

FROM WHERE I SIT

JOHN COONEY

One Out Of The Box

I haven't been my usual, cheerful, chirpy self these past few weeks. You see, I've lost a good friend. My one-and-only son-in-law. He died in a car crash. He became one of those ghastly statistics. He even got his name in the paper. And my tidy little world's been badly shook-up ...



When you're the proud father of a daughter like mine, you invest a lot of years in her. And when she falls in love and decides to marry, it's a bit of a rude shock. I mean, you're suddenly not at ALL sure you want to give your precious girl to this strange young man in a brown beanie, and pants that come halfway down his bum, who turns up in a low-slung blue Cortina that you can hear coming from the other end of the subdivision.

My daughter's boyfriend was an awkward character when we first met him.

Rather shy ... uncomfortable in crowds ... impossible to pin down ... a square peg in a round-hole. He had an endless supply of screamingly funny, highly exaggerated stories. And he made no secret of his belief that the entire country was populated with "flippin' idiots!"

But, I've got to tell you, I came to love this crazy son-in-law of mine. He was one out of the box ... a colourful, lovable original ... with a willingness to work harder and faster than any man I know ... plus a soft, gentle, caring side that lots of people never saw.

And I'm missing him more than I could've thought possible.

Yes, I lost sleep over him at times (as we *all* do over our kids and their partners). I ached for him at other times (as we *all* do over our kids and their partners). And when stuff needed sorting out (as it does in every family), he and I had the occasional straight-up, heart-to-heart, man-to-man talk.

But, you know, I give him a Big Tick: he always listened – he always took it to heart – he was always willing to change – and he was truly trying to grow up.

He loved his beautiful, stropy wife with a passion, and worshipped the ground she walked on. He adored his darling daughter, and some of our most lasting memories will be of him greeting her, cuddling her, playing with her, listening to her, watching “*My Little Pony*” DVDs with her. And we'll miss seeing the look of utter worship that used to animate her gorgeous little face every time Daddy walked in the door.

He behaved – and talked – at times

like he was invincible, unstoppable, bullet-proof ... but, regrettably, the events of one Wednesday afternoon proved that he wasn't.

It hurts like hell watching my daughter grieve. I'm desperately sad that her soul-mate has gone.

But the real sadness would've been never having had him in my life at all!

And if I have a word for other mums and dads and dads-in-law, it would probably just be this:

Parents, love your sons ...

your awkward, shy, uncomfortable sons

your impossible-to-pin-down, square-peg-in-a-round-hole, screamingly funny sons

your colourful, lovable, gentle sons

your invincible, unstoppable, bullet-proof sons

... because they can be taken from you so quickly. ❁

JOHN (GRAPEVINE'S FOUNDER & EDITOR) HAS ONE GORGEOUS WIFE ... THREE VERY ADULT KIDS ... 12 BOISTEROUS GRANDKIDS ... AND NOT A LOT OF TIME LEFT TO FEEL BORED OR IGNORED.

THORT



I wonder how many people thought of the Post-It note before it was invented, but just didn't have anything to jot it down on?