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## Cheater, Cheater

AS I get older, I seem to be encountering infidelity more and more – it's not just people dating multiple partners, but actually married individuals (mostly men) cheating on their spouses.

I recently met a man who seemed like a genuine, humble and funny guy. He was tall, good-looking, down-to-earth, well-mannered and seemed to get me.

To cut a long story short, I found out he was married, something he denied when I confronted him. I only found out the truth when I did a little digging on social media.

When I told friends some were shocked, others were angry, some had stories about how the same thing had happened to them. I wondered, is this what happens to you in your 30s? Are men just looking to stray or is there something deeper psychologically?

The biggest dilemma for me was, do I confront him or go to his wife? I decided to just tell him I knew and wouldn't tell his wife, as much as I wanted to.

I don't know if this will ever be the right decision. I didn't want to be the one causing a woman pain. If she is meant to find out she will, but the thing is, I would want to know. It was a catch-22 situation.

Marriage vows are sacred and forever, not just until someone better comes along. It is like my friend Bina says, 'For men it's like a candy store with so many different colours, flavours, shapes and sizes to try, and even if they have candy already, they want more.'

But what makes men think, 'hey, I'm going to have an affair?' Most men who stray will do so because of many reasons – they are craving attention they aren't getting at home, they are weak (they saw something and wanted it) or just can't keep it in their pants. But most likely, it will be because they think they will get away with it.

However, deceiving someone is not on. Lying about the fact that you are married is just vile. Imagine how your children will feel knowing their father cheated on their mother. These men are doing nothing to help the good guys in the world – the ones who want to be monogamous and want to commit, be the best husbands and fathers they can possibly be. These cheaters are also ruining it for every single woman out there and are ones responsible for turning some into cynical, psychotic, raving lunatics.

Men, it is totally your fault. I'm not saying women don't cheat; they do, but before you stray, just think about everyone you are hurting in the process. And well, you know what they say about karma.

# Listen to stories

## ONE WOMAN'S ACCOUNT OF PARTITION AND HER LIFE IN



by DAWINDER BANSAL

**MIDLANDS-BASED theatre company Black Country Touring (BCT) is aiming to preserve the south Asian storytelling tradition with their latest project *Tongue Tied & Twisted*, which commences a UK tour this month.**

BCT have worked with Asian elders and international storyteller Peter Chand to preserve folktales, legends and myths told through oral tradition. In the process, they met a lot of interesting people with amazing life stories.

Dawinder Bansal, who is producing the touring show, said: "This is the first time they have participated in a heritage project like *Tongue Tied & Twisted*. Their eyes twinkled as they remembered childhood stories they were told by their parents and grandparents, unheard for over 50 years.

"Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund, these stories and their voices will stay alive, in an on-line archive for future generations."

As part of the project, Dawinder met Bachni Kumari, who has since sadly passed away, aged 85. "We need to keep alive stories and life journeys of Asian elders. Their stories are a part of our history and identity. I really enjoyed meeting Bachni Kumari, who was born in 1930 and was a teenager when partition turned her life upside down. We need to keep the rich stories of unsung heroes like Bachni alive.

"With that in mind, I want to share two important journeys from her life she told me before passing away. She had six children, 10 grand children and two great grandchildren," said Dawinder.

### **Bachni Kumari's story: Partition**

"I was a young girl in 1947, when partition between India and Pakistan shattered the tranquil life I enjoyed with my parents, younger brothers and sister. I had a marriage ceremony the year before, and was preparing for a new life with my husband. He had travelled separately to India and I was to meet him there.

"We lived on the Pakistan side of the border, so had to leave behind all that we knew and owned to get to India. We left behind friends, the family

**ORAL HISTORY: Bachni Kumari talks to Dawinder Bansal; and (left and right) with her family**



house and cattle, which was the source of our family's livelihood.

"My parents and I, along with my siblings, set off walking in the direction of India with a long caravan procession with others making the same journey. It was a strange time as we walked for hours and days following the people in front of us. My younger brother became ill with fever and the family had to stop in a deserted village to rest.

"The abandoned huts had clothes strewn everywhere, pots and pans and rolls of material. We lay our brother on a Muslim headstone. I tried to rip off a piece of material so I could place it over my brother, but it was too tight and even with all my strength, I couldn't do it.

"We stayed in this place for about three days. My mother said to leave my brother behind as the caravan was due to begin walking again. After an argument with her, I said they could go on and leave us there, as I was not going to leave my brother. Rest and some food broke my brother's fever, and he survived.

"We rested and continued, but my nine-year-old sister, six-year-old cousin and I became separated from our families. However, we carried on walking along with everyone else. Each day we would swallow so much dust, and had little to drink or eat. Whatever was available we would

share between us. Many times the army would provide food relief; however, if you were not strong or a man to grab the food, it was scarce.

"One memory is when rice packets were thrown into our path. Many sacks broke and the grains scattered. I picked a grain at a time from the ground, collected a handful, tied them up in my scarf and searched for a pot to wash them in and then boil them so the three of us could eat. We shared the little we had with a couple of ladies, but we were afraid to drink any water from the wells as we feared it may have been poisoned by those who wanted conflict.

"I remember being told about one family's plight of elderly parents being left on the side of the road as they were unable to keep up with the caravan. They probably perished due to lack of food and water.

"Another memory regarded a *tava* (skillet) to make roti – the woman I asked to borrow it from asked me which caste I belonged to. My rather sharp reply was, 'give me the tava as this is not the time to consider caste, rather a time for survival. We are all in the same caravan making the same journey in order to live.' We did make roti that night as another woman added, 'just give her the tava and shut up'.

"Occasionally bullock carts would appear to give some frail people a ride on them and some food came in the form of soiled sugar cane. As I was a strong young woman, I was able to climb up on the sides of the carts and pull out a rea-

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time for  
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