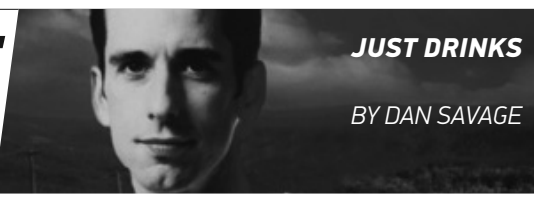


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SAVAGE LOVE



JUST DRINKS

BY DAN SAVAGE

My brother is a virgin and turning 30 in a few weeks. He said he wants to hire an escort just for drinks and conversation for his birthday, but he doesn't really know how to tell what's a reliable service or what criteria he should be looking for to tell whether an agency is legit, reliable, etc. I'm very happy he came to me with this because I can tell it's not something he wants to share with many people—but I don't have any advice or knowledge to pass on regarding this and I want to respect his privacy by not discussing it with everyone in our social circles. Do you have any advice in regards to what he should be looking for?

My Younger Brother's Romantic Order

"Look to social media," said Mistress Matisse, a writer, sex worker, and sex-workers-rights activist. "Now that so many review boards have been taken down, social media is the best way to find a good independent escort."

About those review boards: Law enforcement agencies, always on the lookout for ways to "save" sex workers by making their jobs more dangerous, have gone after online sites, aka review boards, where clients rated and ranked escorts and—more importantly—escorts communicated with each other about safety, clients to avoid (flaky, rude, unhygienic), and clients they absolutely shouldn't see (erratic, threatening, violent). Elizabeth Nolan Brown wrote a great piece for Reason about the issue last fall ("The Truth About the Biggest US Sex Trafficking Story of the Year," September 9, 2016), and everyone should go read it at Reason.com.

Anyway, MYBRO, back to your brother and Matisse's advice.

"I'm not saying 'no social media' equals 'bad escort,'" said Matisse. "There are lots of good escorts who don't have much of a social-media presence. But if you want to get to know a little about who someone is before you meet them, that's just how you do it now."

Another rarely discussed, perfectly legal alternative to figuring out if an escort is for real: pay them to meet up for drinks and conversation, which just so happens to be all your brother wants (or all he's willing to tell you he wants).

"Obviously, this is not a good option for the budget-conscious," said Matisse. "But if you want to test your chemistry and create some trust on both sides before booking a private date, it's a solid way to go. Note the keyword, though: PAY her for her time. [Most ladies have a public social meeting fee that's lower than private-time rates.] And remember the basic rules when you do decide to set a private-time date: Don't ask about sex and don't talk about money other than to briefly acknowledge that you have seen her rates and agree to pay for her time. Expect to use condoms and to abide by the rules of whoever you're seeing."

You can follow Mistress Matisse on Twitter @mistressmatisse.

I've been reading your column for years, and it has definitely helped me develop a sex-positive view of dating, relationships, sex, and otherwise. I've been seeing a girl recently who revealed to me she's a cam girl. I'm totally okay with it. She makes a great living, it's important to her, and it turns her on—all great things! But it's something she likes to keep to herself, and for good reason, obviously. People, however, are obsessed with what other people do for a living. So what's the best answer for when I'm asked what she does? She's as unsure of what to say as I am. I'm bringing her to a company event (I work in finance), and both of us are sure everyone is going to ask what she does (cocktail party small talk is the worst!). What are your thoughts on this subject and other things in a relationship like this?

Man Behind The Cam Girl

Say this: "She's an independent contractor with a video production company—she makes her own hours and works from home. It's a great gig. Oh hey, how about them Bears/Colts/Cubs/Broncos/Braves/WhateverTheFucks."

I'm a tall, slender, attractive, fit, artistic, female 65-year old, taking testosterone, and now without a partner. I'm not sure how to go about engaging in noncommittal quick sex dates. I don't know of any escort services for the ladies, but I would be interested. I'm also interested in exploring the bisexual side of life. Where would you advise I go?

Curious And Wondering

I'm going to echo Mistress Matisse and suggest diving into Sex Work Twitter. Most male sex workers target their ads/online presence to other males, since men are likelier to buy sex, but many male escorts are bisexual or straight but gay-for-pay. They'll happily see female clients, as will many female sex workers, you just gotta ask—politely and, again, without talking about sex explicitly. Remember: You're paying for the escort's time, CAW, anything else that happens is just consenting adults doing consenting adult things.

I have a suggestion for GAYMAN, the guy who just got out of an abusive relationship and wanted to know how to reconnect with his sexuality and other gay men. I came out three years ago, and I must say that joining the organization Frontrunners changed my life. It's an LGBTQ-friendly running group, and I found so much support there as a man coming out late in life. I've met so many LGBTQ people, from all backgrounds, with extremely varied interests, and it really opened me up socially. I'm happy to say I've made some great friends in the year that I have participated.

Running While Queer

Love your column. Often you get questions on how to meet people/find partners, and you respond, "Get out of the house, go to the gym, volunteer." Here's one activity you haven't mentioned: sign up for dance lessons, e.g., salsa, swing, tango, ballroom, etc. It's not hard to find a dance studio that offers group lessons, and partners aren't required. Anyone can join a class. A group dance class will expose you to many people and put them right in your arms as an introduction. I can't think of a better way to meet people. I'm a straight guy who met his last six girlfriends—the latest at nine years and counting—in dance classes. I honestly wouldn't know what to do at a bar. Obviously, partner dance isn't for everyone, but skeptics might be surprised. It's a pretty great environment, and people seem at ease because everyone is focused on having fun.

Strictly Come Dancing

Thanks for sharing, RWQ and SCD.

READERS: Psychotherapist, author, and friend Esther Perel (*Mating in Captivity*) is seeking couples to be featured on her upcoming original audio series. Couples can be married or in a long-term committed relationship, and from all sexual orientations and cultural, racial, and religious backgrounds. Gay male couples are particularly encouraged to apply. For more info, go to tinyurl.com/perelaudio.

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