



Ace Backwords

Artist's name: Ace Backwords

Style: Simple and direct, often using a basic three-frame format
Continuing themes: Social commentary, sex, take-offs of other cartoons, real life situations

Publications include: Twisted Image Newsletter, Twisted Image Newspaper

How long have you been a cartoonist?

I sold my first cartoon back when I was 19, living on the streets, carting my pens and papers around in a backpack. Got side-tracked for about ten years on various dead-end bum trips that life has a way of hurling in your path. Got a lucky break back in '87 and have been cartooning full-time for the last four years.

What artists or strips have influenced you?

Charles Bukowski, R. Crumb, Bloom County, Peanuts, John Lennon, Allan Watts, strips of blotter acid, John "Baboon Dooley" Crawford, a whole bunch of people--this world is full of some real talented fuckers, and hopefully some of their genius will rub off on me.

What motivates you?

"Hey Ace, the rent is due on Monday!" Also, unfortunately I have this overwhelming COMPULSION to express myself, to let people know exactly what I think about this, that, and of course, the other thing. Gets me into no end of trouble--this inability to keep my fucking mouth shut. But at least it's an asset as an artist--to be compelled to get my feelings on paper whether anyone wants to hear them or not.

Are there any messages you're trying to get across through your strips?

"Buy my comics." I have my soap boxes that I climb up on, but that's probably the weakest part of my schtick.

What are some of your other occupations and/or hobbies?

Comics and basketball. And jacking off. Basketball is more of an obsession, an addiction than anything else. It's really a beautiful game. Jacking off? Well, it's free and it doesn't harm the environment, so what the hell. But is it politically correct???

You often do satirical take-offs on the human race. Why?

I don't consider what I do "satirical." The human race, to me, is in fact warped, twisted, bent, etc. I'm just showing the world as it looks to me. Of course, it comes out a little strange because I'm insane, but that's another story. It's like David Lynch. Everyone was telling him what a weird, off-beat, satirical show Twin Peaks was and he couldn't understand the fuss. To him, he was just trying to put out a normal TV show.

What are your favorite characters and/or strips that you've done?

I like the three page take-off I did on *The Simpsons*. I liked "Siskel and Eggbert at the Porno Movies." Truthfully, I love everything I've ever done. All those strips are like my little children; even the fucked up ones that were kind of crippled and didn't really have legs to run on...ya still love 'em. Maybe even more than the good ones.

In your opinion, what is wrong with the world?

Nothing. Everything is absolutely perfect. Forever and always.

What projects are you currently working on?

I just finished the Assignment From Hell. This publisher in Connecticut practically hired a private detective to track me down (it's nice to know I'm not easy to find, considering some of the characters that wouldn't mind getting their mitts on me) and literally begged me to crank out 15 comic strips about our esteemed mush-brain vee-pee-pee Dan Quayle in like nine days for their 1991 "Dan for All Seasons" calendar. It turned into a two-week ordeal of non-stop coffee-drinking and head banging. And now that I'm finally finished, she's demanding all these changes in the comic strip dialogue ("toning it down" is how she puts it, "messing up the timing and the punchlines and the satirical content" is how I put it). Hell, the reason I got into this biz in the first place was so I could do my own thing. Still, the calendar's gonna be a classic when it comes out. If you think Quayle is a quack and a joke, wait'll you get a load of this thing. That man is DANGEROUS.

What do your goals in your work? What do you hope to accomplish?

Basically, to continue to support myself off this crap and not have to take a real job. I might be so far gone down the Bohemian Circuit I might not even be employable anymore, so I better keep supporting myself. Went down to the Oakland Financial District today for the first time in years, and boy, talk about cultural shock. I felt like I was coming from another planet, seeing all these 'normals' in their clean suits and Sunday clothes. Hell, I got like one pair of blue jeans and some beat-up Adidas. On a deeper level, I hope to be able to entertain people, to give 'em a little lift now and again, even if only for the two minutes it takes to read a comic strip. That might sound kinda low-brow, but I've found most of these 'artists', with their grand artistic goals, who consider my approach 'pandering', well, most of them seem obsessed with their own cleverness and produce mostly pretentious fakery. So what the hell. Goals? Turn the people on. And if that doesn't work, then annoy the fuck out of them.