

Oh, Baby!

by Ann Bogle

Subj:Re: hippy Date: 6/9/06 7:19:40 AM Central Daylight

In a message dated 6/8/06 12:54:37 PM Central Daylight Time, rainermaria@.NET writes:> I shaved my head four years ago and played with my resume. Blatant > lies. They didn't help. But I really looked like a total putz with no > hair. As for The Fugs....>

I clipped my hair to an eighth of an inch five years ago—in 2001 before 9/11—to see what the small of my head looked like. Men had suddenly insisted on having a baby with me, men I had not met until then or drunk men I had long known. I had not been hankering for a baby. One of the drunk men, a dear friend, hunk, as he updated me, now living the existence of a poet, called from San Francisco to say he would take the plane to Minneapolis, do it, then leave me to raise the baby. He was driving taxi, something his ex-wife, another of my friends, had not agreed to in him. Another drunk one, a novelist calling from Missouri said he wanted to spread his superior genes (with their single flaw or two) to as many states as he could carry them. He assumed my mother would pay for everything.

"Everything" means private schools. She hadn't needed to pay for private schools for me, so now I'm *really* unemployed. He was working. Then a wealthy drunk poet in New York called in for quintuplet boys to go with his three boys already. "Girls then," I said. "No," he said.

Perhaps if I had suddenly mated, just then, as a fuzzy-headed woman with a man with a shaved head, everything would have turned out okay. I had been very attracted to bald men—even been engaged to one for two years—but he and I didn't have a baby. He had a baby with a woman he had met once at a music festival. The baby was then adopted by rich, white people, a fact that caused me to grow highly suspicious of the economics of having babies, something I had not been in the past.

It was a Jamaican man, a steel drum player, Jah-B, as it turned out, who got it started, when he approached me at a bar, where I

had stopped in for exactly one drink (what I could afford), and said, "Have my baby." We went on two dates total, my hair still long. I must not have wanted a baby so soon: at almost 39. On one of the two dates, I had slathered my arms, legs, and chest with mentholated rub. My muscles felt constantly punished as if by invisible forces. I smelled only menthol and almost could not eat. His mother had had her last of nine children at the age of 52. "Never let anyone tell you you can't have a baby until you're 52," he confided.

