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1. The meeting

I was working in one of the main cities in Germany, and I was captivated by the hustle & bustle of the large city. I felt very much at home because my native Bristol was also such a lively place.

There were plenty of little cafes to sit at when you fancied a civilized cup in the sunshine in the afternoon. After work there was also "the old part of town", as the locals referred to it, where you could loose yourself in a river of public houses, all in a barrage of music from almost every open window. There were immigrants and visitors from almost every corner of the earth caught up in city life. Guinness was therefore on the menu, and a choice of decent Merlots, so there was no chance of getting withdrawal symptoms. Together with the culinary delights that would explode the seams of this book, it was all in all, a pretty good place to be.

And I, little me, was stuck right in the middle of it. Our offices were on the second floor directly in the middle of town, in a well situated area about 200 meters from the "Kö" as the locals affectionately called it. The Königsallee is not in the old part of town, it only fringes on it, and is therefore less common. If you wanted to part with a large amount of your wages then it was the right place to be. I did! So I found myself sipping on a Latte Macchiato in the mid-day sun, or inspecting a newly opened sushi bar, or visiting the Indian restaurant around the corner that I had found one day, and had come to love. It was not that I was rolling in money, and could afford to do this all of the time. This was all of course to build up my strength and psychological stability for the rest of the day at work.

The meeting that I want to tell you about is not one that happened within the four walls of our office. It is although important to let you know a few more things to put you in the picture beforehand.

What was I doing in the office in the middle of this city? Well, apart from enjoying city life again I was working for a telecommunications company that was owned by a little Turkish family made up of a father and two sons. Ironically enough, this little Muslim family happened to be the owners of the largest sex side company in Germany. Not only on the internet, but a wet and wonderful network of flesh and shrewd business calculation; and they even had a call-center on top of all that! But that is another story.

Behind the scenes everything was very respectable. There were the same internal fights that were about in every company. The cultural side although was held up high, and the occasional "Vernisage" was a colorful moment in the company's internal program. Event the company's Christmas event in one of the nobler restaurants on the Rhein was a highlight.

What a dream job! I have heard many people say. When I say people I mean men, talking about the sex side of things, and that was only when their wives are at a great hearing

distance. I tend to think of it more like a gynecologist's job. When you have seen so many gaping holes, then you have seen enough gaping holes to last you a lifetime.

My small part in all of this debauchery was the role as a project manager, building up a server farm with Axe and Internet connection. A rather technical job that which requires you to chat the whole day to an operating system (trying to get the bloody thing to do what you want); instead of chatting up a decent woman.

The job was very demanding, and I was keeping on top of things, but that was not fulfilling me enough. I am not talking about professionally fulfilling. I was getting stuffed with professionalism like a Christmas turkey.

I am not talking about sex either. That is what the company was selling. And as everybody knows sex sells. Believe me. I know exactly how well it does after working in the middle of all that.

By the way, the one very positive thing that came out of being bombarded with so much xxx was that I have a much healthier and open attitude to speaking about sex. Now I feel very sorry for gynecologists when ever I meet one. Instead of feeling envious of them. I suppose that is what the job did to me.

Anyway, back to the meeting. I was feeling restless and wanted to do something else in my spare time instead of sitting in front of a computer.

The other things that I liked to do were diverse, and it has always been a chore to get into the right mood for the right pastime. If you know what I mean. For example about doing something like painting. You just have to be in the right mood sometimes, otherwise the painting does not turn out as well as you expect it to.

Well, I was on my way back home after a day in the office in this wonderful city, and then it happened. Lucy swayed into my life like a figure out of an old black & white "Bogart" movie. Pow!

I was standing in a crowded tram in the middle of the rush-hour, holding onto the rail for my life as one does in an over-packed tram in a large city, and my jaw hit the floor.

She was sitting about 5 meters away, with a baseball cap covering a part of her face.

I remember thinking to myself that it was probably for her protection.

If she had not been wearing the baseball cap, then the half of the men in the tram would have plunged themselves on top of her immediately, and the other half would have been in front of her on bended knees.

I remember thinking "Oh god, I hope no one else has seen her!". I do not know how such a stupid thought came into my head. I can only presume that I wanted to have her all to myself. And I secretly still hoped that none of the 200 people stuffed into the tram had noticed her. Then something tremendous happened.

She took off her protection! She removed her cap with her left hand and swung her hair around as if it had been blown by an angel's breath, and looked in my direction.

There and then I made up my mind what I was going to do for the next few weeks.

I was not in the mood to paint a picture, but by god I was in the mood to do some serious photography again.

She was exposed, and was looking even more gorgeous than she did before, with her baseball cap on her head. I noticed out of the corner of my eye that a few women were already trying to distract their partners away. But I kept my gaze fixed at this vision in front of me who was just asking to be immortalized. And that all from little me!

The tram now came to a halt and my heart almost leapt out of my chest as she stood up to get out at the main railway station. This sign from god was not to be ignored, and thinking to myself "now or never", I plunged after her. This led to the following couple of chapters, written about meeting one of the most captivating women in my life, and how I learnt a whole lot more about photography.

2. The chat up and the agency

How was Lucy captivating? Well, calling her tall would be an understatement! She was a good head and a half taller than me, and I could not help thinking that she came from some sort of Amazonian tribe of women.

The thought of where she came from made the situation a little more difficult to master, because most of the remnants in my head about Amazonian women tribes had them running about the place with very little clothing on whatsoever.

Of course it was not only her height. The face was exquisite, the hair was strong and vibrant, and the proportions were granted by God on one of his good days.

She did not have the proportions that would make a Russ Meyer fan happy, but that was just the right sort of proportions for the sort of pictures, that I had in mind.

I myself am not a fan of being suffocated by pounds of flesh, and neither is the modeling industry. They would love her, I thought to myself; and she would definitely have a chance against her undernourished competitors. She made a healthy, fit impression.

"Let's shake hands and see what happens" I thought to myself. Sometimes in the past I had been disappointed because when I was close-up to a person I would think "Maybe it was better to have stayed at a distance". After all, some people do a really good job of plastering the craters on their face with make-up, porridge, or some other material found on a building site. Other times the communication was difficult. Meaning that the chance was missed, and before I could explain anything properly the person had disappeared never to be seen again.

On top of all of these thoughts, I must say that I was also thinking of my wife, and that I was going to have a hard time in explaining this one to her.

So it was meant to be, that I found myself walking, in a rapid pace, towards a woman who was certainly going to devour me. Meaning, bite me up, chew on me, and spit me out again. But what the hell! It was not the first time that I had asked somebody if they minded having their photo taken, and not the first time I had ended up being bitterly disappointed.

I was well dressed, which I think helped the overall impression that I made. So I stopped Lucy in her tracks, and after a quick introduction I blurted out what I wanted.

She looked at me with the common disbelief that I was used to

"Oh, yeah!" I saw her thinking,

"Here's another one". But indeed, after a couple of minutes we had exchanged telephone numbers, and I found myself thinking

"Oh Yeah! I wonder if she really will contact me like she had promised".

By now, a few of the people who had been on the tram had already walked past us. Judging by the expressions on their faces I really was not the only one who had noticed her on the tram. Those of them who had been distracted by their partners were now being whipped even more into line as they eyed her from top to bottom to bottom, and then looking at me.

"Fuck off" I thought "She's mine!"

Like untamed horses in the ménage, they were being tugged and poked by their loved ones. Passing by, like crawlers on the motorway, boggling and gaping at an accident has happened on the other side of the carriageway.

The train station was crowded and I wanted to get home.

Again I found myself thinking of my wife, and that I was going to have a pretty hard time in explaining this one to her.

The fact about 'having problems explaining it to my wife' was in no way an understatement.

My love of photography, especially taking photos of good looking people, has been a thorn in her side for as long as I can remember.

I had remained stubborn over the years, as I saw no reason whatsoever in giving up a passion of mine that was perfectly respectable. Respectable in so much as that I could say that I had remained faithful to my wife during the 12 years of married life.

I still felt that I had to tell my wife, out of common decency, when I was doing any test shots. I had "forgotten" to tell her a few times in the past. This turned out to be a greater mistake because although she had no reason to think so (other than I had disappeared for longer periods, and come back with make up on my collar, and full of sweat), she really did think that I was having an affair. All of the sweet words in the world could not bring her away from that thought.

I cannot understand where this distrust comes from, but it mutates very quickly into a sort of jealousy. With illogical emotion driven comments such as

"So, you are being unfaithful again!" (You are scouting again).

"Why do you do such horrible things to me?" (Are honest and tell the truth).

"Why can't you have a normal hobby?" (Something like stamp collecting?).

Then I always wonder to myself if Lord Litchfield ever had this bloody problem.

Now I must tell you about PJ.

In the past I have met so many different people. All of who are involved in some sort of aspect related to my interests. The list is plenty. Visuals (photo, video, art), music, sport, languages, and the dreaded computer.

If at all possible, I try not to loose contact with these people because I never give up the hope that we can work together on some spontaneous project that I have. After all, we do then have some sort of common goal, and if the people are nice then it is a good reason to meet up with each other again, and do what you like doing.

Sadly, the most of us have to work to make a living, and such spontaneous projects do not pay the bills. Therefore a lot of the people that I have met are only interested in the profit, and not the fun. They do not want to do anything for the sake of their love to the topic, or for the sake of doing it. Others are completely the opposite. They love their work, and are willing to work together with other people to forward themselves, the others, and for the love of the thing itself.

One of these people was the scouting agent PJ who was working in one of the best modeling agencies in the city. We had met a few weeks ago, and I had shown her my photos. We had then agreed to work together in the normal manner. It is the same old never-ending circle of Model need photos needs photographer needs model, which has been practiced since Eva was naked.

3. Luke in Love and the agency II

On the following day at the office, everyone could obviously see that I was in a good mood. What they did not know, is that I had arranged with Lucy to meet at the office, and to do the photos as quickly as possible.

In my years as a photographer I have done a lot of journalism, which I regard as profession that involves a high degree of workmanship-like skills. It also involves a great amount of inventiveness and flexibility. This means that a photographer will never really be caught out. If the situation calls for it then he will drive a hole in a cardboard box with his ball-point pen and start mixing the silver solution for the rear part of his self-made cardboard camera. I felt myself in a much similar situation. We did not have the luxury of a studio at such short notice. Even so, I felt that I would be able to take a couple of decent photos with the possibilities that I had at my disposal.

Everyone bustled off to lunch, and I waited patiently for Lucy to arrive.

The weather had decided to play along as well, so there was sun in abundance streaming in through the window.

She arrived punctually, and looked ravaging in her tight polo-necked sweater. Thinking about my wife was a great help in stopping me ravishing her.

We did the test shots and it was a nice though to pose Lucy as a criminal who had been arrested. You know the old cliché "mug-shot" photos that I am talking about with a number in front of the chest. At the time of its conception it was a strange sounding idea, but we did them anyway after I persuaded Lucy that it would be worth a try.

Test shots, for those who are not familiar with their usage, are one of the things that save everybody a lot of time and bother. They are useful in the first place, because they serve to show if somebody is photogenic at all. Some people do look good but are not really photogenic.

So, as the best "proof of the pudding is in the eating", the easiest way to find out is to do the photos (the test shots).

Naturally, the modeling agencies are more than happy to spare the bother and costs involved in getting the photos done. Also afterwards everybody knows if further photos are worth it or not.

Anyway, having been somewhat inspired, I had decided not to wait the normal amount of time, but to get the film developed in an hour. This would mean picking it up some time after the lunch break. The luxury of doing the pictures digitally was not yet so common-place and I couldn't stop thinking about shoe box cameras as I was waiting.

It certainly is much easier using modern digital technology isn't it?

Lucy and I arranged to meet soon after I had picked up the photos. We then wanted to plan the proper photos, and talk about a possible photo card for the agencies. Then she left to sort out a couple of things in town.

Luke, our trainee from England, had gotten back from his lunch break after Lucy had left the office. I tried not to say anything at first, so we got stuck into work. Although after the ritual "How was your lunch-break?" question we got on, only partly, with our work and Luke was listening with disbelief at the story of an Amazonian woman from a long forgotten tribe who had just used his desk as a canoe, and when she got arrested she had to pose in prison with a number in front of her chest!

After that we went through a few minutes of: "No you didn't, did you?", "Yes, I did.", and then it was time to pick up the photos. The results had turned out to be more than pleasing. They were only supposed to be test shots, but they turned out to be wonderful gems. Ground and polished with the touch of a craftsman using such simple equipment. The next logical step would be to introduce Lucy to PJ and send her the test shots to view and decide if it was the sort of image that they were looking for.

Almost as punctual as for the photo appointment, the bell rang and Lucy, who was also impatient to see the photos, came in. Luke fell in love at first sight. His jaw hit the floor, and I had a *dejavú* of how stupid I must have looked in the tram the other day. Nice expressions on everybody else's faces! Then, there it was again. The inevitable thought about my partner. Getting back to my wife, I was thinking that I was going to have an even harder time explaining this one to her than I had ever had before. Getting back to the agency, I could not wait to send something. I was too excited, so I rang PJ straight away.

The agency was a good agency. Meaning that it was well situated, well stocked, and well mannered.

I rang.

After a telephone call and a little time we were on our way to the agency.

We met and we showed them the test shots. Great!

We filled out the forms straight away. I think that nobody wanted to miss the chance.

PJ said "Let's do some measurements" and got out her measuring tape. Then they both looked at me the way that girls do when they want to go to the toilet together.

Their unspoken thoughts "You don't really want to come, do you!" readable in the expression. I did, but better think of something else to do, I thought to myself.

There happened to be a fragile male scout present, who had also been giving his opinion about if it was worth doing a card or not.

He was not only happy about the fact it would be a very good thing to get a card ready, but also very happy about the fact that we were both now sitting alone together at the table while the girls were doing a bit of something else!

So it was meant to be that I found myself getting chatted up by a male scout (Broke-back mountain style), who was doing his best not to salivate on the table.

After a couple of minutes they returned and Lucy started packing her things.

PJ said thanks, and said that we should finish signing everything later when the measurements are certain. Lucy seemed a little caught out by the whole affair. She hadn't expected such a positive outcome. And all of that at such a speed, and seemed to be in a hurry to leave.

"I'll tell you about the measurements on the way back" said Lucy.

We caught the tram again to go back to the center of town.

Lucy explained that there was a little problem during taking the measurements. She confessed that she had to get her upholstery out, and that it was a bit embarrassing because she didn't have as much up there as there should be. She said that she had been unhappy for a long time. Not because she was the sort of person who thinks that they must lose 10 kilos when they only weigh 45. She was not bulimic. She was unhappy about not having anything up there at all! "Well just think about Twiggy for god's sake!" I suggested to her.

Twiggy was one of the leading models in the 1980's and had the name probably because she had no tits at all. Even so she was fucking gorgeous. Twiggy had a huge success even though her upper measurements were the same as her waist.

She promised me that she did not want to go overboard with the size. The justification of having to wear a bra would be enough for her. So it would only be a little enlargement. And yes, she knew who Twiggy is, and also thinks that she has a certain "something".

Anyway, Lucy was determined to do something about it and had already booked an appointment with a plastic surgeon. They were going to be inflated in a couple of weeks.

I don't think that PJ was too happy to hear that. For one thing you do not really know exactly how large the measurement will be. Secondly, there is also the danger of scarring from a sloppy bit of surgeon's work. Now at last I could understand what had happened at the agency previously.

"Well fancy that!" I thought to myself.

I was dumbstruck and amazed at the same time but it wasn't all that drastic.

Twiggy could live with no breasts, and I can live with no hair. So what?

But for some people who think that they have 'too little' or 'too much' I am sure that this is a very big problem for them.

Time to be getting back home. Back to my wife.

I think I will not have a hard time explaining this one. Because I'm not going to bloody explain anything at all!

4. The Producer and the penny

Even though I had not mentioned anything at all about breasts, it was still heavy going explaining the success and joy of it all to my wife. Her stony expression put the Grand Canyon in the shade. On top of that it was only my hobby and she had more important things to do.

Back at work, the big bosses had a visitor staying over. It was not a business visitor. It was a private one who was residing in the penthouse suite above the headquarters. Apparently Heman, who was a foreign producer, had won prizes at the Berlin film festival. He had also filmed adverts for some pretty well known companies. His promotion video was worth showing any board of directors.

As we met briefly in the summer, our common passions had brought us a little closer, so that we would sometimes discuss some "crazy ideas", (as I tend to call them) and philosophize over a cup of tea.

I happened to be in the headquarters one day and decided to see if Heman had time for a chinwag.

He kindly gave me a video copy of his cinema film, which he had produced, and had personally filmed. By the way, it had also been banned by the government when it was filmed years ago. My wonder for him grew after I saw the 10 minute birth scene of a woman in a stone hut, for which the film had got banned.

In the course of our conversation I told him casually about the photos that I had done with Lucy. Currently, he was working on a project for advertising a slimming tee, and thought that it would be a good idea to get Lucy to do the advert. If she was as pretty as I had described, there should be no problem. The advert would also be a good addition to her portfolio.

Naturally as always the photos were not there to show him when I needed to. We agreed to meet for a tea, and decide then spontaneously.

A couple of days later I found myself driving down the motorway with Lucy at my side. By now I was already thinking of the next steps in Lucy's career. We had a photo portfolio; a video portfolio was within grabs, and a modeling agency was really interested her.

On the motorway going to meet the producer we got talking about the visit to the agency. As the male scout was licking out my ear, I did also happen to notice that Lucy and PJ had been talking rather energetically.

I did think that it was only because of the upcoming operation.

That was until she slipped in the comment, "You do know that I'm a man don't you?"

Well "Bugger me sideways with a rusty barge-pole" as we say in my home town of Bristol.

I was certainly not prepared for that one!

That I did not have an accident on the motorway was a bloody miracle.

I was so busy looking for signs that he really was a man that I almost missed the exit on the motorway. No stubble, no facial hair whatsoever! No Adam's apple! No way!

It was then that the penny dropped about the operation. It was then that the penny dropped about PJ in the modeling agency. We have to wait for the final measurements after the operation!

I remember seeing an episode of Ally Mc Beal where there was a woman trapped in a man's body. One of the senior partners fell in love and found out what he/she was. And what happened to be dangling there.

I remember thinking to myself that there was no way that I could be fooled by something like that. Not with my keen eyes.

Even so, the more that I had continued watching the episode (which was told with a great sympathy) the more I thought to myself "That is surely a woman!"

I was sure that they had gotten a woman to play the part, and so let the viewers think it was a really good looking man. "Naah!", The Adams apple was neither to be seen!

"Bloomin' hell" I thought again; ". And that coming from a trained photographer!"

I should have seen that. Shouldn't I?. Oh God, I could just imagine the look of surprise on PJ's face when she saw the sex on the passport during the enrollment. At least up to then she had fallen for her 'hook, line, and sinker'.

We had already turned off the motorway and my thoughts turned radically to Heman, who we were now rolling up to. What will he think about the situation? Is it a sin? Like eating pork sausages?

My knowledge about the Muslim faith is pretty limited, and was about to be put to test.

"Who cares!" I thought "Just don't tell him!".

I did not think that it was like giving him a pork sausage, because I was not sure if it was considered being such a terrible think in the first place. I also did not really want to find out when we were all standing there together.

I wished I had not started thinking about pork sausages. I could not get the bloody things out of my mind.

"I won't tell him either" said Lucy as I asked her, and I felt a little less panic.

It wouldn't change anything. We can still all get what we want out of it. And the thought was indeed to be proved correct.

We got to Heman's and decided to skip the tee and get straight on with some shots.

He did a really good job of reminding me of how stupid I must have looked on the tram. His facial expression upon seeing Lucy was the same as everyone else's. My feelings of panic

(When is he going to notice?) slowly began to vanish and be replaced by feelings of amusement. The longer he was salivating after Lucy, the longer I was enjoying thinking

"I know what you don't know!". What a bizarre situation!

The shots were finished in a jiffy, and I was not in the mood to use the time we had saved for drinking a tee afterwards.

So after a hasty retreat we were back on the motorway direction home.

A gorgeous thought came into my head as I was driving. In this case, my wife's jealousy had been over absolutely nothing at all!

No, even better, over a man!

That thought kept me amused all the way back home.

Was I going to get problems explaining this one?

The next time that I was back at work Luke was as eager as everyone else to know how things were going, and as I had not digested the whole situation, I decided that pouring out my own disbelief was the best therapy. I told a distraught Luke the story from start to finish.

Dumbstruck he sat on his chair, giving little yaps of started sentences from his open mouth.

Then he looked up wearing a broad smile and said triumphantly "Ach! You almost got me there. I almost fell for that one!"

It was tough going persuading him that I got no joy whatsoever in making fun of him.

We then had the ritual 2 minutes of "No she isn't?", "Yes he is!" repeated about 10 times.

And after that Luke also had problems in functioning properly for a couple of days.

He probably also disinfected his right hand by sticking it in a cup of bleach.

At any rate, none of us ate pork sausages for a while.

5. Aperitif

My aspirations of doing some heavy duty photography had not gone down the drain but had been postponed for a while. At least the test shots were more than presentable. While Lucy was recovering from her operation and sorting out her future, I was taking a photographic holiday. Naturally on standby until the green light of health goes on again, or I had overcome the shock.

Time went by, and I was no longer working for the company in Düsseldorf when I next spoke to Lucy on the telephone. Then I found myself sitting in the "Kö" again, sipping on a coffee, and waiting for Lucy to turn up. She did, and was looking as stunning as ever.

"How are things?" I asked.

"The operation has been a complete success." she said.

I found myself staring at her breasts. Not too much, not too little. What a wonderful craftsmanship!

"It must have cost a bloody fortune to have them done them that well." I thought to myself.

"What about work?" I enquired.

"Going very well thanks" she said with a broad smile on her lips.

"Paris, Milan, New York 1500 a day. I can't complain."

Then she paid me a great compliment about the photos.

"I have been around a bit in the last few weeks" she said, and she dramatically paused for breath "and have worked with a lot of famous photographers", I listened in captivation, "but nobody has managed to do better photographs since yours. They are still my favorite."

Let me tell you that the compliment went down like honey.

We chatted on about a few other things, which are maybe too uninteresting to tell you as a story, but are probably worth mentioning.

One was that we were talking about doing some photos just for the sake of doing them, and fantasizing about what the topic could be. "Shall we do a Lollita?" was a suggestion from Lucy, that will remain in my mind for a long time.

There I was thinking about pork sausages again.

The other one was that we had a laugh about the slimming tee video.

The video had really turned out to be a classical 'B movie' that you would see on QVC. It was definitely not the sort of thing you could use to promote yourself professionally, but it had been a giggle doing it anyway. Every experience is a good one at the end of the day. But I still cannot understand why such a talented man like Heman made such a tacky thing. His promotion video and cinema film were done much better. I suppose at the end of the day a lot of the male species is driven by the lower regions of their body. The ability to think straight diminishes.

I mentioned at the beginning of this story that I was going to tell you about how I met one of the most captivating women in my life, and how I learnt a whole lot more about photography. She was one of the most captivating women in my life because she demanded attention as a person. It was not difficult to give her attention because of her open and direct nature. She is someone who does not have high opinions of themselves in an arrogant way. When somebody like that comes along then you really are captivated.

What did I learn about photography? That it is not only a theory, that it is possible to produce good results with limited means. That passion is one of the most important motors for producing a good photo. One should never let an opportunity go by, and should keep ones eyes as open as they can be.

Meeting Lucy was an experience that not only broadened my horizon, but is also an experience that I would have never missed for the world.

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