Chapter 12: Hostage Situations

Before all my travels, when someone asked about my worst date, it took some brain power to think of one. I used to be very good at going out with women I had a connection with, so most of my bad dates were the typical stuff. There are two stories I used to tell my dates.

The first: we met on a dating app. Our first date was very normal. On the date, she told me her father was a big poker player, so much so that he'd get hotel rooms comped for free in Biloxi, Mississippi. Keep in mind we were in Atlanta, and Biloxi is a 5+ hour drive. After the date, we were planning our second.

We decided to drive her car to Biloxi and spend the weekend there. I know what you're thinking: second date, and you're going away for the weekend? Isn't that a third-date kind of thing? Back then, no. Now, I think so. I'm very much in the moment. We'd had a nice time. Why not go to the beach and play poker?

I was also a huge poker player. My college friends and I would spend hours on it every week. In Georgia, gambling isn't allowed. I believe that's why I was so eager to go on a second date like this. Looking back, I should have just fired up PokerStars (an online poker website).

The 5-hour drive there was fine. I don't remember anything off about it. We arrived at the hotel and checked in. After getting settled, she said she had a friend nearby she was going to see. I thought it was odd to go meet a friend right away, but I said it was fine. I'd hang around the hotel; just let me know when you're done.

After a few hours of gambling, I texted her asking when she expected to be back. No reply. One hour went by, then another. I sent her another message: "If you're not planning to come back soon, I'll just do my own thing." Not long after, she messaged me that she was still with her friend and asked if I minded if they came and hung out with me.

At this point I was already kinda annoyed. This is why you don't go away with someone on a second date. I remember thinking, damn, I'm stuck here. If I had driven, I could just leave and drive back to Atlanta whenever I wanted. Also, the room was in her name, so I'd need to get another room. I decided to give it a little longer. I reluctantly agreed the friend could join us.

A few more hours went by. By now it was pretty late. Around 10 or 11, she and her friend finally got back to the hotel. I was very annoyed. I had spent my entire day gambling to kill time, waiting on her plan, and I hadn't even had a proper dinner. She didn't acknowledge that she had basically been MIA the entire day.

On top of that, she and her friend were wasted. I was completely sober and pissed. I thought to myself, the nerve of this woman. I attempted to make conversation with them, but it was pretty pointless. What eventually set me off: have you ever been a third wheel on a date? That was me at this point. She was having a full-ass conversation with her friend and not including me at all. I wasn't interested in what they were talking about, but I found it extremely rude.

About 20 minutes into their conversation, I interrupted them. I said I was leaving and that they should both pack their shit. I ended up driving the friend home too, because I'm nice like that, and then I drove her the 5 hours back to Atlanta. She didn't say a word to me the entire ride. I dropped her and her car off at her house, then drove myself home. We never spoke again. If I could do it again, I'd rent my own car, then either drive myself home or enjoy my time there.

The second bad date was a lot shorter, thankfully. I had gone out with a girl I was very interested in. I forget where we met. It's not really important. I agreed to pick her up at her place and take her to dinner.

Once we arrived at the restaurant, she leaned in to give me a kiss. I was surprised but welcomed it. Kissing on the first date, before dinner, is extremely rare in the States. Years later, I'd learn that in Rio it's the norm. I leaned in too, and our lips touched. She then put her hand behind my head and held me there. Our lips touching, nowhere to go. To make matters worse, her lips were pressed tight and not moving. I felt like I was being held hostage during our first kiss. I wasn't able to enjoy the rest of the date, I was so traumatized by that kiss.