

FRIDAY WRAP

#2.26.1

'A Glimpse of Humour'

15 July 2011



Street dancers, Ramblas ,Barcelona

Wrap

- ~ Rap -- to talk., *conversation*.
- ~ a piece of thin, flat bread *that can contain anything* eaten as a sandwich.
- ~ Signaling *the end (ie of a week)*
- ~ *Under wraps – secret.*

Spreading their wings

Background

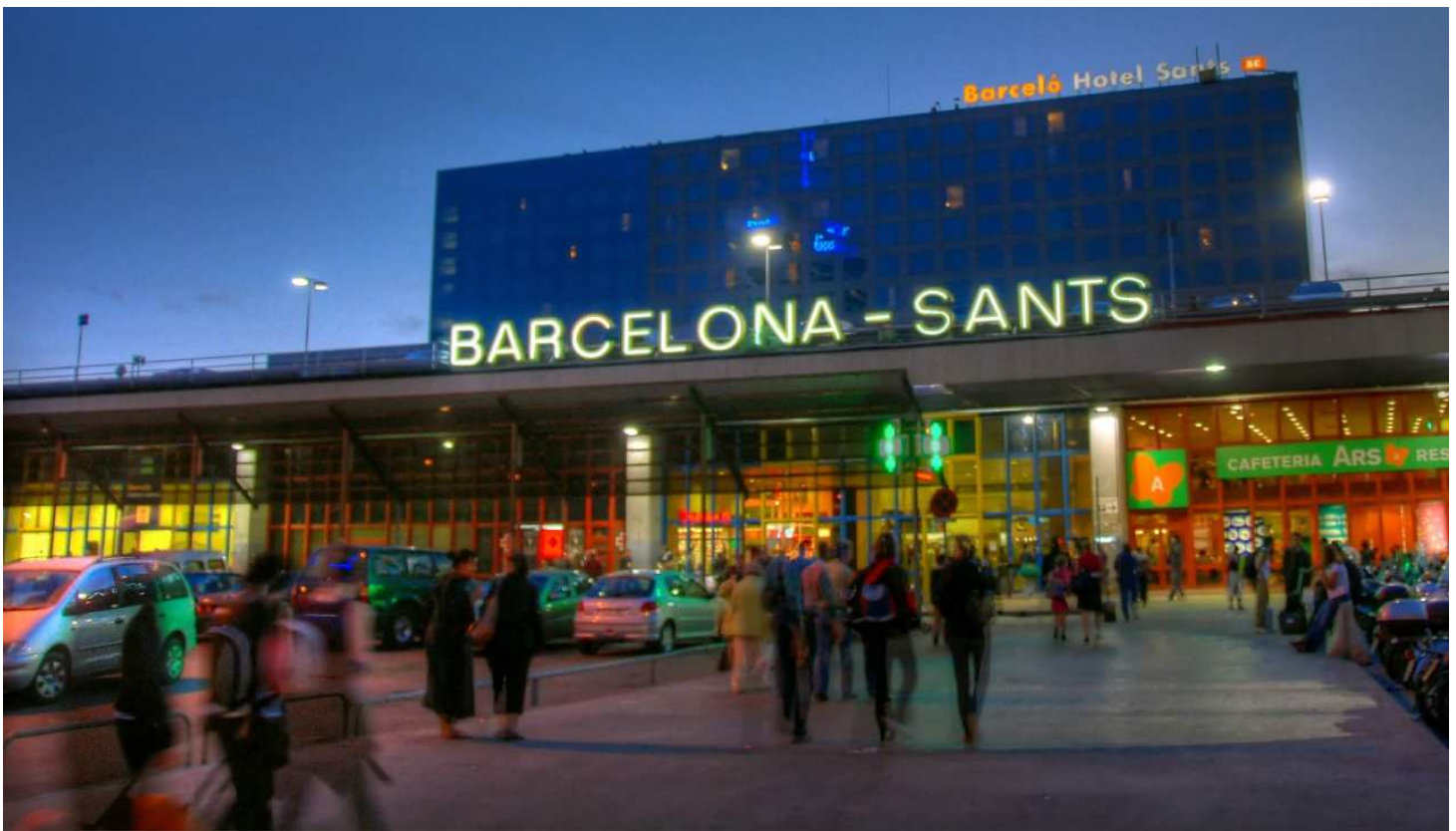
Both my children had left on 9 June with their aunt on a trip to Casablanca (Morocco) Lisbon (Portugal) and Madrid (Spain). My son then went to Germany, Spain and back to Germany and my daughter to Geneva and their

aunt came home.

Initially they were going to go to Tokyo, Japan but then the Earthquake happened and they had to change their plans or lose their money.

They could not get a refund as the airline still flew to Japan and as long as the airline could land there the airline won't refund their money.

Same with the visa, they lost the money. And they obtained it two days before the earthquake. They had to fly there two weeks after the earthquake when Tokyo was running low on food and there was contamination in the fruit and vegetables and in the air and with



Sants Train Station

[Wikipedia Article](#)

[Sants Estació \(Barcelona Metro\)](#)

[Sants Estació](#) is a station on line 3 and line 5 of the Barcelona Metro. It serves the Barcelona-Sants commuter train and main-line rail station, and is named Sants Estació to distinguish it from the nearby Plaça de Sants station also named for the Sants neighbourhood.

The Line 5 station was opened in 1969 and the Line 3 station in 1975. A new ticket hall was added in 2004 to the Line 3 station.

The station provides direct access to Barcelona-Sants station, the city's primary train station. In addition to Renfe long-distance and regional services, the train station. Trains to and from Barcelona airport stop at this Station, taking 20 min

a threat of further earthquakes. The Japanese were still busy cleaning up and finding bodies. Nobody wants to go on holiday to a place like that. So they went to the other side of the world.

So now they were on their own with my son touring Europe with his EuroRail pass and my daughter in Geneva with friends.

We only have contact via Skype or Email with our children. Their cousins and friends knew more about their trip than we did. We only heard from them if they needed money. I told everybody I made some 'Foreign Investments'. Someone commented that it must be a zero yield account as I was not going to get any returns on my investments.

Whereas we only have contact via Skype or Email their cousins received updates via Facebook. We, being good parents and respecting our children's privacy, do not 'subscribe' to their 'account', if those are the words.

Yes, my wife and I do have Facebook, 'accounts' but I, for the life of me, don't know what to do with it, but I am learning, I even 'posted' a message on someone's wall last week. My wife is just as perplexed, she signed up for Facebook and Twitter on one day and spent the next few days just trying to catch up on all the 'posts'. So if we wanted to know where our children was we just had to ask their cousins.

Maybe they can do a Wrap on their return.

Anyway. Background done.

I just want to tell the story about this weekend...of being a parent and helplessness... bear with me.



Valencia train Station

Day 1

My son is on a 'Great European Tour', travelling all over Europe. Or rather all the places he has an interest in.

On Saturday, he was on his way from Valencia, Spain to Munich, Germany. This is not one train he has to take but many. He has a Eurorail Pass so he can travel all over on his pass. BUT. One big but. He can only reserve a seat once he is on that station.

He does not use his cellphone to SMS but rather sends an Email if he gets free Wi Fi. So we receive an email that he is leaving Valencia but there is no place on the train from Barcelona to Montpellier, France.

He needed our assistance two weeks ago too when he was on his way to Nancy, France and needed a place to stay. We thoroughly researched Nancy, France (I did not know of such a place before that day) and booked him into a place quite a distance from the station as

the closer to the station the more expensive it is. The Hotel Cerise Nancy was the cheapest at R350 per night.

These days the Internet makes things just so much easier. We could book a room for him from here in Cape Town in Nancy, France for the next day.

Using Google Street View' we could actually search the streets around the station for hotels or hostels that are not listed and we could look at the street where the Hotel Cerise was and we could tell him there is a bus stop in front of the hotel.

That is today's technology for you.

We just sent him the reference number and when he arrived and took a taxi to the hotel.

It was such a nice place and a nice city he stayed for a few days. Some of the hotel staff were Muslim Bangladeshis and they could point him to places to eat and pray etc.

Anyway.



Montpellier Train Station

He gets to Barcelona Sants Station and 'steals' Wi-Fi at Macdonald's (his words, WIFI was free in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia when we were there) and send SKYPE messages too - There is no place on the train and the next is only the next morning at 0900.

What must he do, he is tired, hungry and hasn't eaten since the morning) and he has only a little money.

My solution was get something to eat, sit and wait for the train but to his mother that was not the best solution.

But the Sants Train Station is closing soon as well. He spent a few days in Barcelona before going on to Valencia and Ibiza, so he wants to leave Barcelona as soon as possible.

Any place, other than home has that quality. You can spend hours or weeks in a place but once you are ready to move on nothing can stop you. You want to go; you want to be on the road, so to speak because your mind is almost

at your next destination. If your next destination is home the feeling is even more acute.

The only trains are going either in the other direction or to a smaller town further on the line and the train could be full once it reached there. And his cell phone battery is dying..

A cell phone battery is dying is a calamity in your life if you are younger than thirty. And even more of a calamity if you have no place to charge it. And even bigger calamity if you are stuck in a foreign city. With a little money.

So, we are soon on the Internet and doing some research.

Option 1

Any other train. No. We can only book for a week in advance. And that is for a ticket, you must pay for the trip - if you have Eurorail pass you must be present at the station to get a 'boarding' pass



View from Montjuic Hill towards Placa d'Espana, Barcelona

Option 2

Look for a flight at EasyJet.com - The only flight is R1400 and is only the next morning at 1000 and the next night at 2200. Nix that idea. The reason we are looking for a flight is so that he can get out of Barcelona tonight.

Option 3

We find a number of Hostels but we can't book him in because the day is almost finish so their dates you can book for, only starts the next day, so if he takes a taxi to a hostel there

may not be any place there. So we search for the number for 'Albert Gaudi Hostel' (R190 per night, beware of the bedbugs according to the Internet Review) and phone them.

Phone rings and stop. No answer. Scrap that idea.

He said he is going to put his bag in a locker and going to find a hostel on foot.

At the end he changed his mind, he is rather going to take the train to the Airport and find a place to eat and a spot to spend the night and be back at the station nice and early.



Morgan Brown *Berkut83@hotmail.it*

Barcelona Skyline

I always heard of travelers spending a night 'on the street' , so to speak, while travelling and I couldn't, for the life of me, figure out how they got into that kind of situation in the first place. I even heard of guys sleeping in a phone booth in London many years ago. And now my son was in exactly the same predicament. He has his EuroRail pass but can't reserve his seat before he gets to that station. So he came and there was no place on the train.

All parents know the feeling of helplessness when they are unable to safeguard nor assist their own children.

It is painful and disturbing, you don't want your child to be in harm's way. He is so far away, hungry without a place to sleep but there is nothing we can do. We can only assist him in so many ways. He must make up his mind and we can only support that decision. We tried and we couldn't assist him. He is old enough to look after himself, we told ourselves.

But it is still disconcerting

He was far away. He was on his own.

Then the question, 'Were we being bad parents to allow this to happen?' To us, some parents allow their children to grow up and to go out into the world to experience it. We are not placing them in harms way but rather allowing them to grow up. Are we bad parents if for allowing that? I help my children to a certain extent but I will encourage them to make up their own mind and their own decision and we will support that decision.

Many parents choose not to let their children go out into the dark, dark world. There is nothing wrong in having your children close to you all the time. But, I think, a child must get a chance to spread their wings, they can't grow up under your wing all their lives. They must start accounting for themselves and start making a mark on life, for themselves.

So after 2 ½ hours of Skype-ing, Internet searches and phone calls, he was on his way to the airport. Hopefully safe and sound. All we could do and can do is pray that he is safe.



Ibiza

Day 2

He emailed us early to say he is on the train and on his way.

From: Mogamad-Shareef Kariem
Sent: Sun, July 10, 2011 8:47:54 AM
Salaam Mom

I need dad to try and reserve train seat for me. It's not working on my phone and I don't want to be stuck on a train station again because the trains are full. From this ticket office I can't buy tickets in France. The trains I need to take are:

1. Montpellier to Geneva. Departs 17:26. Train number TGV 6866
2. Geneva to Zurich. Departs 21:45.

Train number IC747

3. Zurich to Munich. Departs 07:15.
Train number EC191

Try to do it ASAP. I don't want the train to be full again.

Date: Sun, 10 Jul 2011 15:22:40
Just crossed border into France.
Going to be in Montpellier at 17:00.

Date: Sun, 10 Jul 2011 17:35:28
The train to Geneva is full. Trying to find another way there tonight.
At ticket office now.



Valencia ~ L'Hemisfèric – Imax Cinema, Planetarium and Laserium

Sent: Sun, July 10, 2011 6:04:38 PM

It's okay, I'm sorted. The lady at the ticket office is very helpful. I'm on an overnight train to Strausbourg, then Strausbourg to Offenbourg, Offenbourg to Mannheim, Mannheim to Augsburg (outside Munich, to meet friend).

It works out better because I don't have to wait anywhere, only now to 22:50. I save a nights accommodation this way, and I've got a bed on the train.

I just have to book the trains in Germany still, they can't do it here.

It's all sorted for now.

Sent: Mon, July 11, 2011 7:51:14 PM

Salaam Mom

I just arrived in Augsburg, at a friends place. Very, very nice apartment. I will most probably stay here for the rest of the week.

All safe and well here.

Love

And so his holiday continues.

Meanwhile as I write this closing comments my daughter is sitting on Doha Airport on her way home from Geneva, Switzerland. She will be at home tomorrow night.

From: Laylaa Kariem

Date: Mon, 11 Jul 2011 22:28:39

I'm at Doha now. Flight is at 5am again.

Don't lus for anything. I just wanna eat up Peanut! (her cat)

Date: Mon, 11 Jul 2011 22:33:33

I had two seats on the plane so I slept lekker.

Not tired.

I leave here 6am but 5am Mums time. Its 37 degrees.

Rather get to the airport earlier.

All we can do is pray for their safety and a pleasant journey and a safe return home. God Willing.

Postscript

MY daughter arrived home safe and sound on Tuesday 12 July 2011.

All Photos from Flickr, I think.