

Armchair Geurrilla Part 1

My friend Mark got the answer wrong (he said '58) live on Chris Evans' breakfast show on Virgin Radio, and wept as he rang me on his mobile to tell me (I wept too - he was going to take me with him).

Mark is an armchair anti capitalist guerrilla. He enters about 20 competitions a week with exotic and expensive prizes - and prides himself on never purchasing the products which the competitions are supposed to promote. He is a marketing executive's nightmare - an anti-consumerist competition freak who knows how to play the system - and win. He's won a year's subscription to a luxury gym (for women only) and a video of Bryan Robson's football management highlights (the video was blank). He entered a Safeway competition designed to promote British lamb 17 times. 'You must have eaten an awful lot of lamb,' I told him. He gave me a look of withering contempt - he hadn't bought any lamb, but had peeled 17 stickers off packs in Safeway's freezer cabinet. He impressed his current partner by taking her to Paris for a weekend - won through his local paper.

Mark is part of a growing band of compers with their own magazine and even their own clubs in some parts of the country. There are websites devoted to sharing details of competitions, providing the answers and suggesting slogans for tie-breakers. Radical compers know perfectly well that the competitions are the tools of the advertising industry, designed to entice us to sample their latest products. It is a badge of honour to Mark and his comrades never to buy the product being promoted.

Possibly his finest hour was his entry to win a state-of-the-art wide-screen stereophonic television package, worth £1500. Mark spends his lunchtimes in WHSmith, flicking through magazines looking for competitions to enter. One lad-mag had a cover advertising the TV competition inside, so Mark wrote down the details and replaced the mag (he would never dream of purchasing such machismo nonsense). There were three questions on the history of television to answer, so he walked three doors away to Waterstones, browsed through one of their encyclopaedias for the info, and replaced the book. Naturally, he won the prize - the television - but it never came. When he complained he was promised delivery in three days time. But still no TV, so Mark phones the British HQ of this multinational electronic giant, and finds out the Japanese name of their chief executive. Mark's letter to the CEO (UK) was a masterly example of the guerrilla compers black art - he threatened to go public on the electronic giants failure to deliver the prize, so destroying their public relations campaign at a stroke. Mark now possesses not only his £1500 television but also a £700 video recorder which was added to compensate him for his inconvenience. (The fact that it wont fit into his tiny flat is irrelevant to a true armchair guerrilla like Mark).

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About the Author

Davinos Greeno works for the [organic food](#) and [ethical clothes](#) directory that lists 100s of Organic and Ethical Companies and we also have [Health Articles](#) for you to read or publish.