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SAVAGE LOVE

ITMFA!

BY DAN SAVAGE

I am quite the follower on social media—Facebook and Twitter in particular. I make no trolling comments, no #MAGA hashtags; I just look with my male gaze. Like Laura Mulvey says, the male gaze is only natural. I've lost interest in pornography, so I use everyday pictures of women, typically selfies. It helps me to know the story behind the face and body. None of these pics are pornographic—just feel-good selfies by young women posted on social media. I don't communicate with these people, because that would be creepy. I'm not worried about whether this is abnormal. I just wondered if people would be okay with this, if people were aware of behavior like mine when they post, and if I should ask these girls for their permission to wank to their selfies.

Not Anthony Weiner

So long as you're wanking alone, wanking with a reasonable expectation of privacy, and not bothering anyone who isn't a sex partner or a sex-advice professional with your wanking, NAW, you can wank to whatever you'd like—except for images of child rape, aka "child pornography."

You remind me of the proverbial shoe salesman with a foot fetish. (Full disclosure: proverb of mine, not a proverb of Proverbs.) Let's say a guy working in a high-end shoe store has an intense attraction to feet. Is it inappropriate for him to get an obvious boner while helping women try on shoes? Of course it is. It would also be inappropriate for him to drool or pant—and it would be super inappropriate of him to ask the women he's serving if he can jack off about their feet after his shift. But if he can be completely professional, if he can go eight hours without giving off any signs of secret perving, that guy can (and probably should) sell shoes. And he's free to upload mental images to his spank bank for later—we're all free to do so, NAW, and it's only creepy if the people whose images we're uploading/repurposing are made aware that we're uploading/repurposing them.

So in answer to your question, NAW, under no circumstances should you ask the girls whose selfies you're wanking to for their permission. People who post revealing pictures to social media—men and women—know they run the risk of their pics being wanked to by random strangers. But there's a difference between knowing some stranger might be wanking to your pics and hearing from one of those wanking strangers. Being asked by a wanker for permission to wank drags the social-media poster into the wanker's fantasies—and not only is that creepy, NAW, it's also no way to show your gratitude. If some stranger is going to make your day by posting a hot pic, why would you ruin theirs—or make them think twice about ever posting a revealing pic again—by telling them exactly what you're doing while you gaze at their pics?

If you saw a woman on the street that you thought was hot, you wouldn't stop her to ask if you could wank about her later. You would no more ask a stranger that question than you would flash your penis at her because, NAW, it would constitute sexual harassment. (Promise me you wouldn't do either of those things.) You would instead walk on by, minding your own business while discreetly filing her mental image away in your spank bank. You should behave similarly on social media: Don't harass, don't send unsolicited dick pics, and don't ask for permission to wank.

Finally, NAW, your question inspired me to read feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey's 1975 essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in which she coined the phrase "male gaze." Mulvey describes the male gaze as phallogocentric, patriarchal, pervasive, and socially constructed—she never describes it as natural.

A problem has cropped up for me ever since the reports of Donald Trump's pissing Russian hookers made the news. Every time someone on social media tries to make a comment about how disgusting that is, someone else jumps in and scolds that person for "kink shaming." The problem for me is that by normalizing my piss fetish, you're making it dull for me. Piss was one of the few things that even the kink community found disgusting. I now find myself looking for different porn because, eh, a lesbian pissing in the mouth of another lovely lady on a train platform? No big whoop anymore, it seems. My polyamorous boyfriend and I found each other without knowing we shared a love for piss. Neither of us had ever had someone to enjoy that with before. The one thing the piss porn I've been watching for half my life completely failed to capture is how goddamn amazing it is to embrace and make out with a person you love dearly while you're both covered in each other's piss. If you personally don't want to kink shame, that's fine. I get it. But everyone, please stop telling your friends not to kink shame so that my boyfriend and I can get back to the business of pissing on each other and feeling disgusting about it and horny because of it.

Pissed Off Slut Wife

I have grappled with this same conundrum, POSW. If a kink is boner- or slicker-inducing to some precisely because it's so transgressive and disgusting to most, efforts to normalize said kink—by shaming kink shamers, for instance—could piss away that kink's power to induce all those boners and slickers. But I'm confident that the kink shamers will continue to have the upper hand for decades to come, despite the best efforts of the kink-shamer shamers. So your kink will continue to induce enough revulsion and disgust generally to keep you and your boyfriend feeling disgusting and horny in perpetuity.

Listening to pundits discuss the president on the radio, I was inspired by your brilliant acronym (DTMFA) to yell, "Impeach the motherfucker already!" I'd love to see a line of bumper stickers and T-shirts bearing that sensible message: ITMFA! We need a shorthand for the obvious—think of the boost to productivity we'd get if we could cut half-hour conversations about the president to five simple letters: ITMFA! I appeal to you to bring this acronym into our everyday vocabulary.

Dumped My Motherfucker Already

DEAR READERS: DMMA wrote me that letter in 2006. She wasn't referring to Donald Trump, our current awful president, but George W. Bush, our last truly awful president. I thought DMMA's idea was great, I put up a website (impeachthemothefuckeralready.com), and I raised more than \$20,000 selling ITMFA lapel pins and buttons. I donated half the money to the ACLU and the other half to two Democratic candidates for the US Senate. (My readers helped turf Rick Santorum out of office!)

I didn't think I'd see a worse president than George W. Bush in my lifetime. But here we are. So I'm bringing back my line of ITMFA buttons and adding T-shirts and, yes, hats to the ITMFA collection. Go to impeachthemothefuckeralready.com or, if that's too much typing, ITMFA.org to order some ITMFA swag for yourself or someone you love. All the money raised will be donated to the American Civil Liberties Union, Planned Parenthood, and the International Refugee Assistance Project.

We're in for a long and ugly four years, folks. Let's raise some money for groups fighting Trump, let's bring ITMFA back into our everyday vocabulary, and let's remember that we—people who voted against Trump, people who want to see him out of office as quickly as possible—are the majority. ITMFA!

On the Lovecast, sex-toy review with Erika Moen: savagelovecast.com.