

William S. Burroughs

Quotes

*People, Thinking, Writing, Men, Cat, Book, Dream, War, Mind, Needs, Giving,
Real, Art, Drug, Cutting, Long, World, Junk, Color, Mean*

We must all face the fact that our leaders are certifiably insane or worse

~William S. Burroughs

After one look at this planet any visitor from outer space would say 'I want to see the manager.'

~William S. Burroughs

After a shooting spree, they always want to take the guns away from the people who didn't do it.

~William S. Burroughs

Your mind will answer most questions if you learn to relax and wait for the answer.

~William S. Burroughs

What does the money machine eat? It eats youth, spontaneity, life, beauty, and, above all, it eats creativity. It eats quality and sh*ts quantity.

~William S. Burroughs

I think anybody incapable of changing his mind is crazy.

~William S. Burroughs

Man is an artifact designed for space travel. He is not designed to remain in his present biologic state any more than a tadpole is designed to remain a tadpole.

~William S. Burroughs

The cat does not offer services. The cat offers itself.

~William S. Burroughs

Artists to my mind are the real architects of change, and not the political legislators who implement change after the fact.

~William S. Burroughs

Desperation is the raw material of drastic change. Only those who can leave behind everything they have ever believed in can hope to escape.

~William S. Burroughs

I had not taken a bath in a year nor changed my clothes or removed them except to stick a needle every hour in the fibrous grey wooden flesh of heroin addiction. I did absolutely nothing.

~William S. Burroughs

Which came first the intestine or the tapeworm?

~William S. Burroughs

A cat's rage is beautiful, burning with pure cat flame, all its hair standing up and crackling blue sparks, eyes blazing and sputtering.

~William S. Burroughs

I prefer cats to people, for the most part. Most people aren't cute at all, and if they are cute they very rapidly outgrow it.

~William S. Burroughs

I don't care if people hate my guts; I assume most of them do. The important question is whether they are in a position to do anything about it.

~William S. Burroughs

There are no innocent bystanders.

~William S. Burroughs

In the U.S., you have to be a deviant or die of boredom.

~William S. Burroughs

In my writing I am acting as a map maker, an explorer of psychic areas, a cosmonaut of inner space, and I see no point in exploring areas that have already been thoroughly surveyed.

~William S. Burroughs

Panic is the sudden realization that everything around you is alive.

~William S. Burroughs

If all pleasure is relief from tension, junk affords relief from the whole life process, in disconnecting the hypothalamus, which is the center of psychic energy and libido.

~William S. Burroughs

A paranoid is someone who knows a little of what's going on.

~William S. Burroughs

I'm creating an imaginary "it's always imaginary" world in which I would like to live.

~William S. Burroughs

Open your mind and let the pictures out

~William S. Burroughs

Americans have a special horror of giving up control, of letting things happen in their own way without interference.

~William S. Burroughs

How I hate those who are dedicated to producing conformity.

~William S. Burroughs

When you cut into the present the future leaks out.

~William S. Burroughs

Most of the trouble in this world has been caused by folks who can't

mind their own business, because they have no business of their own to mind, any more than a smallpox virus has.

~William S. Burroughs

I am getting so far out one day I won't come back at all.

~William S. Burroughs

There is no line between the 'real world' and 'world of myth and symbol.' Objects, sensations, hit with the impact of hallucination.

~William S. Burroughs

Tangier is one of the few places left in the world where, so long as you don't proceed to robbery, violence, or some form of crude, antisocial behavior, you can do exactly what you want.

~William S. Burroughs

Political conflicts are merely surface manifestations. If conflicts arise you may be sure that certain powers intend to keep this conflict under operation since they hope to profit from the situation.

~William S. Burroughs

Cheat your landlord if you can -- and must -- but do not try to shortchange the Muse.

~William S. Burroughs

There are no innocent bystanders ... what are they doing there in the first place?

~William S. Burroughs

Paranoia is just having the right information.

~William S. Burroughs

There is no intensity of love or feeling that does not involve the risk of crippling hurt. It is a duty to take this risk, to love and feel without

defense or reserve.

~William S. Burroughs

I miss you so much your absence causes me, at times, accute pain. I don't mean sexually. I mean in connection with my writing.

~William S. Burroughs

You must learn to exist with no religion, no country, no allies. You must learn to live alone in silence.

~William S. Burroughs

(1) Never give anything away for nothing. (2) Never give more than you have to give (always catch the buyer hungry and always make him wait). (3) Always take everything back if you possibly can.

~William S. Burroughs

I don't have any politics. I feel that as soon as politics arises, things are already in a hopeless state of deterioration.

~William S. Burroughs

No one is ever really alone. You are part of everything alive.

~William S. Burroughs

Thanks, for a country where nobody is allowed to mind his own business. Thanks, for a nation of finks.

~William S. Burroughs

Your knowledge of what is going on can only be superficial and relative.

~William S. Burroughs

There is nothing more provocative than minding your own business.

~William S. Burroughs

How long does it take man to realize that he cannot want what he wants? You have to live in hell to see heaven.

~William S. Burroughs

I am not a person and I am not an animal. There is something I am here for something I must do before I can go.

~William S. Burroughs

Love? What is it? Most natural painkiller what there is.

~William S. Burroughs

Sometimes paranoia's just having all the facts.

~William S. Burroughs

Smash the control images. Smash the control machine.

~William S. Burroughs

in the magical universe there are no coincidences and there are no accidents. nothing happens unless someone wills it to happen

~William S. Burroughs

Black magic operates most effectively in preconscious, marginal areas. Casual curses are the most effective.

~William S. Burroughs

Whether you sniff it smoke it eat it or shove it up your ass the result is the same: addiction.

~William S. Burroughs

Artists to my mind are the real architects of change.

~William S. Burroughs

If after having been exposed to someone's presence you feel as if you've lost a quart of plasma, avoid that presence. You need it like you

need pernicious anemia.

~William S. Burroughs

You can't fake quality any more than you can fake a good meal.

~William S. Burroughs

When you stop growing you start dying.

~William S. Burroughs

If you weren't surprised by your life you wouldn't be alive. Life is surprise.

~William S. Burroughs

If, after spending time with a person, you feel as though you've lost a quart of plasma, avoid that person in the future.

~William S. Burroughs

The simplest questions are the most difficult.

~William S. Burroughs

Junk is the ideal product... the ultimate merchandise. No sales talk necessary. The client will crawl through a sewer and beg to buy.

~William S. Burroughs

He who has learned to do nothing with his whole mind and body will have everything done for him.

~William S. Burroughs

Perhaps all pleasure is only relief.

~William S. Burroughs

If I had my way we'd sleep every night all wrapped around each other like hibernating rattlesnakes.

~William S. Burroughs

Language is a virus from outer space.

~William S. Burroughs

Silence is only frightening to people who are compulsively verbalizing.

~William S. Burroughs

The face of evil is always the face of total need.

~William S. Burroughs

Every man has inside himself a parasitic being who is acting not at all to his advantage.

~William S. Burroughs

My relationship with cats has saved me from a deadly and pervasive ignorance.

~William S. Burroughs

The cat does not offer services. The cat offers itself. Of course he wants care and shelter. You don't buy love for nothing.

~William S. Burroughs

what a horrible loutish planet this is. the dominant species consists of sadistic morons, faces bearing the hideous lineaments of spiritual famine swollen with stupid hate. hopeless rubbish.

~William S. Burroughs

There isn't a feeling you can get on drugs that you can't get without drugs.

~William S. Burroughs

The junk merchant doesn't sell his product to the consumer, he sells the consumer to his product. He does not improve and simplify his merchandise. He degrades and simplifies the client.

~William S. Burroughs

Be just and if you can't be just, be arbitrary.

~William S. Burroughs

I see no reason why the artistic world can't absolutely merge with Madison Avenue. Pop art is a move in that direction. Why can't we have advertisements with beautiful words and beautiful images?

~William S. Burroughs

I'm an old-fashioned person, and I don't like informers.

~William S. Burroughs

No atomic physicist has to worry, people will always want to kill other people on a mass scale. Sure, he's got the fridge full of sausages and spring water.

~William S. Burroughs

Thanks for the American dream, to vulgarize and falsify until the bare lies shine through. Thanks for a country where nobody's allowed to mind their own business.

~William S. Burroughs

when I become death. Death is the seed from which I grow.

~William S. Burroughs

I had the feeling that some horrible image was just beyond the field of vision, moving, as I turned my head, so that I never quite saw it.

~William S. Burroughs

Too perfect to be sexually attractive.

~William S. Burroughs

Once the law starts asking questions, there's no stopping them.

~William S. Burroughs

The best way to keep something bad from happening is to see it ahead of time... and you can't see it if you refuse to face the possibility.

~William S. Burroughs

People have nothing to say, but they are afraid of saying nothing, so what they do say comes out flat and vapid and meaningless. The shadow of death is on every face.

~William S. Burroughs

Like pregnant women lose their teeth feeding the stranger, junkies lose their yellow fangs feeding the monkey.

~William S. Burroughs

Some of us are sixty feet long with a brain the size of a walnut.

~William S. Burroughs

NOTHING happens by coincidence.

~William S. Burroughs

Kerouac opened a million coffee bars and sold a million pairs of Levis to both sexes. Woodstock rises from his pages.

~William S. Burroughs

There couldn't be a society of people who didn't dream. They'd be dead in two weeks.

~William S. Burroughs

A consumer society is about simplifying and degrading the consumer as well as the product.

~William S. Burroughs

If everyone is to be made responsible for everything they do, you must extend responsibility beyond the level of conscious intention.

~William S. Burroughs

There's no place for impractical dreamers around here.

~William S. Burroughs

I project myself out through the glasses and across the street, a ghost in the morning sunlight, torn with disembodied lust.

~William S. Burroughs

The only possible ethic is to do what one wants to do.

~William S. Burroughs

The photo collage is a way to travel that must be used with skill and precision if we are to arrive... The collage as a flexible hieroglyph language of juxtaposition: A collage makes a statement.

~William S. Burroughs

Quien sabe? Not me. The older I get the less I sabe, the less wisdom, maturity and caution I have.

~William S. Burroughs

The nonconformist here may be "beat down" by life but still has a beauty in his or her longing for freedom and for an awakening of the mind.

~William S. Burroughs

Every word is autobiographical, and every word is fiction.

~William S. Burroughs

Writers, like elephants, have long, vicious memories. There are things I wish I could forget.

~William S. Burroughs

Never interfere in a girl and boy fight.

~William S. Burroughs

Knowing you might not make it... in that knowledge courage is born.

~William S. Burroughs

When all lies, deceit, pretense is stripped away, what remains? The truth of a painting, or a book or a man.

~William S. Burroughs

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