

# Entertainment Outlook

## On the defence, for Bugs and company

Cartoon fans the world over were naturally horrified to read of the latest scandal to hit the world of animated TV.



### Weir's View

By Ian Weir  
Thomson News Service

The Rev. Donald Wildmon, a Missouri preacher who monitors sex and violence in the media, has just laid a terrible charge against Mighty Mouse: in a recent episode, Rev. Wildmon reveals, the hero was clearly depicted snorting cocaine.

Oh, good Lord. Where — as so many disillusioned idealists have moaned before me — will it all end?

I have been a loyal watcher of cartoons for years and years — at least since the age of 18 or so, when I came to the sudden realization (while flipping through the TV Guide one day) that Bugs Bunny was the only decent adult show on TV.

These days, in fact, I am watching even more cartoons than ever — a phenomenon which arises from sharing living quarters with a three-year-old.

Now, granted, I have never argued that cartoons are perfect. It is undeniably true that a lot of the modern cartoons are pretty second-rate, and may even promote questionable values.

The aforementioned three-year-old, for instance, actually seems to prefer the Care Bears to Bugs Bunny. And it is disturbing to discover that an otherwise well-adjusted boy would insist on watching Tender-Heart and his insufferable little companions gushing on about love and friendship, when we could just as easily change channels and watch Elmer shoot Daffy's beak off.

Still, I've remained a staunch defender of cartoons — particularly

against the ridiculous charges that cartoon violence is likely to warp young minds.

My position on this is quite clear. Show me someone who honestly believes that a child will be damaged by watching Wyle E. Coyote blow himself up with an Anti-Roadrunner Missile purchased from the Acme Corp., and I'll show you someone who can't quite understand why the horse who played Mr. Ed has never appeared on any talk shows.

But this latest allegation — that Mighty Mouse snorts cocaine — is something else entirely. This is truly shattering.

Imagine trying to break the news to his millions of admirers: Mighty Mouse has feet of clay. And the sniffles.

According to Rev. Wildmon, the cocaine-snorting episode is clear and blatant: "Mighty Mouse is down in the dumps and he reaches into his cape, pulls out a substance and sniffs it through his nostrils."

Mercifully, a denial was swiftly issued. Apparently, an executive at CBS wrote Rev. Wildmon a letter, stating: "CBS categorically denies that Mighty Mouse or any other character was shown sniffing cocaine." And the producer of the episode explains the hero was merely sniffing crushed flowers.

Well. Such denials come as a great comfort. And yet... a terrible doubt remains.

True, we are overjoyed to hear Mighty Mouse sniffs nothing more than crushed flowers. On the other hand, isn't sniffing crushed flowers a bit, well... odd?

And when you stop to think about it, there is something about Mighty Mouse that just doesn't add up. Put it this way. Here is a small rodent who nonetheless has massively overdeveloped biceps and pectorals, and who flies about performing breathtaking feats of strength.

The only conclusion is chilling, but inescapable: this sounds very much like a mouse who takes anabolic steroids.

And come to think of it, what about some of Mighty Mouse's fellow film stars — like Popeye?

We are intelligent adults. We know you do not become strong to the finish purely and simply by eating your spin-

ach. In other words, there is clearly something in those spinach cans which explains his sudden bursts of energy — and which quite probably caused his premature baldness.

In short, Rev. Wildmon has just alerted us to a terrible possibility — that there may have been, for decades and decades, rampant substance abuse amongst cartoon characters.

And now, loyal cartoon fans must sit back and wait for the crushing reve-

lations that are sure to come, now the truth has begun to leak out. That once a week, Bugs Bunny makes mysterious purchases from Rocky and Mugsy. That Warner Brothers executives are on the verge of checking Yosemite Sam into the Betty Ford Clinic.

Good grief. Talk about a loss of innocence. Talk about the shattering of ideals.

It's enough to make you give up. And watch the Care Bears.

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### ASK DICK KLEINER

#### What sent angel to 'Heaven'?

By Dick Kleiner

Dear Dick: Could you please tell me how Jonathan (Michael Landon) on "Highway to Heaven" died and subsequently became an angel? — J.A.Y., Saginaw, Mich.

Dear J.A.Y.: There have been several explanations for Jonathan's demise offered. In one episode, for example, he told Mark (Victor French) he smoked too much and died of lung cancer. But there have been other reasons given on other episodes. When pressed, an NBC executive simply shrugged and said, "This is television — what can I tell you?"

Dear Dick: When I was a kid in the '50s, I saw a movie "The Iron Mistress," with Alan Ladd as Jim Bowie. When was it made and are copies available? — E.O.L., Reidsville, N.C.

Dear E.O.L.: That film, which also starred Virginia Mayo, was made in 1952. It has not been put on a video cassette. There is no real demand for it — it was a second-rate western to begin with, and they were a dime a dozen.

Dear Dick: I'm trying to find the name of a movie from the '30s about a young man (Joel McCrea) who was shipwrecked on an island, controlled by an evil man. He was given a chance to survive if he could outrun and hide from all the weapons aimed at him. — Mrs. A.S., Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Dear Mrs. A.S.: The film, "The Most Dangerous Game," was released in 1932.

Dear Dick: Isn't Deborah Farentino, who plays Susan the "handyman" on "Hooperman," the same actress who was the sophisticated



Michael Landon Debrah Farentino

Sloane Denning on the daytime soap, "Capitol"? But it doesn't seem to me that was her name. I thought she had an Irish name. — B.C., Lowell, Mass.

Dear B.C.: She did. She was Deborah Mallowney then, but she married actor James Farentino and took his name. She thought of hyphenating it, but Deborah Mallowney-Farentino would have taken up three lines in the TV listings. She now spells her first name Debrah.

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