

# It's plane silly, but I couldn't stop laughing

**S**OME things you can't explain — such as why you laugh when you shouldn't. Or why you can't stop, when you've started for no reason.

Just the other day, a flight attendant snapped a 'would you mind?' my way, cutting dead a conversation I'd thought was running at a whisper. I'm talking high-calibre word slipping. Clipped syllables. Neatly parcelled morphemes. All punctuated by rippled eyebrows and gently creased expressions — as if there were zephyrs tickling our noses.

Intelligence operatives would've strained to detect the subtle mouth exchanges pinging between my fellow traveller and I. So, we stopped and focused on the plummeting-to-earth routine being given by a bored and peeved flight crew. As calm as could be, we faced into looming catastrophe.

Believe me, the demo was anything but rib-tickling, so I'm at a loss as to why there was a welling ... that gave way to a mild snort. By someone. Not me. I swear. Curiosity turned my head. Fatally. This triggered a shoulder shudder by my partner in crime, followed by a discernible 'tee-hee'. The contagion was loose. And with it, the deflated lifejacket demo slipped out of my squinty view.

Don't get me wrong — the bristling air steward was a mere prop in this inscrutable scene. And if he's reading this — sorry, it wasn't you. Honest. Suppressing a grin, I sniffled, only to start my right nostril dripping. A nose-bleed? "Never," I mumbled. Deadpan, I tried tapping my neighbour for a tissue, but sent her into silent wailing contortions. With that, the giddy bug jumped the aisle.

Re-enter the steward — mortally offended and primed to taser someone. Anyone. In his umbrage, he lit on the newest arrival to the party. Puse, all she could do was jab a finger at my side of the plane: "... laffin' ... at ... d, d, dem



**David Young**

## The Last Word

...". Which didn't help, nor buy any breathing space from the steward's glowering look. Lungs in spasm, I feigned as much surprise as I could, while holding a hanky to my drippy face. (As if I were chloroforming myself.)

My eyes had glassed over, so I couldn't make out what was happening next to me. With no intention of chancing anything else, I angled for the sanctuary of the window. And prayed the scrutiny would go away.

If it didn't, I'd have to attempt an explanation. Fearing any enunciation would present as yodelling, followed soon after by thigh-slapping whooping, I fastened my eyes shut, and pulled an ostrich manoeuvre.

As a grown adult, who has flown many times, what sense does that make? All I know is my stomach still hurts. And a certain flight attendant never wants to lay eyes on me and my impromptu posse again. Not even if we walked on board with jackets on, and ready for impact.

