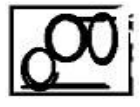


a function of his schizophrenia, this based on characteristics that Rosenthal describes as “word salad” and “disorganized speech.” Of course, this theory has been dismissed by more recent research on Devine for the basic reason that all of Devine’s works are, in fact, extremely organized speech and more of a “word file cabinet” than a “word salad” (Kimball, forthcoming). Thus, there is no reason to believe that the author is a person with schizophrenia, though the alphabetical syntax and list-like nature of many of Andy Devine’s works may indicate that he suffers from obsessive-compulsive disorder (Barlow, 2005; Comer, 2006).

Regardless of whether any of these biographical details are true or not, it is obvious that Andy Devine’s writing are full of implication and possibility. It is further known that Devine has published extensively on the subject of words—including notable essays concerning prepositions, adjectives, and adverbial particles. Devine is probably most well-known for his essays concerning diction in fictional works, two separate conceptual works that were written in a furious rush before the end of the last century—one essay on words that should be used in the writing of fiction and one essay on words that should not be used in the writing of fiction. In 2002, Devine was awarded the 2002 Riddley Walker Prize (for a work that ignores conventional rules of grammar and punctuation). Other acknowledgments of his remarkable work are the fact that Andy Devine Avenue (in Kingman, Arizona) is named after him and his mention in a Frank Zappa song (“Andy”).

Michael Kimball is the author of several critical articles concerning the stories and essays of Andy Devine, as well as of three critically acclaimed novels—*The Way the Family Got Away* (2000), *How Much of Us There Was* (2005), and *Dear Everybody* (2008).



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An Incomplete and Uncritical Biography of Andy Devine

Michael Kimball

Andy Devine is an enigmatic figure and little is known about his life or hobbies. We do not know, for instance, when he was born or where he grew up, whether he was married or not, whether he liked to watch baseball on television or had a favorite flavor of ice cream. Many critics suggest, however, that his conceptual fictional works and many alphabetical essays offer insight into the life of Andy Devine. It has been argued, for instance, that he was born or grew up in Michigan (or both; Tomlinson, 2004). The Italian critic, Stefano DiTrapano (2007), further contends that Andy Devine was raised by his maternal grandparents, in what was most probably a middle-class or working-class family, and that the family may have run a grocery store—all of this conjecture mostly based on the short work “As Day Same That the the Was Year.” Moreover, Granger (2001) hypothesizes that there must have been a terrible incident concerning a baby at some point during Devine’s life—either his younger sibling or his own child (and probably the loss of said baby). The main basis for this speculation is the short work “A Baby Bigger Grows Than Up Was,” though two other works are cited as support, “As at Dying in Night the the Us We” and “By Cart Children Full Groceries He Is Proposes the to Until with Women.”

Concerning the possibility of mental illness, Rosenthal (2004) put forward the suggestion that Andy Devine’s writings are

AS DAY SAME THAT THE THE WAS YEAR ANDY DEVINE

your, your, your, your, your, your, your, your, your, your, ...
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born, both, bother, bought, bought,
bought, boy, boy, boy, boy, boy, boy, brother, brother,
brother, bugs, build, building, building, building,
built, burned, busy, busy, but, but, but, but, but, but, but,
but, but, but, but, by, by, by, by, by, by, by, by, by,
called, came, came, came, came, came, came, can,
can, can, can, can, cannot, cannot, care, care, car-
ries, cars, cars, cars, caused, caused, Celia, cent, cents,
change, change, chapter, chapter, Chicago, circle, city, city,
city, city, claim, Clarence, class, class, class, class, clerk,
clothing, clouds, cob, cold, colored, colored, come, come,
come, coming, coming, corner, cornered, cost, cost, couch,
could, could, could, count, count, count, count,
counting, country, crippled, curtain, Curtis, date, daughter,
daughter, day, day, day, day, day, day, day, day, days,
days, days, death, deep, Detroit, did, did, did, did, did,
did, did, did, did, did, did, did, did, did, did, did,
did, did, didn't, didn't, died, died, died, died

