

# ABU QATADA

A Hive by Landru

# ANOTHER SIMPSON

Dear Dr. Bowles,

I'm just dropping you a line before my appointment on 9th January at 7.30 to save time and effort on the day.

Before I mention what I am coming in for may I just offer you an explanation for my letter to the Manager recently. I felt that after making such a serious disclosure to you on our last meeting I had to explain myself a bit more.

I have had a very difficult few years and it has taken a lot out of me. I feel poorly a lot of the time and I am sure a lot of it is because of what I have gone through. The harassment has only added to my pains. I will soon be in my fifty-ninth year.

I have spoken to my case Manager at the job centre about the harassment I have been receiving and about my bad headaches. He suggested that I make an application through my doctor for another benefit. I am currently receiving Job Seeker's allowance. It would mean me having to go into a lot of detail about my situation and the things which have happened to me. Perhaps after that people will be more sympathetic.

About a week ago I knocked my head and felt a bit dizzy. I had just ridden back from Norwich and was sitting at my mother's when I felt a pain in my head. It was like a sharp electric shock inside the left side of my head. I think it has something to do with the headaches I have been getting so regularly too because they seem to be located around there. It came back now and again even when I was in bed resting. Every time I cough or sneeze it pains in the same area. I continue to feel very tired and lethargic. Even though I have asked the police to leave me alone they still keep harassing me. Every time they come up I tell them that my original offence was contacting my ex partner on the phone five years ago and that it was not malicious or threatening, that I have not committed any crime, and that I am not

hiding anything, yet they still conduct a search of my home. As soon as they step inside the door I ask them to leave. This has been going on for years. They told my mother they just wanted to know if I was alright. They say it will continue indefinitely.

Because my past has been leaked out to my neighbours it has caused a strain where I am living and the Housing Association is threatening to take away my tenancy. They have complained about me having the police constantly banging on my door and upsetting the neighbours. I hope you can help with my application for a different benefit to lessen the burden I am feeling.

Yours Sincerely,  
Blunderchook

P S I sustained an injury to my heel a few weeks ago and could only walk with the aid of crutches. I saw Dr Ahmed about it. It still feels a bit sore. I am not sure if some physiotherapy would help. Dr Ahmed was very impressed with my guns.

Aslan's last battle  
Dear Mr Simpson,  
Yet again.

I am writing to inform you about the visitors who have been calling every day for the past month. They have been banging on my door. Shouting through me door. Rapping on my letterbox. Calling through my letterbox. Throwing stones up at my window and disturbing my sleep. We go through the same boring routine every time I am forced to let them in...

"Let me see now...what have you there...is that your mobile phone? Do you have a smart phone. Is that your laptop. Is that a photo of you. Would you mind if we took a quick look inside your bedroom while we are here. Who is that card from?"

"How is your mum?"

"We know you have been ignoring us. Have you told her yet? It would be a lot better coming from you. Does she have a laptop of her own?"

Told her what: that I once contacted my ex partner on the phone five years ago?

The Boss lolled with her hand on the doorframe. She said that she had nearly a thousand offenders like me to see on her patch and none of them caused her so much trouble.

"Don't fuck it up!" she snapped. "Just don't fuck it up here! The Home Office say we have to do it. We are only doing our job. If you keep refusing to let us in we will have to go round to your neighbours and that will all get reported. You could end up back on the streets. Is that what you want?"

"You have been reported for making a noise in the bedroom and for setting off the smoke alarm..."

"Why don't you do one?" I said.

"If we have to return with a search warrant there will be four of us and we will break down the door!"

“Do whatever you like,” I said. “I still won’t be talking to you. I still won’t react any differently. It won’t get you anywhere.”

“We are only doing our duty! We need to know where you are every second of the day.”

I said, “leave me alone and stop harassing me. And who invited you to our Housing meeting anyway. Why don’t you keep your big fat snouts out of my affairs?”

“I have not committed a crime.”

“I have nothing to say to you.”

“I am not trying to hide anything.”

“Please, just go!”

She smiled and walked across the room to the sofa. She sat down and started to read my letter.

“If you hadn’t done a search on line we would not have had any evidence to get the order.”

“All I did was type in her name! My original offence was phone contact only. Non malicious, non threatening. Why don’t you pick on someone else for a change?”

Webbo smiled. I didn’t hug her this time. I didn’t want to make her feel accepted. They are not my friends. I don’t want anything to do with them.

“We will be coming back for the next ten years while you are on the Register. What’s that in the wardrobe?”

“A red alligator with a pipe up its arse!”

Grumblelicker took out his camera and began photographing my binoculars on the windowsill.

He smiled at me. A kind of sorry smile, or perhaps it was a gleam. I caught his eye on the picture.

“So, you are into young girls now?”

I shrugged.

“You’re classed as a psychopath. A dangerous sex fiend!”

“I am leaving to do my laundry,” I said.

“We would rather you stayed!”

“Could you tell us who left that sticker on your door about police brutality and who took it down?”

“I could. But I won’t,” I said.

Webbo looked flustered. She had a huge team of Officers to manage. You could tell. Many did.

I went over to the door: “Please don’t steal anything this time. Shut the door too when you leave!”

Last week they were chasing me all over the city. Finally they rang my mother.

“What do you want him for?” she asked.

“We just want to know if he’s alright...”

“He was when I saw him last night,” she said.

Yes Mr Simpson. This is my life now.

That was a nice suit you were wearing in the paper.

How was the Duke of Edinburgh?

My mum thinks you’ve lost weight.

Is there an election due?

We haven’t seen you up here for a while.

Why did you suggest I write to the Head of Norfolk Constabulary?

Don't you know these people stick together like shite on a shovel.

On Tuesday we were called to the Railway room for the third time this year.

Grumblelicker was in the corridor.

"What are you doing here?" I asked.

"Why do you think?" he replied, grinning from ear to ear.

At first Mehmet refused to let me sit next to Christine, then he rescinded.

Grumblelicker suddenly appeared through the door and sat down by my side.

"I asked him to come," Mehmet nodded.

"I am not going to sit here with him grinning at me the whole time. I want him to leave."

"This is all about 'labels!'"

Louise smiled.

"You can give the Tosser some feedback later if you have to."  
Grumblelicker stood up and opened the door.

"Go away, and don't come back. I am sick to death of you sticking your big fat snout where it isn't wanted!"

Mehmet went through a list of complaints.

He refused to listen to our complaints of slander, bullying and intimidation.

"You set off your smoke alarm in the early hours of the morning!"

"We didn't know how to switch it off. There isn't an extractor fan in the kitchen."

“You made ghost noises on Halloween intending to scare your poor neighbour’s grandchild!”

“You set off your neighbour’s security light by waving your arms about!”

“I was working late in the garden to clear up the leaves! It goes off as soon as we go out.”

“You banged repeatedly on the wall for hours!”

“We have never banged on the wall!”

“Your neighbours could hear you laughing and making love in your bedroom!”

“We have a very healthy and loving relationship. I sometimes tickle her under the arms.”

“Mrs. K and Mr B have heard you slam the door repeatedly, and when you were asked to stop you said that Christine could do anything she damn well liked!”

“I would never say that. No-body can do exactly as they want. I simply said that Christine should be allowed to close her door normally without being harassed. The door was sticking for a time due to the inclement weather. It has been seen to. I haven’t talked to Mrs K and Mr B for over a year because they refuse to speak to us and we don’t know why. Her son is a serving police officer. I spoke to her about the door over a year ago, when she threatened to take a hatchet to us.”

## Night bird

Her hands,  
Flew down from some other place,  
And planted themselves,  
Like two snow covered angels.

Tenderly they searched,  
the smooth Moonscape,  
In the armchair,  
She blew,  
Them,  
Over my shoulder...

# Vexing the arms of Edgar Holt and the cry of the Orpington Hundred

The streets of old Morton. It's a cold Sunday morning. You have been dragged up Goose Cote lane again. There's a sheepdog bounding over the heather. It's late September. The grouse fly up from the moorland. There's the Busfield Arms. I'll tell you about it later...

The grey slate stained with drafts of misery. Decaying walls and the soot of ancient chimneys. Half cracked flags. Jagged pots and beer mats. A ghost town dead as britches.

His door was pale green: that much was true. You would rather have been out playing soccer I know. Aunty opened the door. A melee of chocolate-coated t-cups. It was dark like the pitches of hell. Dust like an ocean of conch shells.

"Have you eaten today?"

Mother began on the dishes.

"Moderation in all things!"

Remember Uncle Edgar.

"Never leave the seat up!"

Like an old capon he stared glumly into the hearth and up at his coat on the door peg. His nails seemed to stretch for miles and his skin was like silk faded primrose. He yawned and ratcheted up his legs. Edgar hated anything which got in his eyes, and that included bright sunshine. He reached for the dog lead. Standing, he swayed and rolled up his sleeves. Edgar tensed his mighty guns. Dad laughed. Good for a man of eighty. Down the marble steps steep into the village while mum dealt with the ironing. The buildings seemed to suck out the light. For hours we explored the cobbled lanes. The wild tracks. The soundless shops. Into the clattering brown and yellow beck. A skin which enveloped the whole body. Back along the bridge from the mill. Never saw a living soul all day.

Edgar was still tensing his biceps. Then he fell back in his rocker.

None of our concern. We dreaded the word 'geriatric.' The old world coffin-dodger with the sharp and spiky bristles.

On Sundays.

With dad. Without him.

Uncle Edgar, of the many hands.

Gran stood at the sink. She wasn't always so flabby?

She whispered in corners. That's what she was good at.

Could sneeze and fart both at the same time.

I heard she seduced him on the canal bank at fifteen.

Bob was just in from work.  
"He did what?"  
Offered Alice his hanky.  
"You went where?"  
Knees turned to jelly.  
"He did what?" The hairs on his neck bristled.  
Groped a Sunday school teacher while still in short trousers...!

I shook my head, and glanced at the old Codger.  
A short man with beady eyes and shoulders like the Queen Mary.  
Caught the mumps, but too late to matter.  
Who knows why he wrung all the necks...  
His tankard was missing...  
It could have been the skirts his mother sent him to school in.  
He chewed tobacco like a rope ladder.  
Spooled from the fight. Calves like a bull oxen. Chest like a sixty stone  
power lifter.  
Edgar was certainly the most feared man in the village.  
The man in the background. King of the Billy-goats.  
He stood in the doorway and cleared the whole tavern.  
The noise crowded in, too close.  
Then there was silence.  
Edgar shrugged his mighty frame and the crowd which had gathered  
round the bar were no more.  
He eyed the bartender with suspicion.  
His mighty tankard was lowered down from its hook.  
Theakston's Old Peculiar.  
He quenched his thirst.  
On Morton Lane. A boy who may have been his.  
His coat was long. His arms were even longer.  
It kept him in.  
It had a high collar to ward off the wind.  
He had the wrists of a watchmaker. The windows watched.  
With the feet of a monster.  
When Edgar turned the eyes were long gone.  
Another figure crouched in the chair.  
He spoke to the pitch-like form and its pipe smoke.  
Edgar's pipe. Someone better call for an ambulance!  
He wrenched the thought from his mind. Tore off his arms.  
At the back of the drawer.  
Only when he returned home and they heard the slam of his door did  
the villagers dare to sleep.

How he cracked and tore...  
And slaughtered in the pen,  
The Orpington Blue,  
At the end of the garden, the cry of the woeful one hundred,  
He chased,  
He wrung all the necks, at the side of the chicken wire,  
Clara dragged between his two legs,  
On Thwaites brow hill, exactly one hundred.  
In 1943,  
When Edgar returned home,  
Screaming and squawking,  
The blood and the feathers.  
Echoed,  
Into the village the postman dashed,  
Waving above him,  
"The Orpington Blue. He's smashed all their eggs!"

At the back of the drawer under a purse,  
Who would have thought,  
Among mothballs, near his old cap,  
The Victoria Cross,  
Six medals of honour,  
That bleak night in the mud long ago,  
When the wheel on the wagon snapped,  
With his leg broken, and all the horses fled,  
Edgar, that same Edgar Holt who now slipped towards death. With a  
bullet inside. His blue tie rolled. Dying in his chair. The grey and yellow  
skin, flaking. Fingers scratching on the lino. Snow falling. Hair all gone.  
Clara in the churchyard. At Yule-tide. They ate rabbit stew. Food for  
the men. He dragged choking and vomiting over the marsh. Dirt on  
the ground. The tank swung in his hands. Tearing the bolts from their  
bracket. Brave Edgar Holt! Scared of nothing.  
Jerked the wagon out of the mire, and marched to where the men  
had fallen,  
Carried everyone back alive, over his elbow, held on to his shoulder,  
With the guns blaring, the battlefield hell, heroes were dying that night,  
He rescued each one, Sergeant Murphy, Corporal Adams,  
Stony Jack Taylor,  
Hauling the motor, with his bare arms,  
It was easy for him.

## General Belgrano

Into the half fried fires of hell,  
The Argentine sheep-shaggers,  
Leapt,  
Eager for their early swim.  
A Guy Fawkes crew,  
Intent on,  
Hissing and cracking,  
Their way to the shark's breakfast.

Seeking the coolness of the sea.  
Their mean and hasty commands,  
while lonely Tam in his study scrolled,  
And the General,  
With his exclusive band,  
Smiled and wiped his lips,  
A handy,  
Victory in the making.

Hi Marshall!

Happy Christmas.

May I just say how much I enjoyed your sermons throughout the year: they left a lasting impression on me. I found myself agreeing with you on almost every point about the influx of immigrants.

However, I have been informed that someone overheard you getting out of your car and using very bad language (a man with a dog for instance...).

Shame on you, brother!

Happy Christmas Marshall!

I must just say how impressed I was with your sermons during the year. They left a lasting impression on me.

Unfortunately, someone overheard you (a man with a dog, perhaps resembling in some small detail Andy Crick?).

Dear Marshall,

May I thank you for your outstanding sermons during the last year which really made a lasting impression on me. I was especially overcome by your speaking in tongues.

Unfortunately, a man with a dog (who looked very similar to one Andy Crick) overheard you using extremely bad language getting out of your car one day.

Hi Marshall!

Happy Christmas.

May I just thank you for the outstanding sermons you gave throughout the year which left a lasting impression on me.

However, a man with a dog overheard you getting out of your car and using extremely bad language.

Shame on you!

Dear Marshal Sceitell,

None of the above messages were meant to be sent. There was a gremlin in my computer.

## Dear Mehmet,

Thank you for hearing our side of the story today. I am sorry these meetings have been so tense for us all. I do hope things can start to improve and we can leave the past firmly behind. I am sorry that certain people were invited to the meeting. Their interference in my life has been extremely upsetting. I don't deserve this level of intrusion into my life. I pray that we are not being labelled as trouble-makers because that would be totally unjust. I am doing my level best to stay out of trouble and to support Christine after the death of her husband. I am actually a very thoughtful and caring person. After a very difficult time I have started to rebuild my life and have made many new friends in the area.

Since the recent falling out among some of the people here at Strangeways the coffee-morning (and other events) had to be cancelled. I read that Dorothy was looking for someone to start it up again and I mentioned to her that I was interested in putting my heart and soul into it. I have a lot of experience in dealing with people and would be happy to try and improve the social life of some of the older Residents in particular. When I mentioned my intention to some of the people here their faces lit up. I am including a 'flyer' which would let people know what we were intending. I have also included a petition from some of the Residents who know us and are very happy for us to bring it all to fruition. The people who signed it know we are considerate and friendly individuals. I would like to do some fund – raising events, such as a raffle, or a sponsored bike ride for example. I'm not sure how the previous coffee-morning was funded. Would Wherry be willing to help? I envisage doing a 'Reminiscence' session and quiz with a small prize. I have done this sort of work many times before. Due to my confusion about the management structure I did actually write to Mr Bromley about all our problems here and my wish to encourage a better atmosphere altogether. I would be willing to give you and your team any further information you require about my proposal. I would of course consult with Dorothy and other individuals about the best ways to do this and we would seek advice from anyone around who has any more ideas to offer.

## Dear Underling,

Could you please pass on my message to Mr Simpson.  
I don't know who else to appeal to.

Dear Mr Simpson,

I am writing to you again about the disruptive and intimidating nature of the police harassment I have been receiving for years.

Once again they turned up at my home demanding to be let in (or they would get a warrant) so that they could go through my home, looking in all my personal items, checking all my bags, looking in my wardrobe, scrutinizing all my private thoughts, snooping through my laptop, demanding I tell them who my girlfriend was, asking me all about my private life, looking at all my private letters and photographs.

They sit down as if they own the place with a smug smile on their face while the neighbours gossip outside the door.

I keep telling them to leave me alone but they keep turning up out of the blue, making me poorly and extremely annoyed for days.

Once again, I told them today, that my original offence was contacting my ex partner on the phone, on one day, nearly five years ago, and that it was neither malicious nor threatening.

Last month I applied for new passport. I wasn't intending to go anywhere, but wanted to use it for identification. They turned up to arrest me because I had not taken it in to be registered at North Walsham police station.

Last year they arrested me after I had forgotten to log off at the Central library and threatened me with five years in prison. Then they had to let me go.

My partner was at her wits end today worrying they were going to take me away if there were any signs that I had tried to look for my ex partner (who left with all my property!) on my computer (we broke up because I did not want her!). Thankfully, I aren't that stupid.

I am a Writer and Artist. They took copies of all my work with them. They downloaded all my work onto one of their memory sticks. What

has the Members of Parliament in this Democracy been doing to allow them such unhindered access to our private thoughts and space?

This cannot go on. Who can help if not a Member of Parliament?

They turned up at the end of my sentence for the phone call business and told the Magistrates I was a dangerous Sex-Offender who would try and rape my ex partner or a member of the public. When I stood up for myself and said it was "Absolute rubbish!" I was accused of being 'aggressive.'

If something serious happens as a result of their on-going harassment then it will only be the fault of the Government.

I am sure they are interfering in my e-mails, blocking some of them from being sent, and obtrusively examining my mobile phone texts.

What on earth is going on in this Country?

Incidentally, the creators of the Internet wanted it to be about 'Freedom.'

Yours Sincerely,  
Mr Y.D. Ibother

PS I would appreciate a reply this time, if only to say you have read my letter!

# Oxo girl

Eli Walker was seven years old when his mother locked him in the cellar.

That's what she did. That's when he had nothing for supper. He sat down on the cold steps of the cellar and stared through the red chink in the door. He never knew who his father was. Neither did his mother. It didn't matter to her. That was a long time ago.

He went to work on the farm after that. The hours were long but at least there was enough food on the table. He found a wife before he was thirty. She gave him three daughters.

Eli's young daughter was handed the abacus frame. She stared at the colours, but there was nothing there she could eat. She looked up and smiled. She cuddled round his feet. She never let go. At five years old she was packed off to school. Mrs Robinson placed the dunce's cap on her head soon after. She sat in the corner for hours after that. The class sniggered all day until home time. That much we know.

Christine was seven years old when she shivered alone in bed. Alice wondered what to do with her. They argued long into the night. Young Eli took himself down to the garden shed. That was where little Bambi died.

It was decided to send her to Minch am Hampton special school. For the next two years she lived away. It was there she met Susanne Watts, who came from Bradford-on-Avon. They remained friends for the next two years.

His daughter returned a young woman. At sixteen she began work in the factory at Chippenham. She stayed there for five years, taking the strips of tubes along to the girls at the machines. The strips were all cut into OXO cubes. She still had to be home by ten.

The Manager called her to his office.

"How would you like to be our Miss OXO, Christine?"

He introduced her to Bill Mackenzie, who had just arrived by train from London. She was driven out to the woods to have her picture taken. I think that's all that happened. Bill gave her a copy of his photo. She had it in her handbag when the other girls snatched it from her. One of the girls took a match to it. The corner of the photo began to melt. She tried to grab it back and run for the toilet.

"Why is it men always get the blame. I could never do that. I know what women are like!" she said.

Young Eli gleamed at the picture. She was stood against a tree with her beautiful blue eyes slanted towards him...

Old Eli sat in his armchair. He was strong enough once. There wasn't much time left. She leant down towards him. She was wearing her hot pants.

He stroked her hand gently.

It was in the living room.

"I've always loved you, and I always will lass!"

# PICKLED GHERKIN

Its many years since Walter first invited me to his house for tea. He met me on the street before we walked down to the yard and complimented me on my new blue t-shirt.

We were both thirteen. Every weekend we went down to Hartington School to have a kick around.

There was a tricky iron gate to climb which could rip your trousers if you didn't watch it, and you had to creep in quietly in case the caretaker was around, but the main wooden building afforded a great wall for our shots: there was a goal painted along the boards which was just right for us.

For hours we endeavoured to beat each other. First Walter in goal and then me. He had a hard shot. He could hit it twice as hard as me from the railway side. He took the ball out to about twenty five yards and dribbled it in, along the red tarmac through the dusty basket-ball lines. The sun was shining on the windows (sometimes it got in your eyes) and a cool breeze threaded among the shadows. You could hear the wind among the tall trees overlooking the playground. You could see the clouds drifting by. The distant roar of traffic. When it was hot we took our shirt off.

About half past four we made our way to the gate. It was harder to climb from the other side. The path was strewn with rocks. We ambled slowly up Holker Street past my uncle's, passing the ball back and forth. We looked to see if the girls were watching. Then we crossed the road to St Anne's. Our church was at the top of the steps. It had a statue overlooking the main road. We sprinted up Spring garden's Lane past Devonshire park, and then on to Cliffe Castle. You could see the caves and the entrance to the aviary. A small doorway led us into the car park. It was a long climb up the hill. Walter had just moved into his new home. You had to go down some stairs. It was cooler down there. He smiled and invited me in.

His mother came to meet us. She was dark haired and very like him. His father said he would have to stop in to finish his homework. We always laughed at his father. He was so serious and spoke with such a funny accent. The family fled from Eastern Europe at the start of the

Second World War. He was determined to make a good life for his son.

Walter went up to his room and came down with his French dictionary. He lent it to me so I could do my own homework. I forgot to give it back to him.

We sat down in the kitchen. It was clean and light. I was expecting a real feast. I was starving. We drank lots of lemonade.

Walter's mother came in with the meal.

I had never seen anything like it.

Pickled gherkins. For tea!

Pickled gherkin sandwiches on a plate. Wait till I tell them all at school, I thought.

\*In memory of my friend Walter Iwanuik

## Rosemary's baby

I had been working at the nursing home a few weeks when the Manager invited me into the office. The Deputy Manager was there too, along with another Carer.

On the desk was the daily log. It was open. I was asked to examine my signature in the left hand column and the date.

"We are certain that your handwriting matches the numbers found on top of Rosemary's baby. Was it you?"

"Do you mean the plastic doll which Rosemary holds in her lap in the entrance hall every day?"

I laboured over my handwriting while the doll was smuggled in.  
"We have tried our best, but the ink just will not rub off!"

The doll was thrust before my eyes. It was dressed in white lace and had ginger hair with a ribbon.

"There is a passing resemblance."

"What kind of person would do a thing like that?"

"I have no idea why Rosemary would want to scribble three sixes on the back of her child's head..."

Dear Mr Simpson,

I am still getting harassed by the police. They came up several times in one week recently even though I have done nothing wrong.

I pleaded guilty to contacting my ex partner on the phone five years ago. A short time before the end of my sentence the police applied for a special order and as a result of getting the order were able to place me on the sex offender's register, even though I had not committed a sexual offence. This gives them the right to ransack my home whenever they wish.

Before I came to live here they went around telling everyone I was a dangerous sex offender. I have since met a very nice lady who is standing by me but she is being harassed by her next door neighbour for being with me. The next door neighbour has accused us of banging on the wall when her grandchild was staying (her son is a serving police officer).

We are now being threatened with eviction by Wherry Housing Association who have not bothered to investigate our complaints of slander, victimization, and bullying against some of the Residents here. Myself and my partner run a small coffee morning for some of the older residents, even though we are quite old ourselves, and have collected twenty signatures testifying to our good character. When I attended the inquiry into the complaint I found out that the Housing Association had invited the police along to the meeting. My girlfriend keeps asking: "why are they treating us like this when we have done nothing wrong?"

Go on then Mr Simpson: ~Can you tell us??

We are trying to get legal aid, but as you may know, it is very difficult to obtain, especially with that kind of label.

Yours Sincerely,  
A Person

IN PRAISE OF FOURTEEN YEAR OLD VIRGINS  
Alright, if you can get one.

