



The Roast of Dad

October 29, 2006 By [Shawn Decker](#)

My mom decided to throw a big surprise birthday party for my dad, who turned 60 last Thursday. The day before, I had a message on my phone, “It would be really special if you did a reading...”

I clinched up.

A couple of weeks before I was in Barnes & Noble when Mom bought 50 copies of the book, which she has been giving away to friends and co-workers. And people who came to the C’ville (my hometown) book event from across the mountain who, as mom put it, “left empty handed” because the store had underordered.

✖ I wasn’t down with hijacking Dad’s big day to pimp my book. Mom admitted she would be giving out to “a few select people”, but she assured me that this was going to be a Roast, that I would just kick things off with a reading about Dad. The week before this thing was going to be a costume party. I started to feel like I was being set up.

There’s one part of the book that a lot of people have commented on. My brother, Dad and I are waiting in the car for Mom to come out of the house one winter’s morning. Dad is cursing, ranting and raving... until Mom gets in the car, of course. I wanted to read that, but Mom reminded me that my niece and some elderly relatives would be there.

“You have to read that part,” Gwenn told me later, daringly.

We arrived and there were about 50 people there, two of which were dressed as pirates. The family friend of five or so years sadly asked me, “Why didn’t you dress up?” Fortunately, when Mom and Dad arrived they were dressed up as punkrockers. But only because Mom used that to trick Dad into believing he was going to a Halloween party.

After signing some books for people of various levels of familiarity, I took the mic to kick off the roast at Lynn’s Pancake House in Waynesboro, Virginia. I stated that if the audience were friends of the Decker’s, then their sensibilities had already been strained. Just chalk this up as one more event on that long list. (That got a hearty laugh. I knew I was home free.)

After my spirited minute-and-a-half reading, the open mic had it's high and low moments, as is always the case. Mom enjoyed three trips into the spotlight, each one going down an increasingly darker path. Like how she and Dad used to fool around at Nanny's (my grandmother, who was there) on Dad's sister's bed. "I hope you washed the sheets!"

It was totally absurd. But I laughed, realizing that Mom had out-vulgared her youngest son by an Augusta County mile. But that was fine by me, because at least I wasn't dressed up as a pirate.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

<http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/the-roast-of-da>