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# Money and checks aren't free despite the American dream

"That's the way you do it/You play the guitar on MTV/Your money's for nothing and your checks for free."



**Scott Harrah**

The lyrics above are from the new Dire Straits single, "Money for Nothing." Although I've never been much of a Straits fan, I find the lyrics of the band's new hit a provocative parody of the mentality of show-biz fans and followers of the American Dream.

We are approaching the coming of yet another stagnating year of college and another step to graduation and job success.

What can we expect to get from that highly coveted college degree — a decent job, an American Express card, lots of bucks for a wedding with relatives and champagne, a nice suburban palace and a multitude of kids and cookouts on our impeccably landscaped lawns?

Or, alas, will we descend to the depths of a working class wasteland full of factory jobs, trailer courts, credit card rejections and polyester wardrobes?

I am one of those people accused of desiring "Money for Nothing." Ever since I was a young freak growing up across the country, moving from school

to school and suburban palace to bigger suburban palace as my parents' generation chased the elusive American Dream, I have always wanted something more.

One line in "Money for Nothing" pinpoints the jealousy of people who see others go for something more and get it: "I should have learned to play guitar," the lead vocalist sings, imitating a working class citizen watching a band on television.

It seems like people constantly disdain and ridicule those who dream of a successful art, literary, acting or music career. But tell someone that you want to go into something commonplace like business and they are behind you in every way.

If you disclose the details of your wistful longings to write, act, sing or paint, expect a flood of laughs. While you're still struggling to "make it," that is. Once you get that first story published, that first recording contract or that first bit part on Broadway, however, the same imbeciles who once snickered at your dreams will be the ones to snarl, "I could do that. Anyone could. He/she must really think he/she is hot..."

I have met both types. There are the egotistical artists who want to leave their mark on the world with some auspicious achievement. And there are others who laugh and say, "You? Ha! You'll never do that. Go get a real job."

You will find that the people who

seem to want glamour, fame and "Money for Nothing" aren't nearly as egotistical, pretentious and outlandish as they appear to be. Shrink the swelled heads of all the aspiring artists, designers, authors, actors and musicians around and you'll find that they're merely people who reject the drone of traditional society and just want to make a living being an individual instead of being an office or factory clone.

I remember working in a nursing home my first year of college. One night an overweight, middle-aged, polyester-frocked frump said to me, "So, you go to school. What are you going to do with your life?"

"I want to write."

"You wanna' be a writer, eh?" she cackled, biting into a Twinkie. "I know what you really want. You wanna' be jet-set and sip wine on the Riviera. Well, one day you'll be my age and realize you hafta' work for a living, kiddo."

"Of course," I replied tartly. "A writing career is something you have to work at to achieve, unlike this job. Any Twinkie-munching matron with enough energy to get off her butt and empty a bedpan can do this."

As we enter this school year, we should not let the cloned cacklers and the Twinkie-munching matrons of the world discourage our dreams. After all, if money was truly for nothing and paychecks were free, we wouldn't be stupid enough to put ourselves through another year of scholarly brutality.

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## Denver fails to capture '80s fans

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In my opinion, John Denver and Billy Zoom do not sound good together. Both are excellent musicians, but musically and ideologically they are years apart — about 10 to be precise.

In spite of the album's problems, it does have flashes of brilliance. To

Denver's credit, the songs he wrote save the record. Of the 11 songs on the album, Denver penned only four. The remaining seven songs are boring and uninspired.

The title track "Dreamland Express" is as hauntingly beautiful as "African Sunrise," written in Africa. Denver's

lyric writing has helped make him famous. For example, on "African Sunrise" Denver sings, "I pray for rain to wash away their tears."

John Denver plays excellent guitar, has a wonderful voice and is a great man, but he should concentrate more on being John Denver, rather than trying to be someone he is not.

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