



## The Proposal

By [Anthony R Howard](#)

[www.anthonyrhoward.com](http://www.anthonyrhoward.com)

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The moment I knew Jenjit would likely be my wife is when I was on a trip to Costa Rica. It was a very calm and relaxing trip. Like many foreign countries, there were beautiful women all around, but all I really thought about was Jenjit, even though she was in another country thousands of miles away. That was a key turning point for me. It's when our relationship turned from the cocoon/caterpillar stage into a butterfly. I don't usually do much souvenir shopping. This time I set out to get a special t-shirt. I bought a yellow t-shirt with a huge butterfly on it that said Costa Rica. I brought it to her upon my return and said: "Don't lose this. It's important." Because Costa Rican's are smaller and Jenjit is tall, even though the shirt was an XL, it didn't fit right... So she never wore it.

Soon afterwards, I had planned a surprise trip to the Cayman Islands for us. This was her favorite country that I had taken her to. She was particularly taken by the majestic beaches I had shown her on our last trip to Grand Cayman, which are some of the most beautiful shores in the world. Snow white sands and crystal blue waters is where I planned to bring out The Ring. But of course, I had to figure out how in the world I am going to get this plan together without her knowing anything. Since Jenjit is a CIA agent, detective, and FBI field officer around the house, all packages and objects are examined upon entrance onto the premises. My house is also subject to random shakedowns for contraband. Contraband would be any snacks I didn't plan on sharing, lose dollar bills, Publix iced tea, or anything she's never seen before.

Since I visited so many jewelry shops while on the search for the perfect ring, multiple sales reps were calling my phone trying to close the deal and get their commission. They would always call when Jenjit was around. If I acted funny with the call, she would think it was a woman. If I spoke normally, she would quickly figure out the plan with the counter-surveillance eavesdropping. Protecting The Ring was certainly a covert operation. I managed to procure The Ring in secrecy, and at one point, she actually put her hands on it. Since the private jeweler I procured The Ring from was inconvenient to drive to, I had them ship it to me instead of me driving back out there. The day when she was supposed to be at work, she arbitrarily decided to stay home for no absolutely reason, and since I was working upstairs, she beat me to the door when the package came. She signed for it, and inspected it to see what it was. I enabled my Mission Impossible maneuvers and Swordfish misdirection: "Are those my 10-gig RJ45 cables?"

leading her to believe it was tech geek parts that I knew she would have no interest in. She never even knew she was holding The Ring.

Now I have The Ring, and disposed of any packaging and paperwork evidence. I still had to get her to wear the butterfly shirt she hates so much on this upcoming vacation.

“Hey, you've never worn that shirt I got you a while back from Costa Rica,” I casually mentioned. “I need to see it on this vacation.”

“I hate that shirt. It doesn't fit,” she replied.

“Maybe it will fit on vacation.”

She gave me a puzzled look, and put the butterfly shirt in the suitcase because she didn't want to mess up her free trip. A small victory. Or so I thought. When we leave to go to the airport, I see she is now wearing the butterfly shirt. This is bad news. If she is wearing it now, there is NO way she is going to wear it *again* when we actually get to the island because she hates the shirt.

I have to get her to take it off.

At the airport I tell her, “We're going to a very nice dinner tonight. Go ahead and take your T-shirt off so we'll be ready and can get straight to eating with out changing.” I had no reservations anywhere. But I could make one. And it was worth a try.

That didn't work. She was clearly dedicated to trying to get the t-shirt wearing out of the way, so she could wear what she really wanted to on the island. But I needed her to wear that t-shirt *on the island* for the special moment, not in the perfunctory and unrefined Atlanta Hartsfield airport...Simple inelegant and unbecoming.

I had to move forward with plan B, which would have collateral damage.

“You were right,” I started. “The shirt doesn't fit right, you should take it off.”

Yes, this made her mad. But the t-shirt came off for re-emergence on the island. A Qualified Victory.

Since there were not a whole lot of hiding places in our room, I had to be creative the whole time on how to camouflage The Ring in plain sight. If I used the safe, the FBI detective would want to know what I put in the safe. I used an old, wrinkled up Walmart bag to hide the ring. Walmart bags would not be that interesting to her, and she left it untouched.

When we got to the island I led her and Jaden to a private part of the island where no other tourists were around. The day was beautiful, and we had just had a nice breakfast. I lead her out to the water in her bathing suit and the butterfly shirt still on. She looked annoyed. She didn't understand why she was in the Cayman Island, at this wonderous beach, with this yellow butterfly t-shirt that she hated, and now she had to be in the water with it.

When we were about knee deep in the water, I pulled out my portable mp3 player and played a song I had chosen. *Angel* by Inc. I put one earpeice in her ear and began to speak to her softly in the other ear. I explained why I wanted her to wear the butterfly t-shirt, why it was important, and what it represented. I pointed out to the ocean and the horizon. I let her know that that's, the depth of love I have for her and her daughter, and the pureness of the water represent the integrity in our relationship. I then pulled the ringbox out of my pocket and opened it. (Cue

the tears) and put it on her left ring finger. She seemed very confused up to the point when she saw The Ring. Then the moment became clear. After several moments I called Jaden out to the water and explained what was going on. I then pulled another ringbox out of my pocket and opened it. Jaden was ecstatic and began to jump up and down as I put her ring on her right hand. I explained to her she was now under my house and my protection. Jaden and Jenjit then made a video from my camera about the moment.

Jaden was supposed to film the moment...but...that didn't work out so well. She got about a second of it. The one second contains Jenjit's confused face about why she was heading to the water in the yellow t-shirt that didn't fit, with half an mp3 player in her ear. It's in the portfolio ([here](#)).

That night as the ladies continued to admire their rings and show them off (every single picture Jaden took for the rest of the vacation *had* to show the ring). We then went back to the room and I went to sleep. Then, when I woke up, I swore I hear two grown women talking to each other.

Jaden shouted: "Mom! You took my ring while I was sleeping!" Usually I would never allow Jaden to talk to her mother in this tone. This morning it was funny because Jaden sounded like a 20 year old.

"Yes, Jaden," Jenjit replied. "I took it off so you didn't lose it or get it scratched up."

"Well where you put it!"

I couldn't help but chuckle. Jenjit was getting checked by a 9 year old and I was staying out of it. This sounded serious.

"Jaden, I put it here on the shelf. See?"

Jaden walked over to the shelf to make sure her ring was there and intact.

"Let me get that," she said reaching for her ring. After she put it on she became a nine year old again. This was the funniest moment of the vacation.