

From 1991 to 2021

Episode 4

Transcript



Episode 4

2001

So back at my parents, as the internet got cheaper, but not necessarily faster (this was still in the time of dial-up!) My parents gave me internet in the bedroom. We have finally moved away from the AOL days and have moved to proper 'dating sites'. These were profile and chat sites. When my parents went to bed, I was on the internet again, looking and chatting to guys. One dating site was mainly USA based, while the other was UK.

I used to disappear to meet guys near me, and we did stuff outside. I also stayed up all night, getting more scantily clad males for my hard drive, apparently 10,000 photos all in different folders for different types and acts was never enough.

I got back into temping. This was also the year of me going 'missing' - this time for a whole week. I got picked up by a lad in a cruising area in London and we went back to his. I don't know his name or age - because he lied about both. Funny thing is, a friend of mine bumped into us in a gay nightclub and called him cute, whilst my dear friend called him, well let's just say 'not cute!' My dear friend picked me up on a few occasions where he lived, so knew what he looked like.

I landed a full-time job, but the panic attacks still happened, I was there for six months, and they tried their best to keep me on. But as we could never get the crux of the matter, I left. This was the first of many times either being unemployed and/or off sick for long spells.

Panic attacks around this time were almost a weekly, if not a daily basis. I was also in and out of the mental health services as well, again, not being able to pin any of these panic attacks to anything. I suppose if I was truthful about my sexual antics at this point in time, It would have stopped to what was to become later.

I was on many different medications for my depression, Prozac, Fluoxetine, Citalopram, to name a few. Sometimes they helped, sometimes they didn't. I just spent my weekends the way I always did, gay adult clubs. Thankfully the mugging it did FINALLY stop me trolling about the public toilets. So, it only took 10 YEARS to figure out that maybe, just maybe I wasn't going to find what I wanted in a public loo.

I have touched on taking G in private settings, there is a proportion of gay men that have normalised drugs within a sexual setting, so when you where in the private chat rooms the conversations would go like this:

- Age? (It's on my profile - read the damn thing!)
- Likes? (you seriously haven't read my profile have you?)
- Own place? (No, but can travel within reason)
- Chems? (sure, which ones?)
- Weed/E/C/G (only do weed here)

Needless to say, there were many occasions where I was smoking dope with guys - this was the start of the next downfall.

I will add though the dating apps are proactive when it comes to their apps being misused by some men in this way. HOWEVER - human beings can get creative to get around these restrictions, and as such it's a cat and mouse game. You only need to see in 2020 and 2021 how people are being creative with restrictions in regards to the current pandemic. The problem is not the apps themselves - it is the species using them!

2002

So 2002. Now I'm 26, and really should know better. My sick benefits ran out, and I ended up on Jobseekers Allowance. August this year I moved out of my parents and into the YMCA. Got a couple of funny stories about the YMCA. There were 3 gays (including me) and a lesbian (sounds like a beginning of a real naff joke) that resided at the time I was there. Every dinner time we would sit around our own table in the corner. The best way to describe that table every night is that the banter in the flat that was in 'It's a Sin' was the banter we had around that table. Much to some of the other resident's disgust!

The other, I was cajoled into watching 'a piece of theatre with music and dance' by one member of the team there. Yes, that was definitely the description - It was basically the teachings of Jesus on the Mount. I'm a Monty Python fan... I was absolutely OK up until 'Blessed are the Meek'. I had to stop myself shouting out loud - thanks to my many time at Rocky Horror: 'Oh, it's the meek! Blessed are the meek! Oh, that's nice, isn't it? I'm glad they're getting something, 'cause they have a hell of a time.' I was there trying not laugh - I ended up having to go to the loo and compose myself before going back into the theatre! needless to say, I declined more theatre productions!

Every room had a phone. I had a PC. I built myself a PC with a DVD Drive, my music on the hard drive, and a TV tuner. Nowadays this is called an HTPC. But back to the phone line and PC. I went online and now I could accommodate in the day I was well away. This was also the time that my haunt in London had a certain night that I frequent and still do. My JSA came on a Tuesday, and so I was able to up on a Tuesday.

This particular Christmas though I got a mobile phone the Nokia 3310. I went to London on Boxing Day night and went trolling in a park. Needless to say, it got stolen... Did this stop me trolling in parks - did it hell! You see it was sometimes 'cheaper' to go to a club and then cruise until the first train home. Part needs must, part something else. I only had three months left at the YMCA as the following year I moved into my own place at last.

2003

So 2003, and I now have my own place. The YMCA helped me fill my flat with furniture, and bought my first washing machine. The washing machine was on the top of my list as I got REAL fed up using a laundrette! The other thing I need was BROADBAND INTERNET. I heard about this new fangled thing, and it was faster than dial-up. 8Mbps compared to 56kps, so I went for that!!

So now I have my own place, the guy who I was in a relationship was going to work, and coming back to my flat lunchtimes. So I had morning and afternoon/evenings to myself. I had my own place, I had the dating site. I had BROADBAND! As we now have faster broadband, we had peer-to-peer downloading - so woo hoo - full porn videos! I had a lot of them!!! So that thing was on 24/7.

On the dating sites, my handle was pretty much my postcode, my hair type on there. The chatrooms were also based on Counties so made it easier to cruise. My tag-line in the chat room was pretty much:

Anyone near ***** can accom. (I got a lot of stick for that. I was VERY well known in that group. We all did meet from time to time in our local gay bar. I met loads of guys at home, I sometimes travelled to their area. There was one case when I met a guy, we were in a group, and someone asked us how we met, and we said 'The Internet' pretty radical then. But then I know others that met on IRC, so not that radical as we originally thought!!

This was also the time I started dabbling with Ecstasy. A guy came over with some, told me what the stages were so I knew the risks of what was happening. Well if you are going to take drugs, you have to take them responsibly, aren't you...

This was the year I was sent by DWP (Department of Work and Pensions) to a Work Programme. These programs all run a similar vein. Get your CV up to scratch, get your IT skills sorted, then you should be job-ready. Yeah, that's gonna get figures down... but that's an entirely different subject! I was going there Mon -Fri. I was also going to the club on Tuesdays. Remember I got paid on Tuesdays.

One particular night at this club the promoter wanted to film some porn to show at the club, as at that time, the type of porn wasn't available, well not as much now. I naturally obliged! We did get paid in a Viagra, plenty of drink and a lousy T-shirt!! The guy I performed with, we became friends with benefits, and he came with Pizza and Ecstasy tablets on various occasions. This was the start of me looking for guys with drugs on the gay chat rooms.

So I was always online until stupid o'clock in the morning looking for sex, sex with drugs videos of sex, and of course, scantily clad men photos...

But I loved it, and it wasn't a problem now....was it?

2004

So, a year in my own place. If I got the right amount of sex at home, I didn't feel the 'need' to go to London. If I went longer than two weeks (usually bound by my DWP benefits I was on at the time) I went to London. I 'think' my days of going missing subsided as I had a home to go to. But one thing that did start to happen was when I did have the feelings of shame or guilt, I wouldn't answer the phone and/or I would lock the door from the inside much to the annoyance of my dear friend.

This was also about the time the long term relationship came to an end, as it was obvious that things weren't working.

Looking back, right now, this was the start of things to come.

I was still frequenting my local haunt, the guy I met with the 'E' still came over, and I actually got off with the doorman at the time (we talked a lot, he was cute, and that's what was all that was needed!!).

So it was at this point it was the cycle of:

- Find guys online: some came back for multiple meets if that didn't happen:
- Look for porn, if I had money in my account:
- I went to London: then I would:
- Feel remorse,
- Stayed offline for a bit.... then:
- Rinse and repeat.

Then I found something else on the gay scene in London at a couple of clubs.....

2005

So I am now frequenting clubs, and I got lucky in a few venues where I knew of a dealer, so I was able to 'E' at that time. I was now consciously looking online for guys with drugs too. I also went back with more guys that did drugs.

I even had a fling with a guy that took Coke, so this was even better. So, if there were no drugs from online meets, then I would go to London. This just seemed the pattern.

One particular night, the dealer offered me MCat, and this then became the drug of choice, either in a venue or online.

I cannot remember much about 2005 when it comes down to guys/venues etc... possibly because at least 2-3 times a month I was taking drugs.

This was the year I started my first IT business as a sole trader, I was going to be a jack of all trades, I got a grant, and things started to look rosy...

Part of the business was to sell HTPCs as I thought this was going to be the future - but as time passed, it was a VERY niche market!!! (It falls into the hobbyist category!) Things started again to fall apart at the seams...

2006

So the year of my business venture. I had a website I built myself, I advertised and started to get a couple of customers. I was working from home. Things were cool, but I advertised in the wrong places, and as this was part of a Work Programme for DWP - I needed to either 'Find customers' or 'find a job'. This was about the time the drag act started to dry up in the gig department. I ended up temping, I was working full time, and as I was good at my job, I ended up working in a school.

Business dried up - quite simply, I advertised in the wrong places and was taken for a ride by two directories.

So, at last, I had a living wage, and because I was working Monday - Friday I had a living wage, it wasn't that much, but I had a living wage. Some Fridays I went to London, Some Sundays I went to my haunt.

Although I was still looking for guys at evenings and weekends at home. I still had regular guys at that point. But I was staying up until 4 am in the morning looking. So, again work was affected.

This came to a head in 2007.

2007

So I'm trying to juggle work, my sex life, and my London trips. I'm finding myself in dangerous situations in London, my depression got worse, and other problems started to show, like my panic attacks.

I'm drug-taking, prescribed and 'not prescribed' - Work got affected, and I went back onto sickness benefits.

This was fine, but because my benefits came on a Thursday, it meant that I wasn't able to get to my haunt either on a Sunday or on a Tuesday - I had to 'make do' with Friday trips. This was OK, as I was able to go and find drugs elsewhere, either online or in a venue. But this was fortnightly – my giro was fortnightly - so my trips to London were fortnightly...

I had enough, I wanted to break this cycle, so the following year I decided to pull myself together - and do something about it.

As this is the shortest post - I will tell you the reason why now, as it's now time for another break!

The reason for this is quite simple. I know what I was doing, but because there were too many occasions where I was missing, high, depressed, going to London, cruising online or looking for porn, all I can remember is the activities rather than the with whom, and where.

I used to pride myself with having a good memory, as you can see from earlier posts I can remember times/dates/places pre 2000's but that is not the case now. When I heavily got into my addiction, things are just a blur. I remember sex, I remember drug-taking with guys, I remember venues, all of these are simply blurred.

TOO MANY MEN IN TOO SHORTER TIME...

This alone should have been the trigger to stop what I was doing. This should have been the time that people noticed. Problem is, I got so adept to hiding my sex life and it's shortcomings, no-one knew. Like I mentioned way back in 1991 with the public toilets, what I was doing was illegal (the drugs) and because it was drilled into me at an early age that this was 'wrong', 'dirty' etc, coupled with the fact that from the age of 15 I was accustomed to the gay life being dangerous meant that I simply thought this was the norm.

The new technologies never help either, as I was already 'damaged' from the public toilets AND from the mugging, my risk-taking just kept on escalating.

Anyway, 2008 - this was the time of change!!

2008

2008 came. I made the decision to try college a THIRD time. I went to my local college, I WILL get on a course. I got myself onto a course called 'Access to Arts & Humanities' which enabled me to go to University. It made me realise that I could sit and learn something and that I could learn independently.

For my dissertation for the end of the year, I went VERY gay. Unbelievably gay - it was about The Eurovision Song contest and block voting - told you it was GAAYYYYYY! I can tell you why there is block voting and why certain countries get in. I can also tell you about the Big Four... but that's not the reason why you're reading!

I passed. I FINALLY passed a college course and was going to University. As this gave me the structure I needed, sex became secondary, I still went to London, I was still going to gay adult clubs where I knew the dealer - I was still also online at night - when I wasn't writing essays.

This September I was going to University, GOING TO UNIVERSITY. I was going to do a Combined BA in Television, Film and Theatre. I had my life FINALLY planned out, I was going to work in television, behind the scenes, but this is what I wanted to do!

At University there was a gay group. I went on the first meeting, after that meeting, we went to the local gay bar. I fancied a couple of guys, and as they were talking to me etc, I missed the fact that they weren't interested in me sexually. I missed the train home and my dear friend had to save me - something he has done on a regular basis. Many many thanks to you for looking after me, even at the low periods, although we haven't got to the lowest period yet - more on that later.

So that was the first and last time I went to that gay group. Anyway, I was happy with the London scene. Anyhow, we have another year of University to tell.

2009

2009 was when two major things happened in my life:

Firstly a friend of mine was found dead in Brighton.

Secondly, my brother came out as trans (before this point they were my sister)

I got counselling at University - Student Support Services were FANTASTIC, they do exactly what they say on the tin!

As I was at University, and as I was trying to keep up with essays - these were done on my PC at home. Slight problem with writing essays on a PC with a broadband connection, especially when you are searching on the web. You are ONE CLICK away from dating sites or porn. I missed the essay deadlines. My depression and anxiety started to rear their ugly heads, and my 'panic attacks' started showing up again.

Another symptom that started was my legs used to 'give way' for no reason - so at times at university I was using a stick. I vaguely remember my toes couldn't keep still either. Was I burning the candle at both ends, was it down to the drug-taking? - I don't know.

There is a part of me that does think that the sexual activities had negative repercussions and these could be attributed to my health and that it's my fault that I am the way I am. Maybe I was predisposed to have these health conditions and those activities just accelerated those symptoms.

What is undeniable is that my past indiscretions did affect my health - whether it was the events, the drugs or both...

I just don't know.

2010

This was the year that my heater packed up. Time off University.

This was the year that I looked after a friend who had a heart issue, who took advantage of my goodwill. Time off University.

I got behind at university, my mental health suffered even more. I went to my GP, who then referred me to Mental Health Services. I had the appointment and the first psychiatrist I saw was BAD, so bad he basically accused me of 'picking mental health conditions off the shelf'. This guy is also SO BAD, that when I went to see my GP, I didn't have to say anything. He said to me straight up 'Do you want a second opinion?' I WANT it!

So my second psychiatrist diagnosed me with depression, anxiety, and OCD. My OCD is mainly to do with hygiene, more other peoples than mine. This became an issue on the gay scene, and I VERY quickly found out that Mcat KILLED my OCD stone dead. It was a simple solution, I looked for guys who were into chemsex and take Mcat. I went to clubs where I could buy it. For me, that was the problem solved.

As I was on various different medications for my depression, sleep etc, something weird started to happen at night before I went to sleep.

- My legs kept moving on their own, I was able to suppress the movement, but it hurt if I did.
- My head kept jerking back and forth, again, suppress, it stopped but hurt.
- Then I started to make nonsensical sounds.
- Then I uttered my first involuntary word. I would love it to have been something nice and fluffy. It wasn't it was the 'N' word.

WTF. What's going on?

I put this down to the meds that I was on and thought nothing about it. Like everything else in my private life... I kept it a secret.

University gave me a year off, but with these new symptoms and that I never got help for the OCD due to cutbacks and mix-ups, we came to the conclusion that I should give up the course. Before I did though, they made absolutely sure that my benefits were correct, and that I got the income I needed. Although I never finished my BA, I wouldn't have the finances today if it wasn't for them.

This is probably going to be one point where I am going to break anonymity - thank you so much to the University of Reading for giving me the support when I was there, and the help for filling out those DWP forms. Your student support services were outstanding.

In 2011, I'm going to actually find out what these panic attacks were, and what these new symptoms were.