

The following monologue has been excerpted from:

RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT

By

Erik Patterson

The following monologue is copyrighted and to be used for classroom or audition purposes only. For production rights, please contact the author.

Erik Patterson

Patterson@dogearplays.org

The following monologue is copyrighted and to be used for classroom or audition purposes only. For production rights, please contact the author.

Ruth from RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT by Erik Patterson

Red Light, Green Light was first produced by Theatre of NOTE in Los Angeles. This monologue was published by Heinemann in The Playwrights' Center Monologues For Women.

Ruth, a mother in her 60s (though her age could be flexible), is having lunch with her 30-year-old son Caleb. In the moments leading up to this monologue, Caleb has tried several times to come out of the closet to his mother, but she's ignored the topic by repeatedly changing the subject. Until, finally:

RUTH

Why do gay people have to talk about it all the time?
Because it bothers me.

Beat.

Because I've read up.
Believe me, I've done my research.
I've read the books.
I've read the magazines.
I've rented the films.
I've watched the news programs.
I've even searched the web.
I've culled my data.
You know, the thing that's...*difficult*...about being a parent,
is that you never know what your kid knows,
what your kid's not telling you,
what your kid's doing when you're not there.
So you have to fill in the blanks,
connect the dots.
And while I might not know what you,
my son,
specifically have done,
I do know what people say—
about you,
about you people,
your people,
about you and your people.
I know what you do, as a group.

I know about, about, about—

I know all about the anonymous sex.

I know about

sex with strangers,

in clubs—sex clubs—with towels around your waists.

About sex in places like public parks behind trees,

or urinals, public restrooms like George Michael,

or alleys, dark alleys, orgies in alleys,

multiple partners in one night, countless strangers.

I know about glory holes,

which I have to admit have a kind of spectacular name:

Glory Hole.

It paints a vivid picture:

Glory Hole.

I found this website that lists all of the glory holes in the world,

at least that's what the website purports,

and I'm inclined to believe it

because there are just so many bathrooms listed, it's...

dizzying.

And the website has all of this...*data*, I guess you'd call it. About where to find the best

glory holes in your area, and what time to go, you know...when each hole hits heavy

traffic. If you wanted to get your penis sucked by a stranger during your lunch hour,

believe me, I could point you in the right direction.

I know about,

about,

about—

I know about leather bars, about bear bars.

About size queens, muscle queens, queen queens.

About Cock rings.

Anal Beads.

Lube.

Poppers.

I know there are other drugs, but poppers are so scary because they could damage your brain, just like that, so you have to be real careful.

And overdosing on Viagra, and things like that.

Because, you know,

the gay population is using a lot of Viagra these days.

And I know about, um,

um,

tops and bottoms, also known as “pitchers” and “catchers,”

and then there are versatile guys but I haven't read of a baseball term that describes them.

I was thinking “he plays for both teams” might work

but then I found out that already means something else entirely.

And I know about, um,

two-headed dildos,

and things like that.

I don't really want to get into all of the sex toys
because they're kind of disgusting to me—
I can't even figure out what some of them are even used for,
I just know that they're disgusting.

Beat.

But what I'm trying to say is that there are all of
these,
these,
these images in my head.
And you have to understand that these
images
sometimes make you a very difficult person to talk to.
But that's not all.
Because I know it's not just difficult for me.
I'm not that self-absorbed.
I'm not that—
I know how you...
I know, I know—
I mean, I don't *know*, but I can imagine,
how difficult it must have been for you,
must *be* for you,
to—
oh, God, to, to—
To come out.
To have that conversation.
To keep having that conversation.
To keep having to have that—
It must have been so hard.
When you said it the first time.
The fear of rejection.
The fear of other things.
The fear of—
I tried not to reject you when you told me.
Because I suspected.
Your son reaches his twenties without ever bringing a girl home and you start to suspect.
And I saw the way you looked at your, you know,
male friends
and the way you weren't looking at your, you know,
female friends.
So I prepared myself,
just in case,
so as not to have the reaction I didn't want to have, which was one of rejecting you.
But, Caleb, honey...
You have to understand

that if *I'm* having these thoughts—
I, your mother—
if these thoughts are in *my* head,
then just think about what other people must be thinking.
I can't help it.
And what I've read,
what I've seen—
which hasn't all been bad.
I don't want to give you that impression...

Beat.

But people are backwards,
people don't understand,
people have a long way to go, you know?
And when they see you,
what some of them are thinking,
what I know some of them are thinking—
I mean, when they see you, I know they're not: Seeing. You.
They're seeing—
They're—

Beat. She's begun to run out of steam.

And I know about Matt Shepard.
Everyone calls him Matthew, but I read somewhere that his friends called him Matt.
I know what happened to him.
And my first thought is that plenty of straight people die worse deaths than he did without
getting put on a pedestal. Without getting idealized. Without becoming heroes.
But I understand why he haunts us.
Because it's just terrible what they did to him.
And you could say it was just a moment of passion,
but that defense doesn't stick because they just spent too much time with him.
They lured him into their truck.
And then they started beating him.
And then they continued to beat him as they drove him out to the fence.
The fence where they were going to leave him.
I know all about Matt Shepard.
And things like what happened to him—they could happen to the rest of us too,
but when you factor in a thing like sexuality,
the chances of something like that happening to my son,
they triple, or something terrible like that.
And that scares me, Caleb. It really, really scares me.

Beat.

And I know about AIDS.
And I know you don't want me to say it,
but I'm a mother,
so I'm going to say it:
You need to be wearing a condom,
and your partner needs to be wearing a condom—
because things were better for awhile,
but lately people have become lackadaisical,
and the figures are rising.
So just wear a condom.
Just do it.
For me.
Because the thought of you getting AIDS
scares the shit out of me.
I'm sorry.
I'm sorry that I'm like this.
I don't mean to sound like a Public Service Announcement.
But I'm a mother,
I'm your mother,
and I just—
I don't want you to get hurt.
That's all.

Beat.

That's all.
So.
What are you having for lunch?