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TALES ABOUT ABROAD #12

Carter Seipel, Foreign Correspondent

Dear Travel Diary,

Last we left off, I was embarking on a search to find my wife before Gary Holmes, the recurring police detective character who had recently admitted to sleeping with my wife, could confess his love to her. Seeing it all written out like this, I must admit that this whole narrative has gotten way too complicated. I long for the simple days when I was writing about fishing cabins and carbon monoxide poisoning. Luckily, I sense that this arc is reaching its conclusion soon.

Speaking of luck, I found my wife before Gary Holmes could. I say it was luck because my first two guesses were all wrong. This is to say she was not out shopping in any of Bath's shopping districts, nor was she in line to see the Minecraft movie. After sitting through the entirety of the Minecraft movie, I finally tracked down my wife. She was in the middle of nowhere. Not literally nowhere but the pub with the most humble name in all of Bath, England.

My wife was sitting outside of Nowhere with her recently widowed mother; they were celebrating Mother's Day. Since their celebration was late by English standards and early by American ones, I figured it was well within my right to interrupt and confront her about that whole affair thing. I was prepared to be hit with a belated April Fools, but alas, I was the April Fool all along. My wife confessed to it all. This affair was as real as God's wrath for those who have sex out of wedlock. I warned my wife about this wrath, but she didn't seem too concerned, replying with a dismissive, "Well, we can't all be simple, honest, hard-working American men who are, above all else, monogamous."

This was a reference to one of my many Bullsheet articles, and at first I was touched, realizing that she actually reads the Bullsheet. Then I was horrified, realizing that she actually reads the Bullsheet! No matter how long I write for that satirical newspaper, I'm still always caught off guard when someone actually reads it. This will probably come as a big shock to many, but I say a lot of mean things about my wife in those articles. I mean, I have created a truly staggering amount of stories and insults about that old rusty ball and chain, but I had always assumed that they would never reach her or anyone's eyes. Suddenly her affair made a lot more sense.

Since that day, things have been really awkward in our shared Bath, England hotel room. Being too cheap to buy a second room, the wife and I decided to split custody. I have the room from 12:00 AM to 11:59 AM and she gets it from 12:00 PM to 11:59 PM. It's an efficient system and probably a good omen that we'll do fine in what now seems like an increasingly inevitable divorce.

HOW REGULAR ARE YOU?

Lindsey George, Regular By Association

Do you have a favorite store? Chain restaurant? Local shop? Do you consider yourself a "regular" at this store? Are you really a regular, though? This article aims to explain to you what being a "regular" means, with the strongest example possible: my dad.

You may consider yourself a "regular" when:

1.) The employees at the store know your name and/or call you by a nickname. AND you know the employees' names too. AND they know your family.

Ex. When my dad started visiting the Dunkin' Donuts five blocks away from my house, the employ ees began using the name on his credit card to address him. "Dan George" soon turned into "George," which turned into "Jorge." Whenever Jorge goes to Dunkin' Donuts, or "Dunks," as he lovingly calls it, he is greeted by his nickname and a huge smile. Do the employees at your store know your name? Do they have a nickname for you? Didn't think so. Another question: do you know the employees' names? When Jorge goes to Dunks, he always greets each employee who is working by name: Gabby, Raul, Orachio, Lal-

Lindsey George, Becoming Regular

HOW REGULAR ARE YOU? (CONT.)

lo, Carlos and Katie. Another question: do the employees know your family? Didn't think so. Not only is Jorge famous at Dunks, but now, by association, so am I. And so is my mom. And so are my sisters. And so is my dog, of course.

2.) The employees at the store know your order by heart.

Ex. Every single day that Jorge goes to Dunks (nearly every day of the week, nearly every week), he gets the same order: extra large hot black decaf. In the beginning, Jorge's order was taken with an air of judgment; who goes to a coffee shop and orders an extra large hot black decaf coffee? But after a while, all it took was Jorge walking in the door to Dunks for the employees to pour him his cup of decaf and hand it to him at the counter. Now, Jorge can simply walk into the store and be recognized as the one who orders an extra large hot black decaf. Jorge at the drive-thru window? Get the extra large hot black decaf ready. Doors open and Jorge walks through? Extra large hot black decaf on its way.

3.) The employees at the store call you to the front when the line is long, give you your order, and tell you that you can pay next time.

Ex. On one particular busy morning, Jorge entered his usual Dunks to find a long line of customers ahead of him. Instead of finding himself waiting in that line, however, he was called to the front by one of the fantastic workers who shouted, "Jorge!" and handed him his usual, an extra large hot black decaf, followed by, "you can pay tomorrow." Jorge walked out of the store standing tall, while all the other cus tomers in line gawked in confusion and jealousy.

4.) Employees who changed locations recognize you by your order months later at the new location.

Ex. Months after Natalie left Jorge's usual Dunks location, Jorge found himself in the drive-thru line of a Dunks a few towns over during one of my swim meets. Driving through this new location, Natalie took Jorge's order, "extra large hot black decaf," and immediately asked, "Jorge?" Indeed it was Jorge, with his unusual and incredibly memorable order. Alas, Natalie had remembered this loyal customer, in a differ ent town, ages after they had parted. Jealous? Yeah, you should be.

5.) The employees prank you by giving you the wrong order and laugh at you when you try to explain.

Ex. Extra large hot black decaf. It's always been an extra large hot black decaf. So when Jorge pulls up to the drive-thru window to see Gabby holding out a bright orange iced mango refresher, completely unironically. Very politely, of course, Jorge starts to say that he didn't order this fruity thing, and in fact is allergic to mangoes so couldn't drink it anyway, when Raul jumps out from behind Gabby and they both point at him and burst out laughing. Jorge gets his extra large hot black decaf, and rolls away chuck ling. They got him good, that's for sure.

I assume, by this point, that most of you readers have realized that you are no Jorge. You are not, in fact, truly regular. Sorry to disappoint. Go find yourself a local spot, and make yourself known. You, too, can be Jorge.



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