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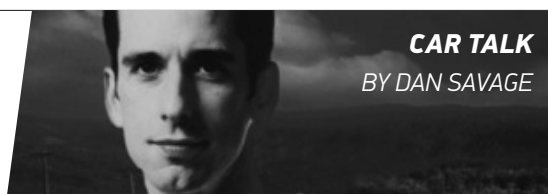
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SAVAGE LOVE



CAR TALK
 BY DAN SAVAGE

Yesterday, I found my 5-year-old son putting things up his butt in the bath. This isn't the first time—and it's not just a "Hey! There's a hole here! Let's put things in there!" kind of thing. The little dude was rocking quite the stiffy while he did it. I'm well aware of how sexual kids can be (I freaking was!), although I wasn't quite expecting to be catching him exploring anal at this young age. I want to avoid a trip to the emergency room to extract a toy car or whatever else from his rear end, and I don't want to see him damage himself. So do you have any suggestions of what I can give him as a butt toy? Yes, I am serious, and no, I'm not molesting him. I know he's going to do this on his own with or without my knowing, and I want him to be safe! Just today, he proudly showed me a toy car that he stuck up his butt. I told him that it wasn't a good idea due to the sharp bits on it, and while he may have gotten this one out, one could get stuck and then we would have to go to the hospital. Help!

Helping Ingenious Son Make Other Moves

"HISMOM has handled this really well so far, and I am impressed with her clarity and calm about this situation," said Amy Lang, a childhood sexuality expert and educator, a public speaker, and the author of *Birds + Bees + Your Kids* (birdsandbeesandkids.com). "But NO BUTT TOYS for 5-year-olds! This is insane and will cause a host of problems—can you imagine if he says to his teacher, 'Yesterday, I played with my butt plug!' Instant CPS call!"

I'm going to break in for a second: Do NOT buy a butt toy for your 5-year-old kid—if, indeed, you and your 5-year-old kid's butt actually exist. I'm way more than half convinced that your letter is a fake, HISMOM, something sent in by a Christian conservative out to prove that I'm the sort of degenerate who would tell a mom to buy a butt toy for a 5-year-old. I'm some sort of degenerate, I'll happily admit, but I'm not that sort. "This clearly isn't a safe way for her boy to explore his body for a variety of reasons," said Lang. "His butthole is tiny, it's an adultlike behavior, and it's germly." And while adults who are into butt play are (or should be) proactive and conscientious about hygiene, grubby little 5-year-olds aren't particularly proactive or conscientious about hygiene—or anything else. You don't want his hands and toys smeared with more fecal matter than is typical for the hands and toys of most 5-year-olds.

"It's also on the outer edges of 'typical' sexual behavior in a young kid," said Lang. "He may very well have discovered this sort of outlier behavior on his own, but there is a chance that someone showed him how to do this. HISMOM needs to calmly ask her son, 'I'm curious—how did you figure out that it feels good to put things in your bum?' Listen to what he has to say. Depending on his response, she may need to get him a professional evaluation to make sure that he's okay and safe. She can find someone through rainn.org in her area to help. While it doesn't sound like he's traumatized by this—he's so open and lighthearted about it—you never know."

Regardless of where he picked this trick up, HISMOM, you gotta tell him that it's not okay to put stuff up his butt because he could seriously hurt himself. I know, I know: You are a progressive, sex-positive parent—if you exist—and you don't wanna saddle your kid with a complex about butt stuff. But think of all the sexually active adults out there, gay and bi and straight, who have overcome standard-issue butt-stuff complexes and now safely and responsibly enjoy their assholes and the assholes of others. If you give your son a minor complex by, say, taking his toy cars away until he stops putting them in his ass, rest assured that he'll be able to overcome that complex later in life.

"She should tell him that she totally gets that it feels good," said Lang, "but there are other ways he can have those good feelings that are safer, like rubbing and touching his penis, and he is welcome to do that any time he wants—as long as he's in private and alone. You can also tell him the safest thing to put up there is his own finger. But he MUST wash his hands if he does that. Nothing else, finger only. And did I mention NO BUTT TOY? Seriously." Follow Amy Lang on Twitter @birdsandbees.

I'm a longtime fan, but I disagree with your advice to CIS, the lesbian who wanted to add "not into trans women" to her online dating profile. I'm a straight guy, and if I met a woman online, I would want to be sure she had female genitalia under her clothes. It's a requirement for me, and that doesn't mean I'm not a trans ally. I'm not into people who don't have female genitalia—should I go out on a coffee date with a trans woman just to make her feel better?

Not An Asshole

There's nothing about preferring—even requiring—a particular set of genitalia that will result in your being stripped of your trans ally status, NAA. The issue is adding a few words to your profile ("no trans women") that might spare you from the horrors of having coffee with one or two trans women over the course of your dating life but that will definitely make every trans woman who sees your profile feel like shit. The world is already an intensely hostile, unwelcoming place for trans people. Why would someone who considers himself (or herself, in the case of CIS) an ally want to make the world more hostile and unwelcoming? Awkwardness and "wasted" coffee dates are built into the online-dating experience. Trans women who haven't had bottom surgery aren't going to spring their dicks on you—they'll almost always disclose before it gets to that point—and you're not obligated to sleep with anyone you don't find attractive.

I'm a cis straight woman. I went on dates with a lot of guys from dating websites (200+) before I got married. Just writing to say that I agreed with your advice to the lesbian dating-site user. I agree that putting negative/exclusionary notes like "no trans women" or "no Asian guys" in a dating profile is a turnoff—and not just to the excluded group but to those who find those kinds of comments to be mean-spirited and narrow-minded. And are there really so many trans people out there that such a comment is even necessary? Are there really that many trans people out there causing massive confusion on dating websites? And honestly, if someone is trans and you wind up meeting them for coffee, what would be the big deal anyway? It's just coffee! I don't understand why this would be such a huge problem.

Straight Chick In DC

My point exactly.

Check out the *Savage Lovecast* every week at savagelovecast.com.