



## WHAT I WOULD DO IF I WERE YOU

Mandy Nolan

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In recent times, Australian cultural life has become increasingly urban and city-centric. The idea of any small country town being a hotbed of culture and sophistication is dismissed by city folk proud of their cafe culture and committed to the cultural joys of urban living. It is, therefore, a surprise that the country's sharpest and wittiest comedic columnist lives modestly in northern NSW and writes for the Byron Bay *Echo*.

Mandy Nolan's stock-in-trade is motherhood and children. She should know something about the topic; she's been married three times and has five children. Her style is based on the timeless comic technique of telling truths that elicit laughter because the comedian is revealing what everyone knows is true but few people acknowledge or accept. Every page has a sublime example but my favourite is: "I drive past those signs on the highway that read, 'Do you want longer lasting sex?' Are you kidding me? The ad company creative who created those slogans had to be a bloke under the age of 22. Middle-aged women don't want longer lasting sex. They want nice, short sex. Two hours bad. Two minutes good. I can't have sex for hours at a time. I have a life to lead. Washing to fold. TV to watch. I was so impassioned by the last ad I came across that I snuck back in the dead of night to graffiti it with, 'Do you want longer lasting sleep?' Apparently, so many women phoned in that it shut down the switchboard."

Nolan's material is resonant whether she is discussing the travails of being a wife and mother, grappling with how to talk about sex with her teenage children or describing how she seems to spend her entire life in the car driving her children around and doing domestic deliveries. This is comedy built on telling the truth – and it is very, very funny.

Reviews by Bruce Elder