

Adulthood

In all the time I had frequented the various chatlines, I had never taken the step of meeting anyone in person. As a matter of fact, I had never even exchanged personal information with anyone until Bob. I think it was the way in which our interactions on the line played out that led to my taking his number. Our initial contact was pretty uneventful. He sent me a direct chat, and I replied. We exchanged some small talk, and the conversation ended unceremoniously which was pretty much the norm for a chatline.

It was by chance that, a few days after that initial contact, I ended up bumping into Bob on the line again. This time, our conversation was less one-dimensional. We talked about school, family, likes, dislikes, and just about anything we could think of. The chat lasted close to three hours. Yet, we still did not exchange information when we ended the chat.

Of course, I ended up on the chatline again a few days later, and, sure enough, I received a chat request from Bob. We immediately dove into conversation, discussing our days and plans for the week and weekend. Hours seemed like minutes as we talked without end in sight. Alas, the time had come to end the call. However, this evening was different.

“You should take my number,” Bob said matter-of-factly.

“Uhhh. . . okay. Sure. I don’t have a cellphone though,” I replied nervously.

“It’s cool. You can call me whenever. My number is. . .” he said as read out his number and listened to me echo it back.

The very next evening, I was sprawled across the bed with the telephone plastered to the side of my face as Bob and I laughed and joked about what bad days we had had. He told me about how coworkers in the office had been on his nerves because they weren’t contributing to some project they all were working on; I told him about how my boss at the movie theatre was on vacation and the manager covering his duties was wreaking havoc on the system we had in place. As usual, the conversation put a smile on my face. So, when he suggested we meet, I was nervously eager.

“I’ll pick you from work, and we can chill at my house,” twenty-eight-year-old Bob said to seventeen-year-old me as I lay in bed whispering to him on the cordless telephone.

You see, a person was supposed to be eighteen years old to use the chatline, but that had not stopped me. As far as I was concerned, I was an adult. I had graduated high school over a year prior; I had a full-time job; I paid household bills, and I could come and go as I pleased. To me, all those things screamed “ADULT!”

“That’s cool. I get off at seven o’clock. I’ll just tell my folks I’m working late, and I have a ride home,” I replied meekly.

I had not planned to make plans with Bob, but he seemed like a cool guy. So, when I talked to him that night and he suggested I come over, I was game. Here’s the thing: not only had I never met Bob, I had never even seen a picture of him. See, this was back when telephone chatlines were a normal way to meet new people. I would often find myself on the line during periods of boredom and loneliness carrying conversations with the anonymous people on the other end.

When I got to work the following day, all I could think about during my shift was meeting Bob. I had really enjoyed our conversations, and I was anxious to see the person I had connected with. The day seemed to race along as the time approached for him to arrive. As I clocked out and exited the movie theater in which I worked, I scoped the parking lot for the black car he said he’d be in.

I found him fairly easily. He was parked directly in front of the entrance with the engine running. I opened the passenger door and slid into the car without a second thought. I closed the door and came face-to-face with Bob.

The twenty-eight-year-old Bob whom I had spoken to on the telephone appeared to be not a day younger than forty. He was a large, bald, burly man with a salt-and-pepper goatee. The surprise I felt must've been visible because he asked if I was okay as he pulled out of the parking lot. I nervously mumbled, "I'm fine," as he pulled onto the interstate.

I didn't know what to do. This was not the situation I had expected, but it was far too late to back out. I figured I would hang out for a little while and make up some excuse to leave. In my mind, it was just that simple. I sat silently in the car watching the street lights pass while I attempted to formulate a scenario that was convincing enough to end our rendezvous.

We pulled off the interstate and into a neighborhood. I found myself attempting to memorize the streets and turns. . . left on Atlantic. . . right at the second stop sign. . . quick left and quick right. . . The closer I thought we were to our destination, the more nervous I became. My nervousness reached its peak when we pulled into a driveway, and he turned off the car.

I silently exited the car and followed him up the driveway. My heart raced as he placed the key into lock and opened the door.

"Make yourself at home," he said as he ushered me into his dimly lit, well-furnished home. "Would you like something to drink?"

"No, thanks. I'm good," I replied meekly as I took a seat on the brown leather sofa. I scanned the room hoping to remember every detail. Just in case. . .

The walls were a nondescript, beige color with darkly stained wood molding. The floor was the same wood as the molding that adorned the ceiling. There was a matching living room set and a monochromatic area rug. He had an older, big screen television in the right corner of the living room against the same wall with the doorway that led down a hall, a long, dark hall. I took a seat on the sofa that looked into the hallway.

"Are you sure you don't want something to drink?" He asked kindly.

"No, thank you," I half muttered to him barely above a whisper.

"You seem uncomfortable. Maybe I can help you relax. Stand up," he confidently instructed. There was not a hint of nervousness or uncertainty in his voice.

Maybe I was overreacting. His confidence made me feel more at ease. I stood and watched him approach me. I froze as he began to unbutton my white shirt. I flinched as he leaned in to kiss my neck. . . and jaw. . . and lips.

In my mind, I was screaming, "STOP!" But no words came from my mouth.

I could feel myself trembling as he grabbed my hand and led me down that long, dark hallway that led to the bedroom; my body was on autopilot. I stood next to the bed as he removed my shirt completely. Then I felt his hands at my belt buckle. Once he unclasped the belt and undid the button that was securing my pants at my waist, my slacks fell to the floor. I could feel myself step out of the pants, but I was still moving on autopilot.

My mind screamed "NO!" but still no words left my lips.

He gently pushed me onto the bed and disrobed. I felt the mattress shift as he climbed onto the king sized bed with me. My eyes scanned the darkness of the room searching for something. . . anything to focus on instead of what was happening. His hands caressed my bare skin. I flinched as I felt the roughness of his palms travel my body.

"Calm down. Your heart is racing," he whispered as he moved atop me.

His lips traversed my nakedness, from my neck. . . to my chest. . . to my thighs. His mouth enveloped my manhood. The feeling was cold and wet. I cringed at the feel of the sticky saliva. He eagerly attempted to bring me pleasure, but my lack of arousal throughout his attempts at stimulation signified his failure in exciting me.

I suddenly felt the mattress shift once more as he returned to standing. Again, I felt his hands on my skin. This time they were grasping my legs and pushing them against my chest. My body shuddered and trembled, but still I said nothing. My mind cried out for him to put my legs down, but the words were lost between my brain and my lips.

Sexual interactions with other men had not been a foreign concept to me. I had engaged in the exchange of manual and oral transactions with peers in high school. I had lost my virginity to a male on the night of my prom. I was not a stranger to the concept a penis penetrating an anus. All my sexual experience had plateaued with my being the “top,” or penetrator, within my encounters. I had never been penetrated by a man. I was not prepared to take that step. Yet, there I was, naked, on my back, legs in air, and a man in between them. I could feel his stiffness pressed against me.

My mind shouted, “PLEASE! STOP!” However, the only sounds that filled the room were the creaking of the mattress and his breathing.

I tensed. My entire body was frozen in a state of rigidity. I was not ready for the step, but I had reconciled within myself that it did not matter if I were ready. This was going to happen. To my surprise, though, he did not press forward. He did not enter my private space. Relief washed over me as I was given a reprieve. He began to grind against me, his breathing slowly intensifying. He slowly increased the pace of his grinding, and, in less than five minutes, I heard him grunt, felt his body spasm, and felt a warm stickiness against my skin. Then my legs were being lowered. He left the room and returned with a warm towel. He cleaned the remnants of his release from my body, and I somberly redressed.

I was able to produce enough voice to tell him I needed to go. He didn’t seem to care that I was ready to leave. He just threw on some clothes and led me back to the car. Instead of having him take me home, I had Bob take me back to work. I don’t remember the car ride at all. I don’t know if there was music playing. I don’t know if he spoke a word to me. I don’t even know what route he took to get back. It was all a blur. All I know is that, 15 minutes later, we had pulled into the parking lot of my movie theater. I didn’t say anything to him as I exited the car beyond mumbling a farewell of some sort. It didn’t matter though. It did not seem like he cared one way or another. I hurried toward the entrance of the building, and I turned back to see him speed off from the parking lot. I never saw or spoke to Bob again after that night.

I entered the theater and headed straight for the private bathroom. I washed my face and took a few deep breaths before calling my mother from the guest service desk and telling her that my ride canceled, and that I’d need to be picked up. I listened to her chastise me for several minutes for not telling her sooner that I would need to be picked up. After she said she’d be on her way, I sat in the lobby listening to music and waiting for her to arrive. My mind was blank.

Ten minutes later, I saw my dad’s car pull in front of the building to pick me up. I was silently in thought the entire ride home. When we got home, I headed straight into my room. I lay in bed and reflected on the events of the night. I decided then that adulthood was not all it was cracked up to be.