

Friday, December 11, 1981, page 1

Its not really Friday. I'm trying to make up for two days of being away from the house. Anxiety about being here with Simone, especially alone. Very strong urge to flee.

Lotti talking to me about Simone and using contraceptives: I don't think you should take the responsibility since it is her body.

Some ideas about the Friday evening meeting: Joe thinks there should be a limit to amplitude and duration of people's talking. Lotti doesn't think it will work. It will end in disaster. Linda wants credit for the tape recording idea. Joe likes it. Lotti and Linda are resistant at first. Linda wants to know how people who break down will be handled. Lotti is feeling very vulnerable at that moment. It has something

Yesterday, Tuesday, December 15, 1981, between 4 and 6 pm, I visited the VD clinic at Cambridge Hospital. This is the story of my visit, examination, and some things I learned there.

I was embarrassed to be there for two reasons. The first having to do with a general sense of shame at going to such a place. There is such an attitude in society about this kind of health care. A sense of guilt. I must have done something wrong to have to go there. But that passed quickly. There were two people ahead of me. They finished very quickly. A man and then a woman. After I finished with everything, and returned to get my coat, the waiting room was filled with men. Half a dozen or more. And no women. The second reason for my embarrassment was related to having run out of clean underwear the day before. So I had borrowed a pair of women's underwear. I made me a bit selfconscious. But that too passed quickly.

So now its my turn. The nurse, Ms C, call me in. She's an older woman, in her late 40's to 50's. Another source of embarrassment, to be examined by a woman. But maybe she won't be doing it. All my little anxieties get added up as we enter the exam room for who knows what. But I don't feel any dis-ease from her. She seems like an old hand at this. Since 1963, in fact. She takes out a roll of paper and puts a new piece on one of those exam tables with stirrups. She sits and I continue to stand. Am I going to run out or something?

Do you have sex with men, she asks. No, I reply, and why do you ask. 65% of my cases are gay males. They tend to be the most promiscuous of all sexually active people. They have the least knowledge about their partners. They have the most casual and frequent sexual contacts. Just women, she comments. Yes, that's right, I assure her. She doesn't ask any questions about animals, plants, or other objects. And nothing about masturbation. Can one get anything from masturbating?

Let me see your penis, she asks, after slipping on a rubber glove. Out it comes. My embarrassment all goes away at this point. She is completely matter of fact, and probably quite unimpressed. One could see a lot of these things in 18 years. She has this piece of wire, about 8 inches long, with a little round thing on one end, and a loop on the other. This goes inside to get something for the culture. The little round thing is specially treated to pick up germs. It smarts like a son-of-bitch! She must have put about half of it inside me. The end gets smeared on the surface of a culture kit. She puts a little pill in with it to absorb all the oxygen. This test is for gonorrhoea. It must be done in the absence of oxygen. It takes a day or two to grow. The little plastic case goes into a second plastic container, a bag. The blood test for syphilis means a needle. Its easy to find a vein, but a little blood spurts out a slightly jagged hole. It stings a little. A friend of mine faints when he sees blood. He can't donate it because of this. Otherwise he's fearless. That's it. I've no other symptoms.

I'd been thinking about doing this for some time. First, to be sure that I was ok in this way. Second, because my sexual partners, from time to time, have expressed anxiety about it, or someone they have sex with has mentioned it. At least one man has said he will not have sex with one of my partners because he is afraid of Herpes, which he imagines himself getting from her, via me. It is also a way of becoming more conscious of one's sexual relationships. And how much one cares about these relationships. I find many people concerned about getting something from someone, but less concerned that they will be the giver. The situation is like this for me. I have 3 sexual partners. All women. I have had sex with two of them for almost two years, and almost 2 months with the third. They have all expressed varying degrees of anxiety about my other relationships. Each of them has had from 9 to 15 sexual contacts, different partners, in the last two years. But their anxiety seems to be mostly directed at my other partners, through me, rather than themselves. And this makes some sense as these other people are more unknown than their own partners. So my idea is to practice some preventive medicine to help put these anxieties to rest. I will start with myself and ask them to do the same. They can be responsible for whoever they relate to. A second part of this is to start some sort of public record. I am thinking of a notebook with the results of my own and other tests. I will make it available to anyone who will have any sort of sexual contact with the people in our 'group'. So I am starting a notebook, VD Test Results. Results will be stored in chronological order, and alphabetically, by last name, within a given month and year. A number of people have told me its a good idea and that they will join me in doing this. I look forward to their participation. Anyone may join in.

Most of my time, half an hour at least, was spent in a most interesting conversation with Ms C. Asking me how I'd learned of the clinic, I tell her it was from an article in a local newspaper. She was not pleased with this paper as she had been badly interviewed several years ago, by them. But she did want to get a copy of the article. I was taking notes at this point and she wanted to know if it was for a newspaper article. No, but I told her a little about my notes and what I wanted to do with what I wrote about my experience at the clinic. I promised to send her a copy.

Herpes was the biggest topic of conversation. Its the thing most people are afraid of. 50% of the people never get it. They are protected by virtue of having contacted Herpes I, coldsores, as a child. I had these things coming out my ears. So it seems I'm well protected against them, and will most likely never get it. She emphasized how stress and anxiety seem to be the biggest cause of an outbreak of Herpes once it is contacted. Its not so terrible. It can be sore. But there is no danger if sexual contact is avoided during this active phase. There is no danger at any other time. Avoid sex when you have the symptoms, and you will

never get it. It seems that Herpes is increasing. Her theory is that some of it is due to increased oral sex. Something about how Herpes I & II get passed around and perhaps have some sort of catalyst, or activating, influence on each other. She does not believe Herpes to be related to cervical cancer. One out of 7900 babies born at Boston Lying In last year, 1980, was done by cesaerian section because of an active Herpes case. One in 5 million cases of Herpes may die from a related cause. There is about 10 times the chance of getting it in an airplane crash. So, avoid oral sex when you have cold sores. She finds that women will use a fear of Herpes as a way of avoiding sex. Men get things most often, but women have the most fear of getting something. Most of these cases turn out to be just fear, and behind it a fear of sex.

A most interesting story of 17 couples in Newton. They are married, have jobs, homes, children. But they have organized themselves in order to get more sexual satisfaction. At the same time they are very conscious of problems that can arise from having so many potential sexual contacts. She has been seeing some of the men for several years. They have regular examinations, but doesn't know what they will do now that the funding for that clinic has been cut. They range from 30's to 50's in age. I want to contact them to learn how they contacted each other originally, how they got started, overcame problems of jealousy, and how it is going now. I want to organize something like this for myself. As do many other people.

Syphilis is another interesting topic. It starts, sometimes, with a simple sore around the genital area. Sometimes nothing. One gets a rash on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet after 6 weeks. Then nothing. It goes to sleep for from 5 to 15 years. It lodges in an organ, or organs. It wakes up and destroys the organ(s). Its simple to cure. Penicillin will do it. Its something you can have and not know. This test, done with blood, takes about a week.

So, I am writing this with the idea of sending it to people that I know and/or am sexually involved with. I hope it will help put an end to some anxiety, and some of the finger pointing. People can have themselves tested, and ask their sexual partners to do the same. In addition, I want to do something about the question of how people can best get their sexual needs met. How to be satisfied and solve some of the problems of health care and emotional care. I feel like Ms C, who had a very positive attitude about sex, and who, sometime during our conversation, told me that people should stop worrying and have fun.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, HOSPITAL AND WELFARE
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January 26, 1982

To Whom It May Concern:

Richard Gardner was seen at the Cambridge Hospital VD Clinic on 12/15/81. His culture and blood tests were negative for gonorrhea and syphilis. He had no symptoms of any other venereal diseases.

Peggy Cutcliffe
Peggy Cutcliffe, R.N.

Clinic hours are 4-6 pm, Tuesday. Call 498-1501 for private appointments on Thursday, 1-3 pm.

I am in the bathroom. Pissing. Glancing to one side I notice someone in the mirror. Not just in the mirror, but reflected from still another mirror. For a moment the identity is unknown. But its only me. From another angle. Almost from behind. Unrecognizable. Its me, but I don't really know it. I don't really know me. Or some of the time, I don't know me. I try to move in a predictable fashion to see different parts of my body. The two mirrors make it confusing. Sometimes I see myself as a doubly reflected person. Someone reflected off the mirror of my past experiences, and reflected off myself, as a mirror for others. But never seeing just myself, or others, without some reflection, or more precisely, ... but the word escapes me. What do I mean? What mirror am I looking into for the answer to this question? The word was in my mind for just a moment. A small movement made it disappear. And now I struggle, moving the mirrors around inside consciousness, attempting to bring it back into view. Who is deciding what word will be used? I wonder if the word will come from my idea of writing the right thing. Is it for my readers? Is it for my idea of who my readers are? Is it for my idea of myself? Is it for me?

Simone tells me of reading Anais Nin's last book. Something about her writing taking her over. Was she nothing but her writing? Was her writing all there was of her? I don't remember exactly how it came out. But she was confronted with the problem of living her life, or living her writing. It became such a big thing for her. It seems that her life was nothing but writing-related things at times. At least she seemed to be expressing this. I read a little about a talk she gave to benefit a feminist organization in Cambridge. It happened at the Old Cambridge Baptist Church. What a time they gave her. The radicals wanted her to come completely over to her side, against men, it seemed. She argued for them to free themselves first from the idea of being on a side and against anyone. Or so it seems to me. I could agree with that.

An hour long talk with Jonathan last night. Simone's cousin. After a short description of the difficulties with Simone, he relates a similar story about himself and Myrna. They talked about and agreed to the idea of having an open relationship at the beginning. But now there is a possibility for him to have something like this. She is against it. Doesn't want it. What will he do? I give him some ideas. But its a little more than he can do. He will probably just see how things go rather than taking an active position. He has to resist his impulses to have anything to do with this other woman. He's afraid of Myrna rejecting him. The other woman is not a sure thing. But he doesn't want the part of Myrna that won't let him have this freedom. He could end up getting the same thing from this new woman. His last girlfriend left him because he wanted to have other relationships. I suggest he think about how he decides on who to have a relationship with.

Sunday, December 20, 1981, page 2

I have been meaning to write about this party, at Linda's, two weeks ago yesterday. It was different from those we have here. It also involved the three men who live in the apartment downstairs. Mark, Brice, and David. I found most of the people there to be very stiff and easily offended. A lot of dancing with sexual messages, but no real feeling. Performance. Judy found it very strange. She left early. Linda really let go of herself. Flirting with every hairy chest there. She was most attracted to a Mr Pink Shirt. The savage, as Lotti called him. This after observing them involved in some sort of fertility rite dance. Later we catch them in a bedroom fondling. She later told me about taking him out on the porch and him taking his pants down. Amazing, considering that a blizzard was going on at the time. All this makes me a bit jealous. I have to ask her about our date after the party. She reassures me. At 3am most people have gone. Those still standing are a bit drunk and/or in stupors. Two people are talking about numbers. Some sort of numerology stuff. Its impossible to calculate at this time, one tells the other. Maximum cube of seven, highest prime non dividable number, one of them mumbles. What floor am I on anyway? Two very attractive female assholes thought me aggressive on my telling them how attracted I was to them. From small planets the only thing you can hear is thump-ta-da-thump-ta-da-thump, I learn from another nearby, but lucid conversation. Lotti lies here with her head on my leg. She doesn't like it here anymore. Interview with Miss MK, a friend of Brice, from the North. Too long, bad, soon to leave, who knows where. No distinguishing remarks about the party. Seldom have I met such a superficial bunch of banannas. Droopily she remarks. Linda emerges with the savage looking type. Pretending, all the time, that nothing is going on. He moves to another room. Lotti thought she was giving him a blowjob. We peeked in every now and then. Pink shirts name is Jeff, alias Big Chief Pink Shirt. Lotti saw them doing some sort of fertility rite. She tries to explain what types of mailing lists I sell. Pink Shirt walks through the room praying, or at least with his hands clasped in a prayerful expression. He's a handsome devil. The sort Linda falls for. Someone asks if I'm the party historian, as they notice me writing. I know about 15 people here. Lotti and I continue our spy game with Linda and Pink Shirt. She thinks he's the sort who will punch me out. Sherry and Marushka thought me much too bold, aggressive even. Steve and Nadine are making out in a chair next to me and Lotti. It all seems a bit mindless compared to the parties on Amory Street. There's a lot more alcohol here. Lotti remarks how Linda doesn't seem to be fixated on me. She seems to have room to breath, unlike Simone, she adds. It wasn't always that way I tell her. Linda is still fixated on the idea of someone. So am I, Lotti sayszes about herself. Steve wants to contact Carol when she's in New York. She gives him the name of her hotel, but he's forgotten her last name. I have the impression of people partying and crashing through life. Stumbling through their allotted days. Falling into things by chance.

Falling into situations. Everything is random and by chance, and everyone wants to believe things are the opposite for them. Each sees the stream of chance in the life of everyone else, but not their own. Each wants to believe that they are in control, that they have a handle on their own personal fate, that things are moving in the direction they want. But I know that a single party, such as this one, can result in enormous changes in one's life. I met Simone at just such a party. I had no idea of what would happen there. A single moments decision, which might have gone completely the other way, led me to go that night with Edwin. This party could be the same for any number of people here. If not this party, then maybe the next. But something completely random will happen sometime. And one will go flying off in that new direction, still believing oneself to be at the controls.

Linda has enough energy for another party. She got it from Mr Pink Shirt. The excitement of a new relationship, plus the tension of me walking around in the middle of it. He's a law school student and is married. He cheats on his wife. Linda flicks buggers at this writer. Nadine describes it as a very human party. And adds that Richard is interested in who's picking up who. She really liked it. People communing with people, not just individuals alone. Its called being a weasel, Lotti retorts, about my interest. Steve wants me to mail him a copy of this. Box 300, GPO, Brooklyn NY 11202.

You look funny with a leaf over your head, Nadine remarks. I'm sitting under a large leafy plant. Leaf, Leaf, over my head. Git away now, or I'll shoot you dead. And my apologies to all you poets.

5am and everyone is gone, but me, Linda, and Mark. In fact, he is totally pissed at me for coming back. I've just given Lotti an escort home. He thought I would be gentleman enough to realize that I wasn't wanted here. It gets very tense. He wonders what things will be like in two more years, from my living like this. He never really explains what the this is. Perhaps he expects me to have heart failure from sexual excess. Or perhaps develop cancer from the anxiety of having many relationships. So the tension continues. Linda looks down at her feet most of the time. With a criticism of me now and then. Several times I ask if she wants me to go. The answer is no each time. Mark seems not to hear this. He continues to pressure me into leaving. He tells me about love. You don't know anything about this, he informs me. You have only base lust, he adds. What Linda and I had this evening is something that everyone but you could see. It was obvious that we shared something special. Something you don't know about because of your preoccupation with pure lust. And on and on he goes. It is my turn. I tell him about how he doesn't notice that Linda wants me to stay. That she doesn't really trust him. He has a mean look in his face, a mean tone to his voice, the whole time. Linda wants me to stay for other reasons. She knows from lots of experience about characters like him. This love that he imagines with her will go

away in a few days. They will feel an odd sort of tension in its place. He has great expectations of the situation, as does Linda. And already they both have fear of not getting what they want. They have turned a few minutes of sitting on a couch and smooching into a great romantic adventure. Its nothing more than their having allowed themselves to let go for awhile. But he can't stand to hear me talk and gets up to leave. Not before informing me that, were he not a gentleman, he'd punch me out. And I have barely had a chance to go at him. Paranoid feelings for an hour or two that he might come back and punch me out. I was surprised that my words hit him so hard. Well, he didn't burn down the house, or shoot me. For some time the sound of people moving around frightened me.

Later, in bed with Linda, I noticed how she said everything she wanted about me, but nothing about Mark. None of the criticisms I've heard about him before. She doesn't trust him and so holds back. He's forced himself on her before. It could happen again. As Ann said, he's a horny young guy who thinks he deserves a woman. Only when we are alone can she say things about him. She does not challenge his claim that she and Mark have what he calls genuine caring for each other. But I know from my experience with her that they will have difficulty talking to each other in a few days.

He's a very well programmed person. He wonders what's wrong with my program by telling me how I should know automatically what was going on with he and Linda, and then bow out gracefully. He sees Linda as someone completely under my control and hopes to rescue her from me. He wonders how Linda could allow herself to be manipulated by me and so trapped in this situation. But he will be glad to save her. This discussion about what people should know, just by being sensitive to the situation, goes on for some time. My response is that I'm completely insensitive, and need to be told exactly what's going on. It doesn't help. He still can't tell me exactly what he wants, except to ask me to leave. Each time I ask Linda if that's what she wants. Each time the answer is no.

Linda agrees with Mark about my not being capable of love. But I think this is a reaction to not getting everything she wants from me. She has gone chasing after love many times since I've known her, and many times before. She's no expert on what love is. She runs after it in desperation and grabs the first thing that even vaguely resembles love. And then has the greatest of expectations for it. Which can't be satisfied. She holds back herself from the very beginning. She always fears it will fail. This contributes to its failure. The other person, who she decides on for having similar qualities, fears the same. The other also holds back. They each notice this holding back on the part of the other, and do more of the same themselves.

So, that's all I have to say about the party at Linda's house, and the house of all those who live, love, laugh, linger, lament, and long there.

Monday, December 21, 1981, page 1

Simone and I were in the bathroom this evening. She's on the toilet. I'm brushing my teeth. She pulls me over, takes down my pants, and sucks on my prick. I get a hairbrush and start brushing her hair. With one foot I begin to kick the garbage can. She twirls the toilet paper roll, the wrong way at first. The paper gets on the floor. She twirls it the other way. It becomes quite amusing. Others in the next room have no idea this is going on. We titillate them with the idea of something having gone on, but only let them guess. I promise to tell everyone later, when the guys leave.

Judy came home from the hospital today. She went in early this morning to have an ovarian cyst removed. I went to a local flower shop and sent her some. Also a card, with a poem. A get well soon card.

Roses are red.
Violets are blue.

Even if you still won't,
I'll always love you!

- Richard

p.s. - get well soon so that I can get back to trying.

Linda is overpowered with feelings of jealousy the last two days. Saturday night I stayed here with Ann. She wanted me to change my plans and stay with her. I would have done it if necessary. But she was only trying to blackmail me. It was done by saying she wouldn't be as amorous the next night, Sunday night, when we had a date. She keeps trying, but I won't do it. Half an hour later, another caller. Anonymous. I say hello and get no response. Two hellos later I get some kissing and lip smacking. A 20 minute conversation of lip, tongue, cheeks, and other facial parts talking. I tend to the orgasmic sounds. The caller to fresher and more playful sounds. It seems like Linda. She denies it the next day. Then its over. She hangs up. It seemed female, and local. Two minutes later another call but its a hangup.

I show Joe and Edwin my postcard from Teri. The note says: From a fantasy in your 81 chronicles, may the new year bring fulfillment. The other side is a naked lady, from behind, bending over, and looking back at the photographer. It was taken about 1925. Edwin thinks it was either a conscious or unconscious message to me. He thinks she wants to get in my pants. Joe thinks the same.

Sunday night phone call from Simone. Another fight. An escalating series of threats and counterthreats. But an interesting thing happens. My threat to talk with Michael and Constance about his being here with her leads to the confession that he was not here at all. She lied. It was to make her feel better. I have seen this happen to her before. We argue. We threaten. I vow to do something. It causes her to recant part of, or some story she's told me. It seems to happen with something everytime we get into this kind of fight. She was with her parents in New Haven. Something has caused them to start talking about sex and to tell