

# I know you . . . You're . . .

When you watch television, do you ever wonder what life must be like away from the camera for some of the actors and actresses you see in the commercials?



**You can't beat a system you can't understand**

By Sam Bari

Imagine being the young woman in the "I have herpes, he doesn't," commercial. She goes out on a first date with someone who doesn't know about the TV spot. Throughout the evening the date keeps saying, "I know I've seen you before, I just can't remember where or when." At the end of the date, at the moment before he kisses her goodnight at her door, he remembers . . . Awkward moment? You bet. Not exactly what anyone would call an auspicious beginning to a lasting relationship.

Let's just say, the young couple survives that first awkward moment. She says, "Yup, that's me all right. But I'm just an actress. It's not really true." And let's just say, he's a standup guy and enjoys the humor of the situation. How long will it be tolerable when his friends keep seriously asking him, "Aren't you just a little bit worried? You catch that, and it's a life sentence, ya know?" I think he would quickly tire of explaining her acting career.

Now think about what it would be like if the guy who has the "on-going problem" was your dad. Like the Energizer Bunny, he keeps "going and going and going." If you were seven years old, and in the second grade, and all the kids you knew kept saying, "Your dad keeps going and going and going," and then they kept laughing and laughing and laughing. You would be less than amused. Wouldn't you say?

And I don't think we have to really delve into the myriad of

possible consequences of the E-D commercials. That's got to be a lose-lose situation for everyone concerned.

On the lighter side of things, would you want to have the lady whose head keeps blowing up larger and larger because she has allergies for your mom? Not if you're six years old you wouldn't. Every time your friends saw your mother they would shout, "Hey Mrs. Smith! Show us how you make your head get real big. We saw you do it on TV!" Hmmm . . . talk about childhood trauma. Her kids will need a little couch time in no time at all - guaranteed.

For a short time, a commercial was aired where a woman and her daughter were standing on a couch holding each other while they screamed and shouted because an animated rat ran across the room followed by his family. The rat looked at the camera and with a lascivious grin and said, "Guess what - youse got roommates." Then the exterminator stepped in with his pressurized can of rat poison, and the rat family ran for the great outdoors. The spot didn't run for long. I imagine because it was just a little too terrifying.

I am certain that the woman who was in the commercial got a few calls about the condition of her house. The first was probably from her mother. "Louise, how many times I gotta tell you to put

the food away before you go to bed? No wonder ya got rats. Now the whole world knows. That's a reflection on me, ya know. What? You think my friends don't talk? They talk plenty. Maybe not to my face. Blah-blah-blah." I think you get the picture.

The point is: What were the actors thinking when they agreed to be in those spots? Did they really believe that some of the brain dead viewers, or children wouldn't take them seriously? And what about the sponsors? They're the real culprits responsible for these disgusting commercials. Do they really believe it is necessary to be so graphic to sell their products?

It wasn't that long ago that any commercials having to do with hygiene or personal medical conditions were addressed by using a doctor or some other expert for a spokesman. Or, the spots were animated and concentrated on the cures and solutions for the problem, not a graphic live action scenario emphasizing the malady.

What happened to the great Wendy's kind of spots that used "Where's the beef?" for a slogan, or, the fast-talking Federal Express guy? Those were memorable commercials. They sold a lot of product and were genuinely entertaining. The actors in the commercials became famous for the charmingly quirky characters they portrayed. You'd want to be related to those people.

Maybe I'm out of step with the latest marketing techniques, but any TV commercial that makes me want to switch channels because of the disgusting content is part of that system I just can't understand.

## Dwyer in canoe event to protect Charles River

Timothy Dwyer of Jamestown is among the early entries for the 26th Run of the Charles Canoe and Kayak Race in Boston, which will take place on Sunday, April 27.

The Run of the Charles is held to benefit the Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA) and its efforts to protect the health, beauty and accessibility of the Charles River.

Dwyer has entered the Masters category for the 19-mile race.

For more information on volunteering, sponsorship, registration or any other aspect of the race, call 508-698-6810, e-mail rotc@crwa.org or visit www.charlesriver.org.

## Learn about foster parenting at DCYF night

The Department of Children, Youth and Families is hosting a Foster Care and Adoption Information Night on Wednesday, March 26, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the DCYF Office at 650 Ten Rod Rd., North Kingstown.

DCYF staff, foster, and adoptive parents will be available to explain the program and answer questions. The information night is open to anyone interested in exploring becoming a foster or adoptive parent for children in DCYF care. Stop by and learn how to make a difference in the life of a child. For more information, call Robin Perez, DCYF Foster Parent Recruiter, at 528-3700 or the DCYF North Kingstown Office at 294-5300.



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