November 2010

The Art of People Watching

Nick Tillinghast
Iowa State University

Whitney Sager
Iowa State University

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/ethos

Part of the Higher Education Commons, and the Journalism Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/ethos/vol2011/iss1/5

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ethos by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
We're all guilty of it. Whether it's intentionally or by accident, we all have allowed our glossy eyes to stare blankly, as innocent passersby cross through our peripheral vision. The art of people watching — we gawk, we relate (or un-relate), we repeat. Creepy? A little bit. But where does it go from here? Let's at least make it more interesting. We are a competitive nation, might as well live up to our reputation. #bustingrhymes

First and foremost, for any of this to work, you need a comrade — someone who is just as sadistically into the game as you and willing to go to great lengths in order to keep the little integrity the game possesses intact. There has to be trust; no one should walk away truly offended.

**Name Game**
This one falls just a smidgen under the obnoxious radar; however, played correctly, it could potentially make someone’s day. Here’s the lowdown:

You and your competitor find a cozy bench or grassy spot 20 feet away from a busy walking path. Once settled, decide on a time limit. As soon as you reach an agreement, start the clock. The premise of the game is to see how many people you can get to respond to you by shouting out random names. Betsy, Michael, Jeremy -- all possible names, but can they be found on the path? For each person who responds, one point is awarded. First one to five is the winner, otherwise whoever is ahead when the allotted time expires is crowned victorious.

If someone is to approach or curse at you in the middle of the game, game is awarded to whoever called that name. If the person approaching is much bigger than you, I suggest you run.

**Back Story**
This game will allow you to get your personal thoughts a break and to give others a chance. If you are stuck people watching, pick some people out and give them a back story. Are they wearing a lab coat because they just got out of bio lab or because they are pretending they’re on Dexter’s Laboratory? Let your imagination make the call.

**From Watching to Talking: The Random Conversation**
(For Brave People Watchers Only)

First, start 20 feet from a busy walking path. Once settled, each person picks a passerby of the opposite sex for the other to confront. This game requires each contestant to go one at a time, so they can witness each other’s conversations.

The premise of the game is to get the phone number or e-mail of the person approached. Time will be recorded in case both contestants are successful. The kicker is, if the person you approach has a significant other of any kind, it’s an automatic disqualification. This game relies on one’s inner instinct and ability to read people. Basically, this game is for creepers. Let the rookies sit this one out.