

## Babies

A friend of mine just had a baby and that got me to thinking. How come everyone's baby is 'intelligent' or 'funny' or 'beautiful' or any of those other adjectives that parents and relatives throw around? If everyone's baby is so wonderful and pretty can someone please explain to me where all of the ugly and stupid people in the world come from? This one's been puzzling me for some time.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm just against babies as a generality. I've met a large number of these vomit factories and I must say that have liked a select few. It's just that when people tell me how great their kid is I expect some serious quantum physics or at least a simple TV sitcom plot going on, but all I ever get is crying and fuzzy toys with spit all over them. Oh I understand that it's just pride and all those other moments of parental joy that will fade once the child learns to drive, but do they have to put their friends on the spot?

A case in point. I was walking down the street awhile ago and a guy I hadn't seen in some time stopped me on the street to show off his kid (Don't ask me what sex it was I personally feel that it's a little early to be discussing sex with the kid no matter how advanced it is). He's telling me all the brilliant things his kid could do but the only talent I could see was blowing spit bubbles. That's not that amazing. Even I can do that. Then it got to the point where I'm told how beautiful everyone says the baby is.

"Even the doctor said that it was the most beautiful baby he'd ever seen. Don't you think so, Chris?" Now I think of myself as pretty honest. I mean, I've never lied under oath but I have told my boss that the traffic was murder when in fact I'd overslept. But having evolved this far, I know that the guy wants me to lie. Because if he wanted an honest answer, he would have received: 1) "Looks kinda like a baby rat to me." or 2) "No, I think that my friend Dom's daughter, Lauren, was the most beautiful baby." Either one of those wouldn't have been a lie, but they wouldn't have been very prudent either. So, I lied.

"Yeah." See, you people who are always harping on how tremendous your kid is are forcing otherwise honest people into a life of deception. Next you'll be expecting me to say that it's all right for the little brat to vomit on me or kick me in an extremely soft spot with those white orthopedic waddlers. We've all been balled up on the floor or in the bathroom scrubbing that unidentifiable toxic spill off of our shoulder while smiling and said,

"No problem." But if the dog vomited something this horrible he'd be given away. Maybe we should be rethinking this problem.

Don't get me wrong, I've had plenty of fun with kids. Once I had to baby-sit my niece and she wanted to play hide and go seek. For hours, as it turned out. I, on the other hand, had no intention of playing for more than ten minutes. So, I got my tape recorder and stood on the other side of the room from where she was hiding (the closet, they always seem to head right for the closest closet) and started to record the hide and go seek phrases of that day.

"I can't find her anywhere."

"She's the best hide and go seek player in the world."

"If I do find her, I'm going to hang her upside down out the window for making me play this stupid game all day." You know, just the general phrases.

Once this was done, I placed the tape recorder outside the door and went back to my term paper. An hour and a half later I finished and let her out.

"You really stink." She shouts gleefully. "You stupid. I didn't think you'd ever find me. You stupid."

"You sure pulled one over on me." I said as her mother came over to take her home.

That was fun. And Dom's other two kids, Chris and Mike, have always been fun to be around. And I'm not just saying that because they're both bigger than me now. And there have been a few other kids, surprisingly most of them have been named Chris (I wonder if there's a trend here?), but as a rule, I find your child more enjoyable in myth.

But I've thought long and hard about this. Besides the name Chris, I find children more enjoyable at certain ages. Like old enough to date me. Oh, that was just comedy. But you know, there's plenty of truth in comedy. But on to the results of my painstaking research. For which I sincerely hope to receive a government grant. Speaking of government grants, did you hear about this guy who received a grant to study nose picking? It's true. I was pretty upset when I found out that Pulitzer Prize Winning Humorist Dave Barry (you always have to write his name like that. I wonder if he gets mail addressed that way?) wasn't the recipient. Dave's the most knowledgeable booger guy that I know of. I hope he sues.

But if nose picking deserves a grant I feel that my topic, 'Children-The Ages At Which They Ooze The Most Toxic Waste And When It Is Finally Safe To Get Near Them And Then They Get Their Drivers License And No One Is Safe To Be Near Them,' deserves one. I know it's a long and boring title, but I think that they pay out the grants by the words in the title so I wanted to squeeze out a few more bucks.

-9-0 (Known to the laymen as the 'pregnancy' phase): There's really nothing to like or dislike about the kid during this phase. But it is fun to watch the mother go from the 'am I showing?' phase to the 'I'm so fat' phase to the 'talking about hemorrhoids and other nasty things to total strangers and eating even more disgusting things' phase to the 'it's sure fun to watch them try to get off of the couch' phase.

0-1: The first few months they smell like a fresh out of the box (without the styrofoam unless you went to one of those store front hospitals then it's part of the treatment) CD player or other expensive electronic item that you could have purchased if this little brat hadn't come along unexpectedly. Then, like most high ticket items, a few months after the warranty expires, so does that freshness. Dead animals smell better than what a kid at this age expels. When the serious toxic waste starts, they spend most of their time on the 5 S's: Stinking, Screaming, Sleeping, Spitting, Shitting. The only real fun you can have with the child at this age is to play with the soft

spot on it's head. Don't you think that it would be safer to let it stay in the womb for another week or so for that one spot to close up? Would it be that much of a bother? Because they spend most of their time staring at nothing with their head swinging back and forth and not making any sense the first thing many parents think is that they have a future Grateful Dead fan on their hands.

2-3: It's at the walking, kicking, grabbing and holding things tight and refusing to let them go as the parents laugh, point and feel grateful that it's not them this time phase. I suggest wearing full hockey pads during this phase if you are forced to visit. It's at this time that kids start to make human-like sounds. The first thing kids these days usually say is 'Why?' and they continue that until 1) they get exactly what they want and 2) they have kids of their own and finally understand how much of a brat they were as a child and tearfully apologize to their parents who are laughing so hard at the pay back their sweet child is receiving that they split their operation stitches.

4-5: This seems to be the age at which I am less likely to want to staple the child to the wall. They are like little adults at this age and I can relate to them totally. I get some of my best ideas for material from kids at this age. Not because they're funny or anything, it's just that they haven't learned the word lawyer yet. It is also the age in which the child likes to play rough. It can get tiring to keep shoving a kid who won't stop laughing and really thinks that you want to play not kill across the room but it sure makes you think about when they kicked you with those shoes. The energy they have at this age and the punishment that they can take in the name of fun is amazing. They're like Super Balls that scream.

6-22: The attitude phase. This is where they start to assert their independence and know that they are smarter than their parents. Ironically, this is also the time when parents become less obnoxious about how great their little bundle of joy is.

23-Death: This is the age at which most of you will be having little bundles of joy's of your very own to make neurotic by pushing into piano lessons because you thought you heard your little darling play the opening riff from 'Dancing With Myself' on their little toy piano. Relax. Let the kid do what it wants without putting restraints on it. After all, we're always going to need fast food restaurant managers.