

The Salem Leader
Educationally Speaking
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My Somewhat Early-Life Crisis

I think I'm experiencing some form of a mid-life crisis. I know that you're thinking, "Uhh...Justin, you're 21." So maybe I should think of it as more of an early-to-mid-life crisis. My point is that I increasingly want to go in half a dozen new directions. My life and work in web site development has proved fruitful enough and most days I muddle by. But there have always been other things that I've wanted to do with my life.

For example, I want to travel the country in a van with friends not to see America or meet new people, but to follow the band Aerosmith on a tour and see all their shows. I figure I'll rent a big blue van, take the back seats out and fill it with pillows and blankets and maybe a toaster and go on my way. We'd stop in all the cities where the Aerosmith tour stops and sit in the front row each night. In addition to that, I've always told my closest friends that whenever I die I want to be cremated and have half my ashes stuffed into one of those confetti blaster guns so at the end of the show when Aerosmith does the big finale, I can be shot out of a big gun alongside tons of Aerosmith-logo shaped confetti.

And every time I go into an electronics store I always see younger kids playing the game Guitar Hero. It's a game where you play a virtual guitar and make points by hitting the right notes in a virtual rock concert. It makes me want to pickup a real guitar. My ultimate goal in life is to play lead guitar with The Rolling Stones at some sold-out show in Madison Square Gardens or the front lawn of the White House. If you can't imagine me playing guitar alongside Mick Jagger and Keith Richards in leather pants, a silk button-down shirt and an extravagant sequin-covered coat, you evidently do not know me very well. Unfortunately, I have to ask fast on this one. Those guys are really old. But I don't want to take the time to actually learn how to play guitar. I'd prefer to think that if I ever picked up a guitar I'd be some boy wonder that just knew how to play.

Once I get done with my rock star lifestyle after a couple years, I'd want to run for Governor. I kinda think I'd be good at the job and that I'd at least carry the Salem-vote. If for no other reason than everyone will assume I'll at least be able to get Highway 135 open. Of course, looking back, it might be in my best interest to run for governor, *then* go be a roadie for Aerosmith and play guitar with The Rolling Stones.

To add to that, I might actually be really good at being Governor, and then I might be forced to make a run for President. I assume by the time this would happen we would have at least one or two new parties in the system. They might be referred to as "Republicans" and "Democrats", but the core principles would likely be much

different than they are today. As a result, I can't really say which party I'd be affiliated with. Just know that it would be pro-Salem and I'd name Willie Harlen Secretary of State just because I assume he would know the history behind every major conflict in the world and he knows a lot of people.

I figure by the end of being a rock star and president, I'd probably start looking towards retirement. As of the present day, I'm on track to retire at the age of 54. I figure after being president I'd probably expect to retire at 43. In which case, I'd pack up my bags in Washington and move someplace like Seattle or Portland. I've always had some bizarre infatuation with the northwest coast. Maybe it's the rain or state-sponsored euthanasia, I just don't know. I had thought about going to undergraduate school in Seattle. Maybe I'll go there in retirement and start to work on a graduate degree in political science. Then, when the class starts discussing human rights in South Africa, I can just look at them and say, "Well. When I was president I went there and...". Or maybe I'll major in music and I can say, "Keith Richards told me just the other day before he died that...".

Who knows where I'll end up in my life? For now, I suppose a modest office gig in Indianapolis and roots in rural southern Indiana is enough. Just don't be surprised to see me driving around the square with a motorcade or on a tour bus.