

Ken Swarner is a Humor columnist and Author of Whose Kids Are These Anyway? He can be reached at <http://www.kenswarner.bigstep.com> .

### **Something's up with Jim** **By Ken Swarner**

I was over at my in-laws the other day when my mother-in-law lowered the boom.

"Where's Jim?" my wife asked, looking around the kitchen for her step-dad. "He's changing Mitch's diaper," she announced. My wife's face froze in shock. "Excuse me?" I have to admit that that was surprising news. I started dating my wife in high school. Back then, Jim reminded me of a cross between prison warden and Ward Cleaver. "That can't be," my wife retorted.

Her mother smiled. "It's true."

My wife shook her head in disbelief. "But, but, this is not the same man I grew up with," she stammered. "Jim violated child labor laws. He worked long hours. He waited to be served. He growled. He..."

"...scared the living daylights out of me," I added.

"Exactly!" she exclaimed. "And now, h-he's changing a baby's diaper?"

My mother-in-law smiled. "Jim's quite comfortable with it. He said changing a poopie diaper is like changing a tire."

"Wait a minute," I interrupted. "He used the word: Poopie?"

"Yea- so?"

"So? What's next? Binkie?"

Just then, we heard him leading a parade of giggling, rambunctious grandchildren into the living room. My wife peered around the corner. She motioned us over to look. "And what about this?" she said, pointing. "Who would have thought that the same man who woke me up at 7 a.m. on Saturdays to mow the lawn, or hid my shoes when I left them lying around the house, or missed my school events because he had to work, would be at this very moment playing This Little Piggy Went Wee Wee Wee All The Way Home." I nodded. "Who would have thought that he'd be playing that game on his own toes." She turned and faced me: "I don't know what to do."

"I do," I retorted. "I'm keeping my shoes on, thank you very much."

We sat staring at him rolling on the floor with the grand kids.

"Nice knee drop, son," I shouted. "Now, give Papa a minute to catch his breath."

My wife gestured. "See what I mean. He lets the kids tear him to shreds."

If I so much as looked sideways at him growing up I was on restriction."

Finally, Jim stood up and announced "last one to the cookie jar is the rotten egg."

We jumped out of the way to avoid getting run over.

As Jim passed by, my wife grabbed his arm. "You changed Mitch's diaper?" she asked him, as if needing to hear it from his mouth.

A goofy smile spread across his face, then, as if understanding her point, his face softened and he said: "Look, I worked hard when you were young - I felt I had responsibilities. I missed out on having fun with you kids. I'm not going to make the same mistake." Then, he hurried over to the counter shouting, "I'm the rotten egg! I'm the rotten egg!"

My wife didn't say a word. The tear in her eye said it all.

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