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THE BLOKE QUOTE

THAT'S the trouble with 'Have a nice day!' It puts all the pressure on you
- GEORGE CARLIN

GERI HALLIWELL went to the police after she found her three-month daughter Bluebell bruised and crying while in the care of a temporary nanny.

An investigation is ongoing but whatever the outcome, this is every mother's nightmare. And particularly a single mother's.

When it's just you, you have to rely on family or friends to get some much-needed time to yourself. If they're not available, it sometimes means you have to trust virtual strangers.

Bluebell, of course, can't speak for herself. Consequently, her distress will

have cut her mother to shreds, forcing her mind into overdrive, imagining all sorts of horrors that may not have happened.

Motherhood is a time spent in guilt, most of which is manageable. But an incident like this can change your perspective for ever, prompting paranoia and an inability to trust your own judgment.

In a statement, Geri said her daughter was now fine and unaffected by whatever had gone on.

If only parents could recover that quickly. Sadly, they rarely can and some never do.



SECT leader Warren Jeffs is in court in Las Vegas for arranging illegal marriages.

Among the many quirks of his lifestyle, he's said to have 80 "wives." Few women (if any) become leaders of cults. Now we know why.

Even the thought of having 80 husbands is enough to send us to a darkened room for a lie down.

NOT THE BLOKE QUOTE

ASK your child what he wants for dinner only if he's buying

- FRAN LEBOWITZ

A STRETCH TOO FAR

IT transpires that two students marched off a Manchester-bound plane from Malaga after mutinous fellow passengers mistook them for suicide bombers had also been questioned by police about a separate trip two weeks earlier.

Sohail Ashraf and Khurram Zeb, both 22, aroused suspicion when they made a 24-hour trip to France via car ferry.

The Manchester University students drove to Brittany and Dunkirk and say they went just because "we were bored."

In which case, why not go to the local library and study? Or do a little bit of voluntary work?

But I digress. Just over £300 for their day trip to Spain and a 24-hour visit to France in their own car.

Bloody hell. No doubt other students will marvel

at their ability to make a small budget stretch so far.

Ultimate revenge of fathers who kill their children

OF all the worrying crime trends, there's recently been a dramatic increase in the most disturbing one of all.

Murdering your own child.

Nathan Tamar was just 15 months old when the man he trusted to protect him - his "daddy" Robert - laid him on a bed and repeatedly knifed him in front of the boy's horrified mother Rachel.

This week it emerged that it was an act of revenge against Rachel after a furious argument. Robert, 48, then stabbed himself to death.

Another father, John Hogan, is on suicide watch in a Greek prison after throwing his six-year-old son Liam from a hotel balcony.

John then jumped while carrying their two-year-old daughter Mia, but they both survived.

The reasons behind this callous act have yet to be established by a Greek court but what is known is that he and wife Natasha had argued shortly before.

Particularly in the case of Robert Tamar, it begs the

almost unthinkable question: Are children's lives becoming the ultimate weapon of revenge for certain embittered and unhinged parents?

Twelve years ago, Sarah Heatley's husband David strangled their two young children, Nina and Jack, before jumping to his death from a block of flats.

Like Natasha Hogan, who released a statement saying her husband had been a loving father, Sarah initially thought she might learn to forgive David. But she couldn't.

She says: "No matter how good (a father) Dave was, he was actually the worst father imaginable because he killed them. He robbed them of their lives and me of my children."

Madness

And, of course, the repercussions spread far wider through extended family and close friends.

No one's lives are ever the same again, and for what? An act of revengeful madness laced with spite.

Most parents would take a knife or bullet to protect their children. Whatever their subsequent remorse or claims of mental illness, a parent who needlessly and wilfully takes the life of their offspring is nothing but a cold-blooded murderer, plain and simple.

They leave behind a trail of grief-stricken loved ones sentenced to a life of guilt wondering if they could have prevented it.

People like Sarah, who says: "I have sympathy and pity for anyone in despair enough to commit suicide.

"But I cannot forgive anyone who kills

their children too. The hardest thing to deal with is the guilt. In their dying moments, when they needed me most, did my children realise what dad was doing, call for Mummy and I wasn't there?"

There has been much written about the plight of poor Natasha and some have even expressed sympathy for John.

But the woman about whom little has been written is John's mother, Josephine.

She lost her husband from multiple sclerosis in 1996 after nursing him through his long battle against the illness.

Later that same year her youngest son Stephen, who was just 17, killed himself at home with an overdose of drink and pills.

Then, two years ago, her son Paul set fire to the family home before throwing himself off a bridge.

And now she's by the side of her remaining son who is suicidal after killing his young boy (and her beloved grandson, don't forget).

Her strength in finding the will to carry on is extraordinary.

SEVERAL advertisements are annoying me at the moment - but none more so than the latest for Galaxy Minstrels where some woman looks dewy-eyed as she eats one while the defunct All Saints trill in the background: "Don't worry, I'll always be there for you."

It's a chocolate for God's sake.

ABI TITMUSS has posed virtually starkers for the cover of a men's mag.

Wearing just ripped stockings and black patent knee-high boots, Abi tantalises the chaps who buy this stuff with the revelation she hasn't had sex for months and is "gagging for it."

One assumes her ambition to be seen as a "serious actress" is on ice.

THE boyfriend of Hollywood actress Lindsay Lohan reportedly wants to take their relationship "to the next level."

How lovely, I thought, he's going to take her to meet his parents.

Or perhaps they're planning a mini-break together in Wales.

Somewhere character-building where they can get to know each other a bit more. After all, they're both

twentysomething and they've only been dating a month.

But no. It appears that Harry Morton is planning to propose.

Ye gods. Why does everyone seem to have their fingers pressed on fast-forward these days?

There's never any slow-build, wait and see. It's all, "I want it now," regardless of the consequences.

Or, perhaps, I'm just getting old.



TWO OF A KIND

PAUL McCARTNEY and Heather Mills have reportedly had a "peace meeting" because they're concerned that recent hostilities have impacted on daughter Beatrice's behaviour.

The other day Heather had to leave a restaurant mid-lunch because the toddler threw a major tantrum.

While a friendlier divorce can only be good news, they shouldn't blame themselves for their daughter's strops.

My youngest is the same age and spends most of her time face-down in crowded places, wailing theatrically and banging her arms and legs on the floor while the Bloke and I roll our eyes heavenward and mutter "not again."

Our crime? Nothing. It's just the terrible twos.