

Rach against the machine

Mixing oestrogen and attitude with penultimate drug experiences

e is for ecstasy, so is chocolate, sex, a size 8 pair of jeans and a half-hour snogging session fully clothed. Ecstasy used to be my drug of choice, (then so did chocolate, sex, a size 8 pair of jeans and a half-hour snogging session fully clothed!) now it's a couple of Mersyndol and a choco-latte before bed, on a good night.

Drugs have never been my forte. After my first Rohypnol, I awoke in a strange house with a black eye and a lifetime ban from the Berlin club. Since then I've never understood the attraction to elephant tranquilizers. My first Quaalude left me with no body (muscle-melt being a minor side effect) but a perfectly stimulated brain. Never being one to let a minor obstacle stand in the way, I still managed to have a great night thanks to the perfectly formed biceps of my mate Raph who carried me round the party just so I could keep socialising.

Then there was the amyl nitrate experience when I lost control of my bladder, my senses and about 40,000 brain cells. Speed wasn't much fun either; I grind my teeth enough in my sleep so I don't see any reason why I should follow through in my waking hours. The inside lining of my stomach led a glorious path up the beach after mushrooms, my nostrils stuck together when I sniffed glue, and tripping only added a further 32.75 personalities to my already close-to-full-house character.

Don't get me wrong, I have certainly had my fair share of "wow man, cosmic, chilled" experiences; I more than enjoyed the entire Male Spanish Theatre Company spitting on my face for hours during a hot-flush experience back in '87. As I recall I

even begged them for more! I too have enjoyed the blinding flashes of enlightenment brought on by mind-enhancing substances: I have loved the enemy, bathed in the light on planet Venus, and been overjoyed by the simple sound of my heels tapping on wood. I have also awoken with my integrity and my bra straps barely intact, miles from home, with the lingering smell and the sludge of the previous night's tequila races staining my décolletage.

There was a time, back in the decadent late '80s, when I got bored with snorting half of Woolies' aisle six washing detergents up my nose. It was then that my thoughts began to turn to more natural methods of achieving nirvana. Guarana caught my eye, and the lining of my stomach, as I tried chewing guarana nuts, dissolving guarana powder into cocktails at happy hour, sculling jungle elixir on the dancefloor and dropping a tab every five minutes. Nothing could stop me on my quest to stay out all night, desperate to suck out the last moments and beat the clock to sun up. Well, I beat the clock night after night and was soon more wired than a Cyclone fence. Then so would you be if you'd downed the equivalent of 10 espressos in a single guarana-infested night. It was time to move on. And as for drug etiquette, little Rach must have been sick that day at school. Is it three tokes and pass it on when inhaling another's spliff, or is it two and pass it back? If they chop the line do I roll the fifty-dollar note or will a fiver do, and am I expected to reciprocate at a later date? What's the code when talking on the mobile – is it "disco biscuit" or

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is that passé; and what do rails have to do with cocaine anyway, isn't that the SRA's department?

Obviously there is more to a simple Saturday night out than I realised. Maybe my worst nightmare is finally coming true and I'm turning into my one-sniff-of-the-wine-cork-screamer mother. Next thing you know I'll be saving my change for the collection plate on Sundays. Once, I couldn't wait for Friday so I could wake up Monday unaware of my past 48-hour's activities. Now, I find myself in bed practically before the sun drops on Friday night, just so I can be the first at the organic fruit markets on Saturday morning! I guess reality just ain't as bad as I thought it was – but maybe I'm just having a bad acid flashback! ●

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