

PSYCHO? LOGICAL? BULLETIN

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CONGRATULATIONS!

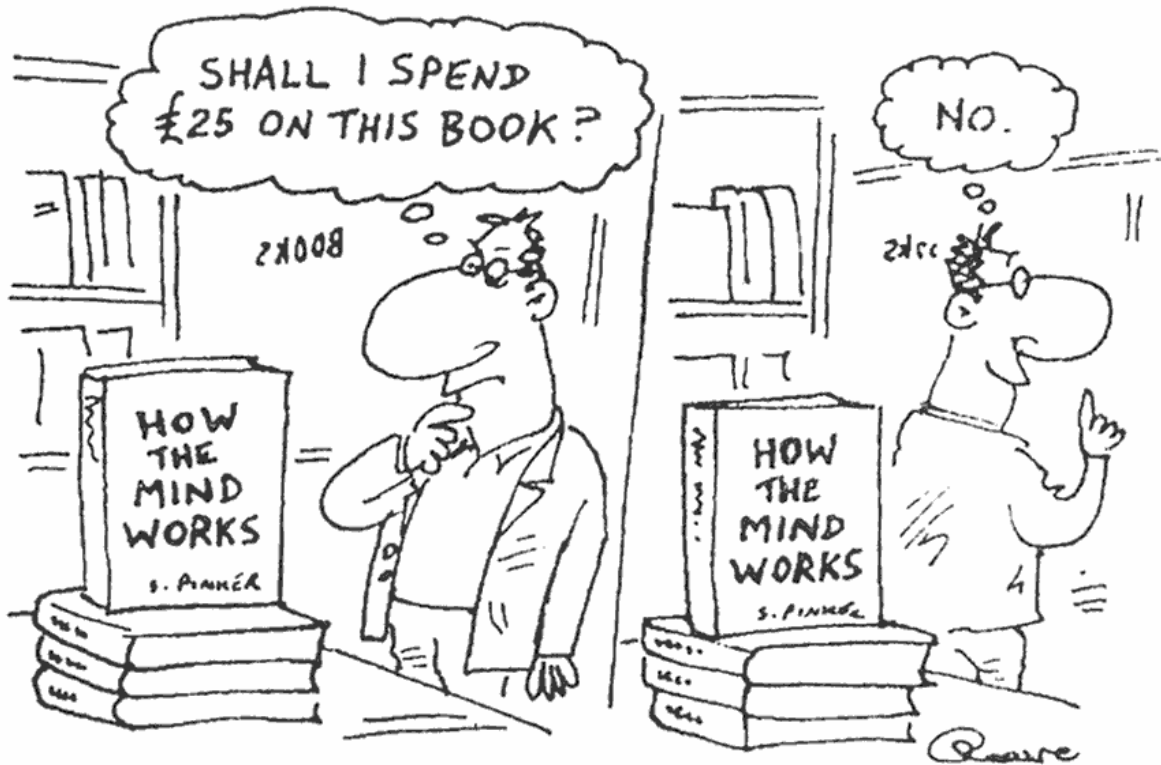


*David Rakison
has been awarded the
Young Investigator Award from the
International Society of Infant Studies
(ISIS) for early-career achievements in
advancing infant studies.*

**BOB SIEGLER RECEIVES HONORARY DEGREE
FROM UNIVERSITY OF LIEGE**



HOW THE MIND REALLY WORKS



Compliments of Dr. Steven Pinker (<http://pinker.wjh.harvard.edu>)

PSYCHO? LOGICAL? TRIVIA



Peeps, those yellow marshmallowy harbingers of spring, originate in nearby Bethlehem, PA.



If you have WAY too much time on your hands, you can visit the Peep factory, which produces over 1.2 billion peeps/year.



EXPOSE! GRADUATE RECRUITING TECHNIQUES REVEALED BY ANONYMOUS SOURCE

Dr. Ken Kotovsky rises to new levels to recruit graduate students into the psychology department at Carnegie Mellon University, sources say. A potential graduate student of Dr. Kotovsky visited Pittsburgh during the last weekend in February to learn about the cognitive psychology program and to meet relevant faculty. Aware that he was competing with other programs (such as UC Berkeley) for this graduate student, Dr. Kotovsky arranged a Pittsburgh bike ride on Sunday, one of the first nice days of a very long Pittsburgh winter. Participants in Dr. Kotovsky's excursion included the visiting student (who had previously enjoyed cycling regularly), an unsuspecting assistant professor, and a good-natured associate professor of mechanical engineering.

The day began as a typical Ken Kotovsky bike ride as Dr. Kotovsky led his colleagues and his guest through swamps of mud, over sheets of ice, and over bridges with heavy traffic, potholes, and no bike lanes. Although this may have been a bit surprising for the visiting student who was unaware of Dr. Kotovsky's adventurous nature, Dr. Kotovsky's colleagues were not fazed at this point. Dr. Kotovsky pointed out Pittsburgh landmarks and scenery to the visiting graduate student, exhibiting such knowledge of the area that his colleagues marveled that he might have just as easily become a Pittsburgh Tour Guide as a Cognitive Psychologist.

As the bike ride proceeded, the visiting student was able to see even more of Pittsburgh than she probably bargained for. After arriving at Station Square, Dr. Kotovsky suggested an alternate "easier" return route – one that according to Kotovsky would "save time and elevation". After such a rough ride to Station Square, an "easier" return trip sounded like music to everyone's ears, and the group immediately began to follow Dr. Kotovsky's lead.

However, sources confirm that it wasn't long until the music in everyone's ears was silenced. This "easier" return trip began by exiting all bike paths, roads, sidewalks, etc. and detouring onto a train track! It should be noted that the trains were very active on that beautiful Sunday afternoon. At first, Kotovsky suggested that his group cycle beside the tracks on the surrounding mounds of rocks; however, it soon became apparent that it was impossible to do so. Undeterred, Dr. Kotovsky suggested that everyone walk their bicycles *on* the quite active train tracks instead. Concerned that a train might run over his colleagues and the visiting student, Dr. Kotovsky showed remarkable leadership by urging everyone to hurry along the tracks as fast as they could – not an easy feat given the large holes in the middle of the tracks. Sources close to Dr. Kotovsky report that during this time, it became apparent even to Dr. Kotovsky that his "shortcut" wasn't working the way he intended because new (very high) fences had been put up all around the tracks for miles – presumably to keep people like Dr. Kotovsky from endangering their lives around the train tracks.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE...

Realizing that the group was stuck on train tracks with no apparent way out, Dr. Kotovsky announced a brilliant solution in the Kotovsky tradition: The group would *climb over the high wire fence* and then *pass the bikes over the fence!* Dr. Kotovsky's two colleagues climbed over the fence first – the mechanical engineer climbed the fence with style and grace; less can be said of the assistant professor whose jacket became entangled in the fence at the top! Dr. Kotovsky then tested his potential student's collaboration style by working with her to hand the bikes over the fence to colleagues waiting on the other side. After the bikes were safely across the fence, the visiting student, and then Dr. Kotovsky, climbed the fence and jumped to the other side. The group (by now looking very muddy and disheveled) then made their way back to a Pittsburgh street, where they encountered a local couple who were kind enough to provide directions for the return trip to CMU.

Sources reveal that upon arriving back at CMU, the visiting student spontaneously stated, "This was the strangest bike ride I've ever been on." When later asked about the trip, Kotovsky replied "It was a good ride."

At the very least, this visit is likely to be an unforgettable one for our student visitor. One thing is for sure...It is unlikely that UC Berkeley faculty showed her such an adventurous time. When asked about his recruitment strategy on that Sunday afternoon, Kotovsky cited classic relationship research indicating that physiological arousal increases attraction. He described a classic social psychological study, in particular, which showed that individuals who crossed a scary suspension bridge were more attracted to an experimenter who conversed with them on the bridge than those individuals who crossed a lower, more sturdy bridge. Apparently, the participants on the scary suspension bridge *misattributed their arousal* (arousal that was really caused by fear of the bridge) to attraction to the experimenter. Kotovsky explained that his "train track recruitment method" served a similar purpose of increasing the visiting student's attraction to the Carnegie Mellon University and associated faculty, staff, and students. That is, although she may have been physiologically aroused because of her experiences on the bike ride (particularly the train tracks), she is likely to misattribute that arousal to feelings of attraction for CMU.

Only time will tell if this unique recruitment strategy will pay off for Dr. Kotovsky. In the meantime, Kotovsky is strongly advocating his recruitment strategies and offering consulting services (at a discounted rate for CMU faculty) regarding innovative methods of encouraging visiting students to join graduate programs. Kotovsky reports that his "train track recruitment method" is only one of many.

AN ANONYMOUS SOURCE

"PANTHER" HOLLOW TO BE RENAMED

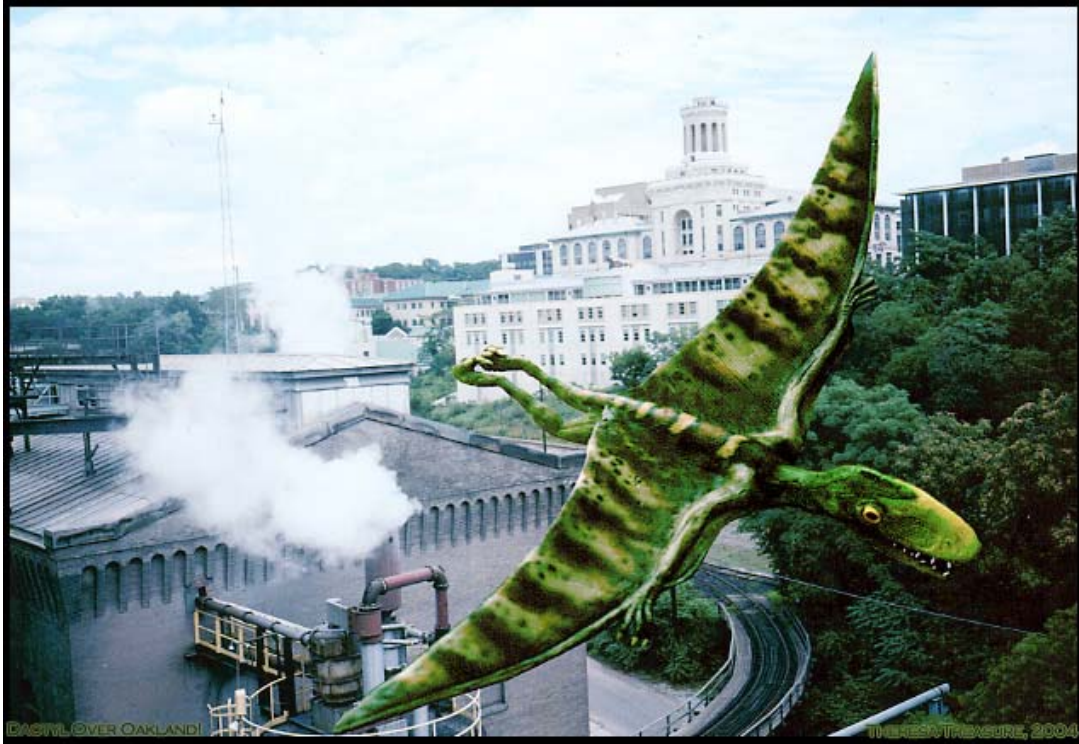


Photo By THERESA TREASURE

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Advanced Professional Skills

Saturday, April 17, 2004

9am – 3:30pm

4th Floor, Scaife Hall (Pitt), Lecture Room 2

COST: \$5 in advance, \$10 at the door, includes continental breakfast (8:30am) and lunch

TO REGISTER: Send name, department, mailing address, email, phone number, and check (payable to "University of Pittsburgh" to Survival Skills Program, Hieber Building, #202 #500 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

MORE INFORMATION: Call 412-578-3716, survival@pitt.edu, www.survival.pitt.edu

Politicians' uniquely simple personalities

The complexity of human personality has been reduced to five dimensions, based on factor analyses of judgements of personality traits¹. Many researchers agree that a five-factor model of personality captures the essential features of all traits that are used to describe personality: energy/extroversion; agreeableness/friendliness; conscientiousness; emotional stability against neuroticism; and intellect/openness to experience²⁻⁴. But we show here that this common, standard set of five factors does not hold for judgements of famous political figures.

We found that, when people judge the personality traits of politicians, they use only two or three factors. Personality factors that are normally independent — such as energy and openness — were highly correlated in a more simplified view of personality.

Political candidates gain intense media exposure over an extended period of self-promotion designed to portray them as trustworthy experts with many admirable personality traits⁵. Such public exposure is intended to lead to clearly articulated perceptions rather than stereotypical evaluations by the electorate⁶.

The nature of campaign information is unique as a basis for forming impressions of personality, as it is packaged by supporters and opponents as pros and cons (favourable or condemning) designed to simplify the ultimately dichotomous decision of how to vote. The selective mental processing and filtering by the electorate of the mass of discrepant input about political candidates must in the end justify each per-

son's one vote: be it for or against. Therefore, we predicted that personality judgements about political candidates would likewise be constricted to involve a limited number of factors rather than the usual five.

We first studied the personality judgements of a sample of 2,088 Italian adults, of diverse ages, education and political views. Leading party politicians were evaluated by 1,257 respondents, and another 831 evaluated their own personalities and those of several celebrities. Judgements were made from a list of 25 adjectives that are markers of the five-factor model. Each adjective (for example, enterprising, reliable, truthful) was rated on how characteristic it was of each target on a seven-point scale, and those ratings were factor-analysed⁷. The analysis reduces the scores to a minimal number of correlated groups of traits within factors that are independent of each other.

Ratings were made of two Italian political candidates (Silvio Berlusconi and Romano Prodi), an international celebrity (skiing hero Alberto Tomba) and a famous Italian television personality (Pippo Baudo).

Table 1 reveals three clear results: (1) respondents' personality portraits of themselves require the five-factor solution, as found in earlier research; (2) personality judgements of national celebrities also require five factors; but (3) personality judgements of political candidates are drastically reduced to only two factors, despite many significant differences between their personalities.

The first of the two stable⁸ personality factors for politicians has been named energy/innovation (which is a blend of energy and openness), and the second factor is honesty/trustworthiness (a blend of agreeableness, conscientiousness and stability).

These findings can be applied more generally, as shown by our replication study with 195 US college students. These students rated their own personalities after having rated Democratic President Bill Clinton and Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole, along with basketball star 'Magic' Johnson. The same 25 five-factor model marker adjectives were used as in our Italian study.

Table 1 shows that this different sample replicates the basic factor patterns found in the larger Italian sample: self-ratings and the ratings of the popular basketball player (among basketball fans) use all five factors, but judgements of the politicians are restricted to only three factors (among potential voters).

Finally, the percentage of total variance explained by each factor solution (2, 3 or 5) for each target personality, for both samples, is a high, nearly identical, average of 60 per cent.

We conclude that, by adopting a simplifying method of judging political candidates' personalities, voters use a cognitively efficient strategy for coding the mass of complex data, thus combating informational overload⁹. Doing so helps them to decide how to cast their vote.

Gian Vittorio Caprara*
Claudio Barbaranelli

University of Rome,
"La Sapienza",

Via dei Marsi 78,
Rome 1-00185, Italy

Philip G. Zimbardo

Psychology Department,
Stanford University,

Stanford,
California 94305, USA

e-mail: zim@psych.stanford.edu

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*More detailed methods and additional results are available from G. V. C. at caprara@axrma.uniroma1.it

Table 1 Factor composition for target personalities

	Factors					Variance explained (%)
	1	2	3	4	5	
Italian sample						
Self (n=827)	E	O	A	C	S	56
Athlete (n=829)	A	E	C	O	S	57
TV star (n=830)	C	E	S	O	A	60
Politicians						
Berlusconi (n=1,257)	A+C+S	E+O	-	-	-	61
Prodi (n=643)	A+C+S	E+O	-	-	-	64
US sample						
Self (n=195)	A	C	E	O	S	57
Athlete (n=81)	S	C	O	A	E	61
Politicians						
Clinton (n=127)	E+O	C+A	?	-	-	57
Dole (n=127)	C+A	?	E+O	-	-	62

Factors 1-5 are arranged in order of the amount of variance in ratings, with Factor 1 explaining the most variance and Factor 5 the least. E, energy; O, openness; A, agreeableness; C, conscientiousness; S, emotional stability; and '?', an uninterpretable factor. Adjectives used to describe the politicians' two factors, normally attributed to the factors shown in parentheses, are - energy/innovation: enterprising (E), active (E), self-assured (E), energetic (E), cheerful (E), innovative (O), creative (O), inventive (O), smart (O), modern (O), efficient (C), optimistic (S), confident (S), cordial (A); and honesty/trustworthiness: sincere (A), truthful (A), loyal (A), responsible (C), reliable (C), precise (C), persistent (C), poised (S), peaceful (S), stable (S), generous (A).

BODY & DIET
SPECIAL HEALTH NEWS
ANTI-TIRED TACTICS
AND MORE

REDBOOK healthbook

January's 5 best body & mind boosters

1

Skipping workouts? Try this fix

Focusing on the fun side of fitness ups the odds that you'll stick to your exercise program. When researchers at the University of Birmingham asked people about their workout goals and intentions, they found that subjects who expected to enjoy their exercise regimen were more apt to have kept it up. To boost your motivation, plan winter activities for the whole family, such as skiing and ice skating.



2

PROTECT YOUR TEETH WITH THIS TRICK

If you drink cola, **don't brush your teeth right afterward**, advises Thomas Attin, D.D.S., director of the department of tooth protection, preventative dentistry, and periodontology at Göttingen University in Germany. Waiting 30 minutes allows the protective compounds in saliva to defend your teeth from the damage caused by the acid in the drink; brushing immediately scratches off the weakened enamel.

3

Beat colds with an optimistic outlook

Be sure to add an upbeat attitude to your cold-fighting arsenal this winter, says Sheldon Cohen, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at Carnegie Mellon University. Researchers rated the moods and personalities of subjects, and then infected them with the cold virus to see if they became sick. The result? **Those who were**

relaxed and happier were less likely to become ill and, if they did, suffered fewer symptoms than those who had reported fewer positive emotions. This may be because the sunnier participants had lower levels of cortisol, epinephrine, and norepinephrine—stress hormones that can lower a person's immune function.

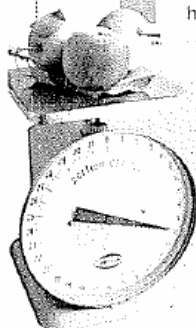
4

DON'T LET A RECALL CATCH YOU OFF-GUARD

Could a batch of your brand of birth-control pills be recalled, or could a potential allergen have been left off the label of your favorite cookies? It happens more often than you think—

and you don't always hear about it on the news. So protect yourself by bookmarking the FDA's Recalls and Safety Alerts page at fda.gov/opa/com/7alerts.html. The database

contains everything you need to know about food and drug warnings, including how to get your money back if you buy a contaminated or defective product.



5

Pick these fruits to peel away pounds

A few apples (or pears) a day may keep the diet doctor away, according to a study from the State University of Rio de Janeiro. Researchers found that overweight women on a low-calorie diet who ate three apples or pears daily lost 38 percent more weight than those who passed up the fruits. The fat-melting mechanism? The fruits' low-calorie content and insoluble fiber, which help you feel fuller longer and, therefore, eat less.

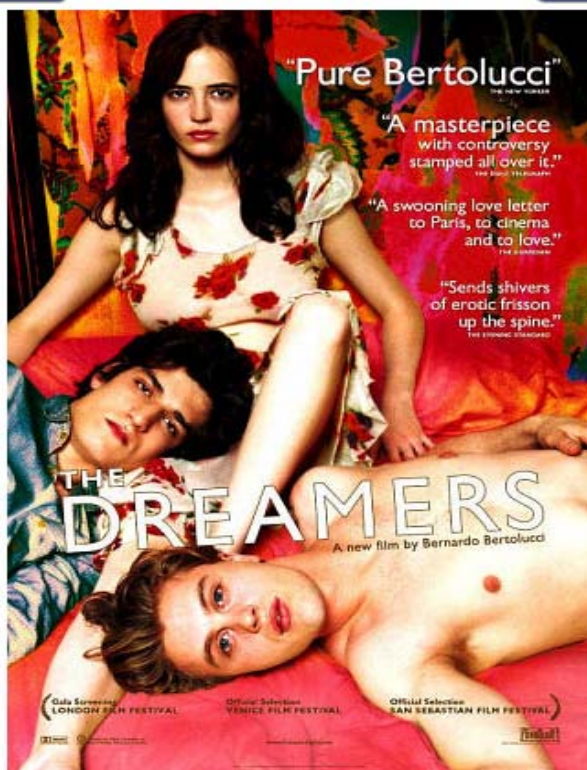
by Jessica Brown

www.redbookmag.com JANUARY 2004 31

“The Dreamers”, by Bernardo Bertolucci

So, it is me that will do the movie thing for this month's PLB, and not David. How can it be? You might wonder. Is it because he correctly predicted all the Academy-Award Winners, whereas my favorite, “Master and Commander”, triumphantly carried away the trophies for “Best Cinematography”, and (I believe) “Best Sound-Editing”, and he therefore feels some punishment is in order? Well, no. In fact, David happened to be busy, whereas I was suffering from that horrible horror vacui that haunts us Graduate Students from time to time: what to do in this endless hour between one deadline and the next? Graciously, I was permitted to share my appreciation of one very special movie this month, so here I go.

It might be next to impossible to find a cinema that is still showing “The Dreamers”. It survived for barely three week's in Squirrel Hill's Manor Theater, which usually has a soft spot for anything “foreign/art”. But yes: it will be worth the effort. Young confused movie-loving American exchange student comes to Paris and explores the nightlife there, mainly the cinemas, enjoying odd and obscure features all night, relishing his secret observations the audience as much as the movies themselves. These are the sixties, and new, exciting, controversial movies are arriving, which our hero, Matthew, watches with a fascination that immediately and miraculously transports itself to today's jaded audience. Matthew's part as an observer is over when he falls for Isabelle and Theo, two impressively sophisticated French students, brother and sister, who invite Matthew to live with them while their parents are away on vacation, resulting in scenes that have earned the movie its NC-17 rating, as well as a giant heap of unwashed dishes (personally, I found the latter much more traumatizing than the “explicit sensuality”, which I believe is the official term, but ohwell).



*Review continued
on the next page...*

THE DREAMERS / BERTOLUCCI

Yes, it could be so infinitely dull, and yet the movie is magically sweet, sexy, intelligent and often truly nontrivially funny. The first minutes reveal that Matthew is telling us the story from the distance of the years, from a peaceful, slightly nostalgic and idealizing point of view, and this stance doesn't change throughout the movie. The initial encounter and the mutual fascination of the friends, their discussions and improvisations of famous movie-sequences- never does the tone of the narrative cease to be affectionate, respectful, mindful of the endearing, special qualities of the persons, the time, every little thing, even in the scenes that show the dark aspects of the triangle: the destructive dependencies between Isabelle and Theo, their loss of contact with reality, the siblings ultimate inability to return Matthew's love, their sometimes unbearably snotty and immature mannerisms, and, ultimately, their self-destruction. Isabelle and Theo can be seen as precious symbols of a life of pure art, which can't survive the confrontation with harsh reality. Matthew's attempts at saving them are heartbreaking. His love is true, and this isn't a movie about sex.

It should be noted that the movie is often very funny, in quite unexpected ways. I can promise a fair number of chuckles and at least a couple of laughs. And another thing is important: Although the protagonists do occasionally indulge in the consumption of illegal (not in the Netherlands) substances, this is not one of these movies in which the main characters stumble about disorientedly, mumbling nonsense. On the contrary: just like its protagonists, the movie is very sharp, very articulate. It achieves this by its authenticity, the attention the little details: the furniture, the wallpaper, the clothing, the music, they all bring to life the time and the people. The soundtrack in particular deserves to be mentioned: It is quite wickedly sexy, and it often seems to take the part of a voice-over commentary, especially in the funniest scenes.

Recommended, recommended, recommended.

-- STEFANI NELLEN

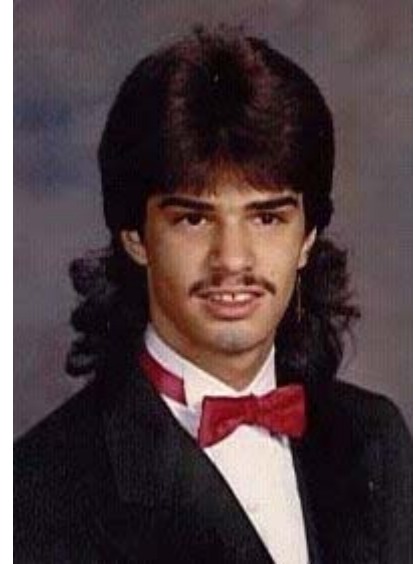


THE PSYCHO? LOGICAL? MULLET

Ah, the mullet.

America's crowning fashion achievement... the short-in-front, long-in-back look made famous by the bad guys running shirtless in episodes of COPS.

You might not be surprised that Mullet Lovers have their own website. But, we bet you will be surprised to find a psychologist of some fame picture prominently in its Hall of Fame (Shame?). Can you find him?



http://www.mulletlovers.com/regular_men3.html

Further evidence that Google really can uncover almost anything...

FAVORITE CITATIONS

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J Trauma. 1984 Nov;24(11):990-1.

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Injuries due to falling coconuts.

Barss P.

Falling coconuts can cause injury to the head, back, and shoulders. A 4-year review of trauma admissions to the Provincial Hospital, Alotau, Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea, revealed that 2.5% of such admissions were due to being struck by falling coconuts. Since mature coconut palms may have a height of 24 up to 35 meters and an unhusked coconut may weigh 1 to 4 kg, blows to the head of a force exceeding 1 metric ton are possible. Four patients with head injuries due to falling coconuts are described. Two required craniotomy. Two others died instantly in the village after being struck by dropping nuts.



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