

Where are the Grownups?

Written by Bob Alexander

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We could buy Real Fireworks for the 4th of July because we lived near the Port Madison Indian Reservation in Washington state. No wimpy sparklers for us. None of that Safe N Sane garbage. These were definitely Unsafe and Insane. We could buy stuff that *exploded*. As SCTVs Billy Sol Hurock and Big Jim McBob used to say,

It blewed

up

real

good

.

I was about to set off a rocket slightly smaller than a cruise missile when I noticed a warning on the box, *Use under adult supervision*.

Well I guess that would be me. A crazed adolescent in an aging body with an arsenal of dangerous, albeit colorful, explosives. I lit the fuse and *ran*. It shot up a couple of hundred feet and KA-WHAP. A pyrotechnic chrysanthemum lit up the sky over our house with a sonic boom that rattled our windows. Another successful 4th of July. Nothing caught on fire and everybody still had all their fingers. As we walked back into the house I realized I finally looked old enough to do all the stuff I couldnt possibly get away with as a teenager.

The only real difference between 15 year old Bob and 60 year old Bob is the older one knows hes not bullet proof. What might pass for wisdom is just having a better handle on Cause and Effect. If you just pay attention, even slightly, for 40 years or so you realize its not a good idea to do all sorts of things.

Left to my own devices my diet would consist entirely of meat, potatoes, and bread.

For breakfast add a couple of fried eggs. For lunch put some meat in-between two slices of bread and slather on the mayonnaise. For dinner fry everything or better yet, deep fat fry everything. The only other vegetable necessary would be corn. On the cob or popped. Either

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way is fine with me as long as theres plenty of salt and butter.

Not a bad diet if you want the blood vessels in your brain to blow out like bald tires on a bad road.

Since I want to live long enough to see everybody graduate from college, get married, and bring the kids around to see grandpa every once in awhile, the 15 year old Bob hasnt been in charge of menu planning for *years*. And that meant coming to terms with broccoli, cauliflower, fruit smoothies, and cramming bushels of vegetables into our juicer. It must be working because my doctor told me my blood pressure was great for someone my age.

When it comes to Health Issues Im *pretending* to be a mature adult individual. If you saw me at the organic market youd see me outwardly making all the right choices but inside Im thinking, Screw the goddamned vegetables. I dont care if they were watered with the tears of virginal angels

I Want An Effing Cheeseburger!

But I pick up a head of cabbage, put it in the cart, and wonder how much Ill have to choke down because its an excellent source of vitamin C with significant amounts of glutamine, an amino acid that has anti-inflammatory properties.

Ysee I *know* Im faking it. I am a pretend adult. In social situations surrounded by people I dont know I am not being thoughtful Im just talking slowly. Were going to go to a big-deal dinner tonight. I have to break out a coat and find my tie. My time limit is about an hour and a half - two hours tops. After that it takes an incredible amount of self-control to not blurt out things that definitely will put a damper on polite conversation. Things like:

If you truly believe what youre saying youre out of your goddamned mind.

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That ones applicable for any conservative junior booster or religious nutjob. My definition of a religious nutjob is anyone who believes the tenets of *any* religion.

I have a sneaking suspicion that most so-called adults are faking it too. And after 20 years or more they get so good at it they can do it all day long. And thats the primary reason Mental Illness strikes 11 out of 10 people. People cant continually pretend to be something theyre not all day long every day without blowing their wheels somewhere along the line.

Sometimes the snapping point is pretty dramatic. Texas Tower sniper Charles Whitman comes to mind. But most of the time its a subtle gradual transformation where people begin to believe more and more in the carefully constructed faade of their own adulthood. They believe in things that arent true at all. It doesnt help when the entire culture aids and abets these insane beliefs.

We live with it all the time. Our previous mechanic seemed like a normal person until we noticed he had FOX News running constantly on the TV in his shop. He was getting his cues on how to behave and talk like An Adult about Current Events from a crazy squawk-box.

The finest examples happen like clockwork. Every couple of years about a half dozen people believe so deeply in their own B.S. they somehow manage to get in front of a television camera and announce they should be the next president of the United States. For the next 18 months they roam around the country, spending millions of dollars, putting forth their image of what they think a mature adult individual capable of handling the job of the most powerful person in the world looks and sounds like.

Mitt Romney. Rick Santorum. Newt Gingrich. Ron Paul.

Each and every one is far crazier than The Rent Is Too Damn High Party's Jimmy McMillan. And we do not want him anywhere *near* the Big Red Button.

During the Gore-Bush debates in 2000, George W. Bush only proved he had partial knowledge of the alphabet and bladder and sphincter control. But that was enough for the millions of Americans who voted for him. This is what happens when there arent any grown-ups around.

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To paraphrase Tom Leher, Americans have gone from adolescence to senility, bypassing maturity.

If I had the answers hell if I had *one* answer I'd certainly tell you.

The only thing I can come up with is, End the Wars, Tax the Rich, Vote for Pedro.

And if you havent seen it Go rent *Napoleon Dynamite*.