

dir/serial/personal/Edward Stevens: **MingusMingusMingusMingus**

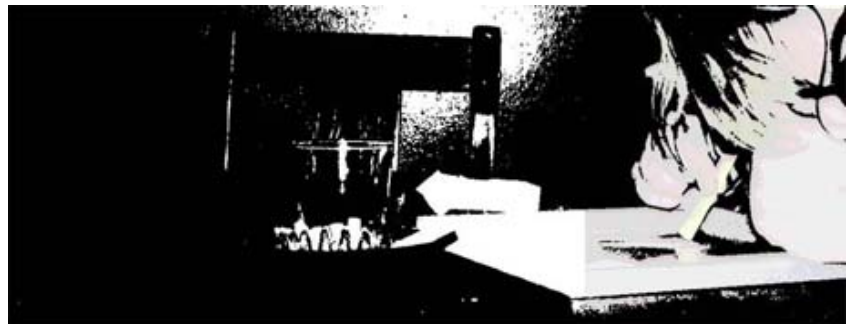


--There's this girl. Was. Her favorite saying is 'That's it!' It is cute when she says it. Not like a statement of discovery, more like, 'That's the last time.' When the ball doesn't go in the pocket. When one of her friends gets in a fun little cheap shot. Or, in truth, even if she gets shot. You look so sexy lying there, a moaning, non- functioning lump with a drippy coke nose and stale MD 20/20 on your breath. Ugh, you said, I'm so fucked up. That's it! Bleach blonde hair, straightened daily, hung over large fake tits on a slim body. 29 years, 104 lbs. What would be the point, I wonder, of yelling at an ounce of cocaine, in a plastic bag, on the white and blue-flowered plate of intended service. They will watch me do it, her friends will. A dull-eyed pack of young zombies. Some not so young. I have been reading Dunleavy's Balthazar B lately. It hasn't helped to soften the revulsion.

If I'd been re-reading my Buk like a good boy, it would have helped, certainly. Not this time. She told me, while drunk, that she had fucked the lead singer of Poison, an 80s pansy glam-rock band, while they were on a let's-milk-it-one-more-time tour. She denied it two days later, while drunk. She posed a hypothetical to me. If I would get mad if she sucked off the lead singer of Sugar Ray, a pansy girl band. Ooo... he has highlights in his hair. The band was coming to town, you see. She calls snorting coke 'partying' and has asked me to leave the room so that she could rail undisturbed with her friends. Does several shots of Crown Royal per day. Has a tongue stud and gives head freely, just not very well, tongue stud notwithstanding, or for any longer than a couple of minutes. She will quit on you. Her best friend is a guy who is a drug dealer, a fact which she has done a poor job of lying/covering up. For whom I don't know.

2.

She has a twelve-year-old daughter whom she has left, albeit chaperoned, in a movie theater so she could run an errand or two and stop off to have a shot of Crown with her friend. When we fall asleep together she does not sleep naked with me. She must wear a bra otherwise she will somehow get a headache. Implants, some kind of pressure... blah blah blah. I don't



know and it's hard to stay enthusiastic about drunken mumbling. Hates the outdoors and shells out for tanning beds. On my brain right now? 'Sour Grapes' by the Descendents. Oh yeah, and the Poison guy? A blown-up cheek to cheek photo at her bedside stuck in a Victoria's Secret catalogue. Brett Michaels with a smugly cool look on his face and bloodshot eyes underneath his plastic LA-style cowboy hat.

He knew what that photo was for. He was right, too—she let it slip that there was a vibrator in the

house. And a great all-time classic—a brief account of how she used to dance on stage (stripper, too) to a Poison song. After the big night, of course. And Patheticus, a local demigod, would set and watch, using his own tears of joy as lubrication for his hand while masturbating furiously. This drug dealer guy visits her at the strip club regularly. Friends. ??? He 'tips' her as one normally might do in such places, up to \$100 per night. He can watch her fake tits all night. Who out there thinks that this is OK on any level, from either side? But...

3.

This is El Paso. A border town. The sleaze is unbelievable. She probably pushes for him in the club. Other strippers. He is already supplying her with coke for her personal use, so really how far are we removed from this possibility. Her friends are so goddamn dumb, such fucking zeros, that even cocaine does not spruce them up. They are numb. Numb from dumb.

Well, you can't polish shit now can you. Just low volume chirping, little sidebars, intimidating forgettable secrets, standing around with Coors Light in hand. She dabs the inside of her nose with a tissue. Got the sniffles, huh. I am not stupid, I now, I just don't know why I bothered to say anything. Oh, I have allergies, she says. Hah! Some kid says, That's exactly what I say! Allergies! Body and soul flapping in the breeze: Hey was that a cop car?

4.

'Partying.' Some fucking party. Oh, a big coke party! Does one say, 'That's life. Things happen. Lives turn out differently. And what do you think, she just laid



around for 29 years waiting for you to show up?' Well, OK, but tell me, just how much crap am I supposed to load in the back of my truck? Southern folk know the pick-up truck rule. Maybe just a clear-cut 'Fuck off' would be better. Yeah, definitely. Drug dealers and strippers intermingling.

You'd expect some serious and wild shit to be happening.

You'd expect to see them in packs, 6 nights a week, cruising the streets with loud music blasting out of a shiny huge late model SUV, barging into bars and parties, making a scene, making a splash, livening up the joint. Like little soldiers of Dionysus. Shocking and fucking and teasing everyone in the crowd, whipping it all up into an orgiastic frenzy.

Please direct all inquiries regarding this matter to the lump curled up in the back seat of a tan Saturn in some parking lot on a Tuesday night or to the puke left unflushed in a toilet in the women's restroom in a Whataburger. So sorry. Just a lot of lying around and inside jokes and late night phone calls. It's weak. The only aspect that approaches interest is how low and lowbrow it all is. That people live like this. I do not belong here. But how does one resist watching a train wreck? Still Dave, isn't there a level of kindness and gentility going on in their circle, no matter how it looks from the outside? Perhaps, but the thing is, it all gets poured into the details of how a boyfriend and girlfriend, both shitfaced from booze and drugs, got into a big fight over nothing of major import and how the girl got oh so upset and

needs to be consoled.

5.

Drunks consoling each other. Or late night phone calls because so and so was really fucked up and drove home anyway. Did you get home OK? OK call me tomorrow. Nonsense such as this. Every fucking night. I suppose the nice thing about it all is while the crises are frequent and dramatic, the truth is that it almost never severs friendships. Allow me to do one thing here-"friendships." There, that's better. (Although that remains a possibility, that there will be words spoken by someone who will have no recollection of saying them one hour from now to someone who is just drunk enough to get emotional, take it in the wrong way. A spaghetti-armed shoving mach ensues.)

Lying there in a puddle of... herself. Somehow it gets lost in the whole thing that cocaine and DWI are actually illegal, like it or not. She will end up in jail because 1) of her habits and 2) her friends are morons, making getting busted inevitable. One is not so cool and fashionable in prison beige. You will not be so cool when you have to feed on slop in the morning instead of late-night drive thru. She will lie in her bed at night, trying not to make a sound while a dyke prison guard eats her pussy. She will have to learn to eat pussy, too. She will have to learn to not make a sound when the large-bellied bull fucks her in the ass. You will not be visited by your good-time buddies after they see your shiner and split lip on your unhappy face and they listen to your depressing stories.

6.

It will, however, give them all some more drama to drool on. They will delight in moaning about how it's time to clean up, get their acts together. I can't be doing this, I've got a kid, for Christsake. When is the next time they will visit her. We'll go together. Or not. Figuring out that they never really had anything in common except the above mentioned. Whatever. Assuring themselves that they actually have the brains and backbone to not end up like that. Then heading off to score. Just another chapter in a series of acts of carelessness in words and deed. Like flicking lit cigarettes off each other's faces. Slick back your hair, do a bump, strap in and sit in the car as it... idles... down... the. highway. A deformed farm animal that chases its own tail all day.

Can you picture it all at once? A gross negligence of dignity. Decency up on the cross, bruised bloody and broken. All of it, every slurred word, every shit eating grin, vicariously and intrusively offensive. Sorry, Dunleavy popped in there again. 'That's it! That is so it!' She can drink enough Crown Royal to make a grown man puke on the sidewalk.

7.

Called me from the club, 1:45 am, asked if she could come over. Sure, my dick said. It ended up that one of her rancid, cheery friend drove behind her just to make sure she got there alright. Both drunk. Long story shortened, they end up talking amongst themselves in my apartment about some drunken drama created by, yes, the drug dealer. More booze and drugs. I kicked them out, a move with which my dick agreed. Later we shook on it.

Hey folks, imagine this: 2:30 am you wake up to the sound of your door being knocked on. You go to open it. It's a drunk stripper. You think for a second, this is my lucky day. 'Thank you, God!,' like that

kid in that movie. You say, Hey baby, c'mon in! You end up in bed with a stripper who is too drunk and weary to even take off her own clothes and anything she manages to say involves how fucked up she is or what so and so said about so and so. What a drag. Of course, in the morning she is too hung over.

She is keenly aware of the big three-O coming up. 'I'm not turning 30. That's it! I'm going to kill myself. This life will not be cool for much longer. Bags under the eyes in an attempt to keep with it. More cocaine. Ed long since gone. Snorting coke off her friend's dick, his buddies' dick. He will say to the other guy, 'We've been friends for years. Be nice.' Outright whore, jaded, staring at the ceiling while some guy pumps away.

8.

Ed is anal retentive. Ed is boring. And now they can talk about it while they huddle around the chinaware. Fuck Ed. snort You don't need him. So fucking holier-than-thou. sniff Who does he think he is, some fucking GI with that haircut? Fine. Ed knows better. Ed knows that after having no girl at all for months, long months, that it is better to have a girl to fuck. Does a body good. At least she is a hottie. Really and truly skin deep. Dick-deep. But come on, are good looks an excuse to be a loser? Like caring for your friends* makes up for being a pathetic alcoholic and unfit mother.

Stupidity hurled after stupidity. Insufficient, nonsensical explanations and lies and bullshit. Where were you... Oh I see... Wait a minute... what?

I foresee sour grapes in the future. No girl, dick hard. I ought to call her. No, wrong. Don't do it, man. Stupid fucking bitch. People like this, there is just no helping. I tried to put it in just such a way, that I'd gone with a girl who'd been raped, alcohol was involved. Probably one or two others who just never said anything. When a girl drinks that much, it's just a matter of time. No dice. I can see it now, after the doctor says she will now have to use a cane (DWI incident) 'Ugh, that's it!' And that any plastic surgeon worth his salt can do something about those scars. Her skull on fire, a fleshless and charred mandible flaps, 'That's the LAST it!' Her fake tits having never looked better.



9.

You are so sexy when you puke in the morning. You're such a hottie when you get up in the middle of the night to do a bump to get rid of your headache and then again one hour later when you get up to do a shot of Grape MD 20/20 so you can sleep.

Now when I see her drunk, all I can do is speak softly and make sure there is a Mingus CD handy. Miles D. would surely send me spinning in times like these. Spanish Key? Forget it.

When you are standing over a toilet, bent over with your finger down your throat, my dick gets so hard. Really it has become tiresome pushing around the ashes and bits of leftover charcoal trying to find some heat. When my hand goes over her hip or the side of her arm, she complains. Can't blame her there. If I had her job, that would be the last thing I'd want, too. She doesn't like me to finger her, either. Fine, I'll stop. A soul like an early 80s IROC Z28 with 250,000 miles on it. Age 29. Mother of a twelve-year-old girl.

10

Oh yea, then there's THAT.

*Denotes a brief conversation in which the author was advised by the subject not to judge the subject by her friends. It is advised that the reader give weight to this when considering the context in which 'caring' is used. It is bullshit, you see. I've never heard the statement 'To each his own' used so frequently with respect to one's friends. Surely concern has to kick in somewhere. Not here. Her brother sells pot. 17 years old. You can throw it all out with the bathwater and the baby.

-Mingus is a non fiction serial piece by writer Edward Stevens.