

‘‘Pregnant from Kissing’’

Joseph Mack

disinformation in the "Vagenda"

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FIRST DRAFT
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ACT ONE

CINDY: 12 yrs old

BOBBY: 12 yrs old, Cindy's boyfriend

FRANCESCA: Cindy's 14yr old know-it-all queen-bee wannabe sister

FRED: Cindy's father. Fred speaks with authority, but you know that everything he says is absolute nonsense. Stereotype father. He's like Michael Palin in "The Cheese Shop".

ELSIE: Cindy's mother. Goes along with Fred knowing everything.

DR FINKLESTEIN:

Doctor at Planned Parenthood; cheery, sunny disposition (the doctor has to be male, so that Cindy has as many male allies as possible)

7TH GRADERS: all players except Cindy and Bobby, or anyone that's available.

In the recently released book, "Vagenda" by Holly Baxter and Lucy Cosslet, the authors describe coming of age as a female in the 1990's in England. One of the chapters is on the disinformation they were fed. One piece of disinformation is that a girl will become pregnant if she kisses a boy when she's having her period. Everyone eventually figures out that this is disinformation, but it's death by a thousand cuts trying to figure out what is true and what isn't. Disinformation is a cruel response to children, who are just asking for information about how the world works. Most of us arrive in adulthood with our ideas about being male and female, still filled with large pieces of disinformation.

This sketch is about growing up in a world of disinformation. It's called "Pregnant from Kissing".

"Vagenda", Holly Baxter and Rhiannon Lucy Cosslet, Square Peg, ISBN 9780224095808, the authors also maintain a blog <http://vagendamagazine.com/>

Comic Perspective: disinformation.

The phrase in the Vagenda that triggered writing the script, was "kissing a girl in her period". I used this as the name of the initial version of the script, even though I didn't particularly like it. I could imagine it attracting the wrong sort of attention with a google search. A friend, Steve Carson, said that the name just had to go and suggested instead "Pregnant from Kissing".

"in your period" appears to be British. I've changed it to "having" or "got"

Script advisors: Jocelyn, Steve, Guy.

Paul at the Cary Playwrights Forum suggested for the final kiss, to have Cindy or Bobby say something about kissing that they mustn't do (eg tongues touching) or they'll get into trouble, to show the audience that they still are in the world of disinformation. I haven't managed to think of an appropriate piece of disinformation. Maybe I should read "The Vagenda" again.

At the first rehearsal, a couple of the cast raised the problem that a large fraction of the US population only thinks of Planned Parenthood as an abortion provider. This is the result of an intense disinformation program. People have forgotten that Planned Parenthood helped finance the development of the contraceptive pill. My first contact with Planned Parenthood was to accompany my girlfriend of the time, when she was being fitted with an IUD. Since moving to the Triangle and going to a public presentation by Planned Parenthood, I find they are about education and contraception. Their role in abortions is only as a provider of last resort. I expect if abortions were available in hospitals, Planned Parenthood would be quite happy to relinquish that role. I expect if kids were subject to less disinformation there would be fewer abortions. I expect if the govt or the medical profession took on the role of education and providing resources for family planning, that Planned Parenthood would be glad to disband itself. The fact that anyone thinks of Planned Parenthood first as an abortion provider indicates the intensity of the smear campaign against them by anti-abortionists.

The script had to be changed to make sure anyone watching the video didn't think Dr Finklestein was telling Cindy about Planned Parenthood so she could get an abortion. In this sketch, Cindy is not pregnant, she just thinks she is.

I went to a public presentation by PP at the CH library about Jun 2015. The young women running the evening (25 at the oldest) would have been perfectly acceptable by high school students. She was poised, cheery and confident. She was quite comfortable talking about everything. She said that they offer free sex education to schools.

The private schools all have their own.

I can't remember what happens in CH, but only a few schools took them up.

Durham however gave a blanket NO, saying they could handle it themselves. Durham had 66 pregnancies last year in their high schools. Apparently 66 pregnancies is better than having PP give sex education.

I don't know what the problem in Durham is. Is it black parents, who are all in churches? Whatever the problem, PP doesn't have much of a toehold around here.

Planned Parenthood has been quite effectively sidelined in Durham.

In the original, I had Dr Finklestein telling Cindy that the nurse would be asking her to pee on a stick. Being a biochemist, it was obvious to me that this was a pregnancy test. However the cast pointed out that this would not be obvious to the 12 yr old Cindy or to many in the audience. We fixed this up on the night.

Cindy is the main focus of the audience's attention. She has all the emotions.

Bobby is the supportive, reasonable boyfriend. He's doing the best he can with the disinformation he's surrounded by. At no point should he look like he's freaking out about the events. He's going to stick with Cindy no matter what happens.

Someone at Cary Playwrights Forum asked why I didn't tell Bobby's story. The girl being pregnant is a lot higher stakes than Bobby's situation. I just decided to tell only Cindy's story.

Cindy's family are living in disinformation. They aren't mean, just clueless.

Francesca is a socially pretentious know-it-all older sister, who has it all figured out.

Dr Finklestein and Bobby are Cindy's male allies.

Laura from CPF pointed out that some of my paragraphs in my sketch "Graduation Day" were too long. After hearing this, I realised that Dr Finkelstein's talk to Cindy was too long. He gave all the possible info about Planned Parenthood. This is OK for a lecture, but not for comedy. There's a lot of comments from Cindy's peers, when they find she's pregnant. Maybe not all of these are needed.

FADE IN

1. EXT. SCHOOLYARD --- DAY

Cindy and Bobby standing together.

Cindy and Bobby are holding hands. Cindy is leaning a bit on Bobby and looks glum. She has her hand gently on her lower abdomen.

CONTINUED

BOBBY

Hi Cindy. Well, first day of 7th grade was chaos. I'm glad we're in at least one class together. ... Er. How are you doing? You look a bit glum.

CINDY

Not great Bobby. I'm having my first period. My sister Francesca warned me about it. She said it would be horrible.

BOBBY

Your parents didn't talk to you about it?

CINDY

No. They're hopeless. They don't know anything.

BOBBY

Well congratulations on getting your period. Sorry it's no fun though. ... Can I kiss you?

CINDY

(horrified, puts hands on face)

Oh no! Don't do that. I'll get pregnant. Besides, it will be our first kiss. Can you wait till my period is over?

BOBBY

I didn't know you could become pregnant by kissing, when you have your period. Our parents kiss whenever they want. If this was true, my mom would be pregnant all the time.

CINDY

Francesca told me you can get pregnant from kissing, when you're having your period. She's 14 and heard about it in gym class. It's called abstinence.

BOBBY

All those stories are just to scare us.

CINDY

Well OK, if you're sure. Do you want to do it with our eyes open or

(MORE)

CONTINUED

CINDY (CONT'D)

shut?

BOBBY

I have no idea. I've never kissed a girl.

CINDY

I've never kissed a boy, so I don't know either. When my mom and dad greet each other, they do it with their eyes shut. How about we do it my parent's way?

BOBBY

OK.

CINDY

Oh this is so exciting. Our first kiss!

They stage kiss. Imagine kissing for the first time as 12yr olds, rather than as Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh in a movie. You want this kiss to be the kiss that everyone in the audience wishes they'd had as their first kiss.

I suggest a nice delicate dry pucker kiss, that can be seen easily in profile by the audience. The actors should be standing outside each other's personal zones, rather than inside them like older bf/gf pairs would do. You will both have to lean forward for your faces to meet. You might want to hold both hands so you don't fall inwards. A suitable model would be the little dutch boy and girl kissing figurines. eg <http://www.terapeak.com/worth/made-in-korea-kissing-boy-and-girl-figurines/201493721663/> or <http://www.terapeak.com/worth/vintage-dutch-kissing-boy-and-girl-salt-and-pepper-shakers-with-corks-japan/300949088980/>

I suggest this be done slowly, so the audience has enough time to remember what they would have liked for their first kiss.

I've wondered whether to have the two look like they know how to kiss or whether to have them get it wrong a few times first.

My initial thought was to have them make several attempts at kissing before success, so it's obvious that you're figuring out what to do. Possibly I thought you could start with your noses colliding and then figure out that this doesn't work and try again.

Later I realised you don't want the audience with their hearts in their mouths, wondering if the two kids are going to get it right or not. It should be instantly obvious to the audience that they're going to have the perfect first

CONTINUED

kiss. They should have an Athol Kay 10 second long kiss.

You want the kiss take so long to execute that the audience is on the edge of their seats, either cringing or being delighted and starting to laugh, having realised that you're deliberately torturing them. You're hoping for pandemonium from the audience.

Immediately afterwards, Cindy and Bobby should smile/laugh, clap their hands together in glee and look delighted/happy/pleased with each other.

edit

2. EXT. SCHOOLYARD --- DAY

Cindy standing at center stage.

Bobby enters from the side talking/exclaiming/waving arms.

BOBBY

(alarmed)

Cindy! Cindy! it's true! I asked my friends. They said you can get pregnant by kissing, when you're having your period.

CINDY

(covers face with hands)

Oh no! Bobby! You didn't tell your friends! Now the whole school will know I'm pregnant. I don't want the whole school to know I'm having my period either.

BOBBY

Don't be silly, Cindy. They promised not to tell anyone. No-one will ever know.

edit

3. EXT. SCHOOLYARD --- DAY

Cindy seated, with her class mates standing around her.

Class mates: tone is that of adults, on hearing the good news, when one of their friends announces that she's pregnant. Girls squealing, clapping hands together in delight, hugging each other, jumping up and down with excitement. Boys pumping fists in air, high 5'ing, bumping stomachs. Applause.

Cindy: tone is that of a 12yr old girl who is accidently and unhappily pregnant. The actor should figure out

CONTINUED

whether she wants to be chagrined (from everyone knowing), mortified, helpless, angry ... If you can do it, I suggest being in tears, to contrast with the joy of your peers.

possibly having this many different statements will be overload. Ask the people at CPF.

CLASS MATES

(ecstatic)

Hooray! This is such wonderful news Cindy. You'll be so happy. I've always thought you'd be a great mother. You're the first one of us to become pregnant too. When's the baby due? Is the baby a boy or a girl? Do you have a name yet? How about you use the name of the school mascot? Are you and Bobby going to get married? Can I be a bridesmaid? Are you going to have a baby shower? Have you told your parents? We'll take turns babysitting and we'll do our homework together. Oh this is so exciting.

Pause, absolute silence, while everyone looks expectantly for a joyous response from Cindy. Audience has to see the contrast between Cindy and her peers.

CINDY

(anguish, tears)

I didn't know. Someone should have told me. How come no-one told me? Oh, what am I going to do?

edit

4. INT. BEDROOM --- NIGHT

Cindy and Francesca on Cindy's bed.

Francesca does physicality to demonstrate that she's a queenbee wannabee. (Flipping hair? I don't know how to do this myself. sorry.)

Francesca reaches behind her to turn on bedside table lamp (eg pull-down cord), to show audience she's in a room in a house (her bedroom).

FRANCESCA

Cindy! You let him kiss you, when you were having your period?

CINDY

Oh Francesca, am I in trouble?

CONTINUED

FRANCESCA

Well my friend Suzy went on a date
and she said all they did was kiss,
and now she's pregnant.

CINDY

But did she do it when she was
having her period?

FRANCESCA

I didn't ask. Are you going to
tell Mom?

CINDY

Adults don't know anything. She
won't know what to do.

edit

5. INT. KITCHEN --- EVENING

parents standing

The Cary Playwrights Forum says this is not too many
exchanges between the parents. You need to show that
they belong to the same conceit (of disinformation about
kissing).

Fred is doing something stereotypically not male-like, like
scraping and rinsing dishes by hand and loading them into
the dishwasher.

FRED

(cheerily)

Hi Elsie, How's Cindy doing in the
new school year?

ELSIE

(concerned, do
physicality eg grabs
Fred's jacket etc)

Something's happened Fred. Cindy's
grades are terrible and she hardly
ever hands in homework.

FRED

(blissfully
unconcerned)

Well she's taking a lot of new
subjects. I'm sure if we leave
her alone, she'll figure it out by
herself.

ELSIE

She never engages us in

(MORE)

CONTINUED

ELSIE (CONT'D)

conversation at dinner anymore.
She just looks down at the table
and pokes at her food. As soon as
dinner is finished, she runs up to
her room and shuts the door.

FRED

She's just shy, Elsie. Not
everyone is like you.

ELSIE

She stays in her room all evening
playing loud music and is on the
phone to Bobby constantly.

FRED

She's in love Elsie. You remember
what it's like. We used to be like
that too. She'll get over it and
one day she'll be as right as rain.

ELSIE

She can't get out of bed in the
morning. I can't imagine what
time she gets to sleep. She used
to always be happy to run off to
school in the morning.

Fred closes the dishwasher door, locks it and presses the
start button

FRED

She's almost a teenager Elsie.
Teenagers can never get out of bed.
It's completely normal. Now don't
you worry about a thing.

ELSIE

Her colour is different and, and,
and, she has a bit of a shine about
her. You don't suppose she's ...

FRED

Pregnant?! Nah! Can't possibly
... She's just a normal young
girl adjusting to a growing body.
Besides, she's only kissed Bobby
once, and that was 6 weeks ago.

ELSIE

6 weeks ago?! She asked me for
some pads back then. Are you sure
that kiss was 6 weeks ago?

Fred looks puzzled, indicating that he doesn't recognise

CONTINUED

that Cindy was having her period when she kissed Bobby. I expect this will go over the audience's head. I'll have to think of something better.

FRED

Er yes. I think so.

ELSIE

OMG. She kissed Bobby when she was having her period!

edit

6. INT. BEDROOM --- EVENING

Elsie (Mom) and Cindy

Cindy and Mom on Cindy's bed.

CINDY

But Mom, you and Dad kiss all the time.

ELSIE

Cindy, once you're married, you can kiss any time you like.

CINDY

Oh.

ELSIE

I'm going to make an appointment with the doctor first thing tomorrow.

edit

7. INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE --- DAY

Doctor Finklestein and Cindy

DR FINKLESTEIN

(cheery and helpful)

Hello Cindy, what brings you to Planned Parenthood?

the works from a terrified 12yr old girl. Cindy thinks she's pregnant, because she did something she shouldn't have done when she should have known better and she thinks it's all her fault. This is the emotional climax of the piece. You want the audience's heart to go out to her. Give the audience everything you've got.

CINDY

(distracted, tears,
(MORE)

CONTINUED

CINDY (CONT'D)

anguish)

Dr Finklestein, I'm pregnant. I kissed my boyfriend Bobby when I was having my period. I know we shouldn't have done that, but it was our very first kiss and it was my first period too. We haven't kissed since then, promise. I haven't had a period in 2 months now, so I've got to be pregnant. On top of that, the whole school knows. It's a horrible mess. What can I do?

DR FINKLESTEIN

All you did was kiss, right?

(

Cindy)

(distraught, tears,
anguish)

Yes. But I was having my period. We only did it once, really, promise. I'll never do it again.

DR FINKLESTEIN

(concerned and
reassuring, *e.g.*
patting her on the
shoulder)

I see. Listen Cindy, you can't become pregnant from kissing. I know there's all sorts of stories you hear at your age, but most of them, aren't true. But just to make sure, the nurse in the next room will do a simple urine test that takes only a few minutes and then we'll know for sure. She'll give you a bunch of pamphlets from Planned Parenthood. These will explain how contraception works, so that you don't become pregnant if you don't want to. Give one set to Bobby and the rest to your friends. Any questions?

Cindy looks hopeful, overwhelmed and apprehensive. She hasn't got the results yet and she doesn't know that she's out of trouble. She doesn't quite know who to believe.

CINDY

(nods hopefully,
sniffle, blows her
nose, wipes tears

(MORE)

CONTINUED

CINDY (CONT'D)

away)
No. Thank you, Dr Finklestein.

edit

8. EXT. SCHOOL YARD --- DAY

Bobby and Cindy

BOBBY

Hi Cindy. So you're not pregnant?!
What a relief!!!

CINDY

No Bobby. Oh! Thank goodness.
Here, read these. They're from
Planned Parenthood. The extras are
for your friends.

BOBBY

Thanks.

Cindy puts her hand lightly on her lower abdomen as she
tells Bobby she's having her period.

CINDY

Now I'm going to have to tell the
whole school I'm not pregnant.
I'll never live this down. I'm
so embarrassed. On top of that,
I just got my 2nd period. If I'd
waited a day, I wouldn't have had
to go to the doctor.

BOBBY

(tenderly)

Well congratulations on getting
your next period. Sorry it's no
fun though. ... Can I kiss you
... again?

CINDY

No way! The last time we kissed,
it was much too scary. Besides
someone told me that if we kiss,
when I'm having my period, we have
to get married. Let's save kissing
for when we're married.

BOBBY

Oh, no, no, no. All those stories
are just to scare us.

CINDY

Well OK if you're sure. Do you

(MORE)

CONTINUED

CINDY (CONT'D)

want to do it with our eyes open or
shut?

BOBBY

. How about we do it with our eyes
shut again?

They stage kiss. Do it to torture the audience, just like
you did for the first kiss ie an Athol Kay 10 second kiss.

FADE OUT

THE END