



**Your on the
Street Reporter**



Uyless Black

Side Effects?

Side Effects? (I) An Ounce of Avoidance is Worth a Pound of Cure!¹

April 14, 2011

Hello from Your on the Street Reporter. This report was written earlier as part of another series but has not been placed on the Internet. I've rewritten and reformatted it to create a new series named "Side Effects?" which deals with medicines and drugs, and their effects on our bodies and minds. We introduce a new character in this series. His name is Doctor Doctor.

We find a radio and TV show about this subject, titled, "An Ounce of Avoidance is Worth a Pound of Cure." Here is what we see:

A television screen displays a talk show host speaking into a microphone to a radio audience. The speaker is promoting a "miracle" drug his company has developed in Tijuana, Mexico. The product is sold from off-shore ships anchored beyond the 200 mile limit of the U.S., as well as drug stores in Canada.

Talk show host, "Good evening my devoted hypochondriacs. This is your sagacious, insightful, fraudulent host, Doctor Doctor, once again on the air to sell you just about everything you do not want or need to ingest in your intestinal tract to combat those irksome germs.

"As required by law, I must state I am not a licensed doctor. Purely by coincidence, my first name is Doctor. My last name is Doctor. My middle name is also Doctor, but you can just call me Doctor Doctor.

"Tonight, we have a very special show for you. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has challenged our company! The FDA says our claims about our miracle medicine are based on false facts. We are calling their bluff this evening. We claim our claims are based on true facts as well as factual facts.

"The show is devoted to our highly touted and egregiously profitable MiracleKillMedicine™, and its life-saving and otherwise life-altering components, MiracleKillIngredients™. To rebuff the FDA, we will dedicate the entire program to an examination of the effectiveness of our fantastic medicine, its wonderful ingredients, its germ killing-power, and its assuaging side effects."

(Writer: The side effects (footnoted shortly) are sourced from an advertisement touting a popular prescription medicine that is likely being ingested by many of my readers. The ingredients of this medicine, described here, are also taken from the advertisement.)

The TV screen is now split, with Doctor Doctor on the right side and a telephone caller on the left side. The images are products of Internet video and Skype.

¹ These tidbits were first made available in the "Coming to You Live from the Dead" series of *The Deadly Trinity* trilogy.

First Call-In

Call-in person A, “Doctor Doctor, I’m in awful shape. I feel bad all over more than anywhere else. I’m dizzy, nauseous, suffer diarrhea, have high blood pressure, can’t sleep at night, urinate almost continuously, and...uh...have lost interest in my wife’s affections.”

Doctor Doctor, “Don’t forget my dear sickee, this evening is devoted to a discussion of the ingredients and effectiveness of our product, not to cure you through the air waves. Besides, we leave the tele-cures to our competitors, the tele-evangelists---who don’t use medicine, other than snake oil.

“Anyway, our mail-order wonder, MiracleKillMedicine, will be helpful to your condition. You should take one MiracleKill pill each morning. Just be aware of possible minor side effects. As examples, you may experience dizziness, nausea, diarrhea, elevated blood pressure, occasional sleeplessness, perhaps incontinence, and some erectile dysfunction. And for certain, your hair will not fall out.”

Call-in person A, “Eh, with the exception of the hair not falling out, you just described the very problems that prompted my call to you.”

“Ah, I see. You’re not having problems with your hair falling out?”

“No.”

“Well, there you go! You will continue not to experience hair fall-out problems.”

Recognizing a potential discontented customer, the talk show host launches his most effective sales tool: obfuscation:

Doctor Doctor, “Not only that, our lab tests show you will not experience all these side effects at the same time. Even better news for you, the first three of the seven side effects will occur independently of the last four. Thus, the possible combinations of these side effects number only twelve!

“For example, you may experience dizziness accompanied by incontinence but you will not experience dizziness accompanied by erectile dysfunction.

Isn’t life grand with your dependence on our drugs! Thanks for calling-in. I’ll now turn your call over to our Order Fulfillment and Fleecing Department.”

Doctor Doctor concludes this part of the show, “Before we take the next call, let me say that due to pressure from the FDA, I am obligated to make the following statement on the air: ‘Some people should not take MiracleKillMedicine because of the possible side effects of its ingredients.’

”There, done. But I assure you MiracleKillMedicine is indeed a miracle medicine. Nonetheless, it might have side effects on the sides, fronts, tops, bottoms, backs, and insides of certain people.

“OK, next caller. You’re on the air with Doctor Doctor’s MiracleKillMedicine!”

Second Call-In

Call-In person B, “I think I need your medication but I’m not sure all the ingredients in your drug are compatible with my body.”

Doctor Doctor, “I understand your concern, and in spite of my pain killers, I feel your pain. Also, I am required by the FDA, the FCC, the AMA, and my nearly atrophied conscience to state MiracleKillMedicine should not be taken by people who are allergic to its ingredients.”

Call-in person B, “What are its ingredients?”

Doctor Doctor silently finds the tab in his “Medicine Manual” labeled “Side Effects, To Be Discussed Only When Threatened By Anyone Who Can Take Away Your FCC-Sanctioned License to Extort the Public.”

He then responds, “Our MiracleKillIngredients for MiracleKillMedicine are Cellulose, lactose, magnesium stearate, iron oxide, talc, titanium dioxide, starch, with Butylated hydroxyanisole added as a preservative.”

Call-in person B, “I’m not familiar with some of those ingredients but I know about the others. Look, I’m already overweight. I don’t need any more Cellulose...just had several pounds removed from my stomach last month. I prefer to use talc on my armpits and private parts, and confine the use of starch to my laundry. In addition...about that preservative...preservative for what, your medicine or my body?”

Doctor Doctor, “Ha! You certainly have a pithy sense of humor Caller-in B. Sure, as individual agents acting alone, those ingredients you mention are associated with fat, body odor, and stiff shirts. But collectively, they congeal in your body to equal more than the sum of their individual parts. They interrelate to one another to produce a powerful antidote to your ills.

“Besides, one of our subsidiaries owns several magnesium, iron, and titanium mines and factories...Can’t let this stuff go to waste. Next caller! You’re on the air with Doctor Doctor”

Third Call In

Call-in person C, “Doctor Doctor Doctor, I’ve...”

Doctor Doctor, “You can’t call me a doctor!”

Call-in person C, “I didn’t. I simply addressed you by your three names. If I had called you a doctor, I would have said, Doctor Doctor Doctor Doctor.”

Doctor Doctor, “Hm. OK, sorry. I have to be careful not to openly camouflage myself. What is your question?”

Call-in person C, “Right, as I was saying, I’ve been taking your pill as you prescribed and…”

Doctor Doctor, “You can’t say prescribed! I prescribe nothing; I am not allowed by the government to ‘prescribe.’ I only advise.

“Dear devoted sickee, remember that I am a talk show host. Even though my ill-informed falsehoods and drivel affect millions of people; even though I abuse the very medicines I disavow; even though I castigate those who are as afflicted and hypocritical as I… Well, I am not responsible for my behavior because I advertise myself as ‘entertainment!’ And I can’t help it. MiracleKillMedicine---and some uppers furnished by my maid---give me a real *Rush*.”

Doctor Doctor continues, “And after all, who doesn’t want to let off a little steam now and then!”

Call-In person C, “Look, you’re the host, I’m the caller; I’m supposed to be the one with problems. Anyway, I’ve been taking the pill you’re pushing on your show. I’m pregnant, have liver problems from alcohol, and I’m also breast feeding. I just read the label on your bottle. It states your pill might be dangerous to people in my condition.”

Doctor Doctor, “Well, as a sidebar, I suggest you ease-up on your sex life and cut down on the Johnny Walker. But…”

Call-in person C, “One moment Doc Doc, here is some more information. After taking one of your pills each day, I began to experience muscle pain, tenderness, and weakness. I have also experienced a breakdown of my kidneys.”

Doctor Doctor, “Well, yes, MiracleKillMedicine might create muscle and kidney problems, at least according to the FDA. But not to worry. If any of these conditions occur in your muscles, kidneys, or breasts, just let us know and we will double your dosage to two pills a day.

“Folks it’s time for a commercial break. Let’s hear more about MiracleKillMedicine, then I will accept your call-in orders for our wonderful pills. Oh yes, no calls are accepted from third-world countries, Detroit, or Newark. Poor folks can’t afford the medicine anyway, so don’t bother using the phone at your strip shopping mall to call us.”

TV announcer, “Thank you Doctor Doctor. Friends, you just heard about some of the wonderful condiments in the MiracleKillMedicine recipe. We only have one minute of advertising time to tell you about its virtues, because, due to FDA regulations, we must give you a *full* disclosure of its side effects.

“First, its virtue is that its side effects allow us to sell you more drugs to counter the side effects. Second, the side effects are many and varied, thus providing diversity to our product line.

“So friendly, sick consumers, here are the possible side effects of taking MiracleKillMedicine. For your convenience, they are grouped according to the parts of your body they affect:²

“**Digestive system:** upset stomach, gas, heartburn, stomach pain/cramps, constipation, anorexia, loss of appetite. **Liver and pancreas:** inflammation of the pancreas, hepatitis, jaundice, fatty changes in the liver, possibly liver failure, cirrhosis, and liver cancer. **Skin:** hair loss (oops, sorry Doctor Doctor; this is a recent discovery); rashes, itching, discoloration, growth of nodules on skin, dryness. **Bones and muscles:** Muscle cramps, aches, pains, and weakness. Joint pain and muscle breakdown. **Nervous system:** Headaches, dizziness, insomnia, tingling, memory loss, damage to nerves, anxiety, depression, tremor, loss of balance, psychic disturbances. **Eyes and taste:** Altered taste sensations, blurred vision, eye muscle weakness, progression of cataracts. **Allergic reactions:** shortness of breath, wheezing, low blood pressure (even shock), swelling of face/lips/tongue/throat, bruises, sensitivity to sunlight, fever, chills, difficulty breathing, burn-like shedding of skin all over the body---including the mucous membranes and the lining of the mouth. **Other side effects having to do with joy, contentment, and happiness:** Loss of sexual desire, impotence, and breast enlargement. Fortunately, the breast enlargement possibility is not as serious as it may sound; it pertains to only half of the population: the male half.”

The TV announcer concludes his pitch with, “Thanks to the FDA, we had to spend most of our allotted time informing you about the possible side effects of MiracleKillMedicine. So, before returning to Doctor Doctor, may I conclude with our motto, ‘An ounce of our medicine is worth a pound of side effects!’ Back to you Doctor Doctor.”

[TV screen cuts back to Doctor Doctor, who is sitting idly beside a bank of silent telephones. The phones remain silent.]

Doctor Doctor, “Keep those calls coming in folks and don’t forget, we stand behind our product. If you are not satisfied with MiracleKillMedicine just call our toll-free number and we’ll send you another bottle at half the price.”

[The camera moves back from Doctor Doctor and the screen fades to black.]

² All side effects in the disclaimer, as well as those cited earlier, pertain to *one* medicine (taken from an advertisement for a cholesterol remediation pill). No joke.

Side Effects? (II)
Erecter Sets for Old Toddlers,
Report One: Doctor, can you erect my set?

April 15, 2011

We find ourselves once again listening to the call-in talk show hosted by Doctor Doctor Doctor. In case you don't recall, you were introduced to Doctor Doctor Doctor in a previous report--- whose three names are "Doctor." We are not allowed to call him Doctor, Doctor, Doctor, Doctor, as that would note that he is a doctor and knows what he is talking about.

But no, he's a talk show host who gets a real *Rush* out of the side effects of medicines, his maid's drugs, and especially his ability to bamboozle his audience. As told earlier, here is how he introduces his program:

"Good evening, my devoted hypochondriacs. Once again, this is your sagacious, insightful, fraudulent host, Doctor Doctor, once again on the air to sell you just about everything you do not want or need to ingest in your intestinal tract to combat those gems of misery deposited in your body by Mother Nature.

"Tonight, we have a special show for you. As you may recall, we've broadcasted educational programs about medicines that make you well and sick at the same time. The first part of this show is a follow-up to another report about that nasty male condition named 'erectile dysfunction.' Its very name is enough to make you sick---well, for the males in my audience anyway.

"It's not the function that's disturbing, it's the name of the function. 'Erectile dysfunction'? The very name creates the condition itself! What can any virile male do but shutter at the very mention of the term: His erectile becomes dysfunctional.

"The second part of the program is about a medicine whose side effect leads to a prolonged 'erectile function.' Yes, my readers---both male and female---you heard me correctly. So on with the show!"

Ring. Ring, as Doctor Doctor takes an incoming call:

Call-in person D, "Doctor Doctor, I've listened to one of your shows about gene therapy and sexual performance. I can't afford all those DNA operations and Medicaid won't fund the money to fix my dysfunction. I called-up the Medicaid office last week and told them about my problem.

"They blew me off! They told me I was a 90 year-old man and erectile dysfunction was supposed to happen with old age."

Doctor Doctor, "No! How dare they?"

“Yep, something about Mother Nature putting the clamps on old men....so we don’t have babies to raise when we’re too old to ...well, raise much of anything---especially the babies.”

Doctor Doctor, “What? You mean they are saying a 90-year-old man can’t raise a 9-month-old-baby?! I’m here to tell you---that as a male---it is your God-given and Doctor Doctor-enhanced-therapy rights to ply your trade...so to speak...until you’re in the grave. Don’t worry about those little ones. Before long, they’ll be on welfare anyway. It’s not your problem.”

“My thoughts, too, Doc Doc. But my buddies seem to have all this stuff going on... You know; multiple orgasms and all. Not sure they’re not just blowing smoke, but I feel left out.”

“Doctor Doctor thinks: *90 year olds? They’re not just blowing smoke, they’re smoking something.*”

But Doctor Doctor can’t relay this fact to his “patient.” After all, he’s in the snake oil business of selling miracle cures to those who have lost hope.

He knows the old saying, “Hope is a failed man’s bread.” For his scam, he knows, “Hope is a failed man’s next wonder-pill.”

“I’m glad you called! You’re my perfect bait...eh patient. I’ve recently made available---only at off-shore and Canadian pharmacies---my patented MiracleKillMedicine™ ‘ERECTER SET’ pills.”

“Erecter set?”

“Yes! They erect your set.”

“Wow! How do they work?”

“Do you know that your testosterone level peaked when you were a teenager? That it’s been going downhill ever since?”

“Hmm. Never gave it much thought. Damn! What does a teenager know about anything? Seems a waste. Anyway, Doctor Doctor, I’m looking to add a little life into my life.”

“Good, and here is the answer! My ERECTER SET medicine will:¹

- Raise your testosterone naturally to
- trigger a range of miraculous benefits, which will
- increase your sexual performance to
- improve your muscle mass and mood, and
- make you wake from a zombie-like state of fatigue.”

Call-in person, “All in a pill?! How many can I take?”

¹ *USA TODAY*, March 7, 2011, p. 9A. These five claims are taken from this advertisement.

Doc Doc, “As many as the amino acids in your stomach can absorb.”

“Great! Send me the max. Anything worth doing is worth overdoing.”

“Done! And you’ll love the side effect.”

“Which is?”

“You may suffer from prolonged states of non-fatigue, so to speak. We call it ‘erectile function!’ and we’ll send another pill to combat this side effect.”

“That’s okay, Doctor Doctor. I’ll settle for the side effect.”

Side Effects (II)
Erector Sets for Old Toddlers,
Report Two: Doctor, can you increase all flows?

Doctor Doctor, “This last call was very gratifying to me, folks. Caller D will now be able to cavort about in sexual revelry and spawn scores of soon-to-be fatherless children. 90 years old? Ha! He’ll only be 110 or so while he’s paying for his children’s college tuition.

Ring. Ring, as Doctor Doctor takes another incoming call:

Call-in person E, “Doctor Doctor, I’m one of those aging males---like the last caller. But I have a different problem.”

Doctor, Doctor is thinking: *Good, keeps the audience attuned and my advertisers advertising....More bucks for me.*

“What’s the problem, dear sickee? Can’t afford a doctor? ...eh, a real doctor” *Damn, I almost blew my open camouflage of a talk show charlatan.*

“No. I’m unemployed and not yet eligible for Medicaid. My friends told me to go to an emergency room, which would have to take me in---and I wouldn’t have to pay a red cent for the care. That’s what I did. Wow! I was wondering who was paying for my treatment, but I really didn’t care. Not my problem.”

Doctor Doctor thinks, but stays silent, *I’m paying for your care! The hospital passes the expense of your deadbeat misery on to me.* But that’s another issue, Doc Doc responds:

“So, how can I help you?”

“I’m taking a medicine to help me with my ...eh, bladder control. You see, I can’t perform at the urinal the way I used to perform.”

Doc Doc recognizes he has a chance to gain an increased audience...if he can provoke his caller to be more Charlie Sheen-like, “How did you perform at the urinal?”

“Ha! In the old days, those other pissers were turds!² They couldn’t match me at all. In comparison to my stream, they had no stream to speak of.

“Anyway, it turns out as I grew older, I didn’t have much of a stream anymore either. It sort of dribbled out, never getting finished.

The truth is, I was ashamed to ‘go’ in public. Those urinal battles turned around.”

² The characterization of “turds” was one that Sheen made about his studio and producer. As of this writing Charlie is on a 20-city tour promoting his warlock nature and his intelligent vocabulary. He’s even trade-marking his Jeffersonian-like phrases.

Doctor Doctor, “I hope your contestants didn’t turn around.”

“Ha! No, Doc Doc, they stayed facing their urinals. So, after getting my free medical advice, I went to the drug store and got a prescription to fix me up.”

“Then why are you calling Doctor Doctor’s talk-in show? It seems you’re fixed.”

“No, here’s the problem.³ My medicine makes me dizzy. I can deal with the dizziness, but after taking a few of the pills, I end-up with a prolonged erection; it may last for four or more hours!”

Doctor Doctor, “Hmm. So, you don’t have the problem of Caller D: an erector set problem?”

“No, just the opposite. I can’t get my erector set to ...well, disassemble.”

“Your side effect is one that many of my male listeners would like to have. And maybe you should be calling your wife. Anyway, Caller E, you need to buy my MiracleKillMedicine™. It contains enough MiracleKillIngredients™ to fix you up.”

“What does it do, Doc Doc?”

“It kills erections.”

“Eh, what’s the side effect?”

“It also kills egos. But that’s the price one must pay for modern medicinal cures.”

“Wait, Doctor Doctor, I’ve not finished. The prolonged erection is not the main problem, and with this side effect, my ego’s in pretty good shape. The problem is: This drug prevents me from any having any ejaculations. But damn, am I ever urinating! All over the place. Frankly it’s a bit depressing.”

Doctor Doctor, “Hmm. Your erector set is fully operational, yet you can’t do much with it...but eh...piss?”

“Yep.”

“That’s not going to make your mate very happy...Okay, let me turn you over to the order and fleecing department to buy my MiracleKillMedicine™ pills to suppress your depression about your urinating too much and ejaculating too little.”

“OK, Doc Doc, but what are the side effects?”

³ These potential side effects (prolonged erections with no ejaculations) are sourced from a brochure about a medicine to address the condition of benign prostatic hyperplasia (an enlarged prostate). To keep matters simple, I’ve not listed or discussed other possible side effects. For all medicines today, we should read and heed the labels. I think I can speak honestly for the male species that the side effects of this touted medicine are a witch’s brew of contradictions about the male psyche.

“Urinating too little and ejaculating too much.”

“Life’s not fair,s Doc Doc.”

“Nor are the side effects of modern medicines, but remember from my other broadcasts that the motto for my MiracleKillMedicine™ is, ‘An ounce of cure is worth a pound of side effects’...And the side effects affect your side, not mine.

“Next caller, you’re on the air with Doctor Doctor!”