

DAMIAN MILLEA IS HOLDING A CAMCORDER, taping his daughter, Peyton, as she lies asleep in her crib, the focus fixed on her chubby, slightly flushed cheeks. Then he pans the walls in her bedroom, decorated with her favorite Winnie the Poob characters, and moves into another room, where his parents sit on a bed, waving to the camera as they happily wrap presents with bright paper and pink ribbons. "It's Peyton's second birthday!" Millea's mother stage whispers, pointing to the boxes scattered around her.

The tape cuts to the family singing "Happy Birthday" a short while later, silly hats perched comically on their heads to match those on Peyton and her friends. Peyton, sitting on Daddy's lap, looks on in joyful amazement, then turns to her father, who hugs her

tight, as if he can't ever bear to let her go.

"Isn't she something?" he asks, his eyes shining with love. It's obvious that Millea can't get enough of her. Literally. That's why he's been in court since Peyton was just three months old, desper-

ately trying to get more access to his daughter.

Millea, a 35-year-old advertising executive in Pittsburgh, is an accidental dad. Of the estimated 5.3 million pregnancies per year in the United States, roughly 49 percent are unintended, according to a recent study published in the journal Family Planning Perspectives. How do these men react to the news that they're going to become a father—especially when the news comes from women who are not their wives? The media is often rife with stories about reluctant-father figures: deadbeat dads; a boyfriend who mistreats his live-in lover's children because they aren't his; bitter celebrity paternity suits; a married doctor who allegedly stabbed his mistress in the legs and buttocks with a needle upon learning that she planned on carrying their baby to term (see sidebar). But little has been heard from the shocked fathers-to-be who, after initially receiving unwanted news, found themselves in love with their surprise babies and determined to stay in their children's lives.

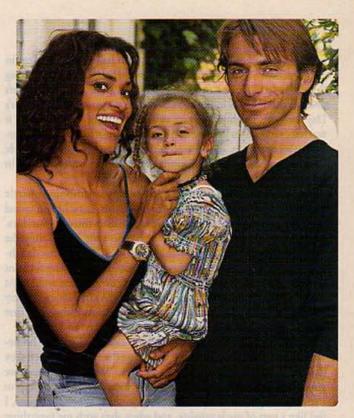
Glamour discovered that not every man runs for the hills upon hearing that he's about to become a dad. Here are three men—accidental fathers all—whose lives were turned upside down by the arrival of an unexpected baby. They all are now in complete agree-

ment: They wouldn't have it any other way.

PEYTON'S PLACE

"Jennifer" was the first woman I fell passionately in love with," says Damian Millea about the mother of his two-year-old daughter, Peyton. When Millea met the then-22-year-old in 1997, he says he was immediately drawn by her looks, her intelligence and the way her reserved demeanor complemented his more outgoing personality. After three months of sometimes unprotected sex—"there were a few accidents," he confesses—Jennifer was surprised to learn she was pregnant. "We were really scared," says Millea. "This was a huge responsibility and we didn't know each other well." Abortion was ruled out by the young Catholic couple.

"Eventually we decided—well, she did, pretty much, but I was in full support—to have the child," he says. Jennifer moved into Millea's apartment, and they attended Lamaze classes together, but they began clashing on such issues as breast-feeding, especially after the baby was born. "I wanted her to, and she flatly refused," Millea explains. "I regret that now. I understand; it was her body." Millea's mood seesawed wildly. "I had moments of sheer, utter happiness that the woman I loved and I were going through this together and everything was going to be fine," he says. "And then there were other



"I SAW HER SITTING IN HER STROLLER, AND RIGHT AWAY NOTICED THAT SHE HAD MY EARS. I KNEW IMMEDIATELY SHE WAS MINE!"

STEHPANIE ROBERTS AND FIORENZO NISI WITH THEIR DAUGHTER, CORY ANNE, WHO WAS BORN ON VALENTINE'S DAY, 1997

times when I felt complete despair and anxiety—about money, about being a good parent, about everything." Couples counseling failed to resolve their difficulties. "I had promised her I would quit drinking, yet I did drink a couple of times and she found out, and it was understandably very upsetting to her," Millea admits.

During the pregnancy, Jennifer moved back home, nearly 110 miles away, to be with her family and, she told Glamour, because she didn't know if she and Damian would be together by the time the baby was born. She returned to Pittsburgh and moved in with Damian briefly during her eighth month, but after experiencing false labor, she returned home again. Still, the couple married in May 1998, a week before the baby was due. "It was very rushed and last-minute—none of my family was able to be there," he recalls. "But I loved Jennifer," he says. The birth itself was complicated; the baby had to be turned so she would not be born breech, and on May 27, Peyton was delivered by C-section. "She had blood on her from the operation," Millea recalls of the first time he saw his daughter, adding that he felt an "overwhelming joy and happiness that Peyton was healthy and breathing and beautiful." He says during the ordeal he was fearful for the health of both his wife and child; Jennifer counters that he badgered her after the surgery about breast-feeding.

The plan, says Millea, had been for Jennifer to move back into his place with the new baby. But she decided to remain with her family. (She says their row in the hospital room cinched her decision not to

COLINIA GRACE MACKERZIE, THIS PAGE, BORBY RELAFAZ.

return.) "It just killed me," says Millea, who had set up a nursery in his apartment. "I still loved her, not just the baby." He began seeing Peyton at Jennifer's house during brief visits but says Jennifer left town to visit relatives in June. "I did not get to spend my first Father's Day with my daughter," he says sadly. "That hurt." (Jennifer says it was her parents who left town, and not wanting to remain alone during her recuperation, she chose to take Peyton and go with them.) He says he'd hoped for a reconciliation, but 40 days after the wedding, in July 1998, Millea was served with divorce papers.

Life since then has been an increasingly acrimonious battle between Millea and his ex-wife over how much time he can spend with Peyton. He now sees her Thursday nights through Sundays, every other week, plus three weeks of vacation any time during the year. "All I wanted was what's fair," Millea says. "And for my daughter to have a relationship with both parents." He is fighting for joint custody. "I love Peyton and love to spend time with her, and I want to be involved daily in her life," he explains. "A child changes every day. I've missed so much of her development already—her first tooth, her first step, her first haircut."

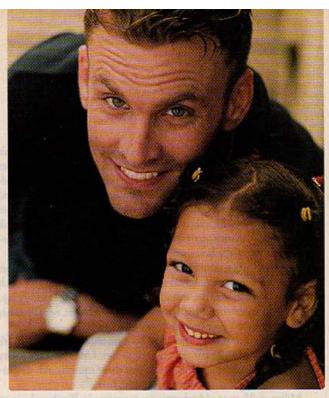
Millea says he tried to transfer to a job closer to Jennifer's hometown, but the position fell through. During their visits together, they do the usual dad-daughter things, he says. "We go to the zoo, we play in the yard and with the neighbors' kids. I rock her to sleep to the song "Angel Mine" by the Cowboy Junkies. When she's gone, I feel like a part of me is missing, and when she's with me everything is OK and everything is going to be fine."

The intensity of his feelings has surprised him: "I didn't know what to expect. I never thought it would be like this. My love for Peyton was instantaneous and keeps growing every day." Reconciliation with his ex seems out of the question, and the idea that someday another man may get to spend more time with his daughter than he does rankles Millea. "I was the first person Peyton saw when she opened her eyes," he recalls. "She made that connection with me right away. It felt right." His voice falters, and his eyes fill with tears. "What gives me solace is that I know that no other man is going to love her as much as I do, and no other man is going to be her father." He takes a deep breath, tries to smile, then unbuttons his shirt: Peyton's name has been tattooed over his heart.

THE SURPRISE(S) OF HIS LIFE

"Did you hear what Lavelle did?"

That's what was being asked around town back in 1984, when Doug Lavelle, then 19, returned home to Indianapolis after his freshman year at Monmouth College, a small liberal arts school out-



"HOW COULD MEN LOOK AT THEMSELVES AND KNOW THEY'VE CREATED SOMETHING OUT THERE AND THAT THEY'RE NOT A PART OF IT?"

DOUG LAVELLE AND HIS "FEARLESS" FIVE-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, SYDNEY, WHO LIVES WITH HER MOTHER

side Peoria, Illinois. The year before, Lavelle, now a 34-year-old plant manager for a window manufacturer, had dated Jane, a young woman he'd met while playing ball at a local park. When he arrived home from school that summer, he began to hear a disturbing rumor: Jane had given birth to a girl, Hallie, nine months before. And the buzz was that Lavelle was the father.

He says Jane had told him she was using birth control and that in those days, before widespread AIDS awareness, he hadn't worn a condom. "We'd briefly dated on and off," he says with a sigh. "It was not a passionate love affair."

Lavelle says his father urged him to get a paternity test but he refused. His emotions were in a tangle. "I did and didn't want to believe it was true," he explains. "Part of it was that I couldn't

A Dad-Denial Horror Story

One man's gruesome response to impending fatherhood

ON APRIL 14, Stephen Pack, 44, a married emergency-room doctor at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx, attacked coworker Joy Schepis, 31, a divorced nurse, after she told him that their extramarital sexual affair had made her pregnant.

As Schepis left the hospital, Pack, a father of two, pulled out two syringes filled with methotrexate, an abortion-inducing drug. Screaming "You're going to have that abortion," he stuck her repeatedly. He was taken into custody by hospital security, and Schepis was given an antidote. (So far, there are no signs of methotrexate-related defects in the fetus, says her lawyer, John Mangialardi.)

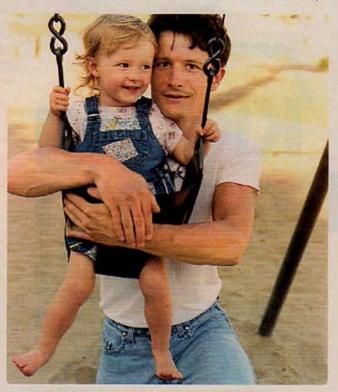
Charged with assault and seconddegree abortion (performing an abortion without consent), Pack has surrendered his medical license; he's pled not guilty, and will most likely say he was mentally impaired: "You've got somebody who runs out and attacks some woman in the street in front of everybody in order to give her an abortion," Pack's attorney, Andrew Rubin, tells Glamour. "Does that sound like a rational act to you?" —LESLIE HEILBRUNN

afford the expensive test. And the other part was like, 'Shame on me.' I was responsible for this, and I was the one who needed to get involved and provide for Hallie."

He went to visit the baby and was upset when he didn't have an instant bond with her. "It felt and looked odd from the beginning," he confesses. "I only spent a few hours with her. She didn't look like me; she looked like her mother. Mostly I was just bewildered. So I told Jane I would hold up my end of the bargain, so to speak, and began to give her money when I could."

But after Lavelle went back to college, he says that he and Jane lost touch. "I knew I had rights," he says sheepishly, "but at the same time it was all really new, and I was young, and I wasn't all gung-ho about it in the first place."

After Lavelle graduated with a business and sociology degree three years later, he moved to New York City and began working as a model. He says intervention by relatives back home brought him back into contact with Jane and that he began sending money, toys and clothing for Hallie. When she was six, he says she visited him in New York for the summer. "We had a great time together," says Lavelle, who was 25 at the time. "We went to the zoo, the parks, out to eat in funky restaurants, did all the tourist stuff. I taught her how to Rollerblade and to ride a bike. I was amazed at how she adapted to all the weirdness of New York—she didn't blink an eye!



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DAMIAN MILLEA, WHO WENT TO COURT TO FIGHT FOR MORE TIME WITH HIS TWO-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, PEYTON What she loved best were those sugar-coated peanuts you can buy from street vendors. And hailing taxis. She just loved that." He laughs. "The cabbies would stop every time."

A combination of career malaise and a desire to be closer to Hallie (who was then seven) brought Lavelle back to Indiana in 1993. While working as a counselor and shift supervisor in a residential program for abused youngsters in Indianapolis, he met Sarah, a 24year-old single mother and administrative assistant. After dating steadily for about a year, the young couple was shocked to discover that another baby was on the way.

"What a dummy!" Lavelle says about himself, shaking his head at the memory. "It's irresponsible. And here I'd told myself I wasn't going to put another child into this situation. But Sarah and I were seriously involved with each other. She was on the Pill, so it was definitely a surprise to both of us, because she was under the assumption that it was working." Although the couple was close, they certainly weren't ready for marriage, he says. "I was angry—at Sarah and myself. We discussed abortion, but because of her religion it was out of the question. I was beside myself."

But as soon as his daughter Sydney was born on February 2, 1995, Lavelle says he was completely smitten. "It was a natural birth, and I was there," he says. "Sydney came out with her eyes wide open—she was looking around like she was thinking, Where am I?! She was such a cutie." He grins and pulls out a wallet full of her photographs. "How could men get up in the morning and look at themselves and know they've created something out there and that they're not a part of it?" he asks. "I realized after Sydney's birth how important that bond in infancy is. I never had that with Hallie. Sydney has always known me as Daddy."

Sydney has Lavelle's last name. He pays \$100 per week in child support and sees his daughter, now five, as often as he likes. They have a Sunday-morning waffle-making ritual, he says. "She likes to get outside, to ride her bike or go Rollerblading or on picnics. We just went fishing; we're working on swimming right now. She is fearless." She loves to pretend she's driving the car, he says. "I let her get on my lap and do some steering. 'Well, why do you have to have your hands on the wheel, Daddy?' she asks me. 'I can handle it!"

Lavelle has a friendly and pleasant relationship with Sarah, and he says that over the years he has tried to spend as much time as possible with both children, seeing Hallie in the summers and on holidays. (Hallie and her mother have moved 300 miles away, he says. Glamour was unable to reach Jane for comment for this article.) But in March 1998, when Hallie was 12, Lavelle says he received a letter from the state asking him to help establish her paternity (necessary for the government assistance program in which Jane was participating, he explains). To his utter astonishment, the blood test concluded that he was not actually Hallie's father.

To say that Lavelle had mixed emotions would be an understatement. "This had affected my path in life. After all, I'd had no intention of coming back to the Midwest."

"But my love for Hallie didn't change," he insists. "Not at all. I knew she would need me more than ever, and I wasn't going to give up on her, not ever." During their visit the following summer, in June 1998, Lavelle says he and Hallie had a long talk about what the news would mean to their relationship. "She's very reserved, so it's not easy to talk to her," he explains. "But I took her to the park and sat down and said, 'You know, we really haven't talked much about this since we found out. How do you feel? I'm open. What role do you want me to play in your life?" Lavelle brightens at the memory of her response. "She said (continued on page 360)



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she just wanted everything to be the same."

"Now she refers to me as her dad and the other guy as her father," he adds. "Isn't that cool?" He says his two daughters have met and that they consider each other sisters. "I love her. We just went from there." Today he continues to see Hallie in the summer, when they go to the movies and out to eat, but she's in the throes of adolescence and, predictably, is often more interested in hanging out with her friends. "She's 14 going on 24," he says with a laugh that any parent of a teenager can understand, "and thinks she can take care of things herself."

Lavelle plans to remain in Indianapolis until Sydney is old enough to travel and visit him, should he choose to move away to further his career in management. He'd love to work again with abused children but can't afford to, with two children in his own life to support. He says he'd like to marry someday, and perhaps have a son. But he's not rushing into any new relationships at the moment. And he says he's certainly not taking any more chances with birth control. "I'm a firm believer that a man loses the right to make a decision when he fails to wrap it up!" he says, rolling his eyes. "Take it upon yourself to have protection," he advises all men. "And don't take it off unless you're ready for that woman to be the mother of your child."

PATERNITY SUITED

Fiorenzo Nisi, a Los Angeles producer and director of documentaries, has just stepped off a plane from Italy, the country where he was raised. Jet lag and exhaustion do little to dampen his infectious energy and enthusiasm. Never mind that he's been up for a day

and a half—he's eager to tell his story, and he even insists on driving to Santa Monica Beach, where the sunset is "the most beautiful in the world."

Nearly four and a half years ago, he had a two-night stand in New York City with Stephanie Roberts, a stunning fashion model. "I was a naughty boy back then," admits the 40-year-old former photographer's rep. "And flamboyant...and single," he adds with a disarming smile. Several months later, when Roberts called him in tears to say she was pregnant, Nisi, who says he didn't question her about birth control because she'd said it was "OK," was enraged. He wanted Roberts, then 27, to have an abortion. She said no, and so Nisi refused to see her. "I said, 'Do whatever the hell you want to do," he recalls. They fought a lot over the phone. Part of the problem, he now admits, is that they were still strangers, yet they had been thrust into a life-changing predicament that had to be dealt with.

Roberts moved to San Francisco to be with her family; Nisi had no desire to be present at the birth of his child. "I was very angry and totally torn apart," he says now. "I said I wanted a paternity test done right away. I didn't know what to do, and my ego got in the way because I hadn't been given a choice at all," he explains.

Six months later, on Valentine's Day, 1997, Nisi received the phone call that broke the logjam—and changed his life. "Congratulations, you're a father!" Roberts told him. "Her name is Cory Anne."

"It was a beautiful moment," says Nisi, adding in his charmingly accented English that he now deeply regrets depriving himself of the "joy to be there at the birth." He says a close friend counseled him: "Even when you say no, Iyou want no part of the child's life], you will still have certain responsibilities for what's going to happen next. You can choose to stay angry, or you can choose to deal with the fact that you're a father.

"When I heard that, I realized I didn't want to be angry anymore."

Nisi first met his daughter when she was nine months old. Her mother brought her for a visit to New York, where he was living at the time. "I saw her sitting in her stroller, and right away I noticed that she had my ears," Nisi says with a laugh. "I knew immediately she was mine!" A month later, the DNA test he had earlier insisted upon confirmed his instinct. "I got kind of drunk that night—I didn't know what to think. It was overwhelming," he recalls. "And only then did I call my mother in Italy to tell her the news. Of course she was upset at first, but right away she sent me a little coat and sweater she knit for the baby."

At first Nisi and Roberts flew back and forth regularly-"Stephanic and Cory Anne came to New York three times, and I went out to Los Angeles a few times, where Stephanie had moved, and we were in touch on the phone every day," he explains. Roberts was modeling and was financially independent, although Nisi contributed when he could. When Cory Anne was very small, he says, he'd put her on his shoulders and walk all over New York with her, taking her to the park, talking and playing. Nisi even found himself sharing her favorite cartoons with her-"much to my surprise!" he adds with a laugh. Who'd have thought that at the age of 39, cartoon watching would be a signal he had finally grown up.

Nisi quit his job and moved west, "I realized that if I wanted to be a father, I could not be a 'plane' father," he explains. He and Roberts developed a closer, friendlier relationship. They share custody—remarkably, without any lawyers or hassles. "We have a verbal agreement, and it works very well," Nisi says. "We know it takes two, and we just accept each other.

"I see Cory Anne usually every other day, so I have her full time for half a week. Sometimes we do more, and sometimes the three of us have lunch or dinner together. Cory Anne loves the beach, so we often go there, and we've watched the cartoon An Extremely Goofy Movie together at least 15 times on video. We have pizza and salad together on our private picnics. And she likes to talk with her little girlfriends on my cell phone."

This summer, Nisi took Cory Anne to Forli, Italy, for a two-month visit alone with her paternal grandparents. "She was totally spoiled and loved by my parents—and she speaks Italian already!"

Nisi knows he has a lot to learn: "Being a good father takes a lot of effort. But treat this new human being with respect and love—especially love—and you will be respected and loved back." He credits Roberts for much of his transformation. "Stephanic is a beautiful person and a great mom," he says. "Because she is so centered and smart, she knows a father has to be there. She made it happen. We are parents, and that's the most important thing."

"Cory Anne wants a baby brother," he adds. "She says she talks to the angels and the angels talk to her, and then she tells me, 'See what you can do about it."

"Next time, hopefully, I'll [have a child] with a woman I know better and am already in love with," Nisi sighs, ever the romantic. Meanwhile, he'll just keep marveling at the blossoming relationship between him and his daughter. Because, as twice-surprised Doug Lavelle puts it, "How can you not fall in love with your own child?"