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Why I Hate Parties

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Why I Hate Parties

Author Bio

Thomas was born in Canada but is not there anymore. He writes sometimes and likes to read and watch things too. He likes to play jazz with his friends and enjoys guitar feedback. His favorite album by The Fall is Dragnet.

Why I Hate Parties

Thomas Neufeld

I've never really been one for parties. Why? I'm an intellectual. It's tough to find people on my level at parties—only stumbling, shrieking, stupid multitudes. Just try bringing up, for example, Max Ernst. I have on multiple occasions. Most recently I brought him up at Cynthia's party. Afterwards she told me I had made people uncomfortable. I replied, "Uncomfortable by what? Knowledge?" Well, I actually thought of that a couple of minutes later after she had already walked away, but I still said it out loud to make a point. In any case, I have stopped communicating with her until she pays me back those two dollars.

I'm getting off track. I apologize. This happens sometimes when your brain works faster than your mouth. It's the price for being intelligent. It's the cross I carry. Anyway, it can get rather lonely being an intellectual in today's world of reality TV, Facebook and watered-down electronica made not for headphones in dark bedrooms, but for top 40 listeners and the troughs they eat out of. So I try to educate people. Here's an example: I was eating at a restaurant with a few people from work, when I heard a couple at the next table over talking.

"I just saw *The 400 Blows* for the first time," the man said. "You know, I'd heard about the ending, but wow." I couldn't help but lean over and start talking; here was a guy who needed my help.

"That's entry level French New Wave," I said, as friendly as I could.

"I-I'm sorry?"

"It's, you know, kind of for beginners in a sense. You want some real French New Wave? Check out *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*". Classic late sixties Godard."

"I'm sorry if I offended you in some way. You know, I actually wasn't even talking to you." This always happens. They start to get defensive for some reason.

"Well, when you make a statement like that."

"Look, I'm really just trying to eat here," he responded.

"I was just trying to help—"

"Alright?"

"Well, I—"

"Alright?"

"OK."

As you can see here, I did nothing wrong in that situation, and for my efforts to raise awareness, I was treated with inexplicable rudeness and hostility. Again, this happens often.

Anyway, a couple of days ago, I got invited to a party at my friend Colin's house. Well, I guess I wasn't actually invited per se, but I overheard him talking about it and just kind of showed up, and he was totally cool with it. He actually didn't really say anything; he just kind of sputtered a bit when I showed up. He let me inside is what I'm getting at. I was a bit late because I had to go back home and get my iPod. I bring my own so people can hear some actual good music. I have a special Krautrock mix all made up, Neu! and Can and Amon Düül II (no Kraftwerk though because they've become a bit too overplayed for me.) But I'm digressing again.

I was at the party and was keeping my distance from the debauchery elsewhere. I found a bookshelf and was silently critiquing the choices when Colin and his girlfriend Ann came walking over. We got to talking and joking around. I made a comment about how Ann was looking particularly hot tonight. Colin didn't laugh but I'm pretty sure he thought it was really funny. There was a bit of silence and then Colin looked down and— Oh! I forgot to mention that in the hallway where I was standing there was a recorder on a shelf. I'm not really sure why it was there. Anyway, Colin picked it up. It was one of those cheaper classroom type ones that teachers used to make you play insipid pieces on.

"Here's what I think of that last comment," he said, laughing. He threw it at me, and it hit me in the stomach. I believe it is possible to be both an intellectual and a bit of a practical joker, so I decided to prank Colin. I picked the recorder up and threw it as hard as I could. What happens next, I have replayed in my mind so many times I have trouble not imagining it as some sort of pseudo-Zapruder film. So I will present it as such.

Frame 14: The hand clutches the recorder. The arm begins to wind back.

Frame 37: The recorder is released. The arm is fully extended.

Frame 54: The recorder is flying through the air, approaching Colin, whose arm is momentarily raised to scratch his head.

Frame 60: The recorder passes underneath Colin's upraised arm.

Frame 62: The recorder makes contact with Ann's left eyeball. The eye is open.

Frame 65: The head begins to jerk backwards. Ann's arm begins to rise to the eyeball.

Frame 80: Ann's mouth opens in a scream.

I didn't feel like I had thrown it that hard, but it was apparently hard enough to knock the eyeball out of the socket. Traumatic avulsion of the globe, they call it. I only saw it for a split second, but the eyeball was

clearly dangling halfway down her face. It was kind of strange. Then people started yelling.

I left the party pretty hastily after that. Even I was prepared to admit that things hadn't gone quite as well as I had hoped. I tried to go visit her in the hospital, but Colin said she didn't want to see me. I chuckled inwardly at that unfortunate use of such a phrase. I guess I chuckled outwardly too because I received some rude looks shortly thereafter.

Then there was Jenny's party. This one went pretty well compared to the one at Colin's house. I heard about this one through my friend Craig. Craig and I used to hang out in the record store before the incident. Craig's not allowed back on the premises still, which is bullshit, but in a way he deserves it because he still thinks, get this, in 2011, the *year* 2011, that The Stooges were the first proto-punk band: therefore totally ignoring all those kickass Pacific Northwest bands like The Sonics and The Wailers and The Monks—well, OK, the Monks were in Germany but they were American. Craig is an idiot. He is still my friend, though, despite his ignorance. Occasionally people will tell me that I'm not the most pleasant person to be around. I disagree and find that opinion rather stupid.

Anyway, I went to Jenny's party with Craig. As soon as we got there, Craig started playing one of his jokes on me and kept telling people he didn't know who I was and kept trying to avoid me and wincing when I tried talking to him when other people were around. Craig is a real jokester. I was about to leave the party because "*Won't Get Fooled Again*" started playing and even though I scoffed multiple times, and increasingly louder, this guy refused to change the song. I explained to him that "*Who's Next*" is really overplayed and that he should put on "*The Who Sell Out*" or "*A Quick One*" or even some Small Faces. He didn't respond but I knew he could hear me, so I just kind of stared at him for a while with real intensity. I then kind of did this thing where I walked backwards still staring at him out of the room. Unfortunately I didn't really know my way around the house and I fell down a staircase and broke one of my arms, a couple ribs and my shoulder. I found out later about the punctured lung when I kept vomiting blood. Turns out a rib poked right through it. I don't really have any regrets because now, whenever that guy hears "*Won't Get Fooled Again*," he will think of me getting injured because he was an ass. It was then that I decided I was never going to go to another party.

The next party I went to was at this club where Craig was the DJ. I got kicked out after I threw a drink at Craig, and it landed on the turntable of one of his Liquid Liquid 7's. The next party was at Mark's apartment. Mark was one of my new neighbors. I helped him carry in a box of books and there was a bunch of Ionesco plays on the top. I had a feeling that Mark and I were going to be friends. Mark was a really cool guy. His party

was even pretty fun—to my surprise, there were people who knew how to have a good time there. We watched projected Brakhage films on the wall and a girl named Catherine stopped talking to me after I mispronounced Jean Genet. Apparently it doesn't sound just like that David Bowie song. She was my kind of person.

Somehow the idea of playing William Tell came up. Everyone else was pretty drunk at the party, but I was completely sober. I had abstained because I got in a fight with Mark over his mugs. Even so, I knew what had happened to Burroughs' wife when he tried it. The difference was that I wasn't on whatever the hell Burroughs was on during that party. OK, I took some children's Tylenol beforehand but that was because I got a paper cut and couldn't find the real stuff so I had an actual reason. Well, long story short, it turns out it doesn't matter if you're drunk or not.

What happened next sounds really bad out of context, so let me explain. A lot of people were yelling really loud when Ann put the glass on her head. I don't have any objections to yelling and having fun, but there is a time and place for that type of thing. Anyway, she was standing there and she told me to throw the something or other. I couldn't really hear, so I guessed. In retrospect, I guessed wrong because I picked up a knife and Ann ended up getting really hurt. I was hoping she would find the whole situation funny in hindsight, but I don't think she did because later she died. Mark said I wasn't welcome at his apartment anymore. In the end, I was relieved that nothing more unfortunate could happen to me or anyone else. Then I got sent to jail, so I turned out to be wrong about that as well.