

Monologue from The Music Man

"Professor" Harold Hill: Well either you are closing your eyes to a situation you do not wish to acknowledge, or you are not aware of the caliber of disaster indicated by the presence of a pool table in your community.

Well, you got trouble my friend. Right here, I say, trouble right here in River City. Why sure I'm a billiard player, certainly mighty proud to say, I'm always mighty proud to say it. I consider that the hours I spend with a cue in my hand are golden. Help ya cultivate horse sense, and cool head and a keen eye. Did you every take and try to give an ironclad leave to yourself from a three rail billiard shot? But just as I say it takes judgement, brains and maturity to score in a balk line game, I say that any boob, can take and shove a ball in a pocket. And I call that sloth, the first big step on the road to the depths of degreda- I say first, medicinal wine from a teaspoon, then beer from a bottle. And the next thing you know your son is playing for money in a pinch back suit and listening to some big out of town jasper here to talk about horse race gamblin'. Not a wholesome trottin race, no, but a race where they sit down right on the horse! Like to see some stuck up jockey boy sitting on Dan-Patch? Make your blood boil? Well, I should say. Now friends, let me tell you what I mean. Ya got one, two, three, four, five, six pockets in a table. Pockets that mark the difference between a gentleman and a bum with a capital B and that rhymes with P and that stands for pool.

And all week long your River City youth will be fritterin' away I say your young men will be fritterin. Fritterin away their noon time, supper time, chore time too. Get the ball in the pocket, never mind getting dandelions pulled or the screen door patched. or the beef steak pounded. Never mind pumping any water till your parents are caught with a cistern empty on a Saturday night and that's trouble. Yes you got lots and lots of trouble. I'm thinking of the kids in the knickerbockers, shirt tailed young ones. Peeking in the pool hall window after school. You got trouble Folks! Right here in River City. Trouble with a Capital T and that rhymes with P and that stands for pool.

Now I know all you folks are the right kind of parents. I'm going to be perfectly frank. would you like to know what kind of conversation goes on while their loafing around in that hall? They'll be trying out Bevo, trying out Cubads trying 'bout Tailor maid like cigarette fiends. And bragging 'bout how they're gonna cover up a tell-tale breath with sen-sen. One fine night, they leave the pool hall, heading for the dance at the armoury, libertine men and scarlet women. and Ragtime, shameless music that will drive your son, your daughter to the arms of the jungle, animal instinct, mass 'steria. Friends the idle brain is the devils playground. Trouble!

Mothers of River City. Heed that warning before it's too late! Watch for the telltale signs of corruption. The minute your son leaves the house, does he rebuckle his knickerbockers below the knee? Is there a nicotine stain on his index finger? A dime-novel hidden in the corncrib? Is he starting to memorize jokes from Cap'n Billy's Whiz-Bang? Are certain wooodooords creeping into his conversation? Words like "swell". A-ha! and "so's your old man". If so my friends. . .ya got trouble!