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What Are the Odds?

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Game 

Informant: 
Kengo James, or KJ as I refer to him, is a kind and out-going person. He is quick to make friends and is very popular around the Utah State Campus. KJ’s personality is one who is always willing to have fun and participate in odd activities. His personality is very open and welcoming, which is a reason why he knows many people and is constantly doing something. Kengo is a Global Communications major at Utah State University. He served an LDS mission in Japan and has a great love for people. He often has a story to tell, most of which he is a main part of. KJ’s best friend is Matt Minaga and they are roommates.

Context: 
This piece was collected while in Kengo’s room. We were sitting on his very comfortable bed talking about school and activities. Kengo feels most comfortable when he is in his own space, specifically his room. He has added pictures, quotes, decorative lights around his room to make it a very relaxed and comfortable setting. KJ believes that the best place for him to study is in his room. This information is important because this was the best place for me to collect a story from him. It was later in the afternoon, but before dinner time. We are usually hanging out close to that time anyway.

I told a story about playing What Are the Odd’s with his best friend Matt. This reminded me that I have played said game with KJ and I wanted to hear a story from him. I met KJ about a year ago am still hearing new stories from him, something that was helpful when collecting folk pieces for my research. Once we started talking, he felt more comfortable and was able to remember stories.

Text: 
KJ: [missing the first few seconds of the story.] And I don’t think I did it that night because I was still kinda confused at what was going on. Kinda confusing thing. But after that, I think I heard somebody do it in high school. And then from there it just, blossomed.

Me: Can you think of one of the stories that stands out the most about playing “What Are the Odds?”

KJ: Dee’s! We were at Dee’s. Dee’s is a eating establishment that’s open late at night. Um, we, had basi- I think we watched a movie and then we went there way late at night. It’s kinda like
Denny’s but local, so we went there, and everything was “What Are the Odds?” Snort sugar.

Drink this drink that everybody put lots of things in. Drink this drink that somebody spit in. Eat this chip with lots of, Cholula sauce on it. Eat this thing that’s weird. Stuff like that. Lot’s of things happened. “What Are the Odds?” [inaudible comment]

Me: How have you taught this to other people?

KJ: Mostly by example

Me: Really?

KJ: See if you like tell somebody, ‘Okay, what we’re gonna do is I’m asking you what are the odds of you doing this and then you count down from whatever, and then like you have to do it.’ kinda confusin. So, um, you say, for example I say, ‘Hey Matt!’

Matt: Hey!

KJ: How you doin’?

Matt: Good, how are you?

KJ: What are the odds, that you do a headstand?!

Matt: One in ten!

KJ: He says one in ten so, from one in ten, so everyone knows how to play the game and a third party doesn’t so I say, ‘So will you count us off such as Kelsey right here

Me: Mhmm

KJ: And then we’re going to say a number between one in ten.

[Group pause]

Me: 3, 2, 1

KJ and Matt: “4” “8” [said simoltaniously]
Matt: [laughing] you said four

KJ: I said four, so we were not right.

**Texture:**
When first asked, he paused. This type of pause was not because he was taken off guard, but instead he was preparing himself to tell the story. Kengo is naturally a great story teller, and having an audience to hear this story was helpful. When describing how he learned how to play the game, it was a more of a matter-of-fact tone. It was him simply explaining how he was introduced to the game, not something he had retold again and again. The second story was about a time he remembered most. He replied to my question instantly, not hesitating to think of a story. It was obvious that he had told this story before. He told it fairly quickly, which could imply the idea that when retelling this story, he often had little time to do so. It could be because he was in competition with other stories, or that there are not a lot of details that he can vividly remember. Nonetheless, he had a personal experience that came to mind instantly which is evidence of a retelling.

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