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## All in the Family

It's done and dusted. Glazer's taken over, put the fun boy three on the board, de-listed the plc and will rape our club, pocket a packet, then bugger off when he's destroyed everything. In the meantime opinion at United is divided more than anytime in 127 years of history. People's views are becoming increasingly polarised and virtually any group of United fans have had some kind of bust up. We're not a happy family anymore, so I'm going to introduce you to a fictitious family, made up of all the viewpoints. They've been through the same agony as most of us and maybe what we can learn is that we should respect each other's choices and stay united. I'll let them each tell their own story.

I'm Chris.

I've walked away and become a founder member of FC United of Manchester. I've sacked my season ticket, although I can hardly remember a time when I didn't go to United. Started going with my older brother just before Munich. Remember the day of the crash, because it was the first time I'd seen our Dad cry, the second was when he heard Glazer had taken over. He's devastated and says he'll never go United again. Our family's torn apart. My Dad won't support FC United and he says I'm disloyal to transfer my support to them. We hardly talk anymore. My son, George, named after the greatest ever United player has renewed without a second thought and he calls FC United the spawn of the devil. I do understand George's position, but he can't see my viewpoint. He's disowned me and I haven't seen him for weeks, nor my little grandson Nathan either. I'd like to take Nath to see FC United, but George won't have it. Poor mite, can't go to Old Trafford either. At his age I was jibbing in under the turnstiles with Brian.

Before George stopped talking to me I asked him, "What is Manchester United?" It might sound like a daft question, but everything's changed. We used to be called Newton Heath. Roy Keane might play as though he's old enough, but the players have all changed. We've changed grounds, chairmen, managers, coaching staff, become a plc and back to private. We play in a different league, (Premiership) the European Cup is now the Champions League (but isn't only for champions) and none of the major cups we've won are the same actual trophy. I told George, WE are what make up the package they call Manchester United. United fans carry the soul of our club in their hearts and some of will transplant that soul into FC United. Glazer can't buy our club, because he can't buy us. George called me a traitor and left.

I'm Brian.

I'm Chris's brother and I'm even more committed to this fight. Gave up the book immediately and I could cheerfully lamp anyone who renewed. "Not for Sale", you're 'aving a laff. I was talking with our kid about why Glazer's takeover matters so much and we decided it's part of the whole decline of football. The Taylor report, no standing, prices through the roof, post 90's jester-hatted knobheads getting into footie, Sky TV dictating stupid kick-off times, the Premiership screwing the Football League and us. I even miss the hooliganism. This Glazer clown is a step too far and for the sake of our club, maybe for the sake of the whole game, we have to stand up and say, "Enough is enough!"

The only way to stop Glazer is to make his business unworkable and that means making United unworkable. The consequence is we'll kill the club. Don't get me wrong, I love United to bits, but I hate what it's become. We have to be prepared to

do whatever to bring Glazer down. "No Customers, No Profit" I won't put another penny in Glazer's pocket and I'll do me damndest to stop anyone else too. We'll show the world that football clubs belong to the people, like FC does and the fans can't be bought and sold like a tin of beans. People like my nephew George, who are supporting the Glazer empire. can go screw themselves. He's a fookin' traitor who sold his arse to a gnome. Chris keeps saying we shouldn't fall out, but George doesn't want to know, so I'll never speak to him again.

I'm Henry.

I'm Chris and Brian's Dad. Can't afford to go to games any more and I'm too old to go without Brian or Chris. They're off to FC, but I don't understand it. I told them I'd rather give up football altogether than transfer my allegiance to another team. How could they throw up a lifetime of United for some tin-pot team of plumbers and window fitters? I'm not gonna get into some big argument over this like Chris, Brian and George, but I barely see my kids or grandkids. Football used to keep us together. I sometimes see my little great-grandson, Nathan, because his dad George can't take him to Old Trafford, so he comes here and we watch it on Sky.

I'm Michelle.

I'm Brian's daughter. Unlike Dad and Grandad, I can't bring myself to give up my season ticket. Dad says I'm selling out, but at least he's still talking to me. I was worried after that last big row when he told my cousin George to "Fuck off back to the Glazerdome and watch the Salford Bucanneers!". It's so awful, because it was Dad who fought to get me a season ticket. I love my seat at Old Trafford and I sit with a great crowd. I couldn't put a daytripper in the middle for every game. If I gave up my season ticket, I'd lose the loyalty pot, so no ways. Going to the game and having the craic with your mates is what it's all about.

I feel guilty and I'm so proud of my Dad and the others who have set up FC United. I'm supporting them too and I've seen a fair bit of FC United because United never play at 3 o'clock Saturday. I can't give up United, but I'm not selling out to Glazer. I threw my replica shirt in the Nike amnesty wagon at the Apollo meeting and cancelled my Vodafone contract. You won't catch me in the Megastore or having a beer at half time. I had to sell the shares Granddad gave me, but I've put the money into the Phoenix fund. I've written to everyone; the sponsors, the Premier League, UEFA, FIFA, my MP, the Office of Fair Trading and the FA. . I've still got to buy cup tickets because of the loyalty pot, but I've cancelled the automatic cup scheme, so the club has extra hassle and no 3% levy.

By next season I'll probably be ready to give up and join the rest at FCUM, which means I can relax now. My greatest fear used to be losing my season ticket, so the club could get away with murder, as I was too scared to get involved in protests. The suits held the ultimate sanction, because they could take my precious season ticket. Now it wouldn't be the end of the world and that's a huge weight off my shoulders. I'm going to fight from within to bring down Glazer, a bit like Michelle of the French Resistance, 'Allo, 'Allo!

I'm George.

I'm Chris's son, though I'm not talking to him or most of my family now they're fookin' turncoats. Don't understand how they can suddenly support another team. At least Michelle still goes to Old Trafford, but even she goes to see those Bury yonners all the time. I told them there are 3 inbred teams and they all have a BL postcode, Bolton, Bury and FCUoB (FC United of Bury, ha, ha). See they're not even from Manchester! I thought that was a clever comment, but Dad said it was as bad as the guy who said he hopes FC crash and burn. Don't know why he got upset at that

phrase, but he started on about knowing the history of the club and talking about crashing. Didn't hear the rest because my uncle Brian pushed me out the door and told me to piss off and never come back.

But they're the ones who have pissed off and deserted the club instead of getting behind the team 100%. Glazer's no different from Edwards, so we should just wait and see. I don't want all these hooligans marching down the road and barricading the Glazers inside the club. That's plain rude. I only care about watching the football and if these protestors cared so much, then why didn't they fight against the plc or do what Fergie says and go to watch Chelsea. Glazer did nothing wrong buying the club. He's a multi-millionaire, so he must be good for us. I don't really understand why they're going on about the debt, it's only like me having a mortgage, but if Glazer needs to make more money, then what's the point of all these boycotts? When I have my pie and pint at half time, I know I'm helping our new bosses and I've bought my son the new blue shirt. I don't take Nath to the games because I can't afford it and anyway he couldn't sit with me and he's too little to go in alone, but he wears his shirt when he watches United on telly. I've brought him up as a proper United fan, so he'll never desert us.

This small United family is pretty representative of the huge family we used to have, but now everyone is torn apart. We're fighting and blaming each other instead of pointing the finger at the common enemies: The Glazers who profess to love our club, Gill and Humby who said the plan was unworkable, Bobby Charlton who once graced the pitch, but disgraced himself ever since and even Fergie who lost his socialist principles then angered his new capitalist mates. Are these people proud of their legacy?

Portia Vale