



## ***Chew on This: Everything You Don't Want to Know About Fast Food***

**Transcript: TeachingBooks Original Movie with Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson**

***Chew on This* creators Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson, interviewed in New York City on February 20 and 21, 2007.**

**This is a transcript of the movie available on TeachingBooks.net. It is offered here to give a quick assessment of the program topics, as well as to enable people with auditory disabilities access to the words.**

**Because this is a transcript of an edited movie, it should not be used as an assessment of Mr. Schlosser's and Mr. Wilson's writing. Many of the sentences found here were edited, and all editing decisions are the sole responsibility of TeachingBooks.net.**

*Chew on This* is a book that tells you what you're eating when you go to a fast food restaurant. *Chew on This* means, "Think about this." The title of the book isn't "do this" or "don't do this," it's "Chew on This." It's trying to make the reader think.

We knew that people in high school were reading *Fast Food Nation*, but we wondered whether we could bring it to middle school students. We wanted to tell the story of *Fast Food Nation* through the story of young people.

Our main hope is that by letting kids know where their food comes from, they might make better choices about the food they buy. I don't think most kids have any idea where their food comes from today.

### **About Fast Food**

You would assume that the nice red color that a strawberry milkshake has comes from strawberries.

[Reading from *Chew on This*] "The dead bodies of small bugs are collected, dried and ground into a coloring additive which is used to make processed foods look pink, red or purple."

One of my favorite foods is the hamburger, but if you saw how the cattle were being raised for fast food hamburgers, you might think twice about ordering one. When we think of cattle, we think of them out on the prairie, eating grass. But fast food hamburgers are coming from a very different place. It's like a city of cattle, just crammed together and fenced in.

One cow produces about the equivalent manure of about 15 people. So imagine putting 100,000 cows together into one feedlot — what do you do with all that waste? The manure pile became so big, it looked like a mountain, and it actually caught fire.

### **On Marketing Fast Food**

The marketing toward children that the fast food industry began started very innocently — maybe with a free lollipop, later on a clown and a toy. And now it's not innocent at all. They hire child psychologists to study children. They're aiming their products at kids two, three, four years old. They're encouraging children to eat food that often is going to have a long-term negative effect on their health. We don't have to have this cheap, unhealthy food being so aggressively promoted.

### **On Making Food Choices**

I think the main thing that we want kids to get from *Chew on This* is we want them to think through everything for themselves. We feel like the fast food industry is such a good place to start because it's so omnipresent, and it's so much a part of the fabric of their lives.

### **M.S. 61 Brooklyn, NY**

I really like visiting schools. What I tell students isn't anywhere near as interesting to me as what they tell me. And during my school visits, I enjoy the feedback I get from them much more than anything I might say to them.

[Student] My favorite fruits are the cantaloupe melon, and mangoes are really good.

I'm really going to the school so that I can hear what the kids have to say.

[Student] The first time I had broccoli, it was Chinese food with beef ribs. I've loved it ever since. I don't have to eat the ribs with it anymore.

Hopefully *Chew on This* is encouraging kids to think.

[Student] This book encouraged me to change my eating habits because certain things that I found out about — things that I eat every day...it just startled me. And it really makes me ponder why am I eating these things that could really damage me.

I hope that kids who read the book will take it upon themselves to read and investigate more on any part of the book that they find interesting.

[Student] I don't think things are really going to change until we get more healthy food stores around neighborhoods.

Eric and I both believe in the idea that one person can change the world by their individual choices. And we show that in the book by the story of a 12-year-old girl who stands up and tries to get her soda machine out of the school.

One of the things I hope that *Chew on This* does is help kids make the connection between choices they make now and their future — their future health.

Thirty years ago, young people were drinking twice as much milk as soda. Today, they're drinking twice as much soda as milk.

I think it's possible to have food that's healthy — that's good for you to eat — that's also inexpensive. For real change to happen, it's going to have to come from the kids, the community, the teachers, the parents. We're all part of this fast food nation. We're all connected by the system, and we all have to be a part of changing it.

**Books by Eric Schlosser**

- CHEW ON THIS: EVERYTHING YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW ABOUT FAST FOOD (co-written with Charles Wilson), Houghton Mifflin, 2006
- COGS IN THE GREAT MACHINE, Penguin Putnam, 2005
- FEEDING THE FUTURE: FROM FAT TO FAMINE, HOW TO SOLVE THE WORLD'S FOOD CRISES, House of Anansi Press, 2005
- REEFER MADNESS: SEX, DRUGS, AND CHEAP LABOR IN THE AMERICAN BLACK MARKET, Houghton Mifflin, 2003
- PLEASURES OF SLOW FOOD, THE: CELEBRATING AUTHENTIC TRADITIONS, FLAVORS AND RECIPES (co-written with Corby Kummer and Susie Cushner), Chronicle Books, 2002
- FAST FOOD NATION: THE DARK SIDE OF THE ALL-AMERICAN MEAL, Houghton Mifflin, 2001
- MONKEY WRENCH GANG, THE (co-written with Edward Abbey), J. B. Lippincott, 1975

**Books by Charles Wilson**

- CHEW ON THIS: EVERYTHING YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW ABOUT FAST FOOD (co-written with Eric Schlosser), Houghton Mifflin, 2006

*Note: Bibliography created in March 2007.*

Many thanks to the folks at Houghton Mifflin, specifically Betsy Groban, Caroline Kraft, Linda Magram, Bridget Marmion and Karen Walsh.

Thanks also to everyone at M.S. 61 — Dr. Gladstone Atwell Middle School 61 — in Brooklyn, New York. Specifically, thanks to Amanda, Ashea, Bob and Shanique for sharing a day of their vacation with us. To Ms. Carter and Ms. Danzy, for all of their generosity and arrangements. Thanks to the New York City Department of Education offices of School Library Services and Communications for their assistance, too.

Thanks to the Brooklyn Public Library for their assistance in the filming of this production. Specific thanks to Ruth Anne Wagner and Judy Zuckerman.

Thanks to the management of Manhattan's Fairway Market and Mariella Pizza on 8th Avenue.

Thanks, as well, to Gretta Miller and Aarick Beher for their invaluable, professional help with this production.

Of course, this entire Author Program occurred because of the kindness and generosity of Charles Wilson, who graciously opened his home and shared his time and enthusiasm with us, and Eric Schlosser -- equally generous and supportive of this project.

This program is a production of TeachingBooks.net LLC and may only be used in accordance with the Subscriber Agreement found on the TeachingBooks website. (www.TeachingBooks.net)

TeachingBooks.net obtained the following permissions:

From CHEW ON THIS: EVERYTHING YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW ABOUT FAST FOOD by Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson. Copyright ©2006 Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson. Published by Houghton Mifflin. All rights reserved. Cover image, text, reading and internal image used by permission. No material shall be published, re-transmitted, broadcast, modified or adapted (re-written), manipulated, reproduced or otherwise distributed and/or exploited in any way without the prior written authorization of Houghton Mifflin.

Permission to film footage inside MS 61 was obtained by the New York City Department of Education, Office of Communications and Media Relations, along with the administration of the Dr. Gladstone H. Atwell Middle School 61. Similarly, each child and their parent/guardian gave permission for this filming as well.

Questions regarding this production should be directed to: [info@teachingbooks.net](mailto:info@teachingbooks.net)

Copyright ©2007 TeachingBooks.net LLC. All rights reserved.