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The 100 Most Pointless Arguments in the World

Written by

Alexander Armstrong and Richard Osman

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The 100 Most Pointless Arguments in the World . . . Solved

Alexander Armstrong and Richard Osman



CORONET

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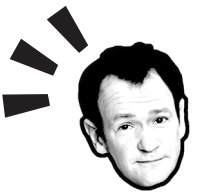
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To my amazing Mum, Brenda Osman,
who taught me how to argue in the first place.



To my parents, Angus and Virginia Armstrong,
with apologies for the many pointless arguments
I have waged over the years.

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100 INTRODUCTION

How much time do you *waste* having arguments? (Does God exist? Does your husband *really* have man-flu? Which one is Ant?) An hour a day? Two hours a day? You are probably now arguing with somebody about how long you spend arguing every day. So, in this book we're going to take the 100 most pointless arguments of all time, and we're going to solve *every single one of them*, once and for all. Are ghosts real? Which way around should the toilet roll hang? You're about to find out.

Here's the basic idea. Next time any pointless argument crops up at home, at work, at school or, more unusually, in a hot-air balloon, simply take out this book, turn to the relevant chapter, point to the definitive answer and move on. Think of the time you'll save. Either one or two hours a day.

You'll also find lots of fiendish play-along *Pointless* quizzes to annoy all the family.

In fact I think it's safe to say that . . .


Hi, Richard!


Oh. Xander, hi. You're back early.


Squash was cancelled – John's pulled his hamstring. What are you doing?


Me? Nothing. Just some admin.


It's just that it looks like you might be writing the introduction to our new book?


I'm not! I'm . . . Well, yes, I'm making notes about the introduction.


I thought you said I could write it this year?


You know when the deadline is, yes?


No – soonish?


Four weeks ago.


Ah . . . That's why we're getting all those emails?


Yes.



And why that woman from the publisher who was so nice at the first meeting is now outside my house with a gun?



Charlotte, yes.



Well, why don't I write it now?



Oh, man, that would be a great idea. But I've sort of done it already is the thing.



Have you mentioned that we're solving the 100 most pointless arguments in the world?



Yep.



And that there will be lots of quizzes from the show for people to play against their families?



Yep, covered it.



And that we're solving lots of viewers' arguments too?



Well, no, I hadn't—



Ooh, and have you said how much we love making the show, and writing the book?


No, but I was going—


Have you said there'll be lots of behind-the-scenes gossip about the show?


Not yet, but—


Like that time you smuggled those two Guatamalan w—


Hey, here's an idea! Why don't we write the introduction together?


Perfect!


Shall we begin?


Well, we've sort of done it, haven't we?


I suppose so. We could say thank you to everyone for watching.


Ooh, yes, that's good. Say that.


Anything else you want to add?


I would like to add that I have lost my keys.



OK. That doesn't need to be in the introduction, though, does it?



No, you're quite right.



So shall we just solve another ninety-nine arguments?



I think we should. Before Charlotte reloads.



99 WHOSE TURN IS IT TO TAKE THE BINS OUT?

This is the perfect place to start the book, as 'Whose turn is it to take the bins out?' opens the single most common argument in Britain today.*

At first it seems like a perfectly innocent query, but we all know better than that, don't we?

When the words 'Whose turn is it to take the bins out?' enter any conversation, your brain instantly issues an 'Amber Level Alert', which, as we all know, signifies 'Deadly Threat Imminent'.

When you hear 'Whose turn is it to take the bins out?' from

* A closely related argument is 'Whose turn is it to chase after the bin lorry because you hadn't realised today was bin day until you heard the lorry trundling by, thanks to forgetting there was a bank holiday?'

your wife, you know the question you're actually hearing is: 'Remind me again why I married you?' And who, quite honestly, still has a convincing answer to that one?

When you hear 'Whose turn is it to take the bins out?' from your husband, however, you know the question you're actually hearing is slightly more complicated. What you are hearing is this:

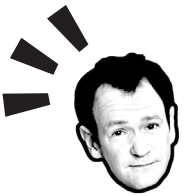
> 'Look, we both know I keep a colour-coded chart outlining whose turn it is to take the bins out. I admit I do this largely because this is the only household task I regularly share with you. Though I do sometimes do the drying up, remember? But that aside, the fact I'm raising it can mean only one thing. I know for a fact that it's your turn and for once I've decided to make an issue of it. Why am I making it an issue today? Who knows? Let's assume my male ego has been damaged in some way. Maybe I can't actually fit into those trousers you told me to try on before I bought them, but which I didn't bother to. Either way, I am now questioning my very role as a man, and resenting the stereotypes that have forced me to live my life as a bumbling male cliché, which, on this particular occasion, is being played out in the form of you expecting me, actually quite reasonably, to put the bins out. But is this all I am? This hopeless but dependable fool? That is what my life has come

to? I could have been a spy, or a motorbike stunt rider. Probably still could if I put my mind to it. I'm only in my forties, for goodness' sake. That's it! That's it! Tomorrow I'm going to start going to the gym again. I bet I could do a triathlon this summer. That'll show everyone. Now, wait, hold on, what was I talking about again?'

I'm going to assume that nobody wants to have either of the discussions above. Wouldn't it be simpler just to take the bins out yourself, then settle in for an evening of watching *The Great British Bake Off*? Maybe Dave could even show you those trousers he bought earlier.

Therefore, the answer to the argument 'Whose turn is it to take the bins out?' should always be . . .

I THINK IT'S MY TURN.



98

SHOULD WE DO A NUDE CALENDAR THIS YEAR?

It's a big question. The sort of question that has Harvard Business School graduates earnestly scratching their heads and groins. Would Woolworths still be a going concern if their board of directors had done a nude calendar? If Lehman Brothers had only taken the care to produce twelve tastefully lit tableaux of unclothed senior partners in a combination of wry and witty scenarios, might the crash have been averted? These, as I say, are questions for academics of a subsequent generation. What you want to know is, 'Should *you* do a nude calendar?'

Assuming you're a small business or charity (and not, say, a care home or a backbench committee) and you've got at least twelve people willing to model, then there's a strong argument that says, 'Yes, you should.'* It's not going to cost you

* Obviously if it's just going to be one person featuring throughout

very much to put together (Dave the printer told Yvonne at the Christmas party that he would do her a nude calendar for *nothing*). And there you go: you've got twelve families geared up to buy at least one calendar each. Again, it should ideally be done to raise money rather than simply 'awareness' because – in any sense of the phrase – no one's buying that.

The trick with this, though, is to be original, and this is where the arguments begin to stack up against you (much like the cream buns did against Celia Imrie in 'November') because this is an idea that has been done a couple of times before. Below I outline some original directions to consider.

JANUARY

Colin from HR running nude across the pitch at Murrayfield surrounded by five members of the Lothian & Borders Police. Were it not for a carefully placed police helmet Col would be demonstrating *his* devastating tackle.**

MARCH

Karen and Lorraine from Reception and Becki who used to

.....

then it looks less 'everyone in it for a lark' and more 'someone seriously needs to have a word with Sandra'.

** Mind you, Sergeant McLintock has no right there to be attempting an Up and Under.

work in Simon Anderson's office caught on CCTV at 1.56 a.m. on Saturday, 2 March 2013, having a wee at the cashpoint next to the Lakeland in Market Street.

JUNE

James from Development and an unidentified brunette photographed nude in club class on a flight to Houston. Mid-flight is no time for the undercarriage to come out! Only a few strategically placed horrified onlookers and cabin crew protecting their modesty!***

SEPTEMBER

A nude of Tahir from PR and Marketing handcuffed to a lamppost outside O'Donoghue's bar in Dublin. Is that a lamppost, Taz? Or are you just . . . Actually, yes, it is a lamppost. And, no, you're not pleased to see me, not with a camera. No, not at all.

NOVEMBER

Trudi from Recruitment and her husband tastefully shot through the window of their VW Passat TDI at the Forest Burn layby. Eagle-eyed calendar buyers will also see the

*** Amid all the turbulence they should, if nothing else, be wearing their seatbelts.

reflection of Jason Macgillivray, our CEO – not such a bored member on this occasion, Jason!

Should you do a nude calendar this year? Of course you should. Will it make money? It doesn't matter. Even if it's a heinous embarrassment to one and all, your 'Not Really Nude' nude calendar will be a salutary experience, and who knows? Maybe it will speed the day when this terrible craze for plagiaristic exhibitionism is a thing of the distant past.