



Your Own Personal Savage

Someone to hear your prayers,
someone who cares **BY SHANNON FINNELL**

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hings on your chest, you need to confess. I will deliver, you know I'm a forgiver..." Reach out and touch an alt weekly sex advice columnist? Since launching his "Savage Love" sex advice column in the early '90s in *The Stranger*, a paper he now co-owns, Dan Savage has become the go-to guy for relationship dilemmas of all sorts. He helps readers navigate relationships (from asexual to polyandrous) and fetishes (feet to feces), tells readers it's time to DTMFA (dump the motherfucker already) and rebukes people for being jerks. He's less of a forgiver and more of an unusual moral compass.

Savage is "one of the most important ethicists in America," Lutheran pastor Benjamin Dueholm writes in March's *Washington Monthly*. "Savage Love" and Savage's other projects tackle tough life decisions and moral dilemmas in addition to political and public issues, but Savage makes an unconventional ethicist, if he is one.

Savage simultaneously embraced and mocked the social and moral politics of writing an advice column from the beginning — for six years he began the letters addressed to him with "Hey Faggot" — but social conservatives' continued focus on limiting gay rights (and the rights of anyone who's extra fun) has more and more steered him toward the outright political.

Savage continues to reclaim — or just claim — other terms, like the name of a certain homophobic former senator, making him synonymous with the "frothy" lube-semen-fecal matter mixture of post-anal coitus. (Said lube-semen-fecal matter is now weighing a presidential run.) Savage's political viewpoints extend beyond matters of sex. He caused stirs by advocating and then rejecting the U.S. invasion of Iraq, and by dissing leftier-than-Democrat political parties for taking votes from the Dems in close races. He raised hackles when *Eugene Weekly* began to run his column in October 2006; letters poured in worrying how his words would affect "the children" (see *EW* cover story March 15, 2007 at <http://wkly.ws/121>).