

## A Quick War

May 1, 2003

Today is my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday.

My daughter's gift to me was this tan leather journal. She told me she wanted me to start recording my life so when I'm gone my future grandchildren can get a glimpse of my life that they missed. I don't know where these grandchildren are coming from. My daughter is thirty years old, her only date was to her high school prom twelve years ago, and she has yet to move out of this house.

My son's gift was a black sweatshirt with "I'm not 50! I'm 18 with 32 years experience" scrawled across the chest in white paint. He told me he wanted to get me this thing called the coffin box that contained fake Viagra pills, an Over the Hill mug, and an inflatable walker but the gag gift store was sold out. There's something not right with his sense of humor. He laughs at the stupidest things. Of course I cannot tell him that, he's my son. So I gave my best "haha, this is great" smirk and head nod and quickly moved on to my wife's gift.

A pressure washer. She told me I could get started on the deck tomorrow. I suppose this was her way of saying that she really was mad that I bought her a washer/dryer combo and not the topaz necklace she wanted for her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday.

I've made it fifty years and I get a blank book, a shirt I'll never wear, and more work to do. What life is there to record? I am a mechanic with calloused, blackened, arthritic hands. It hurts to hold this pen. I get up at 5 a.m., drive an hour to work, flip

tires and replace disc brakes for nine hours, drive an hour home, eat dinner, go to bed. Repeat. There is no life, there's only work.

I could record history. Today's a historic day. President Bush announced the end of major combat operations in Iraq. Mission accomplished. That was a quick war.

May 3, 2003

I didn't write yesterday. The wife made me pressure wash the deck, the siding on the house, the walkway, and something else. I forget. I tried showing her how to use it but she said it was my gift to enjoy. I wanted to tell her what I would've enjoyed more than the pressure washer was getting laid but that seemed inappropriate. When did appropriateness become an issue with us? If I would've said that twenty or even ten years ago she would've laughed and I would've got laid. We only have sex on holidays now. The major ones – Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter. There's a big gap of time between Easter and Thanksgiving.

May 4, 2003

So I was inappropriate. I got to thinking that turning 50<sup>th</sup> constitutes as a major holiday and I asked my wife if she wanted to “fool around.” I should've phrased it differently. Her reply, “Are you going through a midlife crisis now or something? Fool around? We're not sixteen. We're fifty. We don't fool around anymore.” To which I replied, “Well then what is it that we do?” She hesitated with a sigh and said, “Nothing.” I wanted to say well, don't you think that's a problem but I didn't because I knew that would lead to a fight and I didn't have the energy for a fight and then I realized if I didn't

have the energy for a fight I probably didn't have the energy for sex and so I just rolled over and went to sleep.

May 5, 2003

Contemplated an affair today. I was sick to my stomach after thirty seconds of thinking about it. I really do love my wife. I bought her roses on the way home from work. She didn't say thank you but rather, "I'm too tired for sex tonight." I told her I bought them 'just because' but she had already started to walk away and I don't think she heard me.

May 6, 2003

I do not want to record my life any longer. In the past five days I have realized my daughter is somewhat delusional, my son's humor annoys me, and my wife is no longer in love with me. At least the war is over.