

As a small child, Uncle Will taught me how to play with fire by handing me a giant flaming torch and telling me to run off and play. The torch was so heavy, I had to cantilever my body against its weight. The flame lit up the whole winter solstice night.

Years later, I found out that this lesson was never really for us kids, it was for our parents, watching terrified in the doorway of the farmhouse, their kids giddy and swathed in fire. He gave us homemade torches, not to teach us responsibility.

But to teach our parents to calm the hell down, that children are far less flammable than they look, and that sometimes you've got to let your kids burn some hair.