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BY THE AUTHOR OF

**NAKED LUNCH**

**William  
Burroughs  
Junkie**



\*Originally published under the pen-name of William Lee

#### PUBLISHER'S NOTE

"Junk," writes the author of these brutally frank revelations, "is not just a habit. It is a way of life." A way of life in which "kick" is king, and where drug-dominated starvelings float in a half-lighted world of debased values, overpowering hungers and sudden-flaring violence.

Not since De Quincey's *The Confessions of an English Opium Eater* has the finger of light shone so glaringly on the wasteland of the drug addict. Yet, where De Quincey wrote in the vein of dream-phantasy, *Junkie* is pitilessly factual and hard-boiled. From the very first lines, *Junkie* strips down the addict without shame or self-pity in all his nakedness.

But this is more than the story of a drug addict. The anonymous underworld fills its pages—the moochers, fags, four-flushers, stool pigeons, thieves. We follow them as they slink furtively to their "meets" in dim-lit cafeterias and sleazy bars. We watch their hidden gestures, we see them as they "cop the stuff." We see the veins shrink at the needle's thrust, the "bang" as the stuff takes—and the indescribable horrors of junk sickness. We witness the sordidness of every crevice of their lives. For all are a "beat, nowhere bunch of guys," seemingly without past and no future. There has never been a criminal confession better calculated to dis-

courage imitation by thrill-hungry teen-agers. This is the unadulterated, unglamorous, unthrilling life of the drug addict.

At the time this book was written, the author was an unrepentant, unredeemed drug addict. His own words tell us that he was a fugitive from the law; that he had been diagnosed as schizophrenic paranoid; that he was totally without moral values. Even so, his pen had been dipped in an acid of strange lustre, and some of his word pictures are vignettes of compelling artistry.

We realized that here was a document which could forearm the public more effectively than anything yet printed about the drug menace. The picture it paints of a sordid netherworld was all the more horrifying for being so authentic in language and point of view.

For the protection of the reader, we have inserted occasional parenthetical notes to indicate where the author clearly departs from accepted medical fact or makes other unsubstantiated statements in an effort to justify his actions. Also, the names of all the characters appearing in the book have been disguised, for the protection of the guilty as well as the innocent.

# William Burroughs Junkie

*(Originally published under the pen-name of William Lee)*

ACE BOOKS, INC.

1120 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, N.Y. 10036

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The names of all characters in this book are fictitious. Any similarity between these names and those of actual persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidence.

To A. L. M.

An ACE STAR BOOK by arrangement with the author.

Printed in the U. S. A.

## FOREWORD

by Carl Solomon

**J**UNKIE BY WILLIAM SEWARD BURROUGHS WAS originally entitled *Junk* and was written under the pseudonym of William Lee. First presented for publication in the early '50s, it aroused some interest among hard-cover publishers but was brought out as one of the earliest paperbacks of the newly emerging Ace Books.

Since that time, Burroughs has become famous here and abroad as an avant-garde novelist and short story writer, writing under his own name. His novel *The Naked Lunch* has been published by Grove Press. *In Search of Yage*, about his adventures on the Amazon River among the headhunters in search of the "mind expanding" drug *yage*, has been brought out by City Lights. *The Soft Machine* and *The Ticket That Exploded* have been published in Paris by Olympia Press with much attendant scandal. And a new novel *Nova Express*, will soon be brought out by Grove.

In Norman Mailer's *Advertisements for Myself*, Burroughs is referred to as the American Jean Genêt. His second novel, *Queer*, remains unpublished in this country and abroad.

Behind the "beat" renaissance in mid-Twentieth Century America, which shocked the sensibilities of some and gave new expression to others, William Burroughs remains a seldom seen but by now legendary figure. In 1964, unlike 1950, he has innumerable imitators and would-be imitators. His early creed of junk as a way of life has seeped into the youth of today to the point of becoming a major national problem.