

Dreaming of Magic Muscles

I didn't know you had to work out to start getting buff. When my dad complained about Mark McGwire juicing himself into a big meat pile and clobbering the home run record, I thought the reason steroids were unfair was you just inject a drug into your butt and get swole. Like Popeye eating spinach. Magic muscles. I agreed with my dad that this was definitely cheating and very unfair. These guys are making a lot of money. You gotta earn it the old fashioned way, by hitting baseballs with your real muscles.

But of course I also thought steroids sounded pretty cool. So when I got to high school and saw how skinny my arms were, how they were basically just long flesh sticks with grabbers attached at the ends, I didn't think twice about asking the captain of the football team how to get some of those butt drugs to make me buff. He told me where to go and how much it would cost. A lot. No wonder all those football kids come from rich families. Who could afford to pay this much money just for muscles?

Thankfully, me, actually. My family members had been sending me college money for years. Thanks to this new invention called student loans, I knew I wouldn't need money for college because the government would just give it to me for free as soon as I asked them to. So I took my college fund to a very cool man who sold me enough stuff to last sophomore, junior and senior year.

Then I waited. And waited. And waited some more. And I definitely got bigger. A lot bigger. But it wasn't, like, muscles. My cheeks puffed out. My sixteen-year-old body swelled a sixty-year-old's beer belly. I replaced my twiggy stick arms with blobby water arms that sloshed around when I shook them. My parents started making comments,

suggesting I cut back on the snacks. Or maybe take up evening jogging, as PE didn't seem to be doing anything for me.

The football captain told me, then, when I went back and confronted him, that you still have to lift weights and stuff. You can't just take the steroids. I wish him or the nice guy who sold them to me had said so at the beginning. I woulda said forget it. If I wanted to work out to get buff I woulda just done it. What's the point of cheating if you still have to exercise?