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The Drink Tank Issue 109

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PLASTIGOOP & more!
Illustrated Instructions

The Ten Worst Toys of All-Time

As you can tell, I love lists. Whenever some group releases a top ten list, I have to read and write about it. This year, RADAR released a list of the Ten Worst Toys of all time. They called their list Pray for Coal, which is an awesome title. What's really awesome is the actual set of toys.

Number 10: The Fisher-Price Power Wheels Motorcycle. Man, this thing is awesome. Some little kids would rev the engine all the way and take off, with the minor trouble being that the brakes didn't always work. I had a powered motorcycle when I was a kid, but its top speed was something like 2 miles an hour. The Power Wheels cycle was a bit faster, top speed around ten miles an hour or so on some of the models. Still, when they took it off the market, that was a sad day.



Number 9: Battlestar Galactica Missile Launcher. Now, here's a toy that I actually owned. In 1979, Battlestar Galactica was one of my favourite shows, and when they released figures, I got a bunch of them for Christmas. I had the Missile Launchers and the

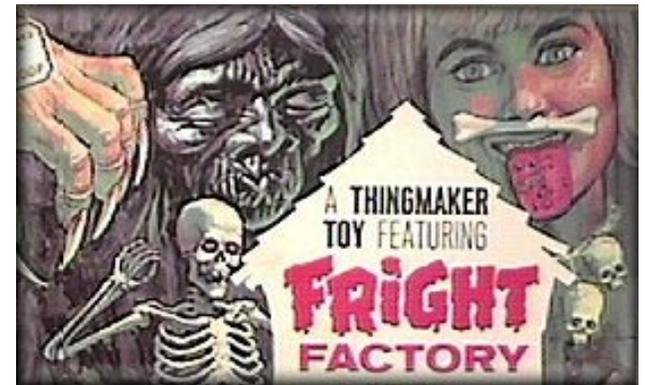


Scarab guy, which I had as late as the late 1990s. I love the thing, and I never shot the missiles into my mouth causing me to choke to death like some kid in Florida did. They were just cool.

Number 8: Johnny Reb Cannon. This is the coolest toy ever made with a Confederate theme! Basically it's a thirty inch long plastic cannon made



by Remco, the company that also made the AWA wrestling figures in the mid-1980s. The thing could shoot its little hard plastic cannonballs up to thirty feet. That's right, thirty feet. Here's what RADAR said about it in short- "For only \$11.98, young rebels got a cannon, six cannon balls, a ramrod, and a rebel flag. What better way to permanently maim your little brother while spreading valuable lessons about states' rights?"



Number 7: Fright Factory. One of my favourite concepts was the Creepy Crawler Fright Factory, which is the distant cousin of today's Creepy Crawlers. This version had a hot plate and you put molds on it and then poured plastic goop on it. That stuff was also toxic and kids would eat it.

Number 6: Bat Masterson Derringer Belt Gun. This is the original version of Tom Savini's Crotch Gatlin Gun from From Dusk 'til Dawn. It was a cap gun that you wore on your belt and fired



by sticking your stomach out. You also had a chance to seriously burn yourself. Nice touch.



Number 5: Sky Dancers. I bought one of these things for Evelyn last year and she loves it! Basically, it's a Barbie-like doll that comes with a launcher. You put the doll on it and pull a thingee and it flies off twirling the blade like arms that have a minor habit of hitting kids and the grown-up supervisors in the eyes. Evelyn likes to fire it towards me, but I've always

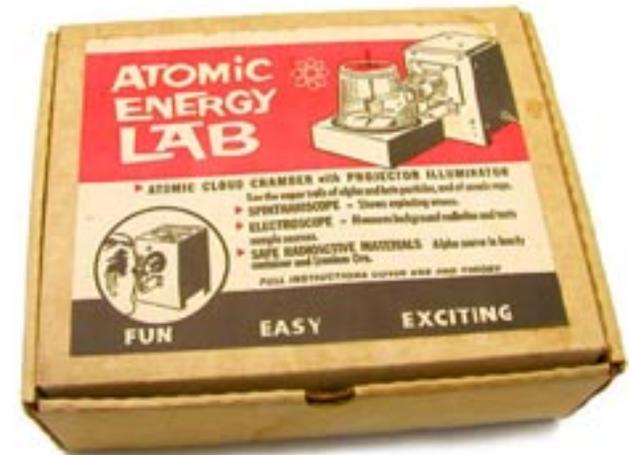
managed to catch it in mid-air.



Number 4: Snacktime Cabbage Patch Dolls. Here's a doll that can eat real food...and that includes the fingers of unassuming children. Ooh, how cute: it's gnawing Baby's pinkie off!



Number 3: Mini-Hammocks from EZ Sales. This one's a fun one and it also makes me sad that I missed them. These 4 dollar hammocks choked more than a dozen kids, a couple of them to death! I've always loved hammocks, and I would have loved to have owned one of these. RADAR describes it as "Baby's First Death Cocoon".



Number 2: Gilbert U-238 Atomic Energy Lab. OK, this is the best idea for a toy ever! In 1951, you could buy a kit for \$49.50 that came with a Geiger-Mueller Radiation Counter, a Wilson Cloud Chamber, a Spinthariscopes, and an Electroscope. Oh yeah, and it came with 4 active Uranium samples. That's right, back in those days you could get U-238 through the mail for less than fiddy bucks. I'm not kidding. There aren't a lot of these around anymore, they only sold for a year or so and that's probably a good thing since



there could have been a generation of mutants from the use of a simple chemistry kit.



Number 1: Lawn Darts. Let me say this right now- I love Lawn Darts. We used to go to the KOA in Santa Cruz and borrow their Lawn Darts and play. No one ever got hurt and we played a lot. I loved those things, so much better than horseshoes, and it was a blast. There were a lot of injuries (more than 6000 by 1987) and a kid got one in his head. They were removed from the market in 1987 and the KOA is far less entertaining now.



What's interesting is that there are a lot of other toys that I had that would certainly belong on this kind of list. There were a lot of things that had pieces that shot out, including the MASK (Mobile Armored Strike Kommand) vehicles that I thought were so awesome. I never swallowed any of them, but there were a couple of points where I got close.

Another were those chemical balloons that you blew up using a

straw. They were awful chemical concoctions that a few folks I knew took a large chunk out of and ate. Not a good idea.

Any toy which made stuff that looked like food was a bad idea too, like those Playdoh sets.

One of my favourites ever was never sold but featured on David Letterman. He called it My First Sawblade Shooter!



Not Quite The Greatest Story Ever Told: Christopher Moore's *Lamb* and Stephen Lynch's *Craig*

I've often said that the best stories are the ones that happen off to the side of the stories we already know. That's why *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* is such a great little film/play. The same with why *Farmer's The Other Log of Phileas Fog* is such a fun read. It's the swirling around the known story that's really interesting. The story of Jesus, the best known story in the world (though the travels of Muhammad, The story of Siddhar-

tha's enlightenment and Titanic might be close) is then one of the best vehicles for this kind of story. Now, heavy was the head that wore the crown of thorns, so to keep things from causing a massive riot, you gotta keep Jesus as sacred. Making him into a drooling idiot (as Michael Moorcock did in some story) isn't a good way to go, but playing with those around him isn't a bad plan at all. My two favourite things that have played with other 'characters' not mentioned in the traditional story are a novel by Christopher Moore and a song by Stephen Lynch.

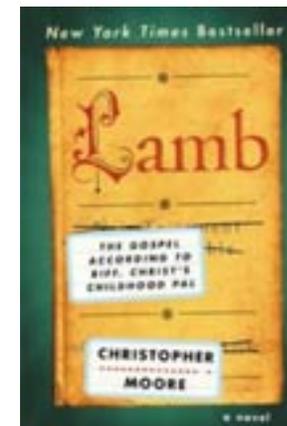
Let's start with the book. Christopher Moore's tale is the *Gospel According to Biff: Christ's Childhood Pal*. It's the story of Jesus' best friend Biff. He's the raging yin to Jesus' sober yang. Or maybe it's the other way around, I'm not particularly versed in Asiatic religious thought. The story tells mostly of what happened while Jesus wasn't mentioned in the Bible, those thirty years or so. According to Moore, they went to Tibet and India and elsewhere, having whacky adventures.

Now, Jesus is all the wonderful things we've heard of him before, only funnier, and Biff is a lecherous, sneaky, wily bastard who actually keeps Jesus from doing the things that'd keep him from being the Jesus that we know and love. It's actually a great look at the dedication of his fol-

lowers and what they would have done for him. While it does turn Mary Magdalen into a whore again, it leads to funny stuff all along the way. There's a lot of fun and funny stuff, especially when Jesus and Biff learn Jew-Do, the first martial art.

The story makes Jesus look slightly more human than the Bible, but it also makes him a terribly tragic figure. Now I hear you say "Hey, the guy knows he's gonna be betrayed and crucified, how could you get more tragic than that?" Well, all his life, he knows he's separated from all the people around him because he has to be perfection and here he thinks about and really doesn't like that. Biff acts the way he does not only because he's a hedonistic jerk, but because he's gotta live a part of Jesus' life for him. That's heavy stuff, and yet it's still comedy gold.

The end of the story is a bit of a downer (Spoiler Warning: Jesus gets it in the end, and in this case, Biff betrays him even worse than Peter did in the preachier version). It's got an up ending though and you really should try and read it. Christopher Moore is a great writer and one of the best genre comedy writers you'll ever read.

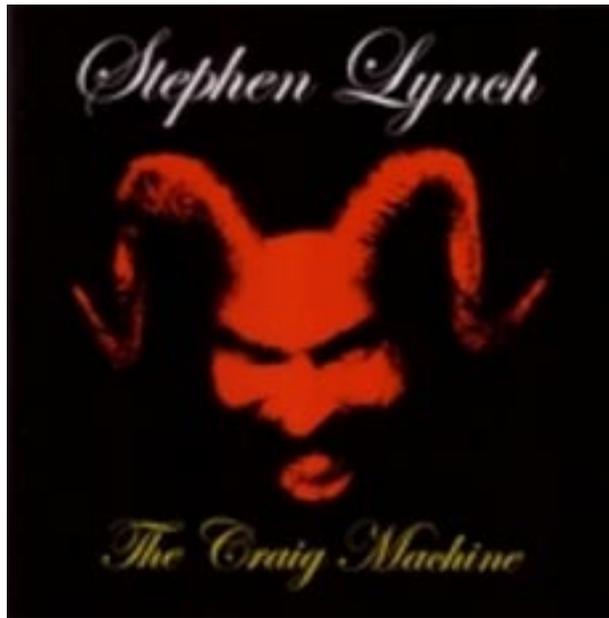


Speaking of comedy, Stephen Lynch. There's a guy who's hilarious in the songs that he does. While Weird Al makes you laugh through a combination of familiarity tweaking and references, Mr. Lynch does it through pure chutzpah and writing songs that are just plain wrong. On his first album, topics included being touched by the local priest, one teste having people and other fun topics. He's got no filter, which is good for a comedian because he has a location where he can make that work for himself. The Craig Machine, a very good live album, features one of the best songs of the bastard's oeuvre: Craig.

Everyone Knows Jesus
The Guy Who Cured the Lame
I am Jesus' Brother
Craig is my name

There it is: the entire basis for the song. Craig's Jesus' bro and obviously he's very different.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace
Jesus is the Lamb
Jesus is the SO of God
But Craig Don't Give a Damn
'Cause when Craig's in sight
We'll Party all night
I don't turn water into wine but into
Cold Coor's Light
I'm Not my Brother, I know
I don't walk on H2O



but I got hydroponic shit that Judas and I grow

I'm Fuckin' Craig
Craig Christ

Now, could Craig be any more different from his do-good brother? He's a party animal and Jesus is the obvious good guy. Perhaps much of Craig's partying is a reaction to Jesus' good guy ways. The association with Judas, who Jesus must know is going to eventually betray him might be another part of that rebellion against Jesus. Certainly that last couplet shows Craig's need for attention in the face of his brother.

I hang out with lepers
Barabbas and Salome

Jesus' friends are called the Apostles
Those Dudes are totally gay
Jesus Performs Miracle
From Galilee to Rome
But it would be a miracle
if he brought a fuckin' lady home
because while Jesus is prayin'
Craig is layin'
Every lady in the Testament, you know
what I'm sayin'

Well, Craig has gone forth and is seeking out others who are not like the ones that Jesus hangs with. It's obviously a reaction to Jesus again, though it is a little strange that he would hang around with Salome, the chick who got the head of Johnny The Baptist, their cousin. Also, this one flies in the face of Dan Brown's DiVinci Code as he's obviously not bringing women home. Add to that the fact that Craig appears to be partying with all the lovely ladies of the first Century.

I won't die for your sins, like my famous kins
but if You've got a little sister then
there's room at my inn

Now, Craig might have a little of the forward sight his bro had. Plus,

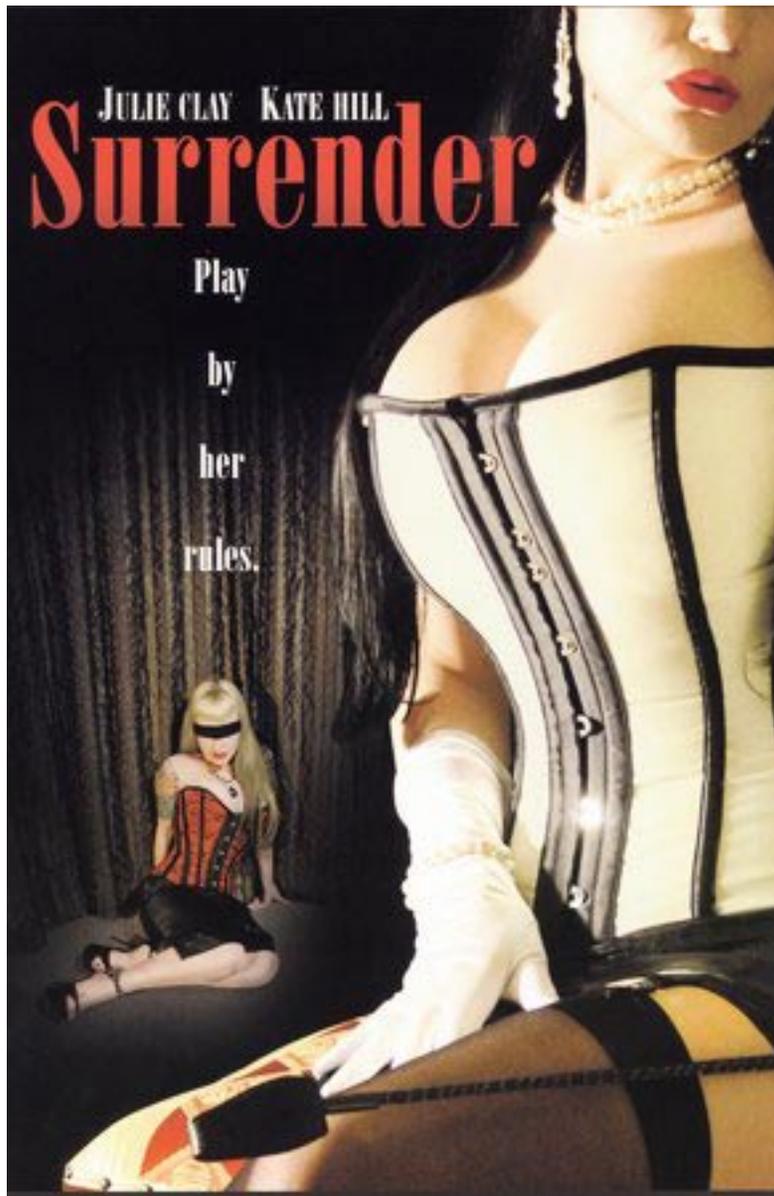
I'm fuckin' Craig!
Craig Christ

Jesus was our mother's fave

*All her love to him she gave
but there's no sibling rivalry
when he's nailed to that tree
And my question to you is not what
would Jesus do
but where will you be when the Craig
Machine comes partyin' through
and if the Lord allows
you've got to ask yourself how
and who and why and when and
where is your messiah now
I'm fuckin' Craig*

Now it's obvious that he knows what's what and that at least most of his acting out is due to his mother giving so much attention to Jesus instead of Craig. What's funny is that Craig is obviously bitter, but at the time, he might have been just as beloved in his circle as Jesus was in his. Think about the parable of the WWE's Brothers Hardy. Jeff, the sensational high-flier with the drug problem is far more popular than his sound working, highly intelligent brother Matt. Why? Because Jeff's a train wreck waiting to happen and he's always trying to go out big. What's more fun than that?

So, the them of portraying the events that swirl around the story of Jesus is one that can provide a lot of funny, as well as maybe teaching us a lesson or two about friendship, duty, and how to rock harder than your goody-two-shoes brother.



Look at that cover.

First words that came to my mind: yeah, this is a movie for me. Chicks in corsets, one of whom is Busty like Dusty, what can go wrong?

Everything. Poor plot construction, shallow acting, slow pace, unresolved issues and, worst of all, NO FUCKING CORSETS!!! The leads were annoying and the accents were sadly bad.

Still, there were loads of hot Girl-Girl sex scenes, plenty of nudity, some S+M (some of which I found very comical) and a lot of booze and drugs. The sex is well-shot. You can actually tell that the Director of Photography was way into the Girl-Girl stuff and did a great job with them, I have to say.

What's funny is that I should have known: The model for the cover is Mistress Persephone (an awesome Fetish Model) and I totally should have known.

Let me say this: if you buy only one Comedy album this year: make it Stephen Lynch's The Craig Machine. It's filthy fun and I can't recommend it highly enough. There's a song called Little Tiny Mustach that might be the most offensive song ever recorded...and I used to listen to 2 Live Cru and N.W.A back in the day.

It's getting to be that time of year again, when they announce the new additions to the National Film Registry (I'll have on that after the end of the year) and they vote on the new additions to the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame. This is a group that excluded Black Sabbath for a couple of decades for some reason and that still hasn't inducted KISS. This year they'll choose from 9 different acts. The choices for who gets voted on are ridiculous when you think about it.

* R.E.M

This one's not that bad and I'm hoping they're one of the five bands that get in. They've got a lot of things going for them, from the nature of their music to the fact that they were really the ones who turned Alternative Music into Pop music with albums like Green and Automatic for the People. I'd say they're in, no question and they probably belong.

* Van Halen

What in the blue Hell are they doing here? True, they were a solid band for a long time, and they did have a long run of hits, but they were just another in a long line of Aerosmith wannabes. Now, I wouldn't have a problem with Eddie Val Halen being inducted on the basis of his schredding guitar work, but otherwise I'm not impressed. I'm almost certain they'll go in, and

it's interesting to see what line-up they induct, as they were a far better band with David Lee Roth but a far more successful band with Sammy Hagar.

* Patti Smith

Early Punk, every bit the poet that Jim Morrison was and a huge influence on Pat Benetar and Chrissy Hynde and pretty much every female rocker that came after her. She was sorta a fully-realised Nico, in a way. She should be in, but I'm not sure that the voters understand her importance, which is far more than the sum of her albums.

* The Stooges

Iggy Pop is not in the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame. What the Hell? He practically invented Rock 'n Roll ex-

cess and if it weren't for him, The MC5 and the New York Dolls (none of which are in) there'd be no Punk at all. They probably won't get in, but they eventually will.

* Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five

This is really an important nomination. There are no Rap performers in. That's a crime, but they only became eligible in 2000 or so by the rules of the Hall (25 years have to pass after the first release, so Rapper's Delight by The Sugar Hill Gang would have been eligible in 2003) and Grandmaster Flash is the most important. He's the measuring stick for acts like Public Enemy and even Eminem. If Grandmaster Flash, who song The Message is the most important ever, than who will get in from that world? I think they'll get in.

* The Ronettes

Just what the Hall needs: another 1960s girl group.

* Chic

This is an interesting one. Certainly an important group in the history of Funk (and The Ojays and P-Funk are in, Rick James is not), but I'm not sure they're close.

* The Dave Clark Five

I'm betting the Five get



in, they were the biggest threat to the Beatles at the peak of Beatlemania, and they probably should be in for that. They also had a movie, *Catch Us If You Can*, that was directed by John Boorman.

* Joe Tex

Literally, I'd never heard of the guy. I've been over the Wikipedia entry for the dude and it still doesn't seem like he should be considered over folks who aren't even on the ballot.

And who's the biggest leav-offs? Well, let's start with KISS. The band that really popped theatrical rock 'n roll. Were they the greatest band ever? No, that's certain. Were they the greatest performing band of all-time? Absolutely. They changed music into the spectacle that it's become. They should be in and receive an apology for having to wait so long.

Iggy, the MC-5, The New York Dolls, Joe Cocker, Jim Croce, Jimmy Cliff, Toots & the Maytals, Yes, and Rick James all certainly belong in for influencing various generations. It's criminal that Television is in and not the MC-5. You could make arguments for DEVO, The Stray Cats, The Dead Kennedys and X as being worthy. Not a single Ska band is in, so I propose the Skatalites or The Specials, maybe Madness.

As far as those who aren't eligible yet, Sonic Youth and Nirvana are

both shoe-ins when it's OK.

Metallica will be in, and I'm pretty sure Guns 'n Roses will be as well. They deserve it for really changing music for ever. Def Leopard? Maybe. Public Enemy? See Flash, Grandmaster. RUN DMC? They're eligible next year and they should be on the ballot if not in. Then there's Nine Inch Nails.

No matter what the problems, I still think the Hall is a worthwhile thing and I'm hoping to make it out there at some point.



This is an interesting fact: I've been going over the Index to 2006 and I've come up with 14 debuts in the Drink Tank. That means I've increased the writer base for TDT by nearly 50%! Six of these were first time Fanzine submitters!



More Letter-Graded Mail!

This one's from the legendary Eric Mayer!

Chris,

Funerary violin...hmmm...are those played by rubbing two fingers together? Very mournfully? I used to have records of compositions by Paganini. That'd be good stuff for the funeral of someone headed for hell.

Our good buddy Howeird had this to say on the topic of Funerary Violin on my LJ: *"Yes, a spectacular event, to be sure, but the book was about Funerary violins, which, had you read this great work you would have known, are violins which have been carved from the wood of exhumed coffins. They are known not only for their unique tone, but also their distinct smell.*

Watch for the rest of the trilogy, The Incomplete History of The Art of Funerary Lathe and Violins of the Living Dead. The Great Flood is remembered, of course, in Street Violins in the Midwest, A Case History."

Speaking of hell...High school...you and John Purcell were involved in a lot of things. Not that I wasn't. My typical day as a teen...I'd wake up and decide whether to read an sf book, play Strat-o-Matic baseball, or kill myself. Usually I picked one of the first two. If I had to go back to high school I'd go for whatever's behind



curtain three. (Cue funerary violin)

That's dark. I loved High School, which I guess is why I love Teen films so much.

I did have a yearbook. My mother made me buy her one. I never looked at it except once to see how the photos I took for it came out. My graduation photo makes me look like my eyes are misaligned. I tried to smile though. Did you ever see the mouth on a possum that's been run over on the highway?

There's a site somewhere (I haven't looked at it for years) that features the worst Graduation photos of all-time. One of the people from my high school was on it because she saw a mouse in the studio and screamed exactly as they were taking the picture. They gave her the proofs and she liked that one the best.

Years later I made the mistake of going to one high school reunion. All anybody remembered about me was how skinny I'd been. Also I was voted "least changed."

You and me both, buddy...except that I've never been skinny.

Hey, thanks for the memories guys!
Best,

Eric

