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Wednesday, November 21, 2012

# Dads in despair



Cut off ... we tell the stories of three fathers trying to see their children

By ANTONELLA LAZZERI Last Updated: 18th March 2011

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SUN columnist Jane Moore has been inundated with letters and emails from heartbroken fathers fighting to see their children.

The floodgates opened when she wrote about a male friend denied access to his kids after a bitter split from their mother.

In her column last month, Jane also highlighted the case of Idi Atiba, 31, who killed himself following a custody battle.

She suggested the system was biased against dads when it came to agreeing contact with their children.

Here, two fathers tell their stories and we also print extracts from some of the desperate letters Jane received.

## MyView

WHEN I wrote about the plight of fathers forcibly estranged from their children by the "family" court system, I had no idea quite what a raw nerve it would touch.

Hundreds of heartfelt emails and letters flooded in – and continue to do so – from divorced or separated men all over the country, desperate to maintain contact with their children but being treated like criminals on the basis of little or no evidence.

Of course some fathers deserve to be ostracised because of violent or mentally abusive behaviour but at the moment, the system's default setting for all cases is to be entirely mother-centric.

## TOP SHOWBIZ

I'M A CELEB 9 hrs ago

Hugo Taylor keeps vow to 'embrace the disgusting' in his Bushtucker

MADE in Chelsea star faced 'savage sewer'

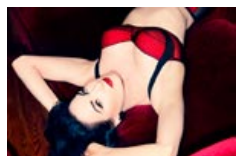


2

SUN CITY 10 hrs ago

Dita Von Teese models her own range of undies

BURLESQUE dancer basques in glory for photoshoot to launch Von Follies lingerie



9



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All names have been changed for legal reasons.

What she says is believed without question. What dad says is ignored or treated with suspicion.

Consequently, men who have done nothing wrong spend years (and a small fortune in legal fees) fighting to see the children they love.

That can't be right, particularly when we castigate wilfully-absent dads, laying much of the blame for societal breakdown at their door.

We can't have it both ways so the system must be changed, moving away from its currently divisive mindset and more towards the role of mediator.

Today, The Sun hopes to start that ball rolling by highlighting the cases of just a handful of the thousands of men out there who want to be good dads but feel thwarted, desperate and voiceless.

MyView

By CRAIG PICKERING

### Families Need Fathers

FAMILIES Need Fathers is backing Jane's call to help dads banned from seeing their children on unfounded grounds. Here, FNF's Craig Pickering gives his view:

WE believe any campaign should focus on children's rights to have a relationship with BOTH parents following separation and divorce.

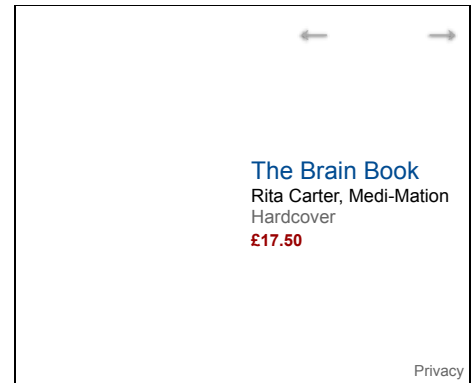
It is estimated one in three children don't have any relationship with their father in these families. This is a tragic statistic.

The system is not fulfilling its purpose – and justice for children is not being achieved. Families, and in particular children, are the losers, as well as society as a whole. We would like to see the following introduced:

- Shared parenting presumption in law – the main purpose of the family justice system should be to keep both parents fully involved in a child's life following separation or divorce where appropriate. In short, to encourage shared parenting whenever possible.

- An end to the delays that make a painful experience much worse. For example, long delays in Cafcass reporting and court hearings.

- Support services – the court is the worst place for these disputes. When couples don't know where to turn they often go straight to a solicitor. Out-of-court options must be promoted for



SHOWBIZ 25 mins ago

### Lindsay Lohan's back on form in silky gown

ACTRESS glows at movie launch in silky gown - hours after looking dazed and pale



2

SOAPS 8 hrs ago

### Emmerdale star Sammie is dishing the dirt

ACTRESS revealed she didn't wash for days filming scenes down a mineshaft



4

X FACTOR 8 hrs ago

### Chris Maloney receives Twitter death threats

LIVERPUDLIAN was booed on Sunday's show as his name was called out to go through



7

BIZARRE 9 hrs ago

### Sarah Harding's fixation on dead celebs' books

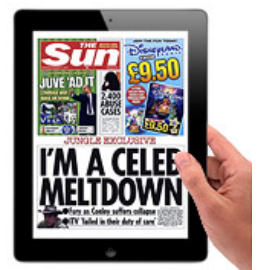
GIRLS Aloud singer has been taking up new interests since retiring from tear-ups



5

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BIZARRE 6 hrs ago

### Wayne Rooney sends Coleen to Stockholm gig

SOME blokes with a baby on the way treat





their wives to a spa but  
ace has other ideas

4



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7

A person is holding a white poster with the word 'MISSING' in large, bold, black letters at the top. Below the title is a black and white portrait of a woman with dark hair. Underneath the photo, the name 'MISS EVELINE' is printed in a stylized font. The poster contains several lines of small, illegible text, likely contact information and details about the missing person. The person holding the poster is partially visible, with their hands and arms in the frame. The background is dark and out of focus.

10



23



28

A portrait of a young man with dark skin and short black hair, looking slightly to the right with a focused expression. He is wearing a bright yellow sports jersey with green trim around the collar and sleeves. On the left chest, there is a green shamrock emblem, and on the right chest, there is a green shield emblem featuring a white harp. The background is blurred, showing hints of a stadium setting.

8



19

Side 3 av 11



"It was really hard not seeing your newborn son every day.

pql

"Then she announced, 'You can't see him again without a court order'. I was heartbroken."

Neil was forced to see a solicitor, who recommended the couple go to Cafcass.

He said: "My ex had told them she didn't trust my abilities as a parent.

"When we went to family court I was ordered to take parenting classes, at £65 an hour.

"I had to take him to these classes and change his nappies while some stranger took notes.

"After that I was allowed to see my son at a contact centre. I hated it there, it was noisy and dirty. I didn't think it was the right environment for a baby. I sent my ex a few text messages pleading with her to let me see him more. She complained to the police, saying I was harassing her and I was charged.

"I got a caution. After that I was allowed to see my son for one full day a week at my home until my ex claimed to social workers that he 'wasn't himself'.

"Even though I had loads of witness reports about how happy my son was with me, I was ordered to have a psychological assessment by Cafcass.

"They also ordered I undergo a 'Domestic Violence Perpetrator' course even though I had never been violent to my ex.

"I refused so contact with my son stopped. I haven't seen him for more than a year. But I still pay for him at £82 a week.

"I think my ex thought if she made it really difficult for me I would give up... but I won't."

#### Extracts from desperate dads' letters to Sun Columnist Jane Moore

'I TRIED to take my own life when I wasn't granted access to my two daughters. After separation, all a father seems good for is paying the mother CSA, there is no need for love, only money.'

**'MY four-year-old daughter said her mum beat her. Social services dismissed it when I told them. My ex then made our daughter say it was all lies. Now she has stopped me seeing her. This is killing me.'**

'I HAVE not seen my son for a year because his mother married again and moved away. I haven't been told where. I'm a 16st doorman and too upset to talk to anyone. I just break down.'

**'I HAVE watched my son go through such pain for 18 months. His daughter now lives 125 miles away. He is allowed contact for seven hours a fortnight. Her eyes light up when she sees him.'**

mpu

'THANKS, Jane, for the story about dads. I have been in front of judges 48 times trying to see my son. I am an ex-soldier who has survived cancer and I am treated worse than a rapist.'

**'I TRIED to return my kids after a weekend visit but their mother was out so I took them back to my home, bathed them and put them to bed. I was accused of kidnapping them.'**

'EXPERTS say it's like losing a child when a court rules "no contact". I agree – but when you know Cafcass's workings, it feels more like murder. It's nice to know someone cares, Jane.'

1

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#### Gary Barlow @ Little Noise gig for Mencap

TAKE THAT singer brought out some of band's biggest hits



1

**BIZARRE** 9 hrs ago

#### Lenny Kravitz to play legend Marvin Gaye

FLY Away singer lands a role most musicians would kill for, in Julien Temple's biopic flick



4

**TV** 5 hrs ago

#### I'll earn more dough with new solo show, says Paul Hollywood

GREAT British Bake Off judge judge bags his own solo TV show



0

**SHOWBIZ** 6 hrs ago

#### Dad said I'd fail as actor...but he turned down Keira Knightley

JACK Whitehall's dad represented the likes of Dame Judi Dench



5

**BIZARRE** 8 hrs ago

#### Calvin Harris is to team up for charity album

THE Scottish DJ is one of the collaborators on Dance (Red), Save Lives by Tiesto



0

**X FACTOR** UPDATED

#### X Factor fan Tinchy Strider says he's ready to take Gary Barlow's job

STAR told magazine he loves the show



6

**SHOWBIZ** 6 hrs ago

#### Nicholas Hoult is on his Jack in fairytale trailer

**EXCLUSIVE:** X MEN star takes on a land of giants in promo for Jack The Giant Slayer



1

**TV** 9 hrs ago

#### Sherlock star Ben returns for Radio 4 sitcom Cabin Pressure

ACTOR Benedict Cumberbatch will play a





Planlegging, Rekkverk,Innglassing Se våre gjennomførte prosjekter her  
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I can't say I'm surprised,its very sad though. Mothers seem to get most of the respect as the parent.when you hear of a single mum,you think nothing of it but with a single dad there will always be that one person to say 'oh,poor child.he must be struggling'. People are so focused on the fact the woman has carried the child,they tend to forget the child has just as much of the fathers genes.with a new born baby its all about the mother and baby bonding.not so much with men. My mother has even said to be on several occasions that you can always get a new father,but you'll always have the one mother.a couple of people have even made disgusting comments as I was always close to my father. Looks wise aswell as personality.they couldn't get their head around the fact that a father would enjoy talking and spending time with his daughter.my two sisters spend hours every day talking to my mother but no one has commented on that.

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TV UPDATED

### Chris is tapped as O'Dowd set to star in a new 'mockumentary'

SERIES reunites stars of hits This Is Spinal Tap & Best In Show



0

TV 31 mins ago

### Eric and Ernie's preview of Mr Preview aired

BLACK & white sketch is blueprint for famous 1971 Xmas show with conductor Andre Previn



1

I'M A CELEB 6 hrs ago

### Fury as Conley suffers collapse on I'm A Celeb

EXCLUSIVE: TELLY chiefs accused of failing in their duty of care to star on show



92

NEWS 8 hrs ago

### David Beckham at centre of £12million global tug of war

FOOTIE ace, 37, begins a bidding battle as he confirms he will leave Manchester U

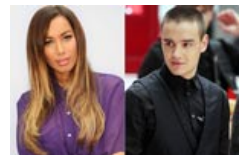


66

BIZARRE 37 mins ago

### Leona Lewis opens up about new love from One Direction

SINGER says she has a lot in common with boyfriend Liam Payne

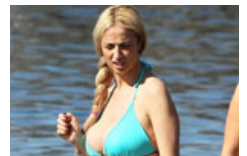


25

TV 20/11/12

### Chantelle leaves relationship woes behind her to jet off on beach break

ENJOYS weekend away after Alex split

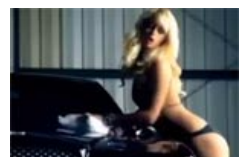


131

MUSIC 20/11/12

### Paris Hilton joins forces with Lil Wayne

VIDEO:SOCIALITE collaborates with rapper in latest bid for chart-success



24







**I'M A CELEB** 20/11/12

## After Brian Conley's shock jungle exit, who should be the first voted out?

**POLL:** WHO deserves to be axed first?



52

**TV** 20/11/12

## Melissa looks blue-ming amazing in slinky navy gown

HUNTED star looked stunning at awards do



0

**TV** 20/11/12

## Will January Jones have more fun as a brunette?

THE Mad Men star dicthes the blonde bob



2

**X FACTOR** 20/11/12

## Christopher Maloney receives death threats

X FACTOR contestant has become subject of vile Twitter abuse



110

**SHOWBIZ** 20/11/12

## Ashton travels 7000 Mila-s for Rome date

SMITTEN star flies to Italy for romantic stroll with new love Kunis a year after Demi Split



4

**I'M A CELEB** 6 hrs ago

## Jungle babe Helen Flanagan's breakout

BEAUTY is suffering from spotty skin as a week in camp takes toll



28

**SHOWBIZ** 1 hr ago

## Spaced-out Lindsay cuts a shocking figure

TROUBLED actress appears dazed, pale and bloated as she arrives at LA airport



28

**I'M A CELEB** 20/11/12

## 'We could've kissed Hugo!' Ant and Dec's



## delight at Taylor's trial

I'M A Celeb duo happy



**SHOWBIZ** 20/11/12

## Bradley Cooper caught ogling co-star Jennifer Lawrence

**VIDEO:** HUNK stares at stunning star's cleavage on red carpet



26

**SHOWBIZ** 20/11/12

## Braless Ellie's in frisky mood in steamy new vid

**VIDEO:** STAR Goulding appears to hit heights of self-pleasure in Figure 8 promo



5

**TV** 20/11/12

## Alex Reid: I've slept with men and prostitutes

REID claims ex Chantelle knew he'd 'experimented' but still wanted to marry him



219

**SHOWBIZ** 20/11/12

## Rihanna puts on touching show in London

SINGER grabs her boob and crotch and pokes out her bum as she thrills fans at gig



38

**X FACTOR** 20/11/12

## 'Rylan should not still be on the X Factor'

SUN readers say Rylan Clark should have been booted off the show already



141

**SHOWBIZ** 20/11/12

## Longoria looks Eva so lonely on girly break

STUNNING actress takes a barefoot walk in Mexico in wake of split from toyboy lover



0

**MUSIC** 20/11/12

## Robbie Williams debuts new video where he plays a criminal

**VIDEO:** SINGER is seen manhandling wife and robbing bank



2



SHOWBIZ 20/11/12

## Kim and Kourtney Kardashian get key to the city of North Miami

REALITY stars attend book because them



24

FILM 20/11/12

## Cowgirl Cam is bucking beauty in Gambit clip

EXCLUSIVE: BLONDE star Diaz lassos Colin Firth with her rodeo skills in new comedy



0

MUSIC 20/11/12

## Nicki Minaj dresses up like the Queen in new video

VIDEO: BRIT loving rapper takes on royal guise for edgy promo



13

SHOWBIZ 20/11/12

## Victoria's Secret Angels give bargain hunters a treat

MIRANDA, Candice, Adriana and Lily are real crowd pleasers



4

SHOWBIZ 20/11/12

## Taylor Swift goes off the rails with tattooed hunk

SINGER puts new romance with Harry Styles on the line



9

SHOWBIZ 20/11/12

## Anne Hathaway: I really want a baby soon

BUT Les Miserables star wants to move away from the glare of Hollywood first



3

SHOWBIZ 20/11/12

## Miley Cyrus has a close shave as she gets her hair cropped even shorter

ACTRESS shows off fresh cut on NYC trip



19

SHOWBIZ 20/11/12

## Girls Aloud put in a Royally good show for Her Majesty



GROUP perform for the Queen at Royal Variety Show



SHOWBIZ 20/11/12

## Mummy Meg's a Fox as she flaunts slim bod

ACTRESS regains her slender figure, looking on top form just weeks after giving birth to son



3

SHOWBIZ 20/11/12

## Transgender girl: I'll have sex change to look like Harry Styles

CATRINA Best, 20, is saving for surgery to be like One Direction star



27

SHOWBIZ 20/11/12

## Gaga simulates sex in steamy clip... with cake

VIDEO: STAR bumps and grinds in remains of cream sponge in raunchy new video



39

SHOWBIZ 20/11/12

## Denim Dream — Pixie Lott shows us how to wear denim

YOUNG style queen rocks in denim as she attends Rihanna gig



4

SHOWBIZ 20/11/12

## Berenice is pluming gorgeous at Skyfall premiere

FRENCH Bond girl looked oh la la-vely in a feathery black dress



1

SHOWBIZ 20/11/12

## Justin Bieber and Selena Gomez seen at dinner together

STARS' meal out looked like they're anything but over



7



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