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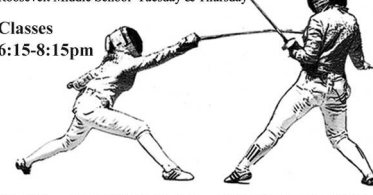
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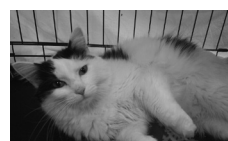
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**RACIST
PREFERENCES**
BY DAN SAVAGE



As a queer man of color—I'm Asian—I feel wounded whenever I am exposed to gay men in New York City, Toronto, or any city where white gay men dominate. Gay men, mostly whites and Asians, reject me because of my race and no one admits to their sexual racism. I understand that sexual attraction is subconscious for many people. But it is unfair for a gay Asian like myself to be constantly marginalized and rejected. I fight for gay rights, too. I believe in equality, too. I had the same pain of being gay in high school and the same fears when coming out. Why is there no acceptance, no space, no welcome for me in this white-painted gay community? I'm six-foot-one, 160 pounds, fit, and very good-looking. What can I do? I might as well be a sexless monk.

Enraged Dude Details Infuriating Experience

"I relate to a lot of what EDDIE is feeling here," said Joel Kim Booster, a Brooklyn writer and comedian. "The double-edged sword of living in a city with a large gay community is that the community gets so large that we finally have the opportunity to marginalize people within it." Jeff Chu, a writer who also lives in Brooklyn, can relate: "Racism still thrives in the gay community, just as in broader society," said Chu. "Many of us who are Asian American come out of the closet and walk into this weird bamboo cage, where we're either fetishized or ignored. Many times I'd go into a gay bar and see guys playing out some gross interracial porno in their heads—with me playing the part of their Chinese pocket gay. Others [the ones I was interested in, to be candid] would act as if I were wearing an invisibility cheongsam."

Chu feels there's plenty of blame to go around for this sad state of affairs. "It's the gay media," said Chu. "It's Hollywood. [Even with all the LGBT characters we have on TV now, what images do we have of Asian American ones?] It's that LGBT-rights organizations still haven't diversified enough, especially in their leadership. And it's all of us, when we're lazy and don't confront our own prejudices."

Booster and Chu are right: Racism is a problem in the gay community, some people within are unfairly and cruelly marginalized, and we all need to confront our own prejudices. Even you, EDDIE. You cite your height (tall!), weight (slim!), and looks (VGL!) as proof you've faced sexual rejection based solely on your race. But short, heavy, average-looking/unconventionally-attractive guys face rejection for not being tall, lean, or conventionally hot, just as you've faced rejection for not being white. (The cultural baggage and biases that inform a preference for, say, tall guys is a lot less toxic than the cultural baggage and biases that inform a preference for white guys—duh, obviously.)

"As a stereotypically short Chinese guy, my first reaction to reading EDDIE's letter? Damn, he's six-foot-one! I'm jealous," said Chu. "And that's also part of the problem. I, like many others, have internalized an ideal: tall, gym-perfected, blah blah blah—and, above all, white."

Booster was also struck by your stats. "It's hard for me to wrap my head around any six-foot-one, fit, VGL guy having trouble getting laid," said Booster. "On paper, this is the gay ideal! I don't really consider myself any of those things—and I have a perfectly respectable amount of sex."

Booster, who somehow manages to have plenty of sex in New York's "white-painted gay community," had some practical tips for you. "EDDIE should stay away from the apps if the experience becomes too negative," Booster said. "If logging on to a hookup app bums him out, take a break. Being a double minority can be isolating, but living in a big city can be great. There are meet-ups and clubs and activities for all stripes. Join a gay volleyball league—truly where gay Asian men thrive—or find one of the many gay Asian nights at one of the gay bars around the city. They're out there."

Chu has also managed to find romantic success in New York. "I've been where EDDIE is, except shorter, less fit, and less good-looking, and somehow I found a husband," said Chu. "The monastery wasn't my calling, and I suspect it's not EDDIE's either."

A quick word to gay white men: It's fine to have "preferences." But we need to examine our preferences and give some thought to the cultural forces that may have shaped them. It's a good idea to make sure your preferences are actually yours and not some limited and limiting racist crap pounded into your head by TV, movies, and porn. But while preferences are allowed (and gay men of color have them, too), there's no excuse for littering Grindr or Tinder or Recon—or your conversations in bars—with dehumanizing garbage like "no Asians," "no Blacks," "no femmes," "no fatties," etc.

And while racism is a problem in the gay community (sometimes thoughtless, sometimes malicious, always unacceptable), according to 2010 US Census data, as crunched by the Williams Institute at UCLA, same-sex couples are far likelier to be interracial (20.6 percent) than opposite-sex couples (13.9 percent). So there's hope—and I don't mean "hope that EDDIE will one day land a magic white boyfriend," but hope for less racism in the gay community generally and fewer racist Grindr profiles specifically. The last word goes to Booster: "A note to the rice queens who will undoubtedly write in about this man: We like that you like us. But liking us solely because our race can be uncomfortable at best, and creepy as hell at worst. In my experience, it's perfectly okay to keep some of those preferences behind the curtain while you get to know us a bit as humans first."

Jeff Chu is the author of *Does Jesus Really Love Me?: A Gay Christian's Pilgrimage in Search of God in America*. Follow him on Twitter @jeffchu. Follow Joel Kim Booster on Twitter @ihatejoelkim.

I am an Italian bisexual 25-year-old guy. I'm in love with a great guy, but he lives far away, and we see each other only one time per month and sometimes less. A few weeks ago, I had sex with a female university colleague. It wasn't anything special: She was somewhat drunk and hurt me with her teeth during petting, so I didn't have a good erection and I didn't come. But I liked having sex with a woman. I want to do it again, but I love my boyfriend and I don't want to hurt him. Am I destined to be unfaithful?

More Or Less

Italians pet with their teeth? Good to know. Also good to know: yourself. Now, I would never suggest that bi guys can't honor monogamous commitments—even though I routinely say just that about straight guys, gay guys, straight women, and lesbians—but it would be foolish for you to make a monogamous commitment. Not because you're "destined to be unfaithful," MOL, but because you've already been unfaithful.

Here's what you know about yourself: You're bisexual, you want to have sex with women and men, and you don't want to cheat. Which means you'll have to either renegotiate the terms of the relationship you're in now—get your boyfriend's okay to have sex with a woman once in a while—or end the relationship and find a boyfriend (or girlfriend) who will give you their okay.

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