

Department of English

PERMAfrost

a literary journal

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Permafrost

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Walter B. Levis, "Diagnosis of a Teenager"

Dear esteemed school administrator and/or overworked-and-underpaid classroom teacher:

Please find attached my confidential "report-to-educators" regarding Charlie Snothead, an 11th grade student at Stayrich Prep, a school I know to be one of the finest and most exclusive in the country. A separate report (less candid, more optimistic) has been mailed to the Snothead family.

After reviewing the report, feel free to contact me with any questions. And note that in addition to Educational Testing, I am available to tutor any student in any subject at any time.

Sincerely,

Dr. Seymour Reedmore, B.A., M.A., M.Div., M.D., P.T., O.T, Ph.D, Psy.D. HiD., Ho.

* * *

STUDENT NAME: Charles B. Snothead (aka: GetLuckywithChucky@yahoo.com; YouMineAllMine@aol.com, and Snothead_Charles@Stayrich_Prep.edu)

DATE OF EVALUATION: New Year's Eve

NOTE RE STATE AUTHENTICATION: In compliance with NYSDNYE (New York State Dept. of Educational Testing on New Year's Eve), all tests were administered according to SAP (standard administrative protocol) of one 6-hour session with a break for pizza and to watch the BDTSONTVHD (ball drop in Times Square televised in high definition).

NOTE RE CONFIDENTIALITY: DO NOT leave this document lying around the teacher's lounge or on the copy machine, and DO NOT bring this document to after-school happy hours where it can be passed around the bar and read aloud. SUBNOTE RE CONFIDENTIALITY: if copies are, in fact, passed around and read aloud, any new client contacting me within 30 days will receive a ten percent discount, and a limited-time cash rebate will be offered to the referring school official. See Web site for details.

Part 1 (section A): Introduction, background, nts re: first meeting:

Charlie Snothead is a sixteen-year-old male; single child, normal birth, no physical limitations, both parents living. He was referred to my office for an assessment of his learning style and

learning difficulties and to update a previous evaluation. As his mother put it, "We want to know what the hell is wrong with him now."

Both parents describe themselves as "fed up" and state that—depending on the results of this report—they will consider sending Charlie to live with his "crazy uncle" in California. "I've had it," said Charlie's dad. "If it weren't for his mother, I'd put the kid up for adoption or, better yet, see what I can get on the black market for his kidneys." (NOTE: Mr. Snothead, at the insistence of his wife, subsequently apologized for the crack about the kidneys.)

Presenting Symptoms:

There are specific concerns about Charlie's continued "attention and executive functioning" difficulties. During the initial consultation, Charlie's father, an executive himself, seemed to drift off. Mr. Snothead also frequently looked at his watch, checked his BlackBerry, and once blurted into his phone, "Damn it! Sell at 38.90!"

Section A of Part 1, con't: TEST DATA:

A modified battery of tests was given to Charlie. (Additional testing was declined as Mr. Snothead said, "Hell no! This is already costing me more than a Rolex watch!") All data was analyzed using a proprietary algorithm correlating the results with a statistical matrix based on the history of rainfall in the Mohave desert, total runs scored against left-handed pitchers still in the game after the fourth inning, and the number of times the stock market has risen when an American model is on the cover of the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue. This proprietary set of tools establishes the correlation of given data with factors contributing to Charlie's primary cognitive functioning as well and his overall energy output (in Charlie's case, his lethargy suggests that $e=mc$, not squared).

NOTE: The tests described below meet all standards. Approved, restricted, mandated, sanctioned, fun—they are psychoeducational evaluative tools (AD 2009) for use ONLY by personnel employed by the Department of Education and Training (DET) or by licensed and certified psychologists. NOTE: Seymour Reedmore & Associates, LLC. has personally trained and certified a small number of additional testers. Feel free to contact me for a list of art therapists, music therapists, massage therapists, yoga teachers, tennis pros, bartenders, waiters, and unemployed actors—all of whom are available to administer additional tests (or to provide party entertainment) at special discount rates.

TEST #1: Differential Ability Scales—Second Edition (DAS-II) (2006)* R2:

This test, as its name suggests, is a measurement of different abilities. It "weighs" the abilities. And it shows—proves—that students *without* certain abilities will almost invariably "fuck up" in school (as Charlie himself put it when asked if he knew why he was here, he said: "Because I'm a fuck up."). The DAS II—second edition—is more recent than the first edition and

measures newly discovered abilities, such as the ability to send and receive text messages while walking. (Charlie excels in this area.)

TEST #2: Leiter International Performance Scale – Revised (Leiter – R) (1997) R2:

Alfred Leiter, a noted music educator, took a leave of absence in 1997 and went to watch students perform in school assemblies at K-12 institutions all over the world. After 4,123 assemblies, Leiter suffered a nervous breakdown. While hospitalized he developed a test to measure the likelihood of children without talent being asked to participate in school assemblies and what children in the audience might actually learn by attending a school assembly. One aspect of the test, which involves following directions about when to sit down and stand up and how to clap politely, was particularly challenging for Charlie, who seems to truly hate assemblies. He said that "school assemblies are more boring than synagogue."

TEST #3: Raven's Progressive Matrices and Vocabulary Scales (2003) R1:

The purpose of Raven's Progressive Matrices and Vocabulary Scales is to intimidate parents, placing educators and therapists in a position of power. Mr. and Mrs. Snothead were, indeed, baffled by the rectangular array of numbers, algebraic symbols, and mathematical functions.

TEST #4: Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales for Early Childhood (Early SB5) (2005) R2:

Some children have been stupid since they were babies, and the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales for Early Childhood can make this fact clear. For example, exactly how long did it take the kid to learn how to roll over? When did he or she sit up? Learn to wave? Stop putting toys in his or her mouth? Using the statistical tool of regression analysis to determine the values of parameters for a function so that the cause will fit the function equal to a set of data observations, this test provides information crucial to breaking the vicious cycle of dumb babies who grow up to become dumb parents who, in turn, give birth to more dumb babies. (Regarding Charlie—I'm still waiting for his pediatrician to respond to my e-mail).

TEST #5: Universal Nonverbal Intelligence Test (UNIT) (1998) R2:

Developed by Marcel Marceau, this test measures the probability of a child becoming a successful pantomime artist. Generally, the chances are slim. Charlie shows no particular promise.

TEST #6: Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence (WASI) (1999) R2:

Approaching intelligence as something that might be shortened for the sake of expediency, WASI measures a child's overall cognition and presents a report written entirely in abbreviations. Areas of study include: BabA2, CagA, IDA, and ITP. Developed by the world-renowned EHSG¹, the test also detects MALT, GERD, and tolerance for NSAIDs. In most areas,

Charlie seems to be normal—I mean, OK.

(¹European Helicobacter Study Group).

TEST #7: Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children – Fourth Edition Australian Standardised:

Similar to WASI's abbreviated scale, this version of the test uses abbreviations based on Australian spelling; i.e., GORD (gastro-oesophageal reflux disease). It's recommended that Charlie undergo additional testing using the WASI Czechoslovakian version (pre-1993), which is administered at a reduced rate once a month at "Czarina's," a well known Russian restaurant located in Brighton Beach, near Coney Island.

TEST #8: Woodcock-Johnson-III Test of Cognitive Ability (WJ-III) (2003)* R2:

Developed in the 1950s by a locker room attendant at the Millbury Academy for Boys, in Millbury, Connecticut, the Woodcock-Johnson Test measures the ability of teenage boys to maintain cognition while having an erection. Basically, boys are asked to solve a math word problem while simultaneously "pulling a Woodcock-Johnson." It should be noted that since the passage of Title IX, the use of this test has been modified, but it remains an established scientific fact that teenage boys think about sex once every seven seconds and often suffer from involuntary erections that contribute to poor academic performance. Therefore, the test remains widely used, in part because it's hysterically funny to administer, particularly the moment when the poor worked-up boy is told to turn off the video and start solving the math problem. NOTE: many practitioners believe the girls' version of this test is unreliable. Charlie's Woodcock-Johnston performance seems to be "AVG."

TEST #9: ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDERS EVALUATION SCALE:

Known by the brief name ADDES, this test is based on the principle of "the paradox." Any child who can sit still long enough to complete the test is fine; children too restless to be evaluated must have some kind of problem. Charlie, who seems to understand the term "paradox," said he would like to have this disorder if it means extra time on tests. See evaluator's recommendations below.

Conclusions:

- Charlie has *superior verbal comprehension skills*, with a solid vocabulary and a great deal of general world knowledge, particularly about rock bands and sports. He understands and can express connections between sophisticated ideas and concepts, particularly about rock bands and sports. For example, he pointed out that California has five major league baseball teams, which he finds "unethical" because some states don't have any team at all.

- Charlie has *superior visual-spatial reasoning abilities*. He can understand and interpret visually

presented material such as maps and graphs and pictures of scantily clad women. He successfully verbalizes presented information to help him process what he's seen. For example, twice he looked at a picture and said, "Wow, what a pair of boobs," and once he gazed at the visual stimulus for almost a full minute whispering to himself over and over again, "Incredible—she looks just like my French teacher." Occasionally, he may process information slowly, and this can negatively affect him on timed tasks. As Charlie himself put it, "Some guys just take a little longer."

- Charlie has *solid working memory capabilities*. He can learn, retain, and mentally manipulate novel information (e.g. he can be given a series of numbers and arrange them in numerical order and recall them). During this part of the testing, Charlie exhibited resistance to engaging the task, calling the manipulation of random numbers a "dumb thing to be good at." However, he later acknowledged a career interest in bartending and linked the importance of short-term memory to success in this field. He added that he thinks it would be "fun" to spend eight hours a day in a bar, where "it always feels like a party." A second round of testing, in which Charlie memorized ingredients for various kinds of margaritas, confirmed that Charlie's *working memory greatly improves when he is interested in the task*.

Evaluator's recommendations:

- Charlie should be given preferential seating, extra time, a laptop computer, and short breaks as needed to his refocus his attention. He should also be excused from school assemblies. On the other hand, if these accommodations don't seem to help, it would be reasonable to try yelling at Charlie whenever he drifts off.
- Charlie's classroom teachers should help Charlie cope with his fear of failure by telling Charlie that they love him no matter what. If this doesn't produce positive results, then, again, it would be reasonable to try yelling at Charlie whenever he makes a mistake.
- As Charlie approaches his senior year, the school's college office should help Charlie research bartending schools.
- As soon as possible, Charlie's parents should be encouraged to get therapy for themselves. (NOTE: In addition to educational testing and tutoring in all subjects, I am available for individual, group, and family therapy. A small rebate is payable to the referring school official if Mr. and/or Mrs. Snothead schedule an appointment within 30 days of this report.)
- Charlie's French teacher should be instructed to contact me immediately—at home, in the evening.

For questions about the content of this evaluation or additional services available, please contact me at the e-mail above or visit www.fixakid.com.

Bio: Walter B. Levis was nominated for a 2006 Pushcart Prize and is author of the novel MOMENTS OF DOUBT (2003). His fiction has appeared in the North Dakota Quarterly, The New Plains Review, and The Connecticut Review, among many others. His nonfiction has appeared in The National Law Journal, The Chicago Reporter, The New Republic, Show Business Magazine, and The New Yorker. More information at www.walterblevis.com.

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