



"Kind of a bleep!": Savvy Mayor-elect Sam Adams takes the winner's podium on primary night May 20.

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utes later there was a crowd in my driveway" of curious Sam-spotters, according to Zagel.

"Work invades his personal life a fair amount," Zagel says. Only a fair amount? He laughs. "OK. A lot."

But that's to be expected of someone on the political champion's track. "If you look at the most successful politicians," said D'Alessandro, "were they out there making friends? No, they weren't."

Tré's Beau

For all his political wrung-climbing acumen, Adams' career almost went skidding off the rails last fall. In a hail of rumors and mud-slinging, he was thrust into any aspiring politician's wak-

ing nightmare: accusations of sexual misconduct with a minor.

As first reported by *Willamette Week*, the story went something like this: Adams, at the age of 42, had engaged in what he defined as a "mentor" relationship with Beau Breedlove, a then 17-year-old legislative aide to state Rep. Kim Thatcher, R-Keizer, just coming out of the closet as a young gay man. Adams took Breedlove to dinner, exchanged text messages with him and attended his 18th birthday party.

Bob Ball, an openly gay property developer and former reserve police officer, said that he'd caught wind of rumors circulating about Adams' relationship with Breedlove and that there were potentially amorous overtones.

D'Alessandro says he remembered being "at events in Portland last summer [where] this rumor was being put on the streets...it was always this vague threat" to Adams' political ambitions. The threat turned very real as the story exploded in local media.

Adams is sitting in Portland's queer community center—Q Center, which he helped found in 2003 and calls "one of my proudest efforts"—when the subject of "the Bob Ball incident" is broached: What did he take away from the whole debacle?

The ever-articulate Adams clams up. He sighs,

then digs his nails into the arm of his chair. Then he shifts his weight and clears his throat. There is a long silence.

"Well...I think that...umm." His voice is light and airy, miles away from his typical authoritarian tone. "You know, I just, uh, umm, just a profound, umm, sense of...you know." He's stuttering and stalling, then manages to put a few words together. "Sadness. And anger. Umm. That someone like that would try to do that to me. Because I've been very supportive of him over the years, friendly to him, friends with him. Not close friends, but friends."

His candidate's composure and voice return again: "It was a scary thing to go through, I will tell you. It was a very scary thing to go through. Having someone say stuff like that...that sort of innuendo," he pauses for a moment, considering the word, "it can kill you professionally. Even when it's not true."

Adams says the Breedlove/Ball debacle made him more careful about appearances on all fronts, and especially sensitive to how his sexual orientation and work with young people might look to outsiders. But he says the scrutiny won't stop him from continuing to mentor queer and questioning men of all ages, even married guys, whom Adams says approach him "all the time."

Brian Wilson, a longtime Adams supporter (whose family company, Kalberer, also donated to Azumano Travel CEO Sho Dozono's failed mayoral bid), called the Ball incident "scary" for Adams but added that "it wasn't necessarily unexpected that something like that would surface" for the candidate.

"Sam's going to be positioning himself for bigger and better things," he said, alluding to Adams' perceived grandiose political ambitions, "and that's going to keep his nose clean."

The Victory Lap

There are bear hugs all around, as Adams makes a victory lap under the courtyard tent at Jupiter Hotel, grinning ear to ear and repeating on endless loop how "just shocked!" he is to have won the Portland mayor's race outright in the primary contest. He leaves one quick embrace to grab the hand of a well-wisher on her way out, who reminds Adams of a special fund-raiser coming up the next week. "I think I should be free; nothing comes to mind," he says, only half-joking. "Can my scheduler call you?"

It will be interesting to see exactly which Sam Adams shows up as mayor next year. BRO's Frazzini looks forward to his "great vision for the city," Q Center's Clawson hopes he'll "break down stereotypes" about out sexual minorities.

In an *Oregonian* editorial just days before the primary, Adams mused on the queer historicity of his candidacy, writing, "It is a good thing when the leadership of a community reflects the community itself." Then, in a moment hearkening back to his 1980 *Axe* editorial, he added: "And I think that people of all persuasions and backgrounds can champion diversity...as a way that every person has a chance to participate, contribute and lead. But the fact that I would be the first openly gay mayor of a major American city does make me proud—not proud of myself, proud of Portland." 10

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