HAL. I've heard that it's a natural instinct for a parent to be a life shield for a child. I say this from lack of personal experience, having no children of my own, but my observations of the parent/child dynamic have made this statement seem to be universally true. Protection. I'm not sold on the fact that the definition of "protection" is completely non-relative (if you'll excuse the pun). Relatively speaking, past age five the subjectivity of child "protection" is completely wide open. One has to ask at what point does "protection" become more damaging than "lack of protection"? "You only have to get burned once by the oven." is a silly idea. Who wants to get burned? Who would let a child walk up and touch scalding iron? I'll tell you who. Those who realize that the quick burn will usually heal in time, but the slow burn just cooks from the inside out. From my vantage point, neither is very pleasant -- but it would seem that on occasion, the best protection one can give another person is to take the shield away completely. Now, I know, one may say, "Wait until you have kids of your own." or "Why would you want someone to have to suffer through disappointment when you could have stopped it?" My response -- "Can you stop it? Can you really?"