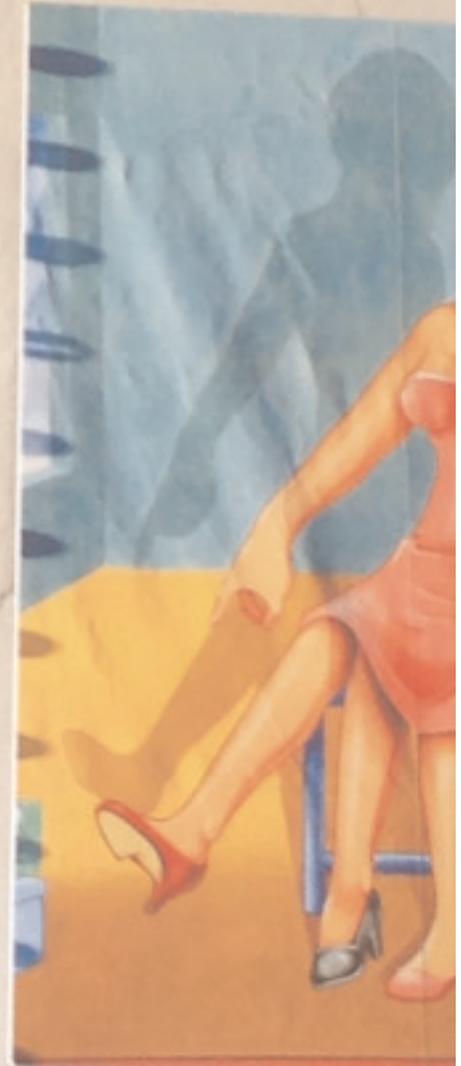


*It's a kind of magic:
2013 Laine Cunningham Award Winner Lily Wakefield,
Phil Juliano, and The Dream Journal*

The Blotter

August 2013

MAGAZINE



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[c l m p]

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"Morality"

My friend John says, in more choice words, that my work lacks *gravitas*. My editorials are light, breezy and forgettable. And while I don't want to admit it, he is correct. I have chosen a path with my writing that avoids the critical, the opinionated and the serious-minded. Part of the reason for this, and perhaps a mask I hide behind, is that The Blotter is a non-profit enterprise constrained by a requirement to avoid political stance-taking. And unfortunately we live in times when any opinion seems to be politically motivated. But I have been asking myself recently if my perceived non-committal-ness is caused by something less noble. I live and work in the woods (literally) and spend my days typing and looking out at the greenery, walking down the hill to feed the chickens and ducks and when stuff happens, it mostly happens somewhere else. I order my coffee at the coffee shop. I talk to the check-out ladies at the supermarket about the weather. I stay out of the fast lane on the highway, because I'm really not in a hurry. I avoid. I brush off. I *hide*.

Maybe I am actually afraid of standing up and being counted. Maybe I'm not as moral as I think I am, as I purport to be, as I wish I was. Maybe, though, I prefer to be as clear headed as I can be when I write my fiction, where characters may or may not deserve redemption (just like in real life) and where behaviors are driven by those things within us that drive us (just like in real life) and let the readers (someday) make their decisions whether I was staying *true* to the human condition.

Or maybe that, too, is a bucket of crap. What I believe to be right in my heart is often no more valid than my opponent's belief in the opposing view. Because we're not just talking about validity here – well-grounded thinking, logically reached conclusions. We have ideas and opinions assailing us from all directions. Now more than ever before we appear to have leaders who have been sent to represent, but who merely wield power, and so-called constituents who have voices that may or may not be heard, but finally have all the tools necessary for speaking out in their own hands. And there's a lot of disagreement on what should or shouldn't be done. What can and cannot be done. Society's level of frustration is very, very high.

I have tried to defend myself with the argument that directly confronting that which you disagree with is often as damaging as the thing itself. Telling someone they are wrong is a tough row to hoe. It requires you to explain yourself to someone who doesn't think that they are wrong, and who may immediately resent that you think they are wrong, and subsequently conclude that you are wrong, even before you explain yourself. Your argument, well thought out as it is, is no longer being heard by an objective audience. Frankly, it may not be heard at all. The stronger parts of it, the rocks upon which you built your thesis, may be ignored, and the weaker parts, theories rather than facts, will be picked apart like stinking offal by a flock of turkey vultures, leaving you to wonder at best if you are even correct, and at worst why you even bother talking at all.

I'm not saying that I don't do this from time to time. And I'm also not saying that we shouldn't critically discuss subjects of import. I've just found that I don't like pushing as much as I might have once upon a time, and I've decided that there are no universally held opinions.

Here's what I think I mean (I'm no longer sure about much). I say that I want the world to be a moral place, but what exactly do I mean by that? That no bad stuff happens, that I want to be safe. To me it seems a reasonable request. Oh, and that I want my stuff to be safe, too. From whom? From those who would take it from me. But what about those people who go to bed at night hungry? Should they be allowed to have food? How about my food? Should I be trusted to feed my hungry brother? Or should it be mandated by my government? What government - at the local level - that is, my town feeds the hungry in my town? Or at the county level, perhaps? Hey, I live right on the border of my county. Should the lack of civilized rules regarding distribution of food just across the county line be permitted to affect me? Or should their laws that state "to each according to his need" put my store of canned-goods at risk? And what if I believe that I have a right to accumulate cans of hickory-smoked baked beans far beyond my capacity to eat them, even if I consumed two or three cans per meal for the rest of my life. Is it reasonable that I should be the most flatulent hoarder of groceries? What if it is reasonable in my county, but not in the county I live near, where there are many people who are hungry and who would even risk entering my stinking hovel to get some for themselves. Should I hire a police force to protect my cans of beans? I think I should, but I don't know for sure. I mean I'm not talking about complete strangers here. Just hungry folks. Maybe their kids go to the park and play with my kids on the swings. And what if I like eating beans, but it makes you sick to see me eat them, to consume quantities of legumes and then expel methane like a tar-pit in the middle of summer. Just puts you off completely. Do you have the right to tell me to stop eating this foul matter and if I say go pound salt I like beans do you then have the right to make me stop eating them? I mean, it really makes you nauseated, right? You maybe should at least do *something*, right?

I don't know. I do know that we're doing a lot of yelling recently. Probably no more than usual, but there seem to be a lot more microphones around. A lot more places to yell into - the comments fields of a million articles and editorials and blogs and news-organs. And if the answers were easy ones, we still might trip over them a couple of times before we noticed and said, hey, let's try *this*.

See, I've already gone on longer than I wanted. What I do know is that The Blotter stands for free speech, even when it spurts from the mouths of the hate-full, the ignorant, and the wrong-headed. And even if that mouth is mine.

Garry - chief@blotterrag.com

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CAUTION

*Whoa. Did you see that?
No I was watching the
road.*

Excerpt from

2013 Laine Cunningham Award winner

“No Photo Available

<A Sex Scandal in 563 Emails>”

by Lily Wakefield

No one except a cad likes to reflect that he has been loved more than he has loved.

Vita Sackville-West
The Edwardians

Editor’s Foreword

I can’t help wondering why a man with so much to keep hidden printed out his emails when it would have been wiser to leave them floating around in the ether. Perhaps Tom Pearson was trying to understand what had happened. Perhaps he thought he wouldn’t die. Or perhaps, in the end, the historian in him decided a life left unrecorded was the worst of all possible punishments posterity can mete out. If I told you the story you wouldn’t believe me. Were it not for the sheaf of letters I found at the bottom of the garment bag where he preserved his officer’s uniform, I might not believe it myself. He’d used the flyleaf from the cookbook I’d given him for a souvenir the first

time I took him home to Bermuda as the coversheet. It was eerie to see, as if the ink from my fountain pen were still wet, the words of the poem I’d composed for him and the note he’d inscribed underneath. Now I’ve scattered his ashes, I see no reason not to let you take a look. I warn you, it isn’t pleasant reading. The central tragedy of Tom’s life was that he could have been a great man. He had all the natural gifts one admires in both romantic heroes and captains of industry – a keen intellect, charisma, strikingly handsome looks and an irrepressible optimism that made you believe anything was possible if only you set your mind to it. “When I was in college,” he told me countless times, “my football coach used to say: ‘When faced with almost certain defeat, move the ball aggressively down the field.’ It’s advice that’s always stood me in good stead.” There’s no disputing the fact that Tom had indeed moved the ball as



close to the goal line as anyone born in the backstreets of postwar Providence could hope to come. One evening he pulled out a scrapbook bursting with photographs and news clippings. There I saw a blue-eyed young man pitching another winning game, graduating *summa cum laude* and saluting in his impeccable dress whites on the deck of an aircraft carrier. Further along came snippets from the *Wall St. Journal* and *Boston Globe* attesting to his rapid rise in the financial world. By the time I met him in Greenwich shortly after the dawn of the new millennium, he was universally regarded as one of the smartest, most ethical people in the business. “Tom used to be a mighty tough customer,” his Los Angeles partner

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Alex told me confidentially over dinner in Manhattan. “But since he divorced that harridan of a wife, he’s a changed man. I’ve never seen anyone turn his life around the way Tom has. I have the utmost respect for the effort he’s made to reconcile with his sons. Most guys in his position wouldn’t have bothered this late in the day. You might like to know, every time we talk he tells me he’s madly in love with you.”

And so when, 10 years later, on the eve of my 50th birthday, Tom asked me to marry him at the museum’s candlelit Christmas Ball, I fully expected we’d have a happy ending. “True love only happens once in a lifetime,” he said. “You, my dear, are mine. Will you have me?”

Instead of a conventional solitaire, Tom presented me with a diamond eternity ring. It was a gorgeous platinum piece, custom-made in the 1920s, intricately patterned and thickly encrusted with stones. “I wanted to give you something more representative of our multifaceted love than a single gem,” he said. “Something not only precious but complex and irreplaceable. Please wear it forever and remember me kindly when I’m dead and gone.”

Before I let him slip it onto my finger, I asked him a question. “This band has powerful symbolism. Eternity is an absolute. Are you certain you understand what you’re

doing?”

“Of course I understand,” he replied. “Don’t be absurd. I may be a thick Irishman at times but, give me a modicum of credit, I am fully conversant with the English language. My commitment to you always has been – and always will be – complete and irrevocable. Surely, after all we’ve been through together, there can be no room for ambiguity.”

Most intimate relationships worth their weight have their fair share of “mush.” To say every romantic gesture should be greeted with suspicion is the height of cynicism. When a man spends a decade proving his love in a million different ways and there’s no evidence whatsoever to the contrary, when you feel happier with each passing day than you’d ever dreamt possible, and when everyone whose opinion matters congratulates you on your excellent taste, you’d have to be a hardened skeptic or hopelessly paranoid to even begin to wonder if there’s a hidden catch. Call me a bloody fool, but it never crossed my mind anything might be amiss. Don’t delude yourself. You wouldn’t have thought any differently if you’d been in my shoes.

If you think I’m inventing history, you can see the proof for yourself. The society photographer insisted we pose for a snap. It appeared the

following afternoon in an online chronicle with the caption: “Managing Director of Matrix Group proposes Merger.” Simply google Tom’s full name and in less than 5 seconds you’ll find it, along with all the others taken of us at various charity events. There’s even one of Tom in drag at a costume party. “If donning pantyhose and a bra doesn’t prove my undying love for you,” he quipped, “I don’t know what would.”

You may be wondering how I met Tom. It’s quite simple. I was coerced into going on a blind date by a mutual acquaintance. Trevor Jenkins, the hedge fund luminary, wasn’t a man one could easily say “no” to. “I don’t ordinarily dabble in matchmaking,” he said “but I’ve decided to make an exception. I want you to let a colleague of mine take you out to lunch. He’s a true gentleman and scholar – and an all-around good guy to boot. I’ll bet he knows almost as much about history as you do. Put him through the paces and see if I’m not right.”

Naturally, I made a few discreet inquiries through my business school network beforehand to be doubly sure Trevor’s judgment was accurate. Everything seemed perfectly in order. Then, much to my surprise, Tom turned out to be even better than billed. In addition to passing the history test, he was

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The Blotter

funny, insightful and kind and, for a self-made man, remarkably unassuming. It wasn't long before we were inseparable. My friends thought him charming. ("You've picked a winner," proclaimed my closest confidante. "Go for it, girl!") My children took to him immediately. Even our family pets adored him. I figured a man with Tom's way with animals couldn't be all bad.

When we discussed our mutual expectations in the months before we became lovers, one of the prerequisites (in addition to the qualities every normal self-respecting person finds essential in a lifetime partnership) was that, no matter what the future held, we'd keep our separate homes. Although you may find this arrangement strange, it is actually quite commonplace for middle-aged people of means to consider a few nights of solitude each week both practical and beneficial. It seemed the ideal solution, especially for personalities as strong as ours. A few years in Tom gave me a leather-bound copy of La Rochefoucauld in which he'd bookmarked the maxim he said captured the essence of our relationship: "Absence diminishes moderate passions and increases great ones, as the wind extinguishes tapers and adds fury to the flame." Over the years, my only genuine concern was Tom's brief bouts of deep depression, the legacy of his father's abuse. Pearson Sr. had been a brute, with hair as black as Tom's was fair, who beat up his eldest son regularly. "Even after he died," Tom told me, "my old man returned in my dreams to remind me I was too worthless to live. It took me years to realize I was pushing my Porsche to its limits because part of me secretly yearned to go up in flames. If I hadn't swallowed my pride and started therapy with Jane, I'd proba-

bly be dead already. I'll never get my father out of my head completely but I have no intention of letting him win. Please try not to worry when I'm down. Just give me a day or two and I'll bounce back."

Tom's proposal didn't come as a complete surprise. After he'd turned 64 the previous March, he spoke with increasing frequency about both marriage and death. "While I like to believe we're immortal," he said, "I'm also a realist. Chances are you're going to outlive me. I know you don't care about a piece of paper but at least look at the practical implications. When I'm a hopeless cause I need to be sure you'll pull the plug. I trust you – and only you – to make the right decisions. Be strong for me when the time comes. Put me out of my misery. Strike the *coup de grâce*. Then let me die in your arms. If you love me half as much as I love you, will you promise to be there holding my hand right up to the very last second?" I need not tell you I solemnly swore I would. Tomorrow I will be 52. Tom and I never married. Although he was too far gone to recognize my hand, I carried out his last wishes. I did what I thought to be right without fear or regret. Think of me whatever else you wish but let it never be said I'm a woman who doesn't honor her commitments.

Sophie Pembroke
December 21, 2011

Selected Letters and Related Documents from the Estate of Mr. Thomas J. Pearson¹

(Handwritten inscriptions on the flyleaf of *Island Cuisine: A Treasury of Bermudian Recipes*, Royal Press, 1959. Dated May 24, 2003)

An inordinately silly poem presented to

Mr. Thomas J. Pearson on the occasion of his first visit to my favorite place in all the world – third bench from the left, upper porch, Commodore's Mansion, Dockyard. May you always laugh with me, not at me. If I should die, bring my ashes back to this exact spot – remember today – and toss me into the sea.

A Secret Recipe

My love,
If you would only be my own
I'd set you on a cornbread throne,
I'd shower you with shrimp and fish
To satisfy your every wish
I'd promise never more to joke
About your taste for diet coke
Then, to be sure you'd never stray,
I'd cook you pancakes every day
And as a wise precaution bake
A cherry pie and chocolate cake
For I have learned we'll never part
If through your stomach I can find
your heart.

A gift without price gratefully acknowledged by me, said Thomas J. Pearson. You have captured not only my stomach and my heart, but my body, my mind and my soul. Treat them gently, knowing I have waited a lifetime to find YOU. May our love be always as sparkling and as boundless as the Atlantic that stretches before us, as fiery as the sun that fuses your fingers with mine, and as immovable as the pink sand between our toes. I hope the last time we return to this place together it is I who will be in the urn; for I am loved more than any man deserves to be loved and my life bereft of you would be no life at all. Do not weep when you consign my ashes to the waves but smile your secret smile and go on living.

¹ Complete archive comprises 4,913 items preserved in no discernible order. Except where noted, all typographical errors corrected.

Monday October 25, 2010**8:01 AM**

From: <Matrices@DateLine.com>*

To: <Marginalia@DateLine.com> **

Subject: Hi

We seem to have a lot in common – including the absence of a picture. I'd like to get to know you. Let's talk.

* White male, 61, blond, blue eyes, 5' 10", athletic build, executive/management, legally separated, 2 kids, agnostic, non-smoker, social drinker. *"Bright, open, searching and loveable. Well-educated, successful guy, ex-naval officer, looking for adventure on land and sea. Will try anything once. Empathetic, good listener, supportive. Looking for loving, open, honest, creative partner with whom to share life. Mate should want to explore the world with a clear interest in Europe and Asia. Does not have to be a history scholar, but interest and some knowledge would be great."*

** White female, 47, blonde, green eyes, 5' 5", slender build, average looks, divorced. *"I'll tell you later."*

8:05 AM

From: Marginalia

To: Matrices

Subject: re: Hi

Very funny! The only other thing our profiles have in common is a failure to provide any revealing personal information whatsoever. What do you mean by checking "casual" relationship?

8:07 AM

From: Matrices

To: SweetDreams

Subject: Good Morning **9:52 AM**

Hello,

My name is Tom Pearson. I recently relocated to Charlotte and don't know a soul. I'm not into the bar scene so I joined this service in the hopes of making new friends – possibly more...

From: Matrices

To: SilverFox

Subject: Good Morning
...I'm not sure if I'm ready for a serious relationship immediately – but for the right woman I'd be very open in the longer term. Hope springs eternal!...

8:41 AM

From: Matrices

To: Natasha39

Subject: Good Morning
...I've been told it's the way good people connect these days. Please forgive me if I overstep the boundaries of a typical introduction. I'm an internet dating virgin, as it were...

10:02 AM

From: Matrices

To: LegalBeagle

Subject: Good Morning
...You seem to be the kind of smart, sophisticated woman to whom I am attracted – and I liked the way you described your ideal relationship. Could we get to know each other – first in cyberspace then – when and if you're ready – in person?...

9: 10 AM

From: Matrices

To: Sunshine

Subject: Good Morning
...I read your delightful profile – thoughtful, charming and well-written – and the photo of you is lovely. You have a wonderful smile! I sense we are very similar in terms of values, interests and expectations...

10:47 AM

From: Matrices

To: GoBobcats

Subject: Good Morning
...Can you tell me something more about yourself?...



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11:01 AM

From: Matrices

To: 919Marla

Subject: Good Morning
...Not that you asked for one, but the following is a brief description of me: I'm from a large working class Irish Catholic family. I grew up in Providence, Rhode Island, where my father worked in a meat packing plant...

11:59 AM

From: Matrices

To: Valerie

Subject: Good Morning
...Although I excelled at academics, I was a jock in high school – quarterback and pitcher – and attended Boston College on a football scholarship. During my first year at law school I was drafted – but decided to enter the Naval OCS program instead...

1:04 PM

From: Matrices

To: TinyDancer

Subject: Good Afternoon
...I served as Officer of the Deck on

an aircraft carrier stationed in the Gulf of Tonkin during the Vietnam War – before going in-country as an advisor to the Marines. I saw and did a lot of bad things. Don't worry, I'm completely OK – I went through 3 years of therapy to regain my balance. After my second tour, I did graduate work in economics and organizational psychology at U Mass and Brandeis ...

1:53 PM

From: Matrices

To: StarWars

Subject: Good Afternoon
...I have travelled all over the world, in part for business, and in part because I love to explore. I've always been lucky professionally. I'd rather be lucky than good! Early on I was involved in a major urban redevelopment project and had more money than I knew what to do with by the time I turned 30. I then went on to run several financial consulting firms, the last of which I sold to a German conglomerate at a considerable profit...

2:07 PM

From: Matrices

To: NeverTooOld

Subject: Good Afternoon

...More recently, I formed a consulting group with 4 partners – all seasoned professionals – who work together remotely – from offices in LA, Memphis, Chicago and Seattle. We specialize in brokering private equity deals and helping technology companies bring their products to market. I had been working with a firm in Charlotte – commuting back and forth from my office in Greenwich, CT – until last May when their board asked me to take over the helm as President. That's why I relocated to North Carolina...

2:33 PM

From: Matrices

To: FriendsFirst

Subject: Good Afternoon
...I have been working extremely hard and traveling extensively – so my social life has been next to zero. And while that works in the early stages of getting this company moving in the right direction, it does get old quickly...

3:17 PM

From: Matrices

To: AskHeloise

Subject: Good Afternoon
...I'm gradually adjusting to the South – although this is not the Deep

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South. The people are genuinely nice – especially you – and race relations are far better than in most large northern cities. I was actively involved in the Civil Rights movement in the '60s. This area is clearly influenced by the academic community, a big plus for me...

3:23 PM

From: Matrices

To: KarenP

Subject: Good Afternoon
...Like you, my marriage ended long ago. I married for all the wrong reasons when I was too young to know better. She wasn't a bad person – we just had nothing in common – and she was only interested in sex for procreation. After the kids were conceived what minimal physical relationship we had effectively ended. I moved out of the house when we obtained a legal separation 17 years ago...

3:37 PM

From: Matrices

To: LadyLuck

Subject: Good Afternoon
...For various reasons I'd be happy to explain further, my wife has never wanted to finalize the divorce. She's been happily ensconced in a condo in Boca Raton for more than a decade. I only see her at Thanksgiving and Christmas – and occasionally for a day or two during the year – and then solely for the sake of spending time with my sons. I was on the road so much when they were young, I didn't realize how far we'd grown apart until the damage was done...

3:42 PM

From: Matrices

To: Cashmere

Subject: Good Afternoon
...I'm not ashamed to admit I needed professional guidance to help me get back on the right track with my boys. I now devote every minute I can to rebuilding our relationship. It's never too late to make up for lost ground. That too limits the time I have available for my own personal life. Most women I've met aren't interested in a guy who spends his weekends visiting his adult kids – or talking to them on the phone. But I committed to doing this right – and I intend to follow through...

3:51 PM

From: Matrices

To: ArtisticVision

Subject: Good Afternoon
...It's therefore a huge plus for me that you also chose to write about your boys. My 2 are older than yours – both out of college and launched. The oldest was a stellar student – an intellectual like me. He's working his way to the top of a major Chicago investment bank. His brother was a challenge when he was growing up – a great athlete – totally fearless. Unfortunately, he has a significant learning disability and found it hard to fit into any school. I spent years trying to help him find his way. He got into a good college but hated it – dropped out after his freshman year. Finally, I managed to steer him into a world where he could excel – bread baking. I sent him to culinary school, then arranged an apprenticeship in France. He's now running a successful bakery in Aspen...

4:05 PM

From: Matrices

To: StillLookin'

Subject: Good Afternoon

...Apart from our mutual interest in the kids' welfare, my ties with my wife are purely financial. As long as I continue to finance her country club lifestyle, she couldn't care less about me...

4:10 PM

From: Matrices

To: Divine1

Subject: Good Afternoon
...If my marital status is an insurmountable issue for you I will certainly understand. However, I can assure you, I live like a divorced man. I have had a few relationships over the years but nothing serious. Interestingly, the vast majority of women I've met don't want to make a commitment. I sense you are one of the exceptions...

4:27 PM

From: Matrices

To: LucyintheSky

Subject: Good Afternoon
...As you wrote: "We all need friends and companions – and hopefully more over time." I too am looking for a best friend, soul mate and lover with whom to enjoy life...

4:31 PM

From: Matrices

To: GardenGal

Subject: Good Afternoon
...I agree with you entirely. Life without a significant other can be less than fulfilling...

4:39 PM

From: Matrices

The Blotter

To: LuckyLouise

4:51 PM

Subject: Good Afternoon
...You sound so much like me that I wonder – can you really let go – embrace life to its fullest – and develop a rewarding partnership on many levels? That's what I'm looking for...

From: Matrices

To: KitchenQueen

Subject: Good Afternoon
...This has created a dilemma for me. I would love to get to know you. Would you give me a special dispensation from your picture rule – at least for the time being?...

4:44 PM

From: Matrices

To: Heart&Soul

Subject: Good Afternoon
...You noted you never respond to men without photos. Please understand that, given the sensitivities of a new guy in a senior management position, I have elected to err on the side of caution. Perhaps I'm old-fashioned – but I do not think posting a picture online would be the best way for the new president of our company to introduce himself to our clients and competition...

5:03 PM

From: Matrices

To: VirginiaWolf

Subject: Good Afternoon
...I'm driving up to Raleigh this evening to have dinner with a potential investor. Is it too much to hope I'll find a reply when I'm back in the office tomorrow? Please feel free to ask any questions you'd like – and I will answer to the very best of my ability. I'm very open. I'd like you

to feel comfortable with me and vice versa. No rush about anything.

All the best,
Tom

Tuesday October 26

8:02 AM

From: Matrices

To: Marginalia

Subject: re: Hi
One of the interesting choices one has to make on this service is "casual" or "serious." It's like the check-out clerk asking if I want paper or plastic. The distinction is a false one. The implication is that one is looking for "recreational" sex – as opposed to what? – "formal" sex? My guess is the intelligent person is predisposed to a longer term relationship, meaning something more fulfilling than occasional dating. I think "casual" is a more rational approach to begin with. Let's meet – have a drink – then decide to do it again. If you're lucky feelings will develop organically. Openly stating one's intentions and objectives does nothing to facilitate the process. Oh well, I'd rather have this discussion in person – on a casual basis.

Tom

8:07 AM

From: Matrices

To: Heart&Soul

Subject: Hello again
Did you receive my introductory letter? I anxiously await your reply.

8:12 AM

From: SilverFox



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To: Matrices

Subject: re: Good Morning
Hey Tom,
My name is Fran Brookes. I'm in Huntersville and I'm a high school principal. I'm looking for someone to have dinner with, go to a movie, cook at home and cuddle up by the fire...maybe take a spontaneous weekend trip now and then. I want someone who appreciates me for who I am...someone who wants to be with me for the right reasons...not someone needy who latches onto the first person who comes along. I'm looking for a man who takes a relationship seriously no matter how much...or little...time we're able to spend together. I hope that makes sense. You'll find I'm always open and honest. If there's anything else you want to know just ask.

9:48 AM

From: KindHearts

To: Matrices

Subject: Boys galore!

I too am happy to discover you enjoy discussing your sons. That is always a good sign!! It is obvious they've had excellent parenting. I love that you 'followed the child' with your younger boy. Unfortunately, our educational system is designed to squash creativity. Too many children are

forced into unsuitable moulds and never reach their full potential. Your son is very lucky to have a father who allowed him the freedom to discover himself.

I knew long before I ever had children that I wanted mine to have the opportunity to explore the world from their own unique perspectives. I feel lucky we could afford private education and that there was a wonderful Waldorf school nearby. My sons have always loved learning. I am proud they think "outside the box," have respectful relationships with their elders, and enjoy working collaboratively. I'm sure you can tell, early childhood development is a passion for me!!!

Yes, it seems we have quite a few things in common! I'd love to hear what you think about NC so far, and if there is anything you miss about the Northeast. If you would like to call, you're more than welcome.

You'll find my home number below. Dinner is usually over by 6:30, and I'm always up until midnight.

Take care,
Patricia

9:57 AM

From: Marginalia

To: Matrices

Subject: re: Hi
Hey Tom,

Interesting question. You sound like a guy who's been 'round the block a few times. My answer, as they say at Walmart, is "Paper or Plastic? Neither." So what are you really looking for – the whole fidelity thing or something more flexible?

I don't meet men until I know more about who they are, especially if they don't post pics. There are lots of crazies out there. So, tell me something about you. For example, what do you do for a living? Have you had any serious and/or casual relationships lately? If so, did you learn anything?

Hope you have something fun planned for the day. Don't work too hard! Look forward to hearing from you again.

Margie

9:59 AM

From: TinyDancer

To: Matrices

Subject: re: Good Afternoon
Good morning, Tom,

You're right. Life doesn't always turn out as we'd planned.

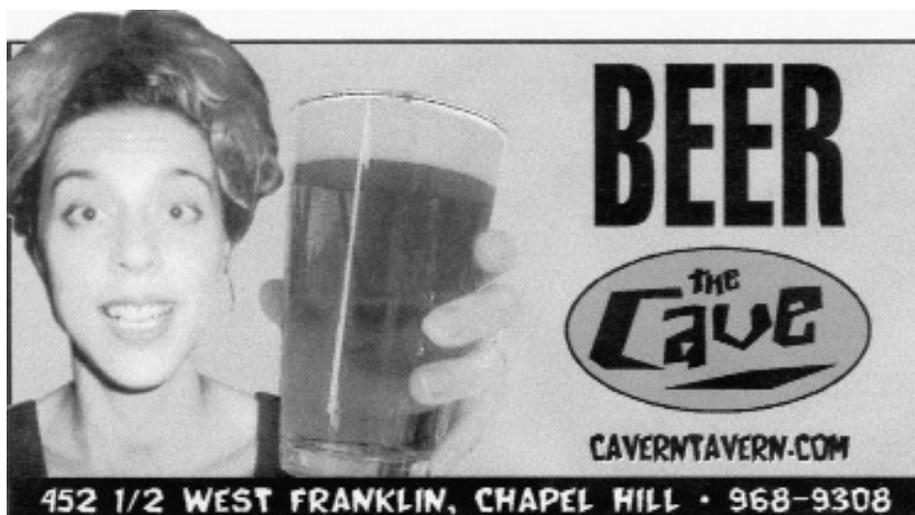
Unfortunately, marriage to my high school sweetheart didn't work. I've been divorced since 1992. I left when my girls and I decided we'd had enough. I pursued my doctorate and got the kids through school. I didn't really think much about dating until recently. I have several great male friends but nothing romantic. I have found that so many men my age are either jaded and cynical or overly clingy. I don't find those attractive qualities in a prospective mate. That is about as honest as I can be. What about you?

Gillian

10:01 AM

From: Matrices

To: Marginalia



The Blotter

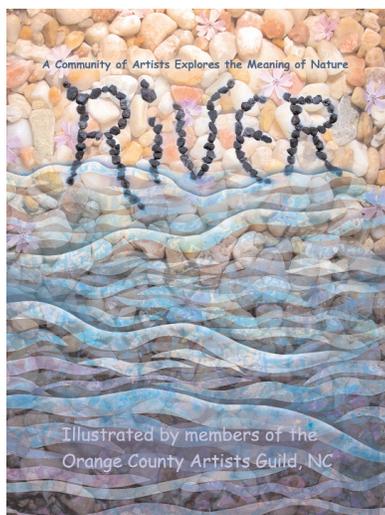
Subject: Paper or Plastic?
Hey Margie:
I do not have a picture on this system – or anywhere on the internet – because I am president of a company. Further, I make statements that are almost accurate – but inaccurate enough to keep anyone from identifying me. (I have 3 kids – not 2 as stated in my profile.) It would not be good for business or my career if I disclosed too much information. I am, however, a good looking guy – an ex-jock and former naval officer. I recently moved here from NYC. Now it's your turn. Why no pic? What do you do for a living? Paper or plastic? I assume you, like me, really enjoy sex – so we don't have to talk about that here. However, I do look forward to that conversation. Yes, if I found a woman with whom I got along, I would very much like to start a solid long-term relationship. Talk soon.

10:25 AM

From: FaithHopeLove

To: Matrices

Subject: re: Thinking of you...



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Hello Tom,
It's good but surprising to hear from you. When we met last summer, I did feel an immediate soul connection with you that was extremely strong. I hoped we would continue to develop a close friendship. Then you disappeared without explanation. I assumed you decided you were wasting your time with me. Please understand, attraction for me this time around will have to be SO much more than physical. I want a full course meal. Last time around all I got was dessert. Not good enough! If you start off thinking that "chemistry" is what counts the most then you miss the good stuff, the REAL stuff that endures. It takes time to know you have more than just dessert. I sense from your email that you are still not comfortable with the uncertainty of whether our friendship would blossom soon enough into a sexual relationship. So I'm wondering what's really going on in your mind. I feel like I am getting mixed messages from you.
Linda

10:37 AM

From: Matrices

To: FaithHopeLove

Subject: re: Thinking of you...
Hello Linda:
Please re-read my letter. The second part – the important part – states that even if you have not changed your mind about getting romantically involved with a man – any man but especially me – I still want to be your friend. Although I am attracted to you – on a number of different levels – I am NOT looking for dessert. I thought we had already resolved that issue. I understood from the start that I was not to think about romance – and certainly not to even consider sex. And I agreed. I stand by that commitment. If you believe otherwise,

you misjudge me. As I explained, my silence was strictly a function of my business commitments – and was certainly not intended to convey a negative message. Now that things are on a more even keel, I am hoping we might find time to meet for another glass of wine. I have attempted to be as open as I can be. The ball is now in your court. You need a hug – and I need a hug. Friendship does allow for chaste behavior of that type. I do hope you are smiling at this point. There is no drama – and certainly no conflict – between us.
Tom

10:22 AM

From: Marginalia

To: Matrices

Subject: re: Paper or Plastic?
Hey Tom,
I can understand why you don't want to post a pic. It's the same for me. Wouldn't want the people I work with to know what I do in my personal life! Lol! Even though it pretends to be a big city, this is a small town. Since you asked, I do freelance archival research – lots of plowing through old books and documents, including handwritten notes found in original texts – hence Marginalia, a play on my name. I don't remember mentioning anything about sex. It's a little early for that don't you think? But, since you brought it up, you're right, I certainly do enjoy it. Doesn't everyone? The question I have for you is: What kind do you prefer? Let's make sure we get our signals straight before we get too far, so please elucidate a little. I don't recall which is paper and which is plastic but, as I think I said, my answer is Neither. I don't color inside the lines. I'm not sure what kind of relationship I'm looking for. I guess it all depends on the person. I'd prefer to figure it out along the way. That's part of the fun.

Welcome to Charlotte, btw. I hope you're liking it here. Look forward to continuing this conversation.
Margie

11:07 AM

From: Matrices

To: Barbie99

Subject: Thinking about...
...your beautiful smile...and imagin-
ing more...

1:12 PM

From: Matrices

To: CowgirlBoots

Subject: Howdy
...So you're in Dallas? I have several
clients there. Perhaps we could meet
for a cocktail next time I'm in the
Lone Star state...

1:36 PM

From: Chuck <C.J.

Tyler@CharTech.com>

To: Tom

<T.Pearson@CharTech.com>

Subject: Website
Afternoon, Tom. Do me a favor
before you knock off for the day.
Take a gander at the bio below. Want
to make sure it meets with your
approval before it goes live. Plus,
not sure which clients you'd prefer to
have publically listed. Fill in the
blanks as you see fit and forward to
IT. Thanks much.
Chuck
Charles John Tyler
Chairman of the Board
CharTech, Inc.

P.S. Give my best to Sophie. If
there's anything Jennie and I can do

to make her transition to the South
easier, don't hesitate to ask.

Thomas J. Pearson, President
*With over 30 years' experience in
management consulting to the finan-
cial services industry, Tom has
helped companies and their leaders
adapt to fundamental shifts in the
marketplace. Through his work as
CEO of Polymath, and Managing
Partner of the Matrix Group, he has
developed the market insights and
business relationships required to
design and implement reality-based
change. Tom has particular expert-
ise in developing cutting edge finan-
cial instruments and innovative tax
strategies. His domestic and interna-
tional clients have included (insert 2
names) and (insert name). A former
Naval Officer, Tom is a graduate of
Boston College.*

1:49 PM

From: Matrices

To: Marginalia

Subject: re: Paper or Plastic?
Hey Margie:
Loved the pun! Very clever! And
you have a very interesting job, as do
I. I'll tell you all about it when we
get together. I know, very presumptu-
ous, but I did like what I read.
OK... neither paper or plastic...
never color within the lines ...you
must give more hints. I can think of
many things – including creative sex
– that would apply. Methinks you are
well beyond creative, my dear. You
shouldn't tease a man like that in the
middle of the day – unless you are
free for the night – or at least a good
portion thereof.
Are you up for a drink this evening?
I like making decisions quickly, as
do you. Within two drinks, we will
both know – after four, who knows
where we will be. Let me know.

2:52 PM

From: Marginalia

To: Matrices

Subject: re: Paper or Plastic?
Hey Tom,
Sorry, I'm not free tonight. Nice
thought, though. Thanks for asking.
I'm going to be tied up (not literally)
for the next week or so. Maybe
after that. In the meantime, what
exactly did you mean by creative
sex? Curious minds want to know.
You're wrong, I don't make quick
decisions. Remember, I'm a
researcher. I like to sift through the
clues – and you don't give many.
Margie

3:07 PM

From: Matrices

To: Marginalia

Subject: re: Paper or Plastic?
Hey Margie:
I know myself reasonably well.
Patient passion is not one of my
virtues. I do like to be teased, and to
tease. I love to make things pro-
longed – especially O's. There is no
approach to sex I have not enjoyed.
I am an aggressive pleaser. I love
having a woman beg me to stop
before I stop making her cum. I like
all sex. But I know this summary
does not satisfy you. I'm not really
into pain – mine or others'. I do
like always taking something new
from a sensual perspective. Love
emotional openness. A little fear
does help from time to time – as
does public display. At times, there is
nothing better than a ménage a trois
– with the right people.
In the final analysis, I think it's a
perfect night – or day – when a part-
ner is smiling, moaning a little, with
cum everywhere. Now you...



The Blotter Magazine

announces with great pride
the winners of the

2013 “Laine Cunningham Novel Award”

1st Place: **Lily Wakefield** of Durham, NC

for her novel “No Photo Available <A Sex Scandal in 563 Emails>”

2nd Place: **David Brendan Hopes** of Asheville, NC

for his novel “The Falls of the Wyona”

3rd Place: **Rupert W. Nacoste** of Raleigh, NC

for his novel “Spooks”

Honorable Mention: **Susan Whitcher** of West Linn, OR

for her novel “Bluebeard Remembers.”

The Dream Journal

real dreams, real weird

Please send excerpts from your own dream journals. If nothing else, we'd love to read them. We won't publish your whole name.

mermaid@blotterrag.com

how dooo!!!

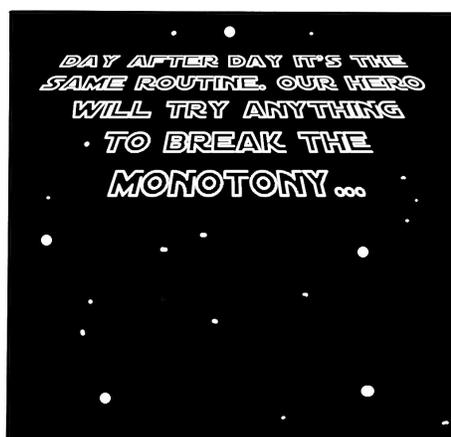
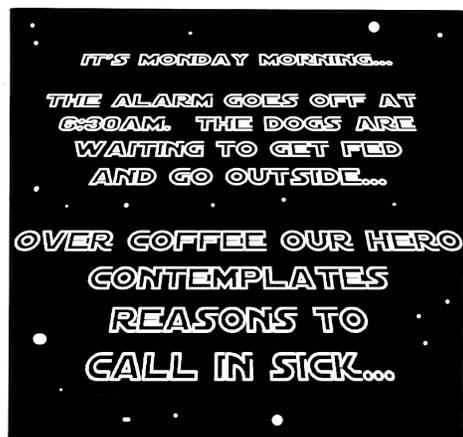
So I never remember my dreams nowadays but I did remember this 1..most..ly....All I remember is me and my friend, Anna being in a car. Maybe hers? After some movie or event? In a parking lot?

Lotta smiles and good times. Getting ready to leave. And then out walks the RZA & a friend of his. I'm waving like a dumbass & either we know each other? or he just recognises me somehow? But he stops walking and just stares at me, with his fists at his sides, slowly looking angrier and angrier, with bug eyes and all. Not moving, just staring like that, like I did him wrong or something somehow. We eventually leave and he's slowly backing away. Him and a close to the head afro he had too.

J. S. - NC Triangle

Best In Show

by Phil Juliano



CONTRIBUTORS:

LilyW: Female, White/Caucasian, 54, brown hair, brown eyes, 5' 6", average build, average looks. Marital status/Children/Religion/Occupation/Income/Education/Politics: *I'd rather not say.* Favorite book: *Dangerous Liaisons.* Currently reading: *The Psychopath Test.* Favorite color: *Blue.* Favorite food: *Fried okra.* Star sign: *I don't believe in astrology.* A little more about me: *I'll tell you later.* I'd like to add: *You can download my novel @ www.amazon.com. Send email to LilyWakefield2013@gmail.com. Please follow me on Twitter.* Photograph: *No photo available.* Elevator Pitch: "Dangerous Liaisons meets Match.com. When the theme is sexual impropriety, betrayal and revenge, voyeurism never goes out of style."

Phil Juliano is patient and kind, never jealous, boastful or conceited. Well maybe boastful a little.



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