East Carolina University

April 24, 2008 By Shawn Decker

Immediately after flying back to Virginia from L.A., Gwenn and I got in our car and headed down to East Carolina University... well, not *exactly* immediately.

The flight landed at 9 at night, but when the bus dropped us off at the economy parking, we weren't quite sure where we parked, though we had it narrowed down to a 200-foot square radius.

Which isn't bad really. At the first hunch, I told the bus driver to drop us off and, what do ya know, there was the car- right in our line of sight. But when we tried to use the keychain Unlock button, it didn't work.

"We're screwed," Gwenn said, noticing that one of the backdoors was closed enough lock, but open enough to have let the battery die. No biggie, we called the airport and they sent a nice guy in a truck over to give us a jump.

We got to just outside of Greenville, then called it a night at the Sleep Inn. How they can call it the Sleep Inn with an 11 a.m. check out is beyond me, especially when most check outs are at noon. But again, they were nice, and we got an extra late check out- for a price- since we didn't have to hit the road until 3 p.m.

East Carolina University brought Gwenn and I in to speak for World AIDS Day 2006, and someone asked me about the Kenneth Cole thing. See, last time we spoke there was two days before my infamous meeting with Kenneth, I remember talking to the staff about the publicity stunt when I was just an innocent, wide-eyed positoid, unknowing of what awaited me in the big bad city...

But I digress. This time we did our secondary program at ECU, entitled “Bugs in the Bedroom”. It’s more of a general STI program- I don’t even disclose my HIV status until the end, as a big shocking finale.

One thing that happened during the program, however, was a bit shocking. I had to retire a joke because of the sensitive nature…

See, we do these condom races, pitting two guys against two girls. It’s a race to see who can put a condom on a fake penis the fastest. The first two go, and then we talk about who was fastest and who did it correctly.

The next pair what, and I crack a joke about, “This time… we see who can put the condom on the fastest… with their mouth!” It’s a raucous joke, and usually I can tell the guy it’s a joke pretty quickly. But this gentleman in particular lost his shit.

It’s not that my delivery was that good- no one used to believe that I was serious abotu this, uh,

gag- but now, as I’m finishing book number 2, I’ve grown some facial hair.

Which makes me look like I mean business. See?

WIth Azure in Los Angeles at The Galaxy Gallery gig.

Order was restored, and I calmed him down and assured him that wasn’t the intent. But man o’

man, for like two seconds there I thought I was going to be calling the local hemophilia chapter for some clotting factor.

Overall, the program isn't the well-oiled machine like "A Boy, A Girl, A Virus", which is more about my relationship with Gwenn, but it is fun and educational. A well-needed boost for the condom in an age of abstinence-only education.

We just haven't done "Bugs" as much over the years, and I sometimes forget how much shaping we did with "Boy, Girl, Virus", where little things had to get taken out to keep the focus where it needed to be. It can't be understated how a few fake penises- one that measures over a foot long- can turn a public speaking engagement into a potentially combustible element.

Thanks to everyone at East Carolina University for inviting us to speak, and taking sexual health on. As for taking things on, I might not be blogging for a couple of days, since I have a Monday deadline to finish the new book. So wish me luck, I hope to have some news on that front in the coming months.

Positively Yours,

Shawn

PS... The L.A. blog is coming next week!

Don't forget to help my AIDS Walk NY Team defeat Kenneth Cole Productions! Click Support to make a small donation to help my fellow positoids.

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