they're in the minority. If you're a left-leaning populist, then trust me, there's a lot of working people out there who agree with you. You might not know it, because we're silenced a lot, but you've got my word on it. It's not only your uncle who complained about Reagan at a family picnic in 1985.

Archie Bunker though is different.

When I say Archie had no class consciousness, I don't mean that he tried to impress rich people. Instead, his outlook was defined by his actual politics. He was a conservative Republican who harbored a long litany of prejudices. *All In The Family* promos would invite viewers to "share some laughs with that lovable bigot Archie Bunker." Despite having a blue-collar job, he even opposed labor unions.

Lots of folks talk about how they have a spoiled relative who votes Republican. That's to be expected, because they're spoiled. But why you, Arch? He couldn't possibly have been fueled by economic anxiety. When I'm confronted by bad economic circumstances, I put the blame where it belongs: on corporate greed. I don't find some false target in a fit of confusion. I'm clearly not alone, because exit polls show that Donald Trump won more votes among the rich (despite the laughable pretense of him being the working-class candidate).

Then again, it's hard to explain the Archie Bunkers who exist in real life. This was borne out by a CNN poll that says that although 66% of Americans believe the Republican tax bill (the biggest tax increase in America's history) favors the rich, "only" 55% oppose it. Shouldn't 66% oppose it? How is it that as much as 11% of the public worships the rich to such an extent that they support a bill that they know favors the rich, when nowhere near 11% is that wealthy?

You're a funny guy, Arch. But you're weird.

BCD means you're SOL

You don't fuck around with Uncle Sam!

A character in a 1954 short film titled "Easy Out?" learned this the hard way. The movie was a little Navy training film about a young man who thinks he can pull one over on the system. In the film, he *deliberately* gets in trouble during his military service so he gets discharged early. But things don't go as planned...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOC5rr4rLkw>

Here's a synopsis of this film in case you're afraid you'll accidentally click on a video of a toilet flushing backwards.

The star of the film gets discharged from the service earlier than expected. His family is so thrilled to see him that they greet him with a big dinner at home.

Little by little, things unravel. One of the first real signs of trouble is when he blows up at his fiancée during the dinner. That exchange ensued after he declared he was going to work at a factory instead of following through on his plan to attend college to become a lawyer. (This was before Reagan killed all the factory jobs.)

It turns out there's a reason he scuttled his college plans: Unbeknownst to anyone else, he had received a bad conduct discharge. That meant no G.I. Bill for him. When he finally has to tell people about his BCD, his entire life crumbles around him. Following an arrogant, defiant tirade in which he tries to justify his misconduct, his fiancée dumps him.

Later, he applies for a job at the factory, and the boss tells him to go down to the post office to check into some nifty on-the-job training available to veterans. The boss doesn't seem to mind that he smokes during the job interview (at least he didn't bubble), but the disgraced young man gets a look of worry on his face when he's told to bring his discharge papers. Things continue to fall apart at the post office. He finds out he doesn't just lose G.I. Bill college benefits because of his bad conduct discharge, but other benefits too. "No on-the-job training, no bonuses or educational benefits, no home or business loans. Nothing," the VA man sternly tells him. In fact, a BCD carries such negative weight that he's told the factory won't hire him at all.

His future is shattered, and he cries like a baby as the film ends with distorted music.

The VA rep says of a BCD, "Once you get one of these things, it stays with you." And he means it. He means it like a dictionary book (to quote Rick James). It's like how getting expelled from Cline Middle School in 7th grade has stayed with me.

"Easy Out?" was produced by the Jam Handy Organization—the Detroit-based company that also gave us the uproarious "Chain Reaction", in which a defective hi-fi breaks a man's rare 78's. Plus, the fiancée in "Easy Out?" was played by Ellen Burstyn, who—although she dropped out of high school during her senior year—became an award-winning actress. She later starred in the NBC series *The Book Of Daniel*, which was canceled because right-wing extremists complained about it. After that, she portrayed Barbara Bush in Oliver Stone's *W*. It was in that role that she delivered the classic line, "Because of the damn media!"

The guy in this film would have been better off if he had just shit his pants like Ted Nugent.

(Also, several sources say that military personnel who receive a BCD must turn in their uniforms, which explains why the man in this story is wearing civilian clothes when he steps off the train.)



"No! It's NOT because of the damn media!"