

Tony Brown Comments



Tony

George Kirby: Straight Man

George Kirby has mellowed like a fine wine. His often bitter life has also had its peaks. He's now at one such peak; not, however, because he's rich or famous. Rather, because of heroin.

Yes, because of heroin. You see, at last—after having his life destroyed and almost losing everything that matters—Kirby now knows heroin as the killer it really is. In one of the most exciting and insightful television interviews that I have ever conducted, Kirby laid it on the line.

With his siren songs of wealth and power, King Heroin has duped George Kirby twice. In 1958, suffering the physical and mental horrors of a powerful drug habit, Kirby had to enter the drug rehabilitation center at Lexington, Kentucky.

After a two-year hitch, he promised to stop obeying dope and go straight. Although he stopped using drugs, he started selling them. Worried about losing his fame, house and car, King Heroin's illusions returned.

Kirby offered to sell 363 grams of cocaine to an undercover narcotics agent in Las Vegas. For the sale, he lost his home, his car, his fame, went from a \$35,000 a week income to no income—and, most importantly, lost his freedom. He was sentenced to 20 years in jail.

"When the judge sentenced me and I stood up in court, I apologized to everyone. I apologized to everyone all over that were fans and friends of mine, that knew me, and had followed my career. And I told them how ashamed I was of even getting involved in all this," he said. "I learned a terrific lesson behind that, and that lesson is, think three and four times before you do anything that is unlawful. And I say that to each and everybody."

Many millions are still doing what Kirby used to do. They underestimate dope and confuse its delusion with reality. "King Heroin," as Kirby calls his poetic message in his nightclub act, is a true devil.

Kirby has written a play entitled "King Heroin." The nine characters are entitled: cocaine, heroin, marijuana, LSD, opium, PCP, the pimp, the thief and Lucifer. "Behold, I'm King Heroin. Known to all as the destroyer of man. From where I first came, nobody knows. I came from a land where the poppy grows. I'm a world power, and all know it's true. Use me once, and you'll know it too."

"...All nations have gathered to plot by destruction, for I'm a breeder of crime and corruption. I came to this country without a passport. And ever since, I've been hunted and sought. For I capture men's wills and destroy their minds and cause them to commit all sorts of crimes."

"With cellophane bags, I found my way to great men in office and children at play. From richest of states to the poorest of slums. From the highest exalted to Bowery bums. I can make a mere school boy forget his books. Make a world famous beauty forget her looks. I can make a husband forsake his family

and wife and send a greedy man to prison for the rest of his life.

"I can make a man forsake country and flag and make a girl sell her virtue for a \$20 bag....Would you like to hear more of the things I can do: The women I defiled, the men I slew? ...Some have run to programs and to the police to get from under my wing. How dare they defy me? I who am king.

"So now they must suffer, you see that's part of my game. They lay with discomfort and they squirm with the pain. They rise in the morning with a hacking cough, six, seven days of this madness and they might throw me off. Oh, they'll curse my name and defy me in speech, but some would pick me up again if I were in reach.

"They heard my warning but didn't take heed. Now they must put the foot in the stirrup and mount my steed. Get tight in the saddle and ride me well, for I, King Heroin, am going to bring them all straight down to hell. Are you, are you, my next victim? Sucker!"

After Kirby recited that very moving anti-destruction piece to me on television, I had chills running across my skin. Then he told me about "the joke between him and the Lord."

"God Almighty was watching me. He watches all of his children." In jail, Kirby had a revelation: "I was talking to the Lord, I said, 'Okay, Lord, when I first got into show business I was a porter, with a mop and a bucket.' And here I was in the institution with a mop and a broom and a bucket. And I said, 'I get it. You want me to get myself together and do it right this time. So when I come out this time, that's what I intend to do!'"

And that's what Kirby is doing. He's warning others. He's up against a country trying to live an illusion. The rich openly admit in divorce court that the Master-Dope turns love to perversion; yesterday's all-American football boy is today's convicted drug pusher; lovely young girls in beauty contests carry cocaine along with cosmetics and go to jail cells instead of into the winner's circle; comedians turn to running balls of fire in maniacal laughter as the dope eats away their skin; the singer, who can no longer sing; seeks new songs in the siren songs of dope's new death.

Some of the poor and not so famous use this devil to be like the rich and famous. They all bow at his feet. They call his message: "recreational usage." They say the devil makes them do it. How right they are.

He loves it, he tricks them all. That's why he's king. He tricked George Kirby, the famous comedian, twice: once in his veins and once in his fame. Now Kirby faces King Heroin for the third time.

"Tony Brown's Journal" TV series can be seen on public television Saturdays on Channel 42 at 6:30. It can also be seen on Channel 58 on Sundays at 6:30 p.m. Please consult listings.

Kirby Presents King Heroin

In 1977 George Kirby's life changed. The famous comedian and impressionist was jailed for selling cocaine and heroin to a Las Vegas undercover agent. He was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Now after being released and on probation, this versatile entertainer is making a comeback.

Kirby talks about his battle with drugs and prison life on the upcoming edition of "Tony Brown's Journal," entitled "George Kirby Presents King Heroin."

Since leaving prison, Kirby has been working to resurrect his career. Because of his own addiction and experiences with drugs, he has been waging a campaign to educate and rehabilitate drug addicts. As an outgrowth, Kirby has added a new character to his litany of impressions: "King Heroin," a chilling dramatization of the destructive impact of drugs. On the program, Kirby brings to live the diabolical force called "King Heroin."

The nation's longest-running, top rank Black Affairs television series has been sponsored by Pepsi-Cola Company for eight consecutive years. Televised nationally on public television, the program will be seen in this area on WTVI, Channel 42 and WUNG, Channel 48 at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 22.

"I got involved in a dealing with drugs which I had no business doing, but out of desperation to save some

material things, I did it," confides Kirby to host Tony Brown. "I learned a terrific lesson behind that, and that lesson is to think three or four times before you do anything that is unlawful.

"I say that to each and everybody in this entire country and over the world. Think three or four times

before you do anything wrong because they made an example out of me. Because of my name, they let everybody know, 'We

don't care who you are. From now on, if you're involved in something, we're gonna sock it to you; we're gonna put you away'."

"Chinatown" Is Sunday Night Movie

Jack Nicholson and Faye Dunaway star in "Chinatown," Roman Polanski's highly acclaimed movie about a baffling mystery involving political corruption and private scandal, to be seen Sunday, January 23, at 3 p.m. on WBTV, Channel 3.

John Huston, director of such film classics as "The Maltese Falcon" and "The Big Sleep," co-stars. Robert Towne won an Academy Award for best original screenplay for "Chinatown."

The time is 1937 and the

place, Los Angeles, then a thriving boomtown riddled with corruption as shady political dealings and land speculation provide opportunities for the powerful to make millions.

J. J. Gittes (Nicholson), a dapper, ambitious but small-time private eye specializing in divorce-case investigations, is catapulted into the middle of this big-time wheeling and dealing when he accepts as a client a beautiful socialite, Evelyn Mulwray (Ms. Dunaway).




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