

Nick and Choose {NICK ALTSCHULLER}

LOCHED & LOADED

Nick drinks like a Scotsman.



BACK IN FEBRUARY, IN AN ITEM sandwiched between a workout for six-pack abs and an article on how the right haircut can tone your tummy, *Men's Health* declared Boston the nation's least-drunk city. We don't drink and drive. Our livers produce bile of unassailable quality. Our health should be a source of pride, but I can't be the only one who immediately wanted to challenge Reno, Nev., to a chugging contest.

It seems everyone is drinking less. Between 1980 and 2007, per-capita consumption of alcohol in the U.S. dropped 17 percent. In Canada, it's 24 percent. In Germany, a country where liters of beer are regularly guzzled from boots, they're drinking 30 percent less. Thankfully, the U.K. still knows how to party. Nineteen percent more people are waking up with a headache, nausea and a stranger in their bed.

In Scotland, the major culprit is Buckfast Tonic Wine, or bottles of phosphate-fortified grape juice packed with eight Cokes' worth of caffeine. For a ned—a Scottish hooligan—two or three dirt-cheap Buckies consumed in a filthy Glasgow alleyway gets the night going, all without the indignity of ordering a Jäger Bomb. The fear is that Buckfast might be too provoking. The Scottish government wants to ban it, and the stats give them reason. In the Strathclyde district, for example, the wine was mentioned in 5,638 crime reports in just the last three years.

Our government won't allow the import of "loopy juice," but the recipe isn't hard to improvise. I wanted to show *Men's Health* what's what, and maybe make a crime report of my own. Here's how things went down.

On Saturday at 7:30 pm, suspects Nick Altschuller and his friend John began mixing 1 ounce brandy, 2 ounces Red Bull and 6 ounces of red wine topped with Coke. Upon raising his glass, John remarked, "To the last thing we remember tonight."

8:30 pm: Two servings down, the accused found a trove of adrenaline-raising programming on television, including *Rocky*, *Rocky II* and *Boston College in the NCAA Hockey Championship*. As a BC grad, John didn't need the extra stimulation.

A twitching Nick noted that their speech appeared accelerated. "I think we're chatty drunk," John agreed, quickly. Witnesses confirmed they sounded like giddy secretaries at happy hour, as opposed to anything approaching manly.

9 pm: John began hearing things, causing Nick to giggle at 400 BPM.

10 pm: The duo found *Lethal Weapon II* on TV. In honor of Mel Gibson's performance, Nick demanded he be called Riggs for the rest of the evening.

10:30 pm: Out of Red Bull, the men switched to using Redline, an energy drink that comes with a 200-plus-word warning label advising consumers to keep the product away from children and nursing women. Both suspects agreed the taste improved.

11 pm: Out of Coke, the men switched to tonic. The defendants no longer cared about the taste.

11:15 pm: With all three bottles of wine gone, John mixed a different caffeinated cocktail. Using his last sober brain cell, Nick advised against it. John responded, "I'm doing this for f***ing literature!" Both men headed out to make some bad decisions.

Like paying a cover charge. Thinking a jug of alcohol and enough caffeine to reanimate a corpse could reverse time, we arrived at a bar where I spent many hazy hours in my youth. Times have changed, though.

Sipping a Red Bull and vodka—for some ungodly reason—I stood in the middle of an empty dance floor, watching dozens of people queue for the party upstairs. With music blaring, I gave a shimmy, then a shake, but no moves could convince these youngsters that the only difference between the two floors was about 15 feet. Channeling my inner Murtaugh, I muttered, "I'm too old for this shit." Besides my pulse, things slowed from there. The most shocking thing to occur was arriving home by last call.

The next day, John studied for a finance exam. He may like to drink, but the man's got goals. I went for a run to flush my prized Bostonian organs. It won't be the last time I'm lambasted, but through experience comes beer-goggled hindsight. I'd rather be a Nick than a ned. ***

Send your stories and suggestions to nick@improper.com.

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Impersonals

SALAD DAYS

TO THE WOMAN WITH the neon-green nail polish and huge, faded "X" on your right hand (presumably from some awful club you went to the night before), who was ravenously devouring a trough of salad with no utensils on the Red Line during rush hour: Listen, watching you mow down fistfuls of greens, chewing with your mouth open, pausing only once to adjust your exposed, dirty-white lace bra was not a pleasant way to end the workday. Next time a favor? Bring a fork.

A trainwreck observer

To the bouncer who let us back into the bar an hour after closing:

We panicked, and asked too much of you, but with only moderate hesitation you put your job on the line and saved an outstanding night from brimming doom. You strayed from the duty of your post, believing more strongly in man's duty to his fellow man. Or else you just saw from our faces that we really were about to pee ourselves, and you didn't want to have to deal with the mess. Either way, there's a big heart in your chest, and try as you might, you couldn't hold it in.

Feeling much better now, thanks

To the a**hole on Avery Street:

You have the dirtiest, most disgusting toilet bowl this side of the Mason-Dixon line. No amount of polished good looks, impeccable manners or Brooks Brothers suits can take this honor away from you. At first I thought it was some sort of modern art etching in the bowl. You make enough money; the next time you experience explosive diarrhea of that magnitude, you ought to hire a cleaning lady. Still seeing spots

Unrequited crush? Bad hair? Need to vent? Send your e-mails of love and spleen to impersonals@improper.com, or fax 617-859-1446.