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She's yours for Pounds 15,000; Britain 2005; Mum needs money for drugs and catalogue bill.. stepdad has drink-drive fines, so..; NOW Investigates
HAZHER MAHMOOD

I never bothered with her really..I won't miss her
THEY look just like any other young mum and dad out shopping for the day as they stand outside Burger King with their pretty two-year-old daughter.

But Lindsey Stone and John Carwithen aren't loving parents looking for clothes and shoes for their little pigtailed angel Charleigh.

Instead they are junkies trying to SELL HER for Pounds 15,000-so they can feed their vile drug habit and pay off bills and court fines. Evil Stone and her thug boyfriend Carwithen arranged to meet our undercover reporter at the burger joint on Friday afternoon to thrash out a deal that will astonish and sicken every decent parent in Britain.

And late last night Stone, 18, even signed a "contract" to hand over her little girl.

It read: "I, Lindsey Stone of Plymouth hereby agree to sell baby Charleigh, who is my own daughter, for the sum of Pounds 15,000. I will not wish to see her again or have any legal rights over her. She will belong to (reporter's name)."

Stone arranged to meet our man at 9.30pm last night at the Copthorne Hotel in the centre of Plymouth. She said she would bring Charleigh.

"She'll have one average size suitcase, it's not too big," she added.

The utter callousness of Stone and Carwithen even staggered our man, a hardened investigative reporter, as they negotiated the sale of the tot as if they were flogging a second-hand car.

"I don't want her. I've never bothered with her really. I won't miss her," said heroin addict Stone at the Friday Burger King meeting.

"She's potty trained. She sleeps through the night. She's not really a whingeing baby -but she does sometimes.

"I haven't got time for her really. She needs a lot of attention, 24-7," she added as she puffed on a cigarette.

Then Charleigh's leering stepfather Carwithen-a convicted petty criminal and fellow addict-chipped in with his sales patter,

emphasising how much he wanted rid of the little girl.

Dirty

"I sit in the bedroom and put the music on when she starts crying. She's a pain in the a*se!" he sneered.

"She's at that age where in a couple of weeks she'll forget everything when she's with new people. It's when they're four or five they start remembering.

"She's got clothes, a pair of shoes and a potty," he added, as if throwing in a few extras on a car deal.

Our man asked the pair if they fancied a coffee in Burger King. As they walked inside little Charleigh-dressed in a dirty pink coat-got excited at the prospect of a treat.

"Burger, Mummy," she squealed. And as the unsuspecting toddler tucked into the kiddies' meal our man had bought for her, the cold-hearted mum she loves carried on calmly discussing her sale...

Earlier we had been tipped off about the couple's plot to sell Charleigh by a computer expert. He was stunned and disgusted when Stone contacted him, asking how she would go about selling a baby on the internet. Instead of posting her advert, he gave us her home number.

Our reporter rang Stone at her council home in Stonehouse, Plymouth, asking what she wanted for the child.

"She's yours for Pounds 15,000," said the mum casually. A first meeting was arranged with Stone and crop-haired boyfriend Carwithen at Plymouth Hoe Moat House hotel on Thursday night. They arrived explaining that Charleigh was at home asleep being looked after by Stone's 15-year-old sister.

Carwithen said: "We bung her with her most of the time. We don't see much of her.

We can't be bothered with her. She doesn't see much of us."

They said Charleigh shares a bedroom with Stone's sister and her boyfriend. The youngster's only friend is her tatty toy dog which she calls Doggo.

Throughout the meeting Stone never once asked our man what he was going to do with her daughter. He could have been a paedophile for all she knew.

But when he asked her what she wanted the money for, the shocking reasons came spilling out. "Drugs and flat!" said Stone laughing.

"We do speed (amphetamines). We stay awake day and night. You fall asleep for a couple of hours and you wake up and you're still buzzing. It's Pounds 45 an ounce and I wish we could do it all the time. We inject it."

The two monsters-who also take deadly heroin-bragged about how they even inject drugs in front of their poor daughter.

Then Carwithen revealed how the couple had been funding their drug habit through crime. "I've been done for street robbery, burglary, obtaining money by deception, fraud, nicking a car when I was drunk," he boasted.

"I'm banned from driving even though I've never had a licence. I've been in prison four times."

He also has a conviction for drug offences and is known for violent behaviour.

Stone went on to explain how they would use some of the money from the sale of their daughter on bills and fines-and on doing up their two-bedroom flat.

"I've got to pay my catalogue off, I owe Pounds 500 on it," she said. "I owe Pounds 60 to the council and John owes Pounds 300 for his fines. He was done for drink-driving a few years ago and is still paying it. I've also got to buy a new coffee table. He smashed it.

He's got a temper, him. I suppose it's better than smashing me in the head!"

Getting down to their sick business, the two junkies said they were not interested in getting Charleigh legally adopted.

"We don't want any paperwork," said Stone, showing our man a picture of her little girl.

When our man asked if the child was definitely hers, Stone pulled out two birth certificates, her own and that of her daughter

Charleigh Marie Stone who was born on September 23, 2002.

"I wouldn't give somebody else's baby away. I had her when I was 15. I'm 18 now."

She described Carwithen as Charleigh's stepdad. "The real dad doesn't have anything to do with her, he never has," she added. Our reporter asked her if she would ever want her baby back to which she replied: "No, I won't. I don't want her. I can't go out."

"If anyone ever did ask me about her I'd say I gave her to you for adoption," she said. "We've just moved into a new place so nobody knows us. Nobody sees us, we stay in."

Then she got down to the nitty gritty of the price. "We want Pounds 15,000," she demanded.

The deal would include the "little agreement" detailed above, drawn up to confirm that the pair had voluntarily given up their daughter. Stone also offered to help get a passport for her daughter so our man could take her out of the country.

The two left the hotel after arranging for our man to "look over" his purchase the next day at the Burger King in Plymouth city centre. "I'm up for it," said Stone.

"Come and see her tomorrow."

As little Charleigh finished off some chips, sitting next to her mum the next day, Stone insisted she should be given a downpayment before the handover to prove our man was a genuine buyer.

"We want Pounds 2,000. If we wanted to disappear we'd ask for more than two grand."

I want Pounds 500 at least," she demanded. "I need drugs tonight." Our man refused.

An edgy Carwithen then tried to close the deal. "We've done our bit. We've shown you everything. We're true to our word," he said.

Blanket

Before arranging to hand over Charleigh on Saturday night, Stone gave our man a few tips on how drug addicts look after children.

"She wakes up at 8. If you want to keep her in bed till 10 keep it dark," she said.

"She'll watch a video all day. Just put a video on. Any Disney video. When she's playing up, take her for a nap."

"She doesn't go anywhere without Doggo," added Stone. "It's like her comfort blanket. She's all right if she's got him."

Stone was right. Charleigh is a lot better off with a ragged old toy dog than she is with her mother.

As they left Burger King, our reporter again asked Stone: "You are absolutely fine selling your child? She obviously loves you." Stone replied: "Absolutely 100 per cent fine."

Our man then asked them both one more time if they were bothered about never seeing the toddler again. Both Stone and Carwithen replied in unison: "No!"

Now, for Charleigh's sake, that wish is coming true. Last night police pounced at the city's Cophorne Hotel and secured the toddler's safety.

Stone and Carwithen were arrested and were last night helping with police inquiries.

DO YOU know a scandal that Maz should investigate? If so, you can call him any time on 020 7782 4402 or e-mail: maz@notw.co.uk

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