

## I Dropped Gerber

I've always been a flincher.

If somebody pretended to punch me in the face I would always flinch. I still fall for it. I guess I'm just a flincher. I like that word. Flincher. Flincher flincher flincher. It has a sort of ring to it.

Flincher.

Anyway, speaking of flinching, I was at this high school party one winter, back in the late 80's. It was a typical New England party for me. Basically, somebody's parents were gone, a lot of kids came over and everyone brought their own stubbies. Stubbies were the 12 oz. Bud's and tall boys were 16 oz.

I was a stoner, and just brought some pot, like always. I was never really a drinker, unless there wasn't any pot. Then again, I probably got drunk a few hundred times, mostly in high school, because pot wasn't as easy to get then as it was when I was older.

So, I'm at some girls' house and it's the same old thing: people listening to Lynyrd Skynyrd, the Doobie Brothers, Peter Frampton and Led Zeppelin, playing beer pong, playing quarters, and just hanging out and partying. As usual, the party escalates as the night goes on and everyone gets more and more buzzed.

I'm just hanging out, minding my own business when I see a couple of the more rugged guys getting drunker than the other kids. That usually means sooner or later someone's gonna get dropped by one of them. No one ever really knows who it's gonna be. I didn't really care all that much, as long as it wasn't me, because, like I said, I'm a flincher and not a very good fighter. I was really good at running, though, which can come in handy from time to time. So I'm hanging out on the stairs that go down to the basement where everyone was playing ping-pong and then here comes Pete Cook and John Gerber. Both played football, both were much bigger and stronger than me, and both were drunk and dangerous. Gerber was so drunk that he fell down the stairs, all the way down, and when he landed he jumped up with a big smile and yelled to the laughing crowd, "See, I didn't even spill my beer!" Everyone cheered. They were quite impressed with his ability for stair acrobatics.

At that moment, Pete Cook saw me and yelled to Gerber, "Waste Brodsky!" Gerber looked at me and without hesitating just started swinging. Since I wasn't drunk, but stoned, my reaction time was quite a bit better than his and I was able to dodge his advance and begin my retreat.

I'm a flincher and a runner, NOT a fighter.

So now, for no reason, I'm being attacked by a drunken, rugged football player named Gerber. I'm in fight-or-flight mode. A second ago, I'm just an innocent bystander, stoned, and hanging out, not causing a problem for anyone. But, since Pete Cook is bored and sees me there, he just figures he'll spice up the party and have Gerber attack me, for no good reason. Kind of like how George Bush attacked Iraq: for no good reason. I guess some things never change. Well, I suppose George Bush had all kinds of reasons; it's just that none of them were the ones he lied to the American people about.

So there I am, running away from Gerber as he chases me throughout the house. Obviously, everyone in the party is watching to see what'll happen while I'm being publicly humiliated, chased, and attacked by a drunken, football- playing asshole. This goes on for a few minutes until he corners me, upstairs in the living room. Gerber's laughing and having a blast while Pete Cook is taunting him to WASTE Brodsky!

I'm completely scared out of my mind and running for my life. I'm trapped with nowhere to run. I'm fucked. I've never been in a fight before. I spent five years in headgear and braces

## I Dropped Gerber

and now he's going to knock out all my perfect teeth and my life will be ruined. All for no good reason. I didn't do anything to deserve this. How unfair life is at times.

We're in the living room with a pretty good-sized crowd watching us. Gerber lunges at me and throws a big, sidearm punch, which I skillfully dodge. I retaliate with two quick, little left-handed rabbit punches, boom boom, and they land square in the middle of his face and his head snaps back just the way you'd imagine a drunk guy's head would snap back when he's getting rabbit punched in the face. Then I throw a BIG right-handed punch, with all of the weight from my legs and body and it lands smack dab in the middle of his nose and the POWER of that punch was just like in the movies.

Gerber flies back, and his Legs actually LIFT off the ground and he goes straight down like a lead balloon, crashing on the coffee table and smashing it into splinters. He's knocked out cold. I feel like a war hero! I've championed the toughest, meanest, drunkest asshole in the party! All the other tough kids from the football team are standing in a big circle around us with their arms folded, smiling and chuckling. It's free entertainment, and they've gotten to see a fun show. One of the kids says to me, "Nice combination."

I'm a super hero now and the toughest guy in the world. It was just like in the movies when someone knocks out someone in a fight, all in slow motion, and they go crashing down onto some furniture splintering it into a million pieces.

The girl who was having the party was yelling at us to get the hell out of her house and that her parents were going to kill her, etc. I didn't care; it wasn't my fault. It was self-defense. I was totally amped up with adrenaline. I was naturally the more skilled and talented fighter and had just defended myself. It really felt unbelievably great.

Now I know why there are wars: it's fun to fight (as long as you win). The high you get from fighting is better than any manmade drug, by far. That's why there'll always be wars. It's a form of addiction and people don't even have a clue about this obvious fact. Not only is it an addiction, it's big business. It isn't about religion, or democracy, or defending people from tyrants. War is just stealing and chemical addiction: people get off on hurting other people and taking their stuff. Until we as a civilization get honest with this obvious fact, it will continue, ad infinitum.

Someone from the crowd says, "You have about 15 minutes to get the hell out of here before he wakes up." I guess he'd seen other guys get knocked out and that was the standard amount of time before someone wakes up from being dropped. Now what? I gotta get my stuff and get the hell outta there, that's what.

The next day in school everyone was talking about how Brodsky dropped Gerber at the party. Gerber's face was all swollen and he had a big, fat lip and a bloody nose that was all fucked up. He was ten times stronger than me and a way better fighter – when he was sober. Now, he was definitely sober and also humiliated and pissed. He was gonna try and get me and it was just a matter of time before he did. But, of course I had fallen into the illusion that I was a war hero and a gladiator and this amazing fighter. I figured I'd just drop him again. I told that to my computer geek, glasses wearing friend, Mike McDonald, who had snot dripping down his nose and unwashed, messy hair, like always. Mike was the smart kid in school and had no friends except the other computer/math geeks who now probably work for Bill Gates and drive Ferraris, while the John Gerber's of the world are busy washing their cars and being called, "boy."

Mike told me that I had better watch out, that Gerber was gonna waste me because everyone knew that Gerber was way tougher than me and that it was just a lucky punch in those

## I Dropped Gerber

circumstances. The bottom line was this: I was stoned and Gerber was drunk, that's the only reason that I won the fight and dropped him – like a lead balloon, I might add. Mike was right, it was just luck and now I was fucked, because sooner or later, Gerber was gonna get me. I felt a terrible sense of panic but that didn't stop me from bragging about how rugged I was and what a great fighter I was, too. I was gonna milk that situation for as long as I could – until Gerber caught up with me, that is.

I was going over the fight in great detail with some of the guys who saw the whole thing. They were all laughing and saying how great my combination of two quick lefty rabbit punches (technically called “jabs”), and my great right hand, full body punch straight into the middle of Gerber's drunk ass face. It was a glorious story, even though the whole time I was scared out of my mind. But that didn't matter, because the bottom line was this: I dropped Gerber and showed the world that I could defend myself.

I had survived that first day of school after the big fight. I made it home and waited. I knew Gerber was going to try and get me and it didn't take long before he and his friends drove slowly right by my house, making threatening hand gestures like they were all going to wring my neck. I sat in the dining room with my mother, doing my homework and pretending like everything was fine. She had no idea of the things I had to go through while I was in high school. I'd been blackmailed, threatened, jumped, ganged up on, humiliated on a constant basis, attacked numerous times – all kinds of terrible things she had no idea about. When most people talk about the stress of growing up in high school they talk about trying to be popular, or getting good grades, or not having zits and pimples. I was dealing with more serious situations, like physical bodily harm, getting busted by police, blackmail, getting narked on – all kinds of things. I had REAL problems.

Anyway, Gerber finally caught up with me, one on one. Just me and him, with no one else around. I had to act fast. I pleaded with him, explaining that I had tried to get away from him at the party and that he had cornered me and there was nothing else I could've done. I told him it was a lucky punch and that everyone knows he's way more rugged than me and that I was a total wimp and not a good fighter. I told him that if he left me alone I would give him a big bag of pot and never mention it again and that he should just be cool and forget the whole thing.

He basically took my bribe and said that if I opened my mouth one more time about how I'd dropped him and what an amazing fighter I was that he was going to personally waste me and that there would be no second chances. I told him that I'd NEVER bring it up again and he left me alone.

I thought that was pretty civilized of him, in a way. Maybe there's still hope for flinchers and civilization as a whole.  
Naaaaah.....