

They say I've got brains, but they ain't doing me  
no good.

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So for the past decade or so, I've been in and out of some rather well-known, intelligent-sounding places. And so, it has happened to me many, many times that I am introduced to some stranger with something in the way of 'This is B. He's at (name of institution)' and stranger replies, 'Oh, so you must be really smart'.

Boy, is that ever annoying.

There is no way that I am ever going to live up to a start like that. That's why I prefer to introduce myself as an artist living on welfare. Keeps the expectations low, and is basically honest. Pablo Picasso defines, "Art is the lie which allows us to see the truth." Is this not a perfect description of economic modelling?

Now, I'm not complaining. I mean, having associated myself with all of these places with lots of smart people has been a decided boon for me, and I have gotten a job or two because the interviewer looked at my resume and exclaimed, 'Oh, so he must be smart.' And if ya hang out with smart people, it sorta rubs off sometimes. But I haven't particularly produced all that much. No publications over here. No starving children fed. I mean, I did write a video game, but that's a far cry from the brilliance that's frequently foisted upon me.

So I feel for Brian Wilson, as I believe many people do (or would, if they knew his story).

Much research has been done on responses to pressure, showing that there are distinct types. Few people perform best with zero pressure, but some people are better with only moderate pressure, and some are better with whole heaps of pressure. The heaps-of-pressure people are the athletes and type-A businessmen of the world. The moderate-pressure people, well, that's the rest of us, including Mr. Wilson.

He's the poster child for a generation set up for failure. We've all read about the type-A people to no end, and there's the constant, implicit imperative that we should be like them. I mean, why not? There wasn't anything that was keeping Brian from finishing Smile: he had the funding, a few hundred hours of tape and the know-how to edit them together. The theory says that he should have easily finished. Yet, it didn't turn out that way.

There's a strong incentive on the part of a public figure to try to give the impression that everything they do is easy, and most pull it off. And that's

why Brian Wilson is the pop icon for me, whom I best relate to. He's not the flawless creative genius who just threw together brilliant works, but someone for whom creation was a fight the whole way along, and although he fought well and created great things, it was a fight he eventually lost.