

Pathological gamblers, compulsive spenders and kleptomaniacs: Are they simply weak-willed or do they have a chemical glitch in the brain?

An antidote to credit cards?

By William Green

Thirty years ago a 14-year-old kid from Brooklyn, N.Y. skipped school and spent a magical day at a local race-track. He picked six winners in a row, and that was his downfall. Hooked on gambling, he owed \$60,000 to loan sharks by age 26. When he fell behind on his payments, a mobster put a gun to his head and threatened to kill him.

Gamblers Anonymous didn't help. After joining, he used his employer's checks to cover a \$14,000 gambling debt. Then a few months ago he heard about a new research study at Manhattan's Mount Sinai School of Medicine. Psychiatrists there put him on Luvox, an antidepressant. "I haven't gambled in three weeks," he says. "That's the longest I've ever abstained."

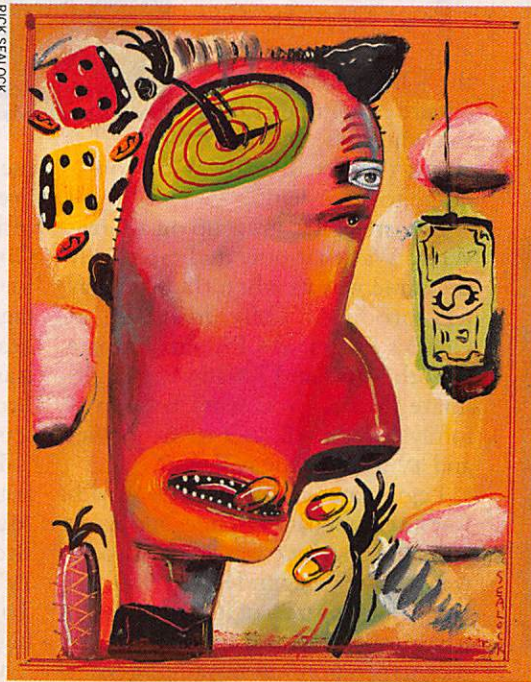
Eric Hollander, a professor of psychiatry at Mount Sinai, thinks pathological gamblers have a biochemical imbalance in the brain. He looks to mood stabilizers and antidepressants to help them kick the habit.

Hollander's studies suggest that the brains of addicted gamblers often have unusually high levels of the chemical norepinephrine. He also thinks there's something wrong with the gamblers' serotonin—a neurotransmitter associated with impulsiveness. Hollander got striking results last year when he tested the drug fluvoxamine on 16 pathological gamblers. Seven of the 10 patients who completed the eight-week trial quit gambling.

Susan McElroy, a biological psychiatrist at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, is similarly reappraising kleptomania. Usually women, kleptomaniacs feel an irresistible urge to steal things they don't need. Over-

come with guilt, they often discard or give away their plunder.

McElroy stumbled upon her findings while treating a 23-year-old bulimic who was also addicted to stealing clothes from shopping malls. When the patient took trazadone for her bulimia, her impulse to steal vanished. She went off the drug and was promptly arrested for shoplifting.



RICK SEALOCK

McElroy decided to look systematically at the effect of medication on kleptomania. So she gave drugs like lithium and Prozac to 20 kleptomaniacs. Half of them stopped stealing or stole less often. Her conclusion: Kleptomania, like pathological gambling, is a "biologically based" mental disorder treatable with drugs.

Donald Black, a psychiatrist at the University of Iowa College of Medicine, studies a third money-related problem: compulsive spending. Typically, compulsive spenders pile up

Edited by Joshua Levine

huge debts on clothes, shoes, jewelry, makeup. Credit cards are their undoing. Black thinks Mary Todd Lincoln, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and Imelda Marcos may have been compulsive spenders.

In 1995 Black put ten compulsive spenders on a nine-week course of the antidepressant Luvox. Nine out of ten improved dramatically. Black suspects the drug helps restore order to an abnormal serotonin system in the compulsive shopper's brain.

But don't expect these economic disorders to disappear under a barrage of pills. Black doesn't think that all spendomania traces to chemical imbalances. "I doubt you're going to find this problem among African Hottentots," he muses. "It's Western culture that offers easy credit, a lot of good products to buy and a high degree of disposable income. It's a society ripe for compulsive spending."

Pathological gambling also has a strong cultural component. Eric Hollander worries that gambling has become too accessible: Airlines offer cheap tickets to Las Vegas, supermarkets sell lottery tickets, and now you can try your luck on the Internet. As a result, women and youngsters are getting hooked on what was traditionally an adult male vice.

David Krueger, a Houston-based psychoanalyst, points out that compulsive spending, gambling and shoplifting provide thrills that many people use to compensate for an overwhelming sense of emptiness and abandonment. "Medication," he says, "takes care of the symptom, not the underlying issues that motivate the behavior." So far no one has come up with a pill that will cure an inner emptiness.

INDULGING ■ Rebirth of the cool

WAS THERE EVER a figure in jazz who evolved as much as Miles Davis? At the birth of bebop in the late 1940s he was playing trumpet in Charlie Parker's lineup. A decade later his collaborations with the great arranger Gil Evans yielded such classics as *Sketches of Spain* and *Porgy and Bess*. *Kind of Blue*, released in 1959, remains one of the genre's finest.

In the mid-1960s Miles formed a band made up of some of the youngest talent around. Backed by Wayne Shorter on tenor saxophone and Ron Carter on bass, the group also included two up-and-coming musicians—23-year-old pianist Herbie Hancock and Tony Williams, an unknown 17-year-old drummer.

On Mar. 24 Sony Music's Legacy label released *The Miles Davis Quintet, 1965-68: The Complete Columbia Studio Recordings*, a six-disc set that captures all the band's music and then some. The collection (price: \$109.98) clocks in at 440 minutes, chronologically

The man with a horn: Miles Davis.



C. DUCASSE / GAMMA-LIAISON

arranged over the course of 27 sessions taped between January 1965 and June 1968.

Of the four other boxed sets of Miles' music available, this one stands out. It was this quintet that changed the trajectory of jazz, moving it from the confines of bebop into the free-form fusion that took hold in the late 1960s. This remarkable band's life cycle was all too short, but this collection, remastered from the original four-track tapes, exquisitely recaptures the quintet's magic.

—PETER NEWCOMB

THE ARTS ■ The Great White Way is a legend. Can Jed Bernstein turn it into a brand?

It's show time

By Ben Pappas

Jed Bernstein sits in a sparse conference room at the League of American Theatres & Producers, the flash of Times Square peeping through the windows, and talks about theater. Broadway to you—home to Bernstein.

Bernstein, 43, grew up on a Great White Way that operated essentially the same way as when the first play was produced there in 1893, at Charles Frohman's Empire Theatre at 40th Street and Broadway. "Legitimate theater" was what Broadway loftily called itself, as if to say movies and TV weren't the real stuff.

Legitimate or not, by 1995 Broadway faced stagnant revenues and rising costs. Its audience was aging. Broadway theater depended on touring companies for 63% of its revenues—it had almost no loyal following. The rock generation was not tuning in.

Enter Bernstein. Like *Guys & Dolls*' Sky Masterson, he was a tall, handsome outsider. He had worked for 17 years as an adman, but the theater was his real love. When the league called, Bernstein dropped everything and took his dream account. His assignment: getting under-40s to buy tickets.

"Broadway theater needed to create innovative ways to solidify its image," recalls Bernstein. He set about the task the same way an ad person sets about selling blue jeans or cars: by creating a strong and attractive image for



Bernstein is performing the wake-up call of Broadway.

the product. With Bernstein as executive director, the league rolled out an official "Live Broadway" logo, a Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval for theater. Then Bernstein landed high-profile sponsorships, including a deal with Continental Airlines that lets travelers relax to a new lineup of Broadway music on its in-flight headsets each month.

He persuaded the league to move last year's Tony awards to Radio City Music Hall from much smaller Broadway theaters and asked talk-TV's Rosie O'Donnell to host. The Tony awards ceremony scored its highest ratings in a decade.

Can you sell a form of entertainment the way you sell soap or sneakers? Bernstein sure means to try. His latest stunt took place at the recent NBA All-Star game, where more than 100 actors, singers and dancers from the casts of ten musicals took center court for a rousing half-time medley.

Is it working? Last season Broadway shows, at home and on tour, raked in \$1.3 billion, up 16% from two years ago. Bernstein's antics may be only partly responsible, but at least he's reminded Americans that there's more to life than TV, movies, CDs and the Internet.

STEVEN BOLONIS