



P.J. O'Rourke Explains 4 Baby Boomer Classes, President Obama And Rev. Wright

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At a luncheon today sponsored by the Cato Institute at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City, satirist P.J. O'Rourke discussed some observations emerging from his latest book on the Baby Boom generation.

Born in 1947, O'Rourke himself was an early boomer. For the sake of illustration, he decided to break the 18-year boomer cohort in four separate age classes along the lines of a high school, from senior to freshmen. After all, boomers can only be classified by age, because using sex, race or location would be politically incorrect. The senior class included himself, Hillary Clinton and Cheech of Cheech & Chong.

"History is full of generations with too many problems," but the seniors in particular had too many answers. They experimented with drugs first and foremost but with everything else from Indian religion to Tai Chi. Though O'Rourke didn't say it, some seniors were stultifyingly serious. Think of Al Gore.

For the junior class, drugs were not an experiment, they were proven. They only 'found their shoes when they got to Silicon Valley and never found their ties." This class, however, included Bill Gates and Steve Jobs.

The sophomore class was slightly more serious. Some even went out and got MBAs. They realized that if a lit "bong fell into the bean bag chair" it might start a fire, O'Rourke joked.

The freshmen represented the final group of this generation, born between 1960 and 1964 or thereabouts. President Obama was one of them. "We wonder" about what the president's philosophy is, O'Rourke noted. "My guess is he doesn't have one," he said. Why? Because Obama's generation grew up practically from day one like "fish living in a sea of hooey." Bombarded with an endless stream of counter-cultural baloney, the freshmen simply tuned out all the nonsense they heard from seniors, juniors and sophomores.

This might explain why, in the 2008 election campaign, Obama seemed oblivious to the rants of the Rev. Wright, who married him and his wife. He was probably sitting in church communicating "with Rahm Emanuel on his Blackberry." O'Rourke quickly added that his generation, the serious seniors, would have been standing on their feet, hanging on every word of the Rev. Wright's rants and cheering, while standing on their feet and shaking their fists in agreement with every "God damn America" and claim that the CIA created AIDs.

Indeed, when the 2008 presidential election began in 2007, many handicappers predicted that it would be the ultimate senior Baby Boomer showdown that failed to take place in the New York senatorial race in 2000: Rudy Giuliani versus Hillary Clinton. (Giuliani was actually born in 1944 but who is counting.) At any rate, Americans rejected that clash just as New Yorkers had dodged it eight years earlier, and politics has since started to pass the boomers by. It seems even the boomers have become sick of themselves.

O'Rourke offered some faint praise for the baby boomer generation, saying that we find ourselves immersed in a "bellicose national political deadlock," which is a lot better than a "bellicose national political purpose." That usually ends up in war.

The Cato Institute is a non-partisan, libertarian-oriented group that seeks to offer solutions to current problems that involve individual initiative rather than government-led programs. O'Rourke said he was glad to see growing interest in libertarian ideas among attendees.

There is still time for them to find a home in the libertarian movement, which should be a natural in many ways for this generation. After all, many believed in various types of liberation and even more engaged in libertine behavior. Furthermore, the last 13 years have witnessed the failure of overly ambitious government arrogance repeatedly, from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to the Affordable Care Act. Recent revelations about the National Security Agency have let Americans know that even if we are hardly a police state, all the machinery exists and already is in place.

Three years from now when New York Mayor Bill DeBlasio approaches the end of his first term, O'Rourke predicts libertarian meetings in the Big Apple will be packed. DeBlasio has unabashedly said he believes in "heavy hand of big government," and that "the magic of the market" is responsible for many of our current problems. Let's see how his answers play out.