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Villanova: Can I Kiss You? Mike Domirtz Says Don't Forget To Ask

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News Editor

Is there anything more intimidating, interesting, misleading, misled, confusing, or just plain better than the opposite sex? With so many adjectives with which you could describe them, it is easy to see why there is nothing quite like the thrill of the chase, that crazy quest we call dating. On the other hand, when so many ideas and emotions become involved, it is no wonder that things can sometimes get out of hand.

In an effort to enlighten the student body here at Villanova, the Department of Public Safety and the Center for Health and Wellness teamed up to organize a presentation on the dangers of dating, how things can go wrong, and some possible methods to prevent the tragedy of sexual assault. The combined efforts of Mrs. Cathy Lovecchio, Mrs. Joanna Gallagher, and Mr. Jim Conway brought Mr. Mike Domirtz and his renowned

"Can I Kiss You?" program to the Villanova Room this past October 23, 2002. Mr. Domirtz is not just another lecturer on the dangers of sexual assault however; his life was forever changed when his own sister was raped in 1989. His own personal struggles have given him a completely different, and much more effective approach, to this act.

Through his Can I Kiss You? program, Mr. Domirtz spreads a message of respect, awareness, and common sense through a mixture of interactive discussion and a humorous atmosphere. To open up the presentation, Mr. Domirtz had all those gathered, around 200 people, all squeeze up into the

front rows of the room. Immediately thereafter, he point-blankly asked the assembly what their dating techniques were. Having stunned the audience, he



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Mike Domirtz brought his relationship seminar to Villanova on October 23rd.

continued by asking what the audience was thinking his program's title was about. The answers: sex, dating etiquette, and, of course, kissing. Expanding from this he questioned how you know when it is safe to attempt "the kiss." After hearing the traditional responses, he asked, "What's wrong with asking? Will it make you look like a dork? Are you afraid of to be denied?" Picking a

volunteer from the audience, he used role-play to present a possible situation where he first tried the smooth, "movie" approach, then the awkward approach where he asked for permission. While the smooth approach received a laugh from all gathered, asking for permission elicited an "Awwwe!" from all the females in attendance.

He continued on with a smooth retort if even asking did not work, which led to his next topic, miscommunications. While all the guys saw his comment about "not making her feel uncomfortable" as a "player"-esque comeback, the girls once again "Awwwed!" at his apparent sincerity. Mr. Domirtz also commented on how girls want "cute" guys and guys want assertive, "forward," girls. Both sides have issues with those images, as being "cute" can weaken a guy's ego and being assertive can make a girl seem like a slut. At the same level, girls tend to throw that term around more readily than

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guys, and if a guy sees one girl calling another a slut, he may likely assume it to be true. Continuing on, he pointed out how "no" can often motivate a guy to continue trying more and more ingenious ways to get what he wants, or to retreat to situations he knows the girl will be comfortable with. On the other hand, a girl, who is well aware that the guy is bigger, stronger, etc., may become intimidated by the repeated advances and say yes unwillingly. Both situations will lead to problems.

If trouble were to happen, Mr. Domirtz pointed out that our parents would give their typical "in my day" speeches on chivalry and proper actions. Once again this leads to mixed interpretation. On one hand the girl thinks the guy may just be being nice, while he may well have ulterior motives. On the same note it promotes a "woman can't fend for herself" image, which thanks to mace and a good old knee to the crotch is hardly true at all.

Neither side is completely to blame though, as girls can often be just as responsible as guys. Before any date, both men and women will often encourage and "plan" the events of the evening in what appears to be only a "dating game." Those same comments, however can come back to haunt later, when one or all of those words lead to misguided expectations and interpretations. It is not just before the date that damage is done. Locker room talk can be just as hazardous, and girls are much worse in this case than guys. Guys will be happy with a simple yes or no, while girls need to hear every single detail of the events. This can lead to a feeling of inadequacy when an account does not live up to certain "standards," or just isn't as entertaining. When the answers to the questions are more than one word, making up a story can get complicated, and the pressure can lead to regrettable actions later.

One of the biggest contributors to sexual assault is the so-called "rape drugs." Aside from GHB, "Rufies," "X," and other intentional drugs, by far the most common, and often unintentional, is alcohol. The lack of mental control from inebriation is a serious factor in any decision, let alone sexual ones. Mr. Domirtz's advice is to wait. Guys especially, if she really wants you, she still will when she is sober. If you are both drunk, he still advises you to wait, after all, you will both remember it better.

He closed with a reminder that it all comes down to common sense. If someone told you that you could have their new car while they were drunk, that would never hold up. If someone just came by and took ten dollars from you, you would be pissed. Taking advantage of someone is no different.

Following Mr. Domirtz's discussion, a brief panel featuring the head of Public Safety, Mrs. Lovecchio, Mrs. Gallagher, and Dean Pugh answered any questions regarding Villanova policy on these matters. In the event that you think you are sexually assaulted, you have two main options. For anonymous assistance, there is an online form at www.publicsafety.villanova.edu that you can use to determine if you have been assaulted. For more immediate help, you can call Public Safety or go to your R.A. In this event, an officer will be sent to get a quick overview before they hand it over to Mrs. Gallagher. Although they have limited interaction in these situations, each officer takes a bi-yearly course on post-rape intervention, which has helped separate them from the rather disrespectful approaches of the local police. In any case, the decision to proceed is completely up to the victim.

For more information on this topic you can visit www.healthy-dating.com, Public Safety's website, or the Center for Health and Wellness.