

MESSAGE DESIGN THEORY IN ANTI-METHAMPHETAMINE PSAs:  
A CASE STUDY OF THE MONTANA METH PROJECT

By  
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A THESIS

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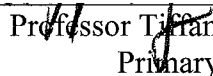
## An Abstract of the Thesis of

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Title: MESSAGE DESIGN THEORY IN ANTI-METHAMPHETAMINE PSAs: A  
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My interest in this research lies specifically in investigating how message design theories work in and are applied to anti-drug messages. I pay particular attention to which aspects of the messages are effective and how this knowledge confirms, expands, or contradicts current approaches to designing anti-drug campaigns. This research focuses primarily on anti-methamphetamine messages because of the expanding awareness of and attention paid to this wide-reaching epidemic. Although the history of meth, and its effects on communities and individual health are important to this story, they are presented here as context for the more critical issue of how to change attitudes toward methamphetamines through the mass media.

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## Chapter One: The Epidemic

Methamphetamine, meth, crystal, ice, speed, crank, poor man's cocaine, or however it is referred to, is a major drug problem throughout the United States today. Once a problem of rural communities and motorcycle gangs in the West, meth quickly spread across the country in the 1990s with the discovery of new, more efficient recipes (Owen, 2007). Meth stayed under the radar for many years because it did not make its debut in urban centers like other hard drugs. Instead, methamphetamines spread far from the watchful eyes of policy makers in Washington, D.C. (Shenfeld et al., 2005).

This terrible chemical compound has ravaged communities across the United States:

- Forty-seven percent of county sheriffs in the United States report meth as their number one drug problem (National Association of Counties [NACo], 2007). That is more than those who reported cocaine (21%) and marijuana (22%) combined (NACo, 2007).
- From 1991 to 2001, the number of arrestees across the United States testing positive for meth increased from 2.1% to 10.7% (*Methamphetamine Treatment*, 2007). According to data from 2007, 50% of Montana inmates are incarcerated for meth-related crimes, and 26.4% of all foster-care admissions are meth-related (Montana Department of Justice, 2008).
- Treatment admissions for methamphetamines have increased significantly across the United States since 2000, more than doubling from 67,568 in 2000 to 152,368 in 2005 (National Drug Intelligence Center [NDIC], 2007).

Because the high is so addictive and the addiction so demanding, methamphetamines disrupt the basic social functions of communities. According to Rob Bovett, legal counsel to Oregon's Narcotics Enforcement Agency and president of the Oregon Alliance for Drug-Endangered Children, "With meth addiction, it's a whole different cycle [than with other addictions]. You just can't function in society. You can't raise your children. You get hooked into the meth addiction pattern, and you can't get out" (Frontline, 2005).

Meth is cheap compared to other hard drugs, and the high lasts more than 10 times as long. Smoking meth produces a high that can last 8 to 24 hours; we should compare this to the 20-to-30-minute high produced by smoking cocaine (The Montana Meth Project, 2008). But the drug's economic efficiency comes at the price of increased crime, identity theft, overcrowded prisons, and explosive clandestine labs.

### History

Methamphetamines were first synthesized by a Japanese chemist in 1919 (Frontline, 2007). The stimulant was used during World War II to increase productivity and keep soldiers alert and motivated on both sides of the battlefield (Frontline, 2007; Shenfeld et al., 2005). Because amphetamines, including methamphetamines, cause users to feel awake and invincible, kamikaze pilots were said to have taken high doses before their missions (Shenfeld et al., 2005).

The 1950s saw amphetamines commonly prescribed as diet aides and anti-depressants for housewives (Shenfeld et al., 2005). The drug was available legally and over-the-counter for some medical purposes, but in the 1960s and early 1970s, people began using it recreationally (Owen, 2007).

In 1970, the federal government criminalized most uses of methamphetamines with the Controlled Substances Act, which severely restricted its legal production in the United States (Shenfeld et al., 2005). However, meth cooks soon discovered that ephedrine, an ingredient found in over-the-counter cold medicines, produced a much more potent version of methamphetamine, known as crystal meth (Frontline, 2007; Shenfeld et al., 2005).

Unlike other hard drugs, meth can be produced using household products (Frontline, 2007). The only crucial ingredient is ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, and a few years ago, these chemicals could easily be found in convenience stores. A typical convenience store in the Portland, OR, area should sell \$30 to \$40 worth of pseudoephedrine products every month (Frontline, 2005). According to Rob Bovett, legal counsel to Oregon's Narcotics Enforcement Agency, many convenience stores were selling thousands of dollars' worth of this product each month before new state regulations were enforced (Frontline, 2005).

### Meth in Oregon

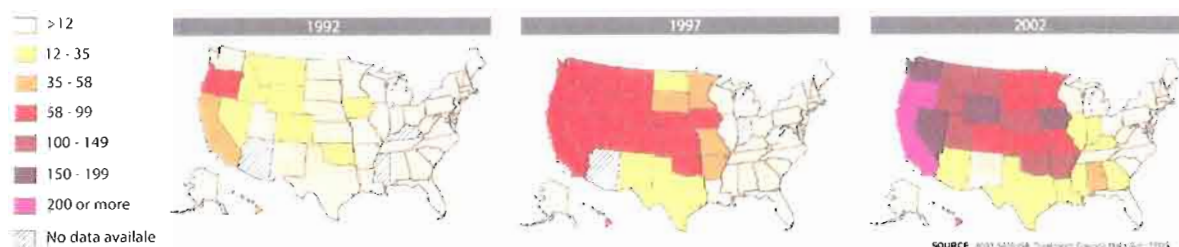
Methamphetamines are highly addictive and incredibly easy to make. As Oregonians, we sit at the apex of this epidemic. In Oregon, 85% of property crime and a majority of muggings, car theft, and identity theft are meth-related crimes (Frontline, 2007). As the meth craze swept across the country throughout the 1990s, Oregon led the way. In 1992, Oregon was the only state with more than 58 people (age 12 and older) per 100,000 treated for meth abuse (Figure 1, Freese, 2006). Within 10 years, the number of states in this category grew to 19, but as of 2007, Oregon still has more



individuals seeking treatment for meth addiction per capita than any other state (Frontline, 2007).

*Figure 1: The Spread of Meth*

Primary Amphetamine/Methamphetamine Treatment Admission Rates per 100,000 aged 12 and over



### Medical Effect

Methamphetamines can be smoked, snorted, injected or orally ingested (National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2006). When meth enters the blood stream, it triggers a surge of dopamine, causing a rush and euphoric high (Office of National Drug Control Policy, 2008; Frontline, 2006). In laboratory experiments done on animals, researchers found that food, sex, and other normal pleasurable activities cause dopamine levels to jump 100-200 units (Frontline, 2006). With meth, dopamine levels increase by 1,250 units, an increase 12 times greater than that released in regular pleasure activities (Frontline, 2006). Comparatively, cocaine only causes an increase of 350 units (Frontline, 2006).

This flood of dopamine to the brain results in a sudden “rush” of pleasure or a prolonged sense of euphoria (Office of National Drug Control Policy, 2008; Frontline, 2006). It also increases energy, hyperactivity, focus, confidence, and sexual prowess (Frontline, 2006). After their first use, meth users require more and more of the compound to attain their original high (*Methamphetamine Treatment*, 2007; Frontline, 2006). Over time, it becomes impossible to feel pleasure anymore because meth

destroys dopamine receptors in the brain (*Methamphetamine Treatment*, 2007; Frontline, 2006). Prolonged usage also can lead to psychotic behavior, paranoia, insomnia, anxiety, extreme aggression, hallucinations, and death (*Methamphetamine Treatment*, 2007; Frontline, 2006).

### Perceptions of Meth

Despite the prevalence of meth use, perceptions of the drug in the United States are sorely off base. Although meth is not instantly addictive (*Methamphetamine Treatment*, 2007), one in three teens (33%) surveyed by the Montana Meth Project say there is only a “slight” or “no” risk to trying meth once or twice (The Montana Meth Project, 2008). Even more shocking is that about one in seven teens (15%) say there is slight or no risk in taking the drug regularly (The Montana Meth Project, 2008). According to the Montana Meth Project (2008), “About one in four teens agree that the drug ‘makes you feel euphoric or very happy’ (24%), ‘helps you lose weight’ (22%), and ‘helps you deal with boredom’ (22%).” The following pictures are of meth users who do not appear to feel euphoric or happy, and do not look healthy or entertained:

*Figure 2: Before-and-after mug shots of meth users. Images from [www.facesofmeth.us](http://www.facesofmeth.us)*



## Anti-Drug Messages

As long as there is a market for methamphetamines, someone will find a way to provide the product. To have a lasting effect on meth usage, it is critical to change people's perceptions of the drug. There is a long history of attempting to change attitudes and behaviors related to drug use via mass media public service announcements (PSAs). Unfortunately, many attempts have been unsuccessful.

Through public service messaging, public policy, and community outreach, The Montana Meth Project is designed to reduce first-time meth use (The Meth Project, 2008). Founded by Thomas M. Siebel in 2005, the program considers methamphetamines a product to "un-sell" (The Meth Project, 2008). Although teen meth-usage rates have been falling since 1999, the Montana Meth Project has received a lot of media attention for the success of its graphic portrayals of the consequences of drug use (e.g. Oyan, 2008).

This approach differs from those taken by other anti-drug campaigns, such as Above the Influence, a program of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Its often humorous appeals to live above the influence of marijuana contrast sharply with the dramatic and shocking television PSAs telling viewers not to try meth, even once.

### This Study

My interest in this research lies in investigating how message design theories work in and are applied to anti-drug messages. I pay particular attention to which aspects of the messages are effective and how this knowledge confirms, expands, or contradicts current approaches to designing anti-drug campaigns. This research is critical to expanding the scope of anti-methamphetamine message campaigns. Research

on anti-drug messages varies greatly, and numerous campaigns have tried different approaches to address the task of decreasing drug usage in the United States. This study investigates two anti-drug PSAs (one anti-methamphetamine message from the Montana Meth Project and one anti-marijuana message from the Above the Influence campaign) through the theoretical lenses of sensation seeking, emotional appeals, optimistic bias, and the narrative paradigm.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

Persuasive messages come in all shapes and sizes for many reasons. Trying to convince a mass public is difficult because people are individuals and have different motivations for their actions and choices. Considering the intricacies of designing effective messages, this topic is addressed under several fields, including psychology, marketing, and communication theory. Despite exhaustive research on target audiences and their communication needs, there is not one solution to the challenge of effective design for millions of different personalities. For example, luxury car ads appeal to viewers differently than do ads for stores such as Target or Wal-Mart or ads for a political candidate. Each requires a different approach. In this body of anti-drug message design research, scholars have found that messages designed to discourage the use of drugs must have a specific appeal to influence viewers.

Although many theories have been developed and tested over the years, there still seems to be major inconsistency in what designers believe to be the most effective anti-drug messages. These differences stand out when comparing messages from different anti-drug campaigns, such as Above the Influence, My Anti-Drug, Truth, and the Montana Meth Project. Their different approaches range from humor to drama and metaphor to realistic depictions of drug use and its consequences.

This chapter will explore several respected message design theories that can be applied to anti-drug campaigns. They are Zuckerman's (1979, 1988, 1994) theory of sensation seeking, theories on emotional appeals, Weinstein's (1980) theory of unrealistic optimism, and Fisher's (1984, 1985) narrative paradigm. Researchers have

studied and experimented in the name of these theories for the past several decades, creating a vast body of literature that I begin to address here.

### *Sensation Seeking Theory*

Attracting and maintaining the attention of the appropriate audience segment is critical to developing effective anti-drug campaigns. Sensation Seeking Theory describes individual character traits that are important for this research because they can (a) identify persons at higher risk for trying and using drugs, and (b) describe the media-sensory needs of those target audiences. For example, an action-filled scene with dramatic music may be more effective in attracting the attention of today's teen audiences than a scene depicting images of daily life with slow, melodic music. Under this same principle, anti-drug messages should do more than just incorporate themes appropriate to a young audience. They should target individuals who use drugs or are at a higher risk to start using drugs. Zuckerman's (1979, 1994) research shows a strong correlation between high sensation seekers (HSS) and drug use. Designers must frame their anti-drug messages in a way that will effectively penetrate this group.

High sensation seekers (HSS) are individuals who have a need for novel, varied, and complex sensations and experiences (Zuckerman, 1979). Sensation seekers also display a "willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experience" (Zuckerman, 1979, p. 10). This need is a biological character trait but may also be influenced by social and environmental factors (Zuckerman, 1979). For example, legal, moderate alcohol use is socially accepted and often expected in this culture. This social environment creates a situation where alcohol use, in itself, is not typically associated with high sensation seeking. However, drinking and driving is not a social norm, and

this activity correlates positively with high sensation seekers (Zuckerman, 1994). High sensation seeking individuals are attracted to situations that are different and unlike their previous experiences (Zuckerman, 1979). They find routine activities boring and are more satisfied when presented with multiple stimuli, which create complex sensory experiences (Zuckerman, 1979). Donohew (1990) describes high sensation seekers as “stimulus-hungry,” constantly seeking out new and varied stimuli, and low sensation seekers as “arousal-satiated” (p. 142). Low sensation seekers maintain their preferred state of arousal in a routine, familiar environment.

Zuckerman (1979, 1988) identifies four subscales of sensation seeking to differentiate the types of novel, varied, and complex sensations people seek. These subscales include Thrill and Adventure Seeking (TAS), Experience Seeking (ES), Disinhibition (Dis), and Boredom Susceptibility (BS). People who score high on the Thrill and Adventure Seeking subscale tend to satisfy their need for “novel, varied, and complex sensations” through physically risky situations, such as skydiving, racecar driving, or rock climbing (Zuckerman, 1988). People who seek sensation through non-conforming lifestyles, travel, music, art, drugs, and unconventional friends score high on the Experience Seeking subscale (Zuckerman, 1988). Disinhibition is characterized by a desire to seek sensation through social stimulation, parties, social drinking, and a variety of sex partners (Zuckerman, 1988). Individuals high in Boredom Susceptibility tend to exhibit great restlessness when things are the same for any period of time, including their environment and peers (Zuckerman, 1988).

Sensation seeking scales describe people’s motivations for activities ranging from adventure sports to travel and multiple sex partners to unconventional friends.

According to a study by Donohew (1990), HSS middle school students are four times as likely to try marijuana as LSSs, and HSS high school students are three times as likely as their LSS peers. The strong correlation between drug use and high sensation seeking, which has been studied extensively (Zuckerman, 1979, 1994; Green, Krcmar, Rubin, Walters, & Hale, 2002; Morgan, Palmgreen, Stephenson, Hoyle, & Lorch, 2003), illustrates the importance of targeting anti-drug messages to prime at-risk groups based on sensation seeking preferences.

In the area of communication, HSS individuals tend to require more arousing messages for attracting and holding their attention (Donohew, Lorch, & Palmgreen, 1991; Donohew, Palmgreen, & Duncan, 1980). Donohew and associates' activation model of information exposure (AMIE) describes how individuals engage with media under certain arousal expectations (Donohew et al., 1980). For example, moderate to high sensation seeking individuals may channel surf until finding an appealing action scene. After attracting viewers' initial attention, if their arousal expectations are not maintained, viewers become bored and turn away from the message (Donohew et al., 1980). This may happen if the program turns out to be a predictable romantic comedy instead of an action flick. However, if the viewers' optimal level of arousal is exceeded, for example with excessive violence and disturbing visuals, the viewers may be overwhelmed by the sensory experience and turn away in this instance as well (Donohew et al., 1980).

When communicating an anti-drug message, campaigns are easily lost in the information overload of cluttered television programming and product advertisements. Therefore, it is difficult to attract the attention of a target audience and motivate viewers



to stay engaged until the entire message has been conveyed (Palmgreen, Donohew, Lorch, Rogus, Helm, & Grant, 1991). Because of their specific communication needs, designing messages to appeal to high sensation seekers will be more effective in reaching and influencing likely and current drug users (Palmgreen, Donohew, Lorch, Hoyle, & Stephenson, 2001; Palmgreen et al., 1991). To do this, designers must integrate formal elements that increase the viewer's perceived message sensation value, drawing the attention of high sensation seekers.

Message sensation value (MSV), according to Morgan, Palmgreen, Stephenson, Hoyle, and Lorch (2003), is the formal and content features of message presentation that can be created or manipulated by message designers (p. 515). The *perceived* message sensation value (PMSV) is "the sensory, affective, and arousal response to these message features" (Morgan et al., 2003). Morgan et al. (2003) set out to identify elements to increase MSV, thus creating general design guidelines that bypass part of the costly message screening and development process while retaining its reliability, validity, and effectiveness. Morgan et al.'s (2003) research shows that intense images, sound saturation, unexpected format, a surprise or twist ending, and the acting out of consequences of drug use are the most effect design elements in attracting the attention of high sensation seekers.

Whereas the sensation seeking model focuses on attracting and maintaining viewers' attention to the message through design features, emotional appeals and optimistic bias address their motivation to comply.

### *Emotional Appeals and Optimistic Bias*

Depending on their purpose, persuasive messages can make various emotional appeals to convince their viewers to take an action. These range from appeals to an audience's sense of compassion for starving children to influence donations to an audience's sense of vanity and fear of pain or illness to influence dental hygiene. Fear appeals are a common motivational tactic in health-related messages such as anti-drug campaigns (Janis & Feshbach, 1953). Fear appeals are messages meant to scare individuals by describing, visually and audibly, terrible things that could happen to them if they do not do what the message recommends (Witte, 1992). When health professionals use this appeal, they expect viewers' motivation to accept their advice to increase as emotional tension or anxiety due to fear increases (Janis & Feshbach, 1953). Basically, one would think that the more frightening something seems, the more likely people are going to take action to avoid the potential consequences evoking that fear.

Researchers have found, however, that people often avoid the *fear* of consequences, but do not necessarily take the recommended action to prevent the consequences from happening (Janis & Feshbach, 1953; Miller & Hewgill, 1966). People avoid fear by avoiding the message entirely through lack of attention, change of topic, failure to recall, denial or minimization of the importance of the threat, or simply, rejection of the message (Janis & Feshbach, 1953; Witte, 1992). According to the research of Janis and Feshbach (1953), "The over-all effectiveness of a persuasive communication will tend to be reduced by the use of a strong fear appeal, if it evokes a high degree of emotional tension without adequately satisfying the need for reassurance" (p. 92).

To create an effective fear appeal, it is necessary to adequately satisfy viewers' need for reassurance (Janis & Feshbach, 1953; Witte, 1992). Witte (1992) developed the extended parallel process model (EPPM) to explain how a balance of threat and efficacy can positively affect message acceptance. When evaluating a persuasive message, viewers go through two appraisal stages. First, the health threat is characterized by its severity and the target population's susceptibility to it (Witte, 1992). If viewers perceive the threat as severe and themselves as highly susceptible, the message will evoke a sense of fear, and they will be motivated to begin the second appraisal (Witte, 1992). How people respond to their fear depends on the level of perceived efficacy present in the message (Witte, 1992). In the second appraisal, people evaluate the efficacy of the recommended response compared to the threat of danger. To change behavior, attitude, or intentions, people need to believe that the recommended response will effectively prevent the threat, and that they are capable of performing the recommended response (response efficacy and self-efficacy) (Witte, 1992). If the perceived efficacy is not greater than the perceived threat, people will become motivated to cope with their *fear* through the defensive mechanisms mentioned before (e.g., denial or rejection of the message) (Witte, 1992).

Before any consideration of the message content and recommended action can take place, viewers must be motivated by an actual sense of fear (Witte, 1992). Witte (1992) writes, "If perceptions of threat are low, then people are not motivated to continue message processing, because the threat is perceived as either irrelevant or trivial" (p. 339). Convincing people of their own susceptibility to a health threat

(perceived susceptibility) is difficult because of what Weinstein calls unrealistic optimism or optimistic bias (Weinstein, 1980).

Unrealistic optimism refers to people's bias to believe that others may be the victims of misfortune, but not themselves (Weinstein, 1980). This common sense of invulnerability is a result of an individual's tendency to focus on him or herself, not realizing that others share similar beliefs and assumptions about themselves (Weinstein, 1980). Weinstein (1980) writes, "If people focus only on their own circumstances, they may conclude incorrectly that their chances differ from those of other people" (p. 807). According to Weinstein (1980), situations that seem to be controllable lead to greater optimistic bias. In these situations, subjects imagine a stereotype of a susceptible person who differs from how they see themselves (Weinstein, 1980). Ultimately, for a person to be willing to process a message, he or she must be willing to believe in the severity of the event and his or her own susceptibility (Witte, 1992). Optimistic bias prevents this from happening.

Another effective emotional appeal often made in health messages is to people's sense of guilt. Because guilt is an unpleasant emotional state, people who feel guilty are inclined to look for ways to relieve that stress and restore their emotional equilibrium (Boster, Mitchell, Lapinski, Cooper, Orrego, & Reinke, 1999). According to Boster et al. (1999), guilty people are much more likely to be persuaded to comply with a message recommendation if it illustrates the connection between the recommended action and a positive emotional effect. Called a positive self-feeling message, this strategy promises to enhance the probability of relief from negative emotions with the act of compliance; for example, "You'll feel better about yourself if you comply"

(Boster et al., 1999). Alternatively, presenting a positive self-feeling message to someone who did not do anything to elicit feelings of guilt can be confusing for message recipients (Boster et al., 1999). In this situation, people may respond by concluding that the message is attempting to manipulate them or that it has confused them for someone else and therefore does not apply to them (Boster et al., 1999). People with high optimistic bias may be less persuaded by messages of guilt because they would not foresee themselves acting in such a way to elicit this negative emotion. They would then be more likely to interpret the message as not applicable to their situation or potential situation.

If people can be persuaded to process an entire message, they must then interpret its validity and context. Fisher's narrative paradigm addresses the issues of probability and truth in message content.

### *Narrative Paradigm*

The narrative paradigm attends to how people understand and believe messages based on the content as a narrative. This paradigm approaches the idea of a narrative as a mode of social influence (Fisher, 1985). For anti-drug campaigns, it is important to learn how a compelling and believable narrative can help people accept a public health message. It is not enough to simply attract attention to a PSA if the narrative of the message is not believable or rational to the target audience.

In this model, Fisher (1984) begins to redirect our understanding of the nature and function of human communication. Narration, in this sense, refers to the symbolic actions, such as words and deeds, "that have sequence and meaning for those who live, create, or interpret them" (Fisher, 1984, p. 2). Descriptions of narration can take many

forms, such as personal accounts, history, biography, argument, drama, poetry, and art. Under this paradigm, narrative context is the basis for determining meaning, validity, reason, and rationality (Fisher, 1984). This means that the narratives of our own lives, of history, and of art help us to understand the actions of others and to make decisions. We understand our lives in terms of narratives. For example, when we meet people for the first time, we learn about them through stories and personal histories, and we make decisions based on experiences.

The traditional model of human decision-making and practical reasoning is based on the assumption that humans are rational beings who make decisions and communicate through formal systems of argumentation (Fisher, 1984). Fisher (1984) refers to this perspective as the rational world paradigm. Under this paradigm, the world is viewed as a series of logic puzzles that can be resolved through analysis and reasoned argument (Fisher, 1984, p. 4). To develop argumentative competence requires education in a classical sense, which today, along with subject knowledge, elevates one to the status of expert (Fisher, 1984). As Fisher (1984) writes, “The presence of ‘experts’ in *public* moral arguments makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the public of ‘untrained thinkers’ to win an argument or even judge them well” (p. 12).

The narrative paradigm does not try to negate this perspective. Instead, it subsumes it as an episode within the narrative of life, a type of narration (Fisher, 1984, 1985). This new concept is part of an evolution of paradigms, which Opt (1988) sees as a story in itself, subject to future replacement in the continuous process of storytelling, or redefinition of the human experience. In comparing the two systems, Fisher (1984) writes, “Where the rational world paradigm is an ever-present part of our consciousness

because we have been educated into it, the narrative impulse is part of our very being because we acquire narrativity in the natural process of socialization” (p. 8). Based on an idea of humans as storytellers, the narrative paradigm says that the essential form of human decision-making and communication is based on “good reasons” or values, which are defined by matters of history, biography, culture, and character (Fisher, 1984, 1985). For example, collective or individual *trust* in a government would be considered a “good reason” for decision-making under the narrative paradigm (Fisher, 1984). In a rational world paradigm, sensible decision-making must be based on expert facts and technical argument. In this traditional sense of rationality, only *experts* have the ultimate power to formulate and make decisions. Reflecting on this traditional view, Fisher (1984) says the role of an expert in the narrative paradigm “is not to pronounce a story that ends all storytelling,” but instead experts should become storytellers and teachers who *guide* the public (p. 13).

One thing that really differentiates these two models is how people are defined as rational decision-makers. The narrative paradigm views everyone as a rational decision-maker because of his or her natural awareness of narrative probability and narrative fidelity (Fisher, 1984). *Narrative probability* is what constitutes a coherent story (Fisher, 1984, 1985): Does the sequence of events make sense? Does the story contradict itself? Message receivers easily discover flaws of narrative probability because they constantly interpret narratives in all of their interactions. *Narrative fidelity* is whether the stories people experience ring true with the stories they know to be true in their own lives (Fisher, 1984, 1985). For example, if the actors in an anti-drug PSA aimed at teens do not make choices that viewers could reasonably see themselves

making in similar situations, the story lacks narrative fidelity and therefore lacks credibility.

The narrative paradigm is critical to the design of anti-drug messages in two ways. One, it is important to conceptualize audiences as part of a narrative world to see all persons as rational decision-makers. It can be easy for adults to mistakenly patronize teens when designing anti-drug PSAs, but these campaigns must recognize viewers' power to decide. This raises the second issue: credibility. Within the narrative paradigm, the concept of narrative rationality indicates "criteria for distinguishing the reliability, trustworthiness, and desirability of statements made in the conversation of life" (Fisher, 1985, p. 353). To create credible and believable messages, anti-drug campaigns must evaluate their narrative rationality according to the principles of narrative probability and narrative fidelity. "Good communication is good by virtue of its satisfying [these] requirements of narrative rationality, that it offers a reliable, trustworthy, and desirable guide to belief and action," according to Fisher (1985, p. 355). The moral of Fisher's story is, 'Tell the truth.'

#### *Message Design and Anti-Drug PSAs*

How do these theories all work together in anti-drug messages? If you can target high-risk individuals with high sensation value messages, you might have their attention. If you can overcome their optimistic bias and convince them of their own susceptibility to the dangers of drug use, you might get them to Witte's (1992) second stage of appraisal. Lastly, if you can give them a message that they believe to be true (narrative fidelity) and give them a reasonable and doable way to overcome the threat (EPPM), you might motivate a change in their behavior.



I intend to use this body of research about message design and apply it to a PSA from the Montana Meth Project and a PSA from the Above the Influence campaign. Through this investigation, I hope to gain insight into (a) how much contemporary anti-drug PSAs reflect the scholarship about message design; (b) the degree to which people find the PSAs to be effective; and (c) how an understanding of these theories explains people's reactions to the PSAs.

### Chapter Three: Method

I conducted a qualitative study because there was not enough data to apply this research broadly, whereas qualitative analysis allows people to communicate their own meaning and interpretations (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). In Chapter Two, I described several theories that can be applied to message design in anti-drug campaigns. It is through the lens of these theories that I break down the formal elements of televised anti-drug PSAs and explore student responses to their message. These theories (sensation seeking, the extended parallel process model, unrealistic optimism, and the narrative paradigm), when applied together, create a critical axis around which we should focus the design of anti-drug messages.

Document analysis and focus group research were used to balance the advantages and disadvantages of each other. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) write, “As the fields of rhetorical criticism and cultural studies increasingly overlap, the former now struggles to revise its tradition of *speculating* about textual influences on audiences ... by participating in and observing its actuality” (p. 25). A document analysis was conducted to identify the degree to which the messages incorporated these theoretical approaches. Although it was not enough to just present my own interpretation of the document, one advantage to performing qualitative document analysis is that its actual content cannot be influenced or manipulated by the researcher. Focus groups were also conducted to investigate how people make meaning in a group setting because without this, it is impractical to make assumptions about how others may interpret the documents or the use of the theories.

I wish to further emphasize the qualitative nature of this analysis, and by doing so, create a level of transparency throughout this project that lends itself to an increased sense of reliability. By acknowledging my presence in the qualitative analysis, I hope to increase its relative objectivity (Harding, 1987).

I used the theoretical lenses of sensation seeking, the extended parallel process model (EPPM), optimistic bias, and the narrative paradigm for the document analysis and to interpret the focus group research. First, using Morgan et al.'s (2003) research on message sensation value, I found the formal and content elements of the message that may draw and maintain the attention of high sensation seekers, even if only for entertainment value. Considering the EPPM and optimistic bias, I then evaluated the effectiveness of the message in overcoming unrealistic optimism and moving viewers into the second appraisal stage of message acceptance to address their perceived efficacy. To evaluate the anti-drug messages against the narrative paradigm, I asked if the story was truthful. Some elements I looked for were whether the characters made realistic choices, whether the plot made sense, and whether the situation seemed plausible. With these factors in mind, Chapter Four is an evaluation of an anti-methamphetamine television PSA produced by the Montana Meth Project, and Chapter Five is an evaluation of an anti-marijuana television PSA produced by the Above the Influence campaign.

Focus groups consisted of University of Oregon students recruited through the School of Journalism and Communication and by word of mouth. Some students were offered class extra credit as an incentive; most volunteered without compensation. Of the 11 participants ranging in age from 20 to 24, seven (64%) identified as White or

Caucasian; one student identified as Filipino; one as Hispanic and White; one as Black, White and Seminole; and one as Asian American. Each focus group lasted approximately two hours, and participants were asked to comment on anti-drug PSAs viewed during the session, message design theories presented at that time as well, and their awareness of methamphetamines. The names of participants have been changed throughout the research to protect participants' privacy and reputations (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). As discussed by Lindlof and Taylor (2002), "A great deal of our conduct seems innocent enough until it is reported in an interpretative context far away from our control" (pp. 96-97). The discussion protocol and transcripts of the focus groups can be found in Appendices A and B, respectively.

## Chapter Four: Results

In this chapter I will explore the message design components of an anti-methamphetamine PSA produced by the Montana Meth Project and an anti-marijuana PSA from the Above the Influence campaign. I integrate document analysis and focus group responses to illustrate how the messages reflect the theoretical scholarship discussed in Chapter Two.

### *“Friends” PSA by the Montana Meth Project*

The 30-second PSA produced by the Montana Meth Project titled “Friends” starts with the viewer facing out of the right rear window of a car. The view is blurred and unrecognizable as the camera quickly and shakily pans to the front passenger seat. Here the camera pauses for about 1.5 seconds, and a teenage girl turns around to look, wide-eyed, in the back seat. She seems nervous or anxious.

It appears to be night, and the car is dark except for moments of light shining briefly from outside. The only audible sounds are the noise of the car, people breathing, and talk radio playing quietly. The camera continues to pan around the car to the left, pausing on the driver, panning across the left car windows, and pausing again on a teenage boy seated in the left rear seat. There appears to be snow on the window.

At seven seconds, the car screeches to a stop. The boy in the back seat looks around nervously or anxiously for approximately 1.5 seconds. He opens his door and begins to climb out of the car. The voice-over of a young female starts at the same time: “I’m really tight with my friends.”

The camera continues to pan across the back seat to a teenage girl passed out on the right rear passenger seat. There is foam on her lip. Someone opens her door and

begins to get her out of the car. Sirens become audible in the distant background. As the girl from the front seat and the boy from the back quickly pull the unconscious girl out of the car, her limp body flops around. At 12 seconds (2-3 seconds after the first voice-over), the voice-over says, “We do everything together.”

The two friends drop the unconscious girl abruptly on the ground at a yellow curb and then run back to the car. The camera follows the unconscious girl out of the car and hovers over her. She lies on the ground, where there is a dusting of snow, wearing a short denim skirt, a tank top, and a jacket. Her knees are bloody.

At 17 seconds, the voice-over says, “And whatever happens...” At the same time, the camera starts to return to an upright view and begins to zoom out to a full screen. Two seconds later, the car skids audibly as the taillight speeds out of the shot. The setting is recognizable as an ambulance bay at a hospital. Medical staff rush into the shot and begin to attend to the unconscious girl. At 21 seconds, the voice-over continues, “They look out for me.” The sounds of the hospital intercom become audible and one of the medical attendees rushes back inside.

At 28 seconds, the scene cuts to the Montana Meth Project logo and tagline, “Meth, not even once.” (To view images of this PSA, please see Appendix C.)

#### *Document Analysis and Focus Group Responses*

In this section, I integrate document analysis and focus group responses into an analysis of the message design components of this PSA. Using the theoretical lenses of sensation seeking theory, emotional appeals, optimistic bias, and the narrative paradigm, we are able to see how the message components may or may not be effective.

*Sensation seeking and message sensation value.* This 30-second PSA fulfills all of Morgan et al.'s (2003) message sensation value requirements for an effective HSS anti-drug message. According to Morgan et al. (2003), effective PSAs include intense images, are saturated with sound, employ unexpected formats, end with a surprise or twist, and act out the consequences of drug use. The graphic image of the girl's foaming lip and limp, unconscious body increase the scene's intensity. The feeling of intensity and drama is also aided by her friends' wide-eyed and anxious faces, the dark car, sporadic lighting from outside, and shaky camera movements. The scene does not require music to enhance its level of drama because it is saturated by the sounds of the situation. The dramatic silence of the car's passengers contrasts with the sounds of their breathing, the car stopping, doors opening, sirens outside, and the hospital intercom. The lack of a narrative voice at the beginning of the PSA heightens viewers' awareness of the emergency without detracting from the message. Concerning unexpected format, the directing incorporates novel camera movements and angles that might draw the attention of high sensation seekers, who look for novelty, variety, and complexity in their sensory experiences (see Zuckerman, 1979). The irony or sarcasm of the contradiction between the voice-over and the visual scene also lends to the PSA's unexpected format. This on-going contradiction in the narrative creates drama that may compel viewers to keep watching to figure out how the two pieces fit together. This leads to the surprise or twist ending of her friends, who she is "tight" with, leaving her on the ground outside of an emergency room, unconscious. This message also dramatically acts out the potential consequences of drug use, attempting to be straightforward and honest about its effects. Overall, I would expect this PSA's

compelling and dramatic format, along with Morgan et al.'s (2003) effective message sensation value elements, to draw and maintain the attention of high sensation seekers.

In the focus groups, a couple of students specifically mentioned that the contradiction in the plot drew them into the PSA because it did not feel like a typical anti-drug message. This idea recalls Morgan et al.'s (2003) third effective element of design. Ed, a 22-year-old White male from a large metropolitan area who scored high on the sensation seeking scale, liked this PSA:

The one I liked was the series with the juxtaposition of the positive speaking – The ones ... with the kids dropping their friend off in front of the hospital. I thought those seemed very subtle. They didn't seem like, "Oh this is a drug ad," in-your-face, here's the direct world.

Because of this innovative style, anti-drug messaging is given another chance by some audience members. Ed's comment also raises the question of how the overall, long-term credibility of anti-drug messages are perceived. His negative opinion of most anti-drug messages can be inferred from the sarcastic tone with which he says, "Oh this is a drug ad." The issues of credibility and believability are addressed extensively where they relate to the narrative paradigm.

*Emotional appeals and optimistic bias.* At this point, we can assume that most viewers have received the message: Don't do meth, or this could happen to you. It is now necessary to consider how viewers may process and react to the message. I will discuss the level to which this PSA uses fear and guilt appeals. First, I investigate the fear message through Witte's (1992) extended parallel process model. The first questions to investigate are whether the message presents a threat, whether it is severe, and whether viewers feel susceptible to it. The threat presented in this message is the



possibility that, if you try meth, you could turn out like the unconscious girl, left on the ground outside of a hospital. The severity of this threat is implied in the intense images of the unconscious, limp girl who foams at the mouth because of a drug overdose and in the fact that she must be close enough to death to warrant a trip to the hospital. The drama created by the dark car, the anxious faces, and the shaky camera movements, as mentioned before, may enhance viewers' perceived severity of the threat presented in the message. Generally, this PSA uses dramatic and graphic themes to illustrate the severity of the threats associated with methamphetamine use. Ultimately, however, if the scene is perceived as overly dramatic or too severe, designers run into problems of narrative fidelity as discussed later with the narrative paradigm, diminishing its believability and credibility.

Before viewers can engage in the second appraisal stage of Witte's (1992) model (perceived message and self-efficacy), they must first be convinced of their own susceptibility to the threat. Optimistic bias is the biggest obstacle to eliciting perceived susceptibility because people generally tend to think that their chances of experiencing a threat are lower than others. This PSA attempts to combat optimistic bias with the casual voice-over of a young girl talking about her best friends. Listening just to the voice-over, the message designers want viewers to assume that the girl speaking is a typical teen with typical friends and values. This attempt to portray the main voice in the PSA as "just like you or me" is overshadowed by the contradictory, dramatic images. Because of people's general optimistic bias (Weinstein, 1980), many could end the appraisal process by saying, "My friends wouldn't do that." More specifically, viewers with high levels of optimistic bias might say, "Meth isn't that bad. I'm not

stupid enough to hang out with people like that, let alone overdose.” By denying the threat, these viewers might not think that it is necessary to address the issue any further and will never reach the point of changing their attitude or actions concerning meth use.

In the focus groups, the issue of optimistic bias was prevalent during discussions of this PSA. Many students referred to the themes of this theory explicitly, while others addressed it through the narrative paradigm and their level of believability of the message. In one focus group, three out of four students agreed that this PSA was believable. The fourth, however, exhibited extreme optimistic bias in his response. Adam, a 21-year-old White male from a large metropolitan area who scored average on the sensation seeking scale, said:

Yeah, I think every incident in those ads has happened at one point, but is it believable that it's inevitably going to happen to you? I don't think so. I don't think any of them were. ... I think a person would have to have pretty low self-esteem to think that they could ever let themselves hit rock bottom. That's why I think most anti-drug campaigns are ineffective. Because just my self-confidence – I could never imagine myself not recognizing that I had a problem and trying to correct it. And I think a lot of people feel that way. I don't think anyone would disagree that everyone thinks, “Oh, it won't happen to me.”

Adam clearly exhibits the tendency to disregard a threat based on the belief in one's own invincibility.

Although some individuals may still deny this message based on their level of unrealistic optimism, some focus group participants overcame their optimistic bias by acknowledging that certain aspects of the message, such as the voice-over or the normal-looking teens, increased their perceived susceptibility. Sally, a low-average sensation seeking 21-year-old White female from a town of fewer than 2,000 people, recognized the campaign's attempt to make the characters seem like typical teens so

that viewers identify with them and see how close in circumstance they are to them.

Sally said:

I thought it was really effective that they all looked like us. In the beginning they looked just like normal people doing everyday things, like going to a party. We all do that. And then how fast it can, like one time can totally turn your life upside down. I thought, in all of them, that was a continuing theme that was effective.

Although Sally only refers specifically to visual cues, we can infer from her comment that this concept also applies to the voice-over in the “Friends” PSA. In the instance of this PSA, the tone and comments of the voice-over could belong to anyone.

Jane’s interpretation of the message also leads her to overcome this tendency towards unrealistic optimism. She acknowledges the threat’s real consequences and her susceptibility to them if she were to try meth:

I believe that if I used meth and I was hanging out with people who used meth and something happened to me that they would, out of fear of being in trouble, drop me off and leave, yeah. I mean, I don’t hang out with meth users and I don’t use meth would be the difference.

Jane’s last comment illustrates how a viewer may disregard a message because it does not fit within the reality and rationality of their lives. Jane ultimately ignores the threat message and the recommended action because the narrative does not satisfy the rules of narrative probability and narrative fidelity.

If viewers *are* convinced of the threat’s severity and their own susceptibility to the threat of overdosing on meth and being dropped off in front of a hospital, the next step in their inner appraisal process is to ask whether they can do anything to prevent it from happening. For a message to be efficacious, its recommended action to prevent the threat must be effective and easily doable (i.e., have high response efficacy and self

efficacy). The way to avoid this threat, as provided by the PSA, is to not try methamphetamines “even once.” This message attempts to be generally efficacious by recommending an action that elicits high perceived self-efficacy. Despite the potential for social disapproval, it would seem that making the choice not to *try* a new drug would have relatively high self-efficacy; it is doable. Low sensation seekers like Jane will probably never find themselves in this situation; therefore, they do not see themselves as susceptible to the threat to begin with. For the most part, this tagline effectively addresses the issue of efficacy. However, this message may still be ineffective for some viewers because although efficacy is relatively high, perceived threat susceptibility is low due to optimistic bias. This may lead viewers to disregard the message without considering a change in their behavior or attitude. For some viewers, like Jane, it may be realistic not to change because they may never be around meth. This PSA is concerned with those individuals who are at a high risk to use drugs and, probably, have high levels of optimistic bias as well.

This PSA can also be evaluated from the perspective that viewers may feel a sense of guilt in response to the characters’ act of abandoning their unconscious friend while on meth. Boster et al. (1999) found that guilty people are much more likely to be persuaded to comply with a message recommendation if it illustrates the connection between the recommended action and relief of guilty feelings. Unfortunately, optimistic bias could override this message because people might be unwilling to imagine that they could act in such a way. Due somewhat to unrealistic optimism but more importantly to a lack of narrative fidelity, they may be more likely to interpret the message and situation as not applicable to them at all. According to Boster et al. (1999),

guilty people are more responsive to messages that explain a direct correlation between an action and a positive emotional effect, called a positive self-feeling message. The positive self-feeling message presented by this PSA is implicit in the faces and actions of the other people in the car. They know that their culpability is not absolved just by bringing their friend to the hospital, hence the car speeding away at the end. Although not explicit, the message tells viewers that they should feel guilty just for allowing their friends to try meth.

Interestingly, in the focus groups, the use of guilt appeals was commonly acknowledged as an effective tactic in deterring participants from meth use. After several minutes of discussion concerning guilt appeals, Dave, a 22-year-old White male from a mid-sized town who scored high-average on the sensation seeking scale, summarized the group's view:

I think in general all the ones that incorporated other people besides yourself, as a whole, were more powerful than the ones that were just like, "not even once" that were primarily just a single person and they would pan over to their methed out face. I thought that those, as a whole, were more powerful.

Adam specifically called attention to the guilt elicited by the "Friends" PSA:

Yeah, with that ad though, I almost think that the anti-drug element isn't derived from the girl being dropped off at the hospital, but the friends sort of dishonorably throwing her at a hospital door and driving off. I was much more responsive to that side of the ad than being the person who was dropped off. Because when your decisions start to affect other people, that is when that sense of guilt really starts to come into play.

*Narrative paradigm.* Another reason this PSA has the potential to be ineffective for viewers relates to the narrative paradigm. Many people don't believe that doing meth once or twice will make them an addict: One in three teens (33%) surveyed by the Montana Meth Project say there is only a "slight" or "no" risk to trying meth once or

twice (The Montana Meth Project, 2008). The connection between the tagline and the narrative implies that trying meth once will lead to this severe situation. If people do not believe this to be true, the message violates their rule of narrative fidelity, throwing off their ability to interpret the narrative rationality of the entire message. These people are likely to see the message as an over-dramatization of the effects of trying methamphetamines, and they may interpret the persuasive tactics of the message as manipulative. This could lead them to question the truth and honesty of the PSA, diminishing its credibility and, ultimately, the credibility of the source. If viewers do not believe that you are telling them the truth, they may disregard current and possibly future messages.

Some focus group participants commented that scenes in the PSAs were over-dramatized. Some people were overwhelmed and unconvinced by the intense images and high sensation value elements. Jane references the theme of optimistic bias again when discussing this point:

My one concern with it is that it seems to be pretty extreme. They try to negate that by saying, “one time,” “not even once,” or whatever. But I feel like it’s still pretty extreme cases. So people would be like, “They’re addicted though. That’s the difference between them and me,” and try to justify their use, just by having something so drastic.

The message elements also provoked some participants to acknowledge the manipulative nature of persuasive messages. Adam said:

I’ve never thought any anti-drug campaign has been very effective, and I feel the same way about these. I think, like how you pointed out, it’s obvious that they’re trying to scare people into not using meth. When the persuasive technique of an advertising campaign is so plain and obvious, I think that people are a lot less responsive to what the ad is trying to say. And I think also, the ad loses a lot of credibility. And for me, the most effective anti-drug messages I’ve

ever seen have been the actual real life before-and-after pictures of people using meth.

Although these messages are meant to be persuasive, Adam's negative interpretation of the persuasive techniques harms the message's credibility. If the source is not perceived as credible, this diminishes the message's truth-value and violates the rule of narrative fidelity.

Credibility is the fundamental element of all anti-drug messaging that can make or break this cycle. One ineffective PSA due to a lack of credibility can irreparably affect the credibility of other PSAs as well. Taylor, a 21-year-old Asian American female from a large metropolitan area who scored low on the sensation seeking scale, had this to say concerning the effect of other campaigns on her perception of this PSA:

Yeah, had I never seen a drug ad before and I watched one of those meth ads I would probably be a lot more scared than after like "Oh, another one of these, they're just going to tell me how terrible it is, not to use it, alright." I've already got the message.

She also said:

I guess I don't know that much about meth, but I feel like you're not going to become that person after one time. I know that what they're trying to say is that you think it'll be one time, but it won't be one time. I guess I feel like the problem with kids using drugs is that they see people using them who look totally normal, who've been using for a while. I think that's the hard part that the commercials don't hit at because you don't become that over night. And when you see people who you think are cool and are using it and they're fine, what would make you not want to do it?

Because she is among those who do not believe that trying meth once or twice will lead to the threat presented in this PSA, Taylor is not convinced by its message. Despite high message sensation value, high threat severity and susceptibility, and a strong guilt

appeal, it is evident that a message's ultimate measure of success is in its level of narrative rationality.

*"Pony" PSA by the Above the Influence Campaign*

The anti-marijuana PSA produced by the Above the Influence campaign titled "Pony" starts as three teenage boys walk in a dry field toward the camera. Behind them are a few trees and shrubs. It seems to be afternoon, and the sky is blue. One boy leads the other two and says, "You gotta try this."

The camera cuts to view them from behind as they climb between two lines of barbed-wire fencing. In the middle of the shot is a brown pony standing with its head down next to a large tree. The only sounds are of the boys walking in the dry grass and a few birds in the distance. The camera remains stationary as the boys walk toward the pony.

The camera cuts to view the second two boys from a 45-degree angle off of their left shoulders. As they walk into the shot from our right, they look ahead, past the camera, as if they are watching something. They look at each other and then look ahead again, confused and curious.

The shot cuts to our left where the first boy stands behind the brown pony. We view the scene from the pony's left. The boy bends over and takes the pony's tail in his hands. Just as he jerks on its tail, the pony neighs and the camera cuts to view them from their right side. This shot is zoomed-in on just the pony's back legs, tail and the first boy's knees. Viewers can just make out the other two boys standing back on the other side.



As the shot cuts to this view, the pony is in the process of raising one leg and kicking the boy in the knee. The crack is audible as the pony connects with the boy. He grunts painfully and says, "Ow." He falls back out of the shot to our left and leaves the viewer to look past the pony's hind legs to the other two boys. One boy is relatively expressionless. The other looks at him anxiously and then begins to walk forward toward the pony and the camera.

The camera cuts to the left side of the pony again, this time from the approximate vantage point of the last boy standing back. The viewer sees a side-profile of the pony and the second boy approaching behind it. The first boy holds his leg in the background while he watches the second boy follow his lead and pick up the pony's tail.

The camera cuts back to view the last boy as he cringes at the sound of the pony kicking the second boy and the painful grunting that ensues.

Cutting back to view the pony and other boys, we see the second boy limp off toward the first boy as he holds his leg and says, "Ow, ow, ow."

The camera cuts back to the last boy and views him head on. Music starts, and a calm, low voice-over says, "You know a bad idea when you see one," just as he turns around and begins to walk away. The camera starts to zoom out so that the barbed-wire fence comes back into view. The voice-over continues, "Live above weed. Live above the influence." The Above the Influence logo is displayed in the lower left corner of the screen. (To view images of this PSA, please see Appendix D.)

*Document Analysis and Focus Group Responses*

In this section, I integrate document analysis and focus group responses into an analysis of the message design components of this PSA. Using the theoretical lenses of sensation seeking theory, emotional appeals, optimistic bias, and the narrative paradigm, we are able to see how the message components may or may not be effective.

*Sensation seeking and message sensation value.* Unlike the dramatic, intense scene presented by the Montana Meth Project, this PSA does not implement Morgan et al.'s (2003) message design components that most effectively raise message sensation value. The only element of Morgan et al.'s (2003) requirements that could be considered present might be the intense image of the pony kicking the boys. However, after being kicked in the knee by a pony, the boys are still able to walk, and they are still alive. We could almost imagine them walking home, laughing together, in a few more minutes. This eliminates most readings of the scene as intense or severe. The scene lacked sound saturation, an unexpected format, and a surprise or twist ending, unless viewers are surprised by the third boy's choice not to pull the pony's tail. The metaphor that using marijuana is like being kicked by a pony or as harmful as being kicked by a pony ignores Morgan et al.'s (2003) finding that acting out the consequences of drug use is more effective than other approaches.

The Above the Influence campaign is obviously trying to appeal to low sensation seekers, who tend to be "more influenced by a message that stresses peer resistance skills and is low in sensation value than by a message that features exciting alternatives to drug use and is high in sensation value" (Palmgreen, Donohew, Lorch, Rogus, Helm, & Grant, 1991). The tagline "Live Above the Influence" addresses the

issue of peer pressure, which is a more common explanation for drug use in low sensation seekers (Palmgreen, Donohew, Lorch, Rogus, Helm, & Grant, 1991).

However, because the PSA addresses *marijuana* use, all of the focus group participants, low and high sensation seeking, agreed that it is ineffective. Dave explains how he believes other drugs are more appropriate for anti-drug campaigns:

I think it should've been some different drug. Cause, all in all, weed is the safest drug you can ever put in your body. There has never been anyone, ever, that has overdosed on weed. It is impossible to consume enough THC to have your body stop working. It is the safest. ... You eat enough multi-vitamins, and you die. You eat enough Advil or whatnot, and you'll die. You can never smoke enough or eat enough hash brownies to die. They should have picked something like, I don't know, meth for example. Something besides pot.

This belief was affirmed by all of the focus group participants. Their reasoning relates directly to the extended parallel process model (Witte, 1992) and the narrative paradigm (Fisher, 1984, 1985).

*Emotional appeals and optimistic bias.* One of the biggest problems in this message is the fact that there is no threat. According to Witte (1992), if there is no threat, why should viewers concern themselves with the message? Getting kicked by a pony seems very painful but not deadly. The two boys in the PSA started to recover from their encounter even before the end of the scene. In one focus group, Sally commented that someone might try this as a humorous stunt, high or sober: "But I'm just thinking of middle school boys who might think that that is absolutely hilarious, and they want to run out into a field and pull some horse's tail and see what happens." Ed agreed, citing the show "Jackass" as an example. The fact that people might only consider this situation funny and not acknowledge any sense of threat related to marijuana illustrates a break in the EPPM appraisal process.

Considering optimistic bias, viewers who perceive severity in the threat of being kicked by a pony may still not perceive themselves as susceptible to that threat. There is the potential for people to easily deny the message by saying, “I’m not that stupid. Even when I smoke, I’m not going to do anything remotely that stupid.”

For those viewers who *do* consider the efficacy of the recommended action not to use marijuana, the message is confused. What does it really mean to live above the influence and above weed? Using the term “influence” makes it clear that the message is trying to appeal to viewers in terms of peer pressure, but it is not clear how exactly to avoid peer pressure or whether avoiding peer pressure will help them avoid stupid situations. In the focus group, Taylor, a 21-year-old Asian American female from a large metropolitan area who scored low on the sensation seeking scale, noted how the anti-marijuana message is confusing because it does not address the designer’s real motivation for targeting users:

I feel like the anti-marijuana campaign is because they think of marijuana as a gateway drug, but then none of the ads address that as the main concern. ... I guess for me, I just feel like with all of them it’s like, “Can you show me some proof that using marijuana is going to lead to other heavy drug use?” I don’t know how they could do that. Do they even have statistics on this? So to me it’s just sort of like, “You haven’t shown me that there is a real problem yet.”

If the threat of using marijuana is really that people may continue to use increasingly more dangerous drugs as a result, this PSA does not provide a convincing solution that would effectively prevent this from happening. For Taylor, this confuses the efficacy of the recommended action and adds to the message’s ineffectiveness.

Although the threat and efficacy of this message are both low, the most fundamental problem with anti-marijuana campaigns is when people don’t believe

them. In the focus groups, every participant agreed with this comment from Sally: “I think the problem with anti-marijuana ads is that the majority of us have smoked weed, and it’s really not that bad.”

*Narrative paradigm.* Ultimately, these focus group participants do not agree with the statements made in this anti-marijuana PSA. For people who do not believe that marijuana is as severe as getting kicked by a pony, they may interpret this message as untruthful and therefore violating the rule of narrative fidelity. Associating the sharp, powerful pain of getting kicked by a pony with the typically mellow response people have to using marijuana goes against the rule of narrative fidelity because it contradicts real experience.

An interesting theme brought up by focus group participants was that metaphors, like this PSA, are not effective anti-drug messages. Based on the EPPM (Witte, 1992) and Weinstein’s (1980) work on unrealistic optimism, metaphors may not work because some viewers may not connect this message to the real threat or may not perceive a strong enough appeal to their own susceptibility. Based on the narrative paradigm (Fisher, 1984, 1985), it may also be that some viewers simply do not believe the metaphor and therefore do not believe its message. In one focus group, Beth, a 22-year-old White female from a large metropolitan area who scored low-average on the sensation seeking scale, acknowledges that the message’s humor appeal takes away from the content of the message and in the end diminishes its credibility:

These ones where they add something just a little too ridiculous, like a talking dog, like a Gumby girl, that kind of thing, it detracts I think. I think maybe ... they’re throwing in that little thing to get your attention ... So they’ve got that little thing in there, but all that it does ultimately is detract from the message,

because it just adds this level of ridiculousness that is not a part of drugs or drug culture or anything like that.

The “ridiculousness” of the message can have wide-reaching effects for other anti-drug campaigns as well. Based on experiences with marijuana that have been enjoyable and have not resulted in any harmful consequences, some people may feel manipulated by this message and untrusting of its source.

If this PSA is someone’s foundation for understanding and interpreting anti-drug messages, it may have detrimental effects on future communications related to this issue. In one focus group, Beth says:

I think it probably overall would do a really pretty negative thing because it makes me compare these cheesy ridiculous things to what these more serious disturbing ads are trying to do, and it makes me wary of – like I think you said earlier, “This is a drug ad, what are they going to tell me?” How are they going to make – it doesn’t work again. If you see enough of them, all of these I think, yeah, do some pretty bad things for any movement, any anti-drug campaigns.

We can infer from Beth’s comments that messages like these have a discrediting effect. From focus group participant comments, it seems that people respond well to what they perceive to be the truth. Sally says:

I think it’s important in marijuana ads to address, like the couch one, to address the fact that yeah, we know it’s not going to kill you. We know you’re not going to run off and buy a whole bunch of meth the next day, but it does make you lazy and all those stereotypes are pretty much true.

Because anti-drug messages often do not clearly address the issue or do not satisfy the rule of narrative fidelity, they create, as Ed said, “sort of a formula, in some ways.”

When viewers are aware of the formula, some may be more likely to sense the persuasive tactics in the message and react negatively to what may seem like

manipulation. Constant exposure to anti-drug messages like this irreparably damage their credibility and sometimes even the credibility of future efforts.

## Chapter Five: Discussion

This discussion will answer my research questions, address their theoretical and practical implications, acknowledge the limitations of this study, and offer suggestions for opportunities for further research in this area.

### *Theoretical and Practical Implications*

At the end of Chapter Two, I proposed several areas of investigation. These were (a) the extent to which contemporary anti-drug PSAs reflect the theoretical scholarship about message design, (b) the degree to which people find these PSAs to be effective, and (c) how an understanding of these theories explains people's reactions to the PSAs. After conducting qualitative document analysis and two focus groups, I am revisiting these research questions to explore their theoretical and practical implications.

Through qualitative document analysis, I critically examined the message components of these two anti-drug PSAs. I found that their messages do not consistently incorporate the extensive scholarship about message design theory. Surprisingly, some government-funded campaigns seem to completely disregard this body of research. Even those PSAs that illustrated some important theoretical components did not fully satisfy the integrated, multi-theory approach I used to analyze their effectiveness. Whether or not the anti-drug messages specifically address these theories, the ultimate measure of success is the degree to which PSAs affect drug use. However, there is little chance a PSA will affect drug use if viewers do not find it effective. In the case of these two anti-drug PSAs, focus group participants were generally positive about the effect of the Montana Meth Project PSA, but generally critical of the Above the Influence PSA. In both, the most common complaints referred



to issues of narrative rationality. Nevertheless, it is important to distinguish that many participants did not find the “Pony” PSA credible on any level, whereas the “Friends” PSA lacked narrative fidelity because many viewers did not believe it applied to them. This is an important distinction because some viewers accepted the Montana Meth Project’s message as credible despite not foreseeing themselves in such a situation. Lastly, how does an understanding of these theories explain people’s reactions to the PSAs? Identifying how people’s comments reflect the theoretical components of effective message design allows us to better categorize their reactions within the tested theoretical recommendations. Within the framework of these theories, we can identify the weaknesses in message design and correct them to improve future messages. Although this categorization helps to illustrate larger implications, it is important to remember that individuals ultimately react differently to messages. This is why persuasive tactics are so difficult to implement for a mass public.

Concerning message design theory, this research and analysis has shown that one theory may not answer all questions. I have found that to effectively design anti-drug messages, it is critical to address several theories in an integrated approach and then to test the extent to which the theories have been successfully applied. Through this analysis, one theory can make up for another’s shortcomings.

For the practical design of anti-drug messages, this research and analysis brought to light several important considerations. Probably of the greatest concern is that many current anti-drug PSAs do not incorporate this tested body of research about how to design effective messages. From focus group data, it is evident that ineffective messages can negatively impact viewers’ perceptions of all anti-drug messages, creating

a numbing effect or diminishing credibility. During focus groups, participants were clear that they do not respond well to metaphors when used in anti-drug messages. If we re-examine Morgan et al.'s (2003) research that shows message sensation value is increased by actual representations of the consequences of drug use, we should already assume that metaphors would be ineffective. There have been many examples of PSAs that use metaphors to illustrate the negative effects of drug use, including the memorable, but ineffective video of an egg frying and voice over saying, "This is your brain on drugs." It is in this vein that the Above the Influence campaign, which is funded by the Office of National Drug Control Policy, produced the "Pony" PSA addressed in this study. It would benefit campaigns to incorporate demonstrated message design strategies so that viewers are more likely to accept their anti-drug messages as believable and their sources as credible. This leads us to the most common complaint of focus group participants: lack of believability or credibility. These two issues can be explained by the theories of optimistic bias and the narrative paradigm. If anti-drug message designers expect to influence viewers, they should be constantly aware of and concerned with the level of credibility and honesty in their messages.

### *Limitations*

This study is limited by the constraints of having only two small focus groups in which most participants were not high sensation seekers. Because participants were asked to watch and pay attention to all of the Montana Meth Project and other anti-drug PSAs, they were exposed to an above-average number of anti-drug messages in a very short amount of time. In a real world situation, viewers may see very few of these PSAs relative to the amount of time they spend watching television or browsing the Internet.

The information overload of the focus group setting may have led participants to confuse the messages of several PSAs. However, the highly focused situation may also have made participants more aware of the message details than they would have been otherwise. This analysis is also limited by the small focus group sample, which was probably not large enough to reach a saturation point. Since more focus group data may have revealed new information, my research must be considered limited to only a handful of views. Despite its small size though, I was able to obtain in-depth information as to how some PSAs work. This study at least provides insight that these messages certainly do not work for everyone.

#### *Further Research*

There are many opportunities for further research in this area. A large quantitative study exploring how these theories work together may confirm, expand, or contradict my findings. It may also be interesting to explore how high sensation seekers or low sensation seekers respond to guilt appeals and metaphor tactics in a study large enough to offer conclusive evidence to their success or failure. Because the credibility of every anti-drug PSA is such a critical issue to the effectiveness of all anti-drug messages, it is important to evaluate current campaigns, such as the Montana Meth Project, with large sample sizes representative of high-risk target audiences to gain a comprehensive understanding of their effectiveness. Theoretical research as to how viewers perceive the credibility of the Montana Meth Project as a source compared to other sources of anti-drug messaging will also enhance designers' ability to reach target audiences in the future.

## Appendix A: Focus Group Protocol

### *Class Recruitment Script for Extra Credit*

My name is Stacey Malstrom. I am a senior in the Clark Honors College and the School of Journalism and Communication. I am exploring how best to design messages in anti-methamphetamine campaigns, like the Montana Meth Project. There are many theories about how to design anti-drug use messages, and part of my research is to analyze these approaches.

Your professor is offering you \_\_\_ points of extra credit (dependent on professor) to participate in my study, which will consist of a focus group for about two hours. We will watch anti-meth advertisements, which could be graphically disturbing, and discuss their effectiveness.

Your participation is voluntary. If you are interested, please fill out this sign-up sheet with your name and e-mail address. If you have any questions, you can contact me at [smalstro@uoregon.edu](mailto:smalstro@uoregon.edu).

### *Protocol Questions for Focus Groups*

*Introduction.* My name is Stacey Malstrom. I am a senior in the Clark Honors College and the School of Journalism and Communication. Professor Tiffany Derville is my primary adviser for my senior thesis. I am exploring how best to design messages in anti-methamphetamine campaigns, like the Montana Meth Project. There are many theories about how to design anti-drug use messages, and part of my research is to analyze these approaches.

The Montana Meth Project started in Montana in 2005 and has since expanded its programs into Arizona, Idaho and Illinois. The project has also created a national

platform called the Meth Project, so you may have seen some of the ads before.

Thomas M. Siebel, a millionaire from the computer technology industry, started the program.

We are going to look at some of the advertisements from the Montana Meth Project and discuss them. Your participation is voluntary. I would really appreciate your involvement. [Here is a consent form...] Please read through the form and let me know if you have any questions. The form states that your written responses will be kept confidential, and that all of your comments will be reported as a group. If I do use individual quotes, they will be identified as anonymous.

First, we would like to get an idea of your current perceptions of meth. Please take a few minutes to fill out the handout as honestly as possible. These responses will be kept private, and you do not need to include your name. I will be the only person looking at the handouts.

*Handout 1.* Now that everyone is finished, I will collect the first handout. Here is a second handout for you to take notes on as we watch the advertisements and throughout our discussion. Again, I would like to collect your notes, and I will be the only person to see them. The advertisements I am about to show you have disturbing visuals. If anyone would prefer to leave and not watch the advertisements, please feel comfortable doing so.

*Handout 2.* We will now discuss your reactions to the advertisements. Please note that confidentiality of your verbal comments cannot be guaranteed because of our group setting.

*View Montana Meth Ads:*

- What do you think of the advertisements?
- Do you think they are effective? Why or why not?
- What audio/visual elements do you feel are relevant to the message?

*Emotional Appeals.* Okay, lets talk about a theoretical approach. One theory says that you can convince people not to use drugs by appealing to their emotions. We've all heard of scare tactics or guilt trips? These are attempts to scare you out of doing something or guilt you into doing something.

- What emotions do you think these ads are trying to appeal to?
- Is this effective? Why or why not?
- Do these ads scare you?
- How does the audio/visual aspect of these advertisements help or hinder the emotional appeal?

*Sensation Seeking.* Another theory divides people into high sensation seekers and low sensation seekers. High sensation seekers are people who need lots of stimuli in their lives. They are adventurous, like spontaneity and excitement, and tend to live more dangerously. Low sensation seekers like plans and routines. They are less likely to take uncalculated risks, and they are less likely to experiment with drugs. Sensation seeking theories say that you should target anti-drug messages to narrow audiences to have the most effect. High sensation seekers are more likely to process the message if it has a high sensation value, which appeals to their sensation seeking preferences.

Here is a quick test to determine your sensation seeking level.

- For the HSS in the room, did these ads appeal to you? Why or why not?

- For the LSS in the room, did these ads appeal to you? Why or why not?
- Are they effective in appealing to both HSS and LSS?
- How do the audio/visual elements affect the advertisements' sensation value?

*Compare to print advertisements:*

- For the HSS in the room, did these ads appeal to you? Why or why not?
- For the LSS in the room, did these ads appeal to you? Why or why not?
- How do the print advertisements compare to the television ads?
- How are they different?

*Narrative Fidelity.* Our third theory will be Walter Fisher's narrative paradigm, which has two parts: Narrative probability and narrative fidelity. Narrative probability refers to how the story fits together, whether it is probable and doesn't contradict itself. Narrative fidelity refers to how truthful the story is. Based on your values, do the characters in the story make realistic choices? Does the information presented reflect what you already know is true? In the case of anti-drug messages, you are more likely to accept the message if the story seems authentic.

- When you watch the Montana Meth Project anti-meth advertisements, do you think they are truthful and believable?
- What makes it believable or not?
- Do you think believability is important when communicating anti-drug messages?

*View other anti-drug advertisements:*

- What do you think of the advertisements?
- Do you think they are effective? Why or why not?
- How do you think these advertisements compare to the Montana Meth Project?

-How are they different?

-Do you think any of the theories we discussed apply to these ads?

*Conclusion.* The Montana Meth Project, and now The Meth Project nationally, focuses its energies on research-based marketing strategies that graphically communicate the risks of meth use. This model has been very successful. You may be interested to know that since it started in Montana in 2005, meth use among teens in Montana has declined by nearly 45%, meth-related crime has dropped more than 50%, and workers testing positive for meth have declined by 70%, the largest drop in the country.

Thank you for sharing your insights today. If you have any questions or would like to add comments, you can contact me at [smalstro@uoregon.edu](mailto:smalstro@uoregon.edu).



## Appendix B: Focus Group Transcripts

*Focus Group Pseudonyms*

Jane is a 20-year-old Hispanic and White female from a large metropolitan area (approximately 500,000 people) who scored low on the sensation seeking scale.

Dave is a 22-year-old White male from a medium sized city (approximately 150,000 people) who scored high average on the sensation seeking scale.

Molly is a 21-year-old White female from a medium sized city (approximately 150,000 people) who scored average on the sensation seeking scale.

Adam is a 21-year-old White male from a large metropolitan area (approximately 500,000 people) who scored average on the sensation seeking scale.

Ed is a 22-year-old White male from a large metropolitan area (approximately 500,000 people) who scored high on the sensation seeking scale.

Beth is a 22-year-old White female from a large metropolitan area (approximately 500,000 people) who scored low on the sensation seeking scale.

Nathan is a 21-year-old White male from a medium sized city (approximately 75,000 people) who scored low on the sensation seeking scale.

Taylor is a 21-year-old Asian American female from a large metropolitan area (approximately 500,000 people) who scored low on the sensation seeking scale.

Kris is a 24-year-old mother from a medium sized city (approximately 150,000 people) who identifies as Black, White, and Seminole, and scored low on the sensation seeking scale.

Patrick is a 20-year-old Filipino male from a community of about 55,000 people in a large metropolitan area (approximately 3,800,000 people) who scored low-average on the sensation seeking scale.

Sally is a 21-year-old White female from a small town (approximately 2,000 people) who scored low-average on the sensation seeking scale.

*Thursday Transcript: April 17, 2008*

[Watched Montana Meth Project PSAs]

Me: What do you think of them? Any comments? There's a lot there, so if you have any questions remembering which one ...

Jane: I thought that it was interesting that they were targeting teens and young kids. Every one of them seemed to be. That's good, I guess, if it's affecting kids. My perception of it is always that it affects existing drug users, but I don't know. Not too many people experimented with meth in my age group. But it's good. The shock value of it is pretty intense. It gets the message across pretty well I guess.

Me: Does it appeal to you?

Jane: Meth?

Me: These ads.

Jane: These ads? Yeah, I think it'd be good to have them shown nation-wide just like the Truth ads and all those other ones they have out right now. I think it'd be an effective way to stop the rise in meth use.

Me: Anyone else? Responses as to how these affect you or how you responded to them.

Dave: Maybe the thing that's different between this kind of advertisement and a Truth advertisement – potentially, I think this might have some sort of an effect on a current drug user. Normally, all of the – I think that Truth is an utter waste of money for any sort of stopping-smoking-once-you've-already-started. Everybody knows that smoking is bad for you, causes cancer. Then Truth just makes up a bunch of horseshit numbers, you know, eight million babies die from ... bullshit. But at least this shows – I think that it does a great job of showing progressive drug use. So maybe it could potentially affect a current user that just started and the targeted teens. It definitely portrays a really realistic way, like when they lit up the meth on the light bulb. A lot of times that's what you do because you have no money, but light bulbs are everywhere. I was impressed for the fact that this is one of the only anti-drug – because I think that most anti-drug stuff, like DARE, is the most amount of wasted government horseshit. At least this has a more progressive way of looking at drug use and a more realistic way.

Molly: There's a big scare tactic in it, too. Even just for entertainment value, somebody's not going to see that commercial come on and leave the room. It catches your attention. I think it was good that it pointed out that young kids could potentially – I don't know if young kids are, but I can imagine that'd be the scariest demographic to get into it because then, once you're in, you're in. But yah, I agree.

Jane: My one concern with it is that it seems to be pretty extreme. They try to negate that by saying, 'one time,' 'not even once,' or whatever. But I feel like it's still

pretty extreme cases. So people would be like, 'they're addicted though. That's the difference between them and me,' and try to justify their use, just by having something so drastic.

Molly: Yeah it's the same problem with the Living Above the Influence ones. They show people smoking weed, and all of a sudden their life is ruined.

Jane: Exactly. The only reason that came to mind is because those come on and people are like, 'That doesn't happen.' We all know this stuff happens. You see people on the streets with meth marks and just all messed up, but I don't think that kids are necessarily going to go from point a to point b. They're going to try to justify it in between.

Adam: I've never thought any anti-drug campaign has been very effective, and I feel the same way about these. I think, like how you pointed out, it's obvious that they're trying to scare people into not using meth. When the persuasive technique of an advertising campaign is so plain and obvious, I think that people are a lot less responsive to what the ad is trying to say. And I think also, the ad loses a lot of credibility. And for me, the most effective anti-drug messages I've ever seen have been the actual real life before-and-after pictures of people using meth. Or, I think my friend even told you, the ad about the couple who got lost in the snow.

Me: Yeah, I found that one.

Adam: Yeah, that one I thought, since it was a true story, it carried a little more weight.

Me: Have you seen that one?

Adam: Yeah, I have seen that one.

Me: Well, we can talk about that one a little bit later when we talk about some of the other ones because I have it. I have a question about that one. Do you think that all of those ads were equally powerful, or were there some that stood out to you as being more persuasive than others?

Dave: I definitely thought there were a lot of them that were fairly weak compared to the other ones.

Me: Which ones specifically, if you can remember?

Dave: The one where the kid goes into the laundry mat I thought was – I'm sure that people get robbed, but people don't really get robbed at the laundry mat. His amount of being caught and being seen by everybody – He should just go rob a convenience store, go rob someone on the street instead of going into – If I was

going to rob something to get money, I would much rather hit up someone on the street or outside a movie theater instead of a well-lit area like a laundry mat. And people who go to laundry mats, theoretically, are in a lower demographic. So they wouldn't have as much cash, valuables, jewels on them.

Adam: I actually wrote down that I thought that was a pretty weak ad, too. But I think one thing the ad was implying was that, since he was just randomly robbing a laundry mat, they were trying to say that the typical meth addict doesn't have that rationalization process. It's just a very impulsive decision.

Molly: Well, that's why I thought that the robbing-the-house one wasn't good because that –

Jane: Yeah, I didn't like that one either.

Molly: – kind of contradicts that one, and that would take planning. It was extreme, but it was extreme to the point where you're like, 'Hmm, I doubt that would really happen unless somebody already had a really bad disposition.'

Adam: Yeah

Jane: I also thought that the laundry mat and the house one were really fast. Everything was going really fast, and you couldn't really pick – you'd lose someone. Like you were saying, you wouldn't get up and leave the room if you were – Like in the shower one, the girl's like, 'Oh, I'm going to go take a shower.' Then all of a sudden, you're like, 'What's going on in this ad?' But in the laundry mat, everything's just going so fast it screams like a Truth ad or something, and you're like, 'okay whatever.' I thought some of the other ones that caught you a little bit earlier on, then you were sitting there like, 'oh damn.' The shower one is intense. I guess maybe just because it was the first one or something. But if I didn't know what we were doing in here, I wouldn't know what was happening, and then all of a sudden you see that girl. It was weird.

Molly: That one freaked me out. There were a couple of other ones that weren't very clear that it was a meth ad, like the girlfriend/boyfriend one. It took me to the very end, whenever he was actually touching the meth, to even realize how that came into play. I couldn't decide if that was more effective or less because, like you said, it wasn't as blatantly obvious. But at the same time, you've got to show what your ad is about. I thought the mom one was really effective – where he steals from his mom, and she's crying.

Adam: That's funny because I hated that one. I just thought – what was his name? John or whatever? I just thought the acting was so terrible. The only thing I thought about was 'this guy sucks at acting.' I also thought the same thing about the locked out ad where the kid was locked out by his family and was like, 'I'll kill

you.’ It seems like a lot of those commercials threw in the synthetic, crazy, meth phrase that someone would say. They all seemed really contrived, like they were carefully placed to have an effect on viewers. Like I said earlier, when persuasive techniques are so obvious, you’re less responsive. And that’s just kind of how I felt about those two ads.

Jane: The one thing I did like about those two ads was that it was showing how it affects those around you, as opposed to just you. Everyone knows that you’ll be affected when you do drugs, but I don’t think people think in terms of its affect on those around you as well. So I thought that message was good, but I don’t know that it was necessarily done in the best way.

Molly: It could’ve been executed better.

Me: So that message is compelling for you?

Jane: Yeah, I think so.

Molly: I agree. It’s the same thing with the drunk driving ads. The ones where you’re getting hurt, it’s not as big of a deal.

Jane: Right

Molly: But whenever it shows you killed a wife and child ...

Jane: Yeah

Adam: Yeah. I thought the bathroom ad where the girl was prostituting herself –

Dave: Yeah, her and her sister? That one?

Adam: Yeah, I probably thought that was the best one just because it was a little more subtle than the rest of the ads. There wasn’t the shaky camera and the shouting and all the action. It was just sort of quietly unsettling. And any time you see someone, like a young person, prostituting herself you can’t help but ...

Jane: I think it would’ve been more effective if they didn’t look so close in age. I mean, I guess they couldn’t have a really little kid, but I couldn’t figure out if it was her friend who was also on meth or if it wasn’t. And the only way they showed that is by having her stand back and look scared.

Molly: Yeah, I was trying to figure out if she had the stuff on her face.

Jane: Me, too. Like, is she on meth?

Molly: Yeah

Dave: Yeah, is it her friend?

Jane: Does she want the money too? That's the only thing. But that's a good point. And I think it also has the same appeal of when you don't know what's going on, so you're sitting there watching it, trying to figure out what's up.

Molly: Yeah, and you're like, 'Is that really going to happen?'

Jane: Yeah

Me: [redirect] My project specifically deals with three theories of message design. The first one is emotional appeals, which we've already kind of touched on. We talked about fear appeals, or fear tactics. I was wondering, one, if you want to talk more about fear tactics, or two, if you saw any other emotions that they were trying to appeal to specifically. We kind of touched on it.

Jane: Yeah, I think that's what we're saying, like the drunk driving ads that say, 'you killed a wife and kid' and the ones where your family is affected by your use of meth. It appeals to your empathy. People care more about other people than themselves sometimes. You know what I mean?

Me: Would you say another interpretation for that, and tell me whether or not you agree with this, would be a guilt appeal?

Dave: Yeah

Jane: Yeah, guilt, yah.

Adam: Yeah

Me: So, do you see any other ads with those? Can you pick out some of the ads?

Molly: Well, it's like the recent gambling ads where the guilt appeals as well.

Me: So of the ones in this project, we said the one with the sister.

Jane: Yeah, the last one we just watched.

Molly: The mother and son.

Jane: The one where he's stealing from her, and he kicks her.

Molly: I'm trying to think if there were others.

Dave: I think in general all the ones that incorporated other people besides yourself, as a whole, were more powerful than the ones that were just like, 'not even once' that were primarily just a single person and they would pan over to their method out face. I thought that those, as a whole, were more powerful.

Me: Did everyone agree with that?

Jane and Molly: Yeah

Me: Another theory that I'm working with is called sensation seeking. This one is pretty interesting. It kind of has people on this scale of need for sensation from low to high sensation seekers. And so, low sensation seekers like things to kind of continue in their normal pattern, everyday routine sort of thing. High sensation seekers need a lot of change and a lot of action and activity. Often, drug users are high sensation seekers. Being a high sensation seeker in no way means that you might try drugs. It doesn't lead that way, but those people who have that tendency to want to try the experience of drugs and have that new novelty tend to be high sensation seekers. So, I brought a sensation-seeking test, so we can all find out what kind of sensation seekers we are.

[Participants take test]

If you don't mind sharing, what kind of sensation seekers are you guys?

Molly: Average.

Me: Average, right in the middle?

Molly: 47.4, boring.

Jane: Low, low to very low.

Adam: Average.

Dave: Average, I think. [later told me very close to high sensation seeking. A couple debatable questions and leaned to the conservative side.]

Me: [to Jane] Since you're a low sensation seeker, or pretty low, was there anything – The fast paced, the drama, those types of elements are all ways to appeal to high sensation seekers. Did the ads appeal to you, strongly?

Jane: That's what I said. The laundry mat ad, which was really fast and everything, was happening really fast. I didn't like it. So I guess that makes sense. The shower ad

was kind of shocking, I don't know. I don't like scary movies; I don't like jumping things.

Me: The slow pace might have pulled you in more on the shower one?

Jane: I don't know. Yeah, I guess so. The fast camera-moving thing, those kinds of things stress me out.

So, I have a couple print advertisements that are also from the same campaign. I'll just read it: "No one thinks they'll try to tear off their own skin. Meth will change that." Does anyone want to comment on this? Maybe in comparison to the video ads? I mean, is this more compelling or less compelling?

Dave: It's pretty gross.

Jane: It's pretty gross, yeah. That was my first reaction. That's disgusting.

Me: Is it convincing?

Dave: I think it's too much.

Molly: Yeah, I think the blood is too much. You can imagine somebody picking at their skin, but you don't imagine blood coming out of it because of it.

Jane: I think the razor, on that same note, is a little much.

Dave: Yeah

Jane: Like you said, you'll imagine someone picking at their skin or something, but a razor? I don't know what that ...

Adam: Yeah, it seems a little dramatic.

Me: Here is one that goes with that other TV ad: "My mom knows I'd never hurt her. Then she got in the way."

Jane: Wow

Dave: I think that one is a lot better than the last one.

Molly: It involves somebody else, so ...

Jane: Yeah

Dave: mm hmm [agreement]



Me: That is why?

Molly: Yeah

Jane: I think so, yeah.

Dave: Definitely

Me: How does this compare to the actual TV one?

Molly: Well, I think video is always going to be more compelling because it hooks you in. But I think this would help bring it around, you know, reiterate the campaign.

Me: So, used together they would be more effective?

Jane: Yeah

Me: [next slide] “You’ll never worry about lipstick on your teeth again.”

Jane: That’s gross.

Adam: It’s pretty gross.

Molly: It’s gross, but it doesn’t look real to me.

Jane: It looks like something from a movie, from a horror movie, like a zombie or something.

Dave: Yeah, but in the same respect, do you guys ever cruise around downtown Portland really late at night? You can see all the guys that have their noses from picking and all their skin deteriorating? All their noses are all gone, and almost all their teeth look like that, and they have sores all over their face and stuff?

Me: So, in your experience, does this seem real?

Dave: Yeah. It looks a lot like – You guys have never talked to those people?

Jane: No, try not to go to downtown Portland at night very often.

Molly: I’m not cruising downtown Portland at night.

Dave: Oh, okay. I don’t think it’d be on a person this young necessarily. I think that that maybe isn’t – She looks like a fairly young girl, at least from that respect. There was this guy who used to hang around the Roxy. Anyone ever go up to Portland,

up to the Roxy? It's like the only 24-hour really ... weird place. Well there was this guy who used to kind of live around the corner, homeless guy. And he had a really, really inflamed nose. But his nose was all huge divots from where, for some reason, he just had a fixation with getting into his nose. And his lips were all fucked up because that is what happens to your lips from blowing on the glass and all that stuff from meth.

Molly: Yeah, the real story would probably be much more compelling.

Jane: I think so.

Molly: Even when it's less dramatic and is real, it would be more compelling to me than something that is fake but more dramatic.

Adam: Yeah, I totally agree. But I don't necessarily think that it's unrealistic for someone's mouth to look like that.

Me: [redirect] Lastly for theory stuff, this one is probably the one I find most interesting. It's called the narrative paradigm and there is this guy named Walter Fisher who said we all experience our lives in stories. So we all learn via stories, and all of our lives are a series of stories or narratives. He talks about these two different tests, narrative probability and narrative fidelity, to say whether a story is true. So in this instance, if you're viewing the ads, if you think the story is probable and it doesn't contradict itself throughout the ad, and if you think the story is truthful, you're willing to believe it as a realistic narrative. In that respect, which of the ads do you think the ads are believable based on that?

Dave: Do mind rephrasing it?

Me: Yeah, when you watch the ads, do you think they're believable?

Jane: There were some that were, definitely.

Dave: Yeah

Me: Which ones?

Dave: I'd say the one where the girl that looks like the two sisters, and the one where it was really slow, where they asked to buy the girls for 50 bucks, and they go in the bathroom. I thought that was much more believable than the other ones.

Jane: I think the one where they drop the girl off at the hospital and then drive away was pretty believable.

Dave: Yeah

Molly: I agree.

Adam: Yeah, I think every incident in those ads has happened at one point, but is it believable that it's inevitably going to happen to you? I don't think so. I don't think any of them were. Did I make myself clear on that?

Me: I think so. So these ads don't convince you that those things that happen in the ad would happen to you if you tried meth?

Adam: No, I think a person would have to have pretty low self-esteem to think that they could ever let themselves hit rock bottom. That's why I think most anti-drug campaigns are ineffective. Because just my self-confidence – I could never imagine myself not recognizing that I had a problem and trying to correct it. And I think a lot of people feel that way. I don't think anyone would disagree that everyone thinks, 'Oh, it won't happen to me.'

Jane: I think everyone thinks that it won't happen to them, but I think that is the nature of the beast. I think that is what addiction is. Even when people are addicted, they don't necessarily realize they're addicted or realize that they're at rock bottom. It's like the thing they're trying to overcome with these ads is the it-won't-happen-to-me-mentality, but I don't know if they've done it. I don't know if they can do it because everyone thinks that.

Adam: That's the big challenge.

Jane: There's no one out there that is like, 'Yeah, if I tried it I'd be addicted.'

Me: But the ads like the one with the friends – you're willing to watch that and say, 'If I tried meth, that could happen to me?' You said that one was more believable. Do you agree with the statement that that could happen to you if you tried meth?

Jane: I believe that if I used meth and I was hanging out with people who used meth and something happened to me that they would, out of fear of being in trouble, drop me off and leave, yeah. I mean, I don't hang out with meth users and I don't use meth would be the difference.

Dave: Yeah, I think that that one, but especially for the fact of how dirty most meth is created. It's highly probable that – because the difference between the meth chain that makes clean meth that is really pure and ultimately is bad for you but it's not as bad. All it takes in the process is the guy under-cooking or over-cooking or changing the temperature. The whole process takes a fairly long time. You cook it all night. So most of the time, the cookers are up all day and all night preparing the batch and drying it out. There's a high probability that you'd just switch something. It's kind of like making your own grain alcohol. If

you make your own grain alcohol but you get the temperature off, that is where you get the instances where you can temporarily blind yourself or your friend. Which is just a really simple mistake, and I think it's highly probable that something like that would happen in a small dose and it could affect someone and they're dropped off. That was kind of a long rabbit trail. I apologize.

Adam: Yeah, with that ad though, I almost think that the anti-drug element isn't derived from the girl being dropped off at the hospital, but the friends sort of dishonorably throwing her at a hospital door and driving off. I was much more responsive to that side of the ad than being the person who was dropped off. Because when your decisions start to affect other people, that is when that sense of guilt really starts to come into play.

Molly: And in that one she hadn't necessarily – I mean, hopefully that'd be a person's rock bottom, but that wasn't necessarily a typical rock bottom. It was just a crap situation. So, it wasn't like the other ones where it's like, I'm shivering in a shower and all my skin's coming off. It's like

Me: We can look a couple other ads. Here is the one with the cold couple. I know this is really hard to see.

[Viewed Nebraska ad]

Me: Could you read the text? Were you able to see it? What do you think of that one?

Adam: I just think actual examples are more affective than manufactured examples.

Dave: Yeah, I thought that did a fairly good job.

Me: Do you think that would catch your attention if you were watching television? This is an interesting situation because I have you here, and I'm making you watch this ad. But say you're watching TV, would you stay in the room to watch that ad?

Dave: Or would you not switch the channel?

Me: Exactly. Does it catch your attention enough to keep you there?

Dave: Yeah, I think I would definitely listen to it.

Adam: Yeah, I mean, both me and my friend, we remember that ad from however long ago, and we're able to describe it pretty accurately. So that, I really think, is the best anti-drug ad I've ever seen.

[Viewed Eyebrow ad]

Jane: Oh god. [during clip]

Me: Could everybody see the other eyebrow was kind of bloody, obviously had been tweezed? Their other eyebrow was partly tweezed off and kind of bloody. I'm sorry that was hard to see.

Jane: There is another one where they start digging in to their skin with tweezers. It's way more graphic.

Molly: I know, I assumed that when you said that, so I was like, 'oh no, I don't want to see this.'

Jane: Sorry. I kind of ruined that one. I saw it on TV a while ago.

Me: Do you think that one is believable?

Dave: Yeah, I don't think it's – It's not way over the top by any means.

Molly: I'd probably sit and watch that too, just to see what was going to go on. Either that or change the channel because I was waiting for her to dig in, and it freaked me out.

Me: Realizing that I'm not necessarily supposed to put my input, I just want to ask, realizing that I'm leading kind of – I thought that they weren't tweezing very hard on that one. Which led me to realize the makeup involved. On the first eyebrow, I was like, 'what are they doing,' because it didn't seem like they were picking very hard. But that could just be how it starts out. No one else seemed to bring that up, and that is fine. You don't have to agree with that by any means. I was just wondering.

Dave: It could also be saying that just because they're up for such a long time – It isn't necessarily how hard they did it. If you just tweeze your eyebrow for four hours in a row, you're going to irritate it enough to break open your skin, potentially.

[Viewed engine metaphor ad]

Dave: That was terrible.

Jane: That was not a very good ad, in my opinion. I don't know.

Me: Why?

Jane: It's just boring.

Molly: I think that one kind of targets an older demographic. It's kind of like the – See, I figure it must be good because I still remember it from when we were little, but the egg – 'This is your brain,' then smashing it, 'this is your brain on drugs.' But it's kind of the same kind of thing. But I don't think that would make somebody stop. They'd be like, 'Okay cool, it speeds up my heart.'

Me: Do you think it would make somebody not want to start? Because that is a different question than not want to stop.

Dave: I think it would have absolutely no effect. I think people would just look at that and think that it's a fairly comical ad. And he's an awesome comedian too.

Me: Who is that, by the way?

Adam: Henry Rollins

Dave: Yeah, it's just like all of the old-school, really, really directed, over-the-top metaphor of whatever they want to show, like your brain or your family, smashing the egg. It's utter horseshit. It's such a bad representation.

Adam: Yeah, I mean, was that ad targeted at kids or was it targeted at parents?

Me: The last line says, "Tell your kids" or "protect your kids."

Adam: Yeah, cause Henry Rollins has kind of got that old school feel because he's been around for so long. So, I don't know if we're necessarily the right demographic to analyze that ad.

Me: I thought it was interesting because this ad calls back very specifically to the ad with the egg. The original one of that was in the sixties. They had a frying pan, and they were literally cooking an egg in the frying pan. The entire video was just of the frying pan with the egg sizzling. Somebody said, 'This is your brain on drugs. Don't do drugs.' That was the only scene. They've gone through several progressions and I thought this was an interesting call back to that.

Jane: I think with these ones, the difference is the Montana Meth Project is targeting people that are going to start or that are going to try meth once. I think what you're talking about, with the high or low stimulation or whatever – These ones have all been pretty mellow. It's like one picture and then some words so you have to read what's going on. The other one, with the tweezers, was just one scene. I think those don't target people that are actually going to, actual potential meth users. I think meth users are in that high sensation category, and they need something that is in-your-face and fast. So I feel like that is what the Montana Meth Project is targeting; those kids that are going to use meth, who are thinking about it or are in the high risk category for it. So I think that they're targeting

different people. And I think also that is the difference between the Montana Meth Project and us. Us watching that, we're all like, 'Oh that is a little ridiculous or over the top.' But maybe for somebody that has a higher sensation whatever-it's-called, that wouldn't be over the top. It would just be really up their alley, and it would do its job in that case. I don't know.

Me: Here's a couple that you've probably seen before.

[Viewed horse kick ad]

Adam: There's no hope with marijuana ads.

Molly: Yeah, I know. [laughter]

Dave: Yeah [laughter]

Adam: Especially in Eugene.

Me: And why is that?

Adam: Because, I mean I'm not a champion of legalizing marijuana or anything, but I could bring in a lot of my stoner friends who would just argue that weed has made their life better. A commercial like that is not only not going to change their minds, but it's also going to insult them. It's saying that their way of life is stupid and wrong.

Dave: I think it should've been some different drug. Cause, all in all, weed is the safest drug you can ever put in your body. There has never been anyone, ever, that has overdosed on weed. It is impossible to consume enough THC to have your body stop working. It is the safest. You can overdose on vitamins.

Molly: Alcohol is more dangerous.

Dave: You eat enough multi-vitamins, and you die. You eat enough Advil or whatnot, and you'll die. You can never smoke enough or eat enough hash brownies to die. They should have picked something like, I don't know, meth for example. Something besides pot.

Molly: Well, you're already getting somebody to laugh at the commercial because they're getting kicked in the balls, and then you're laughing at the actual commercial too, because you're like, 'Really?'

Jane: I think that'd even be a better tobacco ad, honestly.

Dave: Yeah, yeah, agreed.

Molly: Yeah

Jane: With tobacco ads, everyone knows that's a bad idea.

Me: All of the next ones are marijuana ads, just so you know.

[Viewed cocoon ad]

Jane: Is this where he makes himself a big joint? [during ad]

[Other murmurs/jokes during ad]

Me: So the text said something like, "The choices you make today affect who you become tomorrow."

Dave: Did I see right? So, he got inside a weed cocoon and then stayed in there until he was a middle-aged, balding man, living at home. Okay. [laughs] Just making sure.

Me: So, one, is it believable?

[laughter]

Molly: Well, I'd say, out of all of the Above the Influence commercials, this one is the most compelling at least, because you want to see what comes out. Like, 'Why is he making a cocoon?' But I wouldn't watch that and be like, oh, well...

Adam: Oh, I've got to turn things around now. [sarcastic]

Molly: I don't want to live in that cocoon. [sarcastic]

Dave: I think that more people might try to, yah know –

Adam: Build...

Dave: Yeah, build a weed cocoon than stop using it.

Me: How about this one?

[Viewed Pete's couch ad]

Jane: That's better.

Dave: Yeah, that is a lot better. It didn't put in a worst-case scenario type thing.



Molly: Yeah, and it's truthful.

Jane: Yeah

Molly: You're probably not going to get hurt when you're smoking weed, but here are your alternatives.

Adam: You could do all that stuff high, though.

Molly: Yeah

[laughter]

[Viewed talking dog ad]

Dave: This is a great one. [during ad]

Adam: Oh this one is weird. [during ad]

Molly: This one irritates me. [during ad]

Me: Why does it irritate you?

Molly: Because dogs don't talk! I don't know. It just irritates me.

Me: So, by it irritating you, how does that make you want to respond to the message?

Molly: Change the channel. That commercial plays a lot I feel like, so I just change the channel. I'm like, 'Oh here comes the disappointed dog again.'

Dave: I'd say either change the channel and/or try to get real high until you can see an animal talk to you. If that is the main thing, who would not want to be Dr. Doolittle for a day? Maybe it's just personal opinion.

Adam: I don't like the dog as a character. It seems like that is the way, and I don't mean to offend anyone, but the way someone from Young Life would tell a friend to stop smoking. They would be like, 'I miss my friend.' That is just such a pussy way to go about it. That is what bugs me.

Molly: And almost with that commercial it kind of insinuates that if you're high all the time, you're going to start seeing your dog talk. Uh, never happened.

Me: No one has really said this explicitly, but we almost got to it earlier when you said it would offend their way of life. Do you also think that, even for those people who don't smoke, do you think this is condescending?

Adam: yeah

Dave: Yeah, some of them.

Molly: Well, for somebody who just smokes once in a while, you're telling them that they're basically getting themselves kicked in the balls for smoking, when it's like, 'Actually it's not that big of a deal. Thanks.'

Me: For that ad and for a couple of these other ones, what age of a person would be convinced by that, by a talking dog? Do you think it's an age thing?

Jane: Too young to know about pot.

Dave: I think it's maybe more directed toward the parents. So then the older generation that sees that says, 'Man look at that great anti-drug commercial. That's cute and a little bit funny, and it says its message.' But I think that no kid is going to look at that and be like, 'Man that was a terrible thing that happened to that girl. Her best friend doesn't like her anymore.'

Jane: So more toward the people with the money who fund these kinds of projects, basically, as opposed to the real target audience.

Dave: Yeah

Jane: Yeah, I think the talking dog or the boys getting kicked in the balls is geared more toward tweens, young kids.

Molly: I can imagine that would be a good target audience because that is when I was still like, 'Oh my god, weed is so bad.' So that is a good time to catch people if that is what you're trying to do – to keep that momentum going.

Me: But these ads are obviously played during the TV that you're watching as well. So they're trying to get you too.

[Viewed cartoon ad]

Jane: What is with the disappointed dogs? Quite the theme. [during ad]

Me: Any comments?

Adam: I don't think that is a very realistic response from the guy smoking weed. If I was smoking and someone was like, 'Why don't you try stopping now?' 'I don't want to. I said I can stop any time I want.' I wouldn't be like, 'Oh you're right, maybe next week.' I'd just be like, 'Shut up. Go away.'

Jane: I don't feel like pot is addictive.

Molly: Yeah

Jane: So it makes it sound like the meth ads, where, once you start, you're addicted and that is unrealistic.

Me: I couldn't find my favorite one. Have you guys seen the one called Flat Sarah? I found it, but I lost it.

Jane and Molly: Oh yeah, I've seen it.

Dave: What is it?

Me: This girl is sitting on a couch, and there is another girl on a closer couch. The girl on the other couch looks like Gumby. She's flat and melted onto the couch. The interviewer is trying to talk to her, and her friend says, 'She won't respond. Ever since she started doing marijuana, she's been like this. She just doesn't move. We don't do anything anymore.' [Described Smooshed ad too]

[Viewed Drug Money Funds Terror ad]

Molly: I wish it would explain in which way it's funding terror. Because weed money isn't necessarily.

Jane: Yeah or what drug he bought because if he bought pot, my guess is he didn't fund terror. He funded more pot for his dealer. But I suppose cocaine money and/or other drugs.

Adam: Yeah, opium money or poppy seeds.

Me: So the ad is believable?

Dave: I guess if you really go into it, then I guess it would be believable. But it's too strong of a message saying that. I think it should have split up what drugs it was targeting. Because you're not going to get any terrorism or kill any firemen from pot at all.

Jane: And honestly, pot is my assumption given his age. I don't know why, but I don't figure too many kids – I mean he looked like he was 12 or 13. I don't imagine too many 12 or 13-year-olds ...

Adam: Yeah, the reason I think that ad is really ineffective is because you're gut reaction when someone says you're killing firemen, you support terrorism – The first thing you just instinctively do is, 'No I didn't,' and try and reason why you didn't. Instead of thinking about why you might have.

Me: Do you think that in doing that, in being defensive, you shut yourself off from the rest of the message?

Adam: Definitely.

Dave: I would agree with that too.

[Viewed terrorism with two men eating, so you support terrorism a little]

Me: Is that any different than the other one?

Molly: It's the same thing to me.

Jane: I think it addresses the problem he brought up because that guy is doing the same thing you said you'd do when you saw an ad. He is like, 'How much of my money actually goes there? Not that much, so it's not that big a deal.'

Dave: I thought it was better than the kid one. If I had to say which one was more persuasive, I think that one was more persuasive.

Molly: Well, because it does have an antithesis. It brings up your own argument, which is good. But I don't think he argued against it really well.

Adam: If you use that same line of reasoning you could take so many different products and you could say, 'Oh you made thirty copies of this methamphetamine perceptions sheet. That means you condone the slashing of rain forests.' And if everybody were to consider distant externalities, I would just be driven insane by it. You can only focus on so much. But it's like, 'Oh you wear Nike, so you condone sweatshops.'

Molly: It's true. Any big brand or any kind of cotton or anything.

Adam: Right.

Jane: And I think that does happen. I think that is addressed in diamonds even, like blood diamonds. That is a huge one right now, and everybody is saying don't

support that. And also, GAP was boycotted for a while for the sweatshops and Nike. In the nineties it was huge, Nike's use of sweatshops, and they've amended those situations. But I think, because of the use of that exact line of reasoning in the past and the results that people have seen, I think they're just moving it along.

Me: People are over that argument? Is that what you're saying?

Jane: Well, no, I just think they're moving it to new things such as drugs and drug money supporting terrorism. Terrorism is a huge scare right now. It's a big scare tactic, especially since 9/11.

Molly: I think the diamond thing and things like that are legitimate, but this is taking it to the extreme and kind of taking advantage of those kinds of emotions.

Adam: Yeah

Jane: I think the terrorism emotion is played out as well.

Molly: Yeah, that is kind of a backhanded use of that.

Dave: Also, terrorism is along the same line as saying that things are more green or sustainable. It's just another popular catch phrase of the time that is supposed to invoke some sort of set out emotion. Any time you hear the word terrorism, it's immediately bad whatever it's associated with.

Adam: Well, I think you should have negative connotations associated with terrorism.

Dave: Well yeah, of course.

Molly: But at the same time, the real definition is just political change invoked through fear. That is what the U.S. is, so ... Yeah, let's not go there.

[Conclusion about Montana Meth Project stats and success]

*Friday Transcript: April 18, 2008*

[Watched Montana Meth Project PSAs]

Me: First reactions? What did you think?

Beth: I'm emotionally overwhelmed now.

Kris: Me too. I feel like I could cry – Probably because I'm a mom, though. I still think that they're missing something.

Me: Do you know what it's missing?

Kris: I don't know. More realistic? If there was a series of commercials that had a group of friends and had each of their lives on meth or something. I don't know. It just seems like something is missing to reach the people who are doing it. But I do think some of them were a lot more affective than others.

Sally: I thought the ones where it was like, 'Only once,' when you saw the chronology where they start out like you or me and then they progress toward the meth mouth and the horrible physical and mental attributes of using meth. I thought those were the most affective ones.

Beth: So many of them were – It felt like they were geared toward shock value. They were so in-your-face and violent and confrontational. The ones where there actually was a confrontation between yourself and yourself on meth kind of thing – It was a little bit overwhelming and I think, maybe what was said earlier, was that it lacked a realistic component, which is the ones you were just talking about sort of seemed to have the chronology kind of added that. But the ones that were – Especially that last one where he just has a bat and is swinging it around, I don't really connect that with drugs. That was just violence. At the end it says meth, and then you know that commercial was for meth. But I didn't know. I thought maybe the kid just needed some therapy.

Kris: Maybe if it showed him calling up a bunch of people and he couldn't get a hold of people to get a hook up or something and then him being like, 'Ahh.' Then flipping out. Instead of saying, 'Who are you?' Maybe if they really wanted to show that he was hallucinating – I think that maybe when people are hallucinating they might be like, 'Demon bitch,' or something more like you're hallucinating. They would probably be seeing something. I don't know.

Taylor: I had a real problem with the two ads that suggested that death was better than meth addiction. I just thought that was going too far. It kind of gives the message that, 'Oh, if you're already on drugs, there's no hope for you. You might as well die.' And I just think that is not the right message to send to people. There is hope after addiction.

Kris: That's a good point.

Ed: With that, I was thinking, what else could she have wished for instead of this gruesome death? What about the intervention? A lot of the ads lack context. I know it's 30 seconds, but you have no idea who these people are. They look kind of comfortable, but ...

Sally: Maybe saying, 'Oh I wish I hadn't gone to the party,' instead of 'Oh, I wish I had gotten killed in a car accident.' That was pretty extreme.

Taylor: Right, like, 'I wish I had enough confidence to say no.'

Kris: Or, 'I wish my old basketball teammate would've told me there was something better.' That's what I thought too. They were lacking that there is resources for help and I think there should have been maybe a positive one where the parent explains the differences of drugs to their child and they go to the party and everyone is doing meth and they're like, 'I'm not going to,' or something. Something that shows that when there is intervention, or even one that shows the poor family and the parents are methed out or whatever and there is no food for the kids to eat and the little brother steals meth and goes to school to sell it and the counselor comes in and says, 'We can help you.' Or a foster care situation because that is where I think a lot of the kids get weaker and more influenced. A foster kid or something is going to do it and someone intervenes and that is what I imagine.

Taylor: I just also noticed that all the kids were white. Were there any minorities in any of the commercials?

Kris: Yeah, when the group of friends, I saw some. But when I wrote down my reactions I pictured them as white or more white. I'm sure there are other people, but I associate it with trailer park people. But then also rich white kids who steal the money from their parents or something or call: 'My parents think I'm staying the night at your house' and that kind of stuff.

Taylor: Yeah the first girl was the only girl that I thought looked not lower-middle class.

Nathan: This is also Montana.

Kris: Oh, it's in Montana?

Me: Well, the original campaign is the Montana Meth Project, but they are going to a national platform. Once they go national that is certainly something to consider. But you're right, it did start in Montana and most of the ads were from that original campaign.

Nathan: I lived in Bozeman for a year and a half and there was just white. The principal was black and that was like the only person in town. So I can see the campaign, if they were made in Montana, people who live there. It's kind of weird actually.

Me: Specific things from the ads that would either attract you to the ad or turn you off from the ad?

Kris: I was turned on by the girl who slept with the guy and the boyfriend was outside. And then by the one when they were like, 'We have 50 bucks.' That seemed realistic because it showed the other guys, just regular people. I was turned on by that. It was really gross, but it got into me. I thought it would be more affective if the guy was like, 'Hey, aren't you so-and-so's daughter?' and then have them say, 'What about the other one?' I think that would be really – I mean, it can be offensive, but.

Patrick: I think anything having to do with family, with me, just – because it's a big problem if it infiltrates your family. You see that and you feel really sympathetic towards it.

Beth: The thing about the family ones, like the use of the mother image, that is a potent image, and the siblings. That stuff could be very effective and I think it was for me, but that only kind of works if you have a good family situation to begin with. There are so many people who don't, and that's applying to a very specific group I think. Which all of these were trying to hit different – and obviously the sex ones are going to affect the women because they're seeing other girls potentially their age or something. They're definitely for specific groups, but the family thing only works in certain situations.

Kris: I thought the sex ones would reach dads. I thought it was good for dads. They want to protect their girl. That's why I thought that if he was like, 'Oh are you Mr. Smith's daughter?' His friend? And then the dads being like, 'My girls aren't doing this crap.'

Sally: I thought it was really effective that they all looked like us. In the beginning they looked just like normal people doing everyday things, like going to a party. We all do that. And then how fast it can, like one time can totally turn your life upside down. I thought, in all of them, that was a continuing theme that was effective.

Taylor: I guess I don't know that much about meth, but I feel like you're not going to become that person after one time. I know that what they're trying to say is that you think it'll be one time, but it won't be one time. I guess I feel like the problem with kids using drugs is that they see people using them who look totally normal, who've been using for a while. I think that's the hard part that the commercials don't hit at because you don't become that over night. And when you see people who you think are cool and are using it and they're fine, what would make you not want to do it?

Patrick: I think, going along with that, that one had where it shows the chronology and then the little girl used it after because, I don't know if it was her mom or big sister or whatever. It's like a norm that implements itself.



Kris: Yeah, I liked that one.

Sally: That one scared me. I have a little sister and I was like, 'Oh my gosh.'

Me: Any other comments?

Nathan: I didn't really like the ones with the meth gangs, all the kids going in and robbing the place. Or the one with all of the meth heads making that one clean cut kid smoke with them. I was like, 'Why would that kid even go there?'

Me: Which one was that?

[group specifies Junkie Den ad]

Me: So you didn't think that one was very effective?

Nathan: Yeah. I liked those two that you talked about, the two sex ones. I thought those were the best and the ones where they just focused on one person. I thought those were better than just going back to the shock value, like a bunch of kids going and robbing. It's just more violent than anything else.

Kris: I thought the beginning of the one when she was driving in the car or when she wished that she had broken her neck – I thought it started out pretty good, but then when it showed her dead in the car or whatever, then it was like, 'Okay.' How she said. Once you get on it, you might as well be dead kind of thing. But I thought the beginning had a good approach. I definitely thought the very first one – I liked that a lot, when she was in the shower. I thought that was a good one. And maybe if they showed one of a girl who had been on it, like the chronological one, but have her trying to cover up, put make up on, and still try to look cute and then still have it so that you can kind of tell a little bit so they still kind of look the same and not be so dramatic.

Me: My thesis is going to be a lot about theory and message design theories. The first theory that I'm looking at is called emotional appeals. We're talking about fear tactics and guilt trips. We've kind of touched on it a little bit, but I was wondering where you saw those, how it affected you personally? Try not to extrapolate onto other people so much, but did those things catch you? Did any of the ads evoke those kinds of emotions in you?

Taylor: I thought the one where the kid was banging at the door at his parent's house, that one really got to me just because that one did seem very realistic. The parents just don't know what to do anymore because their kids are out of control. The mom just being so distraught and the dad saying like, 'No, we can't help him anymore.'

Kris: That was good. That was a good one.

Patrick: I think the ones with the chronology, like we said, it connects with you more. If you just look at the shock value ones, it's like, 'Woah, that's intense.' And then probably later on down the line it's like, 'Out of sight, out of mind.' But the other ones you'd probably connect with more and it'd have a more potent effect on me.

Ed: The one I liked was the series with the juxtaposition of the positive speaking – The ones like with one with the kids dropping their friend off in front of the hospital. I thought those seemed very subtle. They didn't seem like, 'Oh this is a drug ad,' in-your-face, here's the direct world. Except when the kid was kicking his mom in the head. That seemed – getting into that violent stage again. But just the very calm message of here are the two different realities going together at the same time. I didn't know, is the person speaking before this ever happened or is this them saying, 'Oh no, it's not really happening to me. Everything is okay.' So I thought that was just a very interesting comparison that evokes that question.

Me: Did that catch your attention? Did that appeal to you?

Ed: Yeah, I thought it did.

Beth: The thing about – just to make it general again – The thing about the violence and the disturbing images and all of the shock value stuff that we're talking about is that it – A lot of drug ads that I remember from when I was younger like the egg and your brain on drugs and that kind of thing – A lot of them were really cheesy. And all that makes you do is just laugh at the situation. You're laughing at drug use essentially. That's really, I think, ultimately damaging and a really negative thing. But no one is going to look at any of these ads, I think, and laugh about it. There are some comparisons that are a little bit laughable, maybe. Like the car crash versus the drugs, which we talked about. I think, maybe a positive of the violence that is added to these is that it presents a starker version of reality that, maybe, previous drug campaigns that I've experienced in the past lack. And those have the cheesy factor. I'm kind of alternating the bashing of the violence and non-bashing. But that is maybe just a positive element that comes with a lot of what they try and do in these.

Me: Any other comments?

Sally: I didn't really feel guilty by any of them, but I think if I had ever used meth, even one time like they kept saying, 'Only once,' or if I knew a meth user very personally, I would feel guilty that I wasn't doing more to help them or that I had done it in the first place. I would maybe want to go out there and volunteer for some rehab clinic or something. I think it did a good job of that, but I

personally don't have experience in that so it didn't really affect me in that way. But I could see how it would.

Me: What I was referencing with the guilt appeal, specifically, would be the one that popped to my mind originally with the little sister. That she follows the lead of her older sister. Tell me if you don't agree with this, but is that a guilt appeal? Is that appealing to your sense of guilt as an older sister? Or would you say that it's appealing to some other sense of emotion?

Sally: I guess if I had set a poor example for my sister, I would definitely – Yes, in general, I think it is a guilt thing. I guess I didn't really think of it like that. It was more of an emotional – because I was like oh my gosh, you know, what if that...

Me: Just an emotional tie...

Sally: Exactly. What if that happened to my little sister, you know, what if I had gone on that path, but I didn't, so it didn't really strike me as guilt, but I can see how it would.

Kris: I thought that one, and the one when the guys are robbing the house and then he looked at his little sister, and then also the 50 bucks one. I thought those all kind of seemed like they had a guilt factor.

Me: So, the second theory that I'm working with is called sensation seeking. This one is kind of interesting. What it says is that there's this sort of scale of need for sensation, that everyone kind of falls somewhere on this scale. You can be a low sensation seeker or a high sensation seeker or somewhere in the middle, and if you're a low sensation seeker you like routine, you like things to kind of be the same, you don't want a lot of things out of the box, hang out with the same people a lot. High sensation seekers are looking for adventure, spontaneity, something new all the time. It makes a difference when you're talking about how you're going to attract the attention of a low sensation seeker or a high sensation seeker in an advertisement like this. I have a sensation-seeking test for everyone to find out what kind of sensation seeker they are. Now, certainly, people who are high sensation seekers are not necessarily drug users. They could be finding their new sensation through adventure sports and all kinds of other activities, travel. But, drug users do tend to be high sensation seekers. So it doesn't go both ways, but that kind of relates to this project for that reason.

Me: If you're comfortable, do you want to share what kind of sensation seeker you are?

Kris: Average

Me: Mid-average?

Kris: 47

Kris: Low average, then.

Sally: I'm low average, too.

Beth: Yeah, really low average.

Me: Average, low average.

Sally: 42.1

Beth: Yeah, exactly.

Patrick: Yeah. Same here. 42.1

Taylor: Oh, I'm just low.

Nathan: Yeah, I'm low as well.

Ed: I think I'm kind of high, actually. But there's some things really that are more interesting to me that I'll go seek that attention, I guess, that make a difference. It's not everything and I'm just... you know, on...

Beth: Skydiving, drugs, sure, yeah whatever, same thing.

Me: Certainly doesn't – It's not saying anything about you or drug habits. I don't mean to imply...

Ed: Oh, no. Sure.

Me: What's interesting – I guess, as a higher sensation seeker, do you find certain things in the ads that appeal to you in – what specifically in the ads appeal to you, the fast action, was it the content? – I mean, what kinds of things in the ads do you think caught your attention?

Ed: I guess I come in with that idea of 'oh, this is going to be a drug ad.' You see that on TV, and you have all these different ideas where there is the violence. There is just the same sort of thing. There is always sort of the cycle, there is always the family torn apart, there is always the girl that is prostituting herself or something. It's just I guess...

Me: Are they convincing?

Ed: Umm, a little bit. I don't think anyone really has that whole thing of how to create a drug ad figured out yet. There is always these problems where it's so easy still to just go 'Oh no. Not really. Doesn't feel right.' Which is not to say necessarily that there is a correct way to do it.

Me: For the low sensation seekers in the room, did the ads appeal to you on the whole? Or anything specific convince you?

Taylor: I guess I would say no, especially now that a couple minutes have passed. And now I just sort of feel like 'oh, yeah.' I don't know. I would probably walk away from this not really feeling all that convinced that what they were saying was real, not that what they were saying is [not] emotional, because it certainly is, but it's just like, 'Well, do now I think that using meth leads to those things?' I'm not really fully convinced.

Nathan: The ones that I remember, or that come to the top of my mind, are the \$50 one, that just hits you like, 'Oh my god, that is crazy,' and the one we were talking about earlier where the girl is just dropped off in front of the hospital with her talking about how much her friends care about her over it. And they don't have to bring in meth at all. It's just like 'Wow, that's...' It's actually pretty clever and subtle, and that one was probably, I thought, the best crafted one out of it.

Ed: I was thinking though, with the \$50 one, as compared to the one where the boyfriend is prostituting her, that one seemed a little bit more realistic to me. That somehow there is this friendship element, this familiarity...

Me: Which one was more realistic?

Ed: The one with the boyfriend prostituting. Because that seemed like there is this connection. Not just going up to complete strangers, but somehow these people that you love are still involved with it. That seemed a little bit more real and intense to me.

Kris: I disagree, because when I was in high school, we would go up to complete strangers, men, be dressed all cute because we were going to be going out and ask them to buy us alcohol. We weren't asking them for sex and not even to buy cigarettes, but we were confident. 'They're going to do it because we look cute, and our boobs are showing, and they're men.' And then with the other one – I did think that one was an effective one too, but I just thought the bringing, showing – I guess the most effective [part] of the \$50 one was showing the other men on the other side. I don't know. I just thought that was really powerful. And then, to go off subject really quick, I thought the one when it was a party one, and then it was like, 'Here is your dealer, here is your drug user friends, and here is your baby' – I guess from each one I would pick things and be like 'Oh, they could have carried off of this,' like the baby one. I thought they could have

showed the baby, like have her put the baby in a playpen and use meth and show two days go by that you didn't notice was really going on and show the baby crying, old milk bottle and big diaper, poop everywhere, something like that. But I guess I pick from each one a thing that...

Sally: I really liked the continuity. I guess that is my low thrill seeking or whatever. But I think that is why I liked the first few ones a lot, like the one with the little sister, like 'I'm only going to do it once,' and then the one where it kept saying 'I'm not going to be like that guy, I'm not going to be like that guy.' I really liked that, and especially in the ones like with the sister. I think there was one or two other ones. They kept repeating 'meth,' so it got really, right in your head, and you knew exactly what they were talking about from the get go. I think that is why I didn't necessarily like the one where they dropped her off at the hospital or where the boyfriend was prostituting her because you didn't really know exactly what they were talking about. Like, 'Is she using heroine? Is she using meth?' And then at the end it's like, 'Oh, it's meth. Okay, I get it.' But, I mean there is just so many drugs that it could have been, and I don't think it was as effective.

Me: Any other comments?

Kris: I guess being the low thrill seeker, I like the shower one. She's like "No, don't do it," and if someone is like "Don't do it," I'm not going to do it. I'm not the type to go skydive because if I know someone has died skydiving, I don't want to do it. You know, you can die walking down the street or whatever, but I think it was powerful. I guess I'm not a thrill seeker.

Me: I have a couple of their print ads on here that I thought we could look at and see if you thought they were more effective or less effective than the television ones. So here's one: "No one thinks they'll try to tear off their own skin. Meth will change that."

Ed: Nope.

Kris: Hmm...

Me: Not effective?

Ed: I'm changing the page. Or it just doesn't work. I continue to read something else.

Kris: Yeah it's gross. What does it mean? They're cutting themselves?

Beth: Yeah, what does it have to do with drug abuse?

Kris: Like committing suicide? Or... what?

Beth: I don't know enough about it to...

Me: I think it's referencing the picking and the...

Sally: Scratching.

Kris: Oh, they scratch scabs, is that...?

Me: But if it's confusing that is something that is important, right?

Beth: Because I didn't know.

Kris: Yeah. I don't really think that one's really...

Ed: Yeah.

Kris: It's like, 'What is it trying to tell me?'

Taylor: I think the image is more powerful than – The sentence doesn't do much for me. I guess because it's like the razors. Well, that is not really trying to tear off your own skin, but then I don't know. Blood is always a little gross to me. It's very dark and there is a – I don't know what that is, that round thing in the darker pool of blood.

Kris: And what's that other silver thing?

Taylor: That's the razor.

Unidentified Girl: No I think the razor...

Ed: That's the drain.

Kris: Oh, it's a bathtub. I didn't even see that.

Beth: Oh yeah. That's hard to tell.

Sally: I think the good thing about it, though, is that they take something that is – They did this in the video ads too. Take something that is normal and be like, "Oh, that'll change if you use meth." You know, like the kids that are at the party and the guy is convulsing on the floor. 'This isn't normal, but when you use meth it is.' They're kind of doing that in this too, and I think that is effective. Maybe if the picture was a little more clear, had someone scratching themselves or something.

Me: “My mom knows I’d never hurt her. Then she got in the way.” Now we did have a direct counterpart to this one so I’m wondering if this one is more or less effective than it’s counterpart?

Taylor: I think less for me. I feel like I’m very sensitive to ads being very gimmicky, and I feel like when I look at this I’m just like “Oh, a beat-up mother. Of course that is what they would show me to make me feel bad.” So it just, I don’t know. I doesn’t really touch me as much.

Beth: I think, for me, this one is a little more effective than the very last one that we saw with the baseball bat just because, for me, like I said earlier, that didn’t directly relate to drugs in my mind, or I didn’t see. And then this is pretty clear she got in the way of, and the word meth is right below it, the drug use, or something to do with this person and the acquisition of the drugs that they needed, I guess. So at least that is a little more clear to me here than it was previously. There’s another mother one too though.

Me: There was one where he’s digging through the purse, and that one had this same character in it. So, not the one with the bat.

Kris: Yeah. That’s the one I was thinking of.

Ed: Oh, it’s the same?

Kris: That’s the one I thought...

Me: How does this one – Do you remember the one where he...?

Kris: He was digging in the purse and she was like “What are you doing? What are you doing? No no no!” and she grabbed his foot. I thought that is what it was. At first when it said that I was like, “Okay,” and then when it said, “then she got in the way,” I was thinking, “then she wouldn’t give me money” or “she took my access bank card away” because I remembered, I think I knew that it was that one. I thought that would be more like, ‘Then she got in the way,’ but I would either cut them off from their money or send him away to a...

Me: Is this print ad more effective for you or the television version of it?

Beth: I think the TV was.

Kris: I think the TV one.

Beth: The struggle there. Witnessing the struggle between the mom and her child kind of thing.



Sally: Watching her beg him to not go and to get help.

Beth: Trying to be the mother nurturer kind of thing.

Patrick: I agree, but for a print ad, if you just see this somewhere and you're just reading along, it would be pretty potent. Just that image alone, pretty powerful already.

Taylor: I like the TV ad more too because I thought it would be more realistic that he kind of kicked her out of the way. But this one looks like he stopped and beat her, and I just feel like that is a lot more extreme and I don't know if that is what really happened.

Beth: Yeah. Like, if she were by a door outside or something, then it would have been more of a correlation. She's just hanging out in the kitchen right now.

Me: There is one more I have here. "You'll never worry about lipstick on your teeth again."

Sally: That is so gross.

Kris: That is a great one.

Me: You like that one?

Kris: Uh-huh. I look at people's teeth all the time, and if they have messed up teeth, I think they use drugs. All the time I look at that.

Beth: That's so gross.

Me: Anyone else?

Ed: Yeah, I just think that it's more gross than anything, really.

Sally: I think it's effective, but I can't even really look at it. It grosses me out.

Beth: I think it would fit in a Cosmo or something where there is this appeal to vanity throughout the entire magazine and then, you know, like "This is the non-stick lipstick" or whatever. That kind of stuff being advertised along side with this sort of thing.

Me: Is this convincing?

Kris: Uh-huh. For me.

Patrick: I guess so, yeah.

Kris: I will never...

Nathan: Don't they run it really big?

Me: Yeah. Billboards.

Nathan: I think I've seen that. It's such a gnarly billboard if you're just going along.

Sally: You're just driving down the road?

Nathan: Yeah

Kris: I don't know. I'm around a lot of kids and I always teach them, 'Brush your teeth, it's really important. You can get all this stuff if you don't brush your teeth, and your smile.' That is a really good one. Just to show how important your teeth are.

Me: Does anyone think it's not effective for them?

Ed: I guess, as a man, it's not really something I think about.

Patrick: Yeah that is what I was going to say. More geared towards women, but I mean, definitely still in your face.

Me: So if there was a similar one with a man...?

Patrick: Umm...

Ed: No

Patrick: Not so much. I mean, because it's going back to the whole lipstick thing and vanity like she said. It's not as important for my lips to be all nice.

Kris: I would think for a man one, in order for it to be up-close, it would have to be of him shaving and having the mouth open...

Patrick: Yeah. That would be good.

Kris: ...and then showing the teeth. But meth users probably don't shave. So, I don't know.

Me: Well, since you said that, I'm going to... hang on just a second. [Show comparable ad with male]

Kris: So is meth mostly used among teenagers and stuff? Is that just what is rising?

Me: I think that a lot of drug ads appeal to teenagers.

Sally: Just the scabs are so gross.

Me: For the guys, if this were the counterpart to that other ad, would this appeal to you?

Patrick: Not so much.

Ed: Yeah, no. What I originally thought with the very first ad, the girl in the shower, I was thinking 'Oh they're going to a party. They'll probably just drink a little bit or something. That is what seems normal. Maybe they'll smoke weed a little bit, but meth?' I guess that is that whole perception of this gateway drug. Is smoking weed going to lead to meth? I don't necessarily think so. I don't think it gets that message there; that someone is going to use meth to try and hookup.

Nathan: On the one with the girl, I think the teeth were just more effective. It's just so gross. So I kind of actually like the other one more.

Kris: I'd like to see an intervention drug ad.

Me: What do you mean?

Kris: I don't know, just...

Me: Like showing an intervention?

Kris: Just to show the kids that just because you're on drugs – I mean if there is a kid who is already on drugs and you just show him these ads, "Stop, blah, blah," they're already hooked. They need something else. Just watching an image isn't going to make them stop.

Me: The last theory that I have is called the narrative paradigm. This guy named Walter Fisher came up with this idea that we all experience life through narratives, through stories. It's just a sequence of stories, and that is kind of how we understand each other as well. So in order for you to accept a story as real or believable, it would have to satisfy these two things: narrative probability and narrative fidelity. Basically, does the story contradict itself? Does it make sense? And does it seem truthful to you based on your prior assumptions? So as you watch it, do you think that those actors in the ad are making realistic choices according to – Maybe if you were in that situation and inclined to do that, would you make similar choices? So, is it believable in that sense as well? Is it truthful? So, I just wanted to talk about the Montana Meth ads in that, and then

we can also look at some other ad campaigns that you've probably seen before and talk about that in them as well. But any first comments on that? As far as believability?

Sally: Is meth really that easily accessible and widespread? Because they're smoking meth in their backyard. Really?

Kris: Yes, yes.

Taylor: You can make it at home, right?

Ed: Mm-hmm.

Sally: I've never experience that so it didn't seem realistic to me.

Kris: My nephew – he is white, he is all white – but he goes to Kennedy Middle School and he, thank goodness that he was brought up religiously, because he says that people in middle school come up to him and ask him, try to sell him drugs. When I was in middle school we would never know where... I didn't know about meth when I was in middle school, or when I was in high school. And so, to hear that, I was like "Oh my gosh." I felt like all I want to do is go into the schools and make sure kids don't do drugs. Because I live here, I want to raise my kids here, it's more personal to me.

Me: So you believe that ad? But...

Sally: I don't.

Me: ...you don't. And that is fine.

Sally: I mean, maybe I do, and maybe it's because I'm – I don't know. I'm from a really small town, obviously, and I maybe I go to different parties in Eugene or something. But I've never been exposed to that, so I just didn't really feel it was something – I mean they make it seem like it's like you walk into a party at any college campus and it's there, everybody's there doing meth. It's a little hard for me to believe.

Kris: Because I still have never seen it, and I went, 'Yeah, that's true.'

Sally: I don't seek it out or anything, obviously.

Kris: I'll see people smoking blunts or whatever at parties or something, but I would never see someone snorting or shooting up, because I wouldn't go there either.

Sally: Well, even cocaine I feel like is more widely – if these had been coke ads or something – it's more widespread. But meth, I've never even – I don't hear people talk about it even.

Kris: See because I think we wouldn't hang out with – I associate meth with lower income or grungy type stuff. Coke is kind of more, I would say, upscale or whatever. Like in our peer group, people would do more coke with weed or something like that at a party than I think meth. I don't know.

Me: So, other people, comments on whether you believe the ads?

Taylor: The one where the kids break into someone's house; I didn't believe that as much as the other ones because I feel like it's easier to steal from someone you know like your parents or your siblings or whatever. So, I guess I thought that was more believable, and it was sadder because you are hurting the people that you love the most and love you the most.

Kris: I thought the same thing, but I thought if the kids would have been doing it while their parents were at work, and then the parents come home with the family, and they walk in and seeing that their house had been destroyed, and they knew it was their son or something like that. But I thought they were pretty believable. But I don't really know what kind of stuff happens. I don't know.

Nathan: I thought the most believable ones were just when it was the guy just in the room by himself, just kind of saying, "Oh, not even once." And he was in there, shooting up by himself. There was one where he was – I think there was only one with actual shooting up, right?

Sally: I think there were two.

Me: I think were two. There is the one where, "I'm not going to be like that guy," where he goes through that, says "I'm not going to be like that guy" and he continues through...

Nathan: And then at the end is it just him?

Me: At the end it was another girl saying, "I'm not going to be like that guy."

Sally: It was the girl from the sister ad, right? Because they were – oh, it looked like her.

Me: I don't think so, it's actually – what I think is funny is, in that specific one, it's the girl that played the younger sister in the O.C. Which I think – well, I don't know if you noticed that or if that...

Sally: I didn't.

Me: ...But the other one is – what was that other one?

Kris: When they were shooting up?

Me: I know it's – at the end it's just him and he's kind of...

Nathan: Yeah, that one – yeah.

Me: He's just kind of shaking and it was similar to – oh that was the one with the "I'd rather get beat up." Right?

Kris: Oh.

Nathan: Ok, I think the...

Me: Do you want me to play it again?

Nathan: No, it's fine. I just think the ones where it's just one person, following them more...

Kris: Yeah.

Patrick: Yeah, I remember.

Nathan: Those ones were a little more believable.

Sally: I really liked those ones.

Kris: I agree. Because it's kind of like the series of storytelling and getting you involved. I don't know.

Patrick: Even though the party ones are not probable, there might be that one choice occasion where you come across it. And even though you'll be like, "I'll never come across this," you might, you never know. I don't know about anybody else, but I've probably just been offered once, and it was random, like "No." A red flag went up.

Kris: You were offered meth?

Patrick: Yeah, I was offered meth. And I was like, "No," and I just kind of went along with it.

Me: We can look at some other ads. So here are a couple other meth ads.

[eyebrow ad]

Me: I don't know if you could see from the picture, but the other eyebrow was bloody, and had been plucked to the point of being bloody.

Patrick: I couldn't see that.

Beth: Couldn't see it.

Me: You couldn't see that?

Patrick: Maybe because it was on a smaller screen, but...

Me: Well, I...

Ed: Even if it was bigger, I don't know...

Patrick: Yeah. It was kind of quick too. When you saw that other eyebrow – it wasn't that noticeable.

Ed: Yeah, there's no personal draw of anything really, that someone would value.

Me: It's not convincing to anybody?

Ed: Yeah, there's no context, anything. No narration, like what you were saying.

Taylor: The only thing that I think is good about it is that the first time you see it, you just keep watching because you don't know what's going on. But then after that, if I saw that on TV I'd just change the channel.

Patrick: Yeah.

Beth: I don't – that's – where do you really get a story like that, and how does that convince me to do or not do anything?

Me: Is it a story?

Beth: Meuh...

Ed: No?

Sally: Yeah, I didn't really get it.

[Engine ad]

Kris: (Laughter) I like that one.

Me: You like that one?

Kris: Yeah.

Me: Did that convince you?

Beth: That had the cheese factor.

Ed: Yeah, that was cheese factor, especially...

Kris: It was cheesy, but I liked how it showed the rush. I thought that was good, because I always think of meth like it must be a rush or a sensation or something, but you can't really see it. I see the cheesy part, but I guess I...

Sally: I don't think it'd be very effective at our demographic just because we – I mean all of us pretty much laughed and were like "Ok, whatever guy..."

Patrick: It's kind of like the egg line, like "your brain on drugs."

Taylor: Analogies don't work.

Ed: Was I the only one who knew who he was, though?

Sally: What? I have no idea.

Ed: He is like a B-list heavy metal star. Is it Henry Rollins?

Beth: Yeah. Henry Rollins.

Ed: Yeah. Which is just like, "Come on," the mid-eighties or something? Shut up. No.

Beth: And also, it was a little bit silly, but even the tagline: "You can't rebuild a heart." I kind of went, "Well, yeah you can, with advancements in modern technology." You know? That was my response initially.

Kris: Yeah, it seems outdated. Like back with the "your brain on drugs."

Sally: Like when we were kids.

Taylor: Well that one is more geared towards – Well, it was sort of confusing because it's telling the person who is seeing the ad what using meth is like, but then at the end it says, "Teach your kids." So was that an ad for parents or the ad for



kids? Or do they think the parents [are] using meth? Probably not. It seemed a little mixed.

Ed: Yeah, I guess, then you're like, "Are the parents Henry Rollins fans? Are the kids these heavy metal fans?" Who is the person?

Kris: Probably the parents if they're using him.

Taylor: I know, because most young people don't recognize him.

[Blizzard ad]

Kris: It should have said the blizzard was 10 miles from their house or something. I don't know.

Sally: Well, people who aren't high on meth get lost in blizzards too and die. I don't know. I don't think that was very good.

Kris: I liked that you could hear his voice and stuff, and how like, "Whoa, you're not there." I thought that was effective.

Patrick: I thought it was pretty good because it's an actual 911 call, and it's something real, that is not an actor.

Kris: And he couldn't say where he was at to get help.

Ed: Yeah, that's the sort of thing, the 911 call, that I feel like I've seen in many other types of ads, or drunk driving prevention or something. You always get some sort of thing like that.

Taylor: Because urgency seems real.

Ed: I guess, yeah, it feels like the staple of creating an ad. It just is there.

Taylor: But I agree that it was a little confusing to me because I couldn't hear what he was saying. So I didn't get as much of an impression that he couldn't say where he was because he was on meth. It sort of seemed like, "Well maybe he's just..."

Kris: freezing and couldn't talk?

Taylor: Yeah, exactly. Because they're already in a really bad situation, and maybe he was a little bit injured, about to die. I don't know.

Nathan: It was all right, but you couldn't really tell what was going on.

Me: If this came on television, would you stay and watch it? Would you change the channel?

Girl 1: I'd watch it.

Girl 2: I'd watch it.

Ed: Well, now I'm feeling very sad, like, "Wow, that's a real person." But I'm not necessarily thinking, "Oh, meth is bad. I don't want to take meth." I have not made that connection at all.

Girl 2: I agree.

Sally: Yeah.

Ed: It's just kind of really been a downer.

Me: Here's one other 911 call, just for comparison. See if it's any different.

Ed: Yeah, that's the same thing where I feel just really like, "Wow, shit." More so than any other ad, but I haven't connected it to meth. I know it's there, but...

Sally: It's just very sad and very urgent. You're like, "Oh my gosh, they have to be in an ambulance. He's probably going to die," exactly. But I don't really see "Oh my gosh, he used meth, so that's why he has to die."

Ed: Yeah.

Kris: I did. I thought that was effective.

Taylor: I thought the link to meth was a lot clearer in this one...

Sally: Yeah, I agree.

Taylor: ...but I felt less emotional about this one.

Patrick: Yeah

Sally: I think it was the picture in the last one.

Taylor: Yeah, the picture. Like, "Oh, they were a happy couple."

Sally: They looked totally normal in that couple.

Kris: Sounded like a real 911 call.

Taylor: And the dispatcher in the last one was like, “I want so badly to help you.” I thought that was really gripping.

Me: The next couple are all anti-marijuana ads. So you may have seen some of them before, but these are the ones that I think are on TV a lot more often, and so a lot more people are seeing these.

[Pony ad]

Ed: (Scoffs) Ok, that is so stupid.

Beth: Analogy. I think what you said before about analogy. They tend to not affect me, really.

Sally: I think the problem with anti-marijuana ads is that the majority of us have smoked weed, and it’s really not that bad.

Beth: It’s not that bad!

Ed: I agree.

Sally: We’re not going to go get our knees blown out by ponies in fields, you know?

Ed: Yeah, that it’s just a bad idea of that sort?

Kris: I would disagree that it’s not that bad, but when you smoke weed you definitely don’t go doing that kind of stuff. I think weed affects you more in motivational ways and memory and that kind of stuff, not...

Sally: I agree, but I don’t think it’s – I think getting completely wasted is way worse than getting high, personally.

Kris: Oh yeah, I’d definitely rather have someone – if they were going to do a drug I’d say, “Smoke weed.” Over even taking prescription medicines.

Taylor: Yeah, there’s still debate over whether or not it’s addictive. While, with the other drugs it’s pretty clear, like with the meth.

Beth: Well, and medicinal benefits and stuff actually are sort of proven...

Sally: No, it’s totally legitimate, yeah.

Ed: Yeah.

Beth: And there is nothing beneficial about methamphetamine, cocaine, or heroine. You know? And any of these sort of things...

Ed: They thought heroine was...

Kris: Well, have you taken any of those any other drugs though?

Beth: Well – let me finish my thought. I guess that seeing some of these kind of ads, it's sort of like, "Well, I kind of wish you'd have spent your money maybe on something like meth, or something that is actually causing tons of physical damage to tons and tons of people," I guess is sort of my thought. And that is as a college student surrounded by a lot of marijuana in Eugene, Oregon, that kind of thing, and surrounded by less of these more potent, powerful, damaging drugs.

Sally: What sort of demographic is this targeted at?

Taylor: Middle school...

Sally: Middle school? Yeah.

Me: That is what you would interpret?

Sally: That is what it seems like. But I'm just thinking of middle school boys who might think that that is absolutely hilarious, and they want to run out into a field and pull some horse's tail and see what happens.

Taylor: Even if they weren't...[high]

Kris: Yeah, but when we were in middle...

Ed: Or just watch Jackass do it.

Sally: Exactly. Send it in or something.

Kris: It seems it'd be more like throwing rocks at a window or something. That seems like what they would do. You know how she says – I don't remember what she said. When I think of little boys and what they're going to do when they're high on weed – either lie in a field or build a skate ramp or something, not...

Taylor: Well this was an analogy, right?

Beth: Well, this was sort of unclear, actually, I think is what we're finding out, as to whether this is something you would do if you smoked or this is *like* smoking.

Ed: That's what I thought it was, *like* smoking. That is what I instantly it was.

Kris: Oh, ok.

Beth: Yeah. But the fact that we're confused is significant.

Taylor: Yeah.

Kris: Yeah, good point.

Me: All right, here's another one.

[Cocoon]

Taylor: I am not feeling that one either. The cocoon was just so weird, like the physical cocoon. I don't know. I guess we were saying analogies are bad, but then this one was too literal.

Ed: Yeah, half the time I didn't even know what he was doing until the end. And like, "Oh, weed, you're going to live with your parents or something?" I don't know, I know plenty of people that aren't, so...

Beth: Well it was literal, but that is not literally...

Taylor: Yeah. Not literal like that's not really what happens.

Beth: I've never seen anyone cocooned as a result of...

Ed: Now you have.

Beth: Now I have.

Me: So, I guess, going back to, "Is it convincing, is it believable?" Would it convince you?

Kris: No, because he still had a house, still looked good, had clothes. Gained a few pounds, so he was eating well. Compared to the meth ones where you're like "Oh, shit. I do not want to live on the streets and look all nasty and have no teeth." You could still live a normal life.

Ed: Yeah, looking to me, he was kind of just hanging around in his room. That doesn't seem that bad. Probably listen to some music...

Taylor: Well I think it's because he's unproductive. He's unemployed...

Sally: What, he worked at Burger King?

Kris: That is what it's supposed to say. Unproductive, not motivated...

Ed: Those seem like normal things. Sometimes you need a day off.

Beth: You do.

Kris: But compared to the one meth one when all the kids were in the room, and they sit around in there. The meth one was believable because there was actual physical effects that you could see. In that one, that is just like success.

Taylor: Well it's like mediocrity. I think that's the most...

Kris: Lack of success. Success. Like lack of success.

Taylor: I just think they can't make those kinds of claims with marijuana, so the most they have to do is, "You'll live a mediocre life, at best," and that is all they're trying to say. And I think to a lot of people it's like, "What's so bad about average?" Lots of people are like that and they're not smoking marijuana, and vice versa.

Ed: Now I'm just thinking of The Big Lebowski; just bowling with my friends all the time. I don't know, what's so wrong?

[Pete's cough]

Sally: I think that one's good. It shows the lack of motivation...

Kris: That's one of my favorite ones.

Beth: Getting better.

Taylor: Because they're addressing what we're saying, where if you smoke...

Sally: You're not going to die.

Taylor: Yeah, you're not going to die, nothing...

Sally: You're not going to get hooked on oxycotin or meth the next day.

Me: Does that make you not want to do marijuana?

Kris: It makes me not want to say I want to smoke marijuana everyday.

Ed: Yeah.

Patrick: Yeah.

Sally: I think there's a difference between smoking everyday, being high 24/7 basically, and smoking every once in a while. And I think they're addressing the people that smoke all the time, that are stoners, so to speak.

Kris: Which – I know stoners and they're just like that.

Sally: Oh, totally. And it is, it's just like that.

Beth: Actually, now that I think about it, I can't really tell who they're addressing because the things that they show in contrast to smoking and sitting on the couch are really active, like biking and ice skating and all that kind of thing, but that is not what everyone – what they like to do. A lot of people, their idea of relaxing, coming home from class or whatever, that is what they want to do. So I guess that I'm maybe a little bit confused on who the appeal is [for]. But for me personally, it's like "Yeah, sitting on the couch is lame. I would like to ride my bike, thank you."

Taylor: Go ice skating with a girl.

Ed: Yeah.

Beth: But that's just because that's the way that I know I am already. So it works to reinforce, I think, more than it works to change anyone's mind, maybe.

[Talking dog]

Sally: Kind of like the guilt trip thing.

Taylor: Yeah, I feel like the dog is really cute, but it would have been better was he not talking, and it was just the dog that was just bored and walked away from its owner because it's not being played with.

Kris: Or if he brought the Frisbee up or something.

Taylor: Yeah, exactly. I mean, puppies do have serious appeal, but not when they're talking.

Sally: Or at least maybe not have the dog move its mouth. Maybe just a thought bubble.

Patrick: Yeah.

Ed: Thought bubble...(laughs)

Kris: It would be better...

Sally: It was awkward with the dog moving its mouth...

Kris: Because then it also makes you think, "Weed is not going to make you see a dog's mouth moving."

Beth: And then, sometimes I just have an issue with the tagline at the end. How would you tell a friend? Talk to their dog about it...

Ed: What do I do?...

Beth: But an actual other human friend, I guess, yeah, I'd say about the same thing as the dog did. I guess – I don't know. The tagline sometimes throws me off a little bit with what they're doing visually with the message.

Ed: I just thought it was weird because it was just out of the context. The other ad, you see "oh, he's with his friends." This one, it's just some afternoon. I don't have any idea what it is.

Nathan: She just smoked by herself and went to go get food? Just doing nothing...

Ed: Getting some milk, I don't know.

Beth: Making healthy choices.

Taylor: Strong bones.

Me: The question of convincing the – The question of believable is kind of – I don't know how you want to address that, but is it believable besides the dog talking? Or does that just throw the whole thing off?

Beth: That's kind of all there was happening.

Kris: I think it's believable in what the dog is saying, like "You're not the same when you smoke, I miss you." If it was a friend being like, "I'm sorry, I can't hang out with you because I'm not going to be around this. you're not the same, you don't want to do anything, I want to go shopping, I want to go do this, so bye, call me when you're ready to be my friend again and quit smoking" or something like that.



Me: There's one I couldn't find, but I'll bring up just for the sake of the fact that it's my very favorite. It's called "Flat Sarah," and it's this girl and she's on – you have the camera facing her on the couch and then there's another girl sitting kind of closer to you on another couch. And Sarah is like Gumby; she's flat and she's melted into the couch, and she's like this, and she can't talk. And the narrator is trying to talk to Sarah, and her friend says, "She won't talk to you. She's been like this since she started smoking pot. We don't do anything anymore..." She's Gumby, right? So I guess that addresses that issue, right? She doesn't play like my friend, but is that – is that convincing?

Kris: I know which one you're talking about. I like that one. Yeah, I think that's a good one.

Sally: I think it's important in marijuana ads to address, like the couch one, to address the fact that yeah, we know it's not going to kill you. We know you're not going to run off and buy a whole bunch of meth the next day, but it does make you lazy and all those stereotypes are pretty much true for the most part, the most general ones like you lose motivation, you don't want to do stuff.

Taylor: I feel like the anti-marijuana campaign is because they think of marijuana as a gateway drug, but then none of the ads address that as the main concern. Because I don't think that people are like, "Oh, we need to put out these anti-marijuana ads because kids are getting lazy." But that is all that they're saying in the ads is that you get lazy enough...

Kris: I agree. It seems like, to show a kid's grades dropping or something people can relate to, like "yeah, when I'm smoking I can tell if I fall asleep the night before and don't study then you're grades aren't going to be as good." Something like that they could bring it more realistic, and not [contradict] itself with the one when they're sitting on the couch and he's like, "I could be doing this, riding my bike." Usually kids who are going to be sitting on the couch, smoking weed probably aren't going to go out and ride a bike and play basketball. They're probably maybe – play cards or play a video game or something. It seems like that was kind of contrasting.

Me: So for you, would an ad be appealing if it addressed – I mean you're in school, so if there was an ad that said "your grades are going to drop" directed to you...

Kris: Or showed that it takes longer – like showing someone taking a longer time to graduate, yeah, that would be more effective, I think. But the one that you were talking about, that you explained, that is one of my favorite marijuana ads.

Me: Is that because it's convincing?

Kris: Yeah, because it's convincing. Because all the other ones are just lame, like "that was a big waste of freakin' money. You did not reach probably one person."

Taylor: I guess for me, I just feel like with all of them it's like, "Can you show me some proof that using marijuana is going to lead to other heavy drug use?" I don't know how they could do that. Do they even have statistics on this? So to me it's just sort of like, "You haven't shown me that there is a real problem yet."

Ed: Well I'd say, with the flat girl commercial, the only thing I've ever seen of that is the show Family Guy making fun of it.

Me: Oh yeah?

Ed: So I think if the TV show that the ad is during, during the commercial break, if they're making fun of it, something's probably not working though, so I don't know.

Beth: These ones where they add something just a little too ridiculous, like a talking dog, like a Gumby girl, that kind of thing, it detracts I think. I think maybe what they're doing, I don't know much about these sort of theories that you're dealing with or advertising or anything, but they're throwing in that little thing to get your attention, however. And it's like, "Ooh, talking dog, ooh, Gumby girl," and then gets your attention. So they've got that little thing in there, but all that it does ultimately is detract from the message, because it just adds this level of ridiculousness that is not a part of drugs or drug culture or anything like that.

Me: Does watching one ad that does that affect how you interpret other anti-drug ads?

Beth: It makes me – I think it probably overall would do a really pretty negative thing because it makes me compare these cheesy ridiculous things to what these more serious disturbing ads are trying to do, and it makes me wary of – like I think you said earlier, "this is a drug ad, what are they going to tell me?" How are they going to make – it doesn't work again. If you see enough of them all of these I think, yeah, do some pretty bad things for any movement, any anti-drug campaigns.

Ed: It sort of just becomes sort of a formula, in some ways.

Taylor: Yeah, had I never seen a drug ad before and I watched one of those meth ads I would probably be a lot more scared than after like "oh, another one of these, they're just going to tell me how terrible it is, not to use it, alright." I've already got the message.

Me: We'll watch just a couple more of these.

[Cartoon]

Ed: The dog is raising up the flag.

Kris: What it was saying was really good, but the animation makes it like, “what the heck?” But what they were saying was completely true.

Taylor: I liked that better than the one with the real dog.

[general agreement]

Beth: That was pretty entertaining too.

Taylor: Thought bubble this time... no moving mouth...

Me: Is it more convincing?

Beth: To not smoke?

Ed: Yeah I see what you’re saying, that there is that element where you’re like, “no, maybe a little bit later,” but that just didn’t feel like the right way to say that at all, it was compounded by all these ridiculous things to show it. The animation, the terrible animation.

Taylor: Well that’s what your drawings look like when you’re on drugs or something.

Ed: Is it?

Beth: We’re supposed to infer a lot of things from that.

Kris: It was more effective.

Me: Any other comments?

Nathan: It was entertaining. Just because it was...

Beth: Pretty funny.

Nathan: Yeah, it was just...

Me: So you would watch it through?

Nathan: Yeah, I would watch it, but I don’t know if I’d – Just the dog walking off, its legs aren’t even moving. It was like an elementary school competition to make

an anti-drug ad and some kid made that, and they actually aired it. It's hilarious, but I don't know if I took the message away from it.

Patrick: I don't know, I think a lot of these marijuana ads have a lot of entertainment value. Even the cocoon one, it was just kind of funny to watch. It's like, "alright."

Kris: If you were high you'd probably think it was the funniest thing.

Beth: It's appealing to stoners, right?

Kris: A stoner probably made it.

[Terrorism ad]

Taylor: How old is that kid?

Beth: Ten?

Taylor: His age and voice really threw me off.

Beth: Wait. I'm sorry; I missed what happened there. How does he kill them?

Kris: Where does the drug money go?

Ed: Somehow they're all fueled through this international cartel to terrorism.

Kris: Oh.

Sally: So by buying drugs it's implied that he killed those people?

Taylor: Yeah, because of terrorists and you're supporting terrorists.

Kris: That one doesn't get me at all because of politics, I think.

Sally: They take the terrorism thing a little far.

Ed and Kris: Yeah

Taylor: It's like what else can you use terrorism to...

Sally: Scare us into doing, basically?

Ed: I'm thinking of the genocide, too. Like in Darfur, they're still advertising today to try and get people interested in that because it seems like it is something that's

so far out of sight, out of mind, that of course I'm not going to go through my daily life and think about those things. And then you have that same sort of thing, like "oh, if you're shopping at Wal-Mart, you're supporting this or this or this." In every way you're destroying the world.

Beth: What drug was that for, specifically? Or was it not...

Me: It said drugs. It said drug money supports terror.

Beth: Drugs, ok.

Kris: See, with that one, it seems like if it would have been a drug dealer saying "I've ruined lives, etc," because he sold drugs to all these people instead of terror...

Taylor: Or even if they did a seven-degrees-of-separation thing, because most people just know their dealer. And then it's like, "no those people don't kill anyone," but then he knows these people...

Me: The only thing I have left is a web page that is run by this Multnomah County Sheriff, and he takes these pictures before and after. So these are all before picture of people who were arrested probably their first time being arrested and related to meth, and then that's a year and a half later. This is two and a half years later. Two and a half years later. Three months later.

Kris: Those are really good. I've seen some of those. They have them in the department of human services, they'll have little pictures up and they've started doing them in color and I think those are really effective because they show how quick...

Sally: They have them on the bus too, don't they? Or they used to. That freaked me out on my way to school.

Beth: Are these – I don't know how many years ago, but there was that article in the Oregonian, were these those faces?

Ed: Yeah, I remember that.

Beth: Because that – I wrote on this thing, or whatever we gave you earlier, that was kind of my first exposure really, seeing that, or even being aware of it as being a problem, and I didn't get it even then as being a problem in Oregon, and looking at those faces. And people were talking about that article in school and in my family for a couple weeks after that.

Ed: Yeah, [I had] the exact same experience.

Me: So is that more convincing or less convincing, than the advertisements?

Kris: I think it's more.

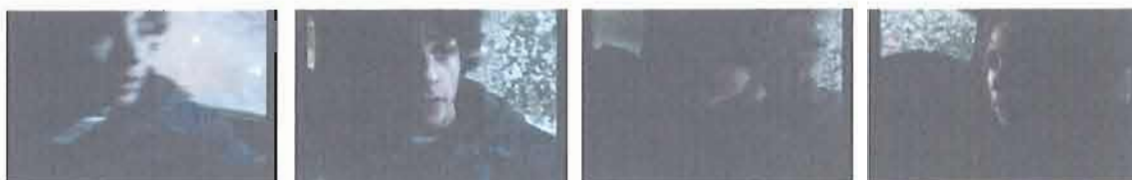
Patrick: Yeah

Taylor: The fact that we can remember years later.

Beth: Always – like when we were talking about earlier with the real 911 calls and the real photograph of people and these real examples of what it does, that is, I think, always going to be, because it's not the hypothetical, this might happen if you were to do this and over and over again. And even the storylines which they create, which I think we generally agreed were a little more effective in some of those ads – really seeing it, like here's this, here's the time lapse, here's this. That's pretty huge.

Taylor: Because even the ad with the bad teeth, now that we're looking at these, was that even a real person or was that just all makeup and stuff?

Me: Well that's all the ads I have to look at. There is a couple more questions on the back of the note-taking handout, if you don't mind. It's creeping up on one o'clock here



Car Stops



"I'm really tight with my friends"



"We do everything together"



"And whatever happens "

"They look out for me"



METH  
NOT EVEN CLOSE





"You gotta try this"



Grunts



"Ow"



"Ow ow ow"

Narrator: "You know a bad idea when you see one"



Narrator: "Live above weed, live above the influence"



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