

Addicted

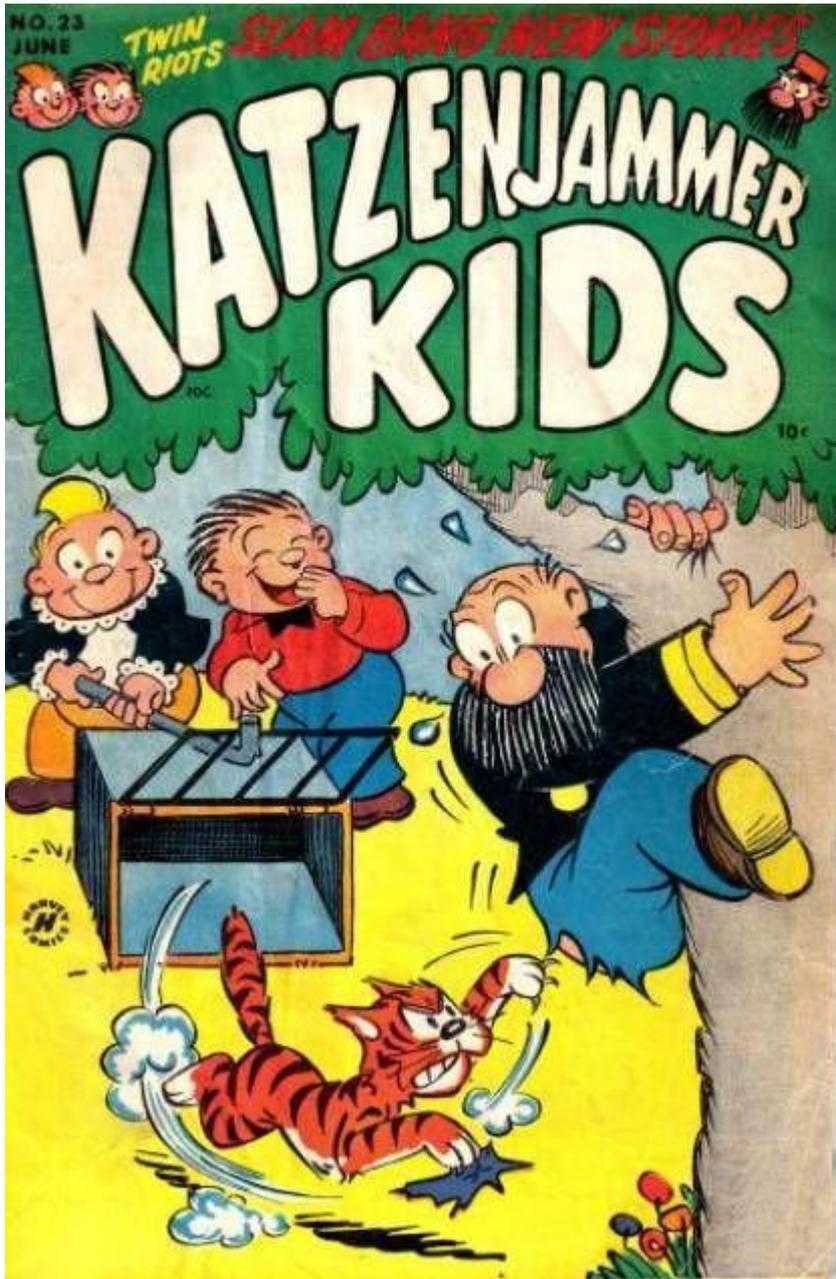
By Ken W. Simpson

WHY WE LIKE IT: *We have to admit to liking this hybrid as much for the pictures as the clear-headed prose. The title says it all. In this case the cultural opiate is the American addiction to violence and the author escorts us on a brief guided tour that runs from Hollywood to Desert Storm. With the images, it's like a 2 minute news brief with a content warning. (Spacing and format is author's own.)*

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What the day
discloses
the night forgets

I can remember being surprised at the brutality of the Katzenjammer Kids comic strip - but it did epitomize an American love for the bizarre.





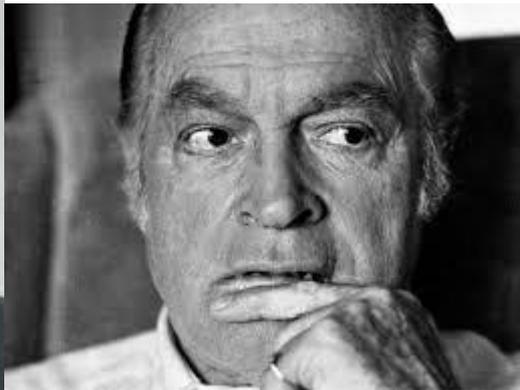
Comedy routines back then varied from the slapstick of Charlie Chaplin - to the cleverly ironic and droll of Jack Benny and Phil Silvers.



Chaplin was invariably about to be beaten up by some huge lout. Jack Benny was one of the great stand-up comedians who set himself up to be laughed at - with perfect timing.



Strange to say - two wonderful current American political satirists - Jimmy Dore and Lee Camp - in the great tradition of Bill Hicks - have been frozen out of the US media. You can go to YouTube and Wikipedia and get a list of great American comedians - but you won't find a sign of Dore or Camp.

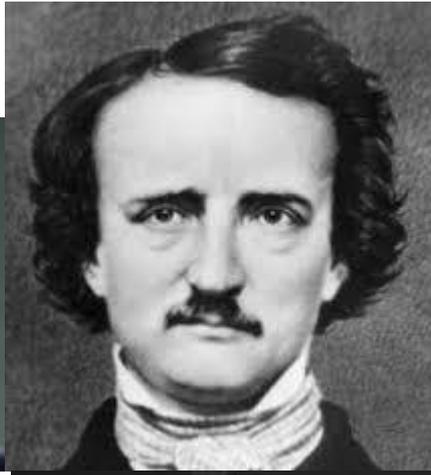




Americans enjoyed the give and take slapstick of Laurel and Hardy and Abbott and Costello - and the ultra violent slapstick of The Three Stooges. Bing Crosby was the straight man to Bob Hope's buffoonery.



In real life Hope was not a buffoon. He was a handler of MKUltra victims - a sort of glorified pimp - but was undoubtedly a fine stand-up comic in the tradition of Jack Benny. Crosbie's rival - Frank Sinatra - pimped girls for JFK and other politicians - and like Hope - was a notorious womaniser - shades of Bill Cosby.





Comedy does have elements of tragedy - and should be taken seriously because of these links - to which Americans seem to feed off - like a drug. Movies were designed to satisfy that craving - an escape from the mundane into a fantasy world.

Americans love to fear monsters - whether they be grizzly bears, bigfoot or King Kong. The movie had the desired element of suspense and horror - as King Kong carried the pretty heroine to the top of the Empire State. Poor Kong had to die - even though he was a nice monster- and the girl who represented purity had to be rescued unharmed.. Later, the Frankenstein monster did the same with a little extra horror. Heroines never died in American movies. Only the imitation villains died.

The vampire craze was a huge success because of Americans addiction to horror - apart from their addiction to sex. Edgar Allen Poe and Ambrose Bierce wrote repetitive variations on horrific themes - vampires for Poe and ghosts for Bierce. Bram Stoker wrote Dracula and Bella Lugosi starred in Nosferatu. Stephen King wrote probably the best contemporary horror novel - The Shining - which was adapted into a wonderful movie directed by Stanley Kubrick. The movie - The Exorcist - was based on the religious belief - particularly among Catholics - that people can be possessed by evil spirits - which need to be exorcised by intrepid priests wielding crucifixes. Evil - like monsters - has to be vanquished in the movies. The Amityville Horror movie was based on reality. A murderous rampage did take place. Hollywood added the evil spirits.

Hollywood adapted comic strip characters such as Superman, Batman and Spiderman - to the screen - using actors with not a lot of acting ability in repetitive action movies with lots of violence. They were American heroes - almost as real as John Wayne - big and imposing - who laconically beat the bad guys to pulp without raising a sweat.

Tastes became even more macabre with movies featuring living corpses.- the living dead - who continued to lurch around after being riddled with bullets. It took more than brute force

to destroy the undead - in numerous astoundingly popular episodes. Zombies continue to be boxoffice superstars to this day.

Apart from the fake - Americans with a taste for violence enjoyed watching the fights. They also enjoyed the fantasy of wrestling. Big, beefy guys, with bizarre names - wearing garish costumes, pretended to hurt each other - good guys to cheer and bad guys to jeer - like what Superman does to the bad guys in the movies - and just as real to the fans.- so that fantasy and reality got mixed together - to produce entertainment.

The love of violence was also catered for in the octagon - where martial artists attempted to destroy each other - and sometimes did. Brutality was extremely popular - and its exponents gained iconic status.

Americans were barely aware of the horrors of war. Their TV's didn't bother them with the truth. Those who knew and who were involved in Desert Storm - or the Invasion of Iraq - were not permitted to share their experiences - so had to suffer from PTSD - and worse - in silence.



Americans may have thought John Wayne's Green Berets had won the war in Vietnam.- so probably didn't believe the truth.



They had little idea that Madeleine Albright - when Secretary of State - had authorised the use of sanctions that caused the death by starvation of half a million Iraqi civilians. Real horror.

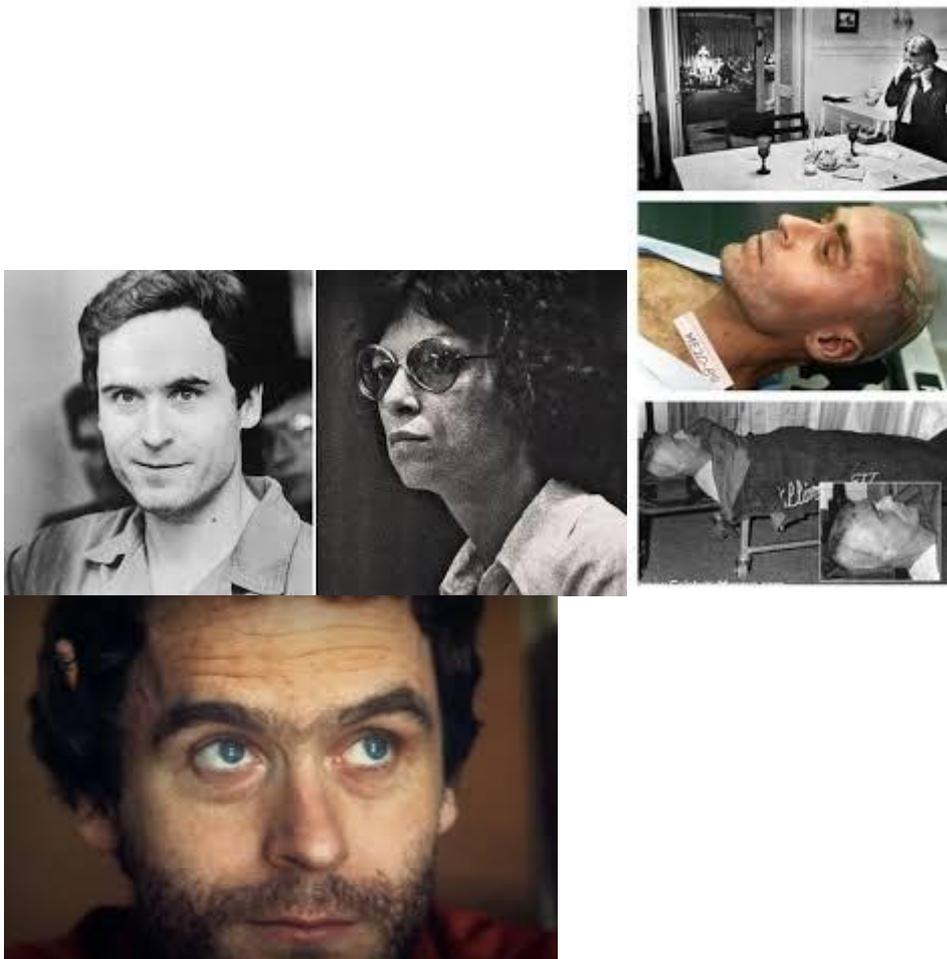
Hillary Clinton, when Secretary of State, had authorised the use of Sarin gas so that President Assad could be blamed.

Katherine Hepburn may not have approved. .

Crime was real too - as an epidemic - and mental disorders were as commonplace as lies, disinformation and propaganda.

Reality was being replaced with fantasy and sanity with insanity. .

Ted Bundy was just one of numerous American bred psychopaths and murderers.in the land of the free.



America has more prisons and prisoners per capita than any other nation. Many inmates are illiterate gang members from ghettos - where life is a battle for survival.

Drug addiction is an escape from reality into a halfworld of fantasy.

Americans have become slaves to the artificial world created for them - deliberately - by their government - in collaboration with the media and Hollywood - and where the give and take of honest debate is verboten.

***AUTHOR'S NOTE:** My activism began with opposition to the Vietnam war - although I still accepted America as the leader of the free world. I had no idea the media was collaborating with the governments of the American alliance to tell lies - disinformation - and propaganda.*

I thought poor Gaddafi was a terrorist. I thought Syria was a civil war - and Assad was a despot. I thought Barack Obama was God's gift to America - if not the world - but I learned a peace group from America had visited Damascus. They discovered that it wasn't a civil war - that Assad was not a tyrant. My mind began to unravel - because I was seeing the truth for the first time since Vietnam.

I began writing poetry in my seventies - about socio/political themes - which developed into an attack against American totalitarianism and imperialism. It was almost impossible to get a lot of my poetry published - and getting banned by the social media was a disadvantage - because I used to post my poetry on Twitter and Facebook.

AUTHOR'S BIO: An Australian poet and essayist - educated at Scotch College (Melbourne) and Swinburne Art School - taught art - began writing short stories - switched to writing free verse poetry and essays - with a poetry collection - Patterns of Perception - published by Augur Press (UK) in January 2015. 43 Allamanaa Blvd - Lysterfield - Victoria - Australia - 3156.