

# Ethanol: With a Side of Trouble, Please

By Amanda Bennett

Outside my house I hear the sounds of stampedes. Yearningly I gaze into the pages of my history textbook, at the photographs of buffalo and horses. The herds outside my door consist of people, not animals, and not just pedestrian, busy business people but powerful, ravenous, wealthy Brazilians. Ludicrously I daydream about future history books, and their chapters about Brazil's invasion of the United States. To save oil, we made a mass switch to ethanol under our first Democratic president in eight years, Rodney Hinton. Strike up a deal with Brazil, the largest producer of ethanol in the world, and most successful to boot, advised Hinton. Some folks suspect that Hinton had already heard that Brazil was after the United States, reproaching him as a spy. Yet he was the richest candidate and promised that if he spent any money on war the funds would be drawn from his own endowment. Any intelligent person knows enough to realize that no president would pull money from his own pocket. The peace-hungry populous fell for his canvassing, and here we are.

Spurring the switch to ethanol, the price of gas peaked at an "atrocious" of 3 bucks a gallon. Never mind that the Starbucks at the gas station charged the equivalent of \$15 a gallon for coffee, and consumers never blinked at that, nor did Mr. Hinton. This time the president wasn't to blame for the price risings, as the public had blamed Bush a few years ago: the oil companies were the villains. In an attempt half meant to benefit consumers by driving down cost and half meant to "save" the environment (although I suspect another half was to spite the oil bigwigs), Hinton passed a law phasing out gas in two months, with free distribution of mechanisms to convert gas-fueled cars to ethanol receptors. He set up a contract with Brazil: take away the over-50-cent tariff on ethanol from South America and give Crystalsev, Brazil's largest ethanol exporter, rights to all Exxon-Mobil stations (the twelve billion offered to Hinton by a Crystalsev lobbyist did not influence this decision, according to the president). A fool-proof plan, right?

Wrong. What about America's farmers? Corn grows like a weed in the Midwest; ranchers don't need government assistance, said Hinton. Let's save the money for welfare, for impecunious people in the cities, who really need it. Yes, the farmers nurtured harvests and reaped tons of corn, anticipating an upwelling demand for the ethanol-producing crop and an insufficient supply to fuel it. Brazil ended up supplying all the ethanol, though, and these farmers were left with a mass of grain and one option: cow food, since the corn for ethanol tasted bland and destined for cattle. With the large amount of corn available, the food producers and stores weren't paying top dollar for the crop. When farmers decided to grow corn for ethanol, visions of profits dancing in their heads, they didn't know that the energy used to make ethanol (1.3 units) dwarfs the production of energy by ethanol (1 unit), so ethanol plants don't actually pay a high price for corn. Nor did the government or any so-called environmental activist groups inform the farmers of the process of creating ethanol: extracting the starch from corn (leaving behind a good amount of waste), cooking it to break it down into monosaccharides, adding enzymes to catalyze the process, adding yeast to enhance fermentation, dehydrating to remove the water from the ethanol, which is a type of alcohol with a 200 proof rating, and then the addition of a small amount of gasoline or another substance to render the ethanol unfit for human consumption. Farmers raising corn to produce ethanol themselves were unable to complete the complicated process. More evidence of the difficulty to profit from corn sold for ethanol: one bushel of corn produces only 2.5 gallons of ethanol, and that same amount of corn could be used to make 22 pounds of livestock feed, 10 boxes of cereal, or 33 pounds of sweetener.<sup>1</sup> Of course, the majority of farmers just grew the

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nwicc.cc.ia.us/pages/continuing/business/ethanol/Module2.htm>

corn with plans of shipping the crop off to commercial processors. But since Brazilian ethanol comprised the main source of ethanol for the United States, companies couldn't find a reason for investing in ethanol plants here. The Brazilian plants producing all the ethanol made sense: a shortage of corn relative to the need did exist in Brazil, so the prices charged by farmers were profitable to the farmers. Since they were used to working for lower wages, these "high" prices were actually less than the "low" prices in America. Companies based in Brazil could pay out little and make the Brazilian farmers happier than the American farmers selling to American plants. While oblivious consumers filled their tanks at the pumps, proud of their environmentally friendly "choice", farmers in Iowa, Kansas, and Oklahoma watched their boon, corn, rot in the fields as their stomachs churned with pangs of hunger.

Of course Hinton then drove the country into debt, paying out too much farmer compensation (but what else could he do?). To solve the lack of money, we made a larger deal with Brazil; they'd pay our debts for the right to be the sole proprietor of ethanol in the United States. Hinton accepted, and succumbed to a coup two weeks later.

I return my eyes to my history text, forcing myself to complete the homework. The new Brazilian teachers enforce the rules, and I don't want to get a detention. I must admit, though, however much I complain about their tough love, I am learning a lot from them.

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The sun shines in through my window, and I squint against the bright rays, forcing myself to get up and face another day of chaos. My ritual of brushing my teeth (without water, because a shortage of that plagues the world) and showering (with a five-minute cap) is interrupted by my pompous father, a rather roly-poly man with a "healthy" paunch, who comes running into the bathroom with a newspaper in his hands, shoving it in my face. He acts just like a little kid when he gets excited.

Spitting out the toothpaste into the sink, I take the paper, the town's daily newspaper, the *Reworder*, from my dad and read the headline: Whirlwind Idea!

"Look, look," he pleads, his eyes glistening with hope. "The town council has decided to start an underground construction of windmills. Each family, look it says right here"—he points to a paragraph beneath a photo of a tall and slim silver pinwheel—"it says right here that each family will receive one windmill, to put up at night. They'll store energy to power the house through the day. We'll starve out the Brazilians by reducing our dependence on ethanol to heat and cool our homes!"

The absurdity of this plan stares up at me from the page and I glance up at my dad's animated face. He obviously assumes that the Brazilians won't buy a *Reworder* today.

"Um, Dad, won't the Brazilians see the windmills?" I ask.

"But they'll be up at night!" exclaims my father. I sigh, remembering a time a few years ago when the country still used gas. My family traveled for vacation, and we stopped at a gas station. A gallon of gas cost \$3.19, and my dad started grumbling about the price as he filled the tank. He entered the station to pay and came out with a paper, waving it as elatedly as he was now. He climbed into the car and relayed to our family that the House of Representatives had just repealed the gas tax. Of course there were more steps to pass before the move became law, but with the people pressuring the president and their congressmen, the gas tax could disappear in a few months. It did.

The blessing of losing a few cents at the pump turned rotten as the country fell into even deeper debt. The practically unnoticeable savings to families from the tax elimination quickly added up as losses for the country, and many government-maintained roads fell into disrepair. Formerly funded by the gas

tax, the roads no longer had funds to be maintained. This memory influences my dubious thoughts about our town's current scheme.

"Dad, remember the gas tax? The President didn't want to eliminate it, but the public forced him to. Maybe this time we should let the leaders do what they think is best for us," I urge. "I know, the newspaper has disclosed the barbarian acts of the Brazilians, but you don't really believe that they plucked random people off the streets to torture, do you?"

"Honey, you never know!" my father replies.

"Why would they want to hurt us? If we are gone, who will buy their ethanol?"

"They could always invade Canada too..." mutters my dad as he wanders into the kitchen, his favorite spot to head to if he wants to end a discussion, to sell the idea to my mother.

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"Look, look, the editorial page of the *Reworder*, can you believe what this nutcase says? He's insulting the town's ideas, outright calling the mayor a dolt, I think he is rather erudite for carrying us through this disastrous raid without looting like other towns, and he says that the ethanol not being used as fast will be a sign of our windmills, and—" my father stops to catch his breath, putting his hands on his knees. The newspaper crinkles between his beer belly and his thighs. Standing up, he opens his mouth to start another rant, but I interrupt before he can start. His excitement over the deranged windmill plan published two days ago gave me reason to be wary of his opinions.

"Dad, can I please read this editorial before you lecture me about it? You used too many pronouns, I have no idea who you are talking about," I added, the words of my grammar book seemingly wafting through the air into my unconsciousness from the open book on my bed. My dad holds out the newspaper, still panting from his vigorous gallop up the stairs to deliver the proclaimed "libel" to me. Smiling, I glance at the words, skimming them while letting thoughts tumble through my mind. I already know what the paper says, because I wrote it. I'm surprised that the newspaper published the editorial so soon. I guess they must not be receiving too many letters. "This person is just exercising his right to free speech," I calmly explain to my father. "The Brazilians didn't take away that. Anyhow, you know my opinion of the windmill motion. I don't think that it will work. And read here, the guy explains: '*Windmills will help eliminate the footprint left by humans when we consume energy, but the way to achieve a wind-powered grid is to appeal to the Brazilians like we, unsuccessfully, appealed to Hinton.*' He's right, dad. The Brazilians lead us now, whether we like it or not."

"Well," says my dad, "this person claims that Hinton let the Brazilians take over and was never interested in stopping global warming by reducing energy consumption."

"Did you read the explanation and evidence after the thesis?" I sigh. "Hinton didn't ever initiate any bills to reduce energy consumption. He only required replacing the gas with ethanol. He knew that Brazil was—is—the world's largest producer of ethanol. He practically invited them to take over our economy, and once the market is controlled, the country isn't too far behind, in the eyes of the invader," I explain, my head cocked in his direction to catch any muttered protests. Much to my surprise, my father instead snatches the paper from my hand and furiously begins reading.

"Oh my ... oh darned ... you're right, you are totally right. The author of this is right. How did we not see it? How did Hinton manage to keep the entire country blind as he, as he, extradited us to Brazil?" my father gasps and gapes at the editorial. I try to conceal my surreptitious proud smile. Despite my contentment that my father finally understands, a hesitant notion skulks into my mind: if my dad, and

the rest of our town, now realizes Hinton's planned overthrow, they will try to do something about the conundrum. They loved Hinton, almost worshipping him as the savior of the country. They'd try to do something to redeem themselves and convince everyone—not that anyone cared—that our town never supported Hinton. Based on past theories to save the earth (last November, they proposed setting up a giant greenhouse around the town to warm the entire community during the winter to reduce home heating costs and the fuel used by plows, but the plan halted once an editorial appeared in the *Reworder* pointing out that the energy required to heat the bubble would far outweigh the energy needed to heat homes and plow driveways), ominous black clouds gather in my head as I try to imagine what ideas the town government would dream up this time.

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After nightmares of greenhouses trapping me and suffocating me with heat, I wake up and stumble downstairs to the kitchen for breakfast. My mother, a short stocky woman with fiery strawberry-blonde hair and a knack for cooking, although lacking in the cleaning department, makes me whole-wheat blueberry pancakes on our electric stove, powered by a solar panel, using mix from a local store and blueberries from our backyard. Surprisingly, despite their outlawing of windmills, the Brazilians encouraged everyone to use solar panels as a source of electricity for their homes. Their reasoning behind this is clear to me: Brazilians bought out BP Solar, a large producer of solar panels, and paid every other manufacturer they could find an inarguably high amount to let BP Solar (now, BP stands for "Brazil Powered") take over their company and become our only maker of solar panels. As long as the Brazilians benefited, they didn't mind our using alternative energies. Also unpredictably, the Brazilians truly cared about reducing global warming. The angered Americans are too distraught to realize that our energy emissions since the coup have fallen almost 50%. Our gas use is zero, and although ethanol does not burn 100% clean, our emissions of gases from cars fell dramatically. The United States—name now in debate—now takes the number two spot on the least-energy-consumed-per-person worldwide list, second only to Brazil itself. The Brazilians also require every home or apartment to plant one crop to enhance self-sustainability. We chose blueberries, and the Brazilians only charged \$5 for a mature plant (imported from Brazil). Similar deals were available for perennial plants that take a while to bear fruit. Annuals, including most vegetables, were imported from Brazil and sold for only \$1. Local farm stands received large cash bonuses, enabling them to lower prices below that of grocery stores and stay in business. Outrageous taxes were imposed on the large, big-box grocer chains if they imported products from anywhere outside their state (except Brazil, which gave them a bonus if they used electric-powered boats and ethanol-powered trucks to transport the goods). Local foods taste better anyhow, as many people discovered, and many large-scale grocery stores were bankrupted. I actually feel that the Brazilians administer the states better than Hinton ever could have. My mother had been originally appalled at this suggestion when my father shoved my editorial in front of her face yesterday, but after much coaxing she too listened to the reasoning behind the letter and woke up today in a considerably improved mood.

"Honey, I bought this at the store this morning," she says, and I realize that I did wake up late. The clock over the stovetop blinks 10:43 at me in bold red numbers. She holds up a pill bottle, like the one that Advil comes in, except the label reads "MindStop". "Just sprinkle a little of this powder-" (I guess they aren't pills) "-onto your daily breakfast and unpleasant thoughts float out of your mind. Forget anything you don't want to remember! Stop those buggers today with MindStop!" she reads, smiling at the bottle, almost lovingly. "Mind if I sprinkle a few on your pancakes?" she giggles, laughing at her pun. I'm appalled. My mom is acting like a 10-year-old. She cups her hands under her mouth and blows. "Fairy dust!"

"Yes I do mind!" I cry, breaking the blithe atmosphere. My mother steps back as if slapped.

"But darling, you could forget that your boyfriend dumped you last weekend. You could forget that I burnt dinner last night. You could forget that we trusted Hinton, and he let us down," she beseeches. So that is what this is about, I think, forgetting Hinton. This is our crazy town's solution.

"Sorry, Mom, but why would I want to forget things? We have to remember negative experiences. It's how we learn. If a baby touches something, and it hurts, it won't touch it again. What if a mother took this, this, this 'medicine' and poisoned her breast milk? What if her baby didn't learn that touching a hot stove was bad?" I suggest. "Is this approved?"

"Of course it is. The former mayor approved it. Would I offer it to you if I wasn't sure that it was safe? I even tried it this morning, when I first bought it around seven; I went to the store as soon as I read the paper. I couldn't remember anything bad until your father turned on the news, where I was reminded about Hinton, and then when I looked in the refrigerator and saw charred leftovers, and then when I looked into your room and didn't see the picture of Henry on your dresser, which reminded me that you two had split," explains my mom. "See, as the *Reworder* explains today, MindStop will only work if everyone takes it, so that no one will be able to remind us of all the things MindStop helps us forget!" exclaims my mother. I cringe as I read over the *Reworder's* article. Many of the town's residents despair for assistance in overlooking Hinton's cooperation with the Brazilians. They'll fall for MindStop, especially since the article touted it as being outlawed by the Brazilians. I notice some fine print on the bottle that my mother had handed me. "Produced in Columbia. Active Ingredient: Coca Hydrochloride." A gear in the back of my brain clicks.

I jump up from the table and jog upstairs, where my biology books hides in my backpack. Pulling the textbook out, I open to the chapter on plants that includes a special section on drugs. I flip to the table containing drugs, the plants they are derived from, and their active chemical. Startled, I read: "Cocaine; Coca leaves; Cocaine Hydrochloride. Note: Cocaine, also known as crack, is one of, if not the, most addictive drugs available on the street at time of publication."<sup>2</sup> No wonder Brazil outlawed MindStop. One of the first laws passed by the new government eradicated all drugs unless prescribed by a doctor, actually enforced, even on cough syrup and children's medications. They'd become the most popular drugs to abuse. Plain-clothes cops busted one million drug rings in the first six months of the campaign. Half of the Brazilians' motive regarded the health of its new citizens; the other half dealt a blow to Columbia, and its president-dictator Hugo Chavez, who invaded the drug-exporter from his seat in Venezuela two years ago. Chavez, to cripple the world, proceeded to create the world's largest consumer country, of energy, food, water, wealth, and materials. Not to mention that producing refined versions of drugs such as cocaine gobbles up tons of energy. The Brazilians are currently attempting to upset Chavez, but Hinton secretly supplied the South American monster with hundreds of weapons, and the Brazilians aren't making much progress.

I run back downstairs and slam my biology book on the table next to my plate of steaming pancakes, rattling the silverware.

"Hey, Mom, do you realize that the active ingredient in MindStop is cocaine?" I innocently ask. She picks up the bottle and scrounges in her pockets for her glasses, which she refuses to wear except during extreme circumstances like this one.

"No," she replies indignantly, "the active ingredient is coca hydrochloride." She looks at me triumphantly. "Sorry, honey. Now eat your—"

"Mom, cocaine comes from the leaves of the coca plant, and the chemical in them is hydrochloride," I elucidate as I point to the table in my book. "And it is dangerously addictive. Stop taking that

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<sup>2</sup> [www.Cocaineabuse.net](http://www.Cocaineabuse.net)

MindStop junk, Mommy." I grab a fork and begin to eat my pancakes drenched in maple syrup, the real deal from a farm stand a couple blocks away. A bitter taste touches my tongue and I look intently at my mother. "Did you lace these with that drug, behind my back, when I ran upstairs to retrieve my textbook? Did you stoop that low?" I inquire forcefully.

"Dear, it's for your own good!" she bursts. "I had to have some myself, and I crave to share that with you! And MindStop, the feeling it gives you, you can finally forget, dear, forget! Forget global warming, forget Chavez and Brazil, forget burnt dinners and boyfriends, just forget! Besides, your father liked it. Please eat your breakfast!" Revolted, I fling my fork onto my plate, splattering syrup on the counter. The sweet liquid pools into blots shaped queasily like the country of Brazil, leaves, and pancakes. I push away from the table and totter across the kitchen floor, unsteady, unable to process the attraction of MindStop. Why would someone want to forget about global warming? Carbon-reducing efforts would stop; the ocean would go back to rising; the ozone layer would resume depleting. Would morals be forgotten? Would crime run amuck in the streets? Terrified, I stumble out the door into the sunlight. Our neighbor waves, calling my name.

"Hey! How's your dog doing?" he calls from the sidewalk. I halt. My dog died last month. A favorite of the neighborhood, his "funeral" was attended by all our neighbors. This guy must be on MindStop: he forgets that my pet passed away!

I stand in the light, with nowhere to go. I feel as though I am the only being in the town with the knowledge that MindStop is a hazardous addictive drug. My own mother won't listen to my reasoning. What chances did I have that the town would pay attention? My only option stared me right in the face, and I began walking down the street towards Town Hall: report the drug to the Brazilians.

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"I'll be right with you, menina," quips the Secretary of Town in a chipper, high-pitched voice as I walk into the Town Hall. She recommences her telephone conversation, apparently booking a manicure for the following week. "Oh, you carry oil-based nail polish? Isn't that against the law, for using a non-renewable resource flippantly? Okay... uh huh... sim... see you then." She set down the receiver and made a note in a phone book. "Plain-clothes work, menina. Finding the salons that break the law." She sets down her pen and slides her pink-rimmed glasses onto her head. "How can I help you?"

"I'd like to report a major crime," I start. She takes off her glasses altogether and angles her head a bit towards mine. "Who would I talk to?"

"Depends how 'major' the crime is," she replies.

"Major major," I secretively say.

"Let me show you to the Head of Town's office, okay? Right over here," she suggests, pointing to a labyrinth of hallways and doors that lead deeper into the Town Hall. I rise to follow her, and she leads me through the maze to a large, oak entrance bearing a bronze plate reading "Head of Town: Sr. Invernizzi". She knocks, and a thin, spectacled man with a scruffy sierra beard opens the door.

"Oi," he greets. "How may I help you, Ms. Jesu?"

"I have a citizen here who would like to report a major crime, sir," Ms. Jesu explains. I step up beside her, and address the Head.

"Mr. Invernizzi, I'd like to speak with you privately about a breach of security in the town that endangers the lives of countless citizens as we speak," I urgently implore. "Por favor." Mr. Invernizzi scrunches his brow, contemplating whether to let me in.

"Sim," he finally answers. "Ms. Jesu, please return to your desk. This matter is confidential." Ms. Jesu turns and strolls back to her desk, presumably to bust more salons. My issue takes precedence over the oil-based polish, though, and I quickly enter Mr. Invernizzi's office.

"Obrigado, sir," I commence. "A new drug is sweeping through the town as we speak. The name of the drug is MindStop, and it confers severe forgetfulness upon the consumer. The user disregards all negative memories and thoughts. A shocking example: a neighbor asked me this morning how my dog was, and my dog died last month. This man must have been using MindStop, and since he loved the dog and its passing pained him, he forgot the incident." Mr. Invernizzi brings his hand to his hair and thoughtfully combs it with his skinny fingers. He moves down his sideburns to the beard, furrowing his forehead as he contemplates the imminent disaster. Or so I thought.

"You say this drug—MindSwap, did you call it?—eliminates all bad thoughts and memories from the mind? All of them?" he excitedly asks, fingering the end of his whiskers.

"Yessir: it's MindStop. And the main ingredient..."

"So, one can simply walk into a pharmacy, fork over a few bucks, and walk out without a care in the world, no past or present but a sweet one?" Mr. Invernizzi poses ecstatically.

"Sir, the main ingredient in this drug is..." He interrupts me again.

"Thank you for this update on the state of the town. I appreciate your concern, but this drug doesn't seem very perilous to me. If it makes my subjects happy, it makes me happy! Claro? Claro!" The Head throws his hands up, swivels in his chair, and plants his feet atop his mahogany desk. "Now, if I could get back to..."

"But sir, this is a highly addictive drug! They'll forget the laws they don't like, forget the dangers of gas, forget money they owe! The town will fall into disarray! Por favor, listen to me!" I cry, leaping from my chair in desperation.

"Please, before I call security, 'Por favor, listen to me,'" he mocks, grinning. "I assure you, the citizens of this town are competent enough to make their own decisions. Now, I'm serious about summoning security...and would you mind telling me where I could secure a bottle of this MindStop? For testing purposes," he chuckled. I walk to the door, shaking my head and on the inside shaking my fists too. A drug that is threatening the entire city and only a two minute conversation, with a threat involving police? Not to mention an interest in self-use! Not a positive sign—I guess some of the Brazilians are corrupt, too. Our last mayor embezzled a million dollars from the town. Reluctantly, I suppose, a little forgetting isn't so bad in comparison.

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"A little forgetting", I realize as I wake up, is just as bad as stealing. Murder is a crime, and we're talking about killing thoughts. I rush to pack my knapsack. I shove in dehydrated berries, a favorite snack of my family, and some "space" ice cream that we'd bought a while back at an amusement park. Supposedly developed by NASA, the vendor touted the little pouches as the ice cream of the future. According to my parents, the same thing was said when they were kids, but we bought some anyway. Finally the packets come in handy! I grab some canned Spaghetti-O's and Ramen noodles, totaling enough food to last one week. The backpack fills up with sweatshirts, pants, underwear, and t-shirts. I'm provisioned with enough to supply me to travel to a place without MindStop, without thick-headed townsfolk. I don't know where I'll go. Most likely I'll have to stow away on a boat or plane to Europe, since the United States' towns and politicians obviously won't meet my standards. I know when to give up. I thought that the Brazilians saved us, eliminating harmful energy habits, and cleaning up the

states. I suppose they did, on that note. No lives were lost in the coup, no one harmed. Why were the townsfolk so darn stubborn? Without memories, we lose civilization. The Opium Wars, fought with weapons primitive to modern technology, were caused by a drug. Imagine what could happen today, especially with warnings from history like former wars forgotten!

I sneak out the door, my parents at work, and half run, half creep to the bus station. I climb on the 10:15, the bus going across the state. I'll keep going until I reach an airport and see if I can get on standby for something. I have fifty dollars, enough to get to the ocean. From there, who knows: perhaps I'll finally find a place that can balance being green environmentally with being green mentally. Perhaps I won't.

The woman next to me bounces a baby on her knee, singing a song:

*Just a small town girl,*

*Livin' in a lonely world*

*she took the midnight train goin' anywhere*

*Strangers waiting*

*Up and down the boulevard*

*their shadows searching in the night*

*don't stop believin'*

*Streetlight people...*

## Afterword

I've learned a lot in writing this story. To make it as realistic and educational as possible, I completed some research on ethanol (my main sources are cited in footnotes) and drugs. Both substances confront us with difficulties today.

Ethanol is a fuel that is a blessing and a curse at the same time. The good news: ethanol is from a renewable resource, such as corn or any other starchy plant. The bad news: ethanol really does take more energy to create than it eventually gives out. Despite this relatively unknown drawback, ethanol quickly climbs the charts as a favorite fuel of the future (and of today) for environmentalists. I thought that ethanol was a great option too when I began writing this essay, until I started my research and encountered some startling facts. Ethanol production creates a lot of wastes, since only the starch from the corn is used. Fortunately, I also found many articles boasting new options developed for the recycling of that waste, including a unique venture: as heat for greenhouses.<sup>3</sup> The Brazilians became my invaders-of-choice after I read a newspaper article about President Bush's South American tour in March 2007. The article explained that Bush discussed ethanol with Brazil's president, and that Brazil exported a significant amount of the world's ethanol.<sup>4</sup>

Drugs began to interest me after reading another article, also in the local newspaper, about the astonishing availability of prescription drugs. The article ended with a lamentation from a police officer that with the millions of illegitimate prescription drug suppliers online, no method existed for the identification and shutdown of all of them. I believe that drugs can wreak havoc and ruin lives, and I wanted to convey that fear in my story.

My hope is that you, the reader, also gained something from reading my story. I hope that we all can find the courage to stand up for what we know is right and to never stop "believin'".

The song at the end of the story was originally released by the band Journey in 1981. The song, which earned a #9 spot on the charts at the time, has made a comeback into modern culture and is one of the songs most frequently downloaded from iTunes.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.ethanolproducer.com/article.jsp?article\\_id=455](http://www.ethanolproducer.com/article.jsp?article_id=455)

<sup>4</sup> *Article from the Greenfield Recorder*

<sup>5</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don't\\_Stop\\_Believin'](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don't_Stop_Believin')