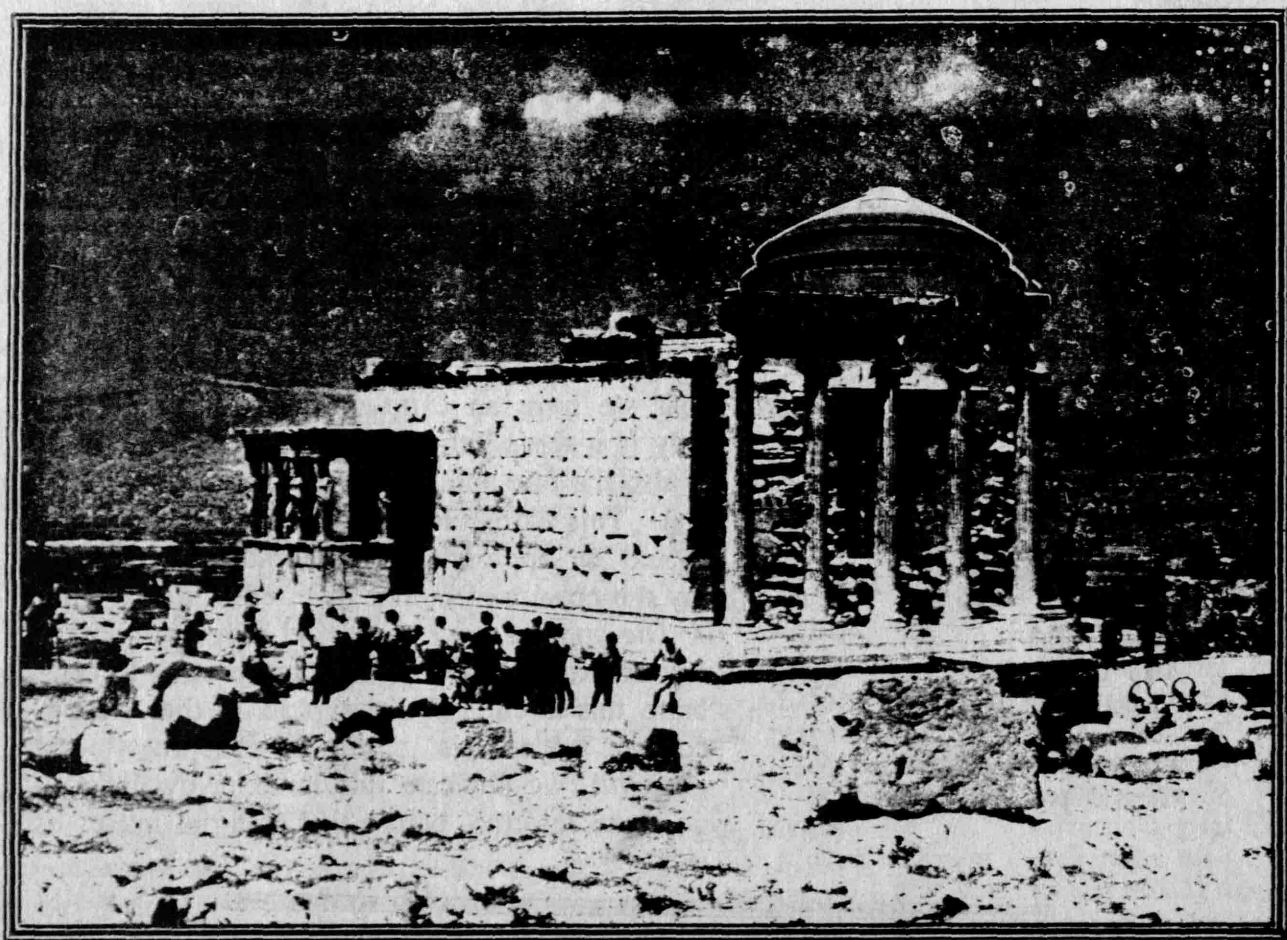


VOO DOO's

**Tool
& Die**

**Celebrating
MIT's 126th
Anniversary**



**Inside: Official History of MIT
Plus: Souvenir Map**

VOO DOO's



THE MIT HUMOR MAGAZINE

Published every term sometimes

Number 4

Spring 1987

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Credits

Jake--BD
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EDITORIAL:

It's that time of year again. No, I'm not talking about finals week, or Spring weekend. I'm talking about the most memorable time of year for all M.I.T. students: the Institute's anniversary! Last year we got an extra-special treat; we celebrated the quiscuacentennial, or 125 years. This year we have an extra-extra-special treat. Not only is it the 126th anniversary of M.I.T., but it is also the first anniversary of the quiscuacentennial. This extra-extra-extra-special time of year should be appropriately celebrated by all, and (by the powers of humor invested in me by *Tool & Die* and the gods that be) I hereby declare a day of extra-super-duper-special feasting to celebrate this event, which is akin to the Second-coming. To this spirit of happiness and goodwill, we dedicate this issue. Now let's all do some feasting, before this editorial makes us sick.

Thanks to:

Finboard for financial assistance (we're supposed to get it, aren't we?)

All the wonderful advertisers who were brave enough to give us money.

Anyone who doesn't throw this in the trash.

Printed by the
 Charles River
 Publishing Co.



Spring 1987

The Official History of MIT

(As recorded by the renowned MIT history department)

MIT's charter was first granted on April 10, 1861. Four days later, the North was first attacked at Fort Sumter, starting the Civil War. No one has yet proven a correlation between the two.

Due to this Civil War thing, the first MIT class of 15 students did not enter until February of 1865. As the first incoming class, they are noted mostly for being the only freshman class in MIT history to get decent rooms on campus. However, that is probably the only big advantage they had, other than their cafeteria food being somewhat better than it is now.

In the beginning, the institute had many numerical difficulties, most of which dealt with money. At several times, MIT came extremely close to being taken over by H——d. In fact, in 1905 the President of MIT actually engaged in a serious effort to have MIT become part of H——d. The MIT faculty voted against the merger, 56 to 7. The Alumni voted against it 2,035 to 834. The students rioted, realizing that the only possible thing worse than going to MIT would be going to MIT *and* being a H——d student. In view of all this, the MIT corporation approved the merger. (To this day, the MIT corporation seems to be maintaining a similar character.) Fortunately, due to a legal technicality the merger was called off and MIT stayed separate. The president, incidentally, was named Pritchett. He resigned immediately, and now has a fitting memorial to his name.

William Barton Rogers, who is best known for having his name of the front of the little dome, is also the person responsible for founding MIT. He served as president, and is probably also responsible for what is probably the best-known and most important tradition at MIT...the tuition increase; in 1873 the tuition was doubled from \$100 to \$200. Mr. Rogers taught mathematics and served as president until 1881, and returned in 1882 to speak before handing out diplomas at the commencement. His speech is most memorable for the fact that he died in the middle of it.

1882 was also a bleak year at MIT for another reason - the first electrical engineering course was taught. A separate department was

founded in 1902, and by 1921 had more students than any other department...this is another tradition which has also been upheld every year since then.

MIT moved across the river to its present Cambridge location in 1916. In Cambridge, as everywhere else, Harvard (H——d) started out with a lot of advantages over MIT. Having gotten there 280 years earlier, Harvard got all the good real estate in Cambridge. This resulted in MIT's getting a campus which is two and a half miles long and slightly wider than the infinite corridor. In fact, Harvard even seems to have anticipated where all the movie theatres, bookstores, record shops, and stores would be built, for somehow they're all located right near Harvard and not MIT.

MIT truly came into its own after World War I, possibly because it discovered a phenomenon known as the "Defense budget." In this century, MIT faculty and alumni have worked on some of the greatest achievements of our era, such as the atomic bomb, the Strategic Defense Initiative, and a missile that can actually be called the "Peacekeeper." However, rumors that Lobdell is a Biological Warfare Research Center are entirely unfounded.

Several nonmilitary advances have also been made here. For instance, the letters "MIT" were the first satellite communication ever sent, from Lincoln Labs to a station in California. (Despite this laudable achievement, dormline phones still cannot get three recognizable letters across the campus...) MIT has also become world-famous for its advances in computer science - like Project Athena.

Probably MIT's greatest achievement has been consistently getting otherwise intelligent people to spend several years and exponential amounts of money to come here, just to get a ring that looks like one brass knuckle. There is every indication that MIT will remain a great university, if only because it isn't really good for anything much else. Ideas such as making it into a parking lot or an extremely long bowling alley have not proven workable. Until someone can think of something else to do with it, MIT will undoubtedly continue as it has for the past 125 years...

Professor Skaggs Ponders:

The Liability Crisis

...I am reminded of the case of McGirt vs. McDonalds Corporation. The plaintiff, Eugene McGirt, claimed that he ordered a cheeseburger at a McDonalds restaurant, only to discover that the cheese was placed "below the meat, as opposed to on top of the meat," causing him "great emotional distress." McGirt sued for an amount equal to the Gross National Product of the United States, and a small order of fries "to go." Although the jury agreed with his suit, the judge reduced the amount, awarding him instead the right to "twice slide down the twisting slide at McDonaldland Playland." McGirt was reportedly "pleased" with the judgement.

Soon afterward, McGirt began to list his occupation as "Professional Plaintiff." He sued Mattel, Inc, claiming a toy he once owned as a child was "knowingly defective," causing him to misidentify "common farm animals, such as the cow, pig and horse." The toy, "Point and Speak," was supposed to function as follows: the child points a large arrow to one of the pictures of farm animals on the toy, pulls a string, and then a recorded voice says the name of the selected animal, and mimics the sound made by that animal. In his suit, McGirt claimed that the particular Point and Speak he owned as a child was defective; he would point to an animal, but the toy's recording would say the sound of another animal. This, he claimed, taught him the "wrong sounds for the wrong animals." A partial transcript of the hearing follows: [MA = McGirt's Attorney]

MA: Will the bailiff please blindfold Mr. McGirt.

Judge: Will the bailiff please blindfold Mr. McGirt.

[Bailiff blindfolds Mr. McGirt]

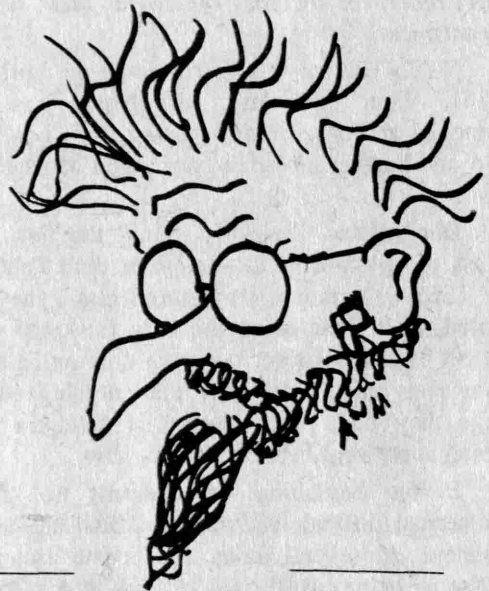
MA: Will the bailiff please lead the animal into the courtroom.

Judge: Will the bailiff please lead the animal into the courtroom.

[Bailiff leads the animal into the courtroom]

MA: Will the bailiff please strike the animal.

Judge: Will the bailiff please strike the animal.



Bailiff: I do not have the facilities to strike the animal.

Unidentified: Here, I have a large stick.

Bailiff: Thank you.

[Bailiff strikes the animal]

Animal: mooooooooooooooooooooo.

MA: Mr. McGirt, will you please identify the animal you have just heard?

McGirt: A pig.

Based on this evidence, the jury ruled in favor of McGirt.

McGirt's lawsuits have not always been successful. Appearing recently on People's Court, McGirt sued Publisher's Clearinghouse. He testified that literature for one of their sweepstakes instructed him to "void where prohibited," so he "peed all over my boss's pants, shoes and socks," which he claims subsequently led to his dismissal. McGirt sued for no monetary amount, but only to force Publisher's Clearinghouse to change their name to "Farto Hello Hippopotamus Bum Sweepstakes." McGirt recalled later: "After Wapner said 'All right, we'll take a short recess and I'll give you my decision,' he called me into his chamber, then proceeded to beat me with his gavel, kick me and throw various law books at me, while his bailiff, Rusty, held me down and laughed." McGirt lost the case.

ISSUES OF TODAY

Christmas Gift Ideas!

Sure, it's the end of April. You still have a few dozen shopping weeks until Christmas. But I know you. You're an MIT student. Hours before you leave for the holidays, you still won't have your shopping done. All will not be lost, however. We've done our homework and turned up the following catalogue of Christmas gift ideas *on campus*. You won't even have to leave the confines of MIT to gather an impressive set of gifts for family, friends, or anyone. So Here's *Tool & Die's*

On-Campus Christmas Gift Ideas

1. Third floor of Building 4 -- loads of antique physics equipment outside the physics stock-room. Choose from wooden current and volt meters, vacuum tubes, metal pieces of all shapes and sizes. Great for collectors. It would be a shame to let them throw this stuff away.
2. Mail room, building 24 -- free MIT and student directories. Perfect for the socialite on your list.
3. Twenty Chimneys -- food from here stays

fresh for weeks, if properly stored (under oil, like sodium).

4. MIT Furniture Exchange (215 Windsor St.) -- large selection of furniture students couldn't get rid of any other way. Lots of cute knickknacks. Only open Tuesday and Thursday afternoons during your Soil Mechanics class though.
5. Lobby 10 -- healthy green houseplants. Well nurtured by MIT physical plant workers.
6. Various restrooms around campus -- free toilet paper. Something practical for the person who has everything.
7. Green Building (54) second floor -- wide selection of embedded fossils. Choose from ancient bacteria, dinosaur bones, relics of primitive man (don't miss the first known artificial palate).
8. Building 5 basement -- limited stock of 2' x 3' x h" iron plates. A million uses. They're heavy -- bring a dolly, or an MIT football player. Better make that two or three MIT football players.

Voter Registration By Mail?

Massachusetts Voters recently defeated a measure to allow voter registration by mail. The controversy is not over, however. Politicians from coast to coast are raging over the issue. Those favoring the idea point to increased voter turnout, with citizens living in the Arctic regions voicing strong support. Opponents fear voter fraud, and are afraid to trust the U.S. mail with anything more important than tax forms.

One such opponent is California Senator Raymond Cook. To demonstrate the danger of mail fraud with the system as it now exists in the state, he successfully registered his cat, his recliner, and a sycamore tree in his front yard. Unfortunately for the senator, his plan backfired-- the sycamore voted for his Democratic opponent, Joe Snyder, a former member of Greenpeace.

Another incident imbued the black Mississippi township of Lenfield in controversy. Following the 1986 elections, officials discovered that, out of a population of 1100, the voter tur-

nout had been 1400. Numerous enquiries ensued, until the officials realized that, in the last census, blacks had only been counted as three-fifths of a person.

Proponents of mail voting cannot deny the fraud danger, and have suggested the counseling and/or surveillance of high-risk groups. High risk groups commonly mentioned include schizophrenics, amnesiacs, and politicians, their friends and family. The Democrats would reportedly be eyeing mental hospital outpatients who might attempt to cast multiple votes for George Bush in 1988.

If the fraud problem can be straightened out, there is no question that voting by mail would be a convenience of proportions rivalled only by drive-up bank tellers and take-out sushi. This, and the usefulness of mail voting for those who get lost driving even in their own neighborhood, guarantee that the practice will be supported and hotly debated for years to come.

The HISTORY of NURDS

Dr. Kinkovac, a leading pseudosociopschoanthropologist, looks at the evolution of an unique American subculture



Kinkovac: first nurd was an MIT stud!



c.1900's

Once, only suave dudes entered MIT...



... but heavy work load soon led to bad grooming...



Subjugating all frosh and forcing them to wear BEANIES facilitated the Transformation...



1930's

During the Great Depression, people couldn't afford new eye glasses, so broken ones were fixed...

40's

With the invention of pocket protectors came the first "CLASSIC" nurd



c.1955



"Sha Nah Nurd" fashion was popular...



1960's

Voted as both UMOC and Homecoming Queen!

The first NURDETTE!

Late 60's - Early 70's



Being Nurdy was unhip, and groovy people thought nurds were SQUARE.

In the early 80's.

With the release of *Revenge of the Nerds*, nerds finally came out of the closet; suddenly, it was **COOL** to be a nerd. There was even a "Nerdy" fashion (honest!)

Everywhere you went, everywhere you looked, nerds were found. They were on comic strips, they were on TV... And they lived on **YOUR** street!

Also nerds came in many types - of all colors, sizes and genders.



Silent Type



Sensitive Type



Friendly Type



Greasy Special



Myopic Majority



Hyperopic Minority

1990's

In 1990's POST-prefab society geared to success, designer prestige and corporate conformity, the nurd, whose gross appearance and devotion to academics bring him contempt, finds himself at a selective **disadvantage**, and may soon become a thing of the past!



Oh so sad..



CH



YOU ARE HERE

Warning: To prevent fire or shock hazard, do not expose this map to rain or moisture.

Key Symbols



TEAR OUT AND KEEP

H.G. Steinbrenner Stadium. H. G. S. was M.I.T.'s greatest student athlete, which is like being Siberia's greatest jazz saxophonist. George donated this stadium to mitigate his embarrassment and humiliation. The running surface is Technoturf, a space-age composite of molassas, creosote, horsehair, and Bakelite.

Briggs Field. Site of the final Battle of Cambridge, where Cambridge won its independence from Boston. 16,000 people are buried under Briggs Field. For the recent laying of Astroturf, they had to move some 800 bodies to the Boathouse.

The Old Lump. (Sometimes known as **The Great Thing**). It was apparently once enormously documented but all records were destroyed in the Cambridge fire of 1866 and all memory of its origin is lost. Some say it was the first automatic teller machine in the new world.

Baker. During a site visit, the building's architect insulted students by calling them worms; he designed this dormitory for them to "wiggle about in."

Center for Genetic Engineering

Reactor Meltdown Site. Nothing can be built here for 20,000 years. Proved the safety of current reactor designs.

Stinky Labs for Aromatic Chemistry.

Eichmann Animal Facility. Replicates W.W.II experiments on cute floppy-eared puppies, adorable frisky kittens, fluffy bunny rabbits, and cuddly smart chimpanzees. The original M.I.T. beaver is stuffed and on display in the basement.

Landau building. The bow of the first metalclad ship -- "Old Coppersides." It sank in the Charles River.

The Blackhead Institute.

Arts and Media Technology. This tile-covered edifice is the bathroom facility for a larger building to be constructed around it. The arch will be the doorway for the larger building -- new headquarters for the Electrical Engineering Department.

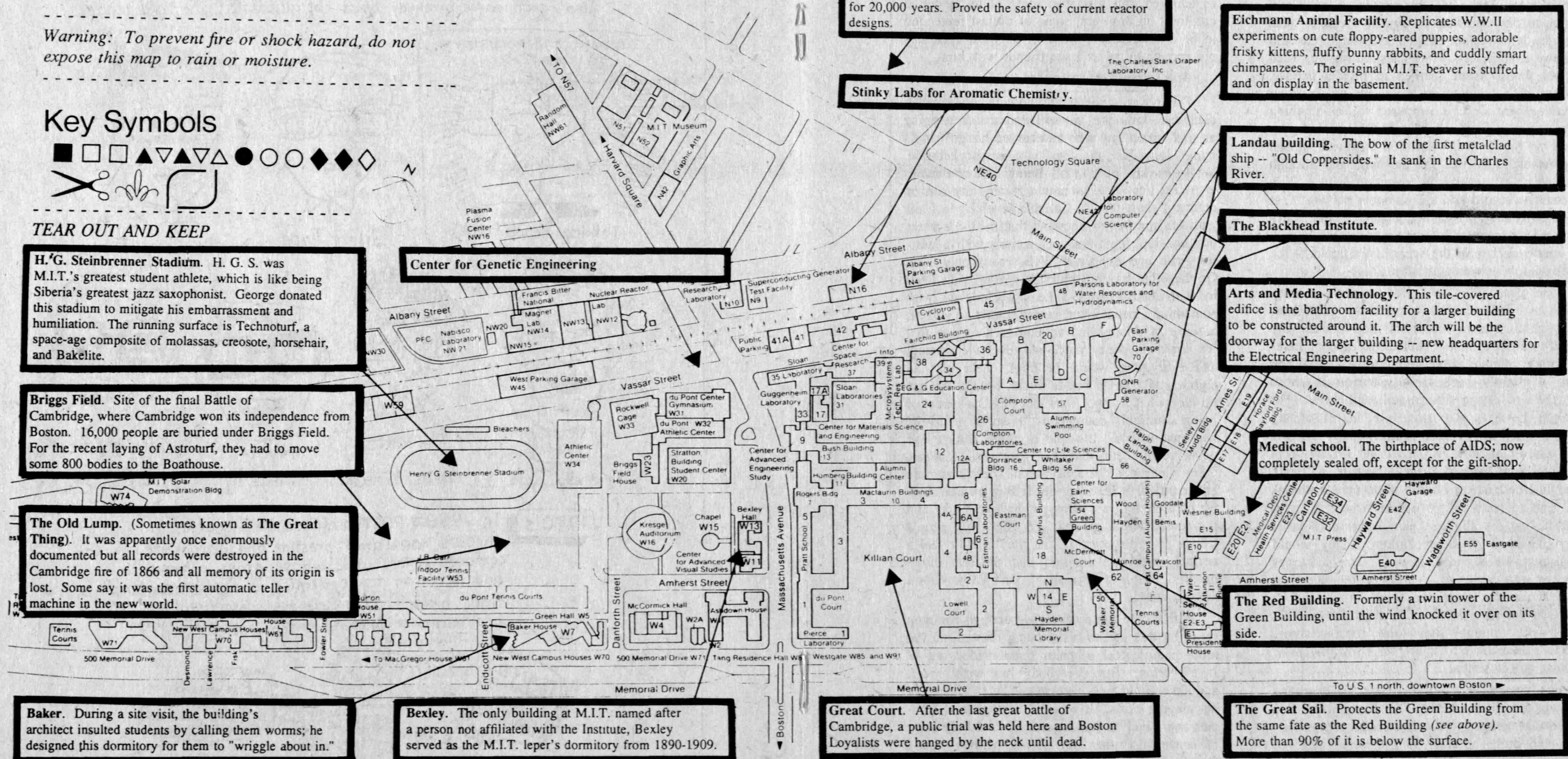
Medical school. The birthplace of AIDS; now completely sealed off, except for the gift-shop.

The Red Building. Formerly a twin tower of the Green Building, until the wind knocked it over on its side.

Great Court. After the last great battle of Cambridge, a public trial was held here and Boston Loyalists were hanged by the neck until dead.

The Great Sail. Protects the Green Building from the same fate as the Red Building (see above). More than 90% of it is below the surface.

Bexley. The only building at M.I.T. named after a person not affiliated with the Institute, Bexley served as the M.I.T. leper's dormitory from 1890-1909.



Remembering Jake

You remember Jake. Everybody remembers Jake. He was a guy we all grew up with, a guy high school wouldn't be high school without. Jake was the tough fighter who was weaned on cigarettes and alcohol, the kid who lost his virginity at an age when the rest of us were still trying to find out what "virginity" meant. Jake was the fellow who, while managing to use and destroy a total of 14 vehicles during his high school years, never seemed to own a license. Jake was the man to go to for advice on doing anything you weren't supposed to do--anything at all, from getting out of your third period gym class to buying high-powered Japanese plastic explosives. Jake was the guy who slid through four years of secondary education with a 20% attendance record and a D in every subject. Yet he was admired by even the most academically oriented students, and he commanded the respect of every teacher in the school. Particularly the ones who were young and female.

The distribution of Jakes in various communities follows no particular guidelines, although any town worth its road tar can lay claim to at least one. The average ratio of Jakes to normal humans is probably around 1 to 5000, with a slightly higher concentration in those areas where Zappa albums sell really well. For myself, I knew only one Jake in all of my adolescence, and I fully believed he was the only one of his kind in the world. I grew up in the northern part of New Jersey in a small, straight-laced, upper-middle class neighborhood, the kind of town where parents would become mortified at the slightest manifestation of Jake-ian tendencies in their children. They would warn us repeatedly in their most concerned tones that we were never to go near people like that, for fear we might pick up some of their habits and turn out just like them. I don't know what our parents thought they were accomplishing, but Jake had them to thank for being the most popular guy in school.

Few people were close to Jake, but everyone had an opinion about him. To the principal this boy was a menace to the entire educational system, and quite possibly to the very fabric of America. To his teachers he represented a challenge, an intelligent youth who needed only to be "reached." To the girls at school he was the subject of a thousand secretly passed notes, and

the object of an even greater number of slumber party fantasies. As for the guys, some of us were jealous and viciously combative with him. Some of us were terrified to death of him. Some of us held him in open disdain, some of us admired him distantly, some of us modelled our lives on him, and some of us just pretended to be unimpressed. Some of us were even stupid enough to try to make friends with him.

And some of us succeeded.

I'll never understand how a respectable, clean-cut kid like myself ended up hanging around with a guy who had carved his girlfriend's name into his shoulder with a pocketknife. Well, I was only 17. Being 17 constitutes universal license to commit virtually any sort of madness short of, oh, Caligula level I guess, all with the comfort of knowing that in future years you can look back on your actions with a wistful smile and explain, "Well, I was only 17." On the other hand, I think the main reason I fell in with Jake was that he provided me with something I needed and lacked totally in myself; a sense of doom-blind adventure, a feeling that we could do pretty much whatever we wanted, and everything would be cool. Fear was an emotion Jake never had to avoid, because he had no idea what it was. This lent him the aspect of being admirably courageous, when in reality he was just insane. It's one of those things I've never really been able to figure out. I mean, other victims of serious mental deficiency are either pitied or scorned, depending on the civility of their fellows. But our history books and our sacred burial grounds are filled with people whose only distinction is that they couldn't feel a normal, everyday emotion that the rest of us have no trouble with at all. I don't know. It's a strange world.

Fortunately I had developed enough common sense by this age to resist being drawn into the more pathological schemes that crawled out of Jake's brain. But everybody has weak spots, and Jake could read weakness like the backs of his playing cards. It was the beginning of summer and I had no job, no money, and little hope of squeezing either out of my parents. Let's face it; I was as vulnerable as an intact window in the South Bronx. So naturally, when my buddy told me about this great new sales job he had, making big money for almost no work, I

walked right into the trap and asked if his employers were still hiring. As I was to find out later, his employers were always hiring. They had to keep their ranks full until the bulk of their sales force got out of jail.

I should have recognized the harbingers of sleaze right away. The company was located in a dingy, run-down section of town, in a building that looked as though it might have been assembled from a kit. The entrance was around at the back, and there was no sign of any kind on the door. Jake rapped lightly in a rhythm that sounded suspiciously like a code and, after identifying himself, we were admitted.

The interior of the buiding pretty much lived up to what the exterior had promised; plaster-board walls, dirty floors, stick furniture, and generic heavy metal playing at a volume that threatened to vibrate the whole place into dust. As I sat down to fill out a job application, Jake went in to talk to the manager, leaving me alone. I wrestled with such scintillating questions as, "If you could be any kind of textile in the world, which one would you choose?" for about three minutes. Jake returned.

"All set, Bob. Let's go."

"Wha...wait a minute! I haven't finished filling out the application. Don't I have to talk to the manager? I don't even know..."

"You've got the job. Let's move. Oh, by the way, the company car is still in the shop. Is it okay if we take yours?"

Now, the car I was driving was not my own. It belonged to my mother, and my mother was the Merchant of Venice of car lending. If the

slightest scratch, dent, or blemish appeared while I had been driving her car, the punishment quite probably would involve heavy bleeding on my part. I didn't even dare to adjust the rear-view mirror; far better to die with a steering wheel through my ribcage than to face Mom after having messed with her Volvo. But this was Jake asking, after all. I looked at him. He looked at me.

"Sure, no problem," I said, and paused briefly, waiting for the thunderbolt to strike me dead. "Where are we headed, anyway?"

"Not far. Worthington. It's upstate. You ever been there?"

"Sure. But, ah...not for a long time. You may have to, like, show me some of the turns, you know?" I had never heard of Worthington.

"Yeah, okay. But first we got to load up. The warehouse is right over there. Back it in."

I should emphasize that at this time I still had no idea what type of sales my new job would entail. I had envisioned some sort of comfortable telephone job, with a big private desk and a 15 minute break every two hours for doughnuts. I was too concerned with looking confident in front of Jake to even ask about specifics. And by this time it was too late to ask without looking like a total jerk.

In the warehouse we found large, informal piles of wholesale junk. Cheap car stereos, imitation leather bags, small plastic toys, worthless novelty items--the kind of stuff that's usually given away as 12th prize in the Publisher's Clearing House Sweepstakes. I was daunted, but stoically silent. We piled armfuls of this

DOONSBURGH



merchandise into the trunk, grabbed an inventory sheet, and took off.

By "upstate" Jake had meant upstate New York, and pretty far up, too. I drove on mile after mile, blindly following his directions. He had clearly traveled the route before, as he was able to call out turns and exits miles before we actually hit them. And he never used a map, of course. I doubt if Jake knew that such things as maps existed, except maybe the kind you draw on the back of a dirty napkin after a meal at Denny's. Finally, three hours and a tank of gas later, we found ourselves in the parking lot of a small, nondescript shopping plaza, featuring a K-Mart, a bowling alley, a pizza place, and the Worthington State Bank. Jake told me we had arrived. I was understandably confused.

"This is it?" I asked. "Why did we have to come 200 miles to sell some junk to a K-Mart store? There are plenty of K-Marts right where we live."

"I been having some trouble selling in Jersey," he explained, with no particular inflection to indicate what sort of trouble that might have been. "And we're not selling our stuff to K-Mart."

I thought about this for a minute. Even with the limited capacity for logic I had so obviously demonstrated up to now, I could still figure out that if K-Mart were not to be our customer, then the bowling alley, the pizza place, and the bank were probably ruled out as well. Cold realization, which had been tapping softly at the door of my brain for quite a while, now began to pound.

"Jake..." I began uneasily. "Jake, we're not going to...I mean, we can't sell this stuff...just to people in the parking lot? Can we?" I looked at him. He looked at me. These silences were taking on a decidedly sinis-

ter flavor. "Jake, you don't have a permit, do you? You're selling this stuff without a permit, and we had to come way out here because the cops chased you out of New Jersey. That's it, isn't it? I don't want to do this, Jake. You could get in big trouble for this. Let's just forget it and go home." True to form, I was a wimp as well as a fool.

Jake laughed shortly. "Hey, you ever seen those street vendors they got in New York City? They're all over the place, sometimes two or three on a street, and they never have any problems. You think those guys got permits?" He was out of the car before I had a chance to reply, arranging the merchandise in the trunk into a less junk-like display.

I had no leverage in the situation at all. Without Jake I had no way of finding my way back home, so I couldn't just threaten to leave. And although I could refuse to help hawk the stuff myself, there was no way to prevent Jake from doing it. So while my friend set about his business, accosting passersby with a conspiratorial, "Yo, I got some nice merchandise in the trunk here, wanna check it out?," I followed the dictate of my conscience and cowered in the front seat with my head under the steering wheel.

Jake managed to move a surprising amount of product. His technique was definitely hard sell; the men he intimidated, the women he charmed, and the teenagers he simply lied to. He was in his element. As the hours passed, I became comfortable enough to poke my head up and peer at him over the seat back. In spite of my apprehension, I couldn't help but admire the style with which the man operated. He was undeniably cool. A psychopath, but cool.

I sat there in the car, the windows rolled up, the late afternoon heat rising around me. After

BOBBY BRAUN



a while I began to get a bit groggy. I didn't fall asleep—I was still to nervous for that. I just passed into a semi-conscious state, halfway between sleep and waking, just sentient enough to wipe the saliva from my chin when I began to drool. This is a fairly common state with me. I spend most of my 9 AM classes like this. One of the unpleasant things about this condition is that I sometimes begin to hallucinate, and real things happening around me get transmuted into a kind of personal "day-mare." It's as if my subconscious is getting back at me for making it worry constantly during my waking hours about every little ridiculous problem I have. The revenge can be nasty.

I watched the people swarming over the parking lot outside the car; they moved slowly, and in silence. There was something vaguely threatening about them. As I stared, I began to see my car as a prison cell, and the people outside became the guards. They were all carrying around car stereo components which I had sold them, and none of them worked. They started to encircle me, stony-faced, drawing out their car keys/pistols, hungry for blood. I couldn't move. My skin felt cold and clammy. I wiped some drool from my chin. Wild desperation began to creep over me, stifling all reason, dash-

ing all hope. What could I do to appease the vicious, 8-foot-tall monster prison guards who were closing in on me, training their 8 mm sub-machine guns on my head? I swallowed, steeled my nerves, and prepared to offer them a full refund.

As fate would have it, I was rescued from my ugly fantasy by a sharp rapping sound at the car window. My consciousness came swimming back up to the surface. Relieved to be back in a world of relative safety, I rolled down the window and greeted Jake warmly. I was grateful for his having pulled me out of my imagined jam, and my voice came out a bit heavy on the male-bonding overtones. Unfortunately, I found the rapper wasn't Jake at all. It was a very large, very hard-looking cop, and he wasn't nearly as pleasant as I was.

"Where the hell were you?!" I whined at Jake. "You're out there selling stuff illegally for hours, and when a cop shows up, you disappear and I have to take the blame! Some friend you are!" The degree of my consternation can only be judged by my willingness to speak to Jake in tones that warrant exclamation marks.

He was unruffled. "You got nothing to worry about," he assured me smoothly. "That cop doesn't know you."

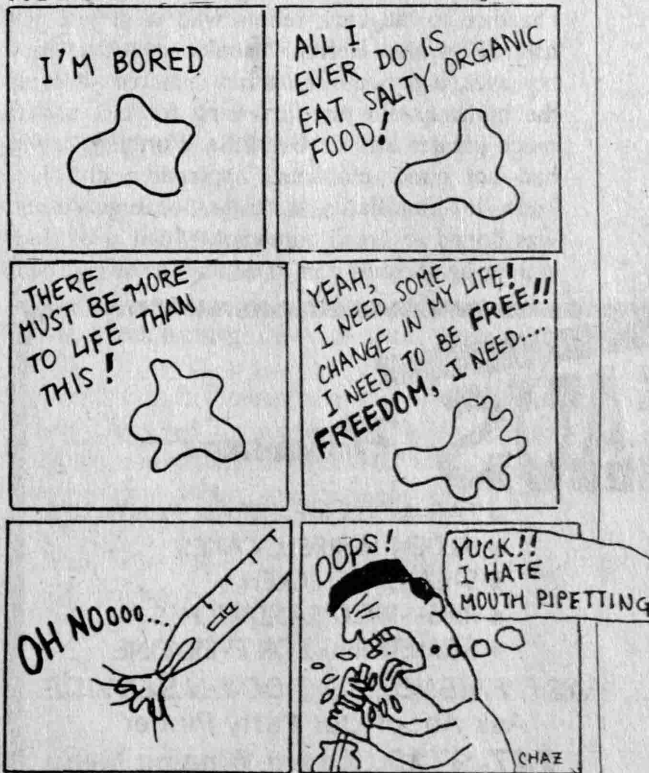
Doesn't know me? One by one, the layers of cool that surrounded Jake were being peeled back to reveal the genuine seaminess underneath. Not only was this guy a wanted man in New Jersey, but apparently he was on a first name basis with the New York police as well.

I sighed. Nothing like a good sigh to make you feel your suffering is of romantic proportions. "All right. At least I'll have something to say at Confession on Sunday. Let's just forget any of this happened and get out of here before that cop comes back." I climbed wearily into the driver's seat.

You know, I had half convinced myself that Jake would actually respond to my suggestion by blithely hopping into the car and buckling up. My naivete was almost quaint, in a pitiful sort of way. In contrast to me, an encounter with the police affected Jake about as deeply as a sneeze. He looked at me strangely for a second, let out another one of those clipped laughs, and headed for the trunk.

I was frantic. I couldn't hide anymore, since the cop knew my car and my name. Jake was

HUBERT : An Amoeba Growing Up.



beyond persuasion, so I was reduced to a kind of frenzied surveillance, racing back and forth around the car, trying to spot any sign of an approaching uniform in time for us to escape. I didn't have to do this for long, though. After pushing junk for another 15 minutes or so, Jake suddenly slammed the trunk, grabbed my car keys, and jumped behind the wheel.

Now this, I thought, is curious. The exact wording of this thought was probably somewhat stronger, occurring as it did while I was diving headfirst through the passenger's window as the car screeched out of the parking lot. While Jake careened recklessly through the streets at speeds hitherto unknown to Worthington, I managed to get the story out of him. "Did you catch that old lady with the leather bag I sold her?" He used the term "leather" loosely. "Forty-five bucks she gave me. That bag didn't have no zipper! We got to cash this check before she finds out and puts a stop payment on it." He was looking for a branch of the bank whose name was on the check, in hopes that they would cash it on the spot. Of course, he had no idea where to find such a bank, but he must have figured that driving down every street in the county was at least as good a tactic as, say, calling Information. And at the speed he drove, it was probably faster, too.

I counted a total of 14 banks before we finally hit it right--the Fidelity First National Trust of New York. Jake screamed across two lanes of traffic and spun the wheel; the right tires thudded against the curb simultaneously, the left wheels lifted into the air, and we crashed down to a bouncing halt.

I realized I hadn't been breathing for the last 10 miles or so. As I swooned and gasped for air, Jake just sat motionless beside me, his hand

still resting on the gearshift. I noticed him staring at the clock behind me, on top of the bank, and I turned to take a look. It was 5:02. The bank had closed 2 minutes ago.

For some reason, my mind chose this moment to call time out and reflect on the circumstances which had led us to this point. I don't think the staggeringly petty lowness of the entire situation fully hit me until then. I mean, here we were, two high school kids from New Jersey, speeding madly through the streets of a nothing little town 200 miles from home, risking our lives, breaking the law, driving my mother's car, all just to cheat an innocent old lady out of 45 bucks for a bag with a broken zipper. With just a little more class we could have qualified as stock characters in one of those Bertholdt Brecht plays. The moment definitely called for pith. I struggled to come up with some poetic bit of fluff, some devastatingly cynical observation to sum up the baseness of all material motivation, the absurdity of noble aims, the pathetic comedy we call human endeavor. My friend, however, beat me to it.

"Shit," he spat with disgust. A man of few words, Jake.

I'm really not at all clear on what happened the rest of that day. It was Jake's plan to make the best of a bad situation and sell some merchandise to the bank tellers who were just getting off work. Before I could scream at him, however, a police siren a few hundred yards up the highway did my screaming for me, and to much greater effect. Our little Worthington 500 had not gone unnoticed, apparently, and Jake knew his familiarity with the local gendarmes was bound to breed contempt. So it was Mach 1 time again, only this time the carrot had been

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replaced by a stick. And it is here that my memory becomes a bit hazy. I'm not ashamed to admit it. Some people live for the thrill of high speed car chases with the police hot on their tails; I tend to throw up. I think I did throw up. Chances are there was a lot of incoherent babbling and spastic flailing, too. I really don't know. I do seem to recall at one point abruptly skidding to a stop in an alley somewhere, and it sounded like Jake was throwing the contents of the trunk out into the street. I could be mistaken about this, though.

Needless to say, I spent that summer broke. Jake never did understand why I refused to become a salesman. He worked at that job all summer and into the next year, getting rich, and never once getting caught. Me, I nervously repainted Mom's car about 7 times, and developed a facial twitch at the sound of anything remotely resembling a police siren. As time went on we saw less and less of each other, and eventually I was obliged to hang around with the "science guys," a group of people whom Jake avoided like 16-year-old girls. Even though he had provided me with neuroses to last a lifetime, I still sort of missed him after a while. Prolonged exposure to this guy would undoubtedly have proven fatal, but Jake in limited doses is just the prescription to keep total sanity from smothering your life.

Which reminds me. I just heard from Jake a few weeks ago, for the first time since high school. He wrote me from Miami, his new home, telling me all about his exciting new job in a field he pioneered himself. As near as I can make out from his handwriting, Jake now makes a living by accepting point money from South American tequila barons to help them smuggle their goods across the Gulf of Mexico into Florida, then turning them in anonymously to the FBI to collect a reward. Double the pay, and never a dull moment, he claims. As it so happens, he's got a major operation coming up in January involving a Peruvian kingpin and several million dollars, and he needs a hand with the transportation....

Well, what the hell. I had nothing planned for IAP, anyway.

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