

## Real Stories MKE Season 1 Ep 2 | Transcript

Joel Dresang 0:00

Welcome to Real Stories MKE, brought to you as part of Ex Fabula's work to connect Milwaukee through real stories. I'm Joel Dresang.

Kim Shine 0:07

And I'm Kim Shine. Ex Fabula believes that everyone has personal stories worth sharing. We host storytelling workshops where community members can build their storytelling, skill and confidence, and StorySlams where true stories are shared on stage. Today, we are bringing you a few of those powerful stories.

Joel Dresang 0:27

Yes, and this episode, our theme is driving. At Ex Fabula, we hear a lot of stories about driving. Let's face it, cars are a big part of the American culture. Getting your driver's license is literally a rite of passage. Driving entails a sense of independence, the seeking of adventure and thrills, and cars are a common source of frustration and danger and unexpected consequences.

Kim Shine 0:51

Yeah, I have so many car stories. I mean, I but I love my car. I love each car that I have. I name them. And they they're like my children.

Joel Dresang 1:01

What's the name of your current car?

Kim Shine 1:03

You know, I don't think I've named this car yet. Which is kind of weird because I've had it about two years. But my first car was named Betty because it was a Ford. My second car was named Blue because it was a blue Neon and now I have a silver car, and I don't know, it hasn't come to me yet. Maybe because...I don't know.

Joel Dresang 1:23

Think about it and share.

Kim Shine 1:25

Okay, I will!

Joel Dresang 1:26

You know, the very first story that I shared on Ex Fabula at a StorySlam was a driving story. It was about the time that a deer saved me from a speeding ticket.

Kim Shine 1:36

Okay, tell me more. I'm interested.

Joel Dresang 1:38

Okay, so I'm driving on the highway, I noticed an unmarked squad car behind me. And I noticed that I was speeding and I noticed that the officers were making motions as if they were going to do something about my speeding and out of nowhere, a deer ran into the side of this car. And they stopped paying attention to me. And I was able to just keep driving. They were okay. As I, as my memory sees it, the deer actually like did a barrel roll over and landed in the ditch on his feet and trotted away.

Kim Shine 2:20

He was—the deer said this is for Joel!

Joel Dresang 2:24

Go Bucks!

Kim Shine 2:28

I would be laughing so hard!

Joel Dresang 2:31

So our first driving story comes from Jasmine Hawkins. She shared this story in 2018 as part of a public StorySlam with the theme, Beginner's Luck. Here's Jasmine.

Jasmine Hawkins 2:55

Wow, this light is extremely bright. Wow. Okay, first and foremost, I am an Ex Fabula board member. So I would just like to say it is great to see you all here tonight. Thank you for coming. John, that does that start my five minutes? All right, okay, I'll go ahead. Um, Beginner's Luck is a farce. First and foremost. It just, it gives people a false sense of self-worth. And they feel like they just better than they are. So it was 2006. And I was in Driver's Ed, pass the class flying colors. I scheduled my driver's test. I took it, didn't have much practice. I took it. And we got two points off. Now I don't remember how many points you can get off to pass, but only got two points off. So needless to say, I was killing it. So I think I got one point off for like turning the wheel the wrong way in an intersection or something. I was like, whatever, who cares about that? And then being on the hill. Again, I turned my wheel the wrong way. And I was just like, I never park on a hill so I don't care. So yeah, I got my license. It's right before my junior prom. So I'm pumped because my mom said hey, if you pass you can drive. So Jasmine is driving to prom— look out! So I wait til Saturday, I get my hair done because you know today a prom because of course I needed to be fresh. Um, I do have a lot of black people in here—woo! So you know that if you go to a black beautician on Saturday, you're gonna be in there for a while. So um, needless to say, I was late picking up my date. So I'm leaving the beauty salon and I'm trying to rush home so I can get dressed and like, oh, I don't want to be late. I kind of, sorta like the guy that asked to go with me and like, you know what the hey, I guess, you know, maybe we can kiss or touch each other or something, I don't know. So I'm like, I want to be on time,

right? So I'm rushing out. And I'm in the middle of a controlled intersection. What happens...? I went the wrong f\*cking way! I was like, Oh my gosh, one of the points I got off. So I turned my wheels the wrong way and someone smacks me from behind. And yes, I go right into oncoming traffic. So the reason why I got the point off, and I guess it was a very important point as the guy may, is when you're in the middle of an inner and control intersection you're supposed to once you get there, and you're waiting to turn, supposed to turn your wheel straight, because if someone hits you from the back then you just kind of go into the median instead of oncoming traffic. So that's what I did. got into an accident. It was also my mom's birthday. Yikes. Um, so yeah, I'm like late, but my hair looks great. So yeah, I am, you know, waiting for an insurance company to get there. I'm texting this guy. And like, yeah, still coming, you know, I just gotta go home and you know, get dressed. So I get home, I don't have time to like shower shower. And like, I take like 30 minute showers. Super hot water til my skin falls off. So I'm like, in there for like a second. I'm like hitting up, you know, the hotspots. I didn't get a chance to shave, I'm like what the hell? Like, this is not gonna go over well. So I think like, on the way to his house, I'm like sweating just because I'm like, "Ah, didn't shave, is he gonna notice?" I got like a backless, sleeveless dress happening. So you know, everything's just like, whatever. It's just weird. And, you know, the rest of the night was whatever. It was like a blur. And, you know, to this day, when I want to tell people how awesome I am, I usually tell them that I took my driver's ed test, and I only got two points off. So like, you know, I am awesome. I leave out the rest of the story. Because who needs all of that garbage, you know? So that's when somebody tells me their beginner's luck story, I'm like, it's garbage because I know that something else after that happened, that was not so great. So actually, you're kind of a loser.

Joel Dresang 7:47

That was Jasmine Hawkins with her driving story. Jasmine continues to serve on the Ex Fabula board and has completely improved her driving record, with the exception of hitting the occasional garage door, fire hydrant, and mailbox. She tells us she recently celebrated her fifth Lyft-aversary and is working hard to maintain her five-star rider status.

Kim Shine 8:11

I mean, that's great. I don't know. I don't know. But I'm glad she's driving because it takes a lot to be a good defensive driver. So kudos to her. So next up on Real Stories MKE is another story about driving this time from John Birdsall. It was told at Ex Fabula's 'Damage Goods' StorySlam in February 2019. Here's John.

John Birdsall 8:47

The year was 1978. I was 16 years old. I had a Wisconsin valid driver's license. And my favorite memory of my father was him sitting at the kitchen table, busily writing a letter, a 20-page handwritten letter to Lee Iacocca, Chairman of the Chrysler Corporation. He was pounding coffee and chain smoking Kent cigarettes, and the contents of the letter, the substance was about the piece of junk, now deceased Dodge Omni Horizon that was in our garage. And he didn't know what happened to it. It could have been an accident. It was dead. The engine was dead. It could have been an accident. It could have been murder. It could have been natural causes, we didn't know. But I do know that it was the angriest I have ever, ever seen him. Even

angrier than the time a few months before when he found all my weed pipes in the basement. So naturally, I was suspect number one to be interrogated about what happened to our brand new automobile that he bought from my mother. The Dodge Omni horizon, if you haven't seen one, is basically a rectangular tin object with a hamster wheel for an engine. And he got that particular car just to show my mother how much she meant to him, I think. So he, of course, questioned me. Now I am a criminal defense lawyer. So even at age 16, though, I knew the value of the Fifth Amendment. So he didn't get nothing out of me. I couldn't tell him well, I could have told him but I didn't tell him what happened. But I'm going to tell you. So my buddy and I. And this was really the only buddy that I had, because my life was basically like that 70s Show except without all the friends. And so we had this ritual where we would just not work during the summer, because we were spoiled punk, white suburban brats. And we would always find a way during the day to go over to one of our parents basements and get high and watch Star Trek. Very productive, really successful. So one particular day, one particular day, we decided to take my mom's brand new car that my dad just got her and take her for a little test drive, you know, just to make sure everything was cool and it was working well. Because I love her, you know. So to say that our driving could be compared to maybe the modern version of Fast and Furious would be an understatement. Actually, what it was, was literally legally criminally reckless conduct. Clearly, a felonious driving statute of limitation has run a long time ago. So that's why I'm here to tell you about it. And what I remember most about that drive was the was the anguish that I know the car was feeling. Because we were going about 80 miles an hour through the curlicue City of Brookfield. When we finally got back to the garage, we pull in, take the key out, we walked back into house, and we both knew something was wrong. Even our little stoned minds knew something was wrong, because there was a noise in the garage that should not be there. But I had the key in my hand. So we walked back to the garage, just check it out. And it wasn't like a normal engine sound like you would hear if an engine was idling. It was more of a gurgling and a, and a belching. And, and it was painful. It was...smoke was coming out. And it was almost like it was saying, "Go! Save yourself. I'm not going to make it." And so that's what we did. So we went back downstairs, and we watched the Beverly Hillbillies. Which was the next thing on the list to do. So the car lasted about 10 more minutes before it breathed its last breath, poor thing. And now, I never told my dad at that time. I told him a few years ago, he's 83 now, he's survived cancer twice. I figured he could handle this story. But now I told him, but I don't know if he actually heard because I was visiting him over Christmas. And I waited till he had a couple of vodkas. And then I purposely turned Fox News up just a little bit loud. So I did tell him, but I don't know if he heard it. No. And then I started to think about it. You know, I've been feeling guilty about murdering my dad's Dodge Omni Horizon all these years, you know, and, and then I thought, You know what? My dad was right. This is Lee Iacocca is fault. For real, think about it. All right. Lee Iacocca, you built a car that cannot even handle a couple of teenagers driving a little bit over the speed limit. You're the one that's responsible for that damaged good. Thank you.

Kim Shine 14:50

So that was John Birdsall and he continues to practice law and he has not stolen any cars. In fact, as a criminal defense attorney, he has defended people who have allegedly stolen cars. His dad, though, unfortunately passed away a few years ago, but John is thankful that he was able

to come clean. And that, to his surprise, his dad laughed about the whole incident. Oh, yeah. That's that's a good memory. I like that. That's good.

Joel Dresang 15:20

Our next story about driving is from Jerrienne Hayslett. She told her story about driving in an Ex Fabula public StorySlam that was entitled 'Crush', and it took place in October 2018. Here's Jerrienne.

Jerrienne Hayslett 15:50

On the theme of 'Crush', I lived in the country when I was growing up about five miles from town. When I was about 16 years old, I had a crush on a boy a couple of years older than me who did not even know I existed, except I think he may have played a prank on me. I had it in my head that he was going to call me one Saturday night. And I waited. He didn't call. I got mad. And so I made a plan. I was going to go find him. But I didn't have a car. I couldn't even drive. But my dad did. So I waited until everybody was in bed. And I went to bed too, but I did not get my clothes off. I did not undress. I kept my clothes on. When I was sure everybody was asleep, I crept out of bed. I went down the stairs, careful to miss the squeaky one. And I went to my parents' bedroom. I knew my dad kept his car keys on the dresser just inside the door. So I was so quiet and I reached in. I got the keys and I crept through the house. I went out the back door and I raced across the lawn to the driveway, and I got in his 1953 Chevrolet manual. What do you call it, stick shift? The only thing I had ever driven was my uncle's John Deere on his farm. I got in, closed the door, started it up. And it bucked. What, what? Oh, yeah, right. There's a clutch! I put, turned it on, backed down the driveway, took off five miles away to town. And I went to the house where this boy lived with his mother and brother. But he had a car and I knew what it looked like, wasn't there. So I thought 'must be out drinking with his buddies'. And I was going to find him. I had no idea where the boys went to drink. So I did drive around town a little bit. And I decided I—I've just got to have to give it up. And I passed this house where one of this boy's friends lived. His car was out front. He was sitting in it. I pulled up beside the car. And it came really close. He was quite nervous, it's a beautiful new car. And he put the window down. I put my window down. "What are you doing here!" He didn't know who I was. And I told him I was looking for Douglas and he said, Are you crazy? He's no good for you. He said, You gotta get home. Uhh uh okay, and so I started to pull away from his car and he said, No, no, no, no, no, let me do that. And so he got in my car, he pulled it away. And then he, bless his heart, followed me all the way home. I parked the car, it was at the end of the driveway because it was quite rainy. And there were mud puddles in the drive. And I got out of the car and I crept back in the house. It was freezing. I took my shoes off, my clothes off, I got in bed, and I did finally get to sleep. And I was really I was just so irritated about everything. The next morning, which happened to be Sunday, we all got ready for church, got down to the driveway into the driveway. And my dad looks at the car and he says "Hm, I could have sworn I parked the car on the other side of the driveway." I didn't say a word, got in the car. And I sat in the back because I was the middle child, and so the oldest child got the front. So, backed out of the driveway and he says 'Huh, there's about a fourth less tank of a—'. It was lower in gas than it had been. And he noticed and he says, "You know what? I think somebody took this car for joy ride last night." I didn't say a word. It was about 20 years before I finally told him.

Joel Dresang 20:35

That was Jerrienne Hayslett . And she tells us “My life today is like living in a different universe, from that night and of my story. I certainly haven't had the need to steal a car again.” That’s good.

Kim Shine 20:47

See, talk about fate and just how everything comes together in the universe. You always learn a lesson somewhere along the lines.

Joel Dresang 20:54

Also, thanks Ex Fabula’s season sponsors that make these public StorySlams possible, including Transfer Pizzeria Cafe, SRH marketing, and WUWM 89.7 FM.

Kim Shine 21:09

Yes. Now, what's the time for Joel?

Joel Dresang 21:11

It's time for UltraShorts! Yeah, so reminder that UltraShorts are ultra short stories that people tell at our StorySlams, but they don't tell them. They write them on little slips of paper.

Kim Shine 21:23

Right! Which means you have to be really short and really concise with the story because someone else is telling it and you don't have to give your name at all either.

Joel Dresang 21:31

That's right. And it adds more voices to the story slams, which I really like.

Kim Shine 21:35

Agreed.

Joel Dresang 21:37

So um, but I'll start. This one is from Tequila. She writes “I grabbed something green from my takeout as I was driving thinking it was an avocado. I reached back to feed it to my baby. After intense screaming, crying, and pulling over, turns out it was wasabi.

Kim Shine 21:59

I hate wasabi!

Joel Dresang 22:01

Ouch! I like it, but not a lot

Kim Shine 22:03

A little is a lot!

Joel Dresang 22:07

Well you can't eat it like an avocado, for Pete's sake.

Kim Shine 22:11

That's true! I tell you what, I have my sushi and there's some-there's just a tiny bit I see it on there and I get so upset because once it's on there, you can't take it off. Like you can try and scrape it as much as you can. But no, it's still gonna bring it down. I don't like it. The next UltraShort is from Amrutha. Amrutha says "It was a cold winter night and I was a new Wisconsin resident, a transplant from Chicago. As I was driving on I94, my car still full of stuff to be moved into my new apartment, started to decelerate suddenly. My heart sank as I realized it was too late. I was out of gas in an unknown town. No friends to call, husband out of town for work, stops on the curb. I was about to call a tow truck when a kind man stopped, volunteered to get me some gas, and returned with a gallon in 15 minutes. And refused to take money and return! The kindness of humanity is a wonderful surprise."

Joel Dresang 23:09

Welcome to Milwaukee, Amrutha. This is from Prana Pirates. "I learned how to drive the European way. You drive fast on the straightaways and slow around the curves, which is different than in America. In Germany, I drove just like everyone else on the Autobahn. In Italy, my driving aligned with the pace of the motorbikes that would swerve in between lanes. But in America, my driving seems to confuse others and attract tickets. How unfair," he says.

Kim Shine 23:44

That has to be! I don't know how we drive in America because different cities—They could be neighboring cities and people just drive completely different.

Joel Dresang 23:53

Yes, you drive like you're from Chicago, right?

Kim Shine 23:55

Oh my gosh, I drive so fast and I just need you to get out of my way. I don't get speeding tickets. I still—I still follow the rules. I follow the law. But get out of my way. I got places to go.

Joel Dresang 24:04

Okay, you get there.

Kim Shine 24:07

You're gonna get in the car with me, Joel? Oh, sure. Yeah. Okay. That's great. I love it. This next UltraShort is from Sarah. "Within four months of owning my car, I put 3000 miles on it. Sometimes trying to find parking on the east side is its own kind of trip."

Joel Dresang 24:24

Yes. This is from anonymous. "I was 21, road tripping with two work friends. First big girl road trip without parents etc. driving home from Wyoming. I was off the hook for driving as at the time, I didn't drive stick. Everyone in the car was exhausted as we had a great time at the wedding in Vail. They gave me a two-minute lesson in stick shift, then all promptly fell asleep, leaving me to drive. I hit the world's biggest raccoon and they both slept through it." Sorry, Lynn.

Kim Shine 25:02

I don't know how they slept through that.

Joel Dresang 25:04

Yeah, I don't know. Well, I would think that the raccoon maybe didn't live in.

Kim Shine 25:15

Oh, gosh, you're funny, man. Okay, this one is from Chris. "Learning to drive on very rural small roads in Wisconsin has its experiences. I had just gotten my license and I was ready to go. Coming back from my aunts and uncles from picking up Starbucks, coming up to a small bridge. I realized half the bridge had fallen into the creek." What!

Joel Dresang 25:40

What? Do you...what do you—what? This UltraShort was too short. There's more of a story there.

Kim Shine 25:48

Right! You know, we need to tell people when they do UltraShorts, don't leave us hanging! I mean, you can but don't try. Please don't.

Joel Dresang 25:53

So I remember a StorySlam that was at the Times Cinema and a woman submitted an UltraShort. And they read it on stage, the one of the emcees read it on stage. And it was like 30 seconds. Really nice UltraShort. And then they picked her name from the hat. And she got up to tell the same story in five minutes that they just told in 30 seconds. So if you go to a StorySlam, write an UltraShort, put your name in the hat, but don't make them the same story.

Kim Shine 26:24

Yeah, I mean, but what? Did she give more detail? Was it worth it?

Joel Dresang 26:30

She had to! Yeah actually, it was a great 30 seconds. But it was—it was hard.

Kim Shine 26:36

I hope she's not listening

Joel Dresang 26:39



You know, brevity is the soul of wit, right? I mean, you know, if he can say it in 30 seconds, don't say it in five.

Kim Shine 26:44

That's true. I hope I hope Jasmine isn't listening either. Because her in the garage doors and stuff.

Joel Dresang 26:49

Yeah, she probably is. How about a couple more?

Kim Shine 27:54

Yeah, I think so.

Joel Dresang 26:56

Um, this is from Peter. "The first day I had a driver's license, I backed into a guy in the post office parking lot. Even though I dented his car, he said, no big deal. One day, a young woman with a new driver's license bumped me. I remembered my first day and said, no big deal." That's pretty good. See, that's karma.

Kim Shine 27:20

That's good. All right, this next one, which will be our last one. "After my brain bleed, I was paralyzed. And I had to learn how to walk and talk all over again. The most frightening moment was when I was ready to drive again. I was risking my life and the life of others. But I took it slowly and eventually started to drive again." Yeah.

Joel Dresang 27:44

Is that it? It seems like this went so fast. I know. We don't have more stories?

Kim Shine 27:48

I know. It makes me so sad.

Joel Dresang 27:50

We'll, let's do another one of these.

Kim Shine 27:41

Yeah, we'll do it. We'll do it next time. You guys gotta join us too.

Joel Dresang 27:52

That's all the time we have for Real Stories MKE. But don't worry, we've been at this for more than 10 years, and there are more audio and video stories available at [exfabula.org](http://exfabula.org).

Kim Shine 28:04

That is so true. Because our website also lists upcoming storytelling workshops and StorySlams, which you should come to! We also hope you'll join us at an event and maybe even share a

story. You can connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and also in the community.

Joel Dresang 28:21

Yes, very, very important. Um, thanks to everyone who makes this program possible, including Ex Fabula staff, the storytellers, of course, and audio engineer, Sam Woods.

Kim Shine 28:29

We love you, Sam! And join us again next Sunday on 89.7 WUWM.

Joel Dresang 28:35

Milwaukee's NPR.

Kim Shine 28:39

For Real Stories MKE, I am Kim shine.

Joel Dresang 28:41

And I'm Joel Dresang. Thanks for listening.