

So When May I?

by Rev. Joe Dirt - Thursday, December 23, 2021

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I just finished watching a documentary, [Bill Cunningham: New York](#). Bill was a fashion photographer for the New York Times. While he shot photos at runways in New York and Paris, he was most famous for his street photos of fashion on the New York streets, especially around Manhattan. He did this for decades and was a fixture in the New York fashion industry and at the New York Times.

His photography was of some interest to me, but what engaged me most in this short film was the photographer and his exceedingly quirky personality. He had one function in life, one overriding passion, and that was photographing fashion. I would have called him a high functioning Asperger's personality except he seemed to have strong social skills. His photography/fashion obsession was his life, everything else was peripheral. He lived simply, ate simply, certainly was no fashion plate, he was totally focused on his mission.

I'm not sure what his financial arrangement with The New York Times was, employee or contractor, but he had an absolute obsession of not being beholden to anyone. He frequently refused money for work done outside of his NYT gig, going as far as even refusing glasses of water if he was working a fashion party. Which leads me to something he said towards the end of the film:

"I just try to play a straight game...to be honest and straight in New York... that is like Don Quixote fighting windmills."

At the time of the documentary he was 79 years old and turned 80. Another one of his quirks that caught my attention was that he called practically everyone younger than 50 or 55 *child*. I like that idea, calling all youngsters – *child*, and begin to wonder at what age could I get away with it. If I am not there already, I believe I am just around the corner...*child*.

And so it goes.

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