

RENAISSANCE CANDICE -- *revised*



PARTY LIKE IT'S 1999!

A little back story....

This post was originally written on November 30, 2018, and uploaded to BTB on December 13, 2018, written just after Candice and I reconnected as friends. The emotion of the reunion was—and still is—very strong, and I feel it safe to say, mutual.

When I knew Candice, she was 16, I was 20, and it was a LOT more than any mere “infatuation”. Now ... I’m 40! We have not seen each other since 1999, and our lives have taken very different paths: she, thank god, is doing very well for herself, and seems to be very happy; I, on the other hand, find myself cast from society without empathy (or mercy) of any proceeding courts. I would have preferred her to have never known what became of me, but outside forces intervened—once again crossing our life paths.

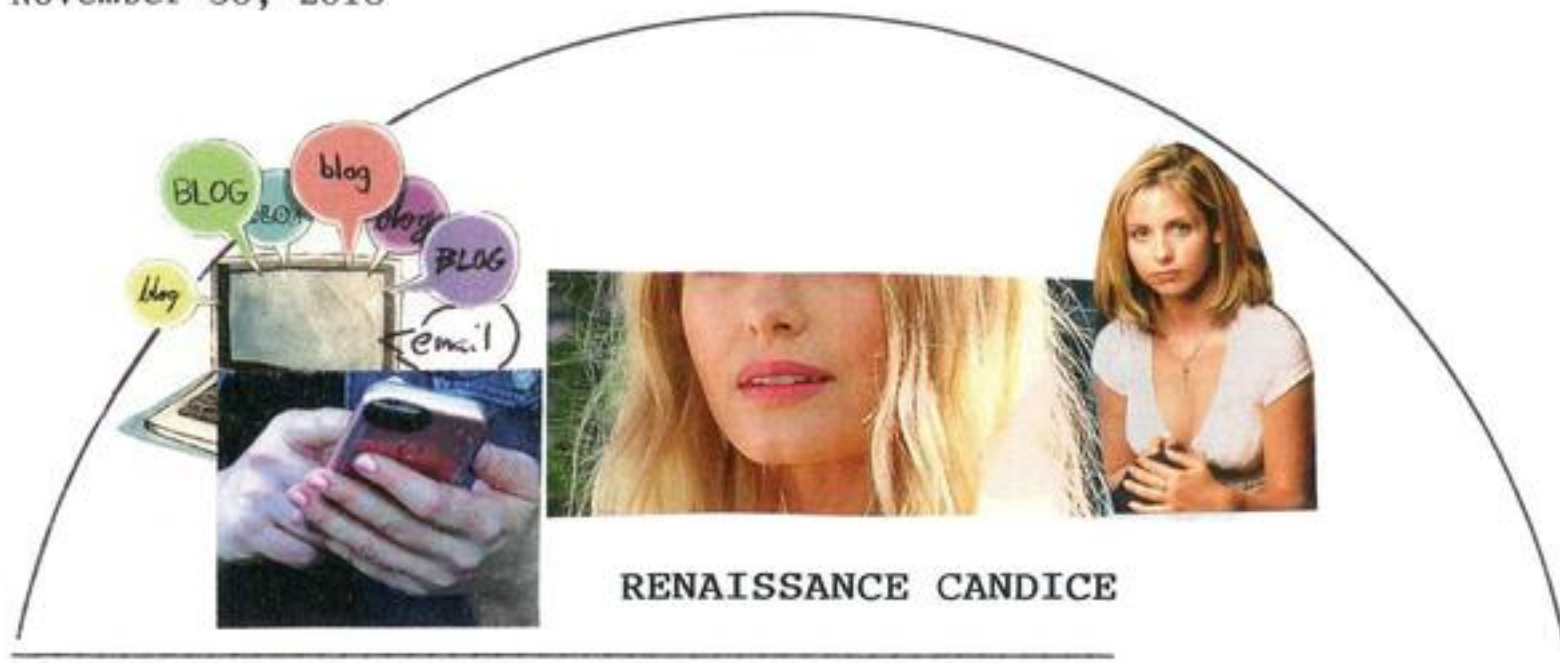
She has been a blessing to me.

Providing a much needed constant, in this situation I now find myself; good friends are hard (impossible) to come by in these circumstances, and she has stepped up to be just that. A dependable friend that I can talk to about anything—or anyone—without judgment. In fact, she offers very sound advice, without judgement, ulterior motive, or spite. Since November, she has only proven herself more and more, to be exactly what she promises—and that, for me, is rare. Very rare.

When I first posted this, as I said, the emotions were very strong, and fresh, in response to the shock of her sudden reappearance, and apparent concern for my wellbeing. I just spoke my mind ... however, I apparently cast stones while at it, and hurt one of my other exes. Who, promptly retaliated! But, instead of being mad, I decided that I would update (revise) the post, to be more friendly, while still remaining true to its original self.

I hope that this will be respected by my exes.

As I’ve stated, soon I’ll be posting *Mustard Grits* in chapter excerpts—so if you are an ex, don’t worry, your post is coming. This post here, has NOTHING to do with me, and should only act as testament to the person it records, for her humanity, and caring heart. There are footnotes, to changes, along with additional pages.



I want to take this post to thank Candice—for treating me with kindness, and giving me some really sound advice. I'm impressed with how skilled and knowledgeable you are, and the advice you've given me—especially from a woman's perspective; and someone that both knows me, and cares about my well being—has been taken to heart. You are right about it all, everything that you've said.

I must admit though, that I still had doubts that it was even you. That is, until we spoke on the phone. And, again, I apologize for all of the red tape involved in the prison phone calls—but, as you can see, once it's all set up, it gets easier—still annoying with the long automated intro, repeated with EVERY call—but, well worth it. Our conversations—even after 19 years! were not awkward at all!—in fact, minus just a little nervousness at first, I felt very natural speaking with you, and look forward to hearing you again later today. And, you're right, a lot of people won't understand why you'd want to talk to me. But, it just serves to prove what kind of person you are—that you have a big heart.

And, I just want to say for the record—that if being friends with me causes too much of an issue for you with others—to a point that it's a problem; I want you to know that I understand. You have a good life, and I'm not worth any drama. But, know that your communication(s) with me, and the beautiful things that you've said, have been taken to heart, and you have helped my self-worth, and raised my spirit. You've done this at a time when I really needed it too. You came out of left field, completely unexpected, and played the heroine role—which really should not surprise me—I always thought of you as a real-life Buffy Summers (and I mean that with the greatest of compliment).

As for my ... punctuation in the prison emails: the "kiosk" machine (a stainless steel computer mounted to the wall), has its shift keys and symbols cut off due to prisoners using them for 'gang symbols'—and hacking—leaving the rest of us to type as grammatically blundering, computer illiterates. I have to use the Caps Lock just to capitalize properly; a question mark (?) is out of the question (no pun intended), and it drives me crazy.

Please, understand, I have a habit of running my mouth, and saying (or writing) everything on my mind, unfiltered. If I say (or write) ANYTHING out of line, let me know. I don't mean to do it, and a lot of people get mad at me over things I either didn't mean, or it came across wrong, or they just didn't let me finish explaining—and they

hold a grudge ... sometimes indefinitely. In those cases, everyone loses over a miscommunication, or ego. I don't suspect you'd be like that ... I'm just giving you a heads up, that if I cross a line, don't hesitate to call me out on it. Think of me kinda like Sheldon on "The Big Bang Theory"—how he just says it how it is, and forgets that not everyone sees it quite the same way he does. I'm like that sometimes.

I wish that I wasn't.

Sometimes I wish that I was just normal, and lived a normal life; for one, it would've saved me from my current situation. But, mostly, so that I didn't run off every decent person that comes into my life.

No matter what comes next—know that I am EXTREMELY grateful to you for taking the time out of your life, to be kind to me. So many people want me to suffer, to hurt, and to be dead—that it's nice to know that their opinions are not quite the general consensus. It gives me hope, knowing that I do have support, that I have friends and family, that I am seen and appreciated. I can only hope that I can be the kind of friend to you that you are proud to have—I will certainly do my best.

We have a LOT of catching up to do.

1999 was a Lo-o-o-o-o-ng time ago.

Though, at times, it's just like it was yesterday.

It's funny how life does, and how Time treats us. Do you ever think about what your younger self, would think of your future self? I do. I think that my younger self, always sensed bad things on the horizon, that there would be no happy ending for me. And, I think that's why as a child, I had a jaded quality to me. You know about some of my childhood, I'm sure you remember ... and I guess, I just never got free of those hurts and loses. This is now the second time in my life that you have come along and shown me that I am worth more than others think.

Thank you.

And, to further explain something in my last email: I said that I had willingly signed those papers—but, you need to know, I wasn't REALLY given a choice, it was either that, or get buried away for FIVE YEARS! I'll use my next email to tell you more, and our call. But, it's on my mind right now as I type this—I'm waiting to give you time to get back home from your coffee run, and then I'll call—they put those papers in front of me, along with a typed paragraph they claimed that you'd written (saying how you had nothing to do with me, and if anyone had any questions: to contact your lawyer), they made their threats, and so, back to South Carolina I went like a dog with its tail tucked between its legs. I gave up all hope of love or being happy.

I tried things with my first wife again—mainly for the kids sake—and I gave it an honest try—but she knew I missed you, and she would never let it go. When we split, I'd thought of looking you up at that point, but figured you'd laugh at me. For a few months I was kind of a manwhore, until I settled down with Skyler—and I was happy for a while—I even went to Atlanta to try to find you, to be sure, to know that marrying Skyler was right, and that I wouldn't still be pining over you ... but, again, all the way there, and I pictured you looking at me like I was an idiot for showing up, so I abandoned my effort—I gave

Skyler 100 percent! I broke it off with all other girls, and stayed true to her ... but, in time, she cheated (more than once). I tried to make it work, because of our daughter. Skyler would change her job, and just end up with some other new coworker. The bad part for me, was that I really had fallen in love with her, and in the end, my love for her is what she used against me to hurt me.¹

But, I hold no animosity towards her.

I'm sure it was all my fault.

For about a month-and-a-half I reverted back to being a manwhore, or womanizer (though I don't like that word, especially since it was the women taking the most advantage at those times). When, one day at my work, Jaime showed up, and though it wasn't me that she was looking for, it was me that she found. We went out that night! Planned an actual date--and when that date came, and I picked her up--she never went home. We were married within ten days of her coming to my job, and I still cherish that day.²

All hell broke loose soon after that--Skyler did NOT take kindly to our daughter Shylynn, calling Jaime: "Momma". And, that's when the drama started that eventually landed me here.

- * Opal was '00 to middle '03³
- * Skyler was middle/late '03 to early '06
- * Jaime was June/July/and two weeks in August '06
- * August of '06 was when I was arrested, Jaime jumped ship before I ever made it to trial--all over a misunderstanding. It was not her fault though. It was mine. All blame is on me.⁴
- She was a good wife, and an awesome mom.

This is all just a summary, and I'll tell you more in time. I am glad that I have you to talk to now. I will forever be grateful to you for this.

I don't want to be any kind of burden on you, complicate your life in any way, or try to woo you away from anyone. I know what you offer is a trusted friendship--and that's what I want.

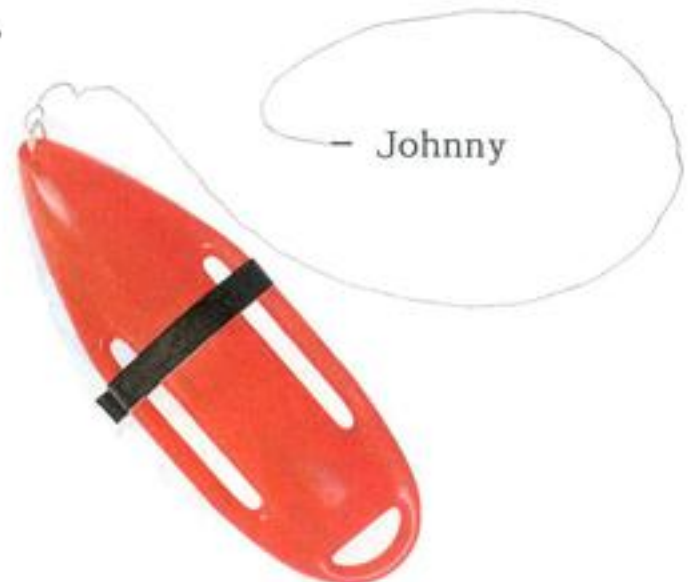
I can use a good friend right now.

Well, it's that time, and I'm off to the phone.

I'd like to end with this: talking to you, has reminded me a lot of who I am--who I REALLY am--and, I want to be me. I want to be the person I know I am, instead of what everyone has tried to make me. I just want to be me again.

Again, thank you for being there for me.

- Johnny



IN ADDITION

Today, here on this Valentine's Day,

Then: 1999
Now: 2019

I feel 100 Percent confident in Candice, and feel that I have no worries about her ever abandoning me, or shutting me out, blocking my calls, or any of that melodrama.

The more and more we talk, the closer we are drawn to each other; and the more I realize what I really had all those years ago. We have recently taken to reminiscing over 1999, comparing our memories. My memory seems to be a little clearer -- and she has enjoyed me telling her the details of our love story. It's apparent that some things, she had blocked out, repressed, she believes in part, due to the trauma of our break up.

To go from what we had, to nothing.

Cold turkey.

It was rough, and hurt us both.

Someone asked me how I can go from declaring my love for my ex, Jaime, to now speaking of Ten (Candice); well, that's easy, and it doesn't devalue either. The fact is, that my feelings for Ten go back nearly a decade before Jaime Beth, they were still there, present at the time of my marriage, even playing a role in my choice of Jaime -- as certain mannerisms of hers, had reminded me of Ten. (I have taken to calling Candice Ten, because of her reminding me of Seven of Nine on *Star Trek Voyager*, the character played by Jeri Ryan. Well, I figure, Candice is a 10. She would be that on any scale or grouping. Even if there were only 9, she would still be a 10. If not a Ten of Ten, then certainly a Ten of Nine. Yeah, she looks that good. Always has, and always will.)

For a long time, and in many relationships over the years, I felt guilt for harboring feelings for Ten. I did not talk of her, or write of her; not just out of respect for her -- but, because I had accepted long ago that I would never hear from her, or see her again in my lifetime, and to reminisce invited pain. Never did I expect this, to have her as a constant presence in my day to day life.

She has defended me here on this very blog.

Something I had hoped somebody would do at some point.

And there was nobody built better, attitude wise, than Ten, to do it. That's another cool thing about her - she has NO FEAR - when it comes to other women, and expressing her opinion, or getting her point across.

With comments like this:

January 22, 2019

ccallahan1983

Posted 5 days, 2 hours
ago.



Favorite

Johnny,

I know that you love Jaime and you know that I understand how difficult it is to just stop loving someone but this woman is a piece of shit! Look at everything she has done to you and everything she says to you. You DO NOT deserve to be played with like some puppet on a string. She gets off on bringing you anguish and adores the fact that she can play with your strings as much as she wants and know that you'll still love her in the end. She's nothing but a crackhead whore and a terrible mother. Cut your loses and move on because no matter what you've done in your life, you can't save this girl from the hell she's willingly putting herself through. Let her continue to get her ass beat for the drugs that she thinks she needs and let her play around with her loser boyfriends. If this woman loved you, she wouldn't do these things to you. She wouldn't constantly hurt you. I know you're trying to be a good man but you need to let go.

I'm sorry for airing this out on the forum but it needed to be said so she can see it.

I'll go off more in an email or on the phone.

-C

How could she be *any* clearer?

January 22, 2019

✓ ccallahan1983

Posted 5 days, 2 hours
ago.



Favorite

I cannot believe you buy her brand of bullshit. You're so much smarter than this, Johnny.

She's hurting because she put herself in that situation. I can guarantee she provoked the entire thing. She needs to be locked in some type of facility so she can get the mental help she needs and the rehabilitation for her drug use.

Do what you know you need to do and leave it alone.

-C

Back during Christmas, I had thought that I'd lost her, but ... I was wrong:

January 10, 2019

Comments

✓ [ccallahan1983](#)

Posted 2 weeks, 1 day ago.



Favorite

J,

Don't ever think you offended me to the point that I wouldn't speak to you. The week of 12/18 is a tough one for me which I told you about on 12/17. Then you have the week of Christmas which is crazy just trying to finalize everything and get it ready for Santa to come. We've been actively sending emails since the New Year so you know everything is good. If you ever offend me, I will call you out on it. I won't just stop talking to you. I'll email you in a few.

-C

There's no question, she's here to stay.

She did ... get a little mad at my ex; but, Jaime stated that Candice is entitled to her opinion. I will be posting an essay on that subject soon, giving a little of Jaime Beth's side of the story.

But, right now, this is all about Candice.

I don't really know what to think of all of this. Today, and officer got stabbed here ... Sunday, a prisoner I knew was stabbed and killed. I know that any day could be my last, but if that moment does come -- I know that I was given a gift in my older, and last years -- a gift I never seen coming.

It's like getting your high school sweetheart back in your life after two decades of never seeing them, and having all of those original feelings come rushing back, stronger than before!

Yeah, I know, I'm all about public displays of affection. I can't help it. I'm happy, and I'm In a better place than I have been in many many years. I still have no idea of what my future holds, but I do know that I have enjoyed these days. My life has taken a turn that I did not plan, could not have planned.

People are coming back into my life that I didn't expect.

I've considered placing excerpts from our email exchanges, but ... that's not necessary. As beautiful as her words are, I will leave them out of this. I place the comments because they are on the blog anyways.

Each just a few weeks back.

She's been consistent, I have to give her that.

Something has caused me to trust Ten more than I have ever trusted any woman in my life. I have found that I can tell her absolutely ANYTHING! She listens, and gives me an honest response, without bias or judgment. Sometimes, I can tell that she does NOT like what I am saying, and she lets me know ASAP! I don't speak to people about the suicidal tendencies that have haunted me in years past -- I can't talk to people about that. And that in itself says something, because most suicide talks are made just for attention -- the fact that I always kept it to myself, proved it was not for attention, I was actually on the verge ... seriously considering it, especially after the manipulations of me, by Jaime Beth came to light around Christmas. I broke inside more ways than I thought possible. Usually I would have talked to no one. But, I mentioned it to Ten, and she listened: she gave me positive feedback that helped me.

She knows me, and I mean *really* knows me.

She just doesn't quite know what to do with me.

I think I can say that with confidence -- she wasn't expecting me any more than I was her. We're both in uncharted waters right now.

I'm nervous, and I'm scared.

I'll admit that.

Ten has a power over me that exceeds that of any other. Which brings one question of Fate to mind:

Of all the women in the world, how was it that the *one* that could break Jaime Beth's spell over me, happened to show up, after 20 years, just in time to save my life?

The odds are astronomical.

I just hope that this is not all ... I am looking forward to an interesting future. One in which I have lots of friends, family, and loved ones. One in which my kids know me.... One in which, I am loved.

Even missed when I am gone.

Thank you Candice, in the end: we proved them all wrong.

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HAPPY VALENTINES DAY!



NOTES

1. I have to be honest here and say that I know Skyler did love me, and gave us an honest try; and while it's all too easy for me to pass blame, I really was more to blame than anyone in our breakup. I must take responsibility for my own failure(s).
 2. Jaime was not there to see me: I had a manboy coworker that she had previously dated -- and he was the one she had called for. But he was out playing house with one of the young girls that worked our drive-thru window, so Jaime Beth found me instead; and, when her friend Amber saw me, she asked Jaime Beth to hook her up with me. I was on the rebound from Skyler, vulnerable and desperate, easy pickings really at that time. Jaime didn't hook Amber up, instead, she claimed me for herself. Causing a riff between the two friends that stayed between them up until Amber's death soon after my incarceration.
 3. This timeline only reflects the years *after* 1999, not those before. The scope of this post is Candice, and thus it reflects those years relevant to her. I'll post a different essay for other years.
 4. As it turns out, there was nothing I could have done at that time to save my relationship with Jaime Beth. She was dealing with personal issues that had nothing to do with me, and would have had no future with me regardless of any action I took, or choices that I made. I still contend that she was a good wife.
She just ... was never meant to be my wife...
Though, I wish she had been.
I will always love her and miss her.
- Candice and I do have a song: "**Bitter Sweet Symphony**" from the movie *Cruel Intentions*. It's on the radio right now as I type this, talk about eerie... And yet, again, Ten breaking that spell.