

Rick Bender was spittin' tobacco
back when he played Semi-Pro Ball
in the California Angels system.

I lost a third of my tongue, **half my jaw**
and **all of the flesh** connecting the right side of my neck



with the rest of
my body

Rick Bender has pictures of himself looking like a normal Southern California teenager. He's confident and cool and totally unaware that he's programmed for disaster. Rick will be barely out of his teens before he falls victim to a combination of three things:

1. Peer pressure
2. A love of baseball
3. Tobacco company ads

rick bender talks

"When I was in my 20s I lost a third of my tongue, half my jaw and all of the flesh connecting the right side of my neck with the rest of my body. I also lost the use of my right arm and for a guy who loves to play baseball, that counts as a real loss."



Terrible
car accident?
Nope.

Terrible
addiction
– tobacco.



Never inclined to be a smoker, Rick got his nicotine fix from a little flat tin of what he calls "spittin' tobacco".

"I bought the 'pinch instead of a puff' line the tobacco companies put out," says Rick. "But spittin' tobacco still is full of benzene, lead, acetone, formaldehyde and about 30 other ingredients that might belong in a car or in paint remover, but certainly not in your body.

"I started chewing tobacco when I was 12. My friends that smoked kidded me. Plus I loved baseball and played it pretty well and thought... the pro guys looked cool chewing and spitting. Of course, all the advertising said it was the thing to do.

Rick was scheduled for a two-and-a-half hour operation. It actually took over 12 hours. It also took away the possibility of Rick looking anything close to normal ever again.

"Even after the operation, they didn't think they'd got it all. They never thought I'd be talking to kids about what I did, and what I've gone through."

No one would blame Rick if he'd gotten a late-night job as one of those telephone sales people... literally faceless, leaving for work in the dark and coming home before the first alarm clock went off.

"Don't do what I did... don't believe them... don't wind up looking like I do."

"I was like everyone else. I wanted to have fun. I wanted to fit in. I was healthy and didn't ever expect not to be. I was invincible, like any other teenager."

It took 10 years for Rick's cancer to signal that it had taken over. "The first sign was a little sore on the side of my tongue. It was enough to spoil my Christmas.

"I thought it might have something to do with the tobacco and I went to the doctor. They did some tests and he said they'd have to operate and take out this cancerous dime-size bump on my tongue."

Instead, he's out there on stage at another high school saying "Don't do what I did... don't believe them... don't wind up looking like I do." The point Rick makes is that tobacco in any form is just bad news. With or without the paper wrapping and the fancy logo, it's still deadly. Smoke it, and you'll smell bad and likely die young. Chew it and there's a good chance that in a few years, you'll be able to pass for Freddy Krueger.

A good thing about being Rick Bender is having the chance to keep someone else from a similar fate. That's what Rick is committed to.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY KATHY BOAKE

LAST YEAR, WORLDWIDE, OVER **3 MILLION PEOPLE DIED**
AS A RESULT OF TOBACCO:

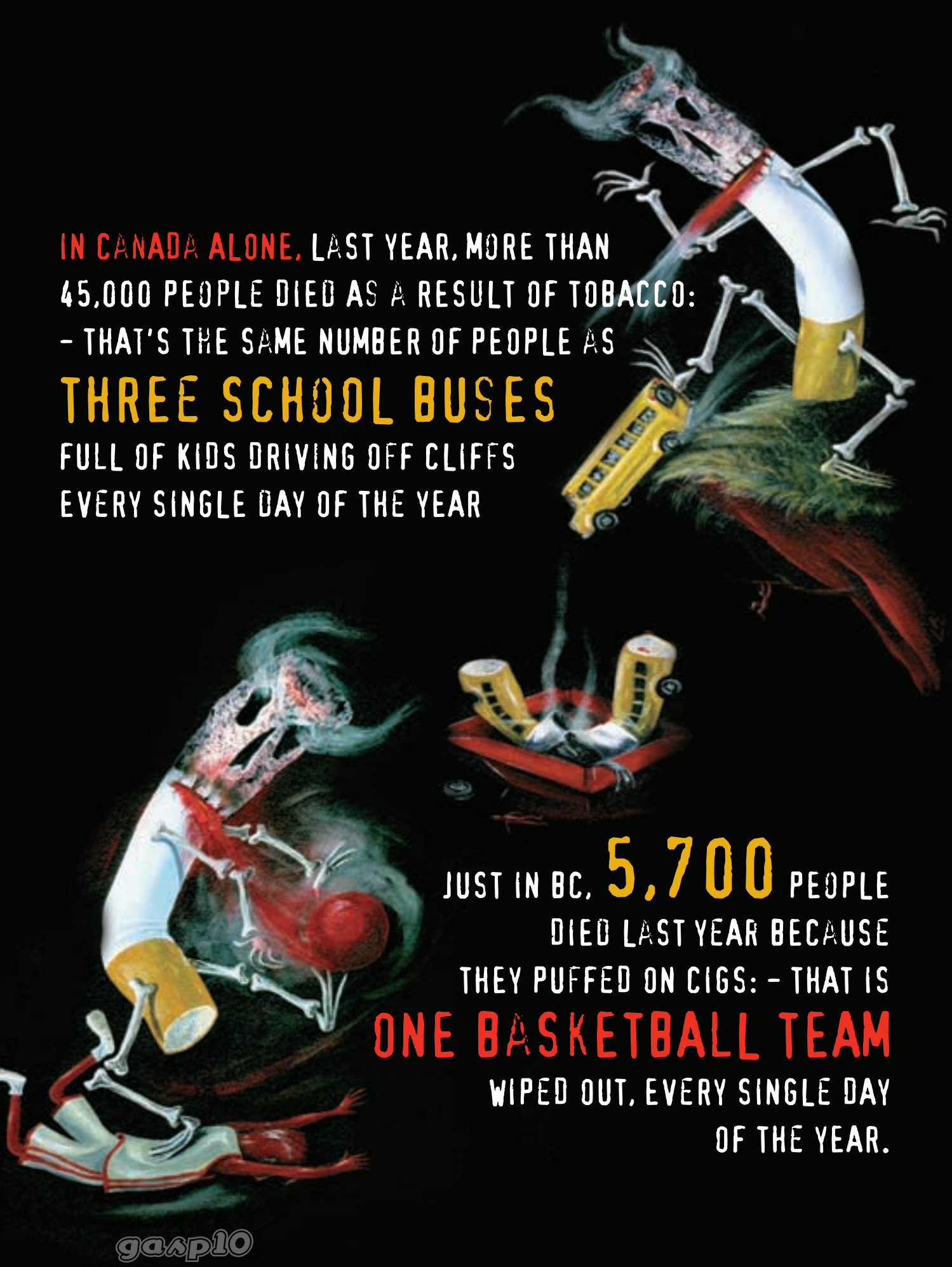
- THAT MANY **COFFINS**
WOULD STRETCH
END-TO-END **ACROSS**
CANADA FROM
VICTORIA
TO **ST. JOHN'S**

CANADA

VICTORIA

ST. JOHN'S

gasp09



IN CANADA ALONE, LAST YEAR, MORE THAN
45,000 PEOPLE DIED AS A RESULT OF TOBACCO:
- THAT'S THE SAME NUMBER OF PEOPLE AS
THREE SCHOOL BUSES
FULL OF KIDS DRIVING OFF CLIFFS
EVERY SINGLE DAY OF THE YEAR

JUST IN BC, **5,700** PEOPLE
DIED LAST YEAR BECAUSE
THEY PUFFED ON CIGS: - THAT IS
ONE BASKETBALL TEAM
WIPED OUT, EVERY SINGLE DAY
OF THE YEAR.

STOP WHAT YOU ARE DOING
— LOOK AT YOUR WATCH
OR THE SECOND HAND ON A CLOCK,
WATCH 10 SECONDS GO BY.
IN THAT TIME, SOMEWHERE IN THE WORLD,

SOMEONE JUST

DIED

'CAUSE THEY SMOKED.

THERE YOU HAVE IT:
A NUMBER OF REASONS TO WRITE TO THE BIG TOBACCO COMPANIES AND **PROTEST**
THE DEADLY EFFECTS OF TOBACCO.

gasp11

