



Confessions Of An Anti-dentite

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From a very young age, children are brainwashed into going to the dentist. We are coerced, coaxed, threatened, and finally forced against our will into dental submission. Children are frightened by the prospects of cavities, which are apparently the equivalent of herpes for adults.

My parents made me believe that cavities were like oil slicks, spreading their terrible black cruelty throughout your mouth at an exponential rate if left unchecked, the evils of candy and chocolate abuse taking their final, chilling toll. You were left looking like jack-o-lanterns, hillbillies, or the British. Teeth would rain out of your mouth like you're barfing up pearls. People would fun of you and stare.

And then it infects all aspects of your life. Your grades start to slip. You get expelled. You're forced into a gritty life of petty theft and prostitution, and one day you sob uncontrollably in the pouring rain in front of a city billboard reading "Colgate—The Freshmaker." If only you'd listened to your mother, your life would be oh so different. (Oh, and you'll whistle as you cry, since most of your teeth are missing. Think of a sad kettle or a depressed train.)

Maybe your parents weren't as vivid and sadistic as mine, but as a "retainer-braces-permanent retainer" survivor (ten years later, I still think a hammer and some courage would have solved my overbite with less trauma), I tremble when my six-month checkup draws near. Bi-annually, citizens like you and me are forced to become scared children again, and I for one am tired of the condescension, the waiting, the oral violation, and the pain. I am exposing the sick, saliva-soaked truth behind The Dentist. Open wide.

Every visit to my dentist tends to be the same. I thumb through the same magazine I always do—my dentist makes over \$200,000 and still only subscribes to *Time* and *Sports Illustrated*, the cheap bastard. I read the same article about the growing rumors that George Bush may be re-elected in 2004 (I never said they were current), and I feel my apprehension begin to grow. When the receptionist calls my name, I begin the short, long walk to my own personal Room 101.

I am led into the brightly office by a "hygienist," a woman who tries to look professional in pink pajamas and rubber gloves. Led nervously to the chair, I fasten my dribble bib (I'm a pro—I don't wait for some ho-gienist to do it for me) and start to prepare myself mentally for what is about to commence.

I'm not sure what triggers my apprehension the most; perhaps it's the crappy soft rock favorites coming out of the radio or maybe it's because I get all of the "hygienists in training"—students still working on the steady hand needed to clean choppers. I have enough gum-scrapes to tally up their final dental report card, and "D" is the

operative letter. Having these girls clean your teeth is sort of like getting your prostate exam from a chainsaw.

When I was younger, the nightmare wouldn't end when the dentist finally came to check on me. Irony has never been lost on me, so I always take time to acknowledge God as the best comedy writer in the universe.

"What the fuck is he talking about," you ask?

Well, my dentist went to great lengths to ensure the sanitary conditions of his office and staff. He constantly had someone wiping the floors, cleaning the sinks, and he himself always wore his white surgical facemask. But my dentist never—emphasize *never*—wore gloves when examining my teeth. He shoved his bare, hairy fingers into my mouth and felt around. Apparently, seeing my overbite wasn't enough; he needed tactile proof that my incisors could open pop bottles. As he rubbed his index finger over my gums, I wasn't sure whether I should scream or bite down.

It was disgusting. Totally. I might as well have rinsed my mouth in the toilet.

If that magic carpet ride of germs wasn't bad enough, the white mask my dentist wore over his mouth provided a cruel, false sense of hope. In another dose of omnipotent irony, my dentist's breath smelled like he ate fungus and dogshit wrapped in a soft, flour tortilla for lunch. Every time I'd go for a check up, I would pray his halitosis had lessened. Instead, I could see the hygienist slowly back away as he approached. I desperately hoped the mask would act as a buffer so I wouldn't have to hold my breath. No such luck. I think the mask actually increased its power. It smelled like the wind from the dump.

Physician, heal thyself.

I think the final straw leading to my rabid hatred of the dentist was that I suffered through fourth grade with a retainer that reduced my voice to a series of wet hisses. I sounded like Sylvester the Cat (and to give you a visual, I looked like Jonathan Bauer from *Who's the Boss*).

I had to suffer the permanent torture of braces for the next four years. Just when I thought my smile couldn't become any tinnier, I had to get another retainer. Another one. It went over the braces and somehow pierced my heart. (There's an emo song in here somewhere).

I set off mall security gates, my cheeks were cut to ribbons, and I was a virgin till I was 20. Okay, being in the closet contributed somewhat, but no self-respecting homo would let all of that metal

come within ten feet of their package. Unless they're into that sort of thing. Or they star in that bad German BDSM porn. But I digress.

After all of this—all the scraping, the stench, the tears, the blood, the social ostracizing, the nightmares about beavers laughing and saying “Nice teeth, faggot!”—after all of this...I still have an overbite and a gap.

So for all the children out there being convinced that the dentist is your only savior from the ninth circle of Gingivitis, where plaque rains like snow and the Tooth Fairy spits in your face, just know that regular brushing and flossing is the key. If you want to experience the dentist for yourself, lick a stranger's finger and swish with fishhooks; shove a bunch of pipe cleaners into your mouth and have someone ask you, “So how are you today?” and expect you to be able to answer. Rinse and spit.

God bless you *FLYMF.com*! You will be missed by at least one socially maladjusted web comedian—thanks for the memories!