

November 18, 2014

## When Harry Met Sally



Thank you.

Before I begin, and for the record, I want you to know that I was tricked into joining this club.

Yes, Denny Griffith and a group of you invited me to a nice lunch in this very building where I was asked many questions about my background and interests. All very appropriate.

I went home that night and told Mary that I was being proposed for membership in the esteemed Kit Kat Club. Of course, she immediately wanted to know what that was.

So I went to the source of all knowledge in this era—Google—and typed Kit Kat Club. And I find that the Kit Kat Club was a heterosexual swingers gathering place that had airtight doors and a loft at the back of the dance floor used for group sex (in New York City). And I thought to myself, . . . wow, I have really arrived. I've lived in Columbus for 40 years and I'm finally. . . finally. . . getting invited to where the real action is.

And then I found out this is some kind of a gentleman's club where you eat a five thousand calorie meal and doze off while listening to a paper delivered by a distinguished member.

Oh and another thing, I'm not talking about 'When Harry Met Sally.' Sorry to disappoint you. I actually hate that movie. It's 25 years old this year. Features Billy Crystal, Meg Ryan, a funny script, lush soundtrack, and a happy ending. It's a chick flick. Our wives are probably all home secretly watching it tonight.

No, the title of my paper was a deliberate attempt to throw you off. I'm going to mess with you for a little bit so come along for the ride. Sit back. Relax. Fill your wine glasses. Sip your coffee.

My paper is about two historical figures. . . . certainly my two favorites of all time. . . . and one was an incredible influence on the other. . . . shaped his life to be sure. . . . they were manly men. . . . and alive at the

same time for about 20 years. So I began to wonder, did they ever meet? Since one had so influenced the other. “When Harry Met Sally, or Not.”

I’ll start by telling you a little bit about each, you may quickly come to realize who I’m talking about. I will confirm it. . . . eventually. And then I’ll share the answer to the question I have posed.

First, Subject Number One. A larger-than-life figure. You know a lot about this person so I’ll mention a few items you may **not** know.

Born into wealth, he was a sickly child who suffered from severe asthma. His *New York Times* obituary read: “As a boy, he was puny and sickly, but with that indomitable determination which characterized him in every act of his life, he entered upon the task of transforming his feeble body not merely into a strong one, but into one of the strongest.” For the presidential scholars here—Mark Real—that first clue may give it away.

Graduated Harvard.

His wife **and** mother died the same day in the same house. His wife, two days after childbirth. He purportedly never spoke his first wife Alice’s name again.

He was an office holder almost continuously from 1882 until 1909. He was a member of the New York legislature, Civil Service Commissioner, President of the New York Police Board, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Governor of New York, Vice President, and President.

When the Spanish War broke out, he resigned from the Navy Department and organized the famous Rough Riders. When asked about his health upon his return from Cuba, he said “I’m feeling fit as a bull moose.”

When World War I broke out, he promptly announced “I and my four sons will go.” His four sons did go, one of them to his death.

While President, he narrowly escaped death in 1902 in a trolley accident. A secret service man accompanying him was killed.

In the 1904 election, he received the largest popular and electoral vote ever given to a President up to that time. Inaugurated at age 42, he was the youngest person to become president.

For settling the Russo-Japanese War, he received the 1906 Nobel Peace Prize.

He was the first president to make conservation a priority, setting aside millions of acres as federally protected parks.

He was the only occupant of the White House who ever had boxing matches there.

While campaigning as the Bull Moose party presidential candidate in 1912, a cranky saloonkeeper named John Schrank shot him. “The bullet lodged in his chest only after penetrating his steel eyeglass case

and passing through a thick (50 pages) single-folded copy of the speech he was carrying in his jacket. As an experienced hunter and anatomist, he correctly concluded that since he was not coughing blood, the bullet had not completely penetrated the chest wall to his lungs, and he declined to go to the hospital immediately. Instead, he delivered his scheduled speech with blood seeping into his shirt. He spoke for 90 minutes. His opening comments to the gathering crowd were, “Ladies and Gentlemen, I don’t know whether you fully understand that I have just been shot; but it takes more than that to kill a Bull Moose.” (Wikipedia)

Almost seven years later, his death was caused by a blood clot that had entered his lungs. The bullet from the earlier assassination attempt had remained inside him.

Of course, I am talking about Teddy Roosevelt.

Subject Number Two. An equally larger-than-life figure. So let me describe him.

He was the most famous writer in the world. He won both the Pulitzer Prize and the Nobel Prize. (“The Old Man and the Sea”).

“In January 1954, he and his wife Mary would survive a pair of surreal plane crashes on successive days in Africa—and he’d stumble from them to read his own obituaries and stroke his myth.” (Hemingway’s Boat). First reports said both had been killed.

He received twice a week electric shock treatments for depression at the Mayo Clinic, checking in under an assumed name. He also had “paranoid delusions about the FBI combing through his bank accounts late at night with their flashlights.” (Hemingway’s Boat).

Five people in four generations of his family committed suicide. (Wikipedia).

He was an ambulance driver for the Red Cross in Italy near the end of World War I. He was wounded by mortar fire, having been passing out chocolate candy to frontline troops, sustaining shrapnel wounds to both legs. He recuperated at a Red Cross hospital in Milan for six months.

He frequented a local bar in Key West called Sloppy Joe’s.

He earned millions of dollars from his work, many stories and novels were adapted to the screen and television.

He shopped at Abercrombie and Fitch.

Of course, I am talking about Ernest Hemingway.

Many scholars have noted the connection of Hemingway to Roosevelt.

So how much did Theodore Roosevelt influence Ernest Hemingway?

I cannot state it more firmly. . . . Theodore Roosevelt was Ernest Hemingway's boyhood idol. The influence was pervasive and the examples are many. . . . I'll dive into a few.

"Theodore Roosevelt was the hero of the generation before World War I and of the Oak Park of Ernest Hemingway's childhood, where he seemed to advocate both of a manly national life and of the strong middle-class family. Teddy had been a child—as Hemingway would be—more than slightly taken up by the adventures of natural history. As a child, Roosevelt specialized in writing a natural history journal, collecting specimens to describe as Audubon had done, by shooting them. The Roosevelt family was closely connected to the establishment of the New York Museum of Natural History. Young Hemingway had his own connections to natural history in the Field Museum in Chicago, where Dr. Hemingway took his children sometimes on weekends. Hemingway owned a large number of natural history and travel books, including Roosevelt's 1902 "The Deer Family" and his 1910 "African Game Trails." ("Cold Warriors", page 71).

Hemingway was deeply influenced by Roosevelt's advocacy of the strenuous life. I'd like to read a short passage from Michael Reynolds' book "Young Hemingway."

"For any boy born at the turn of the century, Theodore Roosevelt was a living legend: western rancher, rough rider, hero of San Juan Hill, the President, African hunter, South American explorer. In popular magazines like *National Geographic*, *Century* and *Outlook*, his essays regularly detailed his own adventures while preaching the strenuous life. When he went on African safari to gather animals for the Smithsonian, he took cinematographers with him. The skins were not yet stuffed when the movie played in Oak Park. At the dime matinee with all the other school children, Hemingway saw 'the most dominant figure since Napoleon, in strenuous stunts peculiarly his own,' as the movie was advertised.

Roosevelt may have suggested speaking softly, but he seldom did. A master at publicizing himself, the Colonel lived the adventure and then wrote about it. Whether he was stalking grizzly bears or pursuing outlaws in the Bad Lands, his writing pad was handy. In 1886, as he prepared to chase two horse thieves down the Little Missouri River, he wrote his closest friend, Cabot Lodge, about his preparations for the adventure. He took Matthew Arnold and Tolstoy along to pass the time, and a camera to record the capture. Already, he was planning the illustrated article that soon appeared in *Century* magazine. The legend Roosevelt became was a conscious creation, whose message was simple: a man of moral fiber and physical endurance can do whatever he can imagine himself doing."

“Although he did not singlehandedly start the physical fitness craze which swept the nation early in the last century, Teddy Roosevelt certainly epitomized it. Every boy knew how the Colonel began as a frail, asthmatic child to build himself into a man. By the time Hemingway was in grade school, physical fitness had become an essential part of education.”

“Directly and indirectly, Hemingway absorbed much of Roosevelt’s enthusiasm, determination, and interests. Not long after the movie of Roosevelt’s African hunt played Oak Park, the Hemingway family-reunion picture shows young Ernest in his safari costume standing at the edge of the smilers. At his side he holds a hat like the one Teddy wore. In *National Geographic*, he devoured Roosevelt’s account of the hunt, complete with pictures of dead animals and half-naked native women. Roosevelt’s book *African Game Trails* became a permanent part of Hemingway’s library.”

Ernest Hemingway was deeply influenced by Teddy Roosevelt’s African safari. Hemingway dreamed of African hunting from age 10 when he followed in the magazines and on the movie screen the African hunting adventures of his hero, Teddy Roosevelt.

After he left the presidency, Roosevelt led a safari in east and central Africa outfitted by the Smithsonian Institution. It was financed by Andrew Carnegie.

Roosevelt and his companions killed or trapped approximately 11,400 animals, from insects and moles to hippopotamuses and elephants. The 1,000 large animals included 512 big game animals, including six rare white rhinos. Tons of salted animals and their skins were shipped to Washington. Regarding the large number of animals taken, Roosevelt said, “I can be condemned only if the existence of the National Museum, the American Museum of Natural History, and all similar zoological institutions are to be condemned.” He wrote a detailed account in the book “*African Game Trails*.” This was in 1909. The trip lasted almost a year.

In 1933, 34 years later, Hemingway and his wife, Pauline went on safari to East Africa. Their guide was none other than Philip Percival, legendary safari man who once worked on Theodore Roosevelt’s epic 1909 safari, which young Hemingway followed in magazines and in Oak Park watched the jerky moving pictures of the Colonel’s expedition on the silent screen. (Hemingway *The 1930’s*).

This safari was one of the highpoints of Hemingway’s life. Their haul was recorded in Pauline Hemingway’s safari journal:

“Of the antelope family, they killed four Thompson gazelle, eight Grant, seven wildebeest, seven impala, two klipspringers, four roan, two bushbucks, three reedbucks, two oryx, four topi, two waterbuck, one eland, and three kudu. Of dangerous game, they killed their licensed limit: four lions, three cheetahs, four buffalo, two leopards, and two rhinos. They also killed one serval cat, two warthogs, thirteen zebra, and one

cobra. Animals wounded but never found included two cheetahs, two warthogs, one eland, one buffalo, and one dik-dik. For amusement forty-one hyenas were also killed. There may have been more but these are the recorded kills.”

The safari would serve as the basis for Hemingway’s next book, “Green Hills of Africa.”

Next, let me click thru a few photos of both men.



“The Early Years,” 1861, Almanac of Teddy Roosevelt



“Early Years, 1899-1921,” JFK Presidential Library and Museum, 1901



“Untitled,” Theodore Roosevelt Collection, Harvard College Library, 1862



“Ernest Hemingway as a Toddler (Oak Park, Illinois),” JFK Presidential Library and Museum, 1903



“Teddy Roosevelt: Patiently Awaiting the birth of Chuck Norris,” Theodore Roosevelt Collection, Harvard College Library, 1858-1880



“Ernest Hemingway Pretending to Box,” JFK Presidential Library and Museum, 1920



“The Bull Moose,” KRAX in Logic: Theodore Roosevelt



“Ernest Hemingway with Pauline Pfeiffer and His Children,” JFK Presidential Library and Museum, 1935





“With Friends on Safari in Tanganyika, Africa,” JFK Presidential Library and Museum, 1933



“Ernest Hemingway in an Ambulance,” JFK Presidential Library and Museum, 1918



“Ernest Hemingway in an American Red Cross Ambulance in Italy,”  
JFK Presidential Library and Museum, 1918

And finally, before we get to the big reveal, I know you’re sitting on the edge of your seats, a note on my sources.

First, I have to thank the Columbus Metropolitan Library. I spent a lot of hours there and the staff is incredibly helpful, particularly one Aaron O’Donovan in Genealogy, History, and Travel. You can be sitting there at a table, reading and writing, and they actually come up to you often and ask if you need any help.

They also have amazing research search engines on their website. I used abscohost, proquest, and newsbank. (Mention Capital Campaign and Roger's leadership of it). There was also a book that only the Grandview Library had called *Cold Warriors* by Suzanne Clark and a search engine called jstor which only the Thompson Library at OSU had available. There were also two academic experts. . . . one who helped me and one who didn't. The one who helped me was Dr. Sandra Spanier of Penn State University. The name may sound familiar, her husband was the Penn State president who was ousted in the Jerry Sandusky scandal. Dr. Spanier is Professor of English and General Editor of the Hemingway Letters Project. She's leading an analysis of 6,000 Hemingway letters, a project headquartered at Penn State. She gave me some great leads on books and articles. She also referred me to Professor Suzanne Clark of the University of Oregon, who has written extensively about Hemingway and Roosevelt. And finally, the JFK Library in Boston has all the Hemingway papers, incredible photos, definitely worth a visit to that website.

If you want to read one book about Hemingway and one book about Roosevelt, I would recommend: *Hemingway's Boat* by Paul Hendrickson and *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* by Edmond Morris.

And now to my conclusion. Did Ernest Hemingway ever get the chance to meet his idol Teddy Roosevelt? Hemingway was almost 20 when Roosevelt passed away. The short answer is no. But there is a footnote to this. In 1910, Roosevelt came to Oak Park, Illinois on a whistle-stop tour. Hemingway was in the crowd. Again quoting from "Young Hemingway,"

"Amid the lusty cheers of five hundred admirers, Roosevelt was carried majestically thru the center of the village about 5 o'clock Thursday. . . . the train, scheduled to stop, merely slackened speed and rolled smoothly past the station platform on which were gathered scores of school children and businessmen.

Standing beside Grandfather Hemingway, a staunch Roosevelt man, Ernest had cheered and waved his safari hat, the newest addition to the costumes he wore as a boy—army uniforms, Indian garb, and now a khaki outfit exactly like the Colonel's. Africa and its dangerous game caught and held his imagination forever."

Thank you. That concludes my paper. I'd be glad to take questions.

**SOURCES**

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