



**Your on the
Street Reporter**



Uyless Black

Rats! The Poison Didn't Work

Rats! The Poison Didn't Work¹

Brooklyn, New York---“Students Arrested for Putting Rat Poison in Teacher's Water Bottle.”

This incident, in Brooklyn PS 315, was not the first incident of poisoning at an elementary school. In England, two 10-year-olds, part of a group calling themselves “The Mafia,” poured a bleach-like substance into their teacher's coffee cup. The teacher was warned by another student before she was able to take a sip.

Youngsters on a rampage. What gives? Let's continue with the article about the Brooklyn school: “A nine-year-old and a twelve-year-old were arrested...for allegedly putting rat poison in their teacher's water bottle, which she drank out of and subsequently became sick.”

A serious crime was committed and the children, not yet into their teens, were ratted-out by a fellow student who recognized rats when he saw them.

Not yet into their teens, one wonders where youngsters, with immature minds, got the idea of killing their teacher? Some children psychologists frequently cite kiddie TV programs as the root cause of certain kiddie events, such as poisoning people.

Consulting social media news, an impeccable source of unimpeachable drivel, this reporter found a TV program that was investigating the possible relationship of childhood violence to childhood television shows.

It displayed the top five television programs that the expose claimed were (my words): turning innocent babes into baby-faced killers. They are listed below, with the reasons the investigation claims the programs are dangerous to delicate minds:

1. Pokémon: It makes children aggressive.
2. Cow and Chicken: It contains sexual innuendos.
3. SpongeBob SquarePants: Its fast pace encourages the development of short-term memory.
4. Calliou: It deals with negative behavior.
5. Winx Club: It shows inappropriate attire, as well as inappropriate behavior.

I watched several minutes of each of these programs on YouTube. I was reminded of how much I liked cartoons as a child, how I looked forward to watching them each Saturday afternoon at the local movie theater before Hopalong Cassidy and other cowboy heroes came on the screen.

Two of my favorite cartoons were “Tom and Jerry” and the “The Roadrunner.” Talk about violence! Each cartoon showed the cat (in “Tom and Jerry”) and a coyote (in “The Roadrunner): being blown up with dynamite, crushed in the head with a falling anvil, falling off a zillion-foot cliff, run down by a speeding truck, and other calamities.

Here is what one television critic had to say about “Tom and Jerry.”

¹ <http://jobs.aol.com/articles/2014/05/21/students-arrested-for-putting-rat-poison-in-teachers-water-bott/?ncid=webmail31>.

It doesn't get much more classic than "Tom and Jerry." ...The original series is...shocking with its cartoon antics, taking the violence to a disturbing level at times. On top of that, like many cartoons of the time, the series threw in a lot of adult jokes that definitely wouldn't get past censors these days.²

These snapshots of the two cartoon movies are typical of the chase scenes in the cartoons---which were mostly chase scenes to begin with. Notice the faces of Jerry and the roadrunner. They are not looks of fear or anguish. Unlike some of today's cartoons I watched on YouTube, they depict two animals having the time of their lives.



The cartoons I recall, many from Loony Tunes---Bugs Bunny, Elmer Fudd, Daffy Duck, Donald Duck, etc.---showed a lot of violence. But the violence was clothed in good humor. A sense of fun diffused an impending knifing of a bird or the eating of a small rat.

Returning to the Brooklyn PS 315 story, other news releases about the poisoning stated the two boys were charged with reckless endangerment, assault, and criminal possession of a weapon. Perhaps because of their youthful-ordained innocence, they were not charged with attempted murder---likely to the chagrin of their teacher.

News releases went on, stating:

PS 315 is also known as the School of Performing Arts, and is well-liked by the teachers that work there, the New York Post reported. "My school is an excellent environment for learning," one teacher posted on greatschools.org. "We...have Smart Boards, document cameras, desktops, and laptops available in all classrooms."

It was not clear what motivated the students. Perhaps they had watched too many cartoons in which the victims were not smiling, or news casts about violence in America and frowning dead people.

But there's not much in the news about killings by rat poison. However, the teacher at PS 315 did say the school was an excellent environment for learning.

² <https://www.cbr.com/horrifying-kids-shows/#the-powerpuff-girls-took-violence-to-the-next-level>