



## Halloweenies

Halloween has come and gone again, and it left me with this thought: What the hell happened to Halloween? Of course I realize there are all sorts of very different neighborhoods all across the country, but from what I see on T.V., even in the most sanitized suburban enclaves there sure

don't seem to be many kids out trick-or-treating after dark. A few more before the sun goes down, but even then not so many, and if kids aren't doing it, then I assume their parents must not be encouraging it... or even allowing it anymore. This is a huge mistake. Also, what the fuck is a "Trunk or Treat"?? The only time kids should gather in a damn parking lot for their Halloween candy-collecting is when they live in isolated rural communities where the homes are all half a mile apart and the entire community sits an hour away from the nearest town. Other than that, please... put on your costumes and go knock on doors! The marked reduction of such basic social interaction is surely having a corrosive generational effect on society. Among my many friends who are fathers now (when did everyone get so old!?), we sometimes discuss how this seems to be another symptom of a gradual but seemingly inexorable loss of our collective grip on what it means to be human, which first and foremost is SOCIABILITY. We are unquestionably social creatures, absolutely built to interact with others, yet we've begun teaching kids from an early age to be supremely (and unnaturally) distrustful, and to avoid any non-vetted association outside the family unit at all costs. This tendency must be catastrophic for developing the habits of independence that come primarily from our youthful instinct to explore the world. Without this, what do we become? Some sort of creature quite unsuited to the world, I'd think. Something like one of those short-legged, flat-faced pug dogs that can barely breathe or function without the support of its master.

Not to be too alarmist about all this, though. I'm sure a castrated Halloween probably isn't the death knell of our increasingly hermetic humanity... but it sure feels like a harbinger of our collective, future enfeeblement, at least.

Plus — can't we just quit robbing our kids of joy, for chrissakes?