By Jennifer Bonneman

SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA—It all started three years ago, in the cereal aisle of the local Safeway. High on heroin, Heather Edney, then 24, and her best friend, Matthew Bowman, stumbled through the supermarket. In the Kellogg's section, they found their inspiration. "We saw the Sugar Smacks cereal box and we were kinda tripping on it," Edney says.

"We were like, 'That cover is begging to be fucked with.'"

And so that's exactly what they did. With help from Kinko's photocopiers, the two friends made a parody of the box cover in which the grinning Sugar Smacks frog appeared to be selling not a sugary cereal, but "smack," or heroin. Bowman and Edney then created a zine for young injection drug users, and slapped their Sugar Smacks spoof on its cover.

The zine, called JUNKHEAD, has become one of the nation's most provocative publications about drugs. It reads like a manual on how to inject drugs as safely as possible—without ever telling readers to stop. The stories in JUNKHEAD are told by junkies themselves, mostly the young users who swap stories at the Santa Cruz Needle Exchange. And the zine's art work is stunningly sophisticated. JUNKHEAD's creators mock the mainstream by skillfully manipulating cultural icons, mixing up Norman Rockwell and Barbie with images of hypodermic needles to create a hip junkie aesthetic.

JUNKHEAD's founders never imagined their publication would sell hundreds of copies, or attract international attention. They had no idea that some drug policy activists would praise their zine for its ability to reach an often ignored population. Nor did they figure that the Manhattan based Lieutenants Centre, the drug policy think tank funded by billionaire George Soros, would become one of JUNKHEAD's biggest buyers.

And the zine's creators had no way of knowing how much and how quickly their own lives would change. So far, there have been four issues of the zine and two more are expected to be published in late September. But the new editions of JUNKHEAD will be markedly different. Three years and several deaths later, JUNKHEAD's founders—and the zine itself—no longer view drugs quite the same way.

EDNEY AND BOWMAN met at the Santa Cruz Needle Exchange, which they cofounded in 1990 and she headed. They created JUNKHEAD with the help of Brooke Libby, an 18-year-old college student. Born from almost the beginning, Edney was the zine's driving force. With her long, jet-black hair, call-hiugh leather boots, and upbringing in the San Fernando Valley, Edney seems part East Village chic, part valley girl. She is ambitious and intelligent, and has been pill-popping and shooting up since she was 15 years old.

Santa Cruz, like San Francisco and Seattle, attracts more than its share of homeless youth. Many of these drifters, virtually all of whom are white, eventually wind up at the needle exchange. They include squatter kids living in the nearby mountains and runaways who fled abusive homes. To find material for JUNKHEAD, the zine's founders

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GONNERMAN
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grabbled a tape recorder, got high, and con-
ducted aardvarkWire interviews with these
users. They all described the reactions they
received. It is the world of these junkies, and their
esthetic, that junkiehood reflects.

Junkiehood and its 1980s court cases.

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Crashing From Speed

we asked a bunch of people from the exchange what they used to come down from the weed. Here is what they suggested:

1: smoking pot
2: valium
3: viocon

Smoking pot almost everyone suggested but harder to get it’s a muscle relaxer.

If you can get it, valium was the second most popular recommendation for crashing off the weed.

Down, cause it makes you feel so crazy.

If you can’t do it, smoking pot will do the trick.

Saying you’ll do it to yourself or I want to just pay some other.

3: viocon

Almost as popular as valium but harder to get it’s a muscle relaxer.

Remember, if you are mixing pills, be careful cause the combination can really mess up your head and slow down your breathing to the point where you can’t breathe on your own.

EXPERIENCE CAN’T TEACH YOUTH HOW TO HIDE. WE SAW THIS MYSELVES. I WANT TO STAY IN THE SYSTEM. I FEEL LIKE I CAN’T DO IT.

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