

# last stop



## 35,000 feet WITH BABIES!

by David Volk

Illustration by John Linton Roberson

**The day was not off to a good start.** I had left behind the bag with diapers and toys for our trip from Moscow to Seattle, the children were doing crying warm-ups, and fellow passengers were giving me nasty stares. And we hadn't gotten out of the ticket line yet.

Our international adoption agency warned us about all kinds of hassles along the road to adoption. Tons of paperwork. Criminal background checks. More paperwork. Home studies. Updating expired paperwork. Lots of waiting. And did I mention the paperwork?

The agency was curiously quiet about flying home, however.

We put our kids to bed early the night before so they'd be awake for our 6 a.m. departure. Apparently, we didn't understand conscious toddlers and confined spaces aren't the best mix. We soon realized we should have tired them out and kept them up for quite some time, possibly as far back as the Reagan administration.

Before the plane even left the ground, there was lots of crying, fussing and fidgeting. And that was just my wife and me.

A missed nap helped. They fell asleep during the last 20 minutes of the Moscow to Amsterdam leg, and our fellow passengers celebrated. Very quietly. Sadly, it was too good to last.

In Amsterdam, we experienced a random security check; one of us was frisked by Officer Friendly, who confiscated the only bottle our kids would drink from. Then he said, "Have a good flight."

Gee, thanks.

I hadn't understood Kenny Rogers' lyrics about being "too tired to sleep" until I flew with my 13-month-old son. I quickly discovered the only way to stop his screaming was to carry him. Then, he miraculously nodded off... until I sat down and his head poked up again due to some minor distraction like his sister, a flight attendant or someone unwrapping food 20 rows back.

What I really needed was a sensory deprivation chamber. What I found was a small, dimly lit hallway between first class and steerage. It worked so well, I fell asleep with him in my arms. He still woke up whenever I sat down, however. This went on for eight hours until a kindly grandmother offered to take "the little rug rat," and we didn't hear another peep until we landed.

The brief quiet was shattered when our 20-month-old daughter fell. What followed was a high-pitched, tooth-rattling scream that prompted a single 20-something guy to say, "For the love of God, we are on this plane to sleep. Could you please take her to the bathroom and muffle her cries?"

It was one of those times in life when I wish I had a much-needed snappy comeback. Instead, I found myself saying, "Sir, we've been dealing with these kids for 18 hours now. If you want to take them, by all means, be my guest." Don't get me wrong, I love my kids, but if he knew so much about caring for them, I was shocked that he didn't take me up on my generous offer. **!**

Humorist David Volk can be reached at [david@davidvolk.com](mailto:david@davidvolk.com), or you can check out his Web site at [www.davidvolk.com](http://www.davidvolk.com). He guarantees you'll laugh, or double your money back.



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