

# Life Begins at ...uh...uh

BY AMOS ARTHUR HOLMES



Ewin Ebenezer is a dear friend of mine. He came to my office last week on the verge of tears. It seems that Ewin had been job hunting and was somewhat stunned to find that he was, at fifty years of age, too ancient for consideration. He had gone to the Ajax Employment Agency and the interviewer had insinuated that fifty was rather a mossy age...an old, old age...and how could one expect to sell a product that was creaky and gray and dentured?

I couldn't believe it. I have spent fifty-four years on this earth and I am in unbelievably good health. I jog each morning, do fifty pushups (with the help of my wife), and work out with weights. My mind is alert and active and crammed to the gills with information and wisdom. I have traveled half way around the world, had experience in a hundred occupations, and I just couldn't believe that my age would hold me back if I sought employment. I decided to visit the Ajax Employment Agency and see for myself.

When I arrived at the agency I was told to sit down at desk four and that I would be interviewed by a Mr. Parkington. I went over to desk four

and sat down. The interviewer was sitting across from me.

Mr. Parkington was perhaps in his early thirties. His thick, raven-black hair was slicked back in a style reminiscent of Rudolf Valentino. His eyes focused on a spot three inches above my head and stayed there. He had a pencil in his right hand that he constantly tapped against the desk.

"Mr. Holmes, how old are you?"

"I'm fifty-four years of age."

Tap. Tap. Tap.

"Well, we certainly can't discount the fact that fifty-four is a pretty advanced age. Can we?"

"I have always considered age a thing of the mind. Some are old at thirty while others are quite productive at eighty."

Tap. Tap. Tap.

"Mr. Holmes, a philosophical discussion on age would be somewhat out of place. I presume we are in agreement when I say that a man of fifty-four would be unable to adequately perform his duties as a ...shall we say...as a laborer."

"That could well be, Mr. Parkington, but there is also the truth that your statement wouldn't hold true for everyone. You see...I jog, do fifty

pushups (with the help of my wife) and I work out with weights. I should imagine that I could perform a laborer's job with great proficiency...but this will hopefully remain conjecture, as I am not applying for a laborer's job."

Tap. Tap. Tap.

"And your age is fifty-four?"

"Yes."

Tap. Tap. Tap.

"Mr. Holmes, I don't want to sound pessimistic but I also don't want you to misunderstand my function. I am here to help you gain employment but I am also here to see that the businesses seeking employees are furnished with men or women who don't have one foot in the grave."

"Mr. Parkington, I understand your predicament. I wouldn't be here if I didn't have absolute faith in my ability to serve in some capacity whomsoever I should find employment with. And I can assure you that neither one of my feet is in the grave."

Tap. Tap. Tap.

"And your age, Mr. Holmes?"

"I was fifty-four when I came in here. I should imagine that I am now eighty-six. Yes, I'm quite sure of it. I am eighty-six years old."

Tap. Tap. Tap.

"Your experience?"

"I have acted as managing editor for the New York Times, I have taught journalism at Princeton University, I am an expert on diesel engines, I have done work on space exploration and I have had vast experience in communications. I can do mechanical drawing and I have performed plastic surgery at the Mayo Clinic."

Tap. Tap. Tap.

"Is that all?"

"Yes."

Tap. Tap. Tap.

"All right, Mr. Holmes, that will be all. Thank you for coming in and every effort will be put forth on your behalf."

"Don't you want my address and telephone number?"

Tap. Tap. Tap.

"Goodbye, Mr. Parkington, and thanks a million. It has been a pleasure meeting you. You are one of the few remaining scholars who doesn't look at achievement as being something totally chronological. If there is room in this world for the zest of youth then surely there is room for the wisdom of age. And you, and maybe you alone, will wave that banner of progress."

Tap. Tap. Tap. Tap. Tap. Tap.