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SAVAGE LOVE

DISCLOSING
BY DAN SAVAGE

My boyfriend of three months, "Marcus," told me last week that he is a trans man. He has performed oral sex on me and fingered me, but he never let me reciprocate and told me he didn't want to have penis-in-vagina sex yet because to him that was a large commitment. We go to college in a conservative part of the country, and almost no one here knows. He worried that if I found out, I would expose him to our friends and peers and perhaps even press charges (because we had sex when I did not know he was trans). Truthfully, had I known, I don't think I would have had sex with Marcus. Before I found out he was trans, I was deeply attracted to him and was falling for him. Now, I no longer feel either of those things and do not know if I can continue dating him. I feel like a small-minded bigot that my romantic feelings about Marcus are based on something as randomly distributed as a penis. Marcus wants to continue to date and to have sex to see if my feelings can change. I don't think they will. But I've never been in this position before, and I don't know anyone who has, so maybe this is a growing experience? Am I being a bigot? I feel very alone because I can't talk to any of my friends about Marcus being trans. Do you have any advice?

No Clever Acronym

"NCA is clearly struggling," said M. Dru Levasseur, a trans activist, attorney, and cofounder of the Jim Collins Foundation, an organization that funds gender-confirming surgeries for trans people. "She met a guy, she's deeply attracted to him and is falling for him, and then she finds out something she didn't expect. He's trans." Before you dump Marcus—if you dump Marcus—Levasseur recommends exploring your feelings. "Does NCA not see Marcus as a man now? Is she sure he doesn't have a penis? Trans guys have amazing dicks that are different from cis guys' dicks (surgery or no surgery)—how does she know she won't like it or even prefer it? Is she afraid of social rejection if people were to find out she was dating a trans person? If she really wants to explore this, she could talk to a therapist, read some books, or join a support group online (where she won't risk outing Marcus). Who knows, Marcus could be the best sex and biggest love of her life." My two cents: You're also struggling with the fact that you had sex—oral and fingering count—with someone you might not have had sex with if you had known this particular detail in advance of the oral and fingering. I believe that Marcus should have told you he was trans before you hooked up, NCA, and disclosing was in his own self-interest. But messing around with someone you wouldn't have if you had known [insert relevant detail here] is a pretty common experience, NCA, and one most people bounce back from. And there are far worse forms of nondisclosure. While trans, poly, kinky, and poz folks are all pressured to disclose, the world would be a much happier place if abusers, users, assholes, and Fox News "personalities" were the ones who had to disclose before sex.

"There is absolutely no legal duty to disclose trans status," added Levasseur. "A person's trans status is 'excruciatingly private' and constitutionally protected information. There are lots of reasons why trans people might be stealth (or not out) like Marcus—for example, the terrifying rate of violence against trans people or the overwhelming statistics of discrimination. But I think disclosure is a good idea early on because it allows people to love you for who you are. Why not know that the person you are getting close to wants you? All of you. Don't you want to find that out pretty early on? There are many people out there who think trans men are the ideal guys. Don't waste your time on anyone else."

Okay, NCA, let's say you've explored your feelings and you've decided that you don't want to keep seeing Marcus. Does that make you a bigot?

"It's okay to have a preference—no judgment there," said Levasseur. "If trans guys are not her thing, no harm done. I would just hope she is kind when she lets Marcus go. From what she says, it sounds like he wants to convince her to want him or love him, and no one should be in the business of doing that. Everyone deserves to be loved *because*, not *although*."

Levasseur wanted to close with a message to any trans men reading this:

"To the Marcuses of the world who will read NCA's letter and think, 'Oh no, who will love me, who will want me?' and see it as just another message of rejection to add to a daily list of transphobia, body shame, and internalized self-loathing that fuels the staggering trans suicide attempt rate: *Don't go there*. Trans men are hot and deserve to be loved for the amazing men they are. They did not have their masculinity handed to them. They earned it—often through journeys that take unbelievable resilience and courage. An intentional man. The full package. And we deserve not to settle for someone who doesn't appreciate our bodies or our histories. Find someone who wants the full you."

Follow M. Dru Levasseur on Twitter @DruLawyer. Learn more about the Jim Collins Foundation at jimcollinsfoundation.org.

I'm a longtime reader, but this is my first time posing a dilemma to you. I'm a 32-year-old pansexual woman. I date a lot of people (mostly guys these days) and have recently started seeing a 22-year-old het male. The thing is, he's in a serious (but open) relationship with a 26-year-old woman. He's asked me if I'm into playing around with both of them in the near future. I'm into it on principle alone (who wouldn't want to fuck a girl and a guy at the same time?!?), but I'm not sure if it's a good idea. I haven't met the girl yet, but she sounds cool from what I've heard. I'd like to do it, but I don't want to deal with the awkwardness around it, let alone have their relationship suffer (and mine with the guy) as a result of playing together. What do you suggest?

Toronto Poly Virgin

Who wouldn't want to fuck a girl and a guy at the same time? I wouldn't, TPV, as I'm gay, gayer, gayest. But I don't see why you—pan, panner, pannest—wouldn't jump at the chance. (After you've met the other girl in person, established a mutual attraction, and negotiated the terms of your surrender.) Could this three-way end awkwardly? Of course it could. But billions and billions of two-ways have ended awkwardly over the centuries, and that fact didn't stop you from having a two-way with this 22-year-old het male, right? The addition of a third person may mean a 33 percent greater chance of someone feeling awkward after the three-way is over, and that isn't awesome. But there is a 100 percent chance of having a three-way, TPV, and that is awesome.

I'm sure you've received a million e-mails about this, but the correct answer, according to my wife (who was raised Baptist but—thank God—is Baptist no longer!): A Methodist will say "Hi" when they see you in the liquor store.

Just Thought You Should Know

Thanks for sharing, JTYSK, and send my love to the wife.

This week on the Lovecast, how to come out as polyamorous to your children: savagelovecast.com.