

I Thought My Grandfather Was Dead.

Written by Bob Alexander

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My mom's step-dad was the only grandfather I ever knew. He was a short, stout, outwardly devout Christian and looked like a Norman Rockwell American straight from a cover of *The Saturday Evening Post*.

He and the rest of Nixon's "Silent Majority" were taken completely by surprise by the '60's. The seemingly placid era of the '50's was turned upside down when Negroes forgot their place and demanded Civil Rights. The next thing he knew young people defied authority and refused to support the war in Vietnam. Women suddenly seemed to lose their minds and wanted control over their own bodies. Clean cut kids started growing their hair long, smoking dope, and having irresponsible sex. This deeply disturbed millions of Americans like my grandfather who sincerely believed sex was only safely discussed within the confines of a Reader's Digest article.

I can understand his confusion and anger. At the end of World War Two there was only one colossus bestriding the globe and that was us.

We Won. And we got our Just Reward.

We were the biggest, and the baddest, and we had Gawd and The Bomb on our side. (Not necessarily in that order.) We had the factories and the money, we had the know-how, and no matter how you sliced it ... We Were The Good Guys. The United States could do just about anything ... and we were poised to do just that. All Americans had to do was go to work, cash their paychecks, and start buying the American Dream as advertised on their new television sets.

Just as my grandfather was getting accustomed to living in paradise, all hell broke loose. The aforementioned Negroes, Young People, and Equal Rights seeking Women were essentially telling him he could take his paradise and shove it up his ass because they had a different idea about where the country should go.

Grimly determined to keep his American dream, he didn't mind when they brought out the dogs and the fire hoses. When the cops attacked in Chicago, and the National Guard started shooting up Kent State ... he didn't mind at all. He wanted his country back. He wanted to go back to the time when We Had Won. He wanted to go back to the time when he didn't have to remember to say the word Negro, instead of the word he had used his entire life. He wanted to

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go back to the time when all the Women, Negroes, and Children did what they were told. He wanted to go back to Pleasantville, where Ozzie and Harriet and "The Beav" solved their problems in under a half hour because Father Knows Best in a black and white world.

The Republicans promised they'd get back that paradise for him and he supported them until the day he died.

Forty-some years ago my friends and I seriously wondered how far our parents' and grandparents' generations would go to preserve their American Dream. When my friends talked about a revolution I'd take another toke off the joint making its way around the room and say there was no need for a revolution. All we had to do was wait just a little while longer and everything we wanted in a society would happen as if by magic.

As Jeffery Deaver wrote:

*You can't see it, but it's always present.
Run as fast as you can, but you'll never escape it.
Fight it with all your strength, but you'll never defeat it.
It kills when it wishes, but can never be brought to justice.
What is it?*

Time.

Everybody standing in our way was going to die.

I'd pontificate as only the righteously stoned could. There will be No More War. There were over 8 million Vietnam Era Veterans. Two and a half million of them had cycled through Vietnam. We would never allow another Vietnam to happen again.

Discrimination would vanish by the time we hit our mid-thirties. We were free of the racism our

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parents and grandparents dragged around with them.

The Equal Rights Amendment, would become a reality because in 1972, it had passed both houses of Congress and we were the people who were going to vote to ratify it.

The unlawful drug we were passing around would soon be legal. We were the ones who would vote to overturn all anti-marijuana laws.

They might have the guns, the cops, and the politicians on their side, but we had the more powerful weapon. We were going to outlive the bastards.

Well ... If Alan Greenspan can admit he made a HUGE mistake then I too can say a belief I held for about 20 years of my life was absolutely overwhelmingly wrong. And I won't recant like that weasel.

My grandparents are dead. My parents are dead. But the one glaring fact I didn't take into consideration was:

Money Never Dies.

I confused the minions of The Elite ... with The Elite. What the hell ... I was stoned OK? I made a simple mistake. A Great Big Simple Mistake.

Capitalism works best when it's Ozzie and Harriet all the time. Lawrence Welk's muzak, American Idol, Las Vegas and Shopping Malls were designed to keep us unconscious. Oppression is used when the people wake up.

In the meantime, the Republicans are staying on their generations old message. They will take

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us back to when life was just about as good as it could get ... if you were a white man. They've sanctified Ronald Reagan because he told the bedtime story best. For those whose brains are only nourished on sound-bites, the fable reverberates as if true. The bullies and bigots love it when their hateful ideas are expressed well via William F. Buckley and Saint Ronnie.

When the Tea Party showed up it was because the Koch brothers paid for it. Billionaires pump money to keep the Gingrich and Santorum campaigns afloat, and Mitt Romney's Financial Backers are the Who's Who of Big Banks and Corporations. Money never dies. It just seeks out new hosts who appreciate working with blood sucking ticks.

If my grandfather were alive he would have watched Glenn Beck's Restoring Honor rally in 2010. Now I hear the tenets of the twisted Christianity he adhered to coming out of Rick Santorum's mouth. My grandfather's dead but his place has been filled by someone else who wants to take the country back.

The Republicans promise a return to a time that most American voters have never lived in. A time they believe in more strongly than the Garden of Eden.

Y'know ... my world turned upside down too. A couple of times actually. But I never wanted to go back to any previous time in America's history. I wanted to go to a possible future.

My first mistake was in not understanding the undying malevolence of money. And secondly I got the demographics all wrong. There weren't nearly enough pot smokers necessary to pull off my kind of passive revolution.

As Jerry Garcia of The Grateful Dead said, "*Somebody has to do something, and it's just incredibly pathetic that it has to be us* ."