Everyone Go To Your Rooms!

Everyone, go to your rooms. I mean it. Go to your rooms. I’m not talking about your literal rooms (I’m an English teacher, we always talk in metaphor and symbolism). I’m talking about the grown-ups in their rooms, the teenagers in theirs, and the kids in the play room. Everyone separate. I know, you all had this mass delusion that the world would somehow be better if we all came out and played together, and for a while it seemed like it could be a good thing. Toy Story was a hip movie that parents could actually stand to sit through with their kids. Teenagers could talk about the latest Batman movie in terms of the social underpinnings of fear as a prime motivator in society in a post 9-11 world. But then came the Anna Nicole Smith Opera (we’re looking to attract a younger demographic), and the Veggie News Network covering a workers strike by the vegetables on sesame street (kids need to learn about collective bargaining), and, wait for it, Lace Camis at the mall (lace camis at the mall? What has Kugler got against lace camis at the mall?). They were size 8. As in, FOR AN EIGHT YEAR OLD.

People this has got to stop. This idea that somehow what is good for one generation is good for all. I took my nieces and nephews to see UP from Pixar, and in the first five minutes the couple finds out that they can’t have children...and then their house is foreclosed on...and then the wife dies...in the first five
minutes. My nieces and nephews don’t need to know how crushingly hard it will be to be an adult. They’ll have plenty of time to do that: when they’re adults! I don’t need my daughter being pushed into a mini-skirt and tube-top by Justice and Limited Too before she even has a top to hold the tube up.

I’m not a prude, I know my daughters will discover boys, but I would like them to at least have a little breathing room to consider who they are and who they want to be. Right now my four year old daughter wants to be a paleontologist. But how long will it be before she surrenders to the new Victoria’s Secret marketing campaign aimed at tweens. You laugh, but let’s talk about PINK. Victoria’s Secret has started a line of lingerie for teenagers. Their latest ad campaign? Pickup lines on panties. Because if there is one thing teenage girls need it’s underwear with the words “RIGHT HERE! RIGHT NOW!” plastered across the front. Otherwise 14 year old boys would be confused and think girls wanted to be treated as people instead of sex objects.

This is just one example in a long line of countless other pressures of an adult society telling my daughters that their only role in life is to be eye candy for slack jawed, knuckleheaded, sideways ball cap wearin’ dopes walkin’ around with their pants on the ground? Yes, let boys be boys. But let’s also let girls be girls, NOT objects.
Conversely, I don’t need Jar Jar Binks dumbing down my *Star Wars* prequels. These are violent films with people being shot, carved up with light sabers, and frozen alive. Why do we need a goofy-like character for the marketing tie-in to the sub-teen age group? And ultimately that’s what’s driving all this. The money. And I could go off on a rant about the evils of corporate greed and a pure market based economy. But I won’t. Instead I will simply close with this. I promise not to let Mr. Miskella show up at your Prom and grind in the middle of the dance floor with Ms. Katzive, if you promise to stop giving “makeout tips with Justin Bieber” to my 8 year old niece in her copy of Pre-teen vogue.