

The Most Judgment-Impairing Super Bowl Ads

Written by Todd McGreevy
Monday, 27 January 2003 18:00

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Pregnancy Ad scene: two white 30-something parents hover over an early pregnancy test
sound: no music, just tense ambient noise screen script: "There will be an addition soon to their family. "

scene: zoom down to the positive EPT device in mom's hands

screen script: "Their lives will change dramatically."

scene: pan up and hallway shot of frightened teen sitting pensively in the bathroom

screen script: "They will be the youngest grandparents in town."

scene: mom hugs daughter

voiceover: "Smoking marijuana impairs your judgment. It's more harmful than we thought."

fade to black; Web tag> www.theantidrug.com

Wow. Just how much more harmful is marijuana than we thought? Can it possibly impair judgment even more than the other drug so heavily advertised during the Super Bowl: alcohol?

A trip to www.theantidrug.com's section on marijuana reveals that, "According to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University, teens who use drugs are five times more likely to have sex than are those teens who do not use drugs. CASA also states that teens who have used marijuana are four times more likely to have been pregnant or to have gotten someone pregnant than teens who have never smoked pot."

But if one reads the full text of the 1999 CASA study (not available at theantidrug.com but which included input from 34,000 teens), one will find, "Teens 14 and younger who use alcohol are twice as likely to have sex than those who don't. Teens 14 and younger who use drugs are four times likelier to have sex than those who don't. Teens 15 and older who drink are seven times likelier to have sexual intercourse and twice as likely to have it with four or more partners

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than non-drinking teens. Teens 15 and older who use drugs are five times likelier to have sexual intercourse and three times likelier to have it with four or more partners than those who don't. Alcohol is implicated in more incidents of sexual violence including rape and child molestation than any single drug."

Seems alcohol is more harmful than we thought, too.

In fact, the CASA study cited goes on to explain, "alcohol use – by the victim, the perpetrator, or both – is implicated in 46 percent to 75 percent of date rapes of college students."

What the commercial really should have said is that the new grandparents failed in discussing both marijuana and sex with their teenage daughter.

The commercial presents no facts, no figures, no evidence to its claim other than its Web site. And the source for data there spells out an even grimmer picture for the other drug advertised during the Super Bowl.

According to the CASA study, "Thirty-eight percent of incarcerated sex offenders were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the crime (23 percent under the influence of alcohol alone, 15 percent under alcohol and drugs) and 5 percent were under the influence of drugs alone. Prison costs for substance-involved sex offenders totaled \$1.6 billion in 1998."

Keep in mind the term "drugs" above refers to all drugs, not just marijuana.

What was more harmful than we thought?

According to Change the Climate (www.changetheclimate.org), American fatalities from 1992 to 1999 that were tobacco-related equaled 3.2 million, alcohol-related 1.4 million, and marijuana-related zero.

Let's go to the next one, Sam ...

Ghost Subway Ad

scene: interior of subway car, lone man passenger, mid-thirties, white

flashes of victims/ghosts appear before him and a group of people of various ages, races, and sexes appears sitting on the seats across from him, ghosts

sound: echoes from multiple voices of "You killed us ... "

ghost voiceovers: "It was a stray bullet ... He strangled me ... I was riding my bike They slit my throat."

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man on seat: "What do I have to do with this?"

ghost voiceover: "They were drug dealers, they were fighting about money. ... Your money."

screeching brakes of subway, fade to black

screen copy: Drug Money Supports Terrible Things

Why don't the dealers of the legal drugs, the other drugs being advertised during the Super Bowl, have to fight over "your money"? Because the fighting they do is on Capitol Hill, with highly paid lobbyists as their henchman, paid to keep their drugs legal and free of a black-market economy that breeds crime, violence, and the systemic dumbing-down of America.

Or maybe it's because they fight for your money by funding commercials like the ones the NDCP paid \$4 million to air last Sunday. So, who's funding theantidrug.com ads?

"The Partnership receives major funding from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and support from more than 200 corporations and companies. PDFFA accepts no funding from manufacturers of alcohol and/or tobacco products. The organization began in 1986 with seed money provided by the American Association of Advertising Agencies," reads the fact sheet at their Web site. However, up until 1997 the NDCP mainlined millions in funding from big tobacco, pharmaceutical, and alcohol companies such as Proctor & Gamble, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Merck, Phillip Morris, Anheuser-Busch, and RJ Reynolds.

Perhaps the alcohol industry has gotten craftier about its underwriting of the NDCP. The subway ad mentioned above and theantidrug.com Web site were both created by the ad agency Ogilvy & Mather. This venerable giant didn't become a multi-national, multi-billion-dollar company by producing public-service announcements. Ogilvy's client list is long and deep with tobacco, alcohol, and pharmaceutical companies.

The CASA study goes on to state, "While it is clear that teens who drink and use drugs are likelier to have sexual intercourse at earlier ages and with many partners, it is not clear which starts first – sexual intercourse or drinking or drug use." Maybe watching beer commercials that show a man dressed as a clown doing handstands drinking beer from his "butt" or two buxom babes stripping each other's clothes off over why beer is so great (an Ogilvy masterpiece) is what contributes to teens' attitudes toward sex and drugs.

Here's my Super Bowl ad: **WARNING: Watching reality TV and non-reality commercials impairs your judgment.**

Links:

[The PDFFA's Pages on Marijuana](#)

[The PDFFA's Super Bowl ads](#)

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[CASA study](#)

[National Health Information Center's abstract on the PDFA](#)

[List of funders from 1988-1991 of the Partnership for a Drug Free America](#)

[The Partnership for a Drug Free America's fact sheet](#)

[Change the Climate's billboards on fatalities](#)