

The Vagina Monologues

by Eve Ensler

The official script
for the 2009 V-Day
Campaigns

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INTRODUCTION

*(*This introduction is arranged for three actresses but can be readjusted to suit your production needs. It can be performed by a much larger group, but may be no less than 3 people. We encourage you to cast as many people as possible.)*

WOMAN 1

I bet you're worried.

WOMAN 2

We were worried.

WOMAN 3

We were worried about vaginas.

WOMAN 1

We were worried what we think about vaginas, and even more worried that we don't think about them. We were worried about our own vaginas. They needed a context of other vaginas — a community, a culture of vaginas. There's so much darkness and secrecy surrounding them — like the Bermuda triangle. Nobody ever reports back from there. **WOMAN 2**

In the first place it's not so easy to even find your vagina. Women go weeks, months, sometimes years without looking at it. A high-powered businesswoman was interviewed and she said she was too busy; she didn't have the time. Looking at your vagina, she said, is a full day's work. You have to get down there on your back in front of a mirror that's standing on its own, full-length preferred. You've got to get in the perfect position, with the perfect light, which then is shadowed somehow by the mirror and the angle you're at. You get all twisted up. You're arching your head up, killing your back. You're exhausted by then. She said she didn't have the time for that. She was busy. **WOMAN 3**

So there were vagina interviews, which became vagina monologues. Over two hundred women were interviewed. Older women, young women, married women, lesbians, single women, college professors, actors, corporate professionals, sex workers, African American women, Asian American women, Hispanic

women, Native American women, Caucasian women, Jewish women. OK. At first women were reluctant to talk. They were a little shy. But once they got going, you couldn't stop them. Women secretly love to talk about their vaginas. They get very excited, mainly because no one's ever asked them before.

WOMAN 1

Let's just start with the word "vagina." It sounds like an infection at best, maybe a medical instrument: "Hurry nurse, bring me the vagina." "Vagina." "Vagina." Doesn't matter how many times you say it, it never sounds like a word you want to say. It's a totally ridiculous, completely unsexy word. If you use it during sex, trying to be politically correct — "Darling, could you stroke my vagina?" — you kill the act right there.

WOMAN 2

We were worried about vaginas, what we call them and don't call them.

WOMAN 3

In Great Neck*, they call it Pussycat. A woman there said that her mother used to tell her "Don't wear panties underneath your pajamas, dear, you need to air out your Pussycat."

*(*You can add "Great Neck, New York" if you are unfamiliar with this town)*

WOMAN 1

In Westchester they called it a Pooki,

WOMAN 2

in New Jersey, a twat.

WOMAN 3

There's Powderbox, a Poochi, a Poopi, a Peepe, a Poopelu, a Poonani, a Pal and a Piche,

WOMAN 1

Toadie, Dee dee, Nishi, Dignity, Monkey Box,

WOMAN 2

Coochi Snorcher, Cooter, Labbe,

WOMAN 3

Gladys Seagelman,

WOMAN 1

VA, Wee wee, Horseshot, Nappy Dugout,

WOMAN 2

Mongo, Mooky, a Pajama, Fannyboo, Mushmellow,

WOMAN 3

a Ghoulie, Possible, Tamale, Tottita, Connie,

WOMAN 1

a Mimi in Miami,

WOMAN 2

a Split Knish in Philadelphia,

WOMAN 3

and a Schmende in the Bronx.

(You can add up to five of your own regionally-specific names to this list.)

WOMEN 1. 2. and 3

We're worried about vaginas.

INTRO - HAIR

Some of the monologues are based on one woman's story, some of the monologues are based on several women's stories surrounding the same theme, and, a few times, a good idea became an outrageous one. This monologue is based on one woman's story, although the subject came up in every interview and was often fraught. The subject being ...

HAIR

You cannot love a vagina unless you love hair. Many people do not love hair. My first and only husband hated hair. He said it was cluttered and dirty. He made me shave my vagina. It looked puffy and exposed and like a little girl. This excited him. When he made love to me my vagina felt the way a beard must feel. It felt good to rub it and painful. Like scratching a mosquito bite. It felt like it was on fire. There were screaming red bumps. I refused to shave it again. Then my husband had an affair. When we went to marital therapy, he said he screwed around because I wouldn't please him sexually. I wouldn't shave my vagina. The therapist had a German accent and gasped (*Gasp.*) between sentences (*Gasp.*) to show her empathy. She asked me why I didn't want to please my husband. I told her I thought it was weird. I felt little when my hair was gone down there and I couldn't help talking in a baby voice and the skin got irritated and even calamine lotion wouldn't help it. She told me marriage was a compromise. I asked her if shaving my vagina would stop him from screwing around. I asked her if she had many cases like this before. She said that questions diluted the process. I needed to jump in. She was sure it was a good beginning.

This time, when we got home, *he* got to shave my vagina. It was like a therapy bonus prize. He clipped it a few times and there was a little blood in the bathtub. He didn't even notice it 'cause he was so happy shaving me. Then, later, when my husband was pressing against me, I could feel his spiky sharpness sticking into me, my naked puffy vagina. There was no protection. There was no fluff.

I realized then that hair is there for a reason — it's the leaf around the flower, the lawn around the house. You have to love hair in order to love the vagina. You can't pick the parts you want. And besides, my husband never stopped screwing around.

(*The "Lists" that follow are broken up for three women but you are free to divide up the answers to the questions among your actresses as you choose.)

WOMAN 1

All of the women were asked the following questions.

WOMAN 2

If your vagina got dressed what would it wear?

WOMAN 3

glasses

a beret

a leather jacket

silk stockings

mink

a pink boa

WOMAN 1

a male tuxedo

jeans

something form fitting

WOMAN 2

emeralds

an evening gown

sequins

WOMAN 1

Armani only

WOMAN 2

a tutu

see through black underwear

a taffeta ball gown

WOMAN 3

something machine washable

WOMAN 1 costume eye mask

purple velvet pajamas angora a

red bow **WOMAN 2** ermine and

pearls a leopard hat a silk

kimono sweatpants a tattoo

WOMAN 3

an electrical shock device to keep unwanted strangers away

WOMAN 1 high heels

lace *and* combat boots purple

feathers twigs and shells cotton

WOMAN 2 a pinafore **WOMAN**

3 a bikini **WOMAN 2** a slicker

WOMAN 3

If your vagina could talk, what would it say, two words:

WOMAN 1

slow down*

*(*Since 'slow down' is one of the biggest laughs in the show, this can also be said by all the actresses in unison. After laugh...)*

WOMAN 2

is that you?

WOMAN 3

feed me

I want

yum yum

oh yeah

WOMAN 1

start again

no, over there

lick me

stay home

brave choice

WOMAN 2

think again

more please

embrace me

let's play

WOMAN 3

don't stop

more more

remember me?

WOMAN 1

come inside

not yet

whoa mama

yes yes

rock me

WOMAN 2

enter at your own risk

WOMAN 1

oh god

thank god

I'm here

let's go

let's go

find me

WOMAN 2

thank you

bonjour

too hard

don't give up

WOMAN 3

where's Brian?

that's better

yes, there, there.

INTRO - THE FLOOD

A group of women between the ages of 65 and 75 was interviewed. These interviews were the most poignant. Possibly because many of these women had never had a vagina interview before. One woman who was 72 had never even seen her vagina. She washed herself in the shower and bath, but never with conscious intention. She had never had an orgasm. At 72 she went into therapy, as we do in New York*, and with the help of her therapist, she went home one afternoon by herself, lit some candles, took a bath, played some music, and she got down with herself. She said it took her over an hour, because she was arthritic, but when she finally found her clitoris, she said, she cried. This monologue is for her. (**Can also say "as they do in New York"*)

THE FLOOD

Down there? I haven't been down there since 1953. No, it had nothing to do with Eisenhower. No, no, it's a cellar down there. It's very damp, clammy. You don't want to go down there. Trust me. You'd get sick. Suffocating. Very nauseating. The smell of the clamminess and the mildew and everything. Whew! Smells unbearable. Gets in your clothes.

No, there was no accident down there. It didn't blow up or catch on fire or anything. It wasn't so dramatic. I mean...well, never mind. No. Nevermind. I can't talk to you about this. What's a smart girl like you going around talking to old ladies about their down-theres for. We didn't do this kind of a thing when I was a girl. What? Jesus, OK.

There was this boy, Andy Leftkov. He was cute — well I thought so. And tall, like me, and I really liked him. He asked me out for a date in his car...

I can't tell you this. I can't do this, talk about down there. You just know it's there. Like the cellar.

There's rumbles down there sometimes. You can hear the pipes and things get caught there, little animals and

things, and it gets wet, and sometimes people have to plug up the leaks. Otherwise the door stays closed. You forget about it. I mean, it's part of the house, but you don't see it or think about it. It has to be there, though, 'cause every house needs a cellar otherwise the bedroom would be in the basement.

Oh Andy, Andy Leftkov. Right. Andy was very good looking. He was a catch. That's what we called it in my day. We were in his car, a new white Chevy Bel air. I remember thinking that my legs were too long for the seat. I have long legs. They were shmushed up against the dashboard. I was looking at my big kneecaps when he just kissed me in this surprisingly "Take me by control like they do in the movies" kind of way. And I got excited, so excited and well, there was a flood down there. I couldn't control it. It was like this force of passion, this river of life just flooded out of me, right through my panties, right onto the car seat of his new white Chevy Belair. It wasn't pee and it was smelly — well, frankly I didn't really smell anything at all, but he said, Andy said that it smelled like sour milk and it was staining his car seat. I was "a stinky weird girl," he said. I wanted to explain that his kiss had caught me off guard, that I wasn't normally like this. I tried to wipe the flood up with my dress. It was a new yellow primrose dress and it looked so ugly with the flood on it. Andy drove me home without saying another word and when I got out and closed his car door, I closed the whole store. Locked it, never opened for business again. I dated some after that, but the idea of flooding made me too nervous. I never even got close again.

I used to have dreams, crazy dreams. Oh they're dopey. Why? Burt Reynolds. I don't know why. He never did much for me in life, but in my dreams...it was always Burt and I, Burt and I, Burt and I. It was always the same general dream. We'd be out. Burt and I. It was some restaurant like the kind you see in Atlantic City, all big with chandeliers and stuff and thousands of waiters with the vests. Burt would give me this orchid corsage. I'd pin it on my blazer. We'd laugh. We were always laughing Burt and I, laughing, laughing. We'd eat shrimp cocktail. Huge shrimp, fabulous shrimp. We'd laugh more. We were very happy together.

Then he'd look into my eyes and pull me to him in the middle of the restaurant — and just as he was about to kiss me, the whole restaurant would start to shake, pigeons would fly out from under the table — I don't

know what those pigeons were doing there — and the flood would come straight from down there. It would pour out of me. It would pour and pour. There would be fish inside it and little boats and the whole restaurant would fill with my flood and Burt would be standing waist deep in it, looking horribly disappointed in me that I'd done it again, horrified as he watched his friends, Dean Martin and the like, swim past us in their tuxedos and evening gowns.

I don't have those dreams anymore. Not since they took away just about everything connected with down there. Moved out the uterus, the tubes, the whole works. The doctor thought he was being funny. He told me if you don't use it, you lose it. But really I found out it was cancer. Everything around it had to go. Who needs it anyway. Highly overrated. I've done other things. I love the dog shows. I sell antiques.

You ask me what would it wear? What kind of question is that? What would it wear? It would wear a big sign: CLOSED DUE TO FLOODING.

What would it say? I told you. It's not like that. It's not like a person who speaks. It stopped being a thing that talked a long time ago. It's a place. A place you don't go. It's closed up, under the house. It's down there.

You happy? You made me talk — you got it out of me. You got an old lady to talk about her down-there. You feel better now? (*She takes a moment.*) You know, actually, you're the first person I ever told about this, and I feel a little better.

THE VAGINA WORKSHOP

(*English accent)

My vagina is a shell, a round pink tender shell opening and closing, closing and opening. My vagina is a flower, an eccentric tulip, the center acute and deep, the scent delicate, the petals gentle but sturdy.

I did not always know this. I learned this in the vagina workshop. I learned this from a woman who runs the vagina workshop, a woman who believes in vaginas, who really sees vaginas, who helps other women see their own vaginas by seeing other women's vaginas.

In the first session the woman who runs the vagina workshop asked us to draw a picture of our own "unique, beautiful, fabulous vagina." That's what she called it. She wanted to know what our own unique beautiful fabulous vagina looked like to us. One woman who was pregnant drew a big red mouth screaming with coins spilling out. Another very skinny woman drew a big serving plate with a kind of Devonshire pattern on it. I drew a huge black dot with little squiggly lines around it. The black dot was equal to a black hole in space and the squiggly lines were meant to be people or things or just your basic atoms that got lost there. I had always thought of my vagina as an anatomical vacuum randomly sucking up particles and objects from the surrounding environment.

I did not think of my vagina in practical or biological terms. I did not, for example, see it as something attached to me.

In the workshop we were asked to look at our vaginas with hand mirrors. Then, after careful examination, we were to verbally report to the group what we saw. I must tell you that up until this point everything I knew about my vagina was based on hearsay or invention. I had never really seen the thing. It had never occurred to me to look at it. My vagina existed for me on some abstract plane. It seemed so reductive and awkward looking at it like we were in the workshop on our shiny blue mats, with our hand mirrors. It reminded me of how the early astronomers must have felt with their primitive telescopes.

I found it quite unsettling at first, my vagina. Like the first time you see a fish cut open and you discover this other bloody complex world inside, right under the skin. It was so raw, so red, so fresh. And the thing that surprised me most was all the layers. Layers inside layers, opening into more layers.

My vagina amazed me. I couldn't speak when it came my turn in the workshop. I was speechless. I had awakened to what the woman who ran the workshop called "vaginal wonder." I just wanted to lay there on my mat, my legs spread, examining my vagina forever.

It was better than the Grand Canyon, ancient and full of grace. It had the innocence and freshness of a proper English garden. It was funny, very funny. It made me laugh. It could hide and seek, open and close.

Then, the woman who ran the workshop asked how many women in the workshop had had orgasms. Two women tentatively raised their hands.

I didn't raise my hand, but I had had orgasms. I didn't raise my hand because they were accidental orgasms. They happened to me. They happened in my dreams, and I would wake in splendor. They happened a lot in water, mostly in the bath. Once in Cape Cod.

They happened on horses, on bicycles, sometimes on the treadmill at the gym. I did not raise my hand because although I had had orgasms, I did not know how to make one happen. I thought it was a mystical, magical thing. I didn't want to interfere. It felt wrong getting involved — contrived, manipulative. It felt Hollywood. The surprise would be gone, and the mystery. The problem, of course, was that the surprise had been gone for two years. I hadn't had a magical accidental orgasm in a long time, and I was frantic. That's why I was in the vagina workshop.

And then the moment had arrived that I both dreaded and longed for. The woman who ran the workshop asked us to take out our hand mirrors again and to see if we could locate our clitoris. We were there, the group of us women, on our backs, on our mats, searching for our spots, our locus, our reason, and I don't know why but I started crying. Maybe it was sheer embarrassment. Maybe it was knowing that I had to give up the fantasy, the enormous life-consuming fantasy, that someone or something was going to do this for me — the fantasy that someone was coming to lead my life, to choose direction, to give me orgasms. I could feel the panic coming. The simultaneous terror and realization that I had avoided finding my clitoris, had rationalized it as mainstream and consumerist because I was, in fact, terrified that I did *not have a clitoris*, terrified that I was one of those constitutionally incapables, one of those frigid, dead, shut down, dry, apricot-tasting, bitter — oh my God. I lay there with my mirror looking for my spot, reaching with my fingers and all I could think about was the time when I was ten and lost my gold ring with the emeralds in a lake. How I kept diving over and over to the bottom of the lake, running my hands over stones and fish and bottle caps and slimy stuff, but never my ring. The panic I felt. I knew I'd be punished.

The woman who ran the workshop saw my insane scrambling, sweating and heavy breathing. She came over. I told her "It's gone. It's gone. I've lost my clitoris. I shouldn't have worn it swimming." The woman who ran the workshop laughed. She calmly stroked my forehead. She told me my clitoris was not something I could lose. It was me, she said, the essence of me. It was both the doorbell to my house and the house itself. I didn't have to *find* it. I had to *be* it.

Beit. Be my clitoris. Be my clitoris. I lay back and closed my eyes. I put the mirror down. I watched myself floating above myself. I watched as I slowly began to approach myself and re-enter. I felt like an astronaut re-entering the surface of the earth. It was very quiet this re-entry, quiet and gentle. I bounced and landed, landed and bounced. I came into my own muscles and blood and cells and then I slid into my vagina. It was suddenly easy and I fit. I was all warm and pulsing and ready and young and alive. And then, without looking, with my eyes still closed, I put my finger on what had suddenly become me. There was a little quivering at first, which urged me to stay. Then the quivering became a quake, an eruption, the layers dividing and subdividing. The quaking broke open into an ancient horizon of light and silence, which

opened onto a plane of music and colors and innocence and longing, and I felt connection, calling connection as I lay there thrashing about on my little blue mat.

My vagina is a shell, a tulip, and a destiny. I am arriving as I am beginning to leave. My vagina, my vagina, me.

Here is a vagina happy fact. This is from "Woman: An Intimate Geography," by Natalie Angler*

*(*This author's name is pronounced AN - JAY)*

The clitoris is pure in purpose. It is the only organ in the body designed purely for pleasure. The clitoris is simply a bundle of nerves: 8,000 nerve fibers, to be precise. That's a higher concentration of nerve fibers than is found anywhere else in the male or female body, including the fingertips, lips, and tongue, and it is twice, twice, twice the number in the penis. Who needs a hand gun when you've got a semi-automatic?

INTRO - BECAUSE HE LIKED TO LOOK AT IT

This monologue was based on an interview with a woman who had a good experience with a man.* (**This statement is not meant to be sarcastic as much as it is matter-of fact. The laugh will actually be stronger the more straight forward the delivery.*)

BECAUSE HE LIKED TO LOOK AT IT

This is how I came to love my vagina. It's embarrassing because it's not politically correct. I mean I know it should have happened in a bath with salt grains from the Dead Sea, Enya playing, me loving my woman self. I know the story. Vaginas are beautiful. Our self-hatred is only the internalized repression and hatred of the patriarchal culture. It isn't real. Pussies Unite. I know all of it. Like if we'd grown up in a culture where we were taught fat thighs were beautiful, we'd all be pounding down milkshakes and Krispy Kremes, lying on our backs, spending our days thigh-expanding. But, we didn't grow up in that culture. I hated my thighs and I hated my vagina even more. I thought it was incredibly ugly. I was one of those women who had looked at it and from that moment on I wished I hadn't. It made me sick. I pitied anyone who had to go down there.

In order to survive, I began to pretend there was something else between my legs. I imagined furniture — cozy futons with light cotton comforters, little velvet settees, leopard rugs, or pretty things — silk handkerchiefs, quilted pot holders, or place settings. I got so accustomed to this that I lost all memory of having a vagina. Whenever a man was inside me, I pictured him inside a mink-lined muffler, or a Chinese bowl.

Then I met Bob. Bob was the most ordinary man I ever met. He was thin and tall and nondescript and wore khaki tan clothes. Bob did not like spicy foods or listen to Prince. He had no interest in sexy lingerie. In the summer he spent time in the shade. He did not share his inner feelings. He did not have any problems or issues and was not even an alcoholic. He wasn't very funny or articulate or mysterious. He wasn't mean or

unavailable. He wasn't self-involved or charismatic. He didn't drive fast. I didn't particularly like Bob. I would have missed him altogether if he hadn't picked up my change that I dropped on the deli floor. When he handed me back my quarters and pennies and his hand accidentally touched mine, something happened. I went to bed with him. That's when the miracle occurred.

Turned out that Bob loved vaginas. He was a connoisseur. He loved the way they felt, the way they tasted, the way they smelled, but most importantly he loved the way they looked. He had to look at them. The first time we had sex, he told me he had to see me.

"I'm right here," I said.

"No, you," he said. "I have to see you."

"Turn on the light," I said, thinking he was a weirdo and freaking out in the dark.

He turned on the light.

Then he said, "OK, I'm ready, ready to see you."

"Right here," I waved, "I'm right here."

Then he began to undress me.

"What are you doing Bob?" I said.

"I need to see you," he replied.

"No need," I said. "Just do it."

"I need to see what you look like," he said.

"But you've seen a red leather couch before," I said.

Bob continued. He would not stop. I wanted to throw up and die.

"This is awfully intimate," I said. "Can't you just do it."

"No," he said. "It's who you are. I need to look."

I held my breath. He looked and looked. He got breathy and his face changed. He didn't look ordinary anymore. He looked like a hungry beast.

"You're so beautiful," he said. "You're elegant and deep and innocent and wild."

"You saw that there?" I said.

It was like he read my palm.

"I saw that," he said, "and more, much much more."

He stayed looking for almost an hour as if he were studying a map, observing the moon, staring into my eyes, but it was my vagina. In the light I watched him looking at me and he was so genuinely excited, so peaceful and euphoric, I began to get wet and turned on. I began to see myself the way he saw me. I began to feel beautiful and delicious — like a great painting, or a waterfall. Bob wasn't afraid. He wasn't grossed out. I began to swell, began to feel proud. Began to love my vagina. And Bob, lost himself there, and I was there with him, in my vagina, and we were gone.