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## Israel, You Rascals

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## Israel, You Rascals

### Abstract

Mark Steel started doing stand-up in 1982 in England, around the circuit of bizarre gigs, going on after jugglers and escapologists and people that banged nails into their ear. Then came the Comedy Store and Jongleurs and getting bottled off at The Tunnel, and then a regular slot on Radio 4's Loose Ends, where he met Joseph Heller, Christopher Lee and Gary Glitter.

He did 4 series of 'The Mark Steel Solution', one for Radio 5 and the others on Radio 4, and a radio series about cricket, which provoked a whole page of fury in the *Daily Express*. He presented three series of a sports programme called 'Extra Time' which he was very proud of, especially as it went out on Tuesday nights on Radio 5 to possibly no listeners whatsoever. Then there was four series of the lectures on Radio 4, a book called 'It's Not a Runner Bean', another one called 'Reasons to be Cheerful', and 3 television series of the lectures on BBC 4 and BBC 2.

He has done weekly columns in *Socialist Worker*, the *Guardian* and the *Independent*. He has written a book called 'Vive le Revolution', and has been on various panel shows like Have I Got News For You and QI, and on Room 101, and on Question Time he says that he "got very confused when I insulted a member of the Tory shadow cabinet, and afterwards he said I was splendid and invited me for a drink." And he's spoken at lots of demonstrations and union meetings and protests, and appeared at quite a few benefits. This essay originally appeared on his website: <http://marksteelinfo.com/blog/>.

### Keywords

Israel, Gaza, occupation, satire

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## Israel, You Rascals

In recent years most of humanity has become proudly more tolerant of groups who once seemed to be on the margins of society. But until now it's still been seen as acceptable to be offensive about one minority, which is the child murdering community.

At last it seems the mood is changing, and finally we're beginning to hear the child murderers' point of view.

For example one brave soul, prepared to speak out, is spokesman Uri Drome, who explained on Radio 4 yesterday that although the Israeli government bombed a school that several children died in, the deaths are clearly the fault of the people who live in the areas being bombed.

What a refreshing change from that tired old thinking that always blames murder on the murderer.

Mister Drome, once a spokesman for the Israeli government said the Israelis were "lured into a trap, now Hamas sheds crocodile tears about the dead."

If only more of us understood bombed schools in this way. We always rush to judge some poor kid in an American town who mows down his classmates, without even pausing to consider the dead kids probably tricked him into it, and now to make it worse their parents are all pretending to cry.

Even more imaginative was Michael Oren, ex-Israeli ambassador In Washington, on Channel 4 News. He explained that Hamas was to blame for all this death, because "They are booby-trapping toasters and fridges in their houses."

It goes to show you should never make up your mind too quickly. Many of us see pictures of buildings reduced to rubble with a bomb sticking out, and hastily conclude the bomb had something to do with the explosion. But look carefully and it becomes obvious the cause was the silly sods have blown themselves up with an exploding toaster.

I bet if we went back to Hiroshima and checked what happened more thoroughly, we'd discover the blast was nothing to do with an atom bomb, and was caused by a booby-trapped kettle. I hope consumer programmes in Gaza cover this issue, to warn people of the dangers. The Gaza edition of Watchdog this week should start "We've received several complaints from those of you who bought one of these toasters from Hamas, and were surprised when it caused your entire street to explode."

Benjamin Netanyahu spoke out for child murderers' civil rights by informing us the Palestinians deliberately arrange the "telegenically dead" to be filmed, to attract sympathy. So it seems Hamas stroll round bomb sites, placing the prettiest corpses on view for film crews, otherwise we'd all think 'it doesn't matter that the Israelis killed that kid, he was an ugly little bastard anyway'.

Other spokesmen have repeated this line, and maybe soon they'll take it to the next stage, claiming the Palestinians we see howling with anguish about their dead children have been trained at a special Hamas acting school. Directors yell 'One more rehearsal everyone, now as soon as we've blown up our toaster we want all the cast kneeling and sobbing, give it everything loves, everything, then we'll go for a take'.

As the bombing continues I expect we'll hear more reasons why the Palestinians are to blame for being bombed. An Israeli minister will say "These people in Gaza are always complaining that they live in a densely populated area, so we're trying to help them out by reducing the population as much as we can to give them more space. But they're STILL not happy. Some people are never satisfied."

The Israelis insist they give warnings before bombing somewhere, and in general we all forgive someone bombing a school as long as they let you know they're doing it five minutes in advance. Given how crowded the area is, and the scale of the bombing, any warning might seem fairly useless unless it gives you instructions on how to fly or escape into another dimension like Doctor Who, but at least the intention is there.

Now they're calling up another 16,000 reservists, but if they don't think they're managing to do enough damage already, a better strategy might be to scrap their F16 bombers that clearly aren't up to the job, and replace them with some booby-trapped toasters as apparently they're far more effective.

In less enlightened times, those responsible for such murder would be snarled at in the street and their pictures displayed on newspapers under inflammatory headlines. But thankfully we're growing more liberal, and can only regret that more thought wasn't given to treating murderers kindly in the past.

Poor Fred West, for example, instead of barely being given a chance to make his case, could have sat in TV studios saying "Of course I regret the deaths of civilians. But you have to understand these people I murdered could be a bloody nuisance. I was lured into killing them, and I'm not even sure I did kill them until I've carried out my own investigation. Some of them kill themselves to get sympathy by booby-trapping their ironing boards you know."

As times change, maybe Netanyahu and his spokesmen will become even more forthright, and organise 'Child Murderer Pride' in which child murderers can get together for a procession and carnival, where they can at last feel safe, and no longer feel looked down on, for carrying out their basic human right to bomb a school to bits.