



Babes in Conservative Land: Making Those Who Can't Vote Political Stars

Long before Hillary Clinton became a [Whitewater girl](#) she was a [Goldwater girl](#). She even read the 1964 Republican nominee's book *Conscience of a Conservative* before becoming what critics would say is a conscienceless leftist. But while Rodham (her maiden name) had to content herself with being a school Young Republican, today politically precocious kids can get something else: 15 minutes of national conservative fame facilitated by fawning adults. And one commentator has a very definite opinion about this.



"The Right Needs To Stop Idolizing Wunderkinds," [says](#) Bethany Mandel.

Writing at the *Federalist*, Mandel points to other "conservative" kids who underwent the Rodham-Clinton transformation — only, it happened after adults childishly hailed them as the next Ronald Reagan.

One is C.J. Pearson. The 13-year-old black Georgia resident [denounced](#) Barack Obama earlier this year in a few videos, which went viral, and he became a conservative YouTube star. That was before he apparently [lied](#) about the White House blocking him on Twitter.

Reportedly [forged](#) his mother's name on a management contract.

And, most significantly, denounced conservatism, announced he was becoming a Democrat, and adopted the choice hashtag of socialist Senator Bernie Sanders's acolytes, #FeelTheBern. And conservatives got burned — again.

Another boy wonder who went from conservative hero to conservative zero is [Jonathan Krohn](#), who at 13 was allowed to give a speech at the 2009 Conservative Political Action Conference (shown). But after hitting a homerun there, he, too, swung left. Of course, such defections inspire animosity; Pearson, for instance, has been the object of scathing tweets. But any who feel betrayed by these lads should realize they betrayed themselves: They betrayed their own principles by making a minor a major political player. As Mandel explains:

One of the cultural trends that make conservatives like myself aghast is social liberals' belief that children are capable of charting major courses in their life, like obtaining birth control, an abortion, or choosing their own...[sex], as if it's all a page in a "Choose Your Own Adventure" book. Teens are far too often allowed to drastically change the course of their lives without their parents' knowledge or consent. Conservatives (rightly, might I add) decry these "treatments" and call them what they are: child abuse. Children are not emotionally or intellectually capable of permanent decisions like these, and many others.

At the same age that conservatives have declared children too immature for these choices, we



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elevate wunderkinds in our midst.

And it “is nothing but hypocritical,” says Mandel.

Interestingly, columnist Michelle Malkin has [just written](#) about five-year-old Sophie Cruz, whom the Left made a “ponytailed poster child for amnesty.” This is common. Liberals often use children as human props, or, one might say, as [human shields Saddam Hussein-style](#). Have an adult as your standard bearer, and he can be raked over the coals. But “You don’t attack a child!” In fact, Malkin mentioned a *Washington Post* reporter who noted that the use of Sophie was “deployed to great effect” and a Harvard University sociologist who called the ploy “tactically ... brilliant.” Some would call it disgusting, deceitful, and manipulative.

In fairness, a 13-year-old isn’t a 5-year-old. Pearson and Krohn weren’t merely coached and callow and reciting lines. And [watching Krohn speak at CPAC](#) the appeal was evident: It can be cute and captivating seeing a boy whose voice hasn’t even changed yet, who has smarts and a big personality, expound on big issues. Yet with his subject being “defining conservatism” (he had written a book by that name), I couldn’t help but think, “A 13-year-old speaking about defining conservatism when he isn’t even defined as a person yet? And adults are taking this seriously? Really?” Maybe now he’ll define liberalism.

Of course, not all youthful political prodigies turn left. WND.com, generally a fine website, actually began publishing a 12-year-old columnist, Kyle Williams, in 2001. He bowed out humbly four years later, [saying](#) he wanted to pursue endeavors beyond punditry. Mandel cites [Benji Backer](#) and [Madeline McAuley](#), who both apparently burned out on politics. And she mentioned as well the Ben Shapiro, Christine Rousselle, and Daniel Mael success stories, but also that they plunged into politics when old enough to more maturely choose a career; the last two were in their early 20s and Shapiro was 17. Mandel also mentions that they “earned their chops in politics.”

And that’s the point. Children are flighty, and unearned success doesn’t build character. Thus, if a child expresses interest in baseball, a wise parent may cultivate it step by step, requiring proportionate and sustained effort from the child.

He doesn’t immediately run out and try to get a contract via an MLB scout.

Likewise, a child interested in politics can join his school’s debate team, run for class president, and have discussions with his family members. As far as the political major leagues go, however, he should receive only one message: Come back and talk to us in 10 years.

This isn’t just because of “burnout.” Twelve-year-old Jesus awed His elders by preaching in the temple, but there’s only one Jesus. As for other children, they certainly can have their own feelings, but *feelings* are largely all they will be.

Any sound ideology will have a strong intellectual foundation built on Truth. Even adults often fail in this regard and are too often governed by feelings, especially in this relativistic age. But a child, a being even more influenced by emotion? Realistically, there’s no chance whatsoever that any substantial portion of his ideology will be more than an inch deep. Ancient Greeks understood this, which is why Plato spoke of the importance of developing in youth an “erotic [emotional] attachment” to virtue; they can then be moored to the good via their passions, the only way possible when they’re still too young to grasp moral principles in their abstract form.

Despite this, we now live in Peter Pan-complex culture that sometimes treats youth as a virtue itself



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(some politicians have even [proposed](#) allowing 14-year-olds to vote). At the same time, elders are demeaned; the '60s had their [credo](#) "Don't trust anyone over 30," and today we hear scoffing about the "old white men" who forged the West and how the GOP is a party of "old people," as if that's some sort of defect. And the elderly are mocked on TV (e.g., *Seinfeld*).

This thoroughly contravenes history's norm. While Tom Wilson is correct in saying "Wisdom doesn't necessarily come with age. Sometimes age just shows up all by itself" (paging George Soros), that just concerns individual variation; at the group level, experience shows its benefits. This is why the Constitution requires presidents to be at least 35 and why ancient Sparta had a Council of Elders whose members had to be over 60. But there's an interesting reason why this norm has been turned on its head.

Experience is the by-product of Truth distilled through time; we also call this accumulated wisdom. And since Truth is unchanging, it is never out of date; a person who grasped it 60 years ago is as sagacious as someone who grasped the same amount of it two years ago. And therein lies the value of the best among older people: They are vessels holding greater amounts of that timeless and necessary commodity.

That's the sane view, anyway. But today we live in a relativistic age in which most don't believe in Truth (only *six percent* of teenagers in 2002 did, [according to a study](#)). All they have are emotion-born preferences, consensus opinion, styles and fashions, credos such as "Follow your heart" and "If it feels good, do it." So even if there isn't wisdom from the mouths of babes, hey, they sure have those exalted things called feelings. And in a land unmoored from Truth, with modern media transmitting ideas at a button's touch, the spirit of the age changes quickly and continually. One generation worships its spirit, the next its spirit, and ne'er the twain shall meet. Hence "generation gaps."

And this is where the elderly can't compete. They're often accused of not being "with it," but what is "it"? It is the latest spirit, which they likely will never know as well as one born into that spirit. Those who value Truth will respect those who have the greatest acquaintance with it: the old. Those who worship only fashions, however, will value most the most fashionable: the young.

Oscar Wilde once wrote, "In America the young are always ready to give to those who are older than themselves the full benefits of their inexperience." It's up to adults to be wise enough not to accept it.



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