



John Scott G

GAY WHAT?

gnud

Gay What?

or: LGBTQIA+ is a terrible acronym

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gnud

GOLOSIO NONTRADITIONAL
UNIVERSAL DISSEMINATION

“Come here often?”

— *Plato*

(Quote unverified.)

“HOW MANY GAY CHARACTERS are in your stories?” is often asked of me via email.

“It’s probably the same percentage as in the general population,” I write back.

“Doesn’t seem that way,” is the reply.

“Unless a characters’ sexual orientation is a necessary part of the story,” I respond, “it doesn’t get mentioned. Which means you might be reading about a gay character without being aware of it.”

“Oh, I would always be aware of it,” was the comeback.

Point taken, but I stand by my explanation. I don’t care about anyone’s sexual alignment, and that means most of my characters don’t care, either.

I have a long history of not worrying about who loves who. Or why. Or how. This does leave me somewhat uninformed. When it comes to the whole gay thing, I probably don’t even know what I don’t know (including whether it’s okay to use a phrase like “the whole gay thing”) but that doesn’t mean I’m totally in the dark.

UNIVERSITY DAYS

My best friend in college was gay, which led to a few interesting conversations. For example, we found we had the same enemies, socially and politically. We both hated bigots. While he may have loathed the GOP on a more visceral level than I did, we both recognized that Republicans were intellectually challenged and morally bereft while being nosy and obnoxious, especially about sex, and most especially about other people's sex.

“All rethuglicans have constipation of the brain and diarrhea of the mouth,” as my friend put it. This is still true today.

We didn't have much discussion of the gay community, as it was called back then, but we did see some gay themed movies. I was working my way through college at a company that supplied university film societies with experimental cinema, so I had access to titles my friend had heard about but had never seen.

On several weekends, I took my 16mm projector to his place and we watched films by Maya Deren, Curtis Harrington, Jean Cocteau, and Kenneth Anger. For example, we viewed Anger's *Fireworks, Inauguration of the Pleasure*

Dome, Scorpio Rising, Invocation of My Demon Brother, and Lucifer Rising.

He thanked me for screening the films for him, and we talked a bit about this cinematic genre. He explained how imagery in the films was interpreted differently by gays and straights.

He said, “Truthfully, this oeuvre has too much symbolism.” When it came to movies, we liked Hollywood flicks. “The bigger and badder the better” was our motto.

Typically, we got high and went to see “big screen crap,” as we called it. We had to get stoned because we were watching dreck like *Mommie Dearest, The Wiz, Jonathan Livingston Seagull, 1941, Logan’s Run, Can’t Stop the Music, Coffy*, (we loved Pam Grier, but she made a lot of Grade Z flicks), *Pretty Maids All in a Row, Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, and disco-kitsch like *Xanadu*.

Unfortunately, once we began our careers, a few things conspired to keep us apart: jobs, family, his death. You know, the usual.

MARRIAGE

After college, I met, dated, and married a lovely woman whose two best girlfriends did the

same. Society wasn't yet enlightened enough to recognize their union, but they claimed to be married and we respected their commitment.

The four of us double dated. In talking about our lives, we found we shared the same enemies, but there was only one conversation that related to TDBATS (the differences between all the sexes). (See, I can create an acronym that's just as bad as LGBTQIA+.)

They convinced my wife and I to go see *Pretty Woman* with them. The initial reviews were scathing, but they had seen a preview and said it was good fun. And they were correct.

After enjoying the film, we all went back to our place. As we were sitting around talking, there was a lull in the conversation, and I asked this question: "During the scenes where it's just Julia Roberts and Richard Gere, do you guys like looking at both of them?"

Without glancing at each other or batting an eye, they said, "Oh yeah!" simultaneously.

Then, they asked me the same question, but they did so non-verbally by tilting their heads and leaning toward me while slightly raising their eyebrows.

"They're very good-looking," I said.

“Yes,” they said with knowing half-smiles.

“I mean, ‘I’m not gay, but’...” I grinned while spouting that cliché and got a chuckle from them. “...but that is definitely a handsome guy.”

Once again, circumstances kept us apart: jobs, divorce, their deaths. You know, the usual.

REELING FROM THE YEARS

Throughout my career as a freelance writer, I have had more than 300 clients. Probably fifteen to twenty percent of them were gay, but to that I say, “So what?” because I didn’t need to know about their lives and loves—I only needed info about their marketing requirements.

Most freelancer/client relationships last a few weeks or months, and some might continue for a few years, but I had one client for 32 years.

This wonderful person employed me as a freelance writer in every marketing department she was in during those three decades. Over the years, I met her wife, visited their lovely home, petted their cat, went out to eat with them—all normal stuff between people who like and respect each other.

Other than discussing the disgusting nature of the bigots infesting our country, we didn’t talk

much about the LGBTQIA+ community, but we sure as hell had the same enemies. BTW, we still exchange text messages about the conservaturd pestilence in this country. We also share pics of rose bushes in our backyards.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR

There was another client relationship that lasted nearly a decade. The woman's job of facilitating online communication led to a lot of interesting PR work for me, but you need to know that her job required her to work from about six to eleven each evening.

Okay, that was part one of this section.

My client's life partner was a superb singer who I had reviewed prior to knowing anything about their relationship. My critique had been positive, so both wives were happy. (They called each other wife, or wifey [unsure of the spelling] [wow, it's fun to use brackets inside a parenthetical].)

Okay, that was part two of this section, and here comes the fun part...

In my capacity as a PR geek, I sometimes was compelled to attend events in the Southern California area. One of my clients was signed to

a record company back East and “the label” booked her into a Hollywood nightclub for a CD release party. The event wasn’t open to the public; only music industry scum and the entertainment press would be in the audience.

The record label insisted I be there. “It’s absolutely essential you attend,” they told me. “And you will need to get there two hours before showtime.”

“No can do,” I replied. “I’ve got a prior engagement, but don’t worry, I’ll be there before the talent begins warbling.”

They weren’t pleased. I said take it or leave it, hoping they’d uninvite me.

I remained invited.

Damn.

Okay, I said to myself. If I must be at this shindig, I want to go with a woman who would make everyone take notice. But you can’t take a date to an event where you might have to work, or worse, remain after the event is over.

Then, it struck me: Denice, the wife of my client, was a dime. A ten. A honey. Seriously, everyone—gay or straight—agreed she was hot. And she was in the music business. Plus, we both knew this wasn’t a date, it was business. In

addition, it was something she could do in the evening when her wife was almost always busy. This seemed like the perfect solution to my dilemma.

I called my client and explained the situation to her. She listened attentively and then said something I never thought I'd hear in real life. She said to me, "Take my wife, please."

I nearly dropped the phone.

When I got done laughing, I told her, "That was the best use of the Henny Youngman line since Henny Youngman invented it."

"Why, thank you," she said.

"Give me Denice's cell and I'll call her."

My client said, "Oh, that's no problem. Hang on." She turned away from the phone and shouted, "Hey Denni?!" and proceeded to explain the whole situation to Denice at the top of her lungs.

Somewhere, off in the distance, I heard a voice say, "Grayte, ell emuhm uhrdy strin n myair," after which my client came back on the line to say, "She said, 'Great, tell him I'm already starting on my hair'."

"That's cool," I said to her. "Yes!" I said to myself.

Okay, so, I am now all set to tell you about “The Adventures of Denice & John at the Promo Event Thingy,” but I am sensing a desire to take a short scenic excursion to discuss the hair. Correct me if I’m wrong.

LOCKS

Alright, Denice’s hair. First of all, there was a great deal of it. When she left a room, it took another half-second for her hair to exit. The tresses were waist length, of course. Thick, rich, full. Three layers. The layer closest to her body was straight. Well, it was probably also gay, but it was linear.

The second layer of her hair was a sparkling aura of wavealiciousness, which may not be a word but should be, and the third layer was ringlets tied with bows. Actual cloth bows. Antique ribbons, I found out later. From the turn of the century. No, not our century, the previous one. These were circa 1897-1903 Amish country go-to-meeting hair ribbons, I was informed.

NIGHTCLUB EVENT THINGY

Denice and I arrived at the club twenty minutes before curtain. There were a couple of

irritated glances from the record label rabble, but all the guests were happy. Of course they were happy—there was an open bar and hors d’oeuvres. If you put music industry dweebs and music press nerds into a club with free drinks and snacks, the only problem you’ll have is getting them to leave.

Denice and I went through the club and introduced ourselves to anyone who was wearing expensive clothes. We may have imbibed some of the free alcohol. Suddenly, it was...

Showtime.

My client and her band hit the stage. The band was excellent. My client, the lead singer, could hit most of the notes. Most of the time.

The forty-minute set received moderate applause. Suddenly, my client was whisked away by her staff. “Gotta get her to the airport,” one client handler said. “We barely have time to get her to a video interview in San Diego!” Everyone I worked with was now gone from the club, which meant I didn’t need to be there.

I told Denice we could leave any time.

“Cool,” she said, and then her expression turned mischievous. “Do you want to slip out, or *do you want everyone to notice?*” she asked.

“Interesting,” I said. “Is this going to involve tipping over tables and screaming?”

“No,” she said with a lovely but evil grin. “I can be covertly overt. Come on, this’ll be fun.”

She grabbed my arm and we went around the throng, bidding everyone a fond and heartfelt farewell. We made our way through the joint until we ended up near the entrance, which would now be our exit point.

“I’ve got one more thing,” Denice told me. “Wait here.” She glided across the nightclub to a woman in the far corner. They hugged and whispered. They shouted with glee. They held hands and stepped back as if checking out their outfits. After one more quick hug, Denice walked almost halfway back to me, stopped with a loud “Oh!” and turned to the woman. She said loudly, “Tell Chantal I love her new tapestry. It’s very erotic!” With a radiant smile, Denice floated over to me, took my arm, and we walked out.

Everyone watched us depart.

Well, everyone watched Denice depart. But I know that they all directed at least one glance at me.

Those who knew Denice asked themselves, “I wonder if John knows?” Those who didn’t

know Denice told themselves, “John must have more money than we thought.”

On the drive home, Denice and I chatted about the band and avoided discussing my client’s singing prowess. Sure, let’s call it prowess.

I pulled my car up to the wrought iron fencing in front of Denice’s building. Obviously, there was no need to invite me up for tea or something.

Denice said, “I had a good time.”

“Me too,” I said. “We should do this again.”

“We should!” Denice said.

And then we began talking at the same time.

“Are you going to...”

“There’s a Grammy party...”

“That Grammy party next...”

“Next week at the...”

“At that hotel in...”

“Santa Monica, and we could...”

“We could go together and...”

“I’ll call you!”

“I’ll call you!”

We began going out. We weren’t dating, we were event-attending. Parties, concerts, galleries, wine-tasting, book store signings, and dinners.

There were opportunities for us to be each other's wing man. Wing woman? Whatever.

"Girl in a miniskirt," I might say with a nod towards the room behind her. She could turn and check out "the talent," as she called it. And because she did the same for me, we were happily sharing.

During all our misadventures in public, we talked about music, movies, television, books, plays, lawyers, business, politics, religion, fashion, philosophy, even gossip.

We shared ideas about life's joys, pains, laughs, sorrows, loves, hatreds, triumphs, and tragedies.

The one thing we didn't talk much about was the LGBTQIA+ community, except...

Except to remark on the fact that we had the same enemies.



About the Author

IN A WORLD GONE BAD, John Scott G is a sore sight for eyes, a gust of stale air, and a category 5 hurricane that is due to make landfall on your noggin in the next few hours.

Every day, this guy writes a bunch of words and puts them into phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. He often uses spellcheck, grammar, punctuation, and other stuff approved by Strunk and White.

He would tell you all about his most recent story except he's too busy writing the next one.



JSG with his first mechanical writing tool. (Photo: Howard Gruen)

*For erotica from Victoria Sarkozy-Reiss,
literary outrage from John Scott G,
and snark from Jimmy Ray:*

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