

*“The Beatles took LSD and wrote Sgt Pepper—  
Anna Nicole Smith took legal drugs and couldn’t  
remember the number for nine-one-one.”*

—Bill Maher

*“An enormous amount of direct advertising from  
pharmaceutical companies are offering a kind of  
instantaneous solution to problems.”*

—Leon Kass

## “Ask Your Doctor”

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I get ideas for this column in various and sundry fashions. This one hit me broadside a few weeks ago. Who can guess what will light you up? Provide motivation? Not I.

Over the past year, I’ve spent a fair amount of time listening to the news. Now, that’s not so much a dramatic revelation, with the veritable \$@\*tstorm of events lately. I’ll bet you all do from time to time, trying to stay informed as citizens and humans, or maybe just out of a morbid curiosity to see today’s train wrecks. I will NOT talk about my sources for this news, because that’s how you start fistfights.

When I listen to news on the radio in the car (I do infrequently), you get the commercials. Some are for doctors, clinics, and lawyers, but the ones that get me started are the ones for prescription drugs that we need to be on. **STAT.** How do I know I need to be on these drugs? Well, for starters, they are “doctor prescribed” or “widely available” and “perhaps for you.” Hmm. Perhaps, yes. And, yes, obviously, I do have some personal favorites.

I want to be on the drug (you likely know it) from the commercial where the woman taking it is petting a horse, and then in the next scene using a power saw. She seems so happy about it, you know? I want to take that drug, pet the horse, and use a power saw. Seems best to be in that order for some reason. I want to be on the drug that allows all the people using it to participate in beach volleyball, and then sit by the campfire.

“Some side effects, including infection, cardiac arrhythmias, sudden death, and hallucinations may occur.” Nope. I just want to play me some volleyball, pet a horse, sit by the fire, and then use a power saw. I’ll pay extra to avoid that other stuff, if you please.

There are ads for “male enhancement” drugs that used to require a visit to your doctor. Nope. Now, they have toll-free numbers and docs on the phone who will clear you and write a script simply by you answering a few questions. Overnight delivery in a “confidential package.” Wow, what kind of Circle of Hell job is that? A medical degree to talk to people on the phone and prescribe “male enhancement” tabs? Any idea how well this job pays? Is this a potential retirement gig?

And, obviously, doctors and lawyers advertise as well. Lawyers a whole lot more. I don’t have a joke here. I’ll just leave that and walk away. But doctors and clinics are advertising. Oh yes, and radiologists and imaging centers. “Ask your doctor if an MRI might be right for you.” Damned straight. Ask them if you might need a whole-body study while you’re at it. Maybe your shoulder hurts, but next week it might be your knee or your spleen, so let’s take a quick peeky-loo.

I’d be better with this if I thought there was some greater purpose served, other than the opportunity for profit. Okay. No, I wouldn’t.

Keep doing that good work. Mahalo.



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