

DELI GUY v2

We are in a deli. Will walks in.

DELI GUY  
Hey, how's it going?

WILL  
Fine. Hello.

DELI GUY  
You want your usual? Ham on rye?

WILL  
I'm not eating. I just stopped by to tell you that I appreciate how gracefully you impose narratives.

DELI GUY  
Okay. What do you mean?

WILL  
I'll explain. Last week I came in here to order a sandwich. A Black Forest ham on rye.

DELI GUY  
Sure, that's what you usually get.

WILL  
Right! And it was raining. A lot of people were complaining about the rain that day. But when I ordered my sandwich, do you know what you said?

DELI GUY  
Can't say that I do.

WILL  
You said "Some rain, huh? I guess we were due."

DELI GUY  
Sounds like something I would say.

WILL  
Well, that's a narrative. You were creating a story in which the rain arrives when it is due. That the rain has a purpose. In a very subtle way, you are providing a way to mentally cope with the rain.

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

Sure, it's uncomfortable to get rained on, but if it's DUE then maybe it is JUST. And it becomes easier to bear.

DELI GUY

I see. Well I certainly didn't have any of that in mind when I said that. I just... said it.

WILL

And.. you're doing it again! You're imposing the narrative that you are NOT imposing narratives, that they are things that exist in the ether, and you perhaps just pluck them out of the air and hand them to people! It's marvelous!

DELI GUY

I think what you're talking about is just... having a conversation.

WILL

Yes, yes, that's true! A conversation is, in a way, two people each imposing narratives onto the world. Taking the events of their lives and forming them into a story. Assigning cause and effect to things which may in fact be random. But when YOU do it, the narrative tends to be positive and you impose it gracefully.

DELI GUY

Okay. I can see what you're saying. Aren't YOU imposing a narrative right now? You are imposing the narrative that I am someone who imposes narratives?

WILL

I suppose. BUT.... you're doing it again! You are imposing a positive narrative on my telling you that YOU impose narratives! You are making ME a storyteller! So generous! You're amazing.

DELI GUY

Are you having some sort of emotional breakdown, and that's why you're doing this?

WILL

No! Not at all. I know it sounds formal and abrupt. But I'm just genuinely impressed and wanted to tell you. (beat) Sorry, have I bothered you? Was this too weird? I know that I can be weird.

DELI GUY

It's not too weird. But I am bothered. Not because you're too weird, but because of some personal stuff. I shouldn't even go into it, but it's just so strange that you say I'm good at narratives. I'm just going to tell you. I had a cousin about my age. We were pretty close growing up. But in our 20s .. he ... killed himself. Sorry, I know this is a lot. It was horrible. Pills. I had no idea anything was bothering him. And talk about narratives -- trying to fit my cousin's suicide into a story that made sense to me? It was impossible! Some days I'd feel so guilty that I hadn't noticed anything was wrong. Other days I was angry -- you know, mad at him for the pain he'd caused me! Most days I was just stunned. I didn't know HOW to think of it. I eventually had to accept that there WAS no good explanation. I mean it's crazy to me that you're saying I am good at narratives -- this whole time you were talking I was thinking "I couldn't come up with a narrative for what happened to Alex." That's why I asked if you were having a breakdown. I want to make sure I reach out if someone needs to talk to someone. I know I barely know you, but if you need to talk, I'd listen. Okay?

WILL

You're kinda bumming me out, dude.