

## STRANGER STILL

You're right; I have been a stranger. Though, considering my upbringing and heredity, I'm surprised that you're surprised.

And but, while we warn our children away from strangers and the danger they conceal within windowless vans and overlong coats in overwarm weather, you still seem sweet on me.

Fine. Fair enough.

I do have an excuse, though. A myriad of excuses, I should say. Oodles of them, oozing from ears, nose and mouth and, while I typically shy away from excuses, I'm going to run you through a number of mine just for shits and giggles and because I'm trapped on a 767 for several more hours and someone has foolishly allowed me access to the internets.

Shall we begin?

I typically bite off more than I can chew, which leaves my schedule poorly digested and prone to acid reflux.

In addition to the soul-sucking joy of my nine-to-five (which is actually often seven-to-seven) and the duties required of my new world-renowned website ([meanspirited.net](http://meanspirited.net)), which replaced my old world-renowned website ([retardedpirate.com](http://retardedpirate.com)) - as I'm sure you can imagine, being twice-renowned is a heavy set of boots to fill, but I must: for the fans; for the children - I've taken up writing again, against the professional pleadings of my therapist (whom I suspect is in love with his mother in an unhealthy, Grecian way and the shame of that unacceptable cognition has been projected onto poor, li'l me in the form of general grumpiness and jealousy for my well-above-average ability and talent at pulling things from my ass, dressing them in flowery, sweet-smelling diction and plopping them down before unsuspecting strangers just to watch the kaleidoscope of emotions that floods their faces when they realize what lies under those crinkly, holiday-themed trappings) and a majority of the literate world.

I've also taken up the banjo, though I'm not entirely sure what all these strings are for, nor what all this hokum about 'chords' and 'notes' and such is in the instructional documentation. I just want to rock.

If that rot isn't enough, I climb rocks on a daily basis and, when inebriated and momentarily outside the bounds of the attention of my understandably bleary and balding minders, I climb buildings.