

Interview with Mikey Havoc

Interview by Dave Gibson

How would you define your smoking status?

I think I probably tried half a cigarette once at school and went, 'Man that sucks, what are you dicks doing?' and ever since then I have had no interest in it whatsoever. I find it absolutely one of the most stupid things in the world.

That's actually quite an unusual experience to have seen the light so quickly and kind of seen smoking for what it is...

Well I grew up in a house where no one smoked so if somebody smoked or someone came in the house who had smoked you could smell it like from upstairs. I always thought, 'Man that's a pretty strong stench whoever that is' and it doesn't smell like lollies or flowers or freshly mown grass or a healthy dog or a girl, just smells like stench you know? When I was a bit younger people smoked and there is a marked difference now, people still smoke but back then everybody smoked, to the point where I would be at work and we would all be coming up with an idea and they go, 'This is great we're on a roll, we're on a roll', and then everyone would just go, 'Right, we've got to have a ciggy' and I would be sitting in the office by myself for 10 minutes going, 'Oh ciggy smokers get an extra break, oh cool, wicked'. It used to piss me off man.

It's the exact same thing in the rock and roll community, you know I mean obviously you were once solidly entrenched in that...

Driving from Blenheim to Christchurch with a bunch of smokers in a van if you don't smoked, sucked. Ok, yeah you eat something because you are hungry or you put on a hat because you think your hair looks stupid, so you breathed in all that crap. For what?

It's quite a unique drug in that sense.

Hey what do you do drugs for? To get really wasted. What do you drink for? Oh just to get a bit more social. What do you put on running shoes for? So my feet don't hurt. What do you smoke for? Ah, cause I'm addicted. Oh, shot.

Is smoking as common as it used to be?

I don't think it's as common as it used to. When the laws came in about smoking in indoor public places I had been clubbing all night long and for somebody who has washed the stink of smoke out of his clothes for years and years and years that was quite a unique moment, to go out to a club and be able to breath you know? To be able to go clubbing or to a concert or

any sort of public place and come home with your clothes smelling like your clothes and not like somebody's ashtray is just splendid.

Why do you think some young people still take up smoking?

Because a lot of the time they just do things that they are not supposed to do and because it's in their faces and because it's perceived as an adult thing and most adults I know who smoke go, 'Oh I wish I'd never smoked but now I am hooked'.

In your opinion, what's the worst thing about smoking?

That so many people do it and no one can tell you why. It's slavery of the highest order, you know? It's companies that want to make money off you by selling you something that costs them hardly anything to make, trying to convince you that you are somebody by buying their product which they pretty much have had to admit now will kill you.

What do you think of people who work in the tobacco industry?

Not very much. I had a friend who worked in the tobacco industry and I watched it just tear his soul apart trying to make it cool and then just realising it's just fucked and he was under so much pressure to sell those ciggies.

Do you think the tobacco industry is visible in New Zealand?

When we were growing up, you know, the tobacco industry sponsored the fashion awards, they sponsored every single race car driver, every single sports team. The tobacco industry is one of the most powerful, rich and manipulative industries in the whole world. By starting to smoke and by going out and buying a packet of cigarettes you do exactly what they want you to do. They haven't had to work hard at all. They've managed to get your money and get you involved in purchasing a product that becomes an addiction. They are going to have you for a long time and so that's why they want to get you early. The tobacco industry are full of shit.

Would you consider quitting smoking a real achievement?

As a non-smoker it seems to be something that you should just be able to do overnight you know? But through experience and having friends who have done it it normally takes either something pretty big or some serious resolve. It is an achievement and you should do it because you will think better of yourself.

Do you have any opinions about how cigarettes should be legislated?

I am glad the tobacco industry are not sponsoring sports teams any more. I'm glad that they are under a lot more pressure to disclose what companies they are involved with cause they are also involved.

How would you support a friend who was trying to quit?

One of the best things I've ever done is a friend who said, 'I really want to quit', and we said 'Ok, we'll help you' and whenever she used to light up a cigarette we would get as many of us around in the room at once and go, 'Smoke, smoke, smoke, smoke', everyone in a club doing that to you and you put out the cigarette in about 10 seconds and that stopped her smoking, it was awesome. In about two weeks, every time she pulled a cigarette out, 'Smoke, smoke, smoke'.