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The World According to John K.

Daniel Dumas [✉](#) 02.28.07 | 9:15 AM

John Kricfalusi, the mind that gave us *The Ren and Stimpy Show*, *The Ripping Friends* and *The Goddamn George Liquor Program* has a plan to make you watch the ads you see online. In fact, his goal is to make it so you won't even realize you're watching a commercial.

Kricfalusi -- better known as John K. -- isn't exactly known for bending to the will of studios or censors. This is, after all, the guy who was dismissed from *Ren and Stimpy* after producing an episode that ended with a character being savagely beaten with a boat oar. Now, he's devised a series of Flash-animated advertisements for VOIP provider Raketu. But this isn't the typical case of selling out. Kricfalusi genuinely wants to bring creativity back to advertising while promoting his animation. Plus, he gets to be way naughtier online than on the TV.

It all started a few years ago when he produced a series of web shorts for Tower Records -- for free. This led to animation deals with Old Navy and then Raketu. The one-minute shorts hawking the virtues of Raketu feature some of Kricfalusi's most bombastic characters (including the hilarious George Liquor) and are punctuated by Kricfalusi's signature style of bright, entertaining and somewhat retro animation.

This form of advertising has been around for decades. Remember when Fred Flintstone peddled Winston cigarettes? But Kricfalusi thinks that his online offering, which carries his distinctive storytelling, will change attitudes toward advertising on the web, kind of like what HBO did for TV. Starting Thursday, you can be the judge. That's when Kricfalusi's ads go live on [Raketu's website](#), as well as his blog, [all kinds of stuff](#).

Wired News sat down with John K. and chatted about the future of online advertisement, his new project with Raketu and, of course, the fate of *Ren and Stimpy*. (To check out John K.'s Raketu shorts, click [here](#) and [here](#).)

Wired News: You make the cartoons for the love of it. Any guilt about making ads?

John K.: Guilt? This is America. I'm a capitalist. I would feel guilty if I didn't sell the product well and if I bored the audience. I have a duty to the sponsor and the audience. Making those two people happy is a lot easier than making a hundred TV execs happy while making the audience and sponsor unhappy. That makes me feel really guilty.

WN: So you really think Flash-animated ads are going to get the online crowd to pay attention?

John K.: I believe this is the future of advertising. Online advertising is annoying. Google ads are stupid -- you don't even pay attention to them. And banner ads for the most part are intrusive and annoying. You just click on them without looking. These ads I'm creating are actually ones you'll want to watch.

We actually used to do mock commercials on *The Ren and Stimpy Show*. You remember [Log](#)? That was the model I wanted to use. Our animation selling the advertiser's products. They did it all the time back in the '50s. But the network didn't listen to me, and the idea was never used.

WN: Funny, now video-game companies add animation to their titles all the time. Did anyone try it during *Ren and Stimpy's* heyday?

John K.: Spumco studio was right next to DreamWorks. DreamWorks stole the idea and tried to do the same thing. They put tons of marketing into a set of cartoons that sold products, but it failed because the animation was lousy.

WN: So you really think this form of advertisement will change the way products are marketed?

John K.: Advertising now is so bloated. Have you seen some of the ads out there? They're shitty.

WN: Like some of the ads on the Super Bowl.

John K.: Exactly. They're boring. They're all retreads. There's no innovation. No one is thinking differently. I've been trying to sell this model for years. But no one has listened until now.

WN: So the online medium is a place you're going to be working in, mostly?

John K.: Online is a much better place for my brand of humor. Working for the studios is so bureaucratic. It's awful. You can't get anything done. Look what happened with *Ren and Stimpy*.

WN: What really happened there?

John K.: Nickelodeon wanted to take the show in one direction. We didn't see eye to eye on a lot of things. And look what happened. They stole as many people from Spumco Studios as they could and the show got canceled a few seasons after I left.



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