



**Your on off the
Street Reporter**



Uyless Black

**Heard off the Street
Articles 21 – 35**

Heard off the Street

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Heard off the Street (IX)

October 19, 2010

This “Heard off the Street” report is the first I have written for almost a year. Sorry for the lapse but idleness is time-consuming. To make amends, we once again learn more about the quirkiness of our species.

To refresh your memory, italicized comments come from my extensive research of the Twitter archives on doctoral treatises.

Report 21: Michael Vick Humbled Enough to Rise like Phoenix¹ Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Michael Vick, NFL Quarterback for the Philadelphia Eagles has had a rough couple years.

So did his dogs, those that are still alive, but let bygones be bygones and gone dogs be gone dogs.²

After serving 21 months in prison for illegal dog fighting, Vick is on the comeback trail. He’s the starting quarterback for the Eagles and even has sites on the Web to order Michael Vick football jerseys.

In an interview with *USA TODAY*, he had this to say (*His former dogs were not available for an interview*): “I think everything that I’ve been through just made me a stronger individual, just being able to deal with everything. I’ve been to the bottom, and I’m just trying to rise like the phoenix.”

The phoenix is a mythical sacred firebird with a fire spirit. Its ability to be reborn from its own ashes implies that it is immortal. It is reassuring to learn prison made Vick a bit more humble. After all, phoenixes don’t come around every day.

He goes on to say, “If I can do that, if I can persevere throughout all the bad things that I’ve been through and all the bad places I’ve been to... .”

An interruption to Vick’s phoenix-centered musings: Not to mention the bad things and bad places his former dogs went through.

*By the way, I use “former dogs” in two ways: (a) They were **his** former dogs. (b) Because they were **his** former dogs, many are now...well, former dogs. (A waiting a canine phoenix to fly-by their ashes.)*

About those jerseys, click on http://www.fansedge.com/Michael-Vick-Black-Reebok-NFL-Replica-Philadelphia-Eagles-Jersey-1033193778_PD.html to order a variety of them. One favorite is shown below.

¹ Christine Brennan, “Vick Hot, yet Humble, in 2nd NFL life,” *USA TODAY*, September 23, 2010.

² In case you think I am picking on Vick, I give no quarter to animal abusers until they rise out of their ashes. Vick is still ascending.

Other dog renditions are available, such as Marmaduke and Goofy. The all-time favorite among Vick's fans has Underdog's picture on the back of the Vick jersey. It's in keeping with Michael's current underdog status of not having (yet) made his phoenix-like ascension.



Poor man, he's such an underdog.

Report 22: Sports Agent Polishes his Reputation³

No Where Ville, USA.

A sports agent (Josh Luchs), looking to keep his reputation intact---and even polish it up somewhat---went public recently about a problem with a commission check. Before explaining this matter, a brief diversion to an interview he had recently with *Sports Illustrated*:

- Between 1990-1996, against NCAA rules, he paid money to more than thirty amateur athletes.
- College quarterback star Ryan Leaf took more than \$10,000 from Luchs. (Leaf paid Luchs back, but probably wished he hadn't as Leaf ended-up as an NFL twig.)
- He paid money to first-round NFL draft picks from Arizona U. and U. of Tennessee.
- He gave concert tickets to a UCLA star.
- He gave money to many other college players who went on to the NFL.

The check problem: Luchs was suspended for a year by the NFL Players association over the handling of a commission check. He also told *Sports Illustrated* he was telling this story because he, "...didn't want his career to be defined by that suspension."

He'd rather his career be defined by over thirty acts of bribery.

³ *USA TODAY*, from wire reports, October 13, 2010, 10C.

Report 23: Food Gestapo Pursues Ronald McDonald⁴

San Francisco (where else?), California.

In another effort to clean up its citizens' digestive tracts and put the clothing chain T³ (Tents for Tiny Tots) out of business, San Francisco's city government is proposing a city ordinance that would ban McDonald's from putting toys in Happy Meals.

That is, unless it adds fruit and vegetable portions and limits calories. Which would make for some less than happy kids, and lead to a renaming of McDonald's iconic treat to "Unhappy Meals."

"Unhappy Meals" for the consumers, but "Healthy, Therefore Happy Meals" for the government food fascists. The city has:

- Expanded a law banning tobacco sales in pharmacies to include grocery stores and big-box stores that have pharmacies inside their buildings.
- Banned sweetened beverages from vending machines on city property.
- Almost passed an ordinance imposing a fee on businesses that sell sugary drinks and alcohol. (*This attempt failed because the city supervisors apparently swig and swill Napa Valley Merlot while scribbling inane ordinances that increasingly usurp citizens' dignity and responsibility.*)

Next on the agenda is a proposal to ban tea within the city limits, as tea is associated with the Tea Party.

City supervisor Eric Mar---aptly named---is spearheading this crusade. Rumor has it that the food lobby is mounting a campaign to fight the proposal under the code name "Spoil Mar." Mr. Mar and his minions are being carefully watched by the San Francisco citizens who wonder what might be government's next step into their private lives.

That is finally good news: government oversight. As the old saying goes, "The probability of someone watching you is proportional to the stupidity of your action."⁵

Report 24: Dis-merit Pay!⁶

Washington, DC.

President Obama wants Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act. Its main purpose is to reward Americans based on the contributions they make to society. Thus, the pay scale would make teachers rich and Wall Street bankers destitute.

Actually, the Paycheck Fairness Act, if enacted, would once again expand the population of lawyers and further degrade American meritocracy: It would forbid differences of pay between

⁴ *Coeur d'Alene Press*, "San Francisco Considers Happy Meal Toy Ban," October 3, 2010, A11.

⁵ A. Kindsvater, *Omni*, May 1979, in Leonard Roy Frank, *Quotations* (New York: Random House, 2001), 831.

⁶ George W. Will, "A New Project of the Gender Police," *Newsweek*, October 4, 2010, p. 24.

men and women that are “...based on differences of education, training, and experience unless there is a ‘business necessity.’ ”

A “business necessity” must be justified for hiring and promoting educated, trained, and experienced employees?

George Orwell is drafting the legislation. In the meantime, litigation express, here we come!

Heard off the Street (X)

December 13, 2010

Here are four reports your reporter and his vast assembly of assistant reporters have obtained from hard-core primary sources and surfing the Web. ...Okay, mostly surfing the Web. ...Okay, only surfing the Web.

Comments in quotes are from footnoted sources. Comments in brackets are mine.

Report 25: Down Thru the Chimney with Good St. Nick!¹

Bakersfield, California.

♪♪♪♪ Ho Ho Ho. Who Wouldn't Go? ♪♪♪♪

"A doctor involved in an 'on-again, off-again' relationship apparently tried to force her way into her boyfriend's home by sliding down the chimney, police said Tuesday. Her decomposing body was found there three days later."

♪♪♪♪ Up on the housetop, click, click, click. ♪♪♪♪

"Dr. [name withheld to protect the privacy of the dead] first tried to get into the house with a shovel, then climbed a ladder to the roof last Wednesday night, removed the chimney cap and slid feet first down the flue, Bakersfield police Sgt. Mary DeGeare said."

♪♪♪♪ Down thru the chimney went Good St. Nick! ♪♪♪♪

"The [wannabe Santa Claus] apparently [apparently?] died in the chimney, but her body was not discovered until a house-sitter noticed a stench and fluids coming from the fireplace Saturday, according to a police statement. The house-sitter and her son investigated with a flashlight and found her dead, wedged about two feet above the top of the interior fireplace opening."

And from old St. Nick:

♪♪♪♪
If you want my *toys* ... ♪♪♪♪
girls and boys ... ♪♪♪♪
leave the flue open. ♪♪♪♪
♪♪♪♪

PS: Law suits are pending from the chimney-stalker heirs. They are suing the chimney owner for failing to build his chimney to permit visits from deranged doctors.

¹ From AOL News. Quotes are directly sourced from this news release.

Report 26: 4-Year-Old Sued for Recklessness² Manhattan, New York

(Comments in quotes are from authoritative, footnoted sources. Everything else is made up.)

"A judge has ruled that a young girl (and her companion) accused of running down an elderly woman while racing a bicycle with training wheels on a Manhattan sidewalk two years ago can be sued for negligence."

Ignoring the well-known fact that 4-year-old children are genetically wired to be negligent.

The estate for the run-over woman, who died three months later from unrelated causes, "sued the children and their mothers, claiming they had acted negligently during the accident."

Ignoring the fact that the weapons of destruction were single-seat bikes and not under the control of the mothers.

In a response, (the girl's lawyer) argued, "She was riding her bicycle with training wheels... ." The lawyer added, "Courts have held that an infant under the age of 4 is conclusively presumed to be incapable of negligence."

But she was not under 4. She was practically an adult!---three months short of age 5. Thus anointed into maturity by the laws of the land, the child was subject to lawsuits.

As all parents and lawyers know, the age of four-years-and-one-second instantly morphs a child's brain into a permanent period of enlightenment, with its associated exposure to "I'm going to sue your ass!" mentality in America's legal system.

The judge offered these comments, "The crucial factor is whether the parent encourages the risky behavior; if so, the child should not be held accountable."

"Daughter, run that old lady down!" Ha. But the parent did not offer such an encouragement. Thus, the child is liable. Goddamn it judge, make up your mind.

The judge stated that any child of similar age would appreciate "the danger of riding a bicycle into an elderly woman."

If 4-year-olds+ 1 second are liable to lawsuits and possibly huge monetary loses, we should give these children the right to vote and drink. It's age discrimination. Law suits are on their way.

Word has it on the street that the little girl, upon hearing she was going to be sued, burst out in tears and wailed, "Mama, I don't have much money in my piggy bank!"

² Alan Feuer, October 28, 2010, AOL News. Unless in italics, quotes are taken from this article.

Report 27: Upcoming Litigant Jawbones a Lawsuit³

White Oak, Texas.

"An East Texas man claims he found a fragment of a rat's jawbone in a package of frozen vegetables he bought at Walmart. Ben Leonard of White Oak, Texas, told KLTU-TV that his wife found the fragment in a package of Walmart's Great Value brand frozen mixed vegetables. The family ate the vegetables before they figured out the fragment was likely a rat's jaw."

Being Texans---but exports from New Jersey apartments---they were well-versed in the skeletal structure of rats.

" 'She thought it was a big chunk of corn cob or something and the further I got into it the more I thought, Oh no, this is a rat's jaw!' Leonard told KLTU."

Being Texans, they knew a lot about corn cobs.

"Leonard said the frozen food manufacturer asked him if the object might be a piece of plastic conveyor belt."

Word has it that Leonard, being a Texan---and therefore knowledgeable about wildlife and corn cobs---was offended that someone would think he did not know the difference between a rat's jaw bone and a plastic conveyor belt---not to mention a corn cob.

Leonard told KLTU he plans to take the fragment to be analyzed, and he wonders where the rest of the rat wound up. "There was a whole rat and so somebody else has got the rest of it," he said.

Lawsuits are pending.

Report 28: Man Sues Family because he Killed a Family Member⁴

Connecticut.

"A driver convicted of manslaughter for killing a 14-year-old Connecticut boy is suing the victim's parents for negligence, claiming they let their son ride his bike on a busy road without a helmet. The Associated Press reports that David Weaving, who is serving a 10-year sentence for slamming his car into Matthew Kenney, is suing Kenney's parents for \$15,000 for causing him "great mental and emotional pain and suffering" and inhibiting his "capacity to carry on in life's activities."

Other investigations have revealed that the family of the dead boy has hired a four-year-old bike assassin to run-over this miserable ass, then sue him for not wearing a helmet.

³ Quotes from AOL News.

⁴ http://www.aolnews.com/nation/article/david-weaving-convicted-in-teen-bicyclists-death-sues-victim-matthew-kenneys-parents/19716953?icid=main%7Chtmlws-main-n%7Cdl1%7Csec1_in3%7C184381.

Heard off the Street (XI)

October 30, 2011

This “Heard off the Street” report (number XI) is being sent to you because of the huge demand for additional reports beyond I through X. Huge, in the sense that no one has yet asked me to remove them from the “Heard off the Street” mailing list.

Some readers have told me they have found these reports hard to believe, but because I make reference to the sources of these bizarre stories, it appears these readers do accept them as being factual. They did happen. When humans are involved, truth is stranger than fiction.

So, here we go, once again into the ever-fascinating world of all those weird people out there...with the exceptions of you and me.

Report 29: Friendly Toasts to a Toasted Friend¹

Denver, Colorado.

In spite of a touching display of camaraderie and comradeship, two men are being hauled to court for driving their friend around town for a night of fun. The men, Robert Young and Mark Rubinson, took Jeffrey Jarret to a restaurant and later, to a happy-time bar named Sam’s No. 3.

Their goodwill was somewhat muted because their buddy was not drinking. Although Jeffery’s self-restraint meant more spirits for Robert and Mark, Jeffery came across as not much more than a kill-joy. Consequently, after throwing-down more drinks at another place, Teddy T’s Bar and Grill, they dropped-off their buddy’s body at his home.

Body, as in: Their friend Jeffery was not consuming alcohol because he was soon to be full of it. He was a corpse. Jeffery was dead even before his former friends took him to the first place for the living; that being Sam’s No. 3. They picked-up his inert body from his home and went out on the town to celebrate his inertness.

It appears Robert and Mark decided Jeffery was not lively enough. No jokes; no sharing of stories; not to mention, no sharing of the tab. What’s the use of having a friend if he is not buying friendly drinks?

After more than ample libation (for Robert and Mark of course), the three of them (strictly speaking, was it two?) drove back to Jeffery’s former home. Once there, his former friends, after taking his former bank card, deposited Jeffery into his former living room.

The bank-card heist ended-up dulling the idea of friendship. After all, how was Jeffery going to pay for his trip to the morgue? Thoughtless friends.

¹ HuffpostDenver, AOL News, September 16, 2011.

Using newly found funds, Robert and Mark continued to toast Jeffery's being toast at Shotgun Willie's, a Denver-area strip club. After closing the place at 4 am, they flagged down a cop to inform him their friend was at his house and that he "might" be dead:



And who said friendship is dead?

Report 30: Pervert, Heal Thyself²

Coconut Creek, Florida

“An 81-year-old Florida man, who police say posed as a door-to-door physician and duped at least two women into having their breasts examined, has struck a plea deal with prosecutors.”

The man had a history of brushes with the law, including “three counts of sexual battery and two counts of simple battery.”

The news release stated that several years ago, Winikoff was arrested for allegedly fondling two women's breasts. Part of the problem in making the charges stick was the difficulty of determining if Winikoff was (a) examining the breasts or (b) fondling them. The judge decided that because the plaintiff was not a licensed doctor, Winikoff had to be guilty of (b). After all, doctors do (a), but not (b).

These earlier charges held-up---and “allegedly fondling” was replaced with “found guilty of fondling.”

Side-bar witnesses said one of the women became suspicious because (1) the phony doctor was making *house calls*---a practice no longer practiced; (2) was giving *free* exams---a practice no longer practiced, even for breasts.

Equally suspicious, taking off his phony hat of general doctor and putting on his phony hat of gynecologist, Winikoff went even further:

² http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/12/phillip-winikoff_n_1007273.html?icid=maingrid7%7Cmain5%7Cd11%7Csec1_in3%7C103929#s270945&title=Gregory_Liascos

“The unwitting patient let Winikoff into her apartment, and he began the exam. After allegedly touching the victim's chest, Winikoff moved an ungloved hand to the woman's genitals and further molested her.”

These women had been conditioned to trust doctors, just by a person so-declaring. Were they stupid? Maybe. Were they trusting? Yes. Is it sad? Yes, because crazy people, such as Winikoff, are so off-the-spectrum of expected human behavior that most of us cannot fathom their even existing.

This pathetic member of our species showed up at the door of these unwitting women carrying a doctor's black bag and a pervert's baggage. Given their trust in physicians, the women did not discern the difference.

I thought of excluding this story from this series, because all entries thus far have had a light touch to them. I decided to include it with this idea. We need to remember: Don't trust, then verify. Verify, then trust.

We wish this cautionary locution about our fellow humans were not part of staying safe. Usually it is not needed. But on occasion, it makes the difference between good things and bad things happening to our lives.

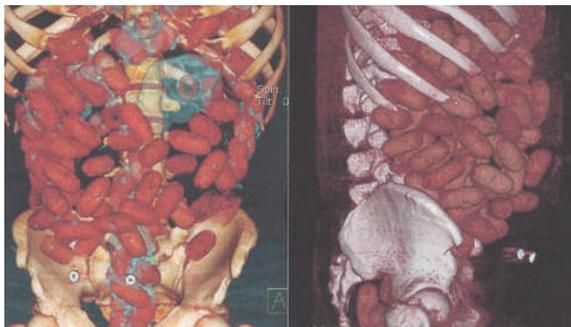
Let's lighten-up a bit and return to the theme of strange tales of our follies.

Report 31: Acid Reflux³

Sao Paulo, Brazil

“Security (personnel) at a Sao Palo, Brazil airport on Monday detained a nervous traveler later allegedly found to be smuggling approximately 72 bags of cocaine in his stomach.”

Allegedly, as in the photos shown here:



The press release is not quite accurate. It appears the bags of cocaine were not only in his stomach, but around his stomach, in the chest cavity, and next to his hips. If not, the man has a very large stomach.

³ HUFFPOST, Weird News, September 17, 2011.

Possible conversation between sending drug dealers and drug courier (mule):

- “Jose, we’ve got a special run for you to make.”
- “Bueno, I could use the dinero. Where’s the dope pouch?”
- “You’re it.”
- “Como?”
- “Open wide, Jose.”

Possible conversation between receiving drug dealers and Jose (if Jose had made it through security):

- “Jose, how did it go?”
- “My stomach hurts.”
- “Bueno! That means you delivered the goods”
- “Bien, but how do we get the dope out?”
- “Bend over, Jose.”

Report 32: If the Rat Poison Won’t Do It, the Anti-freeze Will⁴

Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

A former Pittsburgh Steelers lineman committed suicide by (a) drinking antifreeze.⁵ Originally, his death certificate showed the death was because of football-related injuries. The certificate was changed when laboratory tests on the man’s tissue and urine showed they contained ethylene glycol, the active ingredient in antifreeze.

What was not stated was the possibility that his drinking antifreeze was not an act of suicide. After all, he had a history of consuming lethal goodies and continued to walk around. The former Steeler played guard in the 1980s. During this time he was (b) suspended for violating the NFL’s steroid policy. This suspension led him to “attempt suicide” by eating (c) rat poison.

As stated, the media has focused on his consumption of anti-freeze, steroids, and rat poison as attempts at suicide. I look at it this way: He liked the hard stuff. If he had really wanted to kill himself, he had many non-inebriating alternatives.

A few months before his contributions to Pittsburg’s soon-to-be-tainted cemetery soil, this unsteeled Steeler was (d) indicted for fraudulently obtaining loans to run a chicken-processing plant. To add to his problems, the prosecutors charged that he (e) burned the plant to the ground for insurance money.

“At the time he died, the man’s neighbor said he was separated from his second wife and was depressed about that as well as the federal charges he faced.” That would be (f).

(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f). Let’s leave it at that. No sense in adding fuel to the fire (g). It might be gulped-down.

⁴ <http://sportsbloggerslive.com/>

⁵ Name cited in news releases is not included in this report. My condolences to his friends and family.

Heard off the Street (XII)

October 5, 2012

Hello again. It has been almost a year since I filed my last “Heard off the Street” report to you. It is not a matter of having inadequate material. Weird human behavior, the primary subject of these reports, is as common as the housefly. The delay has come from my sorting the many reports into the slightly weird, the average weird, or the very weird. Our focus is on the very weird, reflected in previous reports, as well as Part (XII).

Report 33: “Lay down, I think I love you!”¹

Anywhere but home.

In most cultures, it is accepted that sex can be life-prolonging: “Good health to you, my love. Now, let’s prolong our lives just a bit more!” If not life-prolonging then certainly life-enhancing: “I just died and went to Heaven.”

But studies have emerged that claim certain sex acts are not all that life-prolonging. Quite a number of people (mostly males) take a trip to the Pearly Gates during their sex act---which, as an aside, must be anti-climatic. But this situation is more complex:

According to the *Scientific American* article: “A Japanese pathologist reported that of [a sample of dead males] who had passed away during intercourse, nearly 80% had died during extramarital sex.”

A detailed analysis of this phenomenon, based on interviews with the ex-wives about their ex-husbands, as well as the doctors involved, revealed: The men were out of shape...in more ways than one.

Studies in several other countries reveal the same statistic: Men are more likely to die of extramarital sex than of marital sex. As one former wife put it: “It’s irony in action or inaction, depending on which bed a man is in.” And as Zsa Zsa Gabor put it, “I know nothing about sex, because I was always married.”

There’s a message in these studies and sayings. But I’m only the messenger. People have to work it out...regardless of how many may be involved.

Report 34: Entrapment²

Washington, DC.

“Federal regulators have urged swimming-pool operators to close thousands of public swimming pools and spas that use drain covers that may not prevent potentially lethal “entrapment” accidents, in which powerful suction from a drain traps a swimmer underwater.”

¹ *Scientific American*, July, 2012, 23.

² Ashby Jones, with contributions from Melanie Trottman, *The Wall Street Journal*, May 28-29, 2012, A3.

Paraphrasing the press release: This notice was issued on the eve of the nation's informal beginning of the summer swimming season [Memorial Day]. It is part of a recall of drain covers announced by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Here is an inside look from this street reporter about how it happened:

- Commissioner Alpha (a blue politician), “We need to shutdown those pools that are drowning people.”
- Commissioner Bravo (a red politician), “Pools don't drown people. Water drowns people. If you want to regulate water, fine. But don't go looking for excuses to outlaw pools.”
- Discussion further degenerates into another deadlock based on intractable ideologies.
- Later, after lobbying from the SPCA, (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Aquatics):
- Commissioner Charlie (a reddish-blue bureaucrat), “OK, we've got an agreement. We don't outlaw water, but we do outlaw water drain covers. We've known about these dangers for a long time. Thus, I propose we make this announcement effective on the Memorial Day weekend.”
- Commissioner Delta (Not destined for political or bureaucratic stardom), “But Memorial Day is *the* swimming day of the year! Why did we not make this announcement earlier, one that did not coincide with a national holiday? Memorial Day is when many people actually swim.”
- Commissioner Charlie, “That's why we've chosen Memorial Day: to prevent as many people as possible from drowning.”

Reporter notes: Obviously, these exchanges are for fun. Except one: The potential dangers from these drains were known long before Memorial Day. Yet as said, the announcement was made just before this holiday. Small wonder we citizens are continuously baffled by our government's problem solving mentality.

Anyway, after lobbying from the NRA (that is, the National Recreational Association), regulations about this matter were rescinded. The idea behind this policy was that if a swimmer felt threatened by a drain cover in a pool, he could carry his own drain cover, and thus be adequately armed. The NRA's powerful lobby in Washington, D.C. was able to sway the government to allow citizens to carry-around unconcealed pool drain covers, without a license, no less.

By the way, this commission declared that there had been reports of 97 entrapments nationwide from 1999-2010. (Twelve of whom died.) Over a decade of time, in which reported entrapments were slightly less than ten a year. Think of this disproportionate fact: In hundreds of thousands of spas, wadding ponds, and pools, the chances of being entrapped are less than winning a national lottery.

Even more ridiculous: Public swimming pools became part of the Fed's drain pool entrapment program of entrapment. *Of those 97 nationwide incidents, I could not find any that took place at a **public** swimming pool.* There may have been some, but in proportion to the notification, Uncle Sam---once again---has cast a far wider net than was needed.

America's obsession with building cocoons of security around every aspect of the lives of its citizens held sway. We are once again protected but increasingly controlled.

Report 35: In God We Trust, as Well as Ramses.³

New York, NY.

If you are in New York City and are tired of looking at tall buildings with their long shadows, visit the Museum of Sex, located at 223 Fifth Avenue, at 27th Street. I did not know the place existed until I came across an article telling its readers that the museum has a display titled, "Rubbers: the Life, History & Struggle of the Condom."

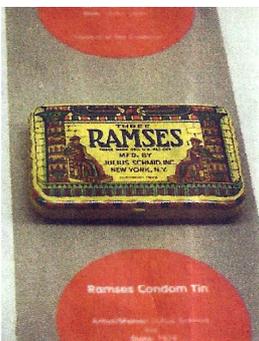
I understand parts of the exhibit's title. Life and history make sense. But struggle? How does a condom struggle? Without question, the contents inside the condom can struggle---perhaps rising to the occasion, perhaps not---but the condom adapts accordingly to its guest's behavior.

Anyway, there must be a museum somewhere in this world for just about any subject. I came across one in Europe that was a museum of thread; another was a museum of salt. There is a building in Wallace, Idaho, that houses the Museum of Accordions.

According to the condom exhibition reviewers, the display is a "modest exhibition." An exhibition whose themes are sex and rubbers hardly seems modest. Also, reviews say the "exhibition elevates the status of the condom." I was unaware the condom was low on the list of esteemed American status symbols. I thought just the opposite. As one example:

During my high school years, the most prestigious "red badge of courage" that could be displayed by a boy was the circular imprint a rubber left on the exterior of his wallet. Condoms in those days were not easy to come by. In my hometown they were sold behind the pharmacist counter at drug stores. However, a rough semblance of the rubber ring could be attained by keeping a half-dollar coin in the wallet for a while. We boys would pull out our wallet anytime we wished to show-off the status of our testosterone levels. For example:

- Girl, "Why are you pulling out your wallet to put a dime in the Coke machine?"
- Boy, "I need some change."
- Girl, "Right."



The museum displayed hundreds of condoms with many styles and packages. In so far as a rubber can be acclaimed, the exhibit showed examples of some of the more venerated rubber manufacturers. One that captured the fancy of America's males was made by Julius Schmid, Inc. of New York. The condoms were sold in tin containers, as shown in this figure. The "Ramses" name for the product led to locker room jokes, one based on the full name of this pharaoh, "Ramses, the Great."

One purpose of the exhibit was to encourage the use of the condoms. As a result, temperance and abstinence leagues were absent. Trojan (a name

³ Edward Rothstein, "Unrolled, Unbridled, and Unabashed," *The New York Times*, Feb 5, 2011, A23.

apropos to the product, and a favorite at our high school) was one of the exhibit sponsors.

One review of this museum exhibit concludes with this assessment of the condom, “It is evidence of civilization and its discontents.” For the life of me, I cannot figure out what this reviewer is saying. It seems to me the condom is evidence of civilization and its pleasures.

PS: Using a Coin to Emulate a Rubber

Returning to my days of adolescence: Depending on the newness of the half-dollar coin (sharp or dull images) and the malleability of wallet’s leather, more than the mere ring outline of the coin might be imposed into the leather. During one night when ten or so of us boys were cavorting about in our small town, the subject of sex came up (it was only a matter of time). One of our buddies, known for his bravado, started bragging about his bagging his girl friend the night before. This sort of admission was rare, and we were taken aback, if for no other reason than few of us had bagged anything thus far in our lives.



We guffawed and told him he was, as usual, full of it. He would not let well-enough alone and took out his rubberless wallet to prove his point. Sure enough, there the condom ring was but no rubber. Reverential silence followed.

But not for long. One of the boys, a recent import from a big town in Texas, knew the ropes. He asked to see the wallet. It was handed over. He examined it from the outside and then the interior. Guffawing again, he opened the inside of the wallet wide enough of us to see...a dim outline of the head of Benjamin Franklin.

From the outside of the wallet, the ring looked like that of a condom. The insides revealed the true origins of the ring. I suppose if my friend had left the rubber inside his wallet long enough, the “In God We Trust” pledge on the coin would eventually have been etched into the leather.

My thought about his matter in human’ lives is simple: “In God We Trust, but don’t forget the Ramses.”