

From: SAGReiss

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Subject: Geoffrey Schwartz

Ted, the man who makes house calls at midnight to fix my father's (BCC) computer, stopping off on his way back after taking the bus home from Jerusalem, where he also works, is a British citizen called Geoffrey Schwartz. I have been to this man's home, a squalid apartment with kids everywhere. (He has ten, some of which still live with him, including a couple of children-in-law and a few grandchildren.) You would not believe the wretched poverty. This man loves his family, but he never sees them except on the Sabbath. He has to work all of the time just to go further into debt. It's hopeless. And he does this, in part, to support a couple of Yeshiva boys (his sons[-in-law] and their growing broods) who may never work in their lives, aside from reading the Torah and making babies, if you consider that work, which they and to some extent the state of Israel do (for example exempting them from military service and paying them welfare). If you'd met their wives, you might also consider breeding to be work. This represents the lives of about twelve percent of the Jewish population of Israel, but as we've already seen those numbers are a matter of dispute and not always easy to verify. Trust me that social services do not just ask some old lady how many descendants she has, and write down 1,400. They count the fucking kids. Obviously a lot of Geoffrey's children will want to get the fuck out of that lifestyle, use the skills they may have learned watching their father fix computers to get a real job, move to Tel Aviv, and obtain birth control, which is actually covered by Israeli semi-public, but universal & almost free, medical insurance, as are the day after pill & abortions. Geoffrey & I like one another, despite our different cultures. I once saved his ass by loudly insisting on a last-minute backup of my old man's files, before Geoffrey utterly trashed his fucking 'puter. I also once threatened to kill him (I can't remember why.) and he begged me to control my "homicidal urges". (As I said, he's a Brit.) You'll notice that Jews refer to one another only by their country of origin, so I am an American, not a Jewish American, since being Jewish is assumed. Also, that label is applied upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. I'm not sure if Rose will be called an American or a Frenchwoman in Israel, but probably American, since her mother a Goy, who obviously doesn't count. Rose is Jewish according to the state of Israel, but not according to the rabbis. Israel is a very complex country, as is Madagascar, and very different from anything you have ever known, Ted. John Wheeler has been to Israel, but he was (correctly) deemed just another tourist with Jerusalem syndrome, to be watched in case of danger, and otherwise impolitely ignored, except when he was paying for something, which I doubt is really his specialty. I will continue to enlighten you about Israel, Judaism, & the linguistic issues involved in Cantillizer (<http://www.sagreiss/Cantillizer.pdf>), and I apologize for occasionally losing my temper. I came by that honestly, as my mother says, meaning I got it from my father, who can create a scene of unbearable hostility & madness in the middle of the souk with no warning whatsoever. I always have to turn away, so no one will see me laughing at the Israelis screaming in Hebrew, and my father screaming right back in his own weird blend of English, Hebrew, & Yiddish.