

**I Kissed Lanie Goodbye:  
What Evangelicals Can Learn From  
the Relationships of Seinfeld's Elaine Benes**



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**By Ted Kluck and Zachary Bartels**

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*For Frank Turk, who would have totally dated Elaine  
had he been a character on Seinfeld.*

*(Or maybe he would have played Costanza's brother.)*



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## Authors:

**Ted Kluck, MFA** is the author of many books, on topics ranging from Mike Tyson to the Emergent Church. Both *Why We're Not Emergent* and *Why We Love the Church* (with Kevin DeYoung) won *Christianity Today* Book of the Year awards, and *Paper Tiger: One Athlete's Journey to the Underbelly of Pro Football* won a Michigan Notable Book award in 2008. His work has also appeared in ESPN the Magazine and *Christianity Today*.

Ted has played professional indoor football, coached high school football, trained as a professional wrestler, served as a missionary, and taught writing courses at the college level. He lives in Grand Ledge, MI with his wife Kristin and sons Tristan and Maxim. He once owned a used Volvo and currently has a boxing ring in his basement.

**Zachary Bartels, M.Div.** is an award-winning preacher and Bible teacher (and, apparently, some sort of self-styled social scientist). He has been serving for eight years as senior pastor of a Baptist church in the capital of a mitten-shaped Midwestern state. He earned his BA in world religions from Cornerstone University and his Masters of Divinity from Grand Rapids Theological Seminary. He enjoys film, fine cigars, stimulating conversation, gourmet coffee, reading, writing, and cycling.

Zach has written several ha-ha books with Ted and recently signed a two-book deal with Thomas Nelson publishing, the first of which (*Demoniac: A Novel*) will be released in 2014.

## Abstract:

### **Why Kiss Elaine Benes goodbye? And what exactly can we learn from Elaine's mistakes?**

Many evangelicals have written books about dating, or courting, or not dating. This "Not Dating" genre has become a cottage industry in and of itself, dating<sup>1</sup> back to Joshua Harris's groundbreaking tome, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*. Harris's book resulted in an entire generation of really confused, frustrated, single evangelical children, who ended up learning about dating not from the church or their older siblings, but from *Seinfeld's* Elaine Benes, who certainly has not, in any way, shape or form, kissed dating goodbye. On the contrary, Elaine was with a ton of guys. My goodness.

But instead of judging Elaine for her relational indiscretions, we'd rather learn from them. Hence, this guide. Written by two renowned experts in the field of interpersonal communication and pop culture, we've provide a comprehensive breakdown of Elaine's relationships— the good, the bad, and the ugly.

This book is intended to open dialogue. To nudge. To encourage. To help you to think more deeply about your own relationships. It should be talked about around the dinner table...over coffee...at a highbrow academic conference. It should be published in journals of an academic nature with Latin words in their titles (e.g. *Elainus Concupiscentia* . . . I mean, not that, but *like* that ). This paper asks the

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<sup>1</sup> Pun intended.

probing, difficult questions that many dating books are afraid to ask. Is there a Phil Titola in your life<sup>2</sup>? A Todd Gack<sup>3</sup>? Maybe a David Puddy? See yourself in these characters. See your friends. And most of all, see where the journey takes you.

And now, like Lanie, let's just skip all the preliminaries and jump right in!

## Todd Gack

Todd Gack is a common player on the Evangelical Dating scene. Tall, well-dressed, handsome, and comfortable with women, this character has no problems engaging in charming, semi-intimate, funny banter with women—who then feel like they've been on dates with him. This was Elaine's chief problem with Gack. He would put her in traditionally "dating" situations— dinner for two, dinner with parents, a wedding— and consequently Elaine felt as though she was dating Gack, when in fact, Gack thought they were just "hanging out." Todd Gack<sup>4</sup> exists in every church youth group and college group in America. He's afraid of being friend-zoned<sup>5</sup> so he hedges his bets to a ridiculous degree, dating-wise. This is your prayer partner. The guy who gives you playful, tickly backrubs after small group, but is aghast and offended when you suggest that you're "going out." Add the fact that he's Dutch<sup>6</sup> and it goes without saying that he's way too spiritual for dating.

## Jimmy

Jimmy hangs out in health clubs and refers to himself in the third person. Ex: "Jimmy likes Elaine." The problem, of course, is that Elaine thinks Jimmy is someone else (to whom she is actually attracted), when Jimmy is actually Jimmy. This, of course, makes me think of other, real, people who refer to themselves in the third person (see: Allen Iverson, Terrell Owens, Chad Ochocinco, and for that matter about two thirds of the guys playing wide receiver in the NFL. And probably U2's "The Edge"<sup>7</sup>). Jimmy also holds grudges, by his own admission. This is less-than-desirable in a romantic partner, to say the very least. The lesson seems simple: Don't date vain, self-absorbed guys who hang out in health clubs, sell "jump" shoes, and refer to themselves in the third person. But is it really that simple? Jimmy, it turns out, had some things going for him— namely the fact that he wasn't afraid to make public his attraction to Elaine. He was very un-Gack-like in this regard. Misguided? Sure. But Jimmy had a

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<sup>2</sup> We hope not.

<sup>3</sup> Much more likely. You've probably "Christian Dated" a Todd Gack.

<sup>4</sup> Gack was also reviled, in his episode, for selling Jerry a faulty box of Cuban cigars, which actually ended up being gross and which Kramer paid for with a bag of change that he slung, angrily, at Gack in the final scene of the episode. Let's face it; if Elaine had any sense, she'd be dating the K-man.

<sup>5</sup> Although he has no problem, apparently, with being *calzoned*.

<sup>6</sup> Maybe. When Elaine asks, "What kind of name is Todd Gack anyway?" Jerry answers, "I think it's Dutch." That's good enough for us.

<sup>7</sup> I think we can all agree that calling oneself "The Edge" is so obnoxious and ridiculous so as to make The Jimmy look like Jon Hamm, Cary Grant, and St. Francis Assisi all rolled into one by comparison.

fundamental element of courage that Todd Gack lacked. Still, perhaps the last word from Jimmy should speak the loudest: “Hands off Jimmy! *Don’t touch Jimmy!*” Indeed.

### **Joel Rifkin**

Joel Rifkin’s only discernible weakness was the fact that he happened to share his name with a famous New York serial killer. Rifkin was kind, soft spoken, well dressed, employed, and devoted to Elaine. He had a nice apartment. He even put up with Elaine’s insistence that he change his name. He actually had the conversation with her, and allowed her to look through a New York Giants game program in search of names. He was a man of ample patience<sup>8</sup>. The last straw, though, came at a Giants game, when Rifkin’s name was announced over the loudspeaker, sending a ripple of fear through the crowd and a shudder down Elaine’s lithe spine.

Elaine’s fundamental weakness in this relationship was her pursuit of the praise of man. She was so obsessed with what The World thought of her boyfriend’s name, that she couldn’t appreciate the blessing that was Rifkin’s presence in her life. If you need us to tease out the 25-minute conference talk that lies just below the surface here, then you’re not the target audience of this paper and should probably stop reading now.

### **Phil Titola**

Phil Titola “took it out,” in the car, after a date with Elaine. The lesson here is pretty simple: Avoid people who do this. And avoid being the kind of person who does this. Really. Avoid this.

### **Crazy Joe Davola**

Joe Davola was crazy. He and Elaine met because he was singing out loud while walking down the sidewalk. I mean really, who does this? Davola ended up being the kind of guy who painted himself up like a clown, alone in his apartment, and also the kind of guy who wanted to kill Kramer. Still, Elaine dated him. The lesson here: Dating nobody is better than dating the kind of crazy person who paints his face and wants to kill your friends. This seems like common sense, but you’d be surprised at the number of people who need to hear it.

Then again, to be fair, the whole clown/revolver/maniac thing happened as a result of Elaine breaking it off with Crazy Joe, who was, incidentally, a writer for NBC. Perhaps a secondary message here is to avoid dating writers.

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<sup>8</sup> Compare with the episode’s eponymous masseuse, who refuses to give Jerry a massage, even when he tries to force it, in one of the most uncomfortable scenes in the history of visual media.

### **Darryl Nelson (the not-really-black guy)**

The Darryl Phenomenon is actually pretty common in evangelical circles, especially on Christian College campuses. Quite simply, Elaine was in love with the idea of dating a black guy. I don't blame her for this. However, I do blame her for thinking he was black, when there was really nothing black about him. Darryl, for his part, was obsessed with the idea of Elaine being Hispanic (she wasn't/isn't). They were both blinded by the sexy, exotic excitement of dating someone from a different culture, but when they both realized they were both white, Darryl asked, "Well, do you want to go to the GAP or something?" The relationship ended shortly thereafter. Herein lies the secret self-destruct button of many an evangelical romance: it can be pretty un-exciting to date someone just like yourself. But when you find yourself in a mega-church singles group in Wheaton or a Christian college campus in the middle of an Indiana cornfield, unless you're one of the 1%, so to speak, you'll probably have to come to terms with it.

### **The Doctor from the Episode Where George Thinks He's Having a Heart Attack**

This episode happened in Season 2, and is the first recorded instance of Elaine completely throwing herself at some guy, which (the throwing) clearly pissed Jerry off. Let me set the scene for you: George is in a hospital room, having thought he'd had a heart attack (he didn't). The attending physician is a hot, youngish guy with an Uncle-Jessie mullet (remember, it's the early 90's and mullets are hot). Some playful banter ensues, about "tonsil people" not being allowed to date "non-tonsil people." (Subtext: I think WE should date). Elaine threw herself at the guy, who ended up being the kind of creep who could only talk about his work all the time<sup>9</sup>. Ahh, Elaine, will you never learn?

### **Jerry**

It goes without saying, but Elaine's relationship with Jerry constitutes a significant part of the show's energy. There was always sexual tension between the two characters, because a.) they actually dated once and b.) they tried doing the stupid thing that friends do where they think they can have un-emotional physical hookups while remaining friends. This, of course, failed miserably<sup>10</sup>.

Speaking of failing miserably, that phrase could be applied to most of Jerry's romantic endeavors, and as far as we know he ended his life miserable and alone. Jerry always pursued, and won the hearts of, women who were way hotter than he was and who, in real life, would probably never be into a horse-toothed whiny guy with pre-skinny-jeans skinny jeans, white sneakers, huge hair, and turtlenecks. Yet these women threw themselves at Jerry as though he was the last man on earth. However, Jerry had several things working in his favor: The ability to banter and make witty conversation, his general poise

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<sup>9</sup> And the kind of guy who carries around a little piece of gauze in case he finds himself suddenly inspired to give someone an anatomical tour of her own tongue. These guys are out there.

<sup>10</sup> Which it always does, as we learned from at least 70% of romantic comedies that came out between 2006 and 2013.

and confidence in social situations, and the fact that he had a nice apartment, ate out all the time, and had tons of money to go see movies, even though he rarely (read: almost never) appeared to be working after about season 3.

### **Dr. Reston (Elaine's Psychologist)**

Nobody is surprised, at this point, by the fact that Elaine has a psychologist, and we're even less surprised to see that Elaine is dating her psychologist because Elaine dates everybody. Some cool things about Dr. Reston: He's older. He has a great office with lots of mahogany and old books. He smokes cigars in that great office<sup>11</sup>. Elaine is so enamored with Dr. Reston, and the power that he has over her, that she calls him her "Svenjolly"<sup>12</sup>.

Elaine sends Kramer in to meet with Dr. Reston, ostensibly to "end" the relationship for Elaine. However, Kramer and Reston end up smoking cigars together, at which point Reston exercises his not-insignificant powers over Kramer. They end up laughing uproariously and being buddies because that's what happens to pretty much everyone who meets Kramer. The obvious take-away here is that dating someone in a position of authority, particularly in which dating would be a breach of trust (e.g. therapist, parole officer, etc.) is never worthwhile. Once again, we see that Elaine is the anti-conscience of the show, except when she's the conscience of the show, which is always.

At this point, having mentioned the cigars, might we again remind you of Gut Check's spectacular new book *The Christian Gentleman's Smoking Companion*, which is available on Amazon.com. You can buy it here: <http://www.gutcheckpress.com/smoking>.

### **Ned Isakoff (The Communist)**

Ned Isakoff was Jim Wallis before Jim Wallis was Jim Wallis. He wore drab olive-colored clothing. He never met a cause he didn't like. He never met a worker for whose rights he didn't want to stand up<sup>13</sup>. Ned had a heart for the little guy, and who doesn't like a guy who has a heart for the little guy? Ned actually lived under a bridge for a little while, just to prove his good heartedness<sup>14</sup> and then wrote a ton of bestselling books about the process, even though he's basically anti-commerce and anti-corporations. Elaine found this irresistible (who wouldn't?).

Ned had a problem, though. Namely, that he couldn't shut the (expletive) up about his causes. This is also, incidentally, what might be miserable about actually dating Jim Wallis or Shane Claiborne. So guys, know that girls love a guy who is all about saving the world. Saving the world is, in general, cool and

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<sup>11</sup> This is something that we, at Gut Check, can relate to.

<sup>12</sup> She doesn't know how to say Svengali. For being really smart (the daughter of famous novelist Alton Benes, and an editor for Pendant Publishing), Elaine can sometimes be really stupid.

<sup>13</sup> You can't not end this sentence with a preposition. Believe me, we tried.

<sup>14</sup> Not really...that was actually Shane Claiborne.

sexy. I know this because I read it in every issue of “Relevant Magazine.” But also remember to shut up about it once in a while.

## **John Germaine**

So, if this episode (“The Rye”) aired in 1996 (when, by the way, the show was in serious danger of jumping the shark), why is John Germaine clearly a product/resident of 1987? He’s got that pre-G.E. Smith swoosh-helmet of hair and he’s a saxophonist for whom women swoon? Really? When Kurt Cobain had been in his grave for more than two years?

At any rate, he was dating Elaine and their relationship, which had apparently been progressing nicely, became thoroughly derailed over a disagreement as to whether the couple was, indeed, “hot and heavy<sup>15</sup>.” Even apart from the not-insignificant moral failings involved in the episode, astute Evangelicals on the dating circuit can see the problem from the outset: Elaine and Johnny failed to have a “Defining the Relationship” talk (or DTR), wherein they could have gotten on the same page about whether they were or were not hot and heavy. Don’t skip the DTR, folks. It can be awkward, but if you really want to see awkward, just do a google image search of “Seinfeld Johnny Germaine.”

## **Lloyd Braun**

“Why can’t you be more like Lloyd Braun?” — Estelle Costanza

We all have a Lloyd Braun in our life. A suave, well-dressed, upwardly mobile yuppie friend who is more impressive than we are. Lloyd was a friend of George Costanza’s and worked in the mayor’s office. In what has become a “typical” Elaine scenario, she became enamored with Braun, and threw herself at him. Elaine was shameless in this regard. Dates ensued.

The problem was that Lloyd, in his zeal to impress<sup>16</sup> Elaine, used one of her boneheaded ideas (nametags for everyone in New York City) in the mayoral campaign, resulting in the loss of the election, and the loss of his job, sending Lloyd into a downward spiral of despair and depression.

The relationship, obviously, didn’t survive, which highlights another one of Elaine’s shortcomings: her inability to stick with anyone who she doesn’t perceive (and perhaps more importantly, who her friends don’t perceive) as perfect. As soon as the “going” got tough for Lloyd, she was gone (see also: Joel Rifkin, Darryl, Jimmy, Jake Jarmel et. al.). This inability to commit underscores Elaine’s fundamental self-obsession— a problem that would plague her through the balance of the program.

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<sup>15</sup> We’re going to ignore the other (far crasser) sub-plot which is a prime example of the sort of lazy writing that put Seinfeld on a path to sucking in the last couple seasons.

<sup>16</sup> Read: Sleep with.



## Keith Hernandez

Keith Hernandez had so much going for him: A fabulous 80's/90's moustache. A majestic mullet. A high profile job playing first base for the New York Mets. Jerry had something of a man-crush<sup>17</sup> on Keith Hernandez and hey, who can blame him? Jerry and Keith became friends and Jerry was so nervous about impressing Keith that he obsessed over what to wear when they hung out, how often to call, etc.

The problems began when Elaine inevitably expressed interest in Hernandez<sup>18</sup> because, let's face it, Elaine expressed interest in anything male at this point in the show, even professional athletes whose acting is somehow a few notches worse than Nancy Kerrigan's that one time she hosted SNL. Elaine made the fundamental mistake of throwing herself at everything that showed any iota of interest in her, which is page one of the "miserable girl with no self-esteem" playbook. Come on, Elaine, you're better than that.<sup>19</sup>

## Brett (Desperado)

Brett dated Elaine briefly and would tell anyone within earshot that he worked for furniture designer Carl Farbman<sup>20</sup>. Brett, like many guys, couldn't shut the (expletive) up about his dumb job, which, because of his own insecurities, he felt defined him and was the sum total of who he was. Weirdly, though, Brett was also obsessed with the song "Desperado"<sup>21</sup>, and he made Elaine shut her yap whenever it came on the radio. Incidentally, this episode highlighted the charm of the pre-MP3 era in which you sort of had to wait for songs that you liked to come on the radio<sup>22</sup>. Now, Brett could just download "Desperado" and listen to it whenever he wanted, which would mean he'd probably gorge himself on it, get sick of it, be less of a tool about it, and then maybe have a relationship that works out.

I'm rambling.

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<sup>17</sup> A "man crush" is a non-gay but no less weird obsession that some men get for other men who are usually either professional athletes or Brad Pitt.

<sup>18</sup> Hernandez's reputation was anything but clean. He was a member of the 1986 New York Mets, a team that was famous for its carousing and widespread cocaine use. Incidentally, Hernandez was one of a handful of pro athletes who was up front about the fact that he smoked cigarettes...which calls into question the aerobic difficulty (or lack thereof) of baseball. Hernandez was also a jerk for spitting on Kramer and Newman. Remember when he did that? Remember how they made it look like the Zapruder film? Brilliant. Remember how it wasn't actually Hernandez, but one of his teammates?

<sup>19</sup> The jury is actually still out on whether Elaine is better than that.

<sup>20</sup> Remember when Kramer hung out with the Japanese businessmen, and they ended up having to sleep in the Carl Farbman chest of drawers? I love that part.

<sup>21</sup> For what it's worth, that song is pretty amazing. I have the same reaction to the song "Turn the Page" by Bob Seger even though I basically hate Bob Seger's music. Pathetically, Elaine tried to come up with "her" song (Witchy Woman) which just seemed sort of copy-cat-ish.

<sup>22</sup> Although why he didn't just tape it off the radio like everyone else, or buy the "cassingle" is beyond me. Also: Remember *cassingles*??

## Hal Kitzmiller

Speaking of fine furniture. Hal Kitzmiller is known almost exclusively for his dogged loyalty to a specialized furniture store called The Lumber Yard, on account of his incredibly bad back. Hal is probably too good for Elaine, as evidenced by his buying her a new mattress out of purely noble intent—a mattress he had had specially made for her particular spine, only to have Elaine freak out at the (perceived) implication that Hal wanted to sleep with her. Why she's suddenly all squeamish about that is anyone's guess, but let this be a lesson to you: just as everyone who dates Elaine should be able to spot her micron-deep personality after two minutes and know enough to assume the worst, there are a few real prizes out there who only want to be kind, decent, and gallant, and if you assume everybody's just a Benes or a Costanza, you're going to miss out.

## Duke Morrison

Elaine fell head-over-heels in love with Duke Morrison the moment she laid eyes on him. And who can blame her? As the head coach of the Denver Values football team, Duke exuded the kind of poise and masculinity that drove Lanie wild. Of course, things got a little crazy when she realized that Duke was firmly lodged at the center of a zany web of conspiracy involving the following: guns, microchips, professional football, hipsters, romance, and a little bit of pop theology.

Oh wait, no— Duke Morrison never dated Elaine; he's actually a character from that edge-of-your-pants, hold-on-to-your-pants, end-times thriller *Beauty and the Mark of the Beast*, which is available on Amazon (e-book and paperback editions) from Gut Check Press. Although, come to think of it, Elaine definitely would have wanted to date Duke. In fact, Elaine would have dated almost all the male characters in that book, since it's chock full of writers and athletes. [www.gutcheckpress.com/satires](http://www.gutcheckpress.com/satires)

## David Puddy

David Puddy represented Elaine's longest, and we daresay most successful, relationship.

Puddy and Elaine, at face value, seemed to be polar opposites. Elaine affected a sort of chic, cosmopolitan persona, whereas Puddy was unabashedly stupid (example: painting his face and chest for a hockey game, and thinking it's cool)<sup>23</sup>. Puddy was large and beefy, Elaine was small. Puddy worked as an auto mechanic (and later a car dealer), and Elaine worked in offices with books. Puddy was, for a time, a self-professed born-again Christian, while Elaine's own religious convictions go no deeper than her own belly, to quote St. Paul.

Their relationship though, while lasting a long time, was pretty much an exercise in futility. Elaine played mind games, while Puddy was brutally honest all the time because he lacked the intellect for mind games. As a result, they were always breaking up and getting back together, one time going three rounds of break-up status on one international flight. The horrifically bad *Seinfeld* finale implied that

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<sup>23</sup> Note: the guy who played Puddy went on to play Puddy in dozens of shows and movies in the following years.

Puddy and Elaine had continued their on-again-off-again relationship to the very end of the series, ultimately coming to a close with Elaine's prison sentence. Take-away: don't be unequally yoked.

High-five.

### **Jake Jarmel**

If anything is proof positive that Elaine will always sabotage her own relationships into oblivion, it's Jake Jarmel, who presents himself as the perfect man in Elaine's eyes: a ruggedly handsome, intelligent author who cleans her apartment for her and prepares her dinner while she's at work. Elaine is in relationship heaven for all of twelve seconds before she finds a deal-breaker of a flaw in her world-be Prince Charming: he doesn't like exclamation points. We later learn that he's a pretentious milquetoast who finds his identity in knowing that no one else on the continent has glasses with the same frames as his. But maybe if Elaine could have powered through their punctuational differences early on, she could have learned to love him despite this. But Elaine can't love, can she? (Can she?)

### **Kevin (Bizarro Jerry)**

The Bizarro phenomenon was a huge mistake, originally made by DC Comics, Inc., and used to great comedic effect by the writers on *Seinfeld*. In the comics, Bizarro was the name of an anti-hero who was sort of the opposite of Superman (e.g. freeze vision instead of heat vision, etc.). On *Seinfeld*, Elaine winds up replacing her circle of friends with a Bizarro version of the main cast (i.e. Jerry, George, and Kramer, except kind, courteous, and given to group hugs). Elaine first entered into this Bizarro world by dating Kevin, the Bizarro Jerry. He's the guy from a previous episode who got a vasectomy to show Elaine just how committed he was to the idea of never having children. In my mind, this makes him rather Jerry-esque, but whatever. The point is that, if Elaine and Jerry are incredibly similar (which they are), then Jerry's opposite should also be Elaine's opposite—and bang goes the whole theory that “opposites attract.” At best, opposites are immediately friend-zoned and then get annoyed with your idiosyncrasies and ask you to leave. And that's what's upsetting about the dynamic of the group.

### **Tony (the Mimbo)**

See if you recognize this stock character: He does extreme sports (and makes sure you know about it). He pops his collar. He wears a cap backwards, frat-boy-esque. He's better looking than everybody and knows it, and therein lies his power. Yep, I've pretty much described the Big Man/Worship Leader on every Christian college campus. This guy is too good for you, and he knows it. And you know it. Your friends all hate him because why wouldn't they? Yet you still doggedly and shamelessly pursue him. This, in a nutshell, is Tony the Mimbo (Jerry's term for “Male Bimbo”). If you've ever “dated” a Tony the Mimbo you are probably full of regret and embarrassment over it...meaning that whenever you're flipping through your college yearbook and see his picture you feel that momentary pang of sickness/

sheepishness. However, if you ARE Tony the Mimbo, your life is pretty much awesome. Until you end up alone and 55 and with a venereal disease. Wow, this just got dark.

### **Aaron (the Close-Talker)**

*Seinfeld* had some great guest stars (Bryan Cranston, Marisa Tomei, Jon Voight, Jon Favreau), but they all pale in comparison to Judge “My Name Is Juuudge” Reinhold, who portrayed Elaine’s boyfriend Aaron. Aaron was a “close-talker,” but only because his real character trait (his inexplicable drive to show his girlfriend’s ex-boyfriend’s out-of-town parents an incredible time during their stay in New York City) was not conducive to spawning a new pop-culture catch-phrase, which *Seinfeld*’s creative team felt obligated to do each and every week by Season 5. It wasn’t his close-talking, but his interest in others that doomed the relationship. As soon as we (the viewer) realized that Aaron was not going to give Elaine 100% of his attention, we knew that the two wouldn’t last. Also, you can’t tie Judge Reinhold down for more than a week. Two, tops.

### **Bob Cobb (aka The Maestro)**

I can see Elaine’s thought process in this one. I mean, what’s better than dating a famous musician, right? Especially one who is famous and older and can take you to Tuscany like The Maestro. The downside, of course, is that he insisted on being called The Maestro which is incredibly obnoxious but is something that Elaine willingly put up with.

Come to think of it, Elaine dated several guys who were both obsessed with-slash-wildly insecure about their jobs in the sense that they wanted everyone to know that they had fabulous jobs. The question, then, becomes: are all/most men like this, or just the men who were fabricated by the show to date Elaine? Probably a little bit of both. None of us know a Maestro, but I bet we all know some insufferable prig who got his PhD. In something practical like 18<sup>th</sup> Century French Poetry, and makes everyone call him Dr. Come to think of it, this is even worse.

### **Tim Whatley**

Tim Whatley was the suave, debonair dentist who turned Jewish “just for the jokes” and who allegedly did something ignoble while Jerry was under the influence of a dental-grade narcotic. Whatley also inspired controversy by stocking his waiting room with adult magazines and hiring girls who looked like strippers to be his dental assistants. He was also making meth in an RV out in the New Mexico desert. All of that to say, Tim Whatley is bad news. Seriously Elaine, can’t you see this from a mile away? I mean, it’s so obvious to all of us.

## Owen March

Having dated almost everyone in Manhattan without finding the validation she so desperately seeks (but, I mean, come on—it's really her father's validation she's after, am I right?), Elaine eventually tried dating an older man. Again, he's a writer (like Elaine's father) and she thinks he might be "the one" for a short time. But before long, she came to terms with the fact that he's not actually exciting—just old—and was pressured into breaking up with him in person. During the breakup, Owen had a stroke. Kramer tried to help him eat cookies whilst unconscious (you're not supposed to do that), and Elaine wound up wracked with (for her, unprecedented) guilt-slash-common human compassion and helped to nurse Owen back to health (Yankee bean!). When he was well enough, he pre-empted her own breakup by dumping her, claiming that he was just using her all along. This kind of thing happens to Elaine a lot. Maybe she should see a therapist. Oh, that's right . . .

## Russell Darymple

Author's Note: Russell Dalrymple, the head of NBC, is amazing primarily because he's portrayed by Bob Balaban, who is amazing (and with whom, incidentally, I [Ted] have exchanged email banter<sup>24</sup>).

Dalrymple becomes obsessed with Elaine when he meets her through Jerry and George who are pitching their show idea to Dalrymple. He becomes obsessed with her after Elaine breaks off the relationship. He even joins Greenpeace because he thinks it will impress her, as Elaine does put out a sort of half-hearted vegan/liberal/environmentalist<sup>25</sup>/Greenpeace/College Sophomore vibe every once in a while, which doesn't really fit entirely because she's also materialistic and shallow, making her essentially the worst of both personalities. Anyway.

It's implied that Balaban later dies at sea on a Greenpeace mission, which is really a shame because a.) That's a horrible way to go and b.) He dies for Elaine?

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<sup>24</sup> Yes, I do tell this to everyone. My conversations usually go something like this: "Great to meet you too...did you know that I once exchanged email banter with Bob Balaban?"

<sup>25</sup> Remember when she reamed George's girlfriend at the party on Long Island, because she (the girlfriend) was wearing a fur coat? I do. It was hilarious.