

## LONELY DADS

A proposal for a commission in a medieval hall in the UK.

I was invited to submit for a commission to be held in a medieval building in a small town in the UK. It was required that it would be a collaboration with either local people or an organisation.

I had spent some time in Belgrade and everywhere I could see cars parked with a man in them. They were pretending that they were at work, or didn't have any, or perhaps had to stay away from home. Maybe the only place they could have solitude.

Raymond Carver, the novelist, used to write his short stories in his car, where he could focus and his only place away from his family.

The Car, a place for solitude.

I wanted to do a performance piece about these lonely men in their cars. I imagined them to be lonely dads.

At that time I had just moved to England and was a surprised how backwards it was when it came to the custody of children after a separation.

The women got an automatic right to the custody. They kept the house and the men always seemed to be found in an expensive, but dismal rental flat. The men had to pay maintenance, not only for their kids, but also for their wife. Some men could look after their kids, half of the time, but still had to pay huge amounts to the wife. I knew some of these Dads myself. Many men were pushed out of even seeing their children at all.

I thought it was something to highlight.

I would look for these Dads in town. I imagined the men in their cars, lonely, and missing their children.



So I started to look for organisations in the area championing for Father's Rights.

I planned to get at least 50 Dads. They would drive in to the square outside the medieval hall. One car for each dad. They would stop and remain in their car. They would all simultaneously pull down their car windows and play the same song; The very romantic Pietro Mascagni, as used as the sound track in Raging Bull by Scorsese. When the song was finished, they were to slowly pull away, head to the motorway in a line towards Southampton, where I also had commission as part of the same project.

We were to hire helicopters to film the motorway, like a "News Copter" where the Lonely Dads would parade with their cars, missing their children.

The curator and I both loved it the idea.



But apparently it was too upsetting for the medieval hall, which attracted a huge amount of local and foreign visitors.

They said; the work was too political.

“What about the women?” they said.

“Maybe the men didn’t pay maintenance?” “Maybe the men had been violent, there are also women who do not see their kids...what about them?” and a lonely man in car, well that can also be a pervert!” etc.

“It will upset people...”

Sorry, the work is just too political

Inside the medieval hall I wanted to hang massive disco balls, as a contrast to that Medieval hall that didn’t happen either.

