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SAVAGE LOVE



THE BOYS IN THE

BANDWIDTH
BY DAN SAVAGE

I am a gay man and have been in a relationship with my GGG boyfriend for more than three years. We are in our early 20s and have a good sex life. I just discovered that he has been engaging in what can only be described as cyber infidelity. He had a secret e-mail account, posted on Craigslist M4M, and also had an Adam4Adam account. About once a week, while I was at work in the evenings, he would exchange photos and engage in conversations with other men. He claims he never met with any of them and it was just to exchange photos. He let me look at his secret e-mail account, and there was nothing that pointed to any physical meet-ups. I asked him to delete his accounts, and he did. I am completely shocked, as we have an intimate and loving relationship. He is ashamed and understands that his behavior is wrong. I understand if he wants to look at porn on his own time (I certainly do), but the quantity and secrecy of his actions is obviously not healthy. We have major life plans together, and I don't doubt that he is committed to me. Where do I go from here, and what steps should I take to make sure it stops?

Stressing Over Cyber Infidelity

It isn't true that your boyfriend's actions can "only be described as cyber infidelity." They could be described as "harmless online flirtations." But you've chosen to slap the "infidelity" label on his actions, SOCI, and now you feel compelled to have a full-blown my-boyfriend-cheated-on-me meltdown.

Try looking at it this way: If your boyfriend regularly stopped at a bar to have a cocktail, and people flirted with him, and he flirted back—and that's all he did—would that constitute an "appetini infidelity"? If some guys looked him up and down in the locker room, and he looked those guys up and down back, would that constitute a "cardio infidelity"? No and no—and a boyfriend who flipped out about those sorts of interactions would be regarded as jealous, insecure, and controlling. So what difference does it make that your boyfriend did a little online flirting? Is it that your boyfriend jacked off thinking about these other guys? You jack off thinking about other guys when you watch porn. Is it that he jacked off thinking about and interacting with guys he could actually have IRL? Lots of guys in monogamous relationships—gay, straight, or bi—jack off about people they flirted with in bars and gyms, i.e., guys they interacted with and could have IRL.

Here's what you should do, SOCI: Ask your boyfriend to knock this shit off because it goobs you out. But don't round this "online flirtation" up to "cyber infidelity" unless you want to make yourself miserable, and don't police your boyfriend's online activities—snooping is the only way to "make sure it stops"—unless you want to get dumped.

I'm in my mid-40s. About two years ago, I had a one-night stand with a 19-year-old college student who placed an ad on Craigslist looking to meet older guys for no-strings-attached fun. We had a good time. He was charming, intelligent, and fun. I was surprised to learn during our conversation that he hoped to pursue a career in my profession. I gave him some advice, and we went our separate ways. Flash forward two years. We are looking for some temporary summer intern-type help, and we got a résumé from a qualified person looking for a summer job. We brought the candidate in for an interview, which my supervisor and I conducted. To my surprise, the applicant was the one-night stand. We obviously did not discuss our prior meeting during the interview, but by the brief, mild look of surprise on his face, my guess was that he was as surprised as I was. He handled himself well in the interview. My supervisor intends to hire him. I would be his direct supervisor. There would be no way around this if he was brought in for the two-or-three-month job, but our contact would be almost exclusively via e-mail. My instinct is that our prior one-night stand shouldn't disqualify him from the job. He's qualified, and my colleague wants to hire him ASAP. What are your thoughts? Any red flags? How should I handle this? Should I broach the subject with him? I don't want to insult his intelligence or even hint that I think he's using our meeting two years prior to land a brief summer job. Again, I am convinced he didn't realize he was going to interview with me.

Nervous Supervisor Anxious

Lots of red flags—I could spin out a few Worst Case Scenarios—but the kid is qualified, he handled himself (and only himself) well during the interview, and your supervisor, who tops you in your company's organogram (and only there), plans to hire him. Under the circumstances, NSA, I don't see how you can avoid supervising this guy for the summer. What would you say to your supervisor? "Hey, look—I sometimes cruise Craigslist looking for young-but-legal ass, and I fucked this kid a couple of years ago, so... let's interview a few more candidates, and hopefully I won't have fucked any of them."

And I agree that the kid shouldn't be penalized for having a consensual one-night stand with an adult who was a stranger to him at the time. So have a quick face-to-face word with your new hire on his first day. Acknowledge the awkwardness privately and verbally (put nothing in writing), tell him the hiring decision wasn't yours and he got the gig on his merits, and close with something like this: "Things between us will be strictly professional from now on, of course—and, hey, crazy coincidence, huh?" Then stick to e-mails for the duration of his internship.

Grain of salt: I've never worked in a place that used organograms—I've never had a corporate job in my life—so my advice could be total crap. Just FYI.

I'm a gay man who is about to turn 35. Somehow, 30 didn't bother me, but being halfway to 70 is freaking me out. The gay world is obsessed with youth and beauty, and once you're not young and hot anymore, your life may as well be over. If you don't have a tight ass and ripped abs and a hot cock, you have no value and nothing to contribute. Why is the gay world so shallow?

One Very Enraged Romantic

Ed Murray was 58 years old when he became the mayor of Seattle. Larry Kramer was 52 when he inspired the founding of ACT UP. Bayard Rustin was 51 when he organized the historic 1963 March on Washington. Harvey Milk was 47 years old when he was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Barney Frank was 41 when he was first elected to Congress in 1981 and 73 when he retired last year. Neil Patrick Harris was 41 when he won a Tony Award for starring in the Broadway revival of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. Jonathan Capehart was 40 when he became a member of the *Washington Post's* editorial board in 2007. Tony Kushner was 37 when he won the Pulitzer Prize for *Angels in America*. George Takei (??), RuPaul (53), Andrew Sullivan (50), Andy Cohen (46), Jared Polis (39)—I could go on.

If you don't think gay men over 35—or 50 or 60 or 70—have anything to contribute, OVER, then it's not the "gay world" that's shallow, it's you.

On this week's *Savage Lovecast*: Spanking, cheating, pervy cousins, and sleeping with the cab driver: savagelovecast.com

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