

## Rusty And Diane



Good morning, y'all. Well, thanks to massive overdoses of Tussin DM and Hall's Mentho-lyptus cough drops, I'm back amongst the living. At some point this pollen thing is going to die down and life will return to normal. The question is, when? I don't know how to connect global warming to the proliferation of pollen, but I'm sure there is a connection. I sure don't remember this much pollen back when I was growing up. I think being able to write a note in the pollen on the car of the owner of a car parked sideways in the Walmart, is a fairly recent condition. Might just be my memory, though.

Speaking of memories leads me back to my after church lunch at IHOP this week. Like I was saying, I saw a couple that was sitting in the corner of the restaurant that was familiar, but it took me a while to place them. After an exhaustive search of my data banks, I was able to identify the couple as Randy and Diane Stover. They were Seniors in high school when I was a Freshman. I remembered Randy as the BMOC back then. He was a football player and Diane was the head cheerleader. Randy looked good considering. He seemed to have most of his hair, though it was all grey now. Diane has not aged nearly as well. Her face is wrinkled and her body is very bent over. I guess it's the osteoporosis, but I don't know for sure.

They seemed to be having a spirited discussion with themselves and I'm thinking that it's pretty cool that they're joking and jibing with each other after fifty plus years of marriage. They even included Levon, their server, in their repartee. Randy and Diane are very demonstrative about their order, and very specific. Diane wants a stack of pancakes with just whip cream on top, not butter, and no syrup. Randy wants the "Breakfast Sampler", with no ham. Could Levon substitute the ham with pork sausage patties? Levon could.

It was funny watching them order because it was like they were a couple of epicures in a restaurant in France, giving very specific instructions to the maitre d. Their enthusiasm for their order was cute because it was like they were taking an

adventure together. Levon was leaving to get their drinks when Diane told "Thomas" that she just wanted water with no ice. Randy corrected Diane's misuse of Levon's name, and Levon laughed it off by saying Diane could call him Thomas if she wanted to. Levon went off to get their order placed and Randy and Diane continued on an undercurrent of conversation.

I was mulling over the question of whether to introduce myself now or wait until my stomach stopped grumbling. I decided the reunion might be tainted by the roar of my belly, so I decided to wait. While we all waited for Levon to return with our orders, Randy and Diane kept up a fairly brisk conversation. Occasionally, Diane would say a word louder than the rest of the conversation, but it seemed like it just might be part of a jibing, teasing routine that couples get into sometimes. You know, like, "you never pick up your dirty socks" with a response of, "I leave them in the floor where they're easy to find".

Finally, Levon returned with everyone's meals, and Diane is effusive in her praise of her pancakes. She can't thank "Manny" enough for his excellent service. Well, now I'm suspicious. I'm not great with names, and as a result, I tend to not use them when talking to folks. I've decided it's more socially acceptable to not use someone's name than to call them the wrong name. It's just my opinion. Diane's attempt to use the waiter's name is socially commendable, but getting awkward since she is using the wrong name. Randy's attempts to correct Diane are severely upsetting Diane. Diane is getting louder and louder and her conversation has veered to talks of "leaving me" and being "done with me". Randy appears to be trying to calm Diane in a moderate tone while Diane's voice rises above his with random city's names throw out loud enough to be heard throughout the restaurant. A restaurant that has now filled with the "church crowd".

Well, I didn't need to be a doctor to diagnose this one. Diane is suffering from dementia. My heart breaks a little to remember the head cheerleader at the top of the pyramid, now accusing her husband of "wanting to leave her in Pittsburgh so he could spend the rest of her money". Randy implores Diane to calm down, "she is creating a scene". Eventually, Diane is able to talk in a quieter tone, but one laced with anger and acrimony. I can hear assorted customers making cracks about having "dinner and a floor show", and I resist the urge to blast them. I also resist my previous urge to reminisce with Randy and Diane. That ship has sailed.