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Help Wanted

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¡ASK A MEXICAN!

BY GUSTAVO ARELLANO



Dear Mexican: I know you've been asked variations of this before but I'm going to ask you again anyway. I'm a gay white guy and I've had three relationships with Mexican men in the last seven years. Each lasted from three to six months. This past relationship actually lasted a year and culminated with us moving in together for a month before it ended badly. Mexican: I've never been treated worse than by the Mexicans I've dated – and yet I've also never been happier. When it's just the two of us, everything is great. But when I'm involved in anything to do with his family, I suddenly don't exist. Or when we're out in public, he might cast me aside slightly, and others are surprised to find the two of us are dating. "He's your boyfriend?!" folks exclaim. "He totally ignored you!" Then I answer, "Oh that! Yeah, it's just a little game we play. Ha."

My family and friends have never failed to embrace with open arms anyone I've dated. But my Mexican boyfriends never seem to know what to do with me. Could they be ashamed of me or themselves? Maybe they have some internalized homophobia going on? Maybe I'm the threat to their family's structure? This hasn't resulted in any prejudice on my side. I love and relish Mexican culture and wish my Spanish were better. The thing is, I had a Mexican guy ask me out recently, and I'm wary. Should I run off and find a nice blond white guy with Pottery Barn decor? (Ick!) Maybe the candy I'm most attracted to is not good for me? Have I just given myself my own best advice? Should I stick to being friends with Mexican and leave the dating of them to my sister? – Becoming Wary of the Brown Man

Dear Gaybacho: It's not the *mexicanidad* in the *mariposas* you went out with that caused them to treat you badly; it was them. Sure, homophobia remains one of the pathologies Mexicans must work through (more on that in a bit), but I know many queer Mexican men who treat their partners with love and care and don't hide their relationships from friends and family. The more serious issue *es usted*: You say, "I've never been treated worse than by the Mexicans I've dated — and yet I've also never been happier." ¿*Qué que?* (English translation: WTF???) Don't enter abusive relationships, Becoming Wary: The only person to blame for them *es tú*.

Now, back to Mexican homophobia. Gentle readers: Most of you know Mexicans who live in California. Please, *por favor*, please tell them to vote no on Proposition 8, a resolution on California's ballot that seeks to ban gay marriage. Latinos will finally assert their demographic influence in Golden State elections this year, and it would be a horrible legacy if the first action of the Reconquista is to deny a minority their civil rights — currently, polls show Latinos supporting the initiative. The Mexican only endorses candidates named Alfred E. Neuman, but he does support *gente* fighting any kind of Know Nothings. Again: Vote no on Proposition 8 — and if you know any homo-hating Mexicans in Califas, tell them to stop acting like sexual Lou Dobbs.

¡ASK A MEXICAN CONTEST! Want a free copy of my latest book, *Orange County: A Personal History*, the finest book published in *los Estados Unidos* since last year's surprise smash, *¡Ask a Mexican!*? First person from each paper I appear in (and the first five *fregones* from ignorant backwaters that don't carry the Mexican) to send me a picture of themselves standing next to a stop sign with a bag of oranges or some type of fruit gets a copy. Make sure to sell those oranges while you're posing! Send pictures to the addresses below!

Ask the Mexican at themexican@askamexican.net or myspace.com/ocwab, or write to him via snail mail at: Gustavo Arellano, P.O. Box 1443, Anaheim, CA 92815-1433!

the siren
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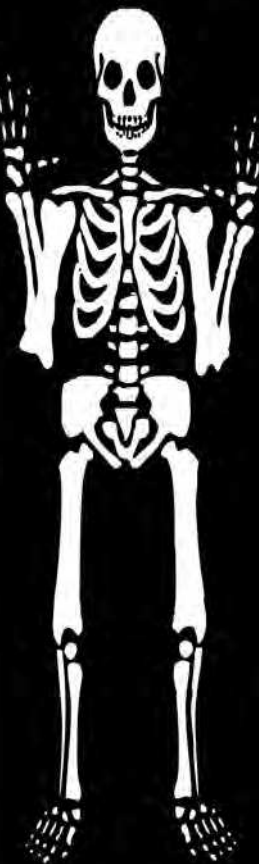
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