

February 6, 2018

Ray Padgett | raypadgett@shorefire.com

Mark Satlof | msatlof@shorefire.com

T: 718.522.7171

Intelligence Squared U.S.

Swipe Left: Dating Apps Have Killed Romance

Keynote Speaker: Daniel Jones

For the Motion: Eric Klinenberg, Manoush Zomorodi

Against the Motion: Helen Fisher, Tom Jacques

Moderator: John Donovan

AUDIENCE RESULTS	
Before the debate:	After the debate:
39% FOR	30% FOR
37% AGAINST	66% AGAINST
24% UNDECIDED	4% UNDECIDED

Start Time: (0:00:00)

[applause]

John Donovan:

The number of Americans who have tried at least one dating app has now passed 40 million people. And that is a lot, especially for a phenomenon that really didn't exist 25 years ago. And how has this been for the state of romance? Has it been good, because the algorithms are better than humans at matching up people who are compatible? Or has it been bad? Because having so much choice among potential partners -- potentially millions -- can turn courtship into something of a commodities business.

Well, the arguments go in both of those directions and in plenty others per side, which make us think it has the makings of a good debate. So, let's have it. Yes or no to this statement: "Swipe Left: Dating Apps Have Killed Romance." I'm John Donovan. We have four superbly qualified debaters on the Intelligence Squared U.S. stage. We are at the Kay Playhouse at Hunter College in New York City. Those debaters will be attacking this question from opposite sides.

00:01:01

But of course, with passion. First, though, we're going to have a conversation with someone whose perspective on love in these times we live in will help us set the table for the debate to come. Daniel Jones is editor of the *New York Times*' "Modern Love" column. He has personally read more than 80,000 first person accounts of people struggling to that -- make that connection that we call romance. By our likes, that makes him the expert we need to bring us up to speed on love in the time of Tinder.

[laughter]

Please welcome Daniel Jones.

[applause]

Daniel, I just want you to know that in the world I come from, you're considered a big get. You're a big catch.

Daniel Jones:

[laughs]

John Donovan:

You're a big catch. We're really delighted to have you -- because we really --

Daniel Jones:

Well, that's good.

John Donovan:

Yeah.

Daniel Jones:

That's nice to hear

John Donovan:

We do think that you -- the job that you've held for, now, 12 years -- is it?

Daniel Jones:

Coming up on 14.

John Donovan:
14 years.

00:02:00

Daniel Jones:
Yeah.

John Donovan:
Editing the "Modern Love" column has really given you an insight into the mating habits, and aspirations, and dreams, and despair of more Americans than anybody has ever seen before.

Daniel Jones:
[affirmative]

John Donovan:
And what we really want to understand is how -- what have been the big evolutions from the time you began to the time that we're in now?

Daniel Jones:
I mean, well, it's appropriate that the subject tonight is online dating, because the -- more than anything, I see this infusion of technology into relationships as -- as changing things more than anything else. And whether it's -- it's online dating apps, whether it's communicating through texting, in a lot of cases hiding behind technology. We are always trying to make -- make love easier, you know? We're always -- and it's true with everything. But with love, we feel like it should be something we can get better at and something that we can solve.

00:03:02

And we bring science to it, and we bring technology to it. And what I -- what I like about love is that none of that ever seems to work.

[laughter]

John Donovan:
There's something that you wrote in the book. I underlined this, I highlighted it, "Love is for the sucker in us, not the skeptic."

Daniel Jones:
Yeah.

John Donovan:
What's that getting at?

Daniel Jones:

It means that you have to suspend disbelief. I mean, this idea that -- which is a relatively new idea in human history, by the way, that -- that you will fall in love with someone who is meant for you and that you will spend -- you know, I don't know what the --

John Donovan:

The soul mate thing.

Daniel Jones:

-- typical -- yeah, the soul mate, that you're going to spend, what, 50, 60, 70 years together and be satisfied by that one person. That takes a lot of nerve and a lot of belief and a lot of faith. And, you know, I wrote that line in a chapter that's about people falling for catfishing and for cons --

00:04:06

John Donovan:

Yeah.

Daniel Jones:

-- for love cons and how easy that is to happen. Like it's so easy to judge people who fall for the fake person online and fall deeply for the fake person online. But that's what you have to do. You have to be open to that. And if you aren't open to falling for the fake person online, then you really aren't open to love in a way.

John Donovan:

So, we're all suckers you're saying. If we're all suckers for love --

Daniel Jones:

No, we aren't. I mean, some people aren't suckers, and -- but I think that makes it harder for them to -- to open up to somebody.

John Donovan:

And in the course of the 14 years you've been looking at love in general, but as you've zeroed in on the dating apps, how has the attitude towards dating apps itself changed? Because I remember a time --

Daniel Jones:

Yeah.

John Donovan:

-- and it was -- it was a -- you would -- it was really embarrassing --

Daniel Jones:

It was a stigma --

John Donovan:

-- to tell somebody that you had gone online.

Daniel Jones:

I think the stigma has gone away.

John Donovan:

Completely? That it's gone?

00:05:00

Daniel Jones:

Almost completely, from -- at least from the stories I get, no one's -- no one -- people -- I used to get stories of people making up fake meeting stories to make up for the fact that they met online. That doesn't really seem to happen anymore. I -- you know, it's a way of meeting people. It's a different way of meeting people. And there are -- there are challenges that it presents that are different from the way we used to meet people. But it's still just a way of meeting people.

John Donovan:

You talk about, if your profile mentions that you are divorced, that that can actually be a good thing?

Daniel Jones:

It definitely is, yeah.

John Donovan:

Why?

Daniel Jones:

Because you --

John Donovan:

Look at all the "hope" that just --

[laughter]

-- rippled across the room there.

Daniel Jones:

Yeah. I've seen this over and over and over. If you are, you know, a 45-year-old man who's never been married, people think there is a deeper problem there.

00:06:01

If you're a 45-year-old man who has been divorced, then at least you are able to convince one person once --

[laughter]

-- that you were worthy and that you -- but also that you -- you -- I guess the main thing is you committed, you know? You ended up not keeping that commitment ultimately, or maybe she didn't, but you committed. And you want someone who will -- who will go there. And if it's someone who's never done that, you're more worried.

John Donovan:

Now, that's divorced individuals. Are there other groups for whom dating apps have caught on faster than for others and are more important in the sort of larger demographic picture than in others?

Daniel Jones:

I mean, in my view, it's -- it's caught on most in the people who are -- or more with people who are -- who are introverts or shier or more prone to fantasy [laughs].

00:07:00

Because you -- I mean, one difference I've noticed in -- in meeting people in person or meeting people online is that when you meet people online, you tend to fantasize more in terms of what this relationship is going to be and how great this person is going to be for you because those fantasies can't be torn down in the moment. And it's a little bit like the difference between, you know, shopping online or shopping at a brick and mortar store. Where, you know, if I go into a store and, like, these jeans are just so great, and I'm going to look so great in those jeans -- and then you put them on --

[laughs]

-- and you stand in the mirror that shows you from every angle, and you're like, "Oh, God, it just -- it doesn't work."

[laughter]

And your ability to fantasize was sort of cut short because the -- you were in person and you did it online.

00:08:00

If you meet someone in person in a bar, you -- those -- you know, they don't give you the time of day -- in which case, you know, your fantasy is dispelled. Or you don't -- you sense there's no chemistry. You know, smell is important in falling in love. And online, there's no --

John Donovan:

Is that --

Daniel Jones:

-- smell.

John Donovan:

Yeah.

Daniel Jones:

Yeah. It's --

[laughter]

-- it's not that a bad smell is off-putting. It's that the smells need to mingle in a way that works, you know?

John Donovan:

I had no idea.

Daniel Jones:

Yeah.

John Donovan:

That's working below the conscious level.

Daniel Jones:

Helen Fisher will tell you about that, I'll bet.

John Donovan:

Yeah? Yeah?

[laughter]

And do you have the dog in your picture or not? Is that a charming thing to do?

[laughter]

Daniel Jones:

The dog in the picture?

John Donovan:
Yeah.

Daniel Jones:
Well, I've heard that if a man has a dog in the picture, that's a huge plus, because it's -- again, it shows commitment and love, and that sort of thing.

John Donovan:
Interesting.

Daniel Jones:
And for a woman, no dog and looking up.

[laughter]

00:09:00

John Donovan:
Really?

Daniel Jones:
[laughs]

John Donovan:
So, there's a science to the -- yeah -- to the mystery?

Daniel Jones:
Yeah. Tom will tell you more about that.

John Donovan:
I'm curious -- in our audience tonight -- is anybody here on a date?

[laughter]

Daniel Jones:
They're not going to raise their hands.

John Donovan:
Oh, come on. Raise -- close your eyes and raise your hands if you're here on a date.

[laughter]

Alright. The reason we mentioned this is that -- at Intelligence Squared, we're sort of committed to the idea of promoting what we call "Intellidating," which is -- let's have a smart evening out tonight, and it's going to be as hot as it is enlightening.

So --

[laughter]

-- I think both of those things are happening right now. But I want to go to, you know, take that question to you in terms of the -- what -- you know, the heart wants what it wants, but the brain is the thing that's telling us, "Don't do that stupid thing."

Daniel Jones:
[affirmative]

John Donovan:
Which do you feel -- again, through your 80,000 reference points -- plays more of a role?

00:10:00

Are there people who can talk themselves out of romance because their brain is telling them that it's a bad idea and their lives become ruined as a result? Or are there people -- the opposite as well? Are people following their hearts and they do incredibly stupid things?

Daniel Jones:
[laughs] People definitely do incredibly stupid things --

John Donovan:
Yeah.

Daniel Jones:
-- following their hearts. I don't think I've ever been asked that question in that way before. I think people are terrified. You know, that -- to open -- to be vulnerable with someone is what love requires, but that's the hardest thing. And I think it's harder -- part of that is harder these days because we have these ways of sheltering ourselves and being meeker about how we ask someone out. You know, it's just a text that says, "What's up?" you know?

John Donovan:
Yeah.

Daniel Jones:
And there's so little risk in that. And when you're used to taking -- when you're not used to taking risks, it was really a risk.

00:11:00

Like, when I was in high school, and I was -- I mean, I'm terrible at relationships. Like, I just -- you know, part of this column has been, like, an education for me, because it's just not something I've ever been very good at. And I -- the idea of, like, calling someone or going up to someone in person --

John Donovan:
[affirmative]

Daniel Jones:
-- was just paralyzing to me. And if I had texting, I would have been emboldened by that. But it would have been this lower bar of, like, saying, "What's up?" you know?

John Donovan:
Yeah.

Daniel Jones:
And I think that you have to practice vulnerability to do it well, just like anything. And I worry that our tools are allowing us not to practice vulnerability.

John Donovan:
How else has actually working on this column and knowing all of these people's stories -- how else has it changed you?

Daniel Jones:
I feel like the question that we ask ourselves constantly, with love and relationships, is -- and this is something that I've sort of absorbed through people's stories -- is everyone is wondering, like, "How happy do I have a right to be?"

00:12:10

John Donovan:
[affirmative]

Daniel Jones:
Or "How happy is" -- you know, because everyone is trying to determine if this person is right for them. "Am I happy enough with this person?" And then, in long-term marriage, "This isn't working for me anymore. But is it worth jettisoning, you know, get -- is it worth getting rid of? And the question that's sort of circling everyone's mind, it's an impossible question to answer. People end up answering it, but it's how -- what is happiness? What does it consist of? And how much of that do I have a right to? Is this marriage enough for me? Is this person enough for me? Now I need to -- we need to start thinking about having a family. Is this the person I want to do it with? Do I feel good enough with this person?"

00:13:00

And I admire the people -- I've come to admire people through the column, the people who repeatedly open themselves up to love after they've been sort of crushed.

John Donovan:
Yeah.

Daniel Jones:
And there are really two kinds of people in this world. And one is the kind -- everyone gets crushed, you know, at some point. And one is the kind who says, "Okay, I'm going to love again." And those people go on to have a happy life, whether they get crushed again, whether they have a horrible disease, whatever. Those are the people who are going to have a happy life. And the ones who say, "I can't do that again," and go in the other direction and don't -- and decide, "My heart can't take that." And I sort of have seen that split in submissions, the sort of bitterness versus openness. And if you can be on that right side of openness, there -- you have a chance at a happy life.

00:14:01

John Donovan:
So -- so -- so which side are you on asked Barbara Walters of --

Daniel Jones:
Oh, my God.

John Donovan:
-- the Journalist.

[laughter]

Daniel Jones:
Which side am I on? I don't consider myself an incredibly brave person --

John Donovan:
Ah.

Daniel Jones:
-- when it comes to love. I have a good marriage, and -- and I feel like I'm happier than I have a right to be considering how much struggle there is in the world. But I -- I don't know. I have a new view of sort of what -- what marriage is. I've been married 25 years and have two kids and see them go through relationships and all of that. And I've just -- I've sort of come to

appreciate what kindness and generosity can do over the long term versus our sort of obsession with love and romance.

00:15:00

Which are -- I don't know, I see so many stories of people who -- who divorce or break up because they don't feel in love anymore. They say, "I don't feel in love anymore." And you just wonder, like, what -- what is valuable, you know, over the long term in a relationship? What is valuable? And what do you cherish? And I'm fascinated by people who struggle with those questions.

John Donovan:

Yeah. Could you see yourself to rekindle the passion coming to an Intelligence Squared debate to sort of --

[laughter]

-- get things fired --

Daniel Jones:

What are you asking really?

John Donovan:

I'm not asking you out. I just want to share. We've had some -- we've had people connect romantically by coming to these debates.

Daniel Jones:

I believe it, yeah.

John Donovan:

And we -- we had -- we had one marriage result -- actually two a few years ago in 2014, I got an email from a guy in Denver named Ryan who wrote and said, "My girlfriend and I have been listening to your debates.

00:16:09

And we were having a lot of disagreements that were keeping us apart. But listening to your debates let us sort out what -- you know, what we believe about things and to learn to respect the differences with each other. And now I think I'm ready to pop the question." And he said -- he said, "Would you mind recording a mock introduction to a debate, say --

Daniel Jones:

Of you.

John Donovan:

No -- yeah, he wanted my voice saying, "Ladies and gentlemen, here is our debate: Nicole should take Ryan's hand in marriage," or something like that.

[laughter]

So, I stood on the stage in front of an -- of the audience that night, and I read, you know, "Nicole --" and then the whole audience burst into applause. And I sent the audio file out to him. And four years ago, he played it in the kitchen while -- while Nicole was making dinner. And then he got down on his knees and proposed to her. And I checked in with him this weekend.

00:17:00

[applause]

I checked in with him this weekend, and I said, "How's it going?" And he said, "We're getting married this summer." So -- so they've been together during those four years.

Daniel Jones:

So, John will do that for you now that you --

[laughter]

He'll record your voicemail message, too --

John Donovan:

Yeah.

Daniel Jones:

-- probably.

John Donovan:

And we -- we're very interested in these topics that kind of mix technology and the human spirit. We've debated the impact of technology on the way we think on whether it makes it smarter, whether video games make us smarter. You know, artificial intelligence, and jobs. So, tonight's entrance in this category of Intellidating, we think, is really on target for us.

Daniel Jones:

[affirmative]

John Donovan:

But to get back to one other -- a couple of other insights from your book that I just found fascinating -- and your book, by the way, is called, "Love Illuminated: Exploring Life's Most Mystifying Subject." I loved it, and I wasn't sure I was going to like it --

Daniel Jones:
[laughs]

John Donovan:
-- I told you this on the phone.

Daniel Jones:
Thank you.

John Donovan:
I really loved this book, because you had -- first of all, you're a fantastic writer. You -- so many people are competing to get into your column.

00:18:00

I'm thinking, "Who is the guy who is judging all of these writers?" You got the right. First of all, all those pieces are really well-written --

Daniel Jones:
Thanks, John. That's nice of you to say.

John Donovan:
-- but your writing is fantastic. But you mentioned that men are three times more likely to declare themselves in love before sex, and that this was a study done at Penn State. Do you recall that?

Daniel Jones:
Yeah, yeah.

John Donovan:
So, what's that about?

Daniel Jones:
That surprised me. Well, it didn't surprise me once I knew why.

[laughter]

Yeah. It was a study about who says "I love you" first in relationships. And I just -- you know, I assumed it would be -- very sexist of me, but I assumed it would be the women who would get

emotionally involved before the man. And maybe they do. But the person who says, "I love you" first is the man, more commonly -- three times more commonly, I think, and --

John Donovan:
Yeah, yeah.

Daniel Jones:
-- and he says it before sex. So, there's sort of a motive to --

[laughter]

-- to saying it. I mean, I don't dispute its sincerity in the moment.

00:19:00

John Donovan:
At the time.

Daniel Jones:
In the moment.

John Donovan:
Yes.

Daniel Jones:
And then women are much more likely to say, "I love you" after sex, at which point the man is less likely to reciprocate.

[laughter]

John Donovan:
If he's still in the room.

[laughter]

Daniel Jones:
Or awake, yeah.

John Donovan:
Yeah.

[laughter]

So, that's unfortunately a very cynical take on the words "I love you."

Daniel Jones:
I know. We should --

John Donovan:
And you also talk about --

Daniel Jones:
-- shouldn't go there tonight.

John Donovan:
-- the -- yeah, let's not. You also talk about the accidental "I love you," when one person blurts out, "I love you," not meaning to, and then --

Daniel Jones:
[affirmative]

John Donovan:
-- and then it lands and becomes often unreciprocated.

Daniel Jones:
Yeah.

John Donovan:
I recommend the book just for these couple of pages, because this is a brilliant story.

[laughter]

Daniel Jones:
Well, it's true. I mean, it -- but again, we're so guarded. And this is -- it's funny how "I love you," has become this sort of threshold. You know, like saying these words -- like, in some cultures you don't even say "I love you" ever.

00:20:00

And for us, it's so loaded. And then the -- I mean, my favorite of stories that have come my way -- many of which actually are about this exact issue -- how do you say I love you? What does a person say in response? And the classic responses are, like, "Thanks," you know?

[laughter]

"I love you." You know, after all this build up, and build up, and build up -- "I love you." "Thanks."

[laughter]

Oh, can you imagine?

John Donovan:

Yeah. Well, yeah. Yeah.

[laughter]

Daniel Jones:

Well, you --

[laughter]

John Donovan:

Yeah. Well --

[laughter]

-- I said at the beginning that having Daniel Jones was really a catch. You are a catch. And you've helped set up this conversation spectacularly well. The book, again, "Love Illuminated." And the column -- you all know "Modern Love." You all have your stories. So, far, 80,000.

00:21:00

We've got another several hundred here, of people who can write and tell their stories. But I want to thank you --

Daniel Jones:

Sure.

John Donovan:

[laughs] I want to thank you so much for taking the time and for helping us --

Daniel Jones:

Thanks, John.

John Donovan:

-- set this table this way. [inaudible] --

Daniel Jones:

Yeah.

John Donovan:

Daniel Jones.

[applause]

Daniel Jones:

Thanks. My pleasure. Thanks.

John Donovan:

And now, let's please welcome our debaters to the stage, starting with Tom Jacques.

[applause]

Helen Fisher.

[applause]

Thank you.

Manoush Zomorodi.

[applause]

Hi. And Eric Klinenberg.

[applause]

Let's all take our places. Our motion is "Swipe Left: Dating Apps have Killed Romance." Let's meet our debaters, please again welcome Eric Klinenberg.

[applause]

John Donovan:

Hi, Eric.

Eric Klinenberg:

Hello.

John Donovan:

Welcome to Intelligence Squared. You are a professor at New York University. You're co-author of the best-seller, "Modern Romance." Your field is sociology. And that's a field that has been looking at mating rituals for as long as anyone can really remember.

00:22:03

And tonight, we're debating the impact of dating apps on people. But how have these apps changed sociology itself?

Eric Klinenberg:

So far, they haven't really changed sociology, but it is inevitable that they're going to. And there's a very simple reason for that, and that is that the things we do on apps are recorded by the companies that make them. And we can turn that into data that we learn to discover all kinds of things about our secrets, the things we do. And actually, I should say that is just one of the many unromantic things about dating apps.

[laughter]

John Donovan:

Okay.

[talking simultaneously]

John Donovan:

You can't slip it in there. Eric Klinenberg --

[applause]

-- trying to slip one by us. And Eric's partner is -- ladies and gentlemen, please welcome again Manoush Zomorodi.

[applause]

Hi, Manoush.

Manoush Zomorodi:

Hi, John.

John Donovan:

You host the "Note to Self" podcast. It's known as the tech show about being human.

00:23:01

Your recent book, "Bored and Brilliant," also makes another sort of fascinating breakthrough argument that is based on new research. You have found, you report, that we come up with some of our best and most creative thinking during periods when we are off of social media and just spacing out, because that's when our minds get busy, you say, in interesting and creative ways. So, given that, is the advice that you would give your opponents tonight, if they want to win this debate, that they should just space out now and then?

Manoush Zomorodi:

Yeah, I would say, if they have not ignited the default mode in their brain and allowed their minds to wander towards brilliance, it's a little late, so...

[laughter]

John Donovan:

But that doesn't mean they haven't done that already. Ladies and gentlemen, the team arguing for the motion.

[applause]

And now let's meet those opponents arguing against the motion, "Swipe Left: Dating Apps have Killed Romance." Please welcome Helen Fisher.

[applause]

Helen, we are delighted to have you on this stage. You've been to many debates as a member of the audience.

00:24:01

It's great to have you up here. You are a biological anthropologist. You are the chief scientific adviser to Match.com, also a breakthrough thinker, notably, your own work applying hard science to the study of love and romance, with your fascinating insight that chemicals like dopamine and serotonin in our brains have a lot to do with who's going to match up well with whom. That's what your book "Anatomy of Love" is all about, which raises the question, which probably will come up tonight, are we stuck with the chemistry that we're born with?

Helen Fisher:

We're not puppets on the string of DNA, that is for sure. We've evolved a huge cerebral cortex with which we make decisions. It's amazing we don't do it better, but we do. We have, although, you know -- although we are flexible, we have personalities that are based in biology. And we're naturally drawn to some people rather than others. So, people are correct when they say, "We have chemistry."

John Donovan:

Oh, what a lovely line. Ladies and gentlemen, Helen Fisher.

[applause]

00:25:00

And next in line is Tom Jacques. Welcome to Intelligence Squared, Tom.

Tom Jacques:
Thank you.

[applause]

John Donovan:
Tom, you are vice president of engineering at OkCupid. You are -- that is a leading date site for anybody who might not know that. It boasts more than 3.5 million users. You, Tom, got your degree in computer science from Carnegie Mellon. And that makes you the numbers guy on the stage tonight, more than anybody else. So being good with numbers --

Tom Jacques:
Yes.

John Donovan:
-- can you please settle the most important mathematical question to have burdened sages and songwriters for generations. Is one the loneliest number?

[laughter]

Tom Jacques:
So, I love this question. So, I think one certainly, you know, is a lonely number. But like all questions, the context matters. So, if we're talking about the number of relationships in the world, then zero is the loneliest number because it means that everybody's alone.

John Donovan:
Oh.

Tom Jacques:
If you have --

[laughter]

00:26:00

You know, if you have one, but, you know, you might have access to a dating app like OkCupid, you can quickly turn that into two.

John Donovan:
Okay. Also getting ahead of yourself. Ladies and gentlemen, Tom Jacques.
[applause]

John Donovan:

Alright. Everybody, we're going to move on. As always, our debate goes in three rounds. And it's the difference between the first and the second vote that declares our winners, and only one side wins. Let's move onto Round 1. Our motion is this: Swipe Left: Dating Apps Have Killed Romance. Speaking first for the motion and making his way to the Intelligence Square there on the floor, Eric Klinenberg. He is sociologist and co-author of the book, "Modern Romance." Ladies and gentlemen, Eric Klinenberg.

[applause]

Eric Klinenberg:

Thank you very much. You heard I'm a sociologist. I love sociology. I can't stop doing it. So, I thought, let's start tonight by getting to know each other a little bit. I'm going to do an old-fashioned instant survey to get us going.

00:27:00

So, let me just ask, how many people in this room -- can you clap, please -- if you have never done online dating -- if you've never used an --

[applause]

-- oh, this is the National Public Radio crowd here tonight. And can you also clap loudly if you have used a dating app?

[applause]

Alright. Alright. We have -- people, we have a future. Can you clap if you're single?

[applause]

Oh, special reception for you after the debate tonight. Clap if you're married, please.

[applause]

Okay. Somewhat disturbing. And just finally, if you could clap if you're currently in an extramarital relationship.

[laughter]

Whoa! Ashley Madison, a dating app that is not dead yet.

[laughter]

So, look, I have spent years studying modern love and romance. I have traveled around the world doing interviews and focus groups with people who are single.

00:28:03

I have studied the data that come from dating companies. And I can tell you that it's true -- millions of people are using dating apps and many are finding relationships. But we are here not to talk about the numbers so much as to talk about the experience. And let me tell you that the experiences of people who use dating apps are anything but romantic. And let's remember why we're here tonight, ladies and gentlemen. Our question is not "Are dating apps popular?" They are. We concede that. It's whether dating apps are bad for romance. And Manoush and I tonight are going to tell you why they are. But before we can do that, let's define the term. What is romance? Let's go to the Oxford English dictionary, a great source for this. It tells us that romance is this kind of feeling of mystery and wonder -- Helen has written about this -- that we get around love, but there's something else in the definition that's important to me. It's the sense of being swept away, remote from reality, away from everyday life.

00:29:03

It's that sense of being preoccupied with some other person. You think about them and care about them so much that everything else kind of melts away. You forget about the mundane. That's the feeling that we try to recapture when we go on vacation, or when we go on a date, or when we make a meal for our special person. Right? It's that idea that we're lost in love. There's not another care we have in the world. Now, it is worth nothing that since the advent of the Internet, marriage rates have gone down. There are more people in the world who are single today than ever before. There are more people who are living alone. Still, I think that most people who are looking for love are able to find it, and technology won't change that. The thing is that dating apps are making just about every part of our search for love less romantic.

Think about it. If you've been on a dating app, you know that it encourages you to treat people like products. People routinely lie about their height, their age, their weight, their income.

00:30:02

They put huge amounts of attention into their photograph -- and for good reason. About 90 percent of the action -- online dating -- is about the quality of your picture. Are you hot or not? 90 percent. But then we sent out heartless and sometimes cruel messages -- things we would never say to a person in person -- because the phones encourage us to treat people like bubbles on a screen. Unfortunately, the things that we do online are changing the culture. My fellow sociologists say that they're changing our norms, making us ruder, and flakier, and more self-involved. Have you taken a selfie recently? Here's the most important thing. Dating apps make it harder, not easier to be swept away by another person. Why is that? Because the

phone demands our attention. It is always telling us that there's something or someone that deserves our attention more than the person we're with or the thing we're doing now.

00:31:01

That's true for new couples, but it's also true for established couples as well. I mean, think about it. How often have you come home at night, if you're in a couple, looking for affection and connection only to find your partner cuddled up on the couch with his iPhone? How romantic is that? Real life and real relationships have a hard time competing with the stimulation that apps give us. On dating apps, the problem is there's too much going on. Today, people go into their phones, and they perceive a world of limitless dating choices. And unfortunately, this means it's very hard to settle on the person that we're with. We're always wondering, isn't there something better out there? Let's go online and find out. I have interviewed people who are on Tinder while in an Uber on their way to a date that they organized on Tinder hours before. And this matters because romance and love don't come from superficial connections. It's not really about whether you're hot or not.

00:32:01

At the end of the day, romance is impossible without sustained face-to-face contact. What's important is not the quantity of our dates; it's the quality of our interactions. And the main reason that you should vote for the motion tonight is because apps and the phone culture that they're part of have made spending quality time with another human being a very hard thing to do. Thank you.

[applause]

John Donovan:

Thank you, Eric Klinenberg. Our motion again, "Swipe Left: Dating Apps Have Killed Romance." And here to make his opening statement against the motion, Tom Jacques, vice president of engineering at OkCupid. Ladies and gentlemen, Tom Jacques.

[applause]

Tom Jacques:

Thank you very much, John. I really appreciate the opportunity to come out here tonight to debate.

00:33:00

So, I usually don't do media or public speaking things. Like most people, it terrifies me. And being a programmer, I'm more likely to talk to a computer than another human being. But, you know, even though I'm not going to be as eloquent as Eric just was, I'm going to do my best. So, hello, everybody.

[laughter]

My name is Tom.

[laughter]

Hello. So, I grew up in a small town of Wayland, Massachusetts. And I attended Carnegie Mellon University where I graduated with a degree in computer science, as John just told you. And, you know, after graduating, I moved to New York to join this crazy startup called OkCupid that was trying to use the internet to help people find love. And, you know, working on a dating app, you know, let me tell you some of my interests. I love to travel, love candle-lit dinners, long walks on the beach, and writing algorithms.

[laughter]

So, I care a lot about the topic of dating apps and romance.

00:34:00

You know, it's literally what I've spent the last eight years of my life thinking about every single day. And I may not look like a traditional matchmaker but today, you know, as Eric told you, I am the typical matchmaker because, you know, dating apps are the most common way to meet people now. And today, you know, I'm going to show you that instead of killing romance, the data actually shows that dating apps are creating romance. And even though Eric didn't want to talk about the numbers, I do.

[laughter]

So, you're hearing things from him about bad behavior, having too many options, you know, arbitrary, irrelevant algorithms, which I take offense to.

[laughter]

You know, but what you won't hear is, you know, them citing a number of studies that prove their point because the data isn't there in the context of dating. So, I've got three main points that I want to get across tonight.

00:35:00

The first point is that more and more people are using dating apps to get together. You know, since building momentum in 1995 when the first dating apps started coming about, there's been a steady increase in the percent of couples that are using dating apps to get together. This is especially true of people who were marginalized before, the handicapped, the

LGBTQI community and people over the age of 55. You know, says -- a quick question to the audience, and remember, it's radio so make a lot of noise. Who knows somebody who's in a relationship because of a dating app?

[applause]

That's a lot of people. Turns out you're not alone. A number of studies estimate that over 40 percent of relationships today come from meeting on a dating app, and over 70 percent of LGBTQI relationships do.

00:36:00

A recent study, called the Strength of Apps [unintelligible] that got global attention in 2017, says that we're actually seeing an unprecedented rise in the number of interracial marriages. And this sharp rise in interracial marriages correlates exactly to moments when popular dating apps were released -- things like Match.com, OkCupid, and, yup, Tinder. This is what dating apps do. They break down barriers and allow you to connect, form relationships, get married to people who you might otherwise never have the chance to meet. What isn't romantic about that? So, my second point is that it's working. Not only are people getting together, they're staying together and they're happy. Studies have shown that married couples who met online report higher marital satisfaction and have a lower rate of breaking up than couples who met offline. And you might be thinking, "Alright. So, what? Anybody can cite a study that makes them look good, right?"

00:37:01

Well, let's talk about something you can't fake -- more data. It turns out that because marriages are registered with the government in the United States, the CDC happens to track marriage and divorce rates. Don't ask me why the CDC thinks that marriage is a disease.

[laughter]

Don't know the answer to that one, but they've got the numbers. According to them, marriage has been steadily declining in the United States since the '80s. And this trend only began to change in 2009, where it started to bottom out, and it's actually started to rise again. You know, if you take a look at divorces -- and specifically the rate of divorces per marriage -- that's a trend line that's been going up over time. You know, people have been getting divorced more and more. But that trend also reversed in 2010. It's actually come back down to one of the lowest points in the last 20 years.

00:38:01

So, now, well, correlation doesn't imply causation. You know, how could these negative trends have been reversed during the rise of dating apps? It's a hard pill to swallow.

[laughter]

So, my last point is this. If dating apps have killed romance, where's the body?

[laughter]

I looked everywhere.

[applause]

I couldn't find one. Qualitatively, people don't think that dating apps are killing romance. Pew Research surveyed 55 percent of people who don't use dating apps -- think that they're good. A lot of people who do use them -- 80 percent -- think that they're a good way to meet people. Quantitatively, people are still forming relationships and getting together. Again, over 40 percent of relationships today and over a third of marriages are due to dating apps. And you know, if this stuff didn't work, I wouldn't have a job.

[laughter]

Dating apps aren't killing romance. They're making romance possible. And because of that, I ask you to vote no on the motion.

00:39:02

[applause]

John Donovan:
Thank you, Tom Jacques.

[applause]

And a reminder of where we are -- we are halfway through the opening round of this Intelligence Squared U.S. debate. I'm John Donovan. We have four debaters, two teams of two, fighting it out over this motion, "Swipe Left: Dating Apps Have Killed Romance." You have heard from the first two debaters -- and now onto the third -- to debate in support of the motion. Here is Manoush Zomorodi, host of WNYC's "Note to Self" podcast, author of "Bored and Brilliant." Ladies and gentlemen, Manoush Zomorodi.

[applause]

Manoush Zomorodi:
I have the least degrees of anyone on this stage.

[laughter]

I am not an anthropologist. I am not a sociologist. I am not a data scientist. I'm a mom of two kids. I'm a wife. I'm a journalist. And I host a podcast that is about how technology is changing everything in our lives.

00:40:02

And my audience is extremely generous. Every day, we get emails and voice memos about how technology is specifically changing the way that they work, the way that they parent, the way that they fall in love. And oftentimes, they are looking for guidance on how to cope with this accelerating world. And so, that is what I hope to offer them on this podcast. But when I told them I was going to be doing this debate tonight, they had a message for you. In fact, they had a few things that they wanted you to know about their experiences on these dating apps. Some simply wanted to share the messages that they had exchanged with potential suitors.

[laughter]

I'm going to read a few to you.

Manoush Zomorodi:

And tell me if this would spark online romance for you. "Hey!" no, that's it, just, "Hey!"

[laughter]

"Nice legs even if you don't shave them."

00:41:01

Yeah, those weren't too bad. Can I read you my favorite? "I'm looking to shove my head between your legs and bend you over. What are you looking for?"

[laughter]

I know. My kids aren't listening. I just want you to know that. To be fair, several of my listeners did say that they eventually did meet a special someone with the help of an online dating site. But like anyone who has spent time on these apps, they first had to run the gauntlet of lewd messages or spend time exchanging messages with people who seemed really interested but then just seemed to disappear from their screens. One person wrote me, "All the apps have bots of beautiful people who seem amazing and educated and hot and available and who will engage you for a few sessions, but then they ghost you." Okay, but let's say -- yeah, exactly. But let's say you do make a connection. Okay, let's stay positive. Let's say you make a connection with the person, a real person, with the help of an app, and you go on an actual date.

00:42:03

Then what? So many people told me that the transactional quality of their experience on these apps just seeps over into real life. Chrissy wrote me, "I have come to despise that look a man gives you when you first meet, the gleam in their eye, the smirk. It makes me shudder. Immediately, I have to decide how hard I'm going to push to split the bill because clearly they think they're buying something." Ew. But at least that guy showed up. Listen to this story about a dude who really used one of these apps to manipulate people. Clip one.

Female Speaker:

He was on Match.com, and he told me I was his type of porn. So, he told me that what he liked to do was start relationships with women and get to the point where it was going to be their first meeting. And I guess that was like the most exciting fun part for him, as it is for most people.

00:43:03

And then you would set up a time and place for them to finally meet for the first time, and then he wouldn't show up. And he would do it over and over and over again."

Manoush Zomorodi:

And that guy was actually her boyfriend at the time. And he broke up with her by posting a picture of himself on Instagram with his new fiancé. Good times. Okay. Now, listen. Have I shared with you the worst aspects of online dating? Maybe. And maybe you're thinking, like, oh my God, if it's so terrible, just don't do it, right? But here is the problem. The destruction of romance extends IRL, into real life.

[laughter]

Even if you give up finding romance online, and you decide to look for love the old-fashioned way, in a bar --

[laughter]

-- this is what you will find. Clip two?

Female Speaker:

Yeah, so I walked into this bar kind of excited to see if I could connect with a guy.

00:44:00

And I looked around, and every single guy at the bar was on their phone on dating apps, every single one. I got to the point where I realized I should just get on the dating apps and see if any of them are actually on it. But there's no point in interacting.

Manoush Zomorodi:

"No point in interacting," much less exchanging glances over a pint of Brooklyn Lager. Are you feeling tired? Are you exhausted by all these stories? Are you thinking, oh my God, this is so straining, especially for women. Yeah. Well, you're not alone. Here's Becca.

Female Speaker:

It's just very exhausting. Like online dating is very exhausting. I'm like, obviously, not opposed to meeting someone in my life. It's just like, for me personally, I don't know where the [bleep] I would meet anyone in real life.

[laughter]

Manoush Zomorodi:

My teammate told you how dating apps have destroyed romance. They've taken away mystery, remoteness.

00:45:00

But I want to add that dating apps have destroyed another important aspect of romance, civility and conversation, basic emotional intelligence, eye contact, being able to read someone's body language and make them think, like at your best, like your best self, make them think that you are just amazing, and they are the most special person in the world, at least until you get to know each other, right? Look, we all know the internet is extraordinary. Information goes around so quickly we are connecting people all over the world. But is it good for romance? No. When human beings interact online, they often revert to their crudest instincts. Dating apps are no different and certainly not better. Give me a Twitter where people punctuate properly and treat each other with respect, and I will grant you a dating app that brings out people's most caring, loving, and romantic selves. Not gonna happen.

00:46:01

[laughter]

And this is why you should vote yes for me and Eric.

John Donvan:

Thank you. Manoush Zomorodi.

[applause]

And the motion to vote on is, "Swipe Left: Dating Apps Have Killed Romance." And here to make her closing statement against the motion, Helen Fisher, biological anthropologist and chief scientific advisor to Match.com. Ladies and gentlemen, Helen Fisher.

[applause]

Helen Fisher:

Good evening. I'm delighted to be here, and I'm delighted that you're here. I do an annual study with Match.com called Singles in America. We do not poll the Match members. It's a demographically and national representative sample based on the U.S. Census. We've done it for the last eight years and we've got data on over 35,000 singles of every age and every background. And today, this past year, 6 percent of singles met somebody in a bar -- I'm not surprised about that.

00:47:02

24 percent met through a friend and 40 percent met somebody on the internet. Moreover, 57 percent think that online dating is a good way to meet people. Are they all crazy? Before we get into deep yogurt on this, into the weeds on this whole issue, I'd like to add a broader, more evolutionary, more anthropological perspective to apps, to romance, and to human nature. And I'm going to begin with a story. I was traveling in New Guinea, in the highlands of New Guinea, and I ran into a man who had three wives. And I asked him, "How many wives would you like to have?" And there was this long pause. And I thought to myself, "Is he going to say five? Is he going to say 10?"

[laughter]

"Is he going to say 25?" And he turned to me, and he said, "None."

[laughter]

A lot of wives can be a real toothache. We are a pair-bonding species.

00:48:00

Even in polygamous societies, the vast majority of men and women pair up with one person at a time. And along with the evolution of human pair-bonding, millions of years ago, we evolved the brain circuitry for romance. I study this brain system of romantic love. I and my colleagues, Lucy Brown, Bianca Acevedo, and others, have put over 100 people into a brain scanner, using fMRI to study the brain's circuitry of romantic love. And we've been able to show that the main circuits lie way below the cortex, where you do your thinking, way below the brain regions linked with the emotions -- at the very base of the brain linked with drive. In this case, the drive to find life's greatest prize, which is a mating partner. In fact, this brain system lies right near the factories that orchestrate thirst and hunger. Thirst and hunger keep you alive today,

romantic love enables you to focus your mating energy on somebody else and pass your DNA on into tomorrow.

00:49:04

This is a survival mechanism and it will not die, whether you swipe left or right on Tinder.

[laughter]

In fact, if you're concerned about killing romance with apps, what about the automobile? In the 1950s, we suddenly had a rolling bedroom. What about the birth control pill in the '70s or Viagra in 1998? Technology cannot change the basic brain structure of romance. Technology is changing the way we court, and you're going to hear more and more about that. In the past, people pulled up in their horse and buggy and wooed at the lunch -- on Sunday lunch. In my day, they called on the phone. Today, people email, and text, and meet, and seek a mate on the internet with apps. It's just the newest way to do the same old thing. In fact, these really aren't even dating sites. They're introducing sites.

00:50:01

The only real algorithm is your own brain. When you go out and meet the person -- and you've got to meet the person -- your own brain snaps into action and you court the way you always have -- smiling, laughing, listening, watching, parading, the way you did long before apps. In fact, romantic love is a little bit like a sleeping cat. 34 percent of singles have fallen in love at first sight. 45 percent have gone into a friends with benefits, thinking it's just going to be a one-night stand, and it turned into a long-term committed relationship. And 89 percent of singles today believe that you can find the -- if -- when you find the right person, you could remain married for life. If that's not romance, I don't know what is. And I think they're looking in the right place. I did this study myself with Match, and I found that people who use internet to date have more education, are more fully employed, and more likely to want to marry.

00:51:04

These sites certainly do have problems. But like any new technology, you've got to learn how to use it. And you've seen how people are not using it properly tonight. The biggest problem -- and it was mentioned by Eric -- is cognitive overload. The brain is not well built to choose between hundreds if not thousands of alternatives. So, what I would recommend is that you stop. If you're a dating person, after you've met nine people -- the brain doesn't deal with more than about nine -- stop and get to know one person more. And the more you get to know a person, the more you like him, and the more you think that that person is like you. Actually, I think romance is expanding due to something that I call slow love. Today, singles are taking different routes to love. Many of them are just hanging out for months before they even kiss. Others are working slowly into friends with benefits, then slowly into dating somebody.

00:52:00

Dating has actually acquired a new significance, more important. And then slowly into living together before they marry. What we're seeing is a real extension of the pre-commitment stage before we tie the knot. Where marriage used to be the beginning of a relationship, now it's the finale. And we have even more time for romance. So, nobody gets out of love alive. You've heard about some of these people. We all suffer on the internet and off the internet as the poet William Butler Yeats once said, "Love is the crooked thing." It is. But I will close with this, the drive for romance and love is one of the most powerful brain system the human animal has ever evolved.

Apps have their problems, but apps cannot, never have, and never will kill the brain circuitry for romance. Thank you.

[applause]

John Donvan:
Thank you, Helen Fisher.

00:53:00

And that concludes round one of this Intelligence Squared U.S. debate where our motion is "Swipe Left: Dating Apps Have Killed Romance." Now we move on to round two. And round two is where the debaters address one another directly, and they take questions from me and from you, our live audience here in New York City. Our motion is "Swipe Left: Dating Apps Have Killed Romance." We have heard the team arguing for the motion. Manoush Zomorodi and Eric Klinenberg argue that dating by apps is anything but romantic, that it makes it harder to be swept away when meeting another person or encountering another person which they define as the essence of romance. They point out that the apps are a transactional activity whose quality is seeping into real life and destroying -- destroying romance actually in real life even in offline relationships, killing things like civility and decency. Dating apps making it just -- people ruder and they used the word "flakier."

00:54:02

And they also point out one of the principles I think is involved here is the problem of having too much choice, that when people know that they have always the opportunity to swipe for somebody else, they're always going to be looking for something better. So that's part of the argument being made by the team arguing for the motion. The team arguing against the motion, Helen Fisher and Tom Jacques, they say that data actually backs up the argument -- their argument that apps are aiding and abetting romance, that the numbers support their argument, that there are people in the world getting together who otherwise would not be able to, including people in the disabled community, the LGBT community, where apps are, they say, responsible for 70 percent of relationships that have developed. They also say there is a

correlation to a breaking down of all kinds of social barriers with the appearance of apps. Also, going to the level of brain chemistry that the brain circuitry of romantic love is too deeply etched in our brains to be dislodged by one generation of dating apps.

00:55:00

They point out that time and time again technology has been blamed for destroying romance, but it's always turned out to be a false alarm. They say it's a false alarm this time again. I want to go to the team arguing for the motion. Essentially, you're making a qualitative argument I would say, primarily. And your opponents are making a quantitative argument. Let's take on their quantitative argument. They're basically pointing out that the numbers so strongly suggest that people are using these apps because they're working for them -- that all by itself, they win the debate -- public behavior wins the debate for them, that people are using these apps. And as you already conceded, there have been many, many relationships developing out of them. Would you like to take that on, Eric?

Eric Klinenberg:

By all means, because we would never concede that millions of people are using those apps. We just think that's a very poor way to measure their effect on romance. So, let me ask you to consider, for instance, Facebook. Do you know that Americans get their news from Facebook like no other place?

00:56:03

Ladies and gentlemen, would any single person in this room argue that Facebook is good for news, for journalism, or truth? Teenagers all over the world are using their smartphones to text each other incessantly. Are smartphones good for conversation? What are the most popular restaurants in the United States today? McDonalds, Burger King, Pizza Hut, Taco Bell. Are they good for nutrition?

[laughter]

The idea that because people are using dating apps -- which have crowded out so many other ways of getting together -- my gosh, you go to the bar and you can't interact if you don't have a phone -- it just doesn't sell.

John Donvan:

Tom Jacques, what's the response to -- your opponents are basically saying that dating apps, like the one that you work for, they are the fast food of romance.

[laughter]

00:57:00

And they're quite seriously arguing that it's coarsening the culture and that anything that coarsens the culture can't be called romantic.

Tom Jacques:

So, I think that there are some fair points they brought up, you know? But one of those points that was brought up was -- is Facebook good for news? Well, I'd actually say yes. I think Facebook and Twitter have been great for news.

[applause]

Facebook and Twitter allow people to get information more directly from the source. Dating apps allow you to expand your options and get down to the point of meeting people who you're actually going to talk with and connect with and get to know.

John Donovan:

Manoush, so the -- embedded in that response is also the argument that team is making -- that people who normally would not have the opportunity to meet are meeting. And definitely, I don't think you would even argue against the fact that communities like the disabled communities -- that would have been shut out before -- are now connecting.

00:58:01

And again, that if romance is sparking in those situations in places it wouldn't before, then that supports their argument. What's your response?

Manoush Zomorodi:

Well, I think, using this word romance, as a journalist who doesn't believe that Facebook is good for news -- and in fact, it is destroying what has been held true --

[applause]

-- and how we disseminate information -- I would argue that when we say -- for example, Helen says 70 percent say that online dating is a good way to meet people. That is not disputed. What we're talking about is romance. And that has all kinds of -- you can't quantify romance. That is a moment where you have butterflies in your stomach or your -- you meet -- I'll give you an example of a young woman who told a story to me yesterday, who said she met this guy and he ticked all her boxes -- literally. He was a doctor. He was tall. He had brown hair, all those things. He even had a golden retriever. And they --

[laughs]

-- she's like, "It's happening."

00:59:00

It's happening. I did it online. I'm going -- we're meeting. He's cool. It's 2:00 in the afternoon." He's like, "Do you want to go for a walk? Do you want to meet my golden retriever?" She was like, "Yeah, I do." Well, that was code. And -- sorry -- meaning that she went back to his apartment, and he was like, "Well, let's get into bed." She was like, "I really just wanted to meet your dog." [laughs] Like, that --

John Donovan:

There was a dog, though, right?

Manoush Zomorodi:

There was a dog.

[laughter]

But -- there was a dog. But my point being that romance is subjective and numbers are not. So, while we say --

John Donovan:

Okay.

Manoush Zomorodi:

-- 70 percent are meeting that way, that does not mean that romance is happening.

John Donovan:

Let me take that response to Helen Fisher, then. Your opponents are basically saying, "If we're going to be talking about romance, about this mysterious swept-away thing -- that that's a different thing from numbers of introductions, and even numbers of relationships that connect." I can see what they're saying there. So, what's your response to that?

Helen Fisher:

Well, it's interesting that they keep on talking about one individual here and one individual there, whereas we are talking about huge numbers of 40 million people.

01:00:00

[applause]

And -- thank you. And all of our data shows that one-third of relationships -- Manoush, relationships -- [laughter] -- start, you know, on the internet -- relationships -- and that one-fifth of all marriages. There's romance in relationships. There's romance in marriages.

Manoush Zomorodi:

I think that people are beaten down. I mean, like getting --

[laughter]

Like when Tom says people are getting together and staying together, that's because they're too tired to move on, people.

[laughter]

I mean, at some point you think, you know, how much longer can I play this numbers game? Let's just call it, you know? The game's over. And as someone who's been married for quite some time. Some days there are romance, some days there are not. And I think what Eric actually and I -- has said to me that I found very fortifying is actually that romance that you have at the very beginning of a relationship bodes well for you down the road because it's a touch point that you can go back to. Thank you for that, Eric.

01:01:00

Eric Klinenberg:

Just so that sociology doesn't get left out of here altogether, because I -- we do have some numbers.

Manoush Zomorodi:

Oh!

Eric Klinenberg:

So, the book I wrote before I wrote "Modern Romance," is called, "Going Solo." And it is worth saying that there are more single people in the world that there have ever been before. There are more people who are living alone than there have ever been before. And that when I interviewed enormous numbers of people -- and by the way, I have no self-interest in this. I have no company that's paying me to do this. I mean, the data is all about me being a scientist and trying to get things. Well, we should take that into consideration because if it was 30 --

John Donovan:

If your -- if your suggestion is that they are shills for their companies, I just want to say, in the spirit of Intelligence Squared, we strike that because we actually want to hear the merits of the arguments that they had.

[applause]

Eric Klinenberg:

Sure, but -- but here we have to be very careful. So, if it was 30 years ago and we were debating whether cigarettes were bad for you and the cigarette industry told us, "Here's our evidence," we would all say --

John Donovan:
All right, again --

Eric Klinenberg:
-- "well, how do we judge that?"

John Donovan:
-- again, these are -- these are not cigarette people.

01:02:00

I just want -- I just want to --

[laughter]

Eric Klinenberg:
So, let me say, for the sake of science, that there is incredible disparity in the numbers of what we get from different sources.

Manoush Zomorodi:
Yes, that's right.

Eric Klinenberg:
So, the Match.com data is different than the data that we get from other surveys. And for instance, let me just pick one -- let me just pick one bone for a moment here. The claim that the rise in interethnic marriage is coincident with the rise of online dating. This is not a claim that holds water. The preeminent researcher of this is Mike Rosenfeld from Stanford University. He's a dear colleague of mine. He wrote a book called "The Age of Independence" that I know well from my work, and it shows, that the rise of intermarriage happens when young people start marrying later, get places of their own, and free themselves from parental control, and so therefore can make decisions about who they want to interact with, who they want to mate with without that kind of pressure before. And so, to say that this is about online dating is just plain wrong. We have to adhere the facts.

01:03:01

John Donovan:
Okay, Eric, I just want to break in because this side has had quite a run. I want to let this side talk for a while now. Take it, Helen.

Helen Fisher:
Well, two things. First of all, I loved your book, "Going Solo." But I think we used to agree, actually, that made people hyper-connected because these days, over -- people write over 15,000 emails during the course of one year. We're hyper-connected. You can't walk down the

street without dodging people because they're so busy connecting with everybody. So, you know, I mean, this is not a -- going solo doesn't necessarily mean that these people are sitting in their -- you know. That's number one.

Eric Klinenberg:

No, just different than romance.

Helen Fisher:

Number two. I want to do talk about this interracial marriage, too, because I don't know if we're referring to the same article. But I was really moved by a particular article that really -- there's two things that we actually do know that inter- -- that online dating is helping, and it is increasing more interracial marriages. And I say that because in this data of -- we have at Match, of -- they have. I'm just a consultant -- of 35,000 people, we ask what you're looking for every year.

01:04:01

And the top things that people are looking for is somebody they respect, somebody they can trust and confide in, somebody who makes them laugh, somebody who makes them -- gives them enough time, and somebody who they find physically attractive. And way down the road is ethnic background. Over 70 percent of singles today would go out with somebody from a different racial group.

John Donovan:

Tom, I want to take -- give you a moment to build on the argument that you were making in the beginning about algorithms. You talked a lot about algorithms, the implication being -- I believe the implication being that these algorithms are better than people at looking at a large group of people and figuring out who's going to be compatible. I think that's your -- that's the basis of your business. And my question to you is, how do we know that that's really any better than if you just got a large group of people together and got them in contact with each other that they would figure out their own matches? So, that's a different question from, it's a larger group of people.

01:05:00

It's once you get that large group of people, why is your algorithm -- what does your algorithm know about dating and romance that the rest of us don't?

Tom Jacques:

It's a great question, and I will answer that in one second. But I have to respond to Eric.

[laughter]

Okay, I love that you brought up Michael Rosenfeld, because Michael Rosenfeld is actually quoted in a recent --

John Donovan:

Is this about the interracial dating?

Tom Jacques:

This is -- just for a second.

John Donovan:

Well -- no, no. The thing is, we have limited time. We've had two rounds on it. You're going to come back at each other with dueling studies. So, I think we'll end up going in a circle. So --

Tom Jacques:

Okay.

John Donovan:

-- if you would not mind moving forward.

Tom Jacques:

Onto algorithms.

John Donovan:

Right.

Tom Jacques:

He said he sees no negative repercussions.

[laughter]

So, I think there's actually a huge misunderstanding about these algorithms. You know, people like Manoush will say, "What does hair color have to do with your soul mate?" And Manoush is right. It has nothing to do with your soul mate. But we don't look at things like hair color, or eye color, or height, or weight. We look at practical, behavioral measurements.

01:06:02

We look at who's online. If you go to a bar, the people that you see are the people in the bar with you. One of the most prominent features of the algorithms are that when you go online, you see people who are online with you too. It's the same kind of things that give you the opportunity to see who's responsive, who's open to actually meeting, who actually talks to each other. Those are the people who we promote, the people who you are going to have the best chance of having a good, positive interaction with. If you behave poorly, you get reported --

John Donovan:

But how do you know it's a positive interaction? Because I think there's a little bit of a sense that -- well -- that if both people like the same kind of music, then that's a thing that's going to help them get along. But you know, maybe that assumption is wrong. Maybe opposites attract in a lot of ways. I mean, what -- how do you account for the possibility of opposites attracting?

Tom Jacques:

So, one way that we account for it is we actually don't filter out all sorts of people, just because they disagreed with you on one thing.

01:07:01

What we do is we present to you the people who are available, and we try and show you things that you can use to connect. Well, it turns out that you happen to agree that ThunderCats was the greatest -- you know, greatest thing of all time as a child. Right?

John Donovan:

But maybe two such people should not be allowed to be together.

01:16:02

[laughter]

[applause]

Eric Klinenberg:

We're going to concede all the ThunderCats couples -- give them to you.

Manoush Zomorodi:

They're very romantic.

Tom Jacques:

But you know, we aren't making those decisions for you. We're just showing you what you have in common with people.

John Donovan:

Okay. Okay. So, you -- I want to let Manoush --

Manoush Zomorodi:

I think that's --

John Donovan:

-- take that on.

Manoush Zomorodi:

And you, of course, are speaking for your company. I had the pleasure, the other night, of sitting on the couch with a single female relative who was, like, "You want to see what it's like? I'll show you what's like." And we got on Bumble. And let me tell you -- it was like -- "Look at his face -- is slightly -- that's weird, the way his ears -- no, gone. Oh, look, at -- he's a little bit oh, I don't know. His smile is weird. Goodbye."

01:08:01

Nobody is looking at whether they're ThunderCats or they like interacting, or anything like that. In fact, she told me that she had gotten more matches or whatever they call it -- on Bumble, when she had nothing written in her profile. It was based on her looking --

John Donovan:

But --

Manoush Zomorodi:

-- super cute.

John Donovan:

But if you take -- but if you look at what Tom's company is doing -- OkCupid -- they're not doing just one or two variables like that. They're going into a great -- a lot of data, and then running it through an algorithm, and then saying, "These two people have a -- will probably be a good match."

Manoush Zomorodi:

John, the motion -- Dating apps -- there's a whole wide --

John Donovan:

Well, I know the motion.

Manoush Zomorodi:

-- spectrum out there.

John Donovan:

Right. So, let's -- but let's have a response to the point that he made.

Manoush Zomorodi:

Well, the --

John Donovan:

You're doing a pivot. Very smart.

Manoush Zomorodi:

Thank you.

John Donovan:

But --

[laughter]

-- but I'd like you to pivot back to the point that he made about the algorithm actually being good at matching people up.

Eric Klinenberg:

But can we just go back to the thing that Helen said -- which I think is kind of brilliant? But there's something a little off about it? It's that Helen, who believes in these dating sites, will always tell us, "Your brain is the best algorithm." Right?

01:09:00

Get off the sites. Get face to face. We completely agree on this. Your brain is the best algorithm. People, your brain is not an algorithm. Your brain is something else -- there's something else going on with you as a whole person. And I think we make a mistake in thinking that we can game this, that we can get this right quantitatively, that there's a model -- because you don't really know, until you're with that other person, whether you have a spark. And the other thing is, it doesn't happen in 10 minutes. We know from the best research that the way to get at what is really distinctive, and human, and special about another person is to spend time with them. Go on a second date. Go on a third date.

John Donovan:

But they're not disputing --

Eric Klinenberg:

-- [inaudible] --

John Donovan:

They're not disputing the value of subsequent dates, and you're not responding --

Eric Klinenberg:

No. But --

John Donovan:

-- to the question of whether the algorithm is better --

Eric Klinenberg:

But --

John Donovan:
-- than we are.

Eric Klinenberg:
-- but I am, because what I'm saying -- and Manoush is saying this also -- is we are actually filtering in a very different way, which has to do with images. And we wind up making decisions that don't give us a chance.

01:10:00

So, over time, over years, are people going to still procreate and find couples? I think we can see the evidence that our species has not died off yet. But is this good for romance?

Manoush Zomorodi:
Right. Is this good for romance?

Eric Klinenberg:
We don't think so.

John Donovan:
Okay. I want Helen to respond, if you would like to, to what was just said, otherwise we can move on to --

Helen Fisher:
I would very briefly.

John Donovan:
Yeah.

Helen Fisher:
I entirely agree, and I ended up saying on the podium that these are not dating sites. They are introducing sites. And this -- I mean, one of the fastest growing one is called OurTime. It's for people over 50. I'm over 50. I can't stand in a bar and wait for people to fill -- you know, walk by. It doesn't happen to me.

[applause]

John Donovan:
Okay, let's go to some questions. I see an orange sweater.

Female Speaker:
Hi. My name is Meredith.

John Donovan:

Hi.

Female Speaker:

And my question is for -- I guess for the four people. I find that I'm a very bad judge of people that I'm in potential romantic relationships with because I self-rationalize as soon as I'm attracted to people, and I just want to have sex with them.

01:11:07

And then I end up getting in a relationship with them by mistake. How would you respond to that point that perhaps meeting somebody -- meeting somebody on an app is better because you don't actually get to like smell them and stuff.

[laughter]

John Donovan:

Thank you for that question.

[applause]

That's for this side, right?

[laughter]

Manoush Zomorodi:

No, I'm with you. I -- I -- okay, so can I share? This --

John Donovan:

Manoush Zomorodi.

Manoush Zomorodi:

-- maybe is familiar. A friend told me this story last night. I had a great night hearing all these stories last night. That she thought that she'd met some guy that she was really into, on OkCupid, and actually, they decided to have sex, and they went out for brunch the next morning. And she's thinking, he smells right, all those things, right?

01:12:00

And she goes home, and she gets on her laptop, and she looks on her laptop, and she says, "Oh, wait, this is not my OkCupid account. Oh, it's -- it's Wayne's OkCupid account. And, while I -- while we were having sex, I went into the bathroom, and he got on OkCupid and set up another date with someone. And then she also saw all the messages that he had sent to other guys saying that she was so easy and what a great time he was having and --"

John Donovan:

Okay, I see where that's going.

Manoush Zomorodi:

-- I mean...

John Donovan:

Let's let the -- let your opponents respond to some of that. Tom Jacques.

Tom Jacques:

So first of all, I'd like to -- like to see those messages. I'd like to see that account. No, I'm not sure --

Eric Klinenberg:

We know you can, man.

[laughter]

Tom Jacques:

You know, but -- but again, what Manoush has been talking about again and again is bad behavior. And are these one-off examples of, again, like truly bad behavior, people behaving very poorly.

01:13:02

But, you know, when you have millions of people using these dating apps to get together, there's a very deep barrel and you can pull out some really nasty stories from the bottom. But that doesn't mean that the typical experience isn't a good one.

[applause]

John Donovan:

Okay, Eric.

Eric Klinenberg:

Can I just --

John Donovan:

Very quick question -- very quick response.

Eric Klinenberg:

Yeah, just another quick sociological survey. People here who have been online dating, can you applaud, women especially if you've been dating online?

[applause]

When Manoush tells stories about these kinds of experiences and messages, will you clap if they ring a bell?

[applause]

John Donovan:

I'm going to move on to another question. I just want to compliment that question as being very short, very interesting --

[laughter]

-- and actually related to the dating app part of it and being a question. So, that's the model.

Manoush Zomorodi:

Well done, Meredith!

[applause]

Eric Klinenberg:

They're "swiping right" on you all over this room.

01:14:01

John Donovan:

Right down here, yeah. You're the only person -- nearest person. If you could stand up again, please. Thanks.

Female Speaker:

Yeah.

John Donovan:

If you don't mind.

Female Speaker:

Hi, I'm Willa. I'm from New York. I am really curious, given your statements about how dating apps are introduction tools. And I know that as a young single person who has dabbled in the dating app world, sometimes I will see people who I know from real life. And sometimes there are people who I -- who I do like from real life. And then other times there are people who I really don't like from real life, like a childhood bully or someone who I work with, and we don't get along well or, you know -- I'm really curious to hear about what happens to our behavior when we see people who we've already been introduced to when we get on these apps. What happens psychologically? What happens in our --

John Donovan:
That's --

Female Speaker:
-- behavior?

John Donovan:
-- that's a little bit more specific than the topic we're discussing. But I'm kind of really --

Manoush Zomorodi:
Fascinating.

John Donovan:
-- interested to hear the answer.

01:15:00

[laughter]

So, I'm going to -- I would -- normally would say let's pass on it, but what's your take on that?

Manoush Zomorodi:
Oh, I want to do an episode on that, totally. My executive producer is here, so we'll talk after.

[laughter]

John Donovan:
Helen?

Helen Fisher:
And I'd just swipe left, is what I'd do.

[laughter]

[applause]

Female Speaker:
Hi. I'm Amelia. I'm from Colorado. So, I think that one of the themes that I'm picking up on here is that there's this idea that part of romance is maybe like figuring out if another person is interested in you. So, that's maybe the appeal of, like, what you guys were saying, going to a bar -- and like, "Oh, are we looking at each other?"

John Donovan:

Do -- do you buy that? I just want to --

Female Speaker:
[unintelligible] --

Manoush Zomorodi:
[affirmative]

John Donovan:
Good. Okay. You got them. Yeah.

Female Speaker:
So, I guess, like, my question is, how is it less romantic intrinsically to meet with somebody who you already know is attracted to you?

John Donovan:
Because of the app?

Female Speaker:
Yes, yes.

John Donovan:
Okay.

Female Speaker:
Through an app.

01:16:00

Eric Klinenberg:
So, again, I can just say, from doing interviews with people all over the world, that when people connect face to face, most of the time, it's a miss. And it's hard to know who you're going to be attracted to in real life, in part because the pictures that we put up of ourselves don't really tell the real truth about us. I mean, if there's anything -- you know, I do sociology, not advice. But if I could give you one piece of advice, if you're thinking about doing online after tonight, it's -- don't believe what you see and read. Wait until you meet the person, because the truth is, most of the time, you're not getting what you expect.

John Donovan:
Helen?

[applause]

Helen Fisher:

I would just answer the question directly and say that the data show that when you know that somebody is in love with you, it makes you like them more.

John Donovan:

Hm. That seems quite intuitive.

Right down --

[laughter]

-- no, no. Yeah. Yes? If you could stand up, please. Thanks.

Female Speaker:

Hi. I'm Ethel, from New York. I want to know why the con artists from the third world are the most romantic men on dating apps.

01:17:01

[laughter]

[applause]

And I want to know if I can figure out that these men are con artists from the third world because they don't know -- they only know the metric system, so they write down that they're four feet tall.

[applause]

How come these people aren't screened out and gotten rid of?

Male Speaker:

I missed the last --

Male Speaker:

That sounds like a question for --

John Donovan:

Tom Jacques.

Female Speaker:

Why aren't they screened out?

Tom Jacques:

That's a great question.

[laughter]

So, again, like, this is something that I dealt with, you know, every day for the last eight years of my life. And we -- I've actually spent an extremely long period of time, over the last year, really delving into, how can we better deal with spammers and scammers like the ones that you're describing? And you know, I do think that it's a big deal. And I do think that those types of scammers tend to try to prey on the elderly -- because, again, they are a vulnerable class of people that don't have other mechanisms of meeting people.

01:18:07

And so, what we do is we actually pay very close attention to that. We take a look at, you know, where are you signing up from? Are you signing up from some third world country in Africa, claiming to be in the United States? All sorts of things like this. And you know, really, at the end of the day, what you're describing is a very serious problem that we pay a lot of attention to, and we've reduced the number of complaints that we've had by over 90 percent in the last year of things like that. But at the end of the day, like, that's an economic problem; it's not a romantic one.

John Donovan:

I want to let the other side respond to that.

Eric Klinenberg:

Yeah. I just want to raise --

John Donovan:

Eric Klinenberg --

Eric Klinenberg:

-- a flag for me, about the way we're talking about the third world and people from other countries.

[applause]

And to say that, again -- you know, we debated the inter-ethnic marriage thing. But can we say that the way I learned about how rampant discrimination is in online dating is from the OkCupid research site that Christian Rudder maintained, where he documented so thoroughly the penalty you pay for being African-American or from being an Asian man, or from being perceived as third world on these sites?

01:19:13

To think that discrimination disappears because we now have a chance to meet other people -- I think -- is off-base. And just listen to the conversation if you want to be concerned about the persistence of these problems in the world online.

John Donovan:

That was quite a gauntlet.

[applause]

So, if you'd like to respond, either of you.

Helen Fisher:

Yeah. Well, all of our data shows that more and more people -- I mean, in my data of 35,000 people, it was way down the list of what you were looking for in a partner. They really -- 70 percent of singles on these dating apps don't -- would go out with somebody from a different race.

Eric Klinenberg:

But can we geek out for one second here to say that it's not about what [unintelligible]. I'm going to go a little deeper, because as you have said repeatedly, it is not about what we say we're interested on a survey.

01:20:00

It's what we reveal when we act online. And if the data tell us that African-American women get three quarters of the affection and attention of all the other groups online and that an Asian man would have to earn an additional \$247,000 to stand on equal footing with his white counterpart, that's important information we get from looking at people's reveal preferences through their behavior. Take the survey with a grain of salt.

[applause]

Tom Jacques:

Can I respond?

John Donovan:

Yes.

Eric Klinenberg:

Yeah.

John Donovan:

Tom Jacques.

Tom Jacques:

So, I'd just like to point out that Eric is citing us. We're the people talking about this. We recognize that these things are problems. And again, this is the type of thing that I spend every day trying to make better. And guess what? It is getting better. People are more willing and more -- more and more willing over time to reach out to these people. That doesn't mean that discrimination disappears overnight. But because there's more exposure to different people of different backgrounds, that's how we get to know each other and bridge those gaps.

01:21:02

[applause]

John Donvan:

Front row here, what's your name?

Female Speaker:

Tiffany.

John Donvan:

Thanks.

Female Speaker:

So, a dating app clearly is quantity, so there are going to be more people that can connect. But it's about the romance in the quantity that are connecting to your point. There are complications, there are problems. And because there's a huge quantity base, people are not happy --

John Donvan:

Wait, wait. Do you have a question?

Female Speaker:

I do have a question. So, my question is, is, how would you say that there's romance when there's all of these people that are constantly being disappointed because there's so much quantity, and every punch left and right to be brought to someone's house to have sex or this or that, all --

John Donvan:

Okay.

Female Speaker:

-- this stuff that comes in. So how would you say that that's romantic?

John Donvan:

Helen, you want to take that?

Helen Fisher:

Oh, no. You can take it. It's about --

[laughter]

John Donovan:

How can all that nastiness be anything suggestive of romance? And it's basically the same argument your opponents are making.

01:22:00

They're looking at many, many incidents of nasty behavior, and they're saying that's not romantic, therefore they win. But, so what's --

Tom Jacques:

It would be nice if arguments worked that way. So, yeah. I mean, again, like, so your point is that, you know, there's so many options. People are talking to you all over the place, you know, and that's not romantic, right? Well, you know, I'd kind of counter it two ways. One is that, what about the people who don't have any other options, the people who are scared to go out, maybe they're not openly gay, and this is a mechanism where they can use these apps to actually meet people that they don't otherwise have, right? Now, that doesn't mean that your point isn't a valid one, right? Like there's a lot of attention. But, you know, what happens if you go outside to the bar? You're going to meet tons of people anyway. Like one of the main complaints that women have when they go out is that people are hitting on them, giving them unwanted attention, and they don't have, you know, the power or the mechanisms to just make those people go away. Well, guess what?

01:23:00

Dating apps let you just swipe those problems away.

John Donovan:

Here's one from YouTube.

[applause]

This is a question for the -- I'm sorry, Helen. Did you want to --

Helen Fisher:

Oh, I just wanted to -- wondered why you thought the nastiness was just on apps. I mean, all you've got to do is read fiction --

Eric Klinenberg:

I know. John, can -- can we -- are you --

Helen Fisher:
I'm done.

John Donovan:
Oh, I thought you were on a roll, okay.

Eric Klinenberg:
Just so our side can respond to this question which I think is about the kind of general --

John Donovan:
I felt like -- honestly, I felt like she was like making your argument.

Manoush Zomorodi:
Yeah, I thought so, too, like --

John Donovan:
Yeah, yeah. So, I don't think we need to nail it.

[laughter]

Eric Klinenberg:
Well, if Manoush says so, I am definitely going to listen to that.

John Donovan:
So, we have a question from YouTube, and this is for the four teams, so it's your turn. "If the dating apps are killing romance by promoting superficial judgments, for example, swipe left/right based on a picture, how is that different from meeting in real life? We do not generally approach people who are unattractive to us."

Manoush Zomorodi:
Should I --

[laughter]

John Donovan:
Manoush.

Manoush Zomorodi:
All right. Total confession. When I first met my now husband, I just -- like he didn't do anything for me, like at all.

01:24:02

It was a work situation. And then we ended up talking, and then he was really funny. And then he had the weird smell thing, like Meredith was talking about, like he smelled right. And we never would have been matched by a dating site. We argue about religion constantly. But we have two beautiful children, and most of the time we're really into each other.

So --

[laughter]

I just think that there's something to be said that we're talking about an industry that is 2.7 billion dollars a year. And it wants to grow, right? So, it makes sense that it wants you to think like there's amazing people on there and they're gorgeous, and they're just like me -- or they're different, but we're compatible anyway. Look around. One woman told me that her son made a match, and she was so happy. But the irony was that the woman worked in the same building as him. So, if they had just looked up from their phones, maybe they would have seen each other.

01:25:00

[applause]

John Donovan:

I'd like to let the other side respond to that.

Manoush Zomorodi:

[laughs]

Helen Fisher:

[inaudible] --

John Donovan:

Okay.

Tom Jacques:

I'll take a quick response.

John Donovan:

Alright. Go ahead.

Tom Jacques:

Yeah. So, I mean, I actually think that your point right there is a fantastic one for dating apps. These people were in the same building, and they never met until they used a dating app.

[applause]

[laughter]

John Donovan:

I think we have time for one more. And somebody holding up our program -- that's a very good way to get my attention. It worked.

[laughter]

Female Speaker:

Hi. I'm Candace. I think romance, the definition of it has changed over time. I'm sure once it was how many sheep you were willing to offer for somebody's hand in marriage. A few decades ago it was, you know, showing up with flowers. How do you guys define romance now? Because I feel like it's something you haven't actually expressed your view, what romance actually is to you.

01:26:00

It seems like the side against the agenda here is --

John Donovan:

I think the for side has told us what romance is.

Female Speaker:

Yes.

John Donovan:

They said very clearly, it's being swept away and wrapped up. So, you're really asking, what's the definition of romance being used by the against side? I think it's a fair question. So, why don't you take a crack at that, Helen?

Helen Fisher:

I've studied that for years. The first thing that happens when you fall in love is the person takes on what we call special meaning. Everything about them becomes special. The car that they drive is different from every other car in the parking lot. The street they live on -- the music that they like. And you focus on them. Elation when things are going well. Mood swings into horrible despair when things are going poorly. Focusing on them. Elation. Let's see. Possessiveness. Butterflies in the stomach. A dry mouth when you're talking to them. But the three main -- you want to have sex with them. But what you really want them to do -- [laughs] -- is to call, to write, to ask you out, and to tell you that they love you. You want that emotional union. It's even more important than sexual union.

01:27:00

And obsessive thinking. Before we put people into brain scanners, the one most important question that I would ask them is "What percentage of the day and night do you think about this person?" And they would say, "I never stop thinking about her" or "I never" -- that is romantic love. It's a very specific constellation of personality traits. Times change. We bring flowers now. These days, don't -- forget the flowers -- just leave your cell phone in your pocket and you'll do a lot better on a first date.

[laughter]

But anyway, it's very distinct characteristics of romantic love. We know what's happening in the brain. Times have changed. We've got something now which is called culture lag. Our definition of what romance is, is changing faster than our understanding. And what -- and our expectations.

John Donovan:

I can let the other side have one final word, if you'd like, or --

Manoush Zomorodi:

[inaudible] --

John Donovan:

Or do you want to -- just want to say that that was pretty beautiful?

Manoush Zomorodi:

Yeah. No. that was lovely. I'm in love with Helen right now, actually. But, like, my -- I don't think we're disagreeing about that. But I think it comes back to the motion -- which is about how difficult dating apps are making it to get to that point, that you have to deal with all the extremely unromantic difficult behavior.

01:28:07

Whether it's rating people by what they look, or dealing with extremely rude, racist, sexist comments. It's a tough road to you to get to this wonderful thing that you're describing. So, I think -- we all love each other onstage. But I think we disagree about the --

John Donovan:

Well, let's --

Manoush Zomorodi:

-- road that we get to -- there.

John Donovan:

Then let's -- then let me call it. That's the end of Round 2 of this Intelligence Squared U.S. debate, where our motion is --

[applause]

-- Swipe Left: Dating Apps Have Killed Romance. And now we move on to Round 3. Round 3 will be brief closing statements by each debater in turn. Those statements will be two minutes each. Here to begin that round, to make her closing statement in support of the motion, Manoush Zomorodi, host and managing editor of WNYC's "Note to Self."

Manoush Zomorodi:
I stand up, right?

John Donovan:
Yes, you do.

[applause]

Manoush Zomorodi:
On the square.

01:29:00

Okay. So, I just mentioned 2.7 billion dollars that we're talking about with these dating apps. But as you have seen from the headlines, Silicon Valley's utopian belief that tech is always a force for good is being tested. We're seeing it be tested from a consumer perspective, from a civic perspective, from an economic perspective, and tonight, I think from a romantic perspective. We're living in this age of self-experimentation. And I think we have to be able to say, like, no, this isn't working. This is gross a lot of the time. We don't feel good about ourselves. A lot of the emotion that I saw in some of the people standing up to ask questions is very real. Maybe the data doesn't show it, but the stories are extremely important. And Silicon Valley needs to listen more closely to the people that they're peddling their wares to. So, let's let that -- let's let the companies know, apps are killing romance.

01:30:02

We need to see change. Humans can now conveniently order their groceries online. You can, with a tap, order up a car. But you should not be summoning romance through an app. The motion is right. Vote yes to the motion.

[applause]

John Donovan:

Thank you, Manoush Zomorodi. And that motion again, "Swipe Left: Dating Apps Have Killed Romance." Here making her closing statement against the motion, Helen Fisher, biological anthropologist and chief scientific adviser to Match.com.

Helen Fisher:

So, several years ago I was traveling in Tanzania with one of the last remaining hunting and gathering tribes called the Hadza [spelled phonetically]. And through an interpreter, I asked a 12-year-old boy if he had a girlfriend. And he said, "I saw a girl. And when I grow up, I'm going to kill a zebra and give her the tail."

[laughter]

Around the world, people love. They sing for love, they dance for love, they compose songs and stories and ballets and operas and movies about love.

01:31:04

They retell myths and legends about love. They have love charms, love potions, love magic, and love holidays like Valentine's Day. We pine for love, we live for love, we kill for love, and we die for love. In fact, the oldest love letter that I saw in Istanbul was from 4,000 years ago.

It was written in Kunena form on a lump of clay. In those days, people most likely romanced in person. And as I've been up here tonight, I began to wonder whether they once had a debate called "Kunena form is killing romance."

[laughter]

The real thing -- thank you. The real thing that is changing romance is not apps, it's women piling into the job market in cultures around the world. This is the huge social modern trend. In fact, marriage has changed more in the last hundred years than it has in the last 10,000.

01:32:00

But romance has not changed. It's like a bamboo tree of Oriental literature, sways in the breezes of time, but it always springs up again. Romantic love is adaptable, primordial, and unquenchable. So, I hope that Tom and I have made a compelling argument for you tonight. And I will conclude with this: To anybody in this room who's looking for love, and anybody on the airwaves who are listening here tonight who is looking for love, apps cannot, will not, and never will kill romance.

[applause]

John Donovan:

Thank you, Helen Fisher. The motion again, "Swipe Left: Dating Apps Have Killed Romance." Here making his closing statement in support of the motion, Eric Klinenberg, sociologist and co-author of "Modern Romance."

Eric Klinenberg:

I've read the histories of procreation, of evolution. And let me say at the outset, procreation and the reproduction of our species is not romance.

01:33:04

If you read about the history of men and women getting together and think that that is a love poem, I don't know what book you're reading. Like it or not, social life today is rooted in the internet. I know some 11 and 12-year-old kids, too. I have an 11-year-old boy. He's been talking all about Instagram recently and Snapchat. He needs to be on it because if he's not on it, he is missing out on where all the action is. He is not part of the conversation. He has to be there. And when I talk to single people, they tell me the same thing about dating apps. But that doesn't mean that they love it or that they're finding the romance they want. I'm married. My wife is here, and I've spent the last decade of my life writing books about the culture of single people. Bless you, honey.

[laughter]

Imagine explaining that to your spouse. When I started this work, I and many of my male friends said, "Boy, it must be pretty great to be a guy in this world of the -- of the swipe apps, online dating.

01:34:06

It seems so easy to find love and romance. You just click a button or swipe left or right." And when I finished all this research, I thought the opposite. Thank God I have escaped that cesspool of humanity online.

[laughter]

We've heard all about the downsides of digital dating, the ghosting, the pointless messaging with strangers, the racial discrimination, the crass treatment of women, the utter terror of it all. And right now -- right now, one in five people in this country are -- say that they are online during all of their waking hours, essentially. So, as we approach Valentine's Day, as we think about how to heal together, could you please join me in thinking that we would all be better off if we had a little bit less time with our screens, a little bit less time on the apps, and a little bit more time with each other, face to face?

01:35:04

[applause]

Vote for us.

John Donvan:

Thank you, Eric Klinenberg.

[applause]

The motion: Swipe Left: Dating Apps Have Killed Romance. And here with his closing statement against the motion, Tom Jacques, vice president of engineering at OkCupid.

[applause]

Tom Jacques:

So, you've heard a lot of stories today -- you know, very emotional ones. I thought it was time I share one myself. So, I'd like to take a moment to tell a personal story of how dating apps have affected me. Despite coming up here today, I'm actually a pretty shy guy. I'm not the kind of person who just walks up to someone at a bar and says, "Hello." And when I graduated college and was moving to New York City to work at OkCupid, I didn't know anybody. I really didn't have many friends. And I didn't know what places to go. But I did have a dating app.

01:36:00

And I got to see firsthand how it worked, and you know, how much the people who worked on it cared about how it worked. And so, I made a profile and started using it. And I realized I wasn't alone. Thousands of other people in New York my age, were looking for someone too. And then, when I was busy trying to find somebody, that someone found me. She messaged me, and we ended up talking and chatting for hours. And the more that I knew about her, the more I wanted to know. And after talking for a while, we finally met. And the more time that we spent together, the more precious it became. Eventually, I realized that not only did I want to spend the rest of my life with this person -- that I didn't want to spend a moment without her. Her name is Natasha, and she's the love of my life. She's actually standing -- standing --

[laughter]

[applause]

-- in the audience tonight. Stories like mine are the reason that I came here to debate tonight.

01:37:01

If you vote yes on the motion, you're saying that you believe the world will be a better place without dating apps and that it would have been better if couples like my wife and I had never had the opportunity to meet.

[laughter]

[applause]

Saying dating apps killed romance is saying that other people looking for love should be denied that same opportunity.

[laughter]

The reason that I do what I do for a living is because I think everyone should have that opportunity. And because of that, I urge you to vote no on the motion.

[applause]

John Donvan:

Thank you, Tom Jacques. And that concludes Round 3 of this Intelligence Squared U.S. debate, where the motion is, "Swipe left: Dating Apps Have Killed Romance." I want to say a couple things. One is this was a little bit of a change of pace, this topic for us. And I'm really, really glad that we did it for a couple of reasons.

01:38:00

We brought in new audience to learn about who we are, but we also demonstrated that, you know, it's -- there were some serious aspects to this conversation. We went down some serious paths. And yet, throughout that, despite disagreement, the ability of both sides to remain -- in the process of this event itself -- civil and decent, and informative, and fact-based, and listening to the other side all the way through is the goal we set for Intelligence Squared, especially in these times that we're living in. So, I want to congratulate all four of you for what you did.

[applause]

I also just want to say this to the -- to the other shy guy on the stage. For you to -- if you -- if you said that you're a shy person and you got up and got through this with the skill and the aplomb that you did, Tom, you're great at this, so --

Manoush Zomorodi:

Yeah, totally!

[applause]

John Donovan:

As we're coming up to Valentine's Day, this is not competitive this point.

Manoush Zomorodi:

Oh.

John Donovan:

I just want to sort of hear -- well, if you want to compete, you can.

01:39:00

But this -- this -- this institution of Valentine's Day, is it itself good for romance? And I'll start -- yeah. What does the audience think about that?

Crowd:

No.

John Donovan:

That's a "no" from the audience? Anybody -- by applause, anybody think Valentine's Day is good for romance?

[applause]

And on the other side of the coin?

[applause]

Manoush, I'll start with you. What is your take on Valentine's Day?

Manoush Zomorodi:

I think it's -- what could -- if one were to question its consumerist standpoint, I would say that Valentine's Day is a bit of a sham. But, you know what's really romantic? My husband could not be here tonight because he's home with our kids because he had to relieve my mother from babysitting. And like, he really wanted to come, but he was like -- like that's romantic to me. And that's just today.

[applause]

John Donovan:

Uh-huh. And the problem with Valentine's Day is?

01:40:00

Manoush Zomorodi:

It's just like, oh, one more thing on my to-do list, like packing the lunches, getting the kids there, figuring out what time they're getting picked up. Now I'm supposed to like, do something-- I don't know. No. I have enough going on in my life. I don't need another holiday.

John Donovan:

How about you, Tom? Tom Jacques.

Tom Jacques:

I'm starting to think maybe Manoush just isn't a very romantic person.

[laughter]

John Donovan:

Oh. Oh.

Manoush Zomorodi:

So sad.

Tom Jacques:

I -- I actually think that Valentine's Day --

Manoush Zomorodi:

Pragmatic romance.

Tom Jacques:

I actually think that it's kind of nice to have a day to set aside to spend with the person that you love.

Manoush Zomorodi:

You don't have kids, man. Like --

[laughter]

John Donovan:

Helen, how about you?

Helen Fisher:

I like getting valentines. But anyway, I'm an anthropologist so I'm really not in the "should" business of whether it's good or bad. But I'm very interested in it. It's one of these things -- it's one of those times that marks who you are. If you've got a good person in your life, then you can really celebrate it. And if you don't, it's a real wake-up call to get onto an app.

01:41:00

Paid [unintelligible], and --

[laughter]

-- and find the right one.

John Donovan:

Oh. NPR also doesn't like commercials, so.

Manoush Zomorodi:

Oh!

John Donovan:

Eric?

Eric Klinenberg:

I'm with Manoush. I think there's like a Venn diagram somewhere and like the people who are really into online dating are also really into Valentine's Day, and then there's these like hopeless, "Every day is romantic in my family."

Manoush Zomorodi:

Yeah.

Eric Klinenberg:

-- in real life. Well, so I also -- I listen to Manoush, and I also looked at my wife who's sitting in the second row, my wife whom I met face to face the old-fashioned way. And I know you're against that. But -- but I just -- I just saw that kind of wave of nausea hit her when they started talking about Valentine's Day. And I felt vindicated, honey, and free to say, we might not go on a Valentine's date this year, but -- but I love you, and we'll have romantic nights another time, when we're not being forced to.

John Donovan:

And I reiterate that Intelligence Squared -- Intellidating can be a very hot evening, so.

01:42:01

[laughter]

Manoush Zomorodi:

I buy that.

John Donovan:

So, we want to see more of you back here with your significant others. I want to tell you that Intelligence Squared -- for those of you -- I know we have a lot of new audience tonight. I want to share with you a little bit about who we are. We are a nonprofit organization. We do these debates -- essentially, it's a philanthropic activity. We create them, and then we put them out into the world through all of the apps that I have mentioned, through all the channels that I've mentioned -- on Newsy and on Public Radio, and through apps that you can get at the Google Store, and the Apple Store -- and on Roku. So, we're kind of everywhere. But the really great thing is that a lot of schools use us -- and I'm talking about schools from the college level down to elementary school. They use us to teach, to talk about civil discourse, to present competing ideas. And we're very, very proud of that. And we're very pleased to have so many people in this audience tonight who bought tickets. But I want to let you know that ticket price doesn't come close to covering the cost of what we do.

01:43:00

So, we ask for and appreciate enormously support from anybody who can give it. And I want to let you know, if -- everybody's got phones in their hands. We know that tonight. You can support us by texting a donation -- or the process to start a donation if you text the word "DEBATE" to 797979. That will give you a link to donate online, and any amount helps that. And I really mean it -- any amount helps, because that will let us keep doing more and more of these. I am now going to announce the winner based on the swing. The way that we determine who our winner is, is we look at the difference between the first and the second votes. It's not the absolute number, it's the number that has gone up the most -- the team that has pulled in the most votes either from the "Undecided" or from their opponents. Here it comes. The basic result was that the for side -- the side arguing for the motion went down 9 percentage points. The side arguing against the motion went up 29 percentage points.

[applause]

That means the team arguing against the motion on -- are our winners. Congratulations to them.

01:44:00

Thank you from me, John Donovan, and Intelligence Squared U.S. We'll see you next time.

[end of transcript]