

Celebrating the Charms of Jonathan Philbin Bowman on St Patrick's Day

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Beverly Hills, CA-The first Irishman I can ever recall seeing was named Lucky, as in Lucky the Leprechaun the cereal frontman. Television Commercial after television commercial, the wee leprechaun was chased by kids who wanted to get a taste of his lucky charms.

Then I was introduced to the green glory of St Patrick's Day. Admittedly, the sartorial restrictions were a turn off. My belief is that I should be able to wear pink and not get pinched.

In time I came to realize that there is a lot more to the Irish than a sugary cereal and green bagels.

And then I met Jonathan Philbin Bowman. He may not have appreciated the fact during his short lifetime, but there were plenty of us who wanted to be around him and considered ourselves lucky to get a taste of his charms.

His kindness.

His generosity.

His honesty.

The first time I ever talked to Jonathan was by telephone. I had managed to track him down in Dublin from Washington DC for an interview for a television show. He could not have been more kind. He advised me on everything from where to stay to what to do during my visit. At the time he was the host of a TV game show and a columnist for the Sunday Independent. Once all the professional arrangements were in place he offered himself up to be my personal tour guide.

“Who would you like to meet when you are here?” he asked.

I only had three days in Ireland and I regret that I didn't think about it too much. Although I had a fleeting thought that I it would be cool to meet Bono because of his interest in Africa, the continent of my birth.

Of course, Jonathan could have arranged it, but meeting him was more than enough. He was a wonderful interview and guide. A few hours into meeting him, it was clear that his life was a potent blend of sadness and sweetness.

He loved his son.
He loved his family.
He loved his country.

Jonathan wanted to make sure that I was versed in all of the cultural accomplishments of the Emerald Isle.

By this point in my life I was well aware that there was more to the place than than an imaginary dude named lucky.

Yes, Jonathan, I know about Angela's Ashes.
Yes, Jonathan, I know about Riverdance.
Yes, Jonathan, I know about Trinity College.

On this St. Patrick's Day, some seven years after his death, it's clear all I really needed to know was Jonathan.

Lucky me for knowing him.

Lena Nozizwe is an Emmy award-winning on-camera broadcaster and the author of *Starring in Your Own Life* (ISBN 0-784-87308-7) published by Simon & Schuster. For more information please visit www.nozizwe.com.

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