

# **Grindr Mom**

By

Ronnie Larsen

Grindr Mom

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Character

Mom - A Middle-Aged Mormon Woman

Age range is flexible but between 40's to mid 60's.

This monologue is a portrait of a very "normal" woman. She is a loving Mom and a loving wife. Under no circumstance should she be portrayed as silly or as a caricature of a conservative women. She is intelligent, thoughtful, warm and kind. She is charming and good at conversation but not a "performer".

Her clothing is conservative but not silly or intentionally tacky.

The tone of this piece should be extremely conversational. She must connect with the entire audience. The actress should move thru the monologue and keep the story moving with not too many pauses, please, but not rushed either. It should neither be played for cheap laughs or for heavy melodrama. It should constantly fluctuate between light, breezy, serious, sad, thoughtful, disturbed, confused, light, breezy, etc. It should feel like a constantly changing roller coaster of emotions and thoughts. Playing one idea or emotion throughout makes it feel monotonous and boring so don't do that.

Above all the piece should feel like a conversation between her and the audience and not a monologue delivered at them.

The set is simply a chair with a side table. On the table is a lamp and a framed picture of her son, Joseph. Preferably a nice, comfortable, elegant, traditional chair you would find in an upper-middle class home. It should have arms and padding so the actress feels incredibly comfortable and cozy, as if she were in her own home.

There are no light cues. Just a spotlight on a woman sitting in a chair. In the original production the actress frequently left the chair and moved around the stage. If you choose to have movement it should be incredibly natural and realistic. It should always feel like we are in her living room.

SCENE: GRINDR MOM

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## Pre-Show Music Plays

A woman enters holding a smart phone, she says hi to a few audience members to establish a relaxed rapport. She holds up her phone indicating to the audience to turn theirs off. There is no black-out. When she is ready to begin she signals for the booth to fade out the music and once that is done she indicates that the house lights should go down and once she is done she sits in a chair, looks at the audience, makes a non verbal connection with them, thinks...after a short while, she begins to speak.

MOM

I never know where to begin. The day I was born? The day I got married? The day my son announced that he was gay and begged me not to tell his Father? My second miscarriage? Probably my second miscarriage because I'm not even sure I'd be in this situation if my second baby had survived or if we'd had a girl or...I have a theory, it's a depressing theory but I believe that the one thing in life you really want, the one thing you think you really need more than all other things, I believe that *that* is the one thing God is never going to give you. I believe it's his way of reminding you that he's in charge and that what you think you really need you don't really need and you should focus on something else. Like right now, I really need a Pepsi but our Church have asked us to abstain from caffeine and I know caffeine is bad for us and I know I should just drink water but I really want a Pepsi even though I already had my one Pepsi for the week...shhhhhh...one a

week...that's all I have...I tell my Bishop...my husband doesn't know but I do tell my Bishop, so anyway, if I sit real still, and I close my eyes, I can hear God saying, "you don't need a Pepsi...  
(echoing)  
...Pepsi, Pepsi, Pepsi...it's not really what you need right now...you need water...

(echoing)  
...water, water...water." And he's right, I know he's right, he's always right...so no Pepsi for me right now, even though I really want one.

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## MOM (CONT'D)

And that's the point, God doesn't always want us to have what we we want and lots of time he gives us things we don't want, like cancer or hurricanes or cockroaches and I just really didn't want to have a gay son...I prayed every night for God to send me a normal, healthy baby...and I guess I thought God understood what I meant when I said "normal and healthy" but maybe I wasn't clear enough. I guess I should have been more specific: "Dear Heavenly Father, please send me a Republican-leaning-heterosexual baby with no birth defects." And I'm sorry, I know that sounds awful, and yes, I'm strong, I could probably handle a baby with special needs but please not a Democrat. My husband gets very heated when he talks politics. I can't imagine him sharing a house with a Democrat. See here's the thing, I really wanted a bunch of heterosexual kids because what I really wanted, what I really want, more than anything is a bunch of grandkids and I believe, I believed, foolishly I know now, but I believed that only heterosexual children could give me grandkids...I understand I was wrong but that's what I thought at the time...so when my only child, Joseph, pulled me aside one day and said, "Please don't tell Dad, but I'm gay"...I wanted to be a good Mom, I wanted to be supportive but I just quickly agreed that he was right, that we should not tell his Father. I tried to remember when I was a young girl telling my parents something that I knew would really upset them, and I tried to act the way that I would have wanted my own parents to react.

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## MOM (CONT'D)

"Do unto others", we all know that saying, right?" "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you"...the Golden Rule...the 11th Commandment, a fundamental teaching of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." So I hugged him and kissed him and told him I loved him but inside...just devastated...furious...I started to question God...for the first time ever...I mean I'd already suffered two miscarriages and now it was like I was watching all of my grandkids die...all I wanted was to be a Grandma and have all my kids and their kids come home for Christmas and Thanksgivings...but clearly my Heavenly Father had other plans for me...clearly...and so because God is God he says, "nope, you think you want a big family but that's not what you're getting no, ma'm, you're only getting one kid and that kid is going to be a gay male and not just gay but really gay, and an Atheist, and a Democrat, and you're gonna learn to love him and accept him because that's my plan for you, that's the test I'm giving you, so I have Joseph...one child...and he is wonderful...but gay...no, not "but", AND, and gay...extremely gay...I mean I don't know if there's a scale of gayness but I would put him at a 9...point 9...and I love him and I accept him...I do...I really do...but his Father...we haven't told his Father...his Father has anger issues...not abusive...not mean...just frustrated easily...irritated easily...we often keep secrets from him...it's just easier to keep secrets...my son was a talker during Sunday school...couldn't keep his mouth shut...so they actually expelled him...who gets expelled from Sunday school??? Well Joseph did. We didn't want his Dad to know so on Sundays I would pretend to take him to Sunday school but we would just sit in the car and eat ice cream.

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MOM (CONT'D)

I knew it was wrong to keep secrets from my husband but I did it to keep the peace...there are some things we just don't talk about in our family...we don't talk about sexuality...we aren't open like that....my son and I discuss it sometimes but we never involve his Dad. Se we decided not to talk to his Father because...and this is sad, but it's the truth, the only thing my husband ever wanted was a big family, 6 kids, 3 boys and 3 girls and he wanted all of those kids to stay in the church...okay so two things...he wanted two things, a big family of kids who stayed in the church, I don't know, but here's the point, okay...now...I'm gonna tell you something I've never told anyone...but I believe my husband is more religious than I am...it feels blasphemous even telling you that...but we're being totally honest here today, right?

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## MOM (CONT'D)

So the only thing my husband wanted, wants, wanted, was for all of his kids to stay in the church...but there are no kids, just A kid, one kid, Joseph, a gay kid, a sweet kid, but a gay kid...and an Atheist...maybe Agnostic, on a good day, but certainly not religious...never going to church again on his own...never going on a mission, never getting married in the temple and never being sealed for all time and eternity or...none of it...he's very respectful of our religion...he goes to church with us when he's in town, he puts on a suit and tie...but he's not religious and it's sad for me...but for his Father...it is absolutely heartbreaking...we don't even really ever talk about it...and even though Joseph has never officially told his Dad he's gay...I sort of think my husband knows but we don't talk about it...having an Atheist son is one thing but I suspect that having a gay Atheist son would just be a bridge too far and my son is a peacekeeper....he likes to keep the peace...like I said, his Father has anger issues...so we just don't talk about it...I'm very good at keeping secrets....did I mention, we're Mormon, LDS, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, I mentioned it already, correct?

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## MOM (CONT'D)

And just to set the record straight Mormons do believe in God and no we do not believe in polygamy and no we do not hate gays or women or blacks and yes we're allowed to eat twinkies...Mormons are very nice people...we are...and I'm not just saying that because I am one, I'm saying it because it's true...we are just very nice people...I'm not saying we're nicer than Catholics but I'm guessing we are...you don't hear stories about gay bishops molesting little Mormon children...well maybe one Bishop...maybe a few children but not thousands...I think we had one Bishop who went to jail for molesting his daughter but we definitely aren't the Catholic church...we love children...we put children on a pedastal...we would never hurt children, in fact, my sister Annette has 12 kids...12 wonderful kids...no Atheists...all still in the church...all married in the temple, all the boys went on missions...it's hard on my husband, family reunions in Utah are tough, cause he looks at John and Annette's family and he sees what could have been if God had had a different plan for us...but he did not...one kid...one...and gay...and an Atheist...but we love him...we do...Joseph...and, no we did not name him after Joseph Smith...or Joseph of Joseph and Mary fame...we named him after my husband's brother who died in a lake in Michigan in three feet of water...and who was incidentally named after Joseph Smith but that's another story...not today.

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## MOM (CONT'D)

So Joseph...I think of Joseph as the result of 27 months of pregnancy....I had two children who died at birth....they um...well, they died at birth....the doctors said we should stop trying...they said we should adopt...maybe we should have but we didn't, we kept trying and God gave us Joseph...the sweetest boy on the entire planet...an Angel...literally an Angel...he barely cried at birth...he seemed so happy to be here...we believe...Mormons believe, I believe, that children choose to come to Earth and have a body...babies live in heaven with their Heavenly Father and they choose to come to Earth where they are given free agency to do whatever they want...be gay, be a Mormon, be an Atheist, be a Democrat...it's called "Free Agency"...basically you get to do whatever you want on this earth, your choices belong to you and if you make the right choices...you get to go back to Heaven and live with your Heavenly Father and if you make the wrong choices...you you get to go back to Heaven and live with your Heavenly Fathers but you don't go to the top level of Heaven....but if you deny God...you go to Hell...you can commit sin, that's okay, sins can be forgiven....but to deny the existence of God...there's no coming back from that...so you can imagine the pain of having an Atheist son...I say, "Joseph, you're not an Atheist you're agnostic"...because Agnostics can still go to Heaven, Atheists can't and I want him to go to Heaven with us and I know he's not gonna go to the top level where we're going, but I believe the lowest level of Heaven is still a really nice place, I mean, not amazing, but totally acceptable....like A Motel 6 or a Days Inn...I mean it's not the Ramada but it's better than sleeping in your car with Satan...So, I hope in his heart he's Agnostic...I pray every day that he's Agnostic...I doubt he's ever coming back to the church but if I can just move that needle a little bit just nudge him from Atheist to Agnostic...so we can all be

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## MOM (CONT'D)

together in the afterlife...so that we can live as a family in the afterlife for all time and eternity...that's what I pray for...that would be a victory in my opinion...sooooo Joseph, Joseph was born, no lets go back further, I was born...no that's too far...I had an uneventful childhood, I'm boring...I think this story really begins the day I met my husband...that's the beginning of this story because that was the day that led me here...I would not be telling you this story if I'd never met my husband or if I'd married a different husband...or if my husband was a different type of man, less conservative maybe...I mean, his personality...his character...he's a good man but he has anger issues...he's a good father but he can be...what's the word...not cold...not cold...he isn't...not aloof...just...stern...conservative. He's just very conservative...he loves Joseph but he's very conservative....there's an edge between them...when they get together the words don't flow easily...I understand cause it was the same with my own Dad...

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## MOM (CONT'D)

I loved him and he loved me but the words didn't just flow...when Joseph and I are alone we chatter non-stop, we laugh, we joke, we kid each other, we challenge each other but with his Dad...he's...I don't even know the word, fearful?...no...reserved?...respectful... and I always wonder if it would be different if Joseph were not a homosexual...sometimes I think my husband....his name is Tom by the way...I should stop saying, "my husband, my husband my husband...his name is Tom, he has a name, so I'll just say Tom from now on...Tom, my husband, my husband Tom...Okay, so Tom and I met...well Thomas actually...when we met he was Thomas...he started using Tom in his 30's...I still call him Thomas some time....mostly When we argue,..which isn't often, truly...we rarely argue....and when we do it's silly...my husband does this thing....well two things....he does two things that drive me crazy...parking...he's always looking for the perfect parking spot...I say, just park the car honey, but no, he wants the perfect spot...so we drive around the parking lot, circling, waiting, searching for that perfect spot and then finally he parks, 4 hours later, in the first spot we saw ...and I just bite my tongue....but I get so nervous when I'm parking cause I worry I'm gonna pick the wrong spot and he's gonna say something...most of the time I make him drive the car.....sometimes I sing a little song while we're driving around parking lots...just to break the tension...it doesn't always work...sometimes he laughs...

(singing)

Jesus, take the wheel  
 Take it from my hands  
 'Cause I can't do this on my own

(speaking)

It usually creates more tension than it breaks.

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## MOM (CONT'D)

So parking...and food...those are our two arguments...our two ongoing arguments...parking and food...whenever we decide to go out to eat he says, "where do you want to eat?" I say, "I don't care wherever you want", he says, "no you decide", I say "I'm fine, I really don't care I can eat anything, whatever you want"...and then he gets annoyed and says, "just pick one", and I say, "I don't care", and then he gets annoyed and says fine lets just go home, which means I'll have to cook, so I blurt out "ITALIAN, let's do Italian tonight." Then he says no, "I don't want Italian." So I say, "Chinese..let's do Chinese...then he says, "I had Chinese for lunch"...so I bite my lip and he says, "let's just go to the buffet"...and I say, "great, let's just go to the buffet."...now why can't he just say, "hey, let's go to the buffet tonight?" Why is that hard? Why cant he just say what he wants...why do we have to dance around for 30 minutes..."What do you want?" "What do you want?" "What do you want?" Parking and food...those our two big arguments...and the fact that he failed as a Father cause his son left the church, there's that, too. But I always say:

(to Thomas)

"You did not fail, Tom, Thomas....look At me, you did not fail..you were a great Dad...you are a great Dad...Joseph has his free agency given to him by his Heavenly Father...all we can do is pray that one day he'll come back to the Church and he'll find his testimony and...you are a great Dad...his choices have nothing to do with you...his sins are not your sins...that's not what we believe...he is a free agent..."

(back to audience)

It's really hard.

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MOM (CONT'D)

Every time Fiddler on the Roof comes on the television we watch it and I know he's thinking, "that's me...I'm Tevye"...all Tevye wanted was for his kids to follow in his footsteps and they all did the opposite...Thomas and Joseph have almost nothing in common...it's heart breaking...but it is what it is, right?

(singing)

Sunrise

Sunset

Sunrise

Sunset

(talking)

Hey, are you guys hungry? I made cookies yesterday....seriously...does anybody want a cookie? This is for real. They're pretty good...

She goes and gets two tins of chocolate chip cookies and hands them to the first row.

MOM (CONT'D)

Just pass those around, there may not be enough for everyone but if you don't get a cookie, well, that's God's plan for you...I'm kidding...not bad, right, not great...but pretty good...I don't know why I make so many cookies when it's just me and Thomas here...I was gonna take a bunch to church tomorrow but...I can make more. So pass them around. Hopefully, there's enough for everyone but if you don't get one, well, that's God's plan for you. Just kidding. So everybody ready cause it's about to get complicated

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## MOM (CONT'D)

Ok, so...here we go...my husband Tom was dating my sister Susan and they were talkng about marriage...but then Thomas went away to college...and I never quite knew what happened...well that's a lie...I know what happened....Tom came home on Spring Break and fell in love with me...it was awkward...but my sister Susan understood and she actually had her eye on a different boy in the Church...a bad boy...well in terms of the Church...he smoked, didn't go on a mission and listened to KISS aka Knights in Service of Satan, not cool...so in our eyes he was a bad boy...but Susan had a mad crush on him...and Thomas had his eye on me or, his eyes, he had his eyes on me, he actually has two eyes, I am not married to a cyclops...So Tom had his eyes on me and Susan had her eyes on Lynn and it just worked out...I married Thomas and Susan married Lynn, the bad boy, the smoker and we all lived happily ever after...for a while at least...til Lynn got caught having an affair with Melissa at work and their marriage quickly unraveled...it was sad...Susan's a great person, my favorite sister...she deserved better but she just chose wrong...in my opinion...she should have chosen Thomas but thank goodness she didn't cause if she had I wouldn't have had Joseph and I wouldn't have had this story to tell you about how I wound up with a Grindr account...so it all worked out...well sort of...see God's plan, you gotta trust it...except the minor problem of Joseph being a gay Atheist living in Sodom and Gomorrah AKA San Francisco...that was a joke....how are the cookies, by the way? Good, good, good...So Thomas and I got married for all time and eternity in the Los Angeles Temple. The happiest day of my life. Truly.

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## MOM (CONT'D)

Have you ever have had that one day where without question it was the happiest day of your life...no question about it...that was the day....then I had Joseph and that was the newest happiest day of my life so my wedding day moved to number two and became the second happiest day of my life...and those were the two days...another day of great happiness was finding out I was pregnant with my first child who passed on at birth...and another happiest day was finding out I was pregnant again....but I lost her at birth as well...and....you know...I don't know if you can understand this or not....but even though my first two children passed on at birth I still think of them as my children....when someone asks me if I have kids and how many I say one but in my mind I'm thinking three...because we believe, Mormons believe, that the reason a child dies at birth is because that child is perfect...it just came to Earth for a few hours to acquire a human body needed for the afterlife but it's perfect, there's no reason for it to stay here and be tested, God needs the baby back in Heaven by his side so he calls it home. I believe, no, I know, my two babies are waiting for me in Heaven and will greet me when my earthly body dies and my soul ascends to Heaven...and hopefully The Ramada and not the Days Inn...so that's what I believe.

She surveys the room.

## MOM (CONT'D)

You know, I can tell we have some Atheists in the room right now...that's okay...we all believe what we believe...how 'bout, you don't judge me and I don't judge you. How's that for a bargain. I'm not perfect. Believe me. I try to live the best life possible but I have my...my things I'm working on...I struggle with..I'm struggling a little right now...snd I'm gonna do it...I'm sorry...I'll be right back...one second...

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She leaves, comes back with both hands behind her back...

MOM (CONT'D)

And now you get to watch me sin...in real time.

She reveals a Pepsi on one hand a clear glass of ice with a straw in the other. She places them on the end table and pours.

I only do this when my husband's not home. I hide it in my closet and I throw the can away in the neighbors garbage can down the street. I am literally the Pepsi generation.

She drinks.

MOM

So good. I remember my first dance with a boy...I remember my first kiss...and I remember my first Pepsi. And I remember the day I realized Joseph was gay...it was an uneventful morning, we were just sitting at the table having breakfast and he said in this very clear and very eloquent voice..."I like Cheerios very much." "I like Cheerios very much." It's hard to describe the way he said it but he sort of sounded like a British food critic...like he was passing judgement or making a declaration. "I like Cheerios very much." He wasn't effeminate...but I just knew...he was articulate...outgoing...confident...he would talk to strangers everywhere we went....we'd be in the supermarket and he would just start talking..."how was your day", "what's your name", "are you enjoying the weather"? I mean how many 6 year olds do you know that ask total strangers if they're enjoying the weather? People would tell me my son was so "unique", so "different" than all the other children...so "mature" for his age....I knew what it meant...I knew...I just knew...He didn't officially come out to me til he was 24. But I knew. I always knew.

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## MOM (CONT'D)

And I think he knew I knew...and I think he knew his secret was safe with me...and it was...I'm very good at keeping secrets....and then one day, we're sitting in the living room, I don't know where his Dad was but it was during that whole gay marriage nightmare when everyone hated Mormons and he said, "Mom, we need to talk." Then he said, "would you please not vote for proposition 8, please." That was the whole gay marriage thing...he said, "I know Dad is going to vote for it, but will you please support me. I might want to get married one day. Please let me have that right" He was basically asking me to deny my faith. To lie to my husband and ignore the teachings of my Church and walk in the ballot box and turn into a Democrat. Democrat for a day...and I just couldn't do it, so I said, I remember saying..."I love you Joseph, but you're allowed to believe what you believe and your Father and I are allowed to believe what we believe and we believe marriage is between a man and woman." And he was silent. He said, okay, And that was it.

She pours some more Pepsi, drinks in silence.

## MOM (CONT'D)

For the record, I voted for Evan McMullin, the Mormon kid. My husband voted for Trump but I voted for Evan McMullin. I just want to get that on the record. I remember asking my husband, "how can we vote for a man who cheats on his wives? How can we vote for a man that goes against everything we believe in?" My husband said, "The Supreme Court." So I knew his vote was set in stone but I just couldn't do it. So I secretly voted against Trump and I voted against my husband...and I lied and told my husband I voted for Trump...but he'll never know cause I'm very good at keeping secrets...

She drinks again.

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MOM (CONT'D)

So a few months later, we're alone again and he says he has a boyfriend. Joseph announces, well whispers, my husband wasn't home but still we always whisper when we discuss things like, you know, things that would upset his Father and so Joseph whispers, "I met someone. A very nice guy. Mom, you would love him. I think it's the real deal."

(Mom)

I say, "wonderful". Where did you meet him?

(Joseph)

I'm not gonna tell you that.

(Mom)

What do you mean you're not gonna tell me where you met? What, did you meet in prison.

(Joseph)

Yes, Mom, we met in prison.

(Mom)

Which prison and what were you in prison for?

(Joseph)

We met online.

(Mom)

So why can't you just tell me that? There's nothing wrong with meeting online. Your cousin Jenny met Greg on Christian singles.

(Joseph)

Grindr, is NOT Christian singles.

(Mom)

Grinder?

(Joseph)

Yes, Grindr. We met on Grindr.

(Mom)

Are you saying Grinder as in like a meat Grinder.

(Joseph)

Well, I never thought of that but yes, like a meat grinder...actually, yes, exactly like, no not like, literally a meat grinder.

(Mom)

I have no idea what you're talking about.

(Joseph)

Its just an app on your phone, you download it. It's for dating.

(Mom)

And he lied to me.

(MORE)

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MOM (CONT'D)

Grindr is not for dating. I know that now. Is anyone in this room actually on Grindr? Is anyone actually on Grindr this moment.

She opens the app, picks the first name that pops up. For instance "Top Daddy"

MOM (CONT'D)

TopDaddy. Are you here?

If he says, yes, deal with him, if not find someone else.

MOM

Does everyone in here know what Grindr is? Anyone?

She improves with the audience. "Are you on Grindr?" "What is your Grindr name?" "What is Grindr?" "Is Grindr for dating?"

MOM (CONT'D)

So, TopDaddy, back me up here, Grindr is not for "dating"...am I correct? Okay, well I'm glad we cleared that up.

Improv section ends. It should be fairly brief.

MOM

So back to the story, Joseph says,  
(Joseph)  
Mom, Grindr is an app on your phone.  
Like Candy Crush.

(Mom)

I love Candy Crush.

(Joseph)

Or Words with Friends.

(Mom)

I hate Words with Friends.

(Joseph)

Or Facebook. You love Facebook. It's like Facebook but only for gay people.

(Mom)

I actually hate Facebook. I had to delete a bunch of people from college and people I grew up with, people, who it turns out, now hate Mormons and hate Republicans and who think getting an abortion should be as easy as buying a slurpee.

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MOM (CONT'D)

I tried to be open-minded for a while but now I just can't with some of these people. People I've known my whole life. To find out after 40 years that they think I'm a bigot because my God tells me that marriage is between a man and a woman. I don't like Facebook.

She tries to stay composed.

MOM (CONT'D)

And now I am craving another Pepsi.

(beat)

And I wasn't satisfied with Joseph's description of the Grindr so I decided to do some research on my own.

She picks up her phone. Holds down a button.

MOM (CONT'D)

Siri, what is a Grindr?

(in Siri's voice)

Okay, here's what I found. In Ice Hockey a grinder is a player better known for his hard work and checking than his scoring.

MOM (CONT'D)

Siri, what is Grinding?

(Siri)

Okay, here's what I found, Grinding is an abrasive machining process, that uses a Grindewheel.

(Mom)

Siri, what is Grindr.

(Siri)

Okay, here's what I found: Grindr is a geosocial and online dating application geared towards gay, bi, trans, and queer people. The app makes use of a mobile devices geolocation which allows users to locate other users nearby.

(Mom)

Siri, what is a Mother? And just tell me what you find, don't say, okay, here's what I found.

(Siri)

Okay, here's what I found: A mother is a selfless, loving woman who must sacrifice many of her wants and needs for the wants and needs of their/

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MOM (CONT'D)

(Mom)

Siri, can women have Grindr?

(Siri)

Okay, here's what I found: A Pennsylvania woman died on Monday after falling into a meat grinder at a food processing company in Rockwood, Penns/

(Mom)

Siri, can a Mother be on Grindr?

(Siri)

Okay, heres what I/

(Mom)

Just tell me!!!

(Siri)

A mother of four in Northfork, Virginia lost her hand on Thursday after it was caught in a meat grinder, the hand/

(Mom)

Siri, how do I open my own Grindr account?

(Siri)

Okay, here's what I found. This is a really bad idea.

(Mom)

Siri!

(Siri)

No, seriously, this is a really bad idea. You definitely should not open a Grindr account.

(Mom)

Alexa, how do I open my own Grindr account?

(Alexa)

I agree with Siri, this is a really bad idea. The monologue has been going very well up to this point but/

(Mom)

And then I downloaded the app. I downloaded the app. I downloaded an application that quote, "gay, bi, queer and trans people use to meet each other". And I don't even know what a queer person is. And I'm not stupid. I know what it means to be gay, or bisexual or transmission. But what is a queer?

(Siri)

Okay, here's what I/

(Mom)

Siri, I'm not talking to you right now. See, I thought queer was a bad word. Like sissy or faggot?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOM (CONT'D)

Is queer a new category for a human being like how now Indians are Native American and blacks are African Americans? I'm sincerely confused. So I Google, "What is a Queer person?"

(Google)

Queer is an umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities who are not heterosexual or cisgender.

(Mom)

Then I Google, "What is cisgender?"

(Google)

Cisgender is a term for people whose gender identity matches the sex that they were assigned at birth.

(Mom)

Then I Google: "Who assigns sex at birth?"

(Google)

Sex assignment, sometimes known as gender assignment, is the determination of an infant's sex at birth. In the majority of births, a relative, midwife, nurse or physician inspects the genitalia when the baby is delivered, and sex and gender are assigned, without the expectation of ambiguity."

(Mom)

And then I took a Tylenol and I slept for four hours. And I had a dream about Tom's brother, the one who died in that lake in Michigan in 3 feet of water. And we were back at the lake but they had changed the name and it was now called Lake Cisgender and I couldn't remember what cisgender is so I start frantically looking for my phone but I cant find it and then I wake up and it's there on my night stand. I pick it up. I play Candy Crush. I go on Facebook. I get enraged. I close Facebook. I open the Grindr. I stare at it. I try to convince myself that it's just another game on my phone. I try and convince myself that Grindr is basically just a super gay version of Words with Friends. I stare at the app. I try to find a good reason for me to open my own Grindr account. I can't think of one. Then I think of all the reasons I should NOT open a Grindr account. And there are so many. But it's already on my phone.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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MOM (CONT'D)

And don't you feel bad for the apps on your phone that you never use. I always imagine all those unused apps as being jealous of Facebook and Gmail. And next thing I know I'm filling out the information. I start making a profile. The phone rings. I almost drop it.

(Mom)

Hello?

(Joseph)

Hey, Mom! What's going on?

(Mom)

He knows. I don't know how he knows but I know he knows. I bet they have some alert that a user receives when their Mother signs up for a Grindr account. I'm caught. I lie. "Nothing much!" I contemplate the truth, "I'm just sitting here getting ready to open a Grindr account and then share my experiences with a roomful of strangers. Other than that, nothing much." Obviously, I didn't say that. We chit chat for a while, I cant stop sweating. We hang up. I know he knows. I'm terrified. I delete the app off my phone. And I forget about Grindr.

(beat)

For two whole days.

(beat)

I'm just gonna take a 5 second pause here to represent the passage of time.

She pauses for 5 seconds.

MOM (CONT'D)

So now it's two days later and I'm in church, we call it Sacrament meeting in case you're s stickler for accuracy, and I something calling me...God?...no...it's the Grindr...

(Mom)

And I can feel this app just calling me...I have to know. I have to. So I excuse myself and I go to the ladies room. I sit in a stall, and I download the app, and I make a profile. I choose a screenname. I want something a little racy but not x-rated. PepsiGuzzzler. With three Z's. PepsiGuzzzler. I like it. No photo. I keep everything very vague. Nothing sexual.

(MORE)

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CONTINUED:

## MOM (CONT'D)

And just like that, I have a Grindr account. And my life changes. I see something I should not see. 6 men online within 1200 feet. 1200 feet??? I start hoping that 1200 feet is a mile or two...I Google 1200 feet...it's nothing...it's not even the grounds of the church. Are there really 6 Mormon men online right now in this building? No way. It is not possible. I start reading the profiles: HappyPig 1100 feet away. MrRightNow, 800 feet away. UBHung, Just the letters UB. No time to waste on spelling out whole words. UBHung, 500 feet away. I have to leave this stall. I return to the chapel. I sit in the last row by myself. I take the phone out. A new profile pops up. With a face photo. None of the others had face photos but this one does...it's Richard Robertson...the choir director...he's married...he has three kids...his profile says...VersBottom4Now "Vers bottom?" I assume verse has something to do with music like verses in a song and he's the choir director so that would make sense, I keep reading...420 friendly...can't host...PNP is a big plus. So I Google 420 - it's marijuana. And I Google PNP - Party and Play, translation, Meth, Cocaine. I Google versbottom and it has absolutely nothing to do with music. I'm now sick to my stomach. I know his wife, Ashley. I've baby sat his kids...and his profile is just him with a big smile on his face. Do I show his wife? Keep my mouth shut. I'm very good at keeping secrets but....and so it begins. I start to type him a message but suddenly he stands. I freeze. He knows. I'm shaking. He looks in my direction. We all stand up and begin to sing. I am now on autopilot.

(singing)

I know that my Redeemer lives.  
 What comfort this sweet sentence gives!  
 He lives, he lives, who once was dead.  
 He lives, my ever-living Head.

(speaking)

The congregation sits. I breathe.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

## MOM (CONT'D)

I take out my phone. His profile light goes green. I think this means he is actively checking his account. My blood is boiling. He's on the altar at our church. 5 feet from the Bishop. All eyes are on him. And he's checking the Grindr. I'm enraged and I'm scared and I'm sad. But I type. "That was a beautiful song choice, Brother Robertson. Though the tempo felt a little rushed. Too much PNP last night, maybe?" He suddenly looks up from his phone and scans the room. I stare at the Bishop. Brother Robertson continues to scan the room. He is clearly shaken. And he should be. I write back. "Like a rat in a trap! And does Ashley know shes married to a "versatile bottom?" And then something comes over me, I am fearless and I type. "Total Top here! Meet me afterwards in the choir room." Poof. And his profile disappears. Gone. And I know I'm playing with fire but I don't care. I've been changed. My eyes are wide open now. And I know it sounds crazy but maybe, just maybe, this is the plan God had for me. Maybe I can make a difference here. Ashley needs to know. It's my job to tell her. It will destroy their marriage. Is that God's plan for me, to, to, to destroy their marriage...to save these poor women? Then all of a sudden I get a message from HappyPig: "PepsiGuzzzler, are you thirsty? Why no pic?" It says he's 80 feet away. He says, "Meet me in the mens room next to the drinking fountain. In the handicapped stall in there, the big one. I'd love to share my huge testimony with you. LOL." A testimony in the Mormon church is you saying what you believe to be true, what you know to be true, testimonies are a serious thing, a testimony is not a punch line, a testimony is not a pick-up line. So, clearly, I head to the drinking fountain. I arrive. No one is there. I start to drink. No one comes and no one goes. I continue to drink. I drink like a water buffalo. No one passes by, except for a few women and children.

(MORE)

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## MOM (CONT'D)

I'm assuming none of them are HappyPig but at this point all bets are off. I swear it's been 10 minutes now of me just drinking. The hallway is empty. So I enter the mens room, and head to the big stall. I kick open the door and...it's empty. I'm now all alone in the men's room. I've officially lost my mind. I decide to leave. Brother Miller enters. He is 78. I know cause we just attended his birthday party two months ago, I say, "Oh my goodness, I came in the wrong bathroom...I'm an idiot...we both laugh...I leave...I walk slowly down the hall. Could Brother Miller be the "HappyPig"? Is it even possible? No. Not possible. Maybe possible. Probably. Good Lord. I've had enough "fun" for the day. I take out my phone, close the app and go in search of my husband. When I find him I tell him I'm not feeling well, which is absolutely true. And I tell him I need to go home and lie down. Which is also absolutely true. We head to the car together. Our hands interlock. I feel safe again, if just for a moment. I see the choir director getting in his minivan with Ashley. Our eyes meet. I give him a big smile and I say without an ounce of sarcasm, "Brother Robertson, the music was lovely today." He says, "thank you", and then God strike me down, but I said it, I opened my big fat mouth and I said, "the tempo of My Redeemer Lives seemed a little faster than normal but I liked it so much. I've seen other choir directors sing it so slow and it just grinds to a halt." And just for fun, I repeat it, "it just grinds to a halt but it's nice to have a versatile choir director who is willing to experiment with other tempos. Have a great week, Brother Robertson, God bless you!"

(beat)

I'm home now. My head is spinning. I'm craving a Pepsi but my husband is home and I never drink in front of my husband. So the Pepsi stays in the closet and I just lay there, staring at the ceiling. Craving Pepsi. The rest of the day is a blur.

(beat)

(MORE)

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## MOM (CONT'D)

It's the next morning. I do my grocery shopping on Mondays. I head to the store. I feel slightly hungover even though I've never consumed an ounce of alcohol in my life so I really have no idea what it feels like to be hungover but I imagine if a person was hungover it would feel something like this. I start to fill my cart. But something is different. I'm different. Did I mention that when you open the Grindr it's mostly a sea of torso pics, headless, shirtless torso's. And every profile is a male looking to have sex with another male. It's not a dating site. My "Angel" of a son told me a big whopper of a lie when he said it was a dating site. It is not a "gay version of Christian Singles" or "Facebook for gay people". I feel sad for my son. This is his idea of "dating". Is he a headless torso, too. Does he "PNP"? Is he "versatile"? I think about things I don't want to think about. I quietly sing to myself just to get my mind off all this.

(singing to herself)

"I Know That my Redeemer Lives"

(speaking)

I think of Brother Robertson. I'll never again be able to sing that song without seeing his smiling face on the Grindr. And now I'm in the meat section. The butcher is grinding meat. I feel God laughing at me. Every package of meat reminds me of a headless torso. Then I see the hot dogs. The sausages. The salami. The bacon. Was that once a HappyPig? No meat for me today. Maybe never again. Maybe Grindr will turn me into a vegetarian. Is that God's plan for me, too. Do I eat too much meat? I head to the checkout line. It's longer than usual. It's taking forever. And next thing I know my hand is in my phone and I'm opening the Grindr. In the supermarket check out line. I'm not right. But I can't stop myself. 4 people within 900 feet. 2 people within 20 feet. One of them has a very muscular arm. MuscleDude. Behind me is a very muscular married man with his wife and two sons.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

## MOM (CONT'D)

Behind them is a very old woman pulling an oxygen tank. My money's on the muscle man but at this point all bets are off. I get to the cash register. The cashier is male. He has an earring. Bingo. It's him. I think. Maybe not. He isn't muscular. But people lie on Grindr, right? I'm feeling bold, like Nancy Drew on steroids. And I just blurt out. "Do you have a grinder? You know? Like for meat?" He doesn't blink. I say it again. I really need a *grinder*. Without missing a beat or flinching the cashier says, "I don't remember seeing one." So then I turn to the nice looking muscular married man behind me and say. I really need a grinder. Did you see any grinders today." He says, "nope, sorry". I continue my little game, "Well I went on my phone and it said there were definitely grinders in here." Neither of the men even smirk at me, not even a raised eyebrow. The married man puts his arm around the waist of his wife. He touches his son's head. He can't be MuscleDude, no way. Oxygen tank lady says, "You're not in target lady, get a move on." I pay for my groceries. I stand off to the side. He pays for his groceries. I refresh the Grindr. MuscleDude is now 100 feet away. I refresh again. MuscleDude is now 200 feet away. This sweet all-American family get in their blue minivan and drive away. MuscleDude is now 1800 feet away. And MuscleDude is gone. And I think about his wife. And I think about his sons. And is everyone on this planet basically a homosexual. Is that the message here? And so it continues...everywhere I go I open up Grindr....the gas station, 4 people within 300 feet...Wal-Mart, 8 people within 900 feet....my job...12 people within 1500 feet...I work at a high school for goodness sake. I'm not, I'm not, I'm not homophobic. I'm not. But they're everywhere.

(MORE)

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## MOM (CONT'D)

I thought my son was special...it just never occurred to me that everywhere I went I was within 500 feet of 10 homosexuals...it's not a bad thing...it's not...it's just...surprising...and a little disturbing...and why is anyone on Grindr in a high school? I'm home now, alone, sitting in my favorite chair. A message pops up on the Grindr? "Pic?" That's all they write. "Pic?" He's 12 miles away. It's time for me to upload a pic. If I'm gonna do this thing I should be doing it better.

She turns and looks at the lamp next to her. She snaps a photo of her lampshade. She uploads it. Waits.

## MOM (CONT'D)

He likes my lampshade. I tell him thanks. Then he writes, "How did you know I have a lamp shade fetish?" He's funny. I like him. I write LOL. He writes. "So what's up? Can I come over and screw my light bulb into your lamp shade?" He's not as funny as he thinks is but I appreciate the attempt. I write "LOL" but I don't really mean it. He never writes back. And so it goes. Everywhere I go guys send me messages: "Hey PepsiGuzzler, nice name." "You want to guzzle my Pepsi." "I hate Pepsi, how bout some "Coke" instead. LOL. PNP?", with a question mark. I'm starting to regret my choice of screen name. And they all seem obsessed with my lamp shade: "nice lamp", "I like your lamp", "looks like you've got a pretty big lamp there". "You're the hottest lamp shade on here". I just ignore them. Most of them. They aren't as funny as they think they are. And how bored do you have to be to start a conversation with a lamp? The whole thing just makes me sad. But I can't stop looking. No matter how gross I just can't stop looking. I start to read profiles. I notice patterns. One pattern in particular confuses me. Their profile usually goes something like this: "In a relationship for 11 years. Happily married officially 6 years ago. Life is great.

(MORE)

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CONTINUED:

MOM (CONT'D)

Looking a for a third to join us."  
 What?!?! Or, "were open but don't play  
 together". Or, "Open relationship here.  
 Married to a wonderful man, not looking  
 for anything serious, just some fun when  
 the husband goes away but he knows so  
 it's all good." Really???" "It's all  
 good???" Is it really? It doesn't sound  
 good. So I Google "open relationship"...

(reads)

"a marriage or relationship in which both  
 partners agree that each may have sexual  
 relations with others."

(Mom),

Isn't that the opposite of marriage? Is  
 my Joseph in an "open relationship"?  
 Would he tell me if he were? Do I even  
 want to know? During the whole gay  
 marriage debate, that ripped this country  
 apart by the way, I never heard one gay  
 man stand up and say, "I just want the  
 right to marry the man I love and then  
 have sex with everyone else". Cause  
 that's not a marriage. A marriage is a  
 commitment between two people. Our  
 bodies are sacred and meant to be shared  
 with just one other person after you're  
 married. That's it. Pick one. That's  
 what I was taught and that's what I  
 believe and I don't know any heterosexual  
 couple that says, "we love each other so  
 much and we get to sleep with whoever we  
 want so basically our relationship is  
 perfect". Who says that? Certainly no  
 couples I know. I mean maybe hippies,  
 but...well...not Mormons. Why should you  
 have the right to get married if you  
 don't respect the institution of  
 marriage. And that goes for everyone,  
 not just homosexuals...everyone! And see  
 I never thought about this stuff before.  
 It just wasn't in my brain. And I begin  
 to have second thoughts about all this.  
 Maybe life was better when I didn't know  
 that every single person on the planet is  
 a homosexual.

She sits and thinks.

MOM (CONT'D)

Grindr makes me feel very lonely.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She thinks some more.

MOM (CONT'D)

But maybe that's the point. Maybe it wants you to feel lonely so that you'll try to meet other people. And then after you meet them and "it's" over and they leave you, you feel lonely again. So you look for another. In an endless loop. An endless grind. And I guess that's why it's called Grindr.

(Siri)

Okay, here's what I found. In Ice Hockey a grindr is a player better known for his hard work and checking than his scoring.

(Mom)

A week goes by...no checking. I had to put it away for a while. Maybe forever.

(beat)

So I think I lied to you earlier. Well not a total lie. I said I work in a high school. I don't work in a high school. I volunteer at a high school. It's basically the same thing I just don't get paid and I only go in once a week. It's easy, it gets me out of the house and it makes me feel like a good person when I leave. Plus, the kids. I like being around the kids. You know I love kids. So I'm in the library on Thursday afternoon and I just finished reading a fairy tale to a group of kids in the day care, it's for high school kids who have kids and still want to finish high school. We have 6 of them in this high school. One girl has two kids. And she's 17. And I envy her. So I finish up this fairy tale. And I mean a real fairy tale. Not like the fairy tale I'm telling you. I'm kidding, I'm kidding. But anyway. I'm in the library. The kids shuffle out. I'm all alone. Next to me is a copy of The Three Little Pigs. Which of course makes me think of, you know, HappyPig. Which makes me think of, you know...but I'm at school...and I know its wrong...but I just can't stop myself. I check my phone. And by check my phone, I mean...you know...I check, the Grindr...at a high school, in the library...aaaaaaand...no, no, no, no, no, no...four kids online within 1800 feet.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOM (CONT'D)

Well I assume it's kids. Maybe one of them's the drama teacher. He's openly gay. Openly gay teachers, it's a new world. But even if one of them is the drama teacher...4 people online...in a high school...come on. A message pops up..."you shouldn't drink Pepsi, it's not good for you." Could this be the health teacher? Or school nurse, maybe. I look at the age. 18. I check the other profiles that are nearby. All 18. My gut tells me they aren't 18. How old are they really? 16? 15? I need to know. I write back, "you are right, Pepsi is really not good for..." NO. I start over.

(spelling it out)

W-a-s-s-u-p.

(speaking it, like a kid)

"Wassup."

(Student)

Just chillin. Bored.

(Mom)

What class?

(Student)

Ha. Wouldn't you like to know.

(Mom)

I don't know how to respond. I don't know what to say without blowing my cover. So I wait. And nothing. Then 5 minutes later.

(Student)

So what's going on?

(Mom)

Just staring at the clock.

(Student)

Me, too. Tick tock tick tick tick tock.

(Mom)

I'm craving...Dairy Queen.

(Student)

Oh, really, you want a milkshake? LOL With or without a cherry on top? Or do you want the cherry on bottom?

(Mom, to audience)

Well that was quick. And then I go for it.

(Mom)

Don't flatter yourself...dude...I really want a milkshake. I'm heading to Dairy Queen after this if you want to chill. Will be there around 3. Join me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

MOM (CONT'D)

Unless you're a flake like everybody else on here.

(Mom, to audience)

There is a long silence. Nothing. He doesn't believe me. My cover's been blown. Silence. Then he responds:

(Student)

Cool.

(Mom)

What have I done. I guess I'm going to Dairy Queen and I am now in Dairy Queen. Picture a Dairy Queen. Can you picture it? Really picture it. Okay, so here I am in Dairy Queen. And the irony escaped me at the time. But I really did go to Dairy Queen. And I'm a nervous wreck. I order a Pepsi to help take the edge off. I take out my phone. I sit and I wait. Finally, a kid comes in, so young, alone. He doesn't order. He just sits. Takes out his phone. I get a message. "Hey, flake, you coming?" I write back, "Almost there. Whatcha wearing?" And I spell it w-a-t-c-h-a, "watcha" cause I'm getting pretty good at this. And then he says, "green shirt." And it's him. And I suddenly feel so sad. He's so young. And meeting a stranger...for...for what? Does he even know? I tell myself just to leave...this is not going to end well...but I can't stop myself...I slowly stand up, slide into his booth and say, "I'm no flake." And he is terrified and shocked and paralyzed and I say...it's okay...I just want to talk...you're not in trouble, I promise. And he just stares at me. And I can tell he's so scared. And I'm so scared and I just blurt out. "How old are you, really, how old are you?" And his eyes well up. And I say, it's okay. And I ask him again and he says, "15". And I believe him. 15?!?! And I tell him that I have a gay son and that I understand and that he's safe. I tell him I'm very good at keeping secrets. And he wants to cry, but he fights back the tears and I reach across the table and I take his hand which is shaking a little. And he starts to talk. It just pours out.

(MORE)

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CONTINUED:

## MOM (CONT'D)

He tells me a story about his Dad accusing him of being "a faggot" because he doesn't have a girlfriend and he's terrified of what would happen to him if his Dad found out. He says the only people that know he's gay are the guys he meets on Grindr. And I keep hold of his hand and I listen to him, and I support him, and I love him unconditionally, and I tell him it's okay that you're gay and that God has a plan for him, words I've never said to my own son. I've never told Joseph, "it's okay to be gay." Why can I say it to a stranger but not to my own son? I don't know. He tells me I'm nice. He tells me he wishes he had a Mom like me. He talks about how lonely he is and I tell him I understand. I say, "I'm lonely, too, I'm married and I'm lonely." And he says he doesn't understand and I say, "well if you ever get married you will." And then a lightning bolt shoots down from Heaven and the Dairy Queen is destroyed and I go straight to Hell. Two more hours pass. Two more Oreo blizzards. We talk about everything. And we laugh a lot. And he asks if we can meet again. He says, "I'm the coolest Mom he's ever met. He nicknames me Grindr Mom." He asks if we can stay friends. I say, "yes", but I lied. I'm pretty sure what I did isn't legal. I picture the headlines, "Straight Married Mormon Woman Arrested at Dairy Queen for Meeting Underage Boy She Met on Grindr." I come to my senses and I realize I have to get out of there. I give him a fake phone number. I have officially become a gay man. And I leave. And I never see him again. And I think about him every day. And I pray he's okay. But I fear that he isn't. And driving home I know that this Grindr adventure is coming to an end. So that night I'm downstairs in the den and my husband is upstairs watching tv and I open the app...I was going to delete it...I was...I really was...but I thought to myself, just one last time, so I open the app...MarriedBottom4U...is 60 feet away. We live on an acre of land. Just me and my husband. 60 feet away?

(MORE)

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CONTINUED:

MOM (CONT'D)

MarriedBottom4U. I start shaking. He has a picture of his...for his profile. And after 26 years of marriage I know what...it...looks like. And I'm shaking. And he was last online 30 minutes ago. Married Bottom4U. Like a fool I read the profile.

(reading)

"Married but in a sexless marriage. The wife is a bitch and when we do try it's boring and over in 10 minutes. Looking for someone to open me up. Take me places I've never been. I want you to own my ass. Keep going even if I say no. Discretion is a must. PNP is no problem. I only bareback with other married men. I can't host but can come to you during the day. Hit me up. Let's get this party started."

She closes the phone. Sits in silence. She is devastated. Completely devastated. She sits and goes thru countless emotions for what seems like hours...she can barely put the next words together. She is shaken to her core.

MOM

I delete my account. I sit in silence. I go upstairs. I smile. I get undressed. We kneel and pray together. I go to bed. He joins me. He kisses me goodnight. He says, "I love you." I say, "me too". And I never open the Grindr again. I'm very good at keeping secrets.

Slow fade to black.

The End