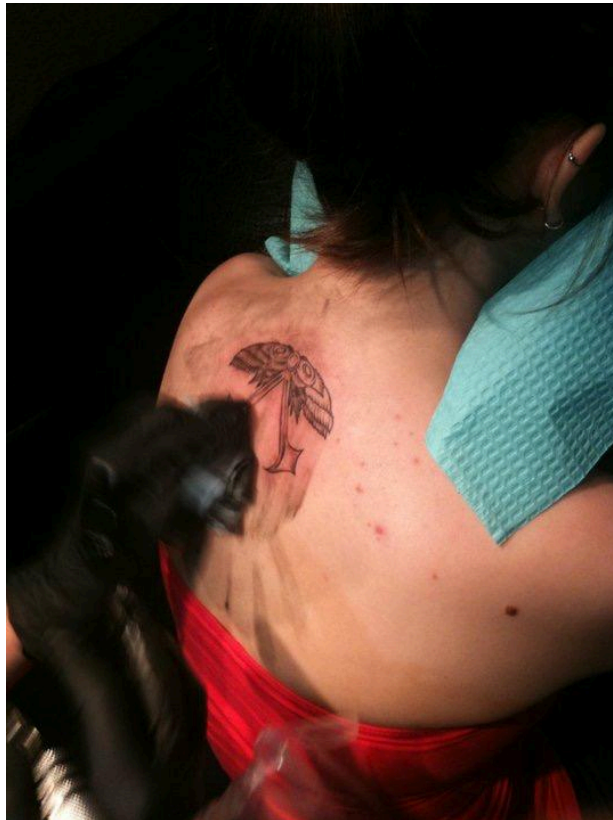


Assassin's Creed was [my favorite video game series](#). For the first game, I was so excited about it that I left college in the middle of the day to go pick up my preorder, planning to go back to class. I brought the game home and was planning on playing an hour of it then going back to class, but I couldn't pull myself away for the rest of the day. Assassin's Creed II inspired me to study Italian for two years and apply for a study abroad program where I'd spend three months in Florence, Rome, and Venice. I got a tattoo on my upper back of the DaVinci version of the Assassin's Creed symbol to remind me of how much the series had inspired me to learn and travel. I only lost interest when I got to Assassin's Creed III - I encountered a bug that irritated me enough to dissuade me from playing again. I didn't pick up the others after that.

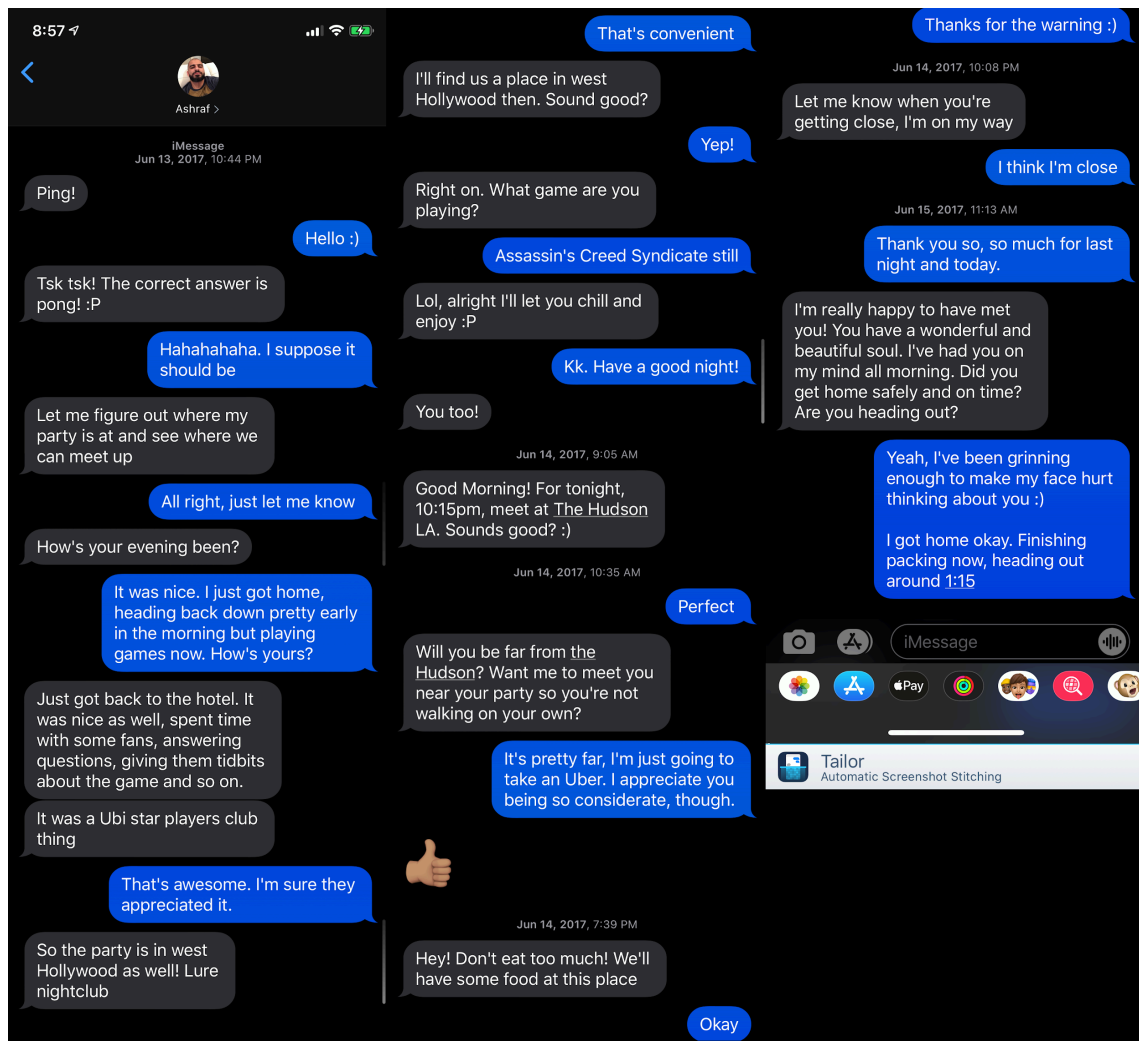


I met Ash on the Tuesday of E3 2017. I was in the Ubisoft booth with one of my friends, watching people play the Assassin's Creed Origins demo because we were too impatient to wait in line. I had a tank top on, so my Assassin's Creed tattoo was visible. Ash was in the area and sort of caught my eye, then approached me and introduced himself. I had no idea who he was before then - I hadn't played Assassin's Creed IV, and most of the devs that I knew of were related to JRPGs, since that's my genre of choice. Ash said that he was the game director for Origins, and had been for Assassin's Creed IV. We talked about games a bit, then he asked for my number so we could keep talking. He gave me his business card, then my friend and I left because it was the end of the day for the show floor.

Ash texted me that evening and we made plans to go to dinner the following night, after E3 and the E3 parties we already planned on going to. We met around 10 at The Hudson, which

is a cool little restaurant in West Hollywood with a tree growing through it. I didn't think this was a date, I should say. I wasn't attracted to him physically and thought this was more of an opportunity to network with someone who was working on one of my favorite series. I've gone to 10 E3s and have always felt like outings were for networking - every lunch, dinner, and party I've been to has been with platonic friends or just to learn more about the work of others, or to learn about how they got where they are.

I only realized it was a date when he touched my arm in a flirtatious way; his hand lingered just a second too long. Once I realized it was a date, I felt ridiculous for wearing a Filthy Casual tank top and leggings. You can see the difference in conversation style before/after the date here (it was originally all stitched with Tailor but it ended up looking weird with formatting):



Through the dinner, he was very charming and said that his sister was a psychologist and had a mind exercise he wanted to try. In this exercise, I had to close my eyes (at dinner... in public... as the waiter was bringing our food...) and imagine that I was walking on a pathway, seeing a bear, walking through a field, and walking through a forest to a building. I don't

remember all the details of it, but I remember that my “results” were more calm than his. He said that the way we imagined our forests represented our futures. Mine was clear, crisp, and dewy; his was foggy. He referred to his “foggy forest” throughout the rest of our conversations when suggesting he didn’t know what the future held, or that he couldn’t make any plans.

I ate like a bird, so I had a lot of leftovers. Ash always made sure we brought any leftovers we had to homeless people, so we left them next to someone we found sleeping behind a sort of gate - 7985 Santa Monica Blvd. We walked from The Hudson up to La Brea and Santa Monica Blvd, then decided to get an Uber to his hotel. He made sure I was sober (I had had two vodka sodas), asked many times if I was sober enough to make decisions, etc. He was very careful about me being sober enough to decide whether or not I wanted to go with him. I was sober enough, I went with him, we had sex, I stayed the night at his hotel. It was consensual. He did not assault me. I have never accused him of assaulting me. The next day, I went home.

As a side note - before Ash and I met, for a month or so, I had been sort of casually dating someone who’s been a good friend of mine for over a decade now. We had plans to go to EDC together, in Las Vegas, before any of this happened. I didn’t think that Ash and I were exclusive since he was a guy I had met two days prior and we hadn’t discussed anything about being in a relationship at that point. He lived in Montreal. It’s also insane to expect someone to be loyal to you two days after meeting you.

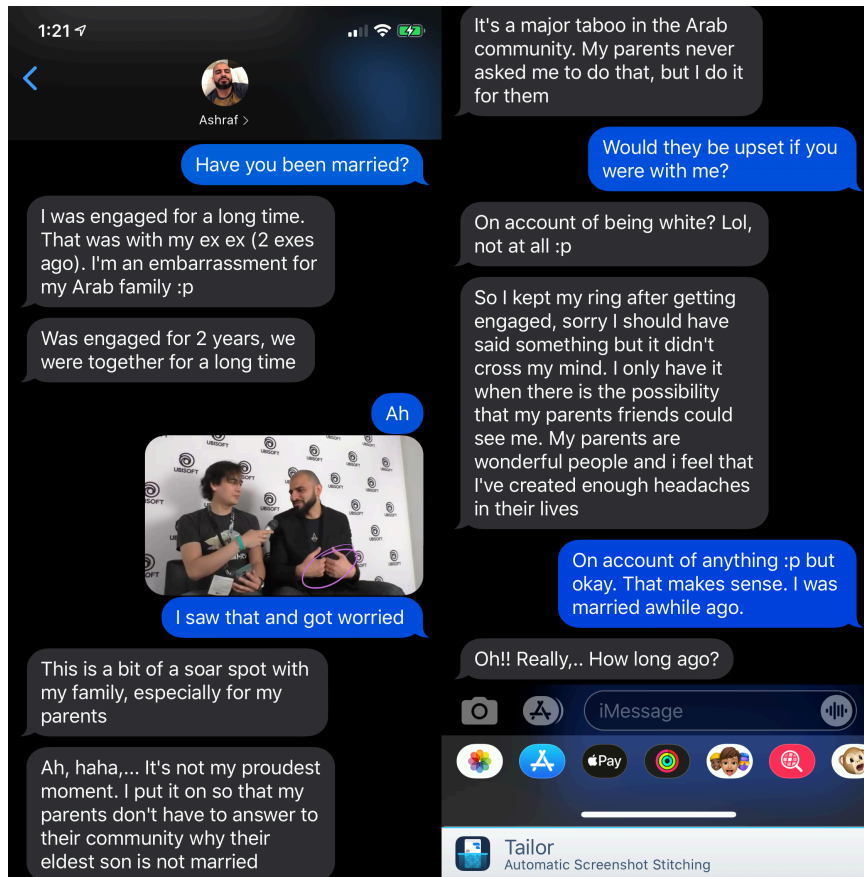
So, I went to EDC with the guy I had originally been dating, Dave. We slept together that weekend, but I said I was uncomfortable with it a couple days in (because Ash was being so heavy with romantic talk, etc. so I thought we might become something) and my friend respected that, which I’m extremely grateful for. Dave has also let me know that I can include the fact that he “tried to warn me like 40 times”. He did. So did Justin, the friend that I was with when I met Ash.

Ash asked if I had “hooked up with anyone” at EDC, so I explained the situation honestly to him. He was hurt that I hadn’t been loyal to him and held this against me for the rest of the time that we were speaking. Keep in mind that for this entire time, he was married with kids.



So, that was the first week of “us,” and while he said there was “no judgment or need of explanation,” he held it against me.

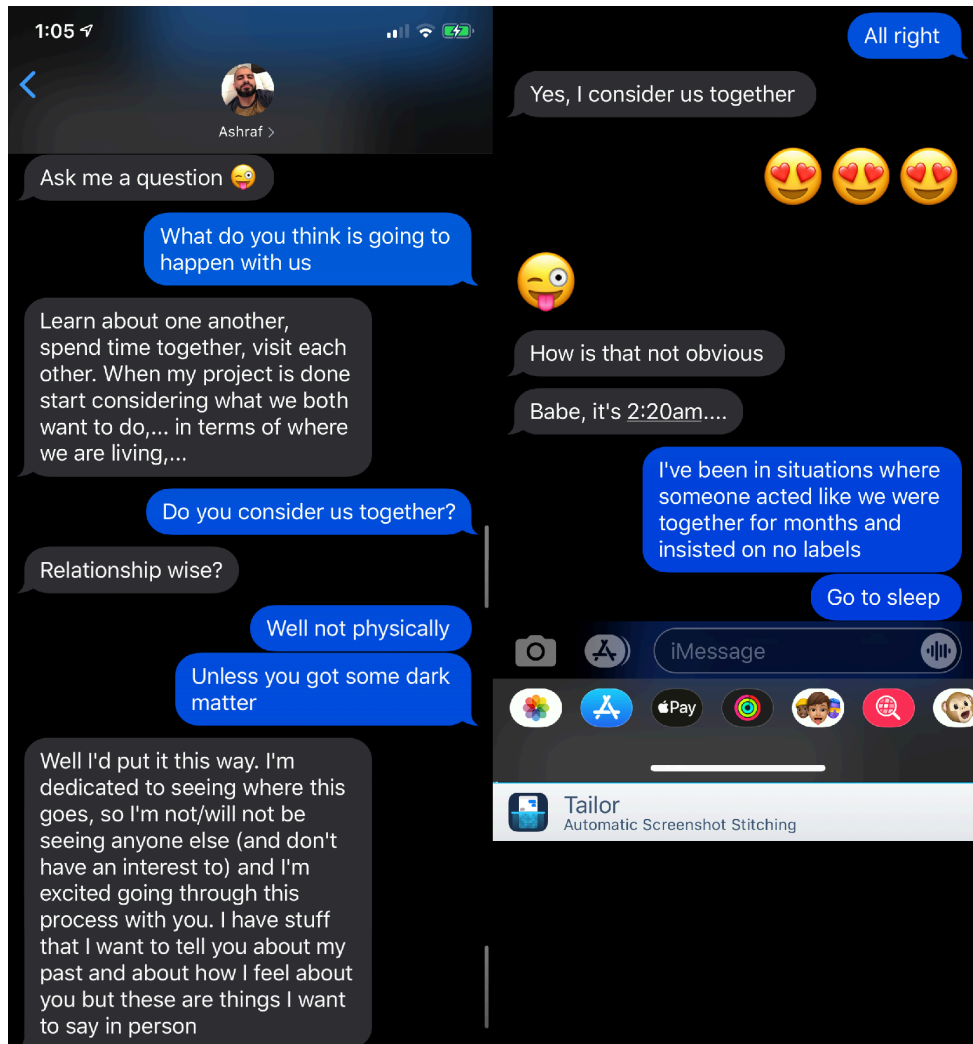
On June 20, 2017, I asked him if he had ever been married, which is in the tweet that started all of this. I had been talking to my cousin about it, because wearing a wedding band seemed like a pretty big red flag.



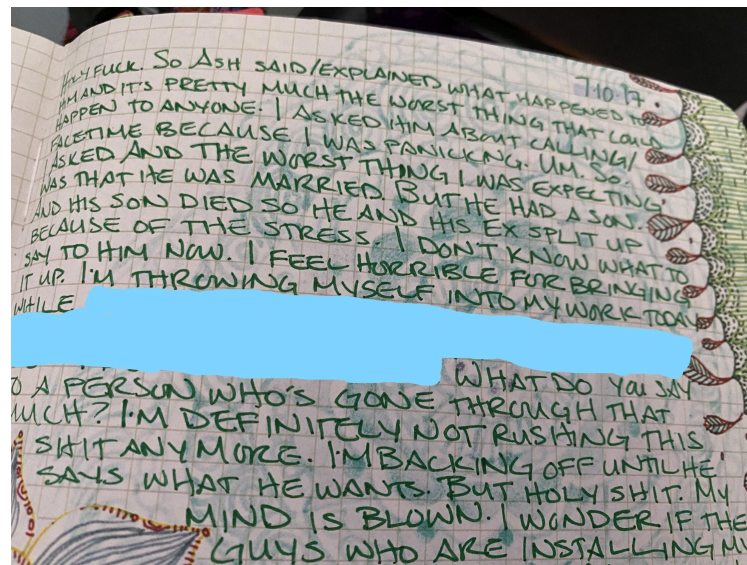
This didn't entirely convince me, but I didn't want to be Islamophobic or otherwise insensitive to his culture, so I *tried* not to push it too much. I failed in this regard. I pushed it a lot. He wouldn't add me to facebook, but he was tagged in pictures with his sisters. I looked at their profiles. I tried to look at the Montreal marriage records. I tried to find her, but couldn't.

While I was at a Fourth of July party in 2017, he told me that he considers us together and that he was being loyal to me. He also mentioned living in the same place, etc. after Assassin's Creed Origins was released.

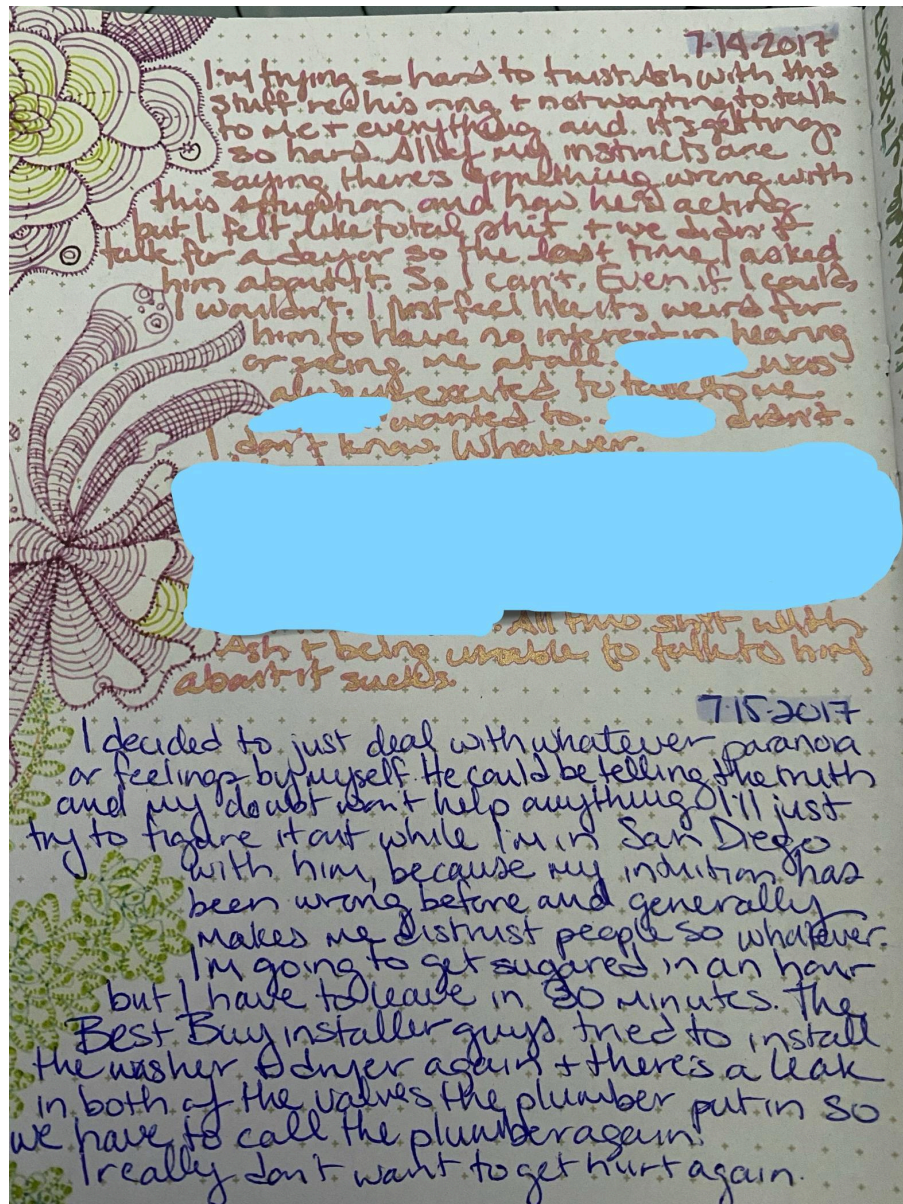




Throughout all this, though, there were things nagging at me. Like that ring. I couldn't get it out of my mind and kept pushing him, asking about it, asking about various things that seemed off or like red flags. I kept asking about it and kept thinking I could just *stop* worrying, but I couldn't. On July 10th, he told me about his son. He would use his openness and "honesty" about this event to try to force me to trust him for the rest of the time we were communicating. After all, if he had trusted me with this, I should transactionally trust him on everything else! I blocked out some stuff from work here, but here's an entry from that day:

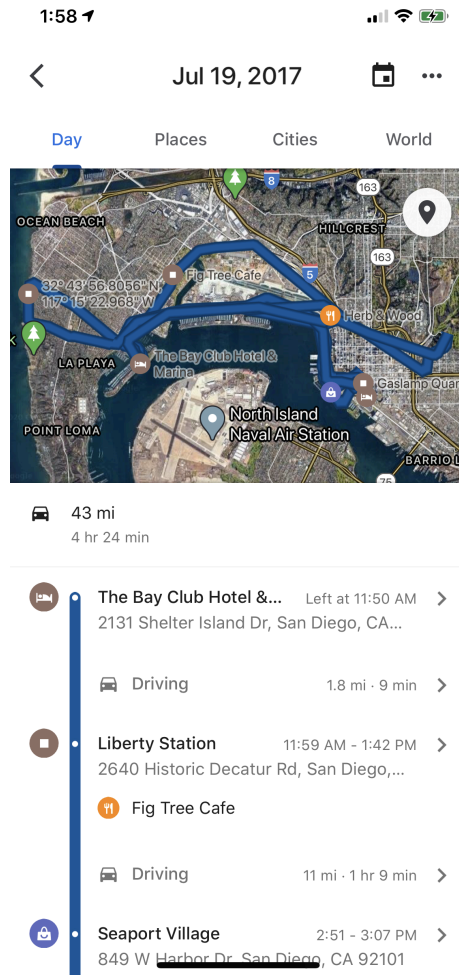


He also made me distrust myself. I've never been a very trusting person and I had been working on becoming more trusting. Here's a journal entry from that time - some names have been blocked out and again, some stuff that's about work has been blocked out:



So. We went to San Diego together on July 18th (I flew in from Chicago, where I had been for work, then drove to San Diego to meet him). We spent July 19th together aside from him doing an interview at the Hilton in the Gaslamp Quarter, then I dropped him off at the airport on July 20th and drove home.



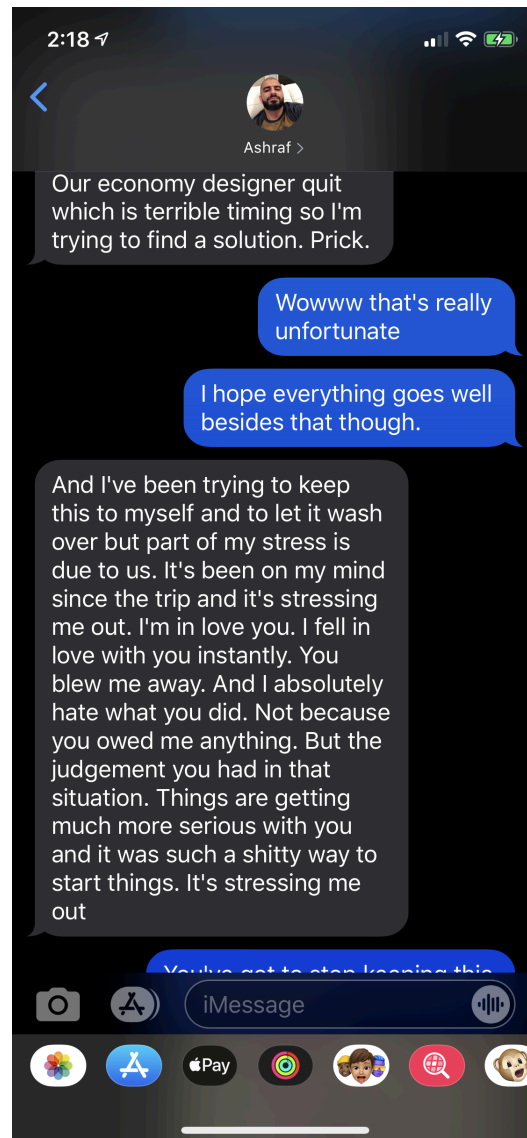


He told me he was falling for me while we were in San Diego together, and he mentioned that he was considering moving to San Diego and that he could work for Rockstar or something. We looked at [gamedevmap](#) together and it seemed like he was strongly considering moving down here to be closer to his sister and me.

... though we only had a couple of days together. I can't believe he said he's falling for me. Mostly because WTF did I do to get a guy like this to even speak to me (suddenly, my Assassin's Creed tattoo is the best decision I've ever made) much less like me... or take me out and spoil me... or take me to enjoy a sunset on sunset cliffs even though I was stupid and cut my leg while shaving. He's so romantic and so kind and feels stuff like I do. I want so many things with him. He asked me what I want — I told him I want a lot, but I won't say what because it's safer not to. Which is true. If I tell him I want

Side note: I still have nightmares about shaving my leg and cutting it as badly as I did that day. It was BAD.

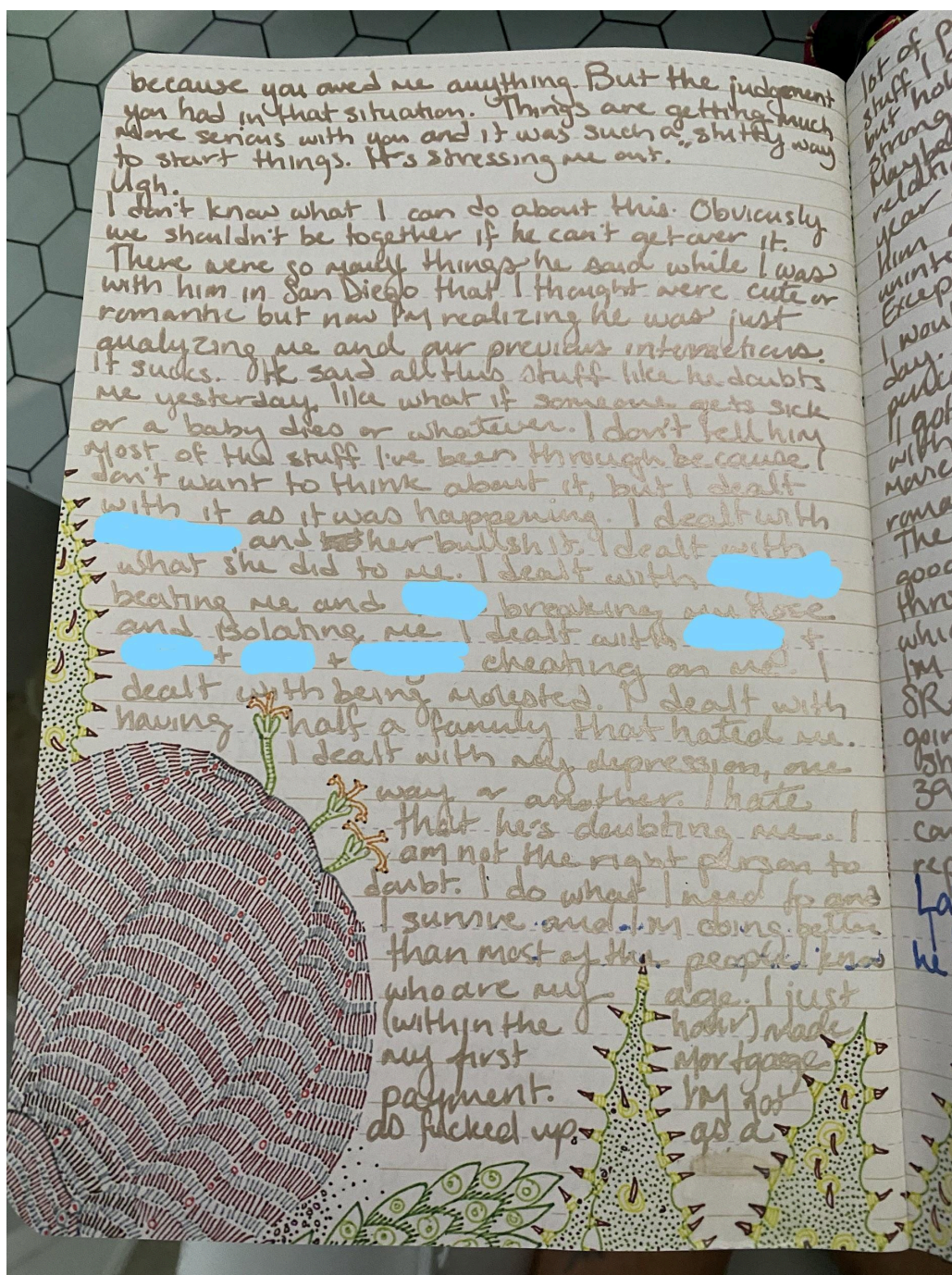
On July 25, he told me he loved me for the first time, then shortly after ended things with me due to my poor judgment with not being loyal to him immediately. There was quite a bit of arguing back and forth - me not understanding how he could have expected loyalty without us talking about it, him saying that my poor judgment in that situation could be applied to other parts of life.



Also relevant information that should be put in here: I have been sexually assaulted, beaten, and cheated on in previous relationships. This is relevant. We had a phone call where he ended up saying that my poor judgment was why I had been raped, why I had been cheated on, etc. He was worried that I wouldn't be able to deal with horrible, traumatic situations like



losing a child, because I hadn't been loyal to him the first few days I knew him. Everything went back to him having a dead son and having all this baggage from that.

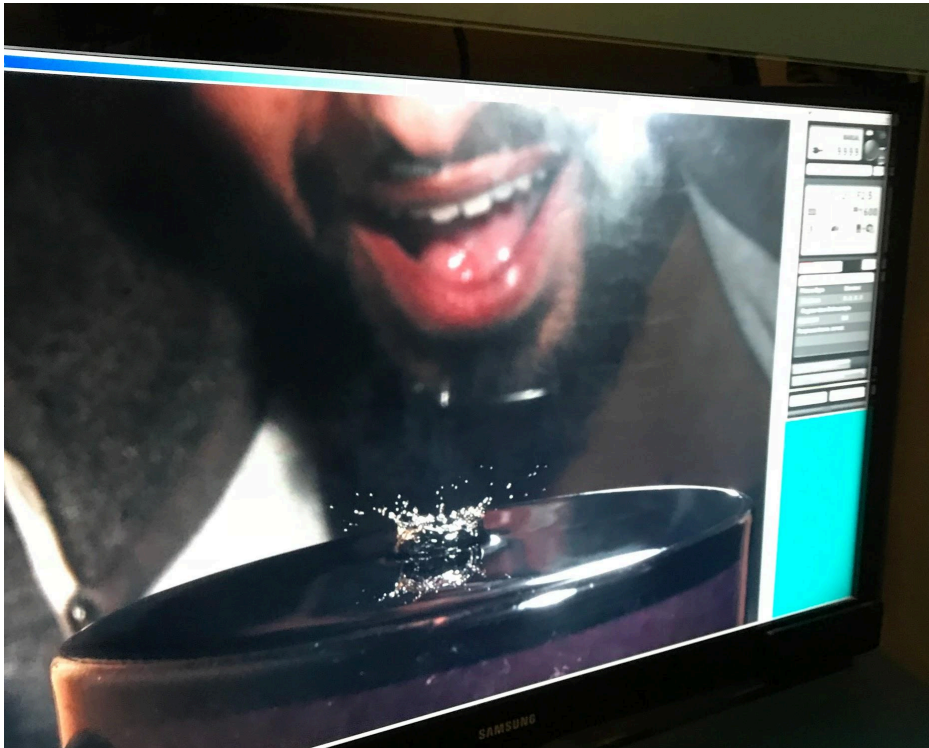


I wanted to keep him in my life regardless, so I suggested that we just keep seeing each other anyway. I would be loyal to him and try to prove that he could trust me and that I had good judgment. Hindsight bias shows that being loyal to/trying to trust him when I had so many red flags was bad judgment in itself.

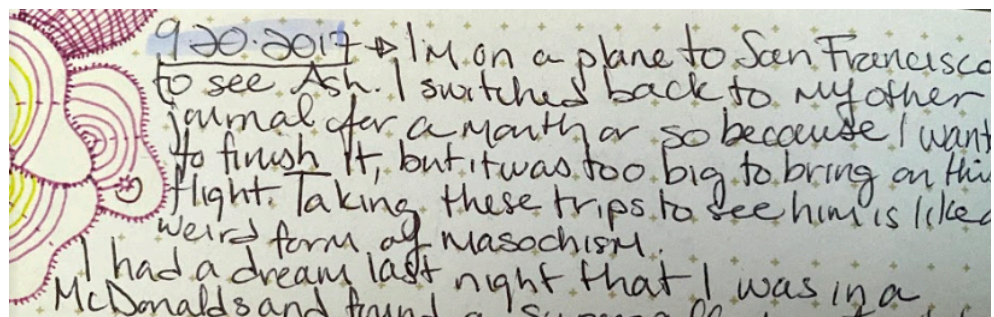


So, I waited a little. We saw each other again a few more times: at PAX 2017, in San Francisco from September 20-22, at Twitchcon 2017 (San Diego again), and then we didn't talk until January. Each time we saw each other, I felt like there was a chance we'd get back together because he was so affectionate, loving, and kind when we were together. We'd go to museums and dinners and he'd talk about how much he valued me, so it felt like much more than just a FWB situation. Either way, we were having sex whenever we saw each other at these events.

Aaaand proof, of course. I don't have any appropriate photos from PAX/Twitchcon, but I took this at the Exploratorium in San Francisco when we went:

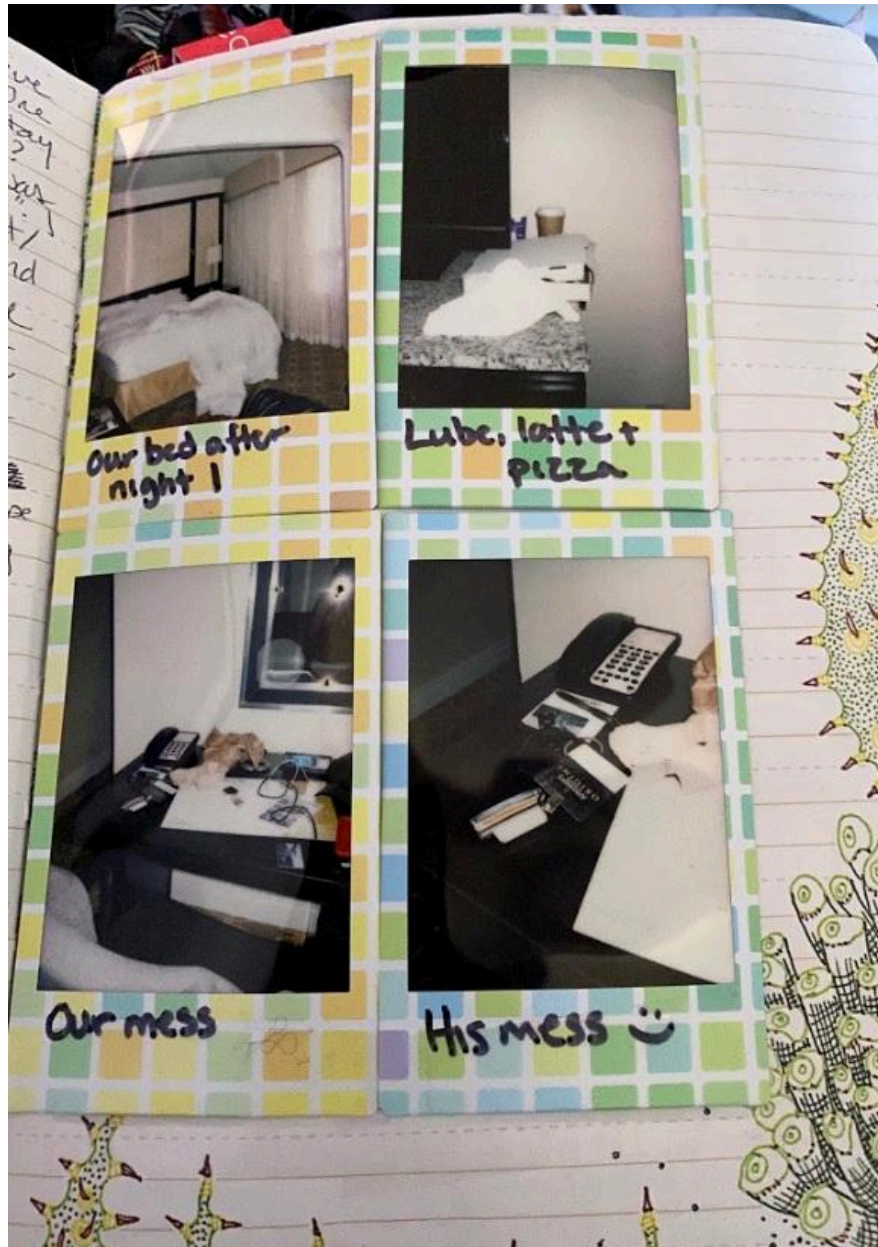


And a journal entry from that trip, where I knew it was probably hopeless but couldn't say no to him:



9.20.2017 → I'm on a plane to San Francisco to see Ash. I switched back to my other journal for a month or so because I want to finish it, but it was too big to bring on this flight. Taking these trips to see him is like weird form of masochism. I had a dream last night that I was in a McDonald's and found a Super Bowl.

And... polaroids. I got to the point where I didn't know what was real because he'd behave one way and say things that contradicted his behavior, so I started taking polaroids so I'd know they were unedited and in my journal with the entries. I had zero trust left in myself (or anything, I just wanted to trust him) at this point.

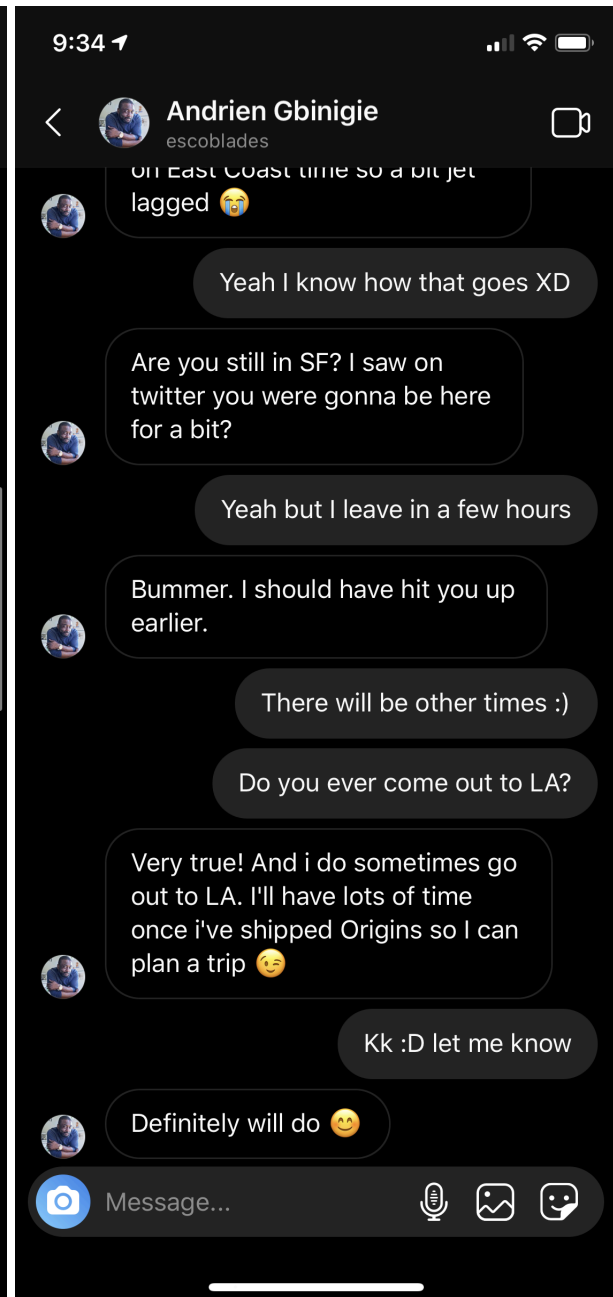


And... I got dressed for us to go out to dinner while he was at the Assassin's Creed Origins event. So here's me in a cute purple dress with his clothes hanging behind me. Very comfortable. I highly recommend Black Milk.

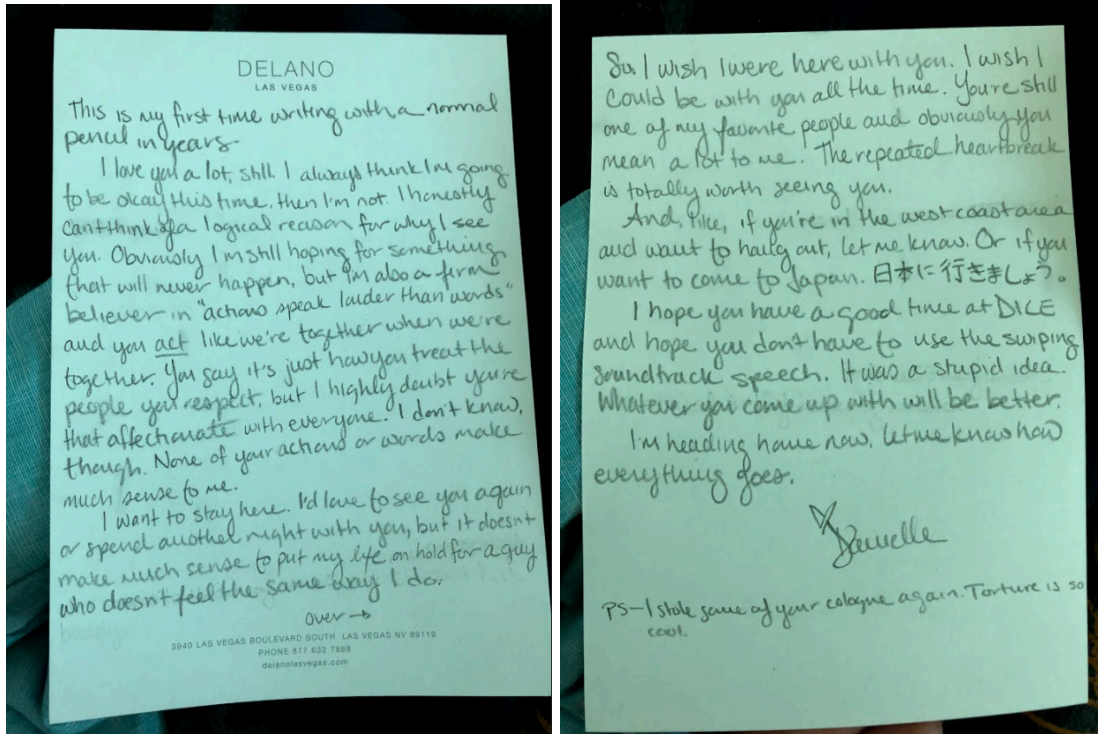




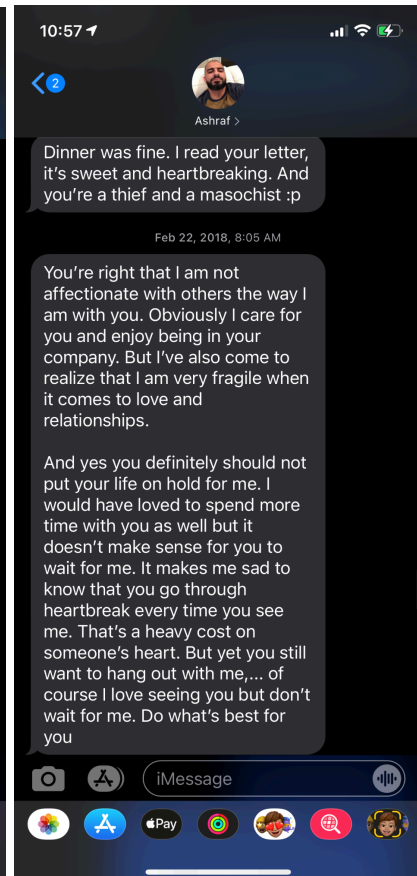
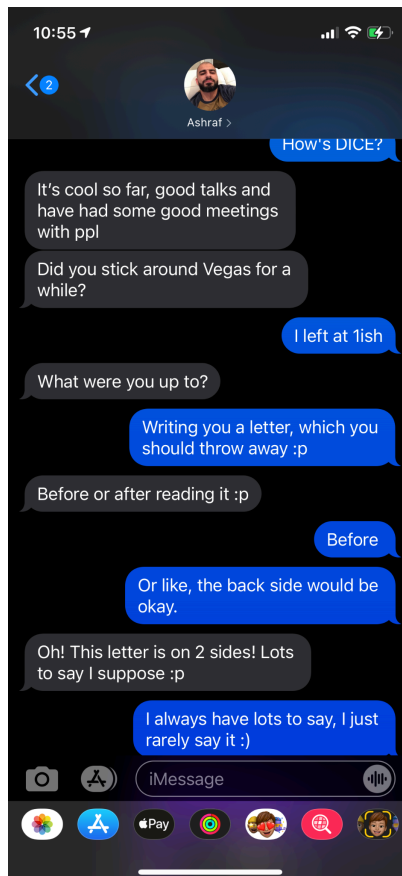
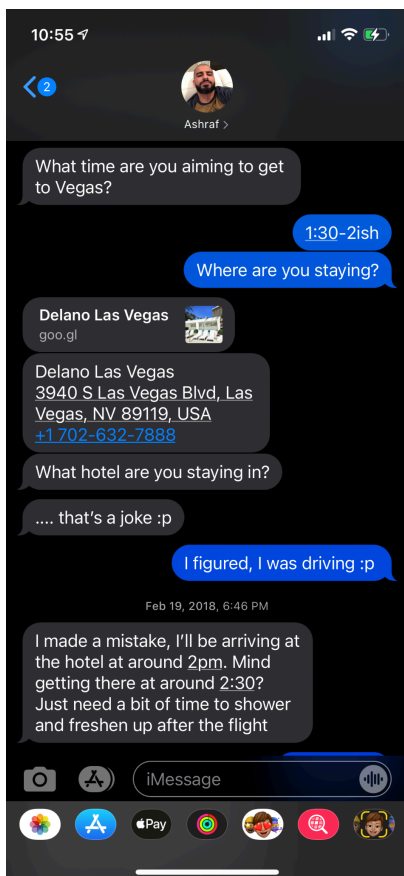
(Edit: Added the following two screenshots on 6/30/2020 at 9:44 PM, just found them before blocking Andie/Escoblades. They also show I was in SF during the Origins event. And... hindsight shows he was trying to flirt?? I didn't pick up on that until now. Oof.)



Like I said, we didn't talk to each other until January or February of 2018. He was going to DICE in Las Vegas and asked me to join him. We went to Cirque Du Soleil and to dinner at Jaleo.



Above is a letter that I wrote to him when I had to leave Las Vegas. Here are texts from when we were planning the trip and him talking about the letter above.







This was our last time seeing each other until E3 2018. I stayed with him one of the nights, then I found out he was married at the Fortnite party via Andie, [who then didn't want Ash to know that he had been the one to tell me](#). Andie didn't know we had been together, so he had no reason to lie up to that point. I wrote a journal entry about the whole thing, so here it is:



6.24.18 - An actual entry. I got a text from Ash a week or two before E3 saying he had just found out he'd be at E3, and he asked if I'd like to grab dinner. Obviously I said yes because I can't say no to him at all. So... We met up for dinner on June 9. His flight was delayed so we got dinner at 10 PM. We used some leftover fry at dinner. He's in therapy. Went back to his hotel and had amazing sex. He was super sweet and acted like we were together again. As he does.

6.25.2018 - Today I bought a pineapple plant. Recently got into gardening. I think it's somewhat meditative. Anyway. Back to Ash.

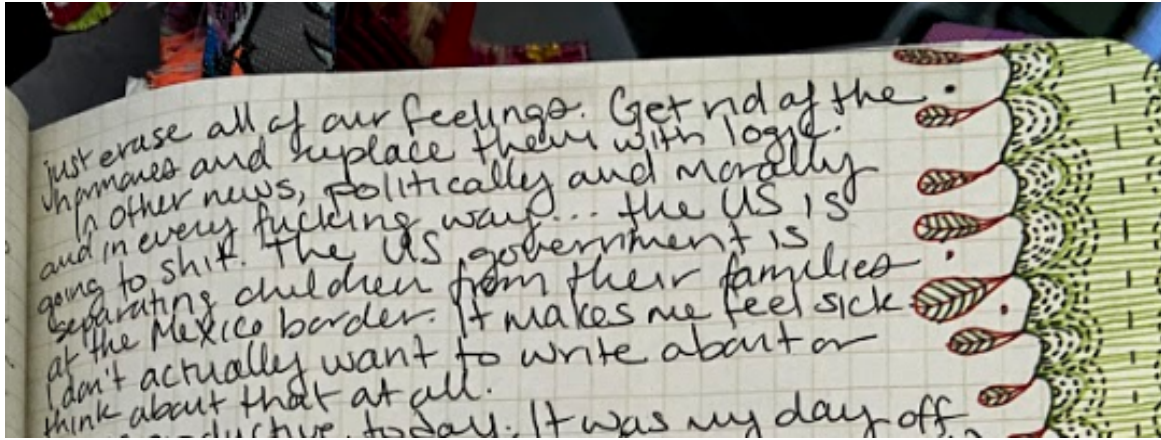
On Tuesday of E3, I went to a Fortnite party at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. Ash's coworker, Andie was there. I pulled him aside and asked if Ash is married. "Ashraf Ismail?"  
"yes."  
"yes."  
"... Oh."

He asked why I asked and I didn't say anything at first, then he saw I was upset and said he was connecting the dots. I said I had been seeing Ash on and off since last E3. I was sad. He said "Oh that's why" he wanted to go to Twitchcon so bad" etc etc.

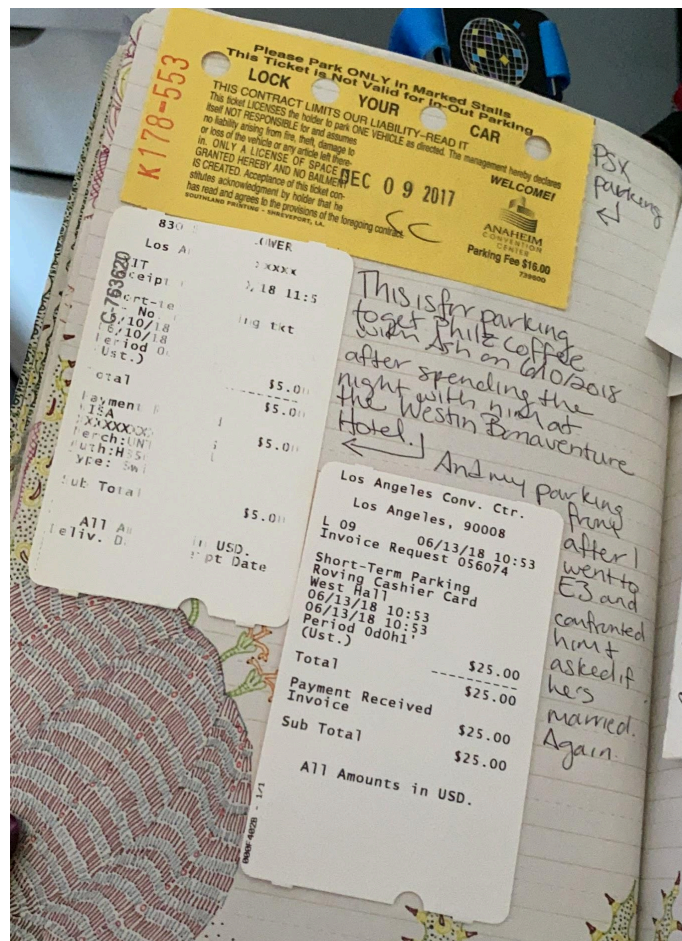
I confronted Ash on Wednesday, we had plans to get brunch on Thursday. He canceled. I went to LAX to see him and give him a hug. I told him I love him a few times and that I'm sorry over and over. I also said he's the best human. He denied that he's the best human. He said I shouldn't say I'm sorry. He said I deserve better than him.

So now I don't know if he's married and I don't know if I'm the other woman and it sucks. I just don't have any of the answers. I wish I could feel less for him but I love him a lot regardless of what I want to feel. It would be nice if we could

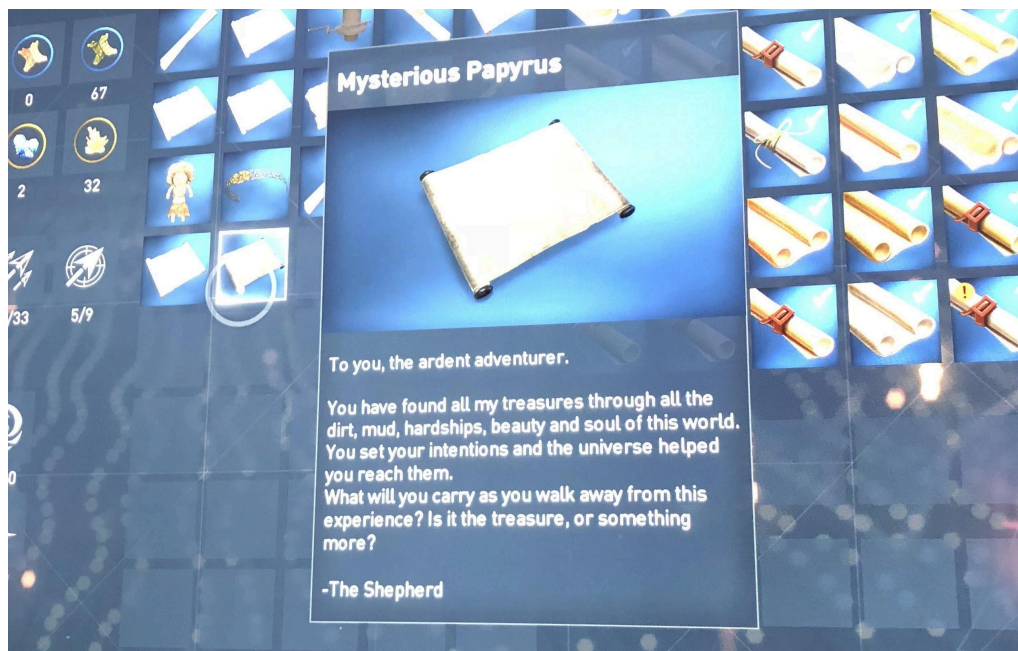
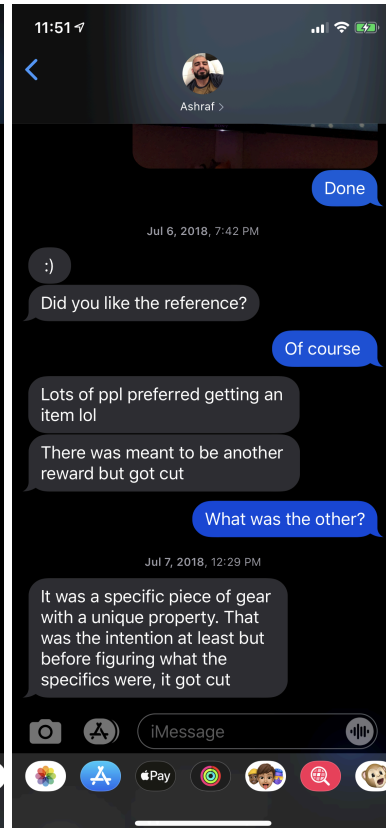
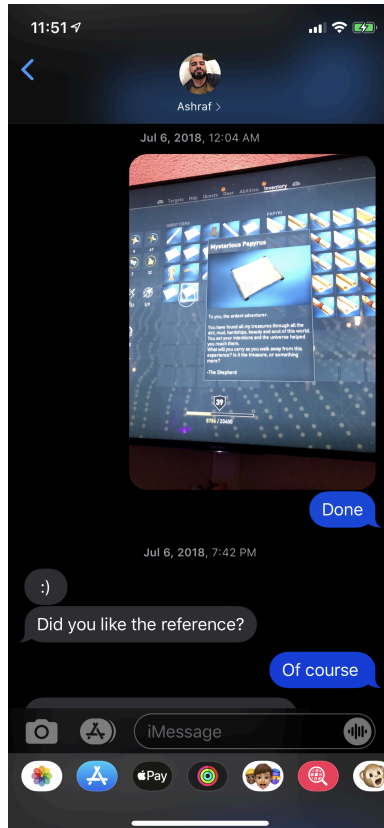
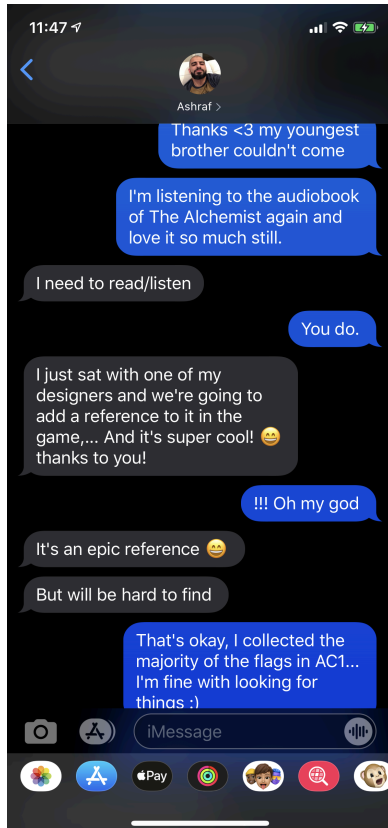




Some context that's not included in this entry: Andie had told me that Ash was off for a week in August 2017 because he had to deal with marital issues/a miscarriage or something. Ash convinced me that those dates didn't make sense (he wrote out a whole timeline of August 2017 and again brought up his dead son) and because I wanted to trust that he wouldn't do everything he had done to and with me while married, I believed him. I mean, it wouldn't make sense for someone to be mad at me for being disloyal while he was married, right? Receipts:



I had bought Origins when it came out, but stopped playing shortly after because it felt so personal. I decided to beat it and use that as my conclusion to us, especially because he had added something to the game for me, since I'm a huge fan of The Alchemist:



So, I beat Origins. I figured I'd never know if he was married or not and tried to compartmentalize everything. I got into a relationship with someone I can trust. It hasn't mattered to me for a couple of years, and I figured it would never matter again because it was just one of those things I could never get the answer to.

Until I did.

I made another great friend at E3 2019, someone who's friends with some women Ash knows. I asked my friend to ask those women if Ash is married. They said that he was.

I decided secondhand information wasn't enough verification, so I asked one of them directly. She said he was, he had told her and another woman that he was.

At that moment, I realized that there was no way I was the only one. When I had spoken to my mom about him, she had mentioned that he might have "a girl in every port". I thought of how calculating and charming he was, how he had found me and shown interest in me based on my tattoo - I was clearly a fan of the series. Every time I doubted him, he brought up his son so I'd pity him and feel guilty for questioning him. I learned to walk on eggshells and just stop asking or pushing the matter.

Our actual relationship was short - but it was very intense, clearly, and the sexual part was drawn out over a year. He denied he was married for the entire time and was only willing to tell me any semblance of [the truth](#) after I [tweeted that he was married](#). I blocked him because I didn't want him to have another opportunity to manipulate me.

Through this experience, though, I've found that he [approached](#) many women the same way. He [spoke to](#) many of us the same way. The fact that there even *were* many of us - in addition to his wife - is a huge issue. I've had at least fifteen women come to me with their stories so far, and several have said that they represent multiple people who wish to remain anonymous. I have seen proof from many of these women and do not doubt any of their stories.

I do not doubt, in any way, that it was a good idea to come forward. My purpose was [never to "cancel"](#) anyone or anything - all of us love Assassin's Creed and want the games to be good - but in doing this I have found that there was a clear pattern of emotional abuse. He never sexually assaulted me, but I will say that there would have been no chance of any sort of sexual or romantic relationship with me if I had known he had a wife from the beginning. I would not consent to a relationship with a married man.

The last week has been stressful, but I will forever be grateful to the [people](#) I've befriended through this and those who've reached out to support us. I'm also grateful to the people who've doubted us and have later apologized or changed their minds as they saw more evidence. It should never be considered weak to change your mind, and I understand your skepticism. We all looked up to Ash, too. We were all fans.

If any of you would like to help take action against sexual harassment and get some incredible art in the process, [you can do so here](#).

Edited June 30 to add screenshots from Andie from our SF trip, edited 4/11/21 to add photos of the letter I wrote him after leaving Las Vegas during DICE and screen shots of our planning and conversation about the letter.

