



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

I've been on the planet for 662 months, and I am known - by name - by a few famous people. I'm not sure I've ever done anything truly historic, but I've shaken hands with numerous people who have. So, what are my chances of making it as the subject of a Page One article in the **Wall Street Journal**?

Ahmed Ibrahim is a year younger than me, an immigrant to America from Egypt, and drives a Yellow Cab on the streets of New York... and the subject of TWO Page One articles in the **WSJ**. The first was four years ago, describing his "value-added" feature: for single adult passengers, he was a self-commissioned "matchmaker." Blind dates, arranged by an outgoing cabbie... for white-collar Manhattan professionals whose professional competence was offset by their romantic failure.

This weekend, **WSJ** did a follow-up treatment, on the occasion of Ibrahim's first engagement. After hundreds of arranged first dates, Ahmed was invited to attend an upscale "ambush:" Cabber Benedict planned to pop the question to Crystal Ingorvaia over dinner at Per Se, followed by champagne at The Rainbow Room - atop Rockefeller Center - with their families... and Ahmed Ibrahim, their "broker." That event made the **Wall Street Journal** Weekend Edition, Page One. The relationship... made possible by a well-intended



introduction, by someone who went out of his way to make the match.

Dinner with a Perfect Stranger: An Invitation Worth Considering. That wasn't the headline from the Journal, it's the title of a book by David Gregory (*WaterBrook Press, 2005*). If you have an hour to enliven, this 100 page mini-book will fill the time incredibly well. Nick Cominsky- the main character in this simple story - is the quintessential picture of the guy next door in the neighborhood, or in the next office at work. He receives an engraved invitation in the mail that says, simply, "You are invited to a dinner with Jesus of Nazareth," Milano's Restaurant, Tuesday, March 24, Eight O'clock. He suspects a practical joke/hoax from his 30ish buddies, but takes the bait and shows up anyway.

No guffaws in the dining room; no pranksters in the parking lot; just a light Tuesday night crowd in a suburban Cincinnati Italian bistro... and a dark-complected 30ish man waiting at a table for two. The book is the

account of a seasoned skeptic sharing a four-course dinner with God in the Flesh, answering the questions that flowed naturally from a young man who had been raised to expect America's Funniest Videos as an explanation for a personal invitation that purported to come from the God of the Universe.

Out take: brought to the table by the maitre d', Nick says, "Excuse me, but am I supposed to know you?" *"That's a good question,"* he smiled, to himself I guess. *"I would say the answer is, 'yes.'"* "I'm sorry, but I've never met you, as far as I remember." *"That's true."* (words of Jesus in italic)

These days, \$12.95 won't buy you three gallons of gas... but it will buy you **Dinner**. I'd suggest you pick up a copy, read it... and then offer it to a friend who reminds you of Nick Cominsky. Ahmed Ibrahim is paid to drive a cab, but he does matchmaking as a value-added service. What if you viewed your career as your "cab," but saw the people in your career space as relationship-challenged, needing someone to introduce them to the One who is waiting for them at Milano's? *This book is a pass-along to them, from you, that could lead to an engagement...*

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