



**Wild & Sublime® Podcast, Episode 2**  
**“Getting Laid During COVID, Part 2: Long-Term Relationships”**  
**Aug 6, 2020**

**Are you and your partner both working from home, maybe with kids underfoot? How's your libido been? Panelists discuss sex in long-term relationships during the COVID pandemic. Plus the story of one sexy afternoon at Burning Man, and Karen's Sermon on the Pubic Mound about being present in our bodies in the moment.**

**Host: Karen Yates**

**Guest: Matthew Amador, David, Tazima Parris, Sarah Sloane**

**Tazima Parris**

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**Matthew Amador**

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**Sarah Sloane**

Are you actually separating yourself out from all of the day-to-day BS to invest time with your partner in creating something exciting?

**Karen Yates**

Welcome to Wild & Sublime, a sexy spin on infotainment®, no matter your preferences, orientation, or relationship style. This podcast is based on the popular live Chicago show. Each week I'll chat about sex and relationships with citizens from the world of sex positivity, with spicy additions from storytellers and musicians. I'm Karen Yates.

This episode: Getting Laid During COVID, Part Two: Long-Term Relationships. What do you do when your libido drops? Or increases during these stressful times? How are you handling your

intimate relationships? And how do you stay sexy when your kids are always around. Plus, a story about a bike parade — Burning Man style — and my Sermon on the Pubic Mound®. Keep listening.

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[Music ends] Now for the panel: Getting Laid During COVID, Part Two: Long-Term Relationships. If you were with us on Episode One, we had a pretty lively conversation about how to navigate the COVID minefield of dating and hooking up during these times. Our panel picks up the conversation again to discuss how intimacy and libido in long-term relationships have been impacted by sheltering in place, working from home, and the kids. I'll be joined again by sex and intimacy Coach Tazima Paris, sex positive psychotherapist Matthew Amador, and sex educator and Director of Operations and Communications of the dating site #Open, Sarah Sloane.

Today we're gonna be talking a little bit about long-term relationships in general during these times and how COVID and the ensuing sheltering in place and all of the things that have come from this have affected libido levels. There might be tremendous financial insecurity that has cropped up for folks. Maybe there's just fear in general... anxiety about COVID-19.

Guests, what are you noticing among clients and people that you interact with around libido and desire to have sex? Sarah, why don't we start with you?

### **Sarah Sloane**

Thank you. I have been really amazed at how people are navigating this. This is like a masterclass in how people handle trauma that we're living through right now. And it's really important to remember that when we're stressed out and when we're traumatized, our experiences of what we need and what we're craving go literally all across the board. I've talked to folks who have zero libido, and many of them are living with somebody who has a lot of libido right now. You know, some of us handle stress by wanting to go and experience more pleasure, and for a lot of people who are very sexual people, that is a totally legitimate way of... of like, them getting some self care needs, but I think it can also be a way that... that some people want to find some control in some area of their life to make up for where they're missing it in other parts.

But, the other part of that is that for a lot of us, trying to figure out how to be intentionally intimate with another person is really, really difficult when we're literally living in this traumatic space. So, I think I've heard a lot of people who have shamed themselves about either not wanting to have sex, or who are feeling shamed when they say, "I wanna have sex," but the people in their lives don't necessarily want it so it's... it's kind of like our libidos are doing what our libidos are doing, and then we're adding on this level of shame and guilt on top of it.

### **Karen Yates**

Yeah... And thank you for just saying the word "trauma," because I would be completely remiss not to bring up Black Lives Matter as part of this trauma that is encompassing everything. People are also reacting to that. I mean, this conversation is specifically about COVID, but there is... there is so much going on in the world and we are physical creatures living in this world. Yeah, I just... I wanted to bring that up. So, Tazima why don't you jump in?

### **Tazima Parris**

What I'm seeing is, people are saying like, "This situation is ruining my relationship," or "things were so good before this time and now it's terrible." And what I have been observing really, is that this time together, extra time together, not being able to do what we've... our normal routines, our normal distractions, is actually showing us what our relationships are. It's actually revealing what's really there, what's been there all all the time, except we've been distracted. So, it's not so much that this situation is ruining it. Yes, it's giving us several more challenges to deal with, several more things to think about, several more stressors. So, our level of resilience was at a certain level with regular stress back in the day when it was just, you know, traffic sucks. And now it's: "I can't leave." So it's... it's a different level of stress. We're not as distracted. You know, what happened to me and what I'm seeing reflected in my clients is the sense of, "Wow, I was doing so much before and I missed a bunch of things. I missed the way that it hurts when my partner says this to me, or the way that I lash out when I feel really angry and scared. And now it's all sort of bubbling up to the surface." So, the... the main thing that I'm noticing here is, like Sarah said, with the shaming of oneself, it's not so much that it's... let's open up our eyes, pay attention to what's actually happening, and then start trying to figure out what we're gonna do next,

### **Karen Yates**

Matthew, what's going on in your world?

### **Matthew Amador**

I'm kind of noticing how everything that's happening right now— and thank you for bringing up Black Lives Matter in addition to the pandemic— it's making us, I feel, kind of more aware of... of our own limitations. And in that... and the way that that's kind of like, combating our own cultural expectations. Like, expectations of self, like, "Oh, we should be able to do this, we should be able to operate, quote, unquote, "normally." It's expectations and denial, kind of like, comin' together. Really, it's kind of like, when you have like, a web browser open. And you have like, a couple pages that... a couple tabs that are still there, and you don't use them, but they still kind of drain some of the bandwidth.

So, we have some big pages. We have Black Lives Matter. We have Coronavirus and COVID. We have everybody's individual tabs that they have going on. But then if you try to just pull up a simple google page and just google, "How do I cook dinner today?" It's gonna take a lot more time. It's similar in terms of how it affects other aspects of our life that we don't think automatically to be connected, like our sex lives, like the way that we... just communicate with others. One way that our bodies react when we're fatigued, when we're exhausted, is we start snapping at other people that we don't intend to snap at. That is one way that our body is... is behaving holistically. And this is, I think, a lot of people's desire, like their libido when it kind of dips is kind of an example of that. Like, we don't think that sex necessarily... directly connected to everything else that's happening in life. But, because we have this kind of bandwidth that's being used by everything else that's happening, we don't always have the energy in our bodies to respond the way that we expect that we're going to respond. We may snap at someone that we love, we may just not feel that we're as aroused or just interested in sex. And those are both kind of examples of the same kind of like, fatigue, emotional fatigue. One thing I'm hoping that this will do is in time, people might find additional compassion for themselves, allowing themselves to feel a certain way and recognize that, you know, it's not ideal, but this is where I am.

### **Karen Yates**

Yeah, for my own self, I'm experiencing a deeper acceptance through this time, of like, I... I can't do any better, you know. Before all of this began, I was really kind of driven. And I'm seeing that my capacity to do that... I don't... I don't have the ability anymore. It's just not... it's... it's just not there. And I've had to accept that. And I was... I was kind of wandering around in a fog for a long time, like, kind of, like almost like, kind of bouncing off the walls like okay, "I'm gonna do this now and..." kind of losing track. And I'm finding I'm having a new relationship with myself and a new awareness of my body. There's just a lot...a new awareness of the natural world outside my... my condo. It's been a great opportunity to get clear. Tazima made a point a little bit ago

about this... revealing what was already there. What happens, what's happening now, what do you do as things... as things are starting to reveal themselves in a relationship that has been maybe steady or not steady, or... I would love for folks to jump in on that.

### **Tazima Parris**

I want to make a distinction here about... There are long-term committed relationships where people are away from each other, and then there are those that are live-in. And we have both of those situations happening. And there are literally people who have long-term committed relationships who were living apart and decided to move together because of the COVID situation and wanting to have, you know, their germ pod in the same place, their biome doing... doing a similar thing. So, one thing that's changed, no matter what situation, live-in or not live-in, there is a dynamic tension of away and together that either skewed way to the away or skewed way to the together. And so people are dealing with that aspect of it. And so like, what to do about that. One place to start is to recognize: we're in this soup of all kinds of emotions all the time every day.

Or, I feel this constant desire to be with my partner that I just can't be with all the time like I want to. Or, the couple times a week that we used to do now is, you know, a little bit longer time, or whatever. The... the ratio of away and together is different. And so, really addressing that straight up and say, "Hey, how do we wanna handle this? I used to go to work, and then coming back together at the end of the day gave us something different to talk about. We don't have that anymore, or it's different in a certain way. Or, we're both on the same websites and discussing all this shit that's happening over time. And how do we do something different? How do we do something for us?" How do we create something that creates that dynamic tension that stimulates attraction for each other, that stimulates something other than what's in the new cycle, stimulate something that's literally just YouTube. So what's the special thing that y'all used to do that you can now recreate in this time of isolation, restaurants kind of being open, kind of being able to get around, maybe not. And decide what... pick one thing, you can just start with one thing, one special thing that you two can do or you and your... your... all your people, your buddies, your pals... can do that would represent like, something of the couple-ness or of the... the group-ness or whatever it is of that relationship that you can actually experience together.

And then plan real time apart for those who are living together. Say, "Hey, my time-off time is, you know, from nine to one, like, I'm gonna be doing my own thing, please don't interrupt me." We really need it. Even if we love, love, love, love, love that person. We really need the... the

away time in order to have the together time be more special and more awesome and actually create that attraction.

**Karen Yates**

Mm. I love it. Sarah, do you wanna jump in?

**Sarah Sloane**

Yeah, briefly. I just wanted to note that I think that what I took from that is something that's been so critical in... in all the work that I've done as a sexuality educator, and that's *create intentionality*. You know, it's... when... when we default into things is when relationships of all kinds tend to start feeling like they're being taken for granted, or we don't necessarily have a chance to... to get that newness of... of spirit that is what makes long-term relationships work. And it's creating this intentional stepping away from our normal day-to-day. Because, when our normal day-to-day is, we're rolling from one room of our house to work in, to the next room of our house to live in, to... and there's no separation, there's no date night, there's no, you know, like we can't have the babysitter come over and take care of kids and go out for a meal. The... the default I think, for so many people is to just kinda let it happen, and let that be the thing that creates conflict. And I think that also has a lot to do with libido.

You know, it's when... when I talked to folks before this, who were looking for, like, how do I spice up my relationship? One of the first things that I suggested is, "Are you actually separating yourself out from all of the day-to-day BS to invest time with your partner in creating something exciting?" And... and, so that intentionality is the first step. I think for folks who are kind of feeling like they need to figure out how to right-size, it's... it's, "Am I making time for my relationship, in the same way that I am making time for myself, that I'm making time for my friendships to be sustained?"

**Karen Yates**

Yeah, it's... it's sorta like, don't let COVID happen to you, you happen to COVID. Like... like really put yourself... locate yourself in the center of this.

**Sarah Sloane**

When we're in times of trauma, one of the responses like, I... As somebody who does a lot of work with trauma, one of the responses that I tend to fall into is, freeze. So, I just kind of sit there and then the world starts happening, and then I feel less and less empowered. And one of the ways that I try to shift that is to find a thing that I can do that... that can help. My partner and

I live separately, but we've been together for six-and-a-half years. We're still seeing each other once a week because we both solo isolate when we're not together. But we.. we've kind of had to look at how we come together, because there's so much stress that's lapping into that... that, you know, our intimacy was getting skewed as well. So it's really about like, "Okay, what is the thing that I can do in this moment to create the kind of environment that my relationship with my sexuality is gonna flourish?"

### **Karen Yates**

Matthew, do you have any... anything to add?

### **Matthew Amador**

Yeah, I think it's important to keep the conversations dynamic, like to keep having them, because you're gonna change from week to week. I've seen this... one thing I've noticed with... while since sheltering in place started here in Chicago... is, people really have gone through like, multiple waves, multiple phases of mourning. Like, the first one was, I don't know, maybe more about distraction when people were more like, concerned about, I don't know, toilet paper. But then, like, phase two, it was like, "Okah, you know, it turns out toilet paper really wasn't so much as important as I thought. Maybe it's more... you know what, it turns out I actually kinda need some structure around the house, maybe. Maybe I just need to have like, a separate place to work from home." And then they're like, "Yeah, you know, that was cool and all, but now I really just need to get touched." [laughter]

Or maybe at some point in there, there's an aspect of being like, "No, you know what, I actually just need to have a point to be like, this sucks. This sucks. I need to have an actual time to mourn and be like, this is sad." And that's very real. And having these conversations with your partners... just kind of an acknowledgment that, "Hey, this is kind of what I need now. You know what, let's check in again in about like, two, three weeks."

### **Karen Yates**

What happens when you are living with extended family, children, all sharing one space 24/7? I mean, this is a very real thing. Plus, then you throw in the school system and having to school your kids. Sometimes it falls to one person in the relationship to be the, you know, overseer of the education. Maybe that person also has a job. I mean, I think the... the first response is, "Oh, to hell with sex." But, there's definitely... I mean, I know folks who are still very much having an active sex life even in the midst of, you know, multiple households and, you know,

multiple-person households and stuff and everything. Let's chat a little bit about navigating that, sexually.

### **Tazima Parris**

So I wanna jump in and... and mention something that a client of mine let me know that she was doing, is that there are five families that all have kids. And so they're rotating the kids to different houses so that at least one of the sets of parents, or a couple of the sets of parents have alone time with no kids in the house. That's that's a PSA, FYI, I wanna let you know that's a thing that people are doing. So you may wanna pull your group of folks to see if their way of isolating... it works and is compatible with yours before you do such a thing.

Some of my clients who are parents have historically had an open-door policy with their kids. And saying like, you can come to us whenever. And for certain ages that makes total sense, and for... and for specific kinds of needs, that also makes sense. And, there is an opportunity for you to modify that, because you need to, which, I'm... I'm bringing this up in context of self-care, cause I also wanted to make mention of each person being responsible for what they need, instead of trying to put that on the other people in their world. Like, I need a hug from you, so that I can be okay. That person may not be able to... whether it's a small person or a large person, or, you know, an older person or a younger person, it... it doesn't matter they may not be able to give that to you. So what do you do, creating some other options? So, masturbation comes up, you know, you may not be able to have sexual contact with a partner in your home even though you live together, or whatever kind of touching or care... physical contact that you need... it's oxygen mask time, it's time for us to put the oxygen mask on your... on yourself first before helping others. This is so critical. And this will also help people with... I call it the pleasure cup where you fill up your own pleasure cup, and then you can give from the overflow. So then when that kid comes and is like, "I have this urgent.. ahhh..." and if you already have your pleasure cup filled up, you won't be like, "Ah, get away from me!" You... you can more resiliently respond to that person who's coming to request your attention time... or space or sexual attention. [laughter]

### **Karen Yates**

It's funny, you're talking and the sirens are going off in the background. [laughter]

### **Tazima Parris**

It's an emergency! [laughter]



**Karen Yates**

And... the other thing...

**Matthew Amador**

Actually, that's actually an alert. My pleasure cup is overflowing right now. [laughter] I need to empty it and then return it to its proper place. [laughter]

**Karen Yates**

You know, it's reminding me, I got an e-blast from a sex toy company that actually addressed the "Our sex toy is great because you can take it into the shower by yourself! And it's waterproof and you can masturbate with it. Isn't that great?" I was like, yeah, that is great, if you've got, you know, 10 people living in your house and you want to get off by yourself. That is an... thank you! Thank you, Minna. [laughter]

**Sarah Sloane**

It's... it's real. It's real.

**Tazima Parris**

And, not only for masturbation— the shower is also good for crying. You need that grief moment. And masturbate and crying. [laughter]

**Matthew Amador**

Since 1979, that is my go-to. [laughter]

**Sarah Sloane**

I was gonna say that's real. [laughter] When all of this really started, I actually was consulting originally but as a... as a process of having lost another job, I'm now full-time as a Director of Operations and Communications for a dating app. And one of the things that we started doing really early on was, we realized, this is gonna totally change the make-up of how people are connecting. And... and we started talking about, like, how do you date when you're isolated? How do you... how do you engage? And... and that wasn't just about like, oh, you wanna connect with somebody who's outside of your house, you can't physically. It also affected like, how people in marriages, in long-term relationships that... that are lacking privacy could rethink some of what sex is. And so, you know, one of the things that we were talking about is like, there are lots of really discreet ways to be a little bit sparkly sexual with a partner. I'm a big fan of dirty texting, 'cause you can do that in front of your kids...

**Karen Yates**

Mm.

**Sarah Sloane**

...or in front of your parents. And, you can have a really sexy conversation with your partner who's in the same room, with a level of privacy.

**Karen Yates**

Hot.

**Sarah Sloane**

You know, there... there's lots of ways that we can expand, thinking about what our sexual... like, what is sex and how do we get that need met? And some of that might be like, "Oh, we need a quick release, let's hop in the shower with our rechargeable vibe, or with some silicone lube or whatever it is that we need." But, I think that we also can be creative about how we make that time. I love the suggestion of having the parents sharing. I have a colleague who... she and her husband have two kids, and she was feeling really, really frazzled, and actually when... apparently they had a conversation with the parents, who were like, "We can totally take the kids." And so it's... sometimes it's finding somebody else that you can be honest about, like, "Hey, we need our alone time." And the cool thing is if you have kids in the house, or you have roommates in the house, you're actually setting an example of, "How do we create healthy boundaries to ensure that our needs get met?" Your kids hopefully are gonna learn like, "Hey, my moms can't have time to themselves without like, letting me know, but it's really important to them, so I'm gonna respect their boundary." And hopefully that gives them the skills to be able to set boundaries with other people as they age and as they become adults. So we can actually look at this as like, it's really a pro-relationship, pro-family thing for us to do to set those boundaries in order to make sure we're getting our needs met.

**Karen Yates**

Wow, Sarah, that is an awesome point that you bring up, because we've done shows in the past about, you know, the sex lies that people have grown up with, and a lot of it is around repression and shame around sex. And I know the audiences were asking in that show like, "God, how do... we how do we have a... a sex positive household?" This is the beginning. I mean, you can use this as an opportunity to say, "Hey, we... you know, we the adults need to be alone. This is important. You know, we have a special... know, relationship... special time with

each other," and you can use that as a launching point. That's a beautiful idea. I also want to say as we wrap this up, what are some final thoughts?

**Tazima Parris**

I want to say something about the myth of spontaneity. I love what Sarah was saying about being intentional. In my practice, I talk about scheduling alone time, scheduling sex or intimate time, play time, adult play time. There's this myth that at some point, sex was spontaneous. Sex has never been spontaneous! You don't accidentally, "Oh, wow, we're gonna have sex!" No, you knew that there was gonna be a date. You took an extra shower. There was... it was never spontaneous! There was a question mark, it wasn't guaranteed... and, sex now in a long-term committed relationship is not guaranteed. So nothing really has changed, except you just took the dates and the intentionality out of it. So, let's not try to talk about, you know, "Well it's not as spontaneous if we plan it." No, it's fine if you plan it, it's just... you can use those... those sexy texts... and by the way, there's an app called Flirtmoji and it has some really sexy, very sexy pics that you can send back and forth— it's very cute— including BDSM stuff.

**Karen Yates**

By the way, audience, we're... we... we're on video and we can see that all of us are notating this... We're all just gonna... write this down... [laughter]

**Tazima Parris**

I'm gonna send one to Karen now! [laughter]

**Matthew Amador**

Oh, are you? Oh, god, what are you gonna... what are you gonna send to me?

**Tazima Parris**

But yes, so... so it's... don't worry about the spontaneity, be intentional. Just create space.

**Matthew Amador**

Oh my god, there's a sexy taco. [laughter] Like, it's dripping.

**Karen Yates**

Oh, I see. You see... this... this is what we need.

**Matthew Amador**

Ooh.

**Karen Yates**

We need the sexy dripping taco.

**Matthew Amador**

Oh, I was gonna add one more thing in terms of... with kids in the household. I think there's a lot of value towards a lot of parents just wanting things to seem like there is no change, like wanting to keep consistency, wanting to keep stability. And yeah, there's... there's so much value in that. I also think that there is additional value in showing how you can cope when something happens, how sometimes switching things up and changing some rules just to adapt to it... I think there's a lot of value to that, that you can have with your kids as well. I totally get that you don't want... I mean, nobody wants their children to have to, for... as an example, not have a birthday party, but look at how many wonderful ways parents and communities have rallied around... even birthday party parades that have happened. Like, that is an example of a way that has incorporated change into the family dynamic in a way that's super positive. And, while a lot of us may be a little more remiss when it's to benefit ourselves, like when it's through sex, when it's through establishing... just different boundaries for right now, I would encourage them to kind of think "Oh, well, no, this actually might be a good way to kind of teach them." It's not denying, necessarily. It's educational.

**Karen Yates**

Thank you. And I can see that Tazima has sent me a whip emoji, lube emoji, and...

**Tazima Parris**

Furry handcuffs.

**Karen Yates**

Furry handcuffs. Thank you all. Tazima, Sarah, Matthew, thank you.

[Music under] You'll find information about our panelists and a transcript of this episode in the show notes at [wildandsublime.com](http://wildandsublime.com), as well as articles, show pictures, and more.

[Music ends] The entire unedited panel interview will be on our Patreon membership site at the \$10 a month level. Help support us and our message of sex positivity, and get cool stuff like sex toy video reviews, live zoom discussions as part of the community experience, and more. Link in

the show notes. Next episode — dropping in a week — we'll learn about a form of touch based therapy that helps clients get into their body more fully during sex, plus a whole lot more.

Next, this storyteller appeared at our very first show, October 10th, 2018, and wowed the audience with his performance. David is the co-curator of OUTspoken, an LGBTQ storytelling series in Chicago. Enjoy.

### **David**

[Applause] I grew up with... with very conservative parents, I mean, we're... just very traditional. I grew up being taught that a person only has sexual relations with their spouse after they're married, and nobody else. And, I remember as a child, very distinctly, my mother telling me that nobody should ever see a person naked, except their doctor and their spouse. [laughter] She said it would be better to be killed than for people to see you naked. [laughter] Better to be killed than for people to see you naked. And, I don't believe this, but I just... [laughter] But I... I... and I'm not comfortable naked alone in my own house. [laughter] It's just... it's just not... not for me. So this... this was my childhood. And yeah, I love my parents, but this is their value system. I like going to Burning Man. [applause] I don't know if you all know Burning Man. But, one of the things at Burning Man, there's radical self expression, and many people... that means nudity. So you... there's a lot of... a lot of naked people around you. And that... that's great.

And two... well, two years ago was the last time I was at Burning Man. It was my Burn Mitzvah, it was my 13th Burning Man. [laughter] And I go for a couple reasons. I like to be creatively inspired, which, you know, happens to me all the time. And another thing is, I believe it's important to do things that make you uncomfortable and can lead to personal growth. So, two years ago at Burning Man, I decided I was gonna do something naked in public. And it really was very challenging for me, but I... I decided to do this. And the event was called Critical Dicks Parade, [laughter] which was answered... Critical Tits, where there used to be parades of angry topless women yelling and screaming and being angry while being topless. So the guys decided to kinda make fun of it with their own parade with everything showing.

So I decided to go to this. And, so it's the middle of the afternoon in the... the desert, completely covered with... with sunscreen to prepare.... yes, well, take care of yourself. [laughter] And then I got on my bike, which is a very unnatural thing to do naked. [laughter] Some people have experienced this, I take it, by the laughing. Kind of adjust and prepare and get ready. And I got on the bike, and I start the pedal and all I thought about was my penis, my penis, my penis. I couldn't stop obsessing. But I... I did it. And I went to the... the center of Burning Man, by the

man, where you meet up for this event, and there were probably about 900 naked men on bikes. I'd say 95% of them were gay. And... okay, so we're each given a little map, and the way this works is, you take the map and you follow this, kind of, circuitous path, in a... like a parade, like a naked men parade to a camp, and at this camp, you all get off your bikes and you have a party!

And then at a certain time you got back on your bikes, another circuitous parade, another party! And that... that's how you spend the afternoon... going, you know, bike rides party. So I get to the first... first party, and I have one drink. It's daytime, I don't wanna get day drunk, I don't wanna mess up my evening, I don't wanna get dehydrated. But I wanna loosen up a little bit because I'm very uncomfortable, very, very self-conscious. And have a little bit of food there and there's dancing, and people are talking to me, people are very friendly, they're talking to me, but they're talking like you're at a party, like you're not naked, [laughter] but you're naked, but they're talking like you're not naked, but you're naked! But you're pretending like you're not. [laughter] So... so I'm.... I'm going with this, just pretending like it everyone's got clothes and I got clothes. [laughter]

Some... some guy comes over and he starts talking to me, very handsome guy around my age from L.A, nice face, kind of gray hair, hairy chest... Paul. And we talk for a bit, have a nice visit, and he gives me a kiss on the cheek, and I said "Oh, thanks. That's the nicest thing that's happened in a long time." Because as of Burning Man, I'd been in a very long-term relationship. When I was at Burning Man, I was single and it had been a while for me. So it's just nice to have that, you know, that peck on the cheek, and positive attention as a man of a certain age. A lot of times I feel pretty invisible, and as an introvert, that's okay, but sometimes it's nice to know that you actually do exist and are visible to other people. So I thanked him and went on.

Parade, party... about the fourth or fifth party, people... a lotta people are really drunk, and it's getting kinda wild. And, I see the guy from the first stop... first I've seen him since then. He comes over, and he's very drunk. And he comes up to me, says hello, and gives me this very passionate kiss. And we're both naked, and I'm.. and it's in public and there's people around, and I'm just uncomfortable, but I'm there to get out of my comfort zone. And I kinda look around, and there are other people kissing. There's people doing all sorts of stuff: people dancing, people talking, nobody cares. It's all adults. Really, nobody cares. Nobody's paying attention. So I kind of get into it and we... we kiss a little bit, and while he's kissing me, he kind of starts to play with my dick. [laughter]

And, I'm... I'm getting excited and very, very self-conscious, and he looks at me and he goes, "David, I really wanna suck your dick." And I said, "No, I can't do that." He goes, "You sure?" I said, I'm thinking, *You know, look, I'm here to be uncomfortable.* [laughter] Nobody's gonna care! Really, nobody's gonna care. So I said, "Okay." He goes, "Really?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "You sure?" I said, "Yeah, you can suck my dick." [laughter] So he does, he gets down and... and... I'm so glad I can't see your faces. [laughter] And, he sucks my dicks and he's... he's very good at it and... just, like kinda blown away.... excuse the phrase... [laughter] And he just kinda looks up at me and goes, "I want you to come in my mouth." And I said, "No." And he just kinda gives me this... this pleading look, sticks his tongue out, and I'm like, "fuck it," and I just... close my eyes, finish off... like, goes everywhere. It's kinda been a while. [laughter] Everywhere.

All of a sudden there's this big round of applause, and... [laughter and applause] and the first person I see is the very first naked transgender woman I've ever seen, who's got beautiful, fully made-up face, long, silky hair, huge, beautiful boobs and a dick that's way bigger than mine, which is so unfair. And then some guy comes over, he goes, "Hey, man, I'm straight, but that's the hottest thing I've ever seen." I go, "Well, thank you." And some other guy comes over and goes, "Hey dude, um, do you want me to spritz some sunscreen on your dick cause like, you might need... [laughter] Burning Man people are so friendly and helpful. I said, "Okay," and he spritzes me, and I look at the guy. He goes "Oh, I'll leave it, I like it. That was really hot. I'd like to do it again sometime." I said, "Oh, great, thanks."

And instead of continuing with the parade, I get on my bike and start heading back to my camp. And there's so many ways I could have respond to this. I mean, I could have been proud or excited or happy, or what... whatever. But instead, what I felt was like, a tidal wave... a tsunami of shame. I was just so embarrassed. And I don't think anything I did was wrong, but you can't just do something and expect you to change completely... changes the process, and that was a step, and maybe I'm on that journey. And I'd love to say that I just felt so excited and happy and... but no, that wasn't the reality of it, and it's... it's my process. So thank you. [applause]

### **Karen Yates**

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And now it's time for the Sermon on the Pubic Mound. A friend of mine died this week. He was someone that I had known for decades. And he was simply a delight to be around, which is something I can't really say about everyone. I had played poker with him for years. And he was part of a crowd that I had known forever, and pretty much, we all agreed, the last person that you would think would die. I found out about his death through Facebook, which is a terrible way to find out that someone has passed. I had just finished Episode One of this podcast. And so I was hunched over and kind of worried, but when I saw that he had died, after the disbelief passed, and the tears, I decided that I needed to get out of my apartment. There's a park across from my place, and I lay down in the grass, and I stared at the sky. It was a gorgeous day out. And I listened to the birds and the people nearby. And I felt the grass between my toes. And I realized what an exquisite pleasure it was to be in my body in this physical existence. Everything about modern culture asks us to refute our body, to live in our mind, to not notice sensation, pain, pleasure. We live our lives hunched over our phones, over our computers, focused on something else in the present moment. Several days later, I watched his funeral being live-streamed, and I reflected on how all major rites of passage involve touch, hugs, clapping of hands, and how in this moment for many of us, that privilege has been taken away, but not forever. I urge you to celebrate today the magnificence of your flesh, the sensations that you feel, being here in this world, in the now. It's good to be alive.

[Music under] Thank you for listening. If you know someone who might like this episode, send it to them. I'd like to thank Wild & Sublime associate producer Julia Williams and intern Alice Asch. Our theme music is by David Ben-Porat. Our media sponsor is Rebellious Magazine: Feminist Media at [rebelliousmagazine.com](http://rebelliousmagazine.com). Follow us on social media @wildandsublime, and sign up for newsletters at [wildandsublime.com](http://wildandsublime.com). And please, if you like what you've heard, give us a nice review on your podcast app. See you next week.