

Ginnie: April 22, 2016

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script consultants: Judy from who I borrowed the line "it's a sign from God".

questions for Anoo before presenting it:

Should I even present this? I'm worried that presenting this is going to be a horrible mistake. Once I let the cat out of the bag, it's out.

This is dramatic. Even though at the time, this event was quite stressful, with the perspective of time, some bits of it are funny. Are people going to see the funny bits as being funny even though the character on stage is in great distress?

questions for Anoo after presenting it:

Would Ginnie be OK with this story being public, even if she kept her identity private?

Are women going to want to hear this?

Are women going to say "OMG yet another story of some dumb schmuck getting lucky"?

0 mins

short (No Shame sized) intro:

I grew up in a conservative christian household. Life revolved around God and the Queen. I was an active member of the church.

When I was a teenager, Australia conscripted my generation to fight in Vietnam. I looked to the church for guidance. They recognised the war as part of God's plan,

No-one asked me. Society just expected me to do my duty.

By the time I was doing my PhD, and the Vietnam war was over, all but the killing, I realised that the church, by condoning the Vietnam war, was morally bankrupt. Much or all of their teachings, on which I'd based my life, were now suspect. I decided that it was unlikely that sex was intrisically,

and only the church could make it wonderful and sacred. I saw my mother as my jailer, although I barely could admit it to myself.

I left home to get away from my mother and the church. I moved to a progressive on-campus college at Sydney University. There students were making decisions about their lives rather than waiting for word from God.

I hoped a few things would change. I was hoping for a girlfriend, where it would be her and me, rather than God, her and me. Finding a girlfriend was even more difficult than you'd expect from looking at me. For decades, all women looked like my mother.

1 min

0 mins

On-campus, there were always things happening.

I had needed a date for a party. As you can imagine it hadn't taken long for me to exhaust the supply of girls who would go on dates with me.

(stop and look down-cast. Wait till get laugh.)

So I asked the girlfriend of a friend if she could set me up.

At the party, my date and I found that we had friends in common, quickly telling me the sort of person she was. From our party conversation, she was accomplished and determined. This was a formidable woman. She was going places.

We were having a pleasant time together. It was a nice date. About half way through the party, my date let me know that she had **plans for later that evening**.

(look in shock. this is more alive than looking terrified. Terrified is frozen and the audience won't know whether it's the character or the actor.)

Her plans meant that we would spend the night together.

To say her declaration came as a surprise would be an understatement; this is not how I expected it would happen. I didn't know people did this.

We weren't getting on in any way special that warranted the unexpected invitation. I realised that I hadn't been asked to jump over a very high bar to qualify. I expected that combing my hair and speaking in complete sentences, had been enough.

She made the invitation, using the only the limited tokens of party chit-chat, the only thing available to people who've just met. She showed great

courage. I would have been impressed, that she'd carried it off, had I the spare neurons to do so.

But I didn't. I was jammed. She'd issued the invitation. It was my place to reply, but I couldn't. I was glad that she didn't smile at me and say "well, cat got your tongue?". Formidable as she was, I knew she didn't have the bandwidth for this. It would have been more than I could handle. I was speechless. I was actually terrified, although I didn't know it.

It never occurred to me to say to her "well thank you, that's very nice. This is going to be my first time and I barely know you. If you'd really like to do this with me, how about we go outside and talk for a bit. Would you like to hold my hand?" Actually it did occur to me, but the voices in my head mocked me so thoroughly, I realised it wasn't worth trying.

As we found out later, on comparing notes, my date was operating with a similar agenda to mine. In the confusion of the evening, it never occurred to me that the unfolding drama might be the result of similar agendas.

I mean, what's the chances of two people, with matching agendas, finding each other, just **randomly** like this, on a blind date no less? And then when the miraculous happens, you're not able to communicate, so neither of you recognise the situation.

Not only could I not speak, I couldn't think either. It never occurred to me that it was going to be **her** first time. I'd always assumed that a girl could do it any time she wanted and she would have done so long ago. All she had to do was pick someone and ask them.

Girls only asked the **cool** guys. I was a science nerd. I **wasn't** one of the cool guys. I knew no-one would be asking me.

(stand to one side of stage. Look at the group of cool guys, holding my hands together, nervously, looking to see if they'll accept me. I approach them cautiously and say "hey guys, want to see my diagram of the strata in the Grand Canyon?"

I then move to where the cool guys are talking the role of one of the cool guys. I stand, hands on hips, as if I'm a cool guy. I roll my eyes and don't acknowledge the nerd.

I resume my position as the nerd, and slink off rejected.)

Although I didn't know it at the time, the thing that I said couldn't possibly happen was **exactly** what was happening on our date. She'd picked me and she'd asked.

Later, I talked to a woman friend, trying to figure out what had happened. She said "well, yes, this is what guys think. But there just aren't that many guys around that you want to do it with, unless you're prepared to just throw it away. It's just as hard for the girls as it is for the guys."

So there I was. I barely knew her. I mean we would be taking each other's clothes off ... and doing things ... which even now I don't speak about publically.

Although the situation was beyond my comprehension, I knew that she was an otherwise completely normal person. She had hopes and wishes for a happy and meaningful life and she was doing her best to get there. I could expect to see her and her friends again. I had to get this right.

(put notes down, look like this is serious)

For the rest of the party, my head was spinning. Rather than putting my efforts into something useful, like establishing communication with her, I spent the rest of the party spiralling into my private hell.

(Hop from one spot to another on the stage, with each new thought.)

Could I do this with someone I'd just met?

She was nice, but we weren't even friends.

Could I say no?

How **do** you say no?

Guys aren't supposed to say no.

When the moment comes, society expects us to do our duty.

No-one tells a guy what to do, when your date puts the make on you. Sure, if you know her, but what if you've just met? Then what?

(stop hopping. walk forward to the front of the stage)

I couldn't imagine another guy in the world, giving the matter a second thought.

If I said no, everyone would know about it the next morning. Hell hath no fury...

There was no way this one would be keeping it quiet. She would have howled from one end of the university to the other. The Sydney women's wall of shame would have my name painted on it in foot high letters.

(paint J O E with hands in the air, then say "Joe") No female would ever forgive me for what I'd done. I'd carry the shame with me for the rest of my life.

I would have to face her friend, the girl who'd set us up.

(girlfriend is stunned, in horror)

"What?! You said no?! You turned her down?! She's my very best friend. She's absolutely lovely. How could you?! I put you two together ... I was counting on you to be nice to her. OMG! she'll be so humiliated, she'll hate me.

(change to anger from the girlfriend)

Oh, how could you do this to me?! I thought I was doing something nice for both of you. You complete bastard! I'll never let you forget this. Every other guy in Sydney would leap over themselves to be with her and I entrusted her to **you**?! You had your chance! You **blew** it! You're never going to hear the end of this! Do you understand?!" If she wasn't good enough for you, don't expect to ever go on another date with anyone again, ever, ever."

At social gatherings, I would see girls urgently whispering to each other, while looking at me in horror and pointing at me. They'd turn to their dates and whisper in his ear. He'd roll his eyes with contempt, then turn to look at me with disdain. Later at the drinks table, he'd greet me "How's it going Casanova?".

I could imagine walking into the dining room, to see the faces of 200 people, smirking at me, their faces plastered with silly grins. They would be beating their hands on the tables as I walked past, rattling the cutlery, drawing everyone's attention to my entry into the dining room. They would be waving to me, loudly calling out to me "How was your date last night Joe?".

I knew what the guy's reaction would be. I didn't know what the girls would think and I knew they'd never tell me. I'd never live it down. I'd have to leave town.

I could tell from the change in attitude and the new confidence of my date, that my silence and confusion had been interpreted as assent.

I had left home for a reason. Was I going to say no, when finally I was being offered just what I wanted, just because it wasn't unfolding in the way I expected, just because it wasn't with someone I knew **very** well?

Who was I waiting for; Catherine of Wuthering Heights?

Even though I hardly knew her and sparks weren't flying, I saw that she was as nice a person as anyone I'd ever met. My decision was made from a mixture of peer pressure and not knowing how to say no. Uptil then, I had spent my life in service to God. I saw that now it really was time to get on

with my life and this was as nice a person as I could ask for to take that next step with.

Maybe it was a sign from God.

(wait a bit, thinking, then look upwards, acknowledge God with mouth or eyebrows)

At the end of the party, we left arm in arm. We were two very nervous virgins, two people who had to negotiate the rest of the night together with a person we'd just met and who we barely knew. We had almost no communication to help us. In place of communication, we had only the hope and trust that we would be nice to each other and the knowledge that our common friends would wish us well. I'd found my Catherine and she'd found her Heathcliff. We left together, to meet our separate dates with destiny, without either of us realising that our partner was doing exactly the same.

9 mins

Author's notes:

I wrote this after reading the chapter in Naomi Wolf's book "Promiscuities" where 20yrs later, she and her friends gathered to share their stories of how they lost their virginity.

I can see from writing my story, that I have a lot less terror of females than I did back then.

I also realise what a bum rap guys get.

My mother treated me like a juvenile delinquent. I was beaten, harrassed and hounded 24hrs a day. She reminded me that I would grow up to be the same beast as my father. I knew what that meant. It was sex, which all women hated and loathed their husbands for. The only thing useful I could do with my life was to die in a war, making her a mother who'd made the great sacrifice for her country.

From everything that I know about my father, he was the nicest guy ever. How he managed to be with my mother I don't know. After he died, my mother drove off his friends, so that I would never know them, till it was too late; they had all died. She rewrote history so that everything good in my life came from her.

I **was** nice to my date that night, at least within the bounds of my nervousness, my limited ability to communicate, how little we knew each other and how uncomfortable we were with each other because of it. You can't ask any more of a young man than that.

A couple of years later, from America, I wrote to the church elder, who'd run the youth fellowship. He best knew my contributions to the church. He knew that I wanted to make the world a better place. I told him that I was taking my own path now and that much of what I learned in the church was not on it. I hoped he would respect my decision and that he'd wish me well. I asked him to pray for me. He never wrote back.

The church has never reviewed its role condoning the carnage of Vietnam. They didn't have to. It was part of God's plan.