

To My Children, With Apologies

by Paul Steven Stone

I'm writing this note to apologize for some of the things you'll be inheriting when I go to my final reward. It's unlikely your father will have time to make amends then, so I'm sending my apologies now.

First off, I'm sorry about all this war and destruction that's running riot on the planet. We older Americans tried to put an end to war, but not enough foreigners and strangers would listen to us or take our orders. After that, what choice did we have but to send in soldiers?

At least we tried.

My apologies also for those crowded roads you and your families have to drive on. My generation would have built more public transportation but, in all honesty, we just didn't give a damn. We never travel by train, so why the hell should anyone else? Try not to hate us too much when you spend half your days driving to and from your jobs.

Come on, guys, honk if you still love your father!

And speaking about cars, I sincerely apologize for the megatonnage of planetary resources I seem to have consumed during my brief stay on Earth. Quite frankly, when I think about the tons of materials used to satisfy my individual desires—all the buying, spending and consuming it took to keep me feeling whole and happy—I find myself surprisingly without shame or remorse.

I'm sorry, but there it is! Your father is a selfish hungry pig and knows it and, apparently, revels in the raw honesty of it. He also loves driving around in big cars and buying thousands of unnecessary plastic items.

Hey, somebody has to.

And speaking of raw honesty, children, I want to apologize for the way I desecrated the land. Lord knows your father, as a

responsible businessman, couldn't let all that good, solid earth remain undeveloped and glorious in its natural state. Much as I hated to, if I hadn't sliced up the land, ate up the woods and fields, and built wall-to-wall malls and sprawls, think of all the money I wouldn't have made...!

And then how sorry would I be?

Lastly, I want to apologize for leaving you a world much filthier, cruder, harsher—and far less friendly—than the one my father left me. It seems a shame people treat each other so roughly these days, or that values have been so perverted by money, false gods and distorted self images. Of course, if that's the price of admission to the RICHEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD, I want to see you kids first in line to buy tickets.

Just remember two things, children: I never promised you a perfect world. And I'm too selfish to help create one.

Oh, and did I apologize for that hole in the ozone layer...?

