

Candy

Written by Ruben Padilla



In addition to storytelling Ruben runs " [Learning is Magic](#), "

a program that teaches kids education fundamentals through magic tricks.

When I was a kid there was a candy bar called a Marathon Bar – anybody remember this? It was chocolate covered caramel shaped like a chain and was eight inches long. The wrapper had a ruler printed on it so you could measure it yourself. They don't make them anymore – and that makes me sad.

Haagan Daaz used to have a flavor of ice cream called Deep chocolate peanut butter. Not to be confused with the inferior Chocolate peanut butter available today. This was Deep chocolate. It was better. It was deep. Sadly, also unavailable today.

Ocean Spray had, as one of their first entries into the cranberry hybrid market, a juice called Cranicot. Cranberries and apricots. It was clear like the their other hybrids, this was thicker, sweeter, the color of arterial blood. That may be why you can no longer buy it. But it was fantastic, and I lament my loss.

Not too long ago, you couldn't buy Ovaltine in the classic chocolate malt style. For over a hundred years sit was in your friendly neighborhood cocoa isle, but then they discontinued it and instead offered the much inferior Rich chocolate variety. Enough people must have complained, because I'm happy to report it's back. My old pal Olvatine. I missed you buddy. Instead of the heavy glass jar, it's now plastic, but hey, I'm not going to complain. I choose my battles.

There are a lot of snacks and goodies that I grew up with that have either changed so they're practically unrecognizable, or.... They're just gone. Their numbers increase the older I get and when I bring them up to other people, often they don't care, and that just makes me feel older.

So it was refreshing to me when I realized I could long for a snack that I never experienced.

Last year my friend Mark said, almost conspiratorially “ I’m going to tell you about something you’ve probably never heard of. Have you ever tried Wild Cherry M&Ms?”

“What? What!? I didn’t even know these existed! I love everything cherry! What are you talking about?”

“They’re limited edition. You can’t even get them here in California. You can only get them in Arizona.”

“What? Who is trying to keep me from having this treat?”

“Arizona is a (To be fair, Mark doesn’t sound like this, but it’s my story so…) Arizona is a test market state for new items. Ever heard of McPizza? (No.) Arizona.

Did you know this? I had no idea, and if you don’t know me, you should know this. I’m an exclusivity whore. If somebody says that something is rare, limited edition or even one of a kind, and I’ll probably never have it. Oh, no no no, I’m on a mission.

But I wasn’t about to take a plane to Arizona. I’m a whore but I’m not crazy.

“Sometimes,” Mark said, “I don’t know, you can find them in 99 stores here in California.”

Really? So off I went to three 99 cent stores in the L.A. area. No luck.

Weeks went by. And then one day I’m at a crappy little gas station in East L.A. The kind that doesn’t even have terminals at the pumps. You have to go inside and pay. Old school. And as I’m standing in line my eyes wander to the candy rack, and there, sitting on a pile of stupid old regular M&M’s, is a red package. And the skies parted, and I heard angels singing and I took a step closer (losing my place in line) and I saw it. One package of Limited Edition Wild Cherry M&M’s.

I quickly grabbed and showed it to the cashier. Do you have any more of these? (Cause one wasn’t enough). “Whatever is there is there,” he replied, like a Buddhist monk. So I clawed through the other bags, regular, regular, peanut, crap. There were no more.

I looked behind him and noticed brown cardboard boxes of unopened candy with the names Hershey and Kit Kat. “How about back there?” I said, like a jonesing heroin addict, “You got any limited edition wild cherry M&M’s in those boxes back there?”

“No sir. What’s there is there.” “Yeah, yeah, yeah what’s there is there. Here.” And I paid for the candy and gas and I left. And I was victorious.

And as much as I wanted to eat them right there next to the unleaded hose, I put them in my car and decided to wait. I decided to wait until I was with Mark and like the magician I am, at the

precise moment, whip them out from under my jacket and say, “Aha! You ever seen these before? That’ magic, bitch, I’m in California!”

So I waited. And about a week later I was in San Diego rehearsing a play. And one day my dad borrowed my car to take my little boy to the park. And when I got into my car the next day, I noticed a something on the floor of the passenger side. It was the empty wrapper. The corpse of the Limited Edition Wild Cherry M&Ms.

And I went to my dad and I said, “What did you do!??? What happened?”

And he didn’t know, so he looked at me like I was nuts. We found the M&M’s and we were hungry. What’s the problem?

“You don’t know what you’ve done!”

Oh How I longed. Maybe it wasn’t meant to be.

And several weeks after that, I’m back in L.A., about to go back to San Diego, this time with my girlfriend, Carrie. And I’m downstairs at the car waiting for her to come outside, and I’m straightening up the back seat, and between the cushions, almost under the seat, I notice something small, and red. And I pick it up, and examine it. It’s a limited edition wild cherry M&M. And maybe it has a bit of lint on it, but its the last of it’s kind. Maybe the only one of it’s kind in the whole state, and like the whore that I am, I open my mouth.

And it falls from my fingers, and hits the door jam, and falls into the street, next to the gutter, inches from the grass where dogs piss and shit and people don’t pick up after them, and homeless guys sit and drink their beer and put out their cigarettes...

...I really should move.

And I bent over. And I picked it up. And I blew off the germs. Cause you can do that.

And I ate the damn thing! And it was great! It was like a cherry, but covered in chocolate, and with a hard candy shell. It was heaven! It was worth it! And I’d do it again!

And Carrie came outside and I knew that if I told her what I just did then she wouldn’t kiss me all day so I walked up to her and I pulled her to me, and I said “I love you” and I planted a wet, chocolately, cherry, pissy, shitty kiss on her!

And she thanked me!

And we got in the car and as we drove away, I said, “I have a story to tell you...”