

## **My baby, a target audience, an Offensive Word, and the Dead Kennedys**

My child is crying again. We're in bed, and he's crying, my poor little baby, my poor little gram, in his crib. He wants to come into bed with us, where he's slept between us each night his entire life. And he needs to start sleeping in his own bed, because he's scratching each of us with needle-like fingernail daggers, grabbing my breasts in the middle of the night and yelling "BOOB! BOOB!" and kicking us hard, in the stomach and lower. And no one is getting any sleep. He is almost 2. He needs to learn to Self Comfort.

*"Mommy!"*

*"Mommy!"*

*"Mommy!"*

"Go to sleep, gram. I'll see you in the morning."

*(long silence)*

*"Daddy!"*

*"Daddy!"*

I guess it never occurred to me that the hardest thing about parenting (and yes, I know, the baby is only 21 months and I have no idea what's coming for me) would be listening to my poor child scream. Yes, it's the only way he can communicate with us, yes, it doesn't hurt him as much as it sounds, but man, if an adult was crying like this, the adult would be put away in a hospital. My sister used to comfort me, telling me that her son screamed so bad that it sounded like he was dying when she was trying to get him to sleep in his own bed. She, herself, had to be locked in a closet to be kept away from him while he learned to Self Comfort.

The baby's scream is genetically engineered to drill right into my head, into my bones, like when someone presses one of those noise sirens close to your head; the message doesn't even get back to your ears before it gets to your spine and your whole back and shoulders jump like you've been kicked, your body reacts before you actually hear the noise.

He falls asleep. I have done this in order for all of us to get a better night's sleep, but now I am awake, wide awake, thinking about pain, the sort of pain you find in the Buddhist sense. The next morning he wakes up, squeals with delight and runs around the house. He's forgotten all about this, but will we? Maybe not if it's in print.

In the early 90s, an ad came on TV Set with music from an intensely obscure ambient band, with a beautiful white UFO-looking car spinning around on the TV Set's face. I felt like a diamond had been drilled into my brain - I MUST BUY THIS CAR. This happens so rarely to me, a Generation X-er, cynical, poor, ragged, oblivious to the TV Set, untouchable by mainstream society. And yet, THEY got to me.

Last weekend, I was gardening and my husband and baby were outside cleaning windows. We listened to the Greatest Radio Station In The World on our local broadcast airwaves, and there came on a song from my past.

*"California! Uber Alles! Californ-I-aaaa! Uber Alles!"*

My husband and I stared blankly at each other, and then looked at our baby. Should we turn off the radio? Protect him from Jello Biafra? But no; the song is too funny, in the Buddhist sense, and we grinned like we're on stage about to play a rock show again. What does it feel like to be mid-to-very-late 30s, (ok, very, very late) standing outside, working on our very own lawn outside our very own house with our very own baby, listening to the Dead Kennedys spraying out over our broadcast airwaves? Like maybe, are WE are in charge now? Did I miss something? Because sooner or later, it IS going to happen, the hippies are all going to retire and/or go deaf, and we're going to get to play Sex Pistols in the malls and elevators and no one will stop us. Grandmas will sk8. Grandpas will have Mohawks and it won't even have to be Max Headroom.

Is it ok to still like the Dead Kennedys if they were played on my local broadcast airwaves? How can you stop liking the Dead Kennedys? Poor misunderstood Jello Biafra, censored from presenting his own point of view on a major network TV show; they couldn't mention the second half of the title of the song "Nazi Punks F\*\*\* Off" in the discussion because the *second* half of the title contains an Offensive Word.

Is part of the knowledge that I am a target wrapped up in the targeting of me? Probably. But it's those instants when I hear

something from my past that I loved and made me feel angry and young that make me remember that I am still alive and haven't grown up yet. Yeah. I'm losing my edge, but I was there.