



@robSafar

You're at home after a day of work.

You're a little fatigued.

It's warm and raining, your skin is sweaty and your clothes are damp.

You walk into your bedroom through the door. On your bed, you see a fox sat there. The fox has been waiting for you.

You ask the fox what it wants. *What does the fox say?*

It's 20 March 2017 in the evening. Safari: new private window. Y-O- autosuggests [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com). Search: [frog the wire](#). I begin with D Reign because I recall that he is an actor in the series and has his own YouTube channel. He has uploaded a montage titled "[H.B.O's 'The Wire' \(D.Reign's Scenes\)](#)". Published in January 2015, the video description is as follows:

All scenes were shot in 2002 in Baltimore city. D.Reign played "Frog" a local drug dealer with a "smart mouth". This montage was edited and put together by Gary D.Reign Senkus in 2015 to celebrate his acting career and display is vase array of entertainment skills.

Using horror-themed title cards the scenes are introduced. The first features the character Frog and his novice supplier Ziggy, who Frog underpays and who responds with a feeble retort. At five minutes and thirty-seven seconds long, the montage concludes with Frog interacting with a cocky undercover police officer while being watched and recorded by a small investigative team.

D Reign has two hundred and sixty-seven followers currently, and six video uploads. The earliest is from 2012, a music video for his song "[LifeTime Fever](#)". The description for this video says "Directed by: Gary "D.Reign"Senkus, And Centree for Uprize Recordz / 695 Entertainment" - a Google search for Centree shows me [the website for Centre E](#) a youth centre in Ely, Cambridgeshire UK; [Centree Technologies](#) who are an Indian software development company; and four French Wikipedia pages on topics with "centrée" in the titles; I'm not sure what this means. Uprize Recordz, however, is an "[Independent record label for the next wave of electronic music | Forged in NYC. Powered by Phase One Network.](#)". Their [latest upload](#) to Soundcloud is by Jace Mek and called *Jar (feat. Brukout)*. It has definite psytrance roots and glitch influences and is three minutes fifty-three seconds long. Soundcloud also autoplays, attempting the more housepop [Get It Going by Phiilo](#), but I stop it. Phase One Network is a music asset management company that controls a range of pop, rap, dance, jazz and rock labels. *LifeTime Fever* appears to be shot in a round tunnel, about two-and-a-half metres tall with a path continuing outside flanked by short grass on one side and overgrown plants on the other - assuming

that both tunnel mouth backdrops shown are in fact the same tunnel. D Reign uses a white handkerchief prop to mime wiping his face sometimes as he repeats the chorus line: "Feels like I got a lifetime fever".

Autoplay from D Reign's montage leads me to an unedited clip of a shootout that begins with the sale of a drug, heroin or crack I believe, branded "WMD" ("It will mass-destruct your ass"). The video has been uploaded in somewhat poor quality, as relatively smooth camera or actor movements result in thick horizontal lines from heavy, low-resolution interlacing. The uploader goes by the name LCeeKay, whose other uploads include an eighteen second rendition of a rapid rap verse originally by Eminem and fourteen seconds footage of a "Really big bee". The shootout is poorly conducted by the young, untrained characters, resulting in the accidental death of a small boy stood by a window in a neighbouring house. The entire opening credits of the episode follows, as per the broadcast edit, featuring the original version of *Way Down in the Hole* by Tom Waits from the 1987 album *Franks Wild Years*. *Franks Wild Years* contains songs for a play of the same name, which was performed by the *Steppenwolf Theatre Company* in Chicago, 1986. The opening credits are followed by twenty seconds of the next scene in the episode before autoplay takes me to another four minute shootout clip.

My concern at this point is whether the number of shootout scenes will exceed my tolerance before changing theme. Indeed, the last shootout is followed by a series of shorter clips illustrating the bloodier aspects of the "Stanfield vs Barksdale War" totalling seven minutes fifty-five and splicing together six shooting scenes, one body scene, and two preambles of gangland murders. The uploader, Mitch Leary, has uploaded four other videos of clips from *The Wire* - it will be interesting to see if his content reappears through autoplay. Fortunately, the next video is a montage called "Avon wants his corners", where the character Avon Barksdale discusses with colleagues and plans the conflict depicted in the previous video. At nine minutes forty-nine, this video is one of only two television uploads by user stoneroses22, and along with "BMW E46 2.3 (2000) Engine Chirping noise on cold start up" is one of three non-music uploads. The rest are predominantly made up of sixty-six Ian Brown and *Stone Roses* related videos. Autoplay rolls on to "Avon and Marlo Meet" in a two minute forty-five scene with Marlo

Stansfield [sic.] meeting Avon when visiting prison expecting to meet a mutual acquaintance. Marlo is able to meet said acquaintance in the following one minute fifty-one autoplayed video, the sole upload of Snow8Man975.

I break here, closing my browser.

---

The date is 6 April and I navigate in a private browsing window to the last video: "Sergei And Marlo Meet". Up next is "The Wire - Spiros and Marlo discuss business".

This two-minute clip features a character not met on this exploration so far, an associate of Sergei (the mutual acquaintance above). He wears a very fetching flat cap, the kind of apparel often worn by golf enthusiasts but has of late, in the UK at least, been adopted for more casual wear<sup>1</sup>. "Joe will be missed..." the video begins, "Very much missed. We liked Joe. A hard man not to like." 'Proposition' Joe had been assassinated by Marlo in a previous episode, I recall. Spiros provides Marlo with a cellphone in this scene, the beginning of a plot point whereby Marlo's gang befuddles the police surveillance by using a Multimedia Messaging Service. The details of this technique is not revealed in this scene however, rather it ends with Marlo looking impressed while Spiros demonstrates the functionality with the screen out of camera view.

User chokurei51 uploaded this video 1 year ago, although by looking at the exact upload date (September 2015) this is closer to a year and a half. The user has uploaded twenty-two other clips from The Wire, the first from 2010, and has 374 subscribers.

Next is a three-minute clip from Brandon Hicks, who has 1,600 subscribers and a richer history of videos. His first upload is "Lima Ohio TB hospital 2013", eleven-and-a-half-minutes of a shaky exploration of an abandoned hospital. They appear to be fairly young, and certainly excitable, prone to becoming "freaked out" by the shadows and debris they encounter. Apart

from one other self-made video in 2014, the rest of his uploads are clips from the Wire, the most recent from just four months ago.

The autoplayed clip itself features a few successive scenes, but the video title specifies a scene that begins a little more than a minute into the video. The video ends abruptly a second into another scene. Autoplay leads to another of Brandon Hick's uploads: "The Wire - Marlo, Chris And Snoop Find Out Omar Is Dead". This seems to be the first time that two videos from the same uploader have appeared together, not to mention within the same binge. The video descriptions for both have been brief, this one especially so stating simply:

| Omar bagged up

The next video is fairly closely related to the previous, depicting the scene where Omar is killed prior to his body being looked over by the investigating police. User Goone Deloox provided this clip, whose upload history is more eclectic than many of the uploaders encountered so far. As well as scenes from The Wire, there are various clips and promos from the TV show House and an assortment of video games including World of Warcraft and Team Fortress 2. None are original, even the video game uploads appear to be obtained from elsewhere given the preceding title sequences. Even a movie trailer has been uploaded, in 2010 for the 2009 film Star Trek. Goone Deloox has 753 subscribers.

---

I understand that The Wire aired a shot over 15 years ago. It is now early July 2017, and I begin to appreciate that this almost-ethnography had the greatest momentum prior to its consolidation - when it was merely a form of procrastination. I think that its fatal flaw now had been that it had no finitude, no end set out that followed logically from its scope. Do I conclude it once and for all when all of the relevant YouTube clips have been exhausted, and all of the individuals sharing them have been examined? Or if I settle for a sample of this population, by what rationale can that sample be considered a reflection of the population?

In some sense YouTube has enabled a reforming of a linear televisual text into a hypertextual form, which I have then reformed back into a linear narrative. The result is heavily fragmented, a survey of the series' shrapnel with negligible effort undertaken to reassemble or coherently map it. There should be little question that the result is impoverished.

---

1. During summer days it has amused me to see thickly woven woollen flat caps donned, which are designed to protect one's face from the rain, in what to me is sweltering heat.