

2014-15 Course

This story won't make any sense without telling you first about my experience with Domingo in 2014-15.

He put me (and arguably himself) in a difficult position by, very unwisely, becoming intimately involved with me, and this began from our first class in September 2014.

Basically, he invited me for coffee after class; I said no. The following week he did the same; I said no again. The third week he invited me for coffee and, worn down, I said yes. I thought it inappropriate but never considered it a romantic gesture.

Anyway, we became friends, and it became clear he was romantically interested in me. I liked him, initially. I have a tendency to fall in love with everyone I know, and it was no different with him. I was 42 and single. So, yes, I was interested to see what might happen. The problem was he was so offensive, narcissistic, and weird, his behavior left me feeling cold towards him.

While we were having coffee, he would leer over teenage girls walking by in their school uniforms. This, I found, utterly appalling.

Nevertheless, we were friends, and he was my piano teacher. I was his student.

I had to go to London for something. I did not want to go alone as my brother had become quite abusive towards me at that time, and my parents did not protect me from him, so I invited Domingo to come with me, which he did. We went to a concert and the opera. We ate lovely food, and I gave him a full and personally (me) guided walking tour of the famous parts of London, two days running. Nothing happened romantically but his behavior was so appalling nothing could have happened. He took every opportunity to flirt with other women; women on the street, on the tube, at check-in at the airport. It was insulting.

So when we got back to Spain, mid-December 2014, he realized that nothing romantic was ever going to happen between us, and he started to get angry with me. He started gossiping with the other men at the conservatory about me, how I was sexually cold - he said this to me directly in class - and, AND, he tried to set me up with his mate (I'm not sure of the guy's name but he's older and has dark hair and sometimes smells of alcohol). I was horrified and saw no other option than to change teachers, which I did. We fell out spectacularly at that moment and I don't believe he ever forgave me.

I told Juan Carles why I had no option but to change teacher. I suspect the thing JC emphasized the most was the initial going for coffee.

2022-3 Course

I started to hear the word "coffee" a lot and with a certain intent and I knew it was about my experience with Domingo and that the gossiping was still going on. I know when people are talking about me, I can feel it and see it in their body language. It makes me very uncomfortable.

There was no teacher for chamber music for ages. The flute teacher took Pablo and I for chamber music class a few times in November. He said a couple of weird things.

I'm very sensitive to this sort of thing. I have had PTSD for 35 years after sexual assault when I was a child. I'm hyper-sensitive because of this so I notice anything that could be dangerous. In fact, I left Denia to go back to London in 2016 because I went to the police about the assault

which re-traumatized me. From 2016-now has been a very difficult time for me and the PTSD, which was more manageable previously, has been really intolerable, although it is getting better now.

End of November, Vidal arrives as our chamber music teacher. He is, in my view, an extremely attractive man. This immediately sets off my PTSD. More so because of his manner, the way he looks at me, and some of the things he says, including repeated “coffee” references, which I connect immediately to the gossip that has been going on.

I feel that I’m being set up and that somehow Domingo is behind it.

Vidal, and the other teachers, start to say and do things which suggest and confirm he is interested in me romantically. Some of these things are extremely tacky and disappointing, i.e. the constant references to romance and Bolero, to playing Ravel’s Bolero (the theme tune to a very sexual movie), to being “shown” to the other teachers at harmony class, things that harmony teacher said (which I struggled to understand but got the gist of), all these things suggested he was interested, and I was flirting a little too. Even though I suspected the whole thing was a massive deception, I really fancied him so thought it was worth the risk. Truth is, I couldn’t help myself, the sexual tension when I was with him was overwhelming, and I still can’t believe it was just me that felt it.

I so rarely like a man in that way, the last time was over 20 years ago.

He was shy of me too, but now I guess that was just a guilty conscience.

Anyway, so it’s a class in February or March, and he started to talk to me, asking me questions about my life, and my PTSD kicked in like never before, and I went into shock-mute. This is when you are triggered by something and sent back to that moment when you were extremely fearful, and you can’t speak for the overwhelming fear. I was unable to speak and I must have appeared to be very rude.

I got home and I was devastated. I suffered this my whole life and I was sick to death of it. I haven’t been able to have a normal life because of these reactions. I was so upset.

The next class he appeared to be insulted which made me even sadder.

I just wanted a way to communicate and say what I would have said had I been able to speak and not been overwhelmed with fear. I prayed to Mary to give me a way to communicate honestly and somehow I came across a Twitter account which seemed like it could be his.

I followed the account. The account blocked me immediately, so I blocked it back, and I thought it wasn’t him, and that was that.

The next class he was SO angry with me I knew immediately the Twitter account was his.

By the way, every chamber music class was a PTSD nightmare for me. I suffered such a high level of anxiety during the class, I used to come home and feel like I had been punched hard in the kidneys, and have to lie down. I started to drink calming tea and take cortisol lowering medicine before class, which helped. I would do my anxiety exercises the whole walk over, and sometimes during the class too. The reason for the exacerbated fear was because he had made signs to me that he was interested in me romantically, and I was certainly interested in him in that way, but more so because I thought he was, but I also felt that he was lying to me at

the same time. In many ways, and in essence, the experience was very similar to my experience as a child where I was tricked by a boy who pretended he loved me.

Aside from all this, the classes were a lot of fun and I think Pablo would also agree. We had a good time playing music together. I sort of took over a bit by bringing lots of different arrangements for us to play. Every class was really brilliant, apart from my nerves, and apart from the last class of the course which was very ugly.

Anyway, that was that, I thought, and then a couple of days later, mid-April time, something pulled me out of bed at 5am to unblock him on Twitter and write, in Spanish, a tweet thread of what I would have said to him, had I been able to. I don't know what motivated me to do that but it was powerful.

It was a very honest, heart-felt, and vulnerable message. I explained I have PTSD with men I am attracted to, and how difficult it is, but explained it usually goes away when I get to know someone better and feel safe with them. And how I didn't want to appear to be rude, that was my least intention.

I don't know why I wrote all this because he had blocked me, so it was as if I was writing to no-one at all. However, writing it was so healing for me. It felt liberating after all these years to finally tell the truth about myself and open my heart and be vulnerable, even if it was to no-one. This was a whole new world for me. I felt an enormous sense of healing and I had no idea he was going to read it. It didn't matter to me if he read it or not.

But at the next class, it was obvious he had read it. The energy between us had changed, his manner had changed, people at the conservatory seemed to be being kinder towards me. Perhaps I was imagining it, but it felt like, for the first time in my life, someone was in my corner. I felt protected and cared for and that there was hope.

But he never responded to me, not in speech, or text, or online, nothing. There was no response at all, just this energetic shift.

It was weird, and I didn't understand it. Was I imagining things? But it felt so real too. I was confused and annoyed, and I started to tweet irreverent things on Twitter. I started having a conversation with no-one, waiting for a reply.

I felt I was right about it all being a set up.

I got angry and tweeted about what happened with Domingo (no names or identifying details, the only people who would know what I was talking about would be those who already knew). I only ever tweeted negative things about Domingo, no-one else, and only twice.

I sensed at the conservatory everyone knew things about me except me, like he was telling people things about me. It was really stressful. I felt like I was the star of a very tacky soap opera and the centre of gossip, yet again.

But there was no response.

I was not interested in Vidal's Twitter activity at all. I did not care who he was connected to, his personal life, or what he said on Twitter. I had only wanted a way to communicate honestly.

However, given the silence, I started to look at his Twitter account, which you could see then if you weren't logged in. I started to see messages that appeared to be from him to me. They were not written messages, they were insinuations, hints, in picture or meme form. I started to

reply by tweeting replies to them, and some weird form of communication did start between us, mid-May time, and some of these tweets appeared to suggest he was interested romantically.

So you might ask why I thought this when he clearly wasn't communicating with me in any other way. Well, I guess I was in this world of hope and fear and, given the sexual tension in the classroom, I suppose I must have been suffering from a sort of temporary insanity. I thought up reasons to explain why things were as they are which seemed reasonable at the time.

Anyway, this weird parallel-world communication got more intense, and I had missed a class due to Covid, and I felt like he would *have to* communicate with me normally because of what he had insinuated on Twitter, and that's really why I came to the choir concert, and he was there but he didn't communicate with me, and I got angry again, and that's when I complained on Twitter about how Domingo manipulated his students to bully you the whole course, and how unpleasant that was for everyone, and his requirement for adoring teenage girls ... etc. It was explosive but I only thought I was talking to one person, or no-one at all.

The next time I went to the conservatory the energy had changed again. Gloria looked at me in disgust. Teachers were furious, saying things left, right, and centre. I couldn't understand it other than assuming Vidal was telling them things I had said on Twitter and this was their reaction. And still he didn't talk to me or make any actual response but the weird Twitter communication continued.

Indeed, no-one has ever spoken to me clearly about any of this.

And again the weird communication got more intense as we approached the end of the year and the final class. And I knew I was being tricked but the fire was really, really intense, so I went along with it, and the hints and insinuations were suggesting that something was going to happen between us, and I was saying I'll believe it when I see it because I didn't believe it.

And I went to class that evening 12th June, and within a few short statements from him, I knew for sure it was all a trick. But this is the grand finale, the final flourish of the main deception. Where the tricked woman finds out the man she thinks is interested in her doesn't really like her at all. And the man's friend, who years ago was rejected by this woman, is now avenged. So boring really.

That was the whole silly game, but I expected that was the game anyway. It's not my first rodeo after all, and I had been alerted the whole course. I'm just sad that the desire to cause a woman pain just because she turned a man down seems so reasonable to so many.

So he's triumphant, parading up and down like a deranged chicken, obviously delighted with himself, blowing his trumpet loudly, violently in my ear, shouting, flapping, and clapping. Gloria's outside the door (probably not alone) laughing, red-faced, delighted. He doesn't even say goodbye to me when I leave. And I leave the building and some of the teachers (for sure including the drunk one) throw dirty water on me from an upstairs window which stains my T-shirt.

And I walk home and Mercedes "bumps into me" (Mercedes has previously revealed her lack of moral limits to me, particularly when it concerned "avenging" Domingo, and I would prefer to avoid her as she is full of ill will. Her speciality is crank phonecalls.). She's obviously been running because she expected me to go in another direction, and she's pretending not to be out of breath but she can hardly speak, and I guess she's been sent to check if I'm crying. I'm not.

I mean, the whole thing is just extraordinary. Behaviour I wouldn't expect of anyone older than about 14.

And I get home and I tweet "well, that was a rubbish ending wasn't it".

And suddenly I see I've been put on a list of around 20 people I don't know, and one of them has retweeted my tweet, and I alarmingly realise that Vidal has shared my account details with a whole bunch of other people, and they have all been reading everything I have said on Twitter, for months!

This was shocking and unexpected!

That last class I found out just how much I am hated by a number of people at the conservatory. Their actions were full of ill will, and intent to harm and humiliate me, neither of which transpired. In fact, their behaviour was so appalling, I am embarrassed for them.

My feelings were very real and nothing to be ashamed about. I just made a mistake. Like we all do from time to time.

I always have a good opinion of people and, even though I knew I was being lied to, I never once thought that a mature adult person, and a teacher, would betray me in that way, especially after I had been so honest and vulnerable.

During that last class, Vidal asked me - once I had realised it was a trick, and he knew I knew - was I staying at the conservatory, and so I guess the whole thing was to get me to leave. Which I won't, of course.

I would rather be left alone to get on with the music which I love than be the centre of gossip simply because I did not consent to a romantic relationship with *my piano teacher* in 2014.

Thank you Concha, for reading this long story, and for giving me the chance to tell my side of these rather bizarre events. I have no idea what people have heard about me and I suppose it is mostly lies. Either way, I have a compelling, sad and funny, story to tell people over dinner, or wherever.

I'm glad I said those things about Domingo on Twitter because it has obviously alerted some people (the alcohol-smelling teacher especially) to their poor conduct given their defensiveness and obvious anger towards me.

I just hope that I didn't offend you, or anyone else that didn't deserve it.

Anyone who cares about me and knew what was going on should have alerted me, as I would them. Even Maria's loyalty was elsewhere, and I suppose for the whole year too. I very much know who my friends are now and they are very few.

Indeed, I have learned a lot and feel curiously positive after all this stress and horribleness and inability to sleep properly for 6 months. I attacked my PTSD head on, for the first time in my life, and it seems to be much, much better now. Is it healed? I don't know yet, but it's certainly getting there. My heart too has opened, after a prolonged ice age, and I am now thinking about the future in a different, more healthy way than before, when I was teetering towards depression most of the time.

I've a lot to be grateful for from this experience.

In any case, it was never my intention to hurt anyone, not now, not in 2014, not ever.