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SAVAGE LOVE **BREATHLESS**
 BY DAN SAVAGE

I have two female sex partners who want to be breath-play dominated. I know the practice is dangerous, and I employ the rules of consent and communication a pro-Dom escort friend taught me. But is there a legal release document we could sign that protects consenting adults in the event of an accident or death?

Ruminating About Consensual Kinks

Restricting someone's air intake is always dangerous, RACK, and while we all too often hear about people dying during solo breath play, aka "auto-erotic asphyxiation" (an activity no one should engage in ever), we rarely hear about someone dying during partnered breath play. (I recently discussed partnered breath play with Amp from Watts the Safeword, a kink-friendly sex-ed YouTube channel. Look up Episode 533 at savagelovecast.com.)

That said, RACK, someone can't consent to being strangled to death by accident. "The lawyers in my office discussed this, and we agree that there is no way to 'waive' or 'consent to' criminal negligence resulting in substantial bodily harm or death," said Brad Meryhew, a criminal-defense attorney who practices in Seattle. "I don't think you'll find any lawyer who would draft such an agreement. Even if an agreement were executed, it is not going to constitute a complete defense if something goes wrong. There are principles of criminal liability for the consequences of our decisions, as well as public-policy concerns about people engaging in extremely dangerous behaviors, that make it impossible to just walk away if something goes wrong." Another concern: Signing such a document could make breath play more dangerous, not less. "A person who had such a waiver might be tempted to push the boundaries even further," said Meryhew.

And now the pro-Dom perspective... "As consenting adults, we assume the risks involved in this type of kink," said Mistress A Elena, a professional Dominant. "But if you harm your partner or they become scared, shamed, shocked, or, even worse, gravely injured, it's the Dom's problem. At any time, the submissive can change their mind. Some cases have been classified as 'rape' or 'torture' afterward, even though consent was initially given. It's our job as Dominants/Tops/Leads to make sure everyone is safe, consenting, and capable."

I'm a 32-year-old guy, my gal is 34, and we've been together for two years. Every time we get it on or she goes down on me (though not when I eat her out), my mind wanders to fantasies involving porno chicks, exes, or local baristas. A certain amount of this is normal, but I'm concerned that this now happens every time. When I'm about to come, I shift my mind back to my partner and we have a hot climax, but I feel guilty. Advice?

Guilty Over Nebulous Ecstasy

I've been asked what biases advice columnists have. Do we favor questions from women? (No, women are just likelier to ask for advice.) Are we more sympathetic to women? (Most advice columnists are women, so...) Are we likelier to respond to a question that opens with a compliment? (Of course.) But the solvable problem is our biggest bias. Some people write in with problems that they'll need an exorcist, a special prosecutor, a time machine, or some combo of all three to solve. I could fill the column week after week with unsolvable problems, and my answers would all be variations on "\(:)"/".

Your letter, GONE, is a good example of the solvable problem—a letter likelier to make it into the column—and, as is often the case, the solution to your problem is right there in your letter. You're able to "shift [your] mind" back to your partner when you're about to come, and when you eat her out, your mind doesn't wander at all. My advice: Make the shift earlier/often and engage in more activities that force you to focus (like eating her out). Problem solved.

P.S. A lot of people allow their mind to wander a bit during sex—supplementing the present sensations with memories, fantasies, local baristas, etc. If it keeps you hard/wet/game and isn't perceptible (if you don't start mumbling coffee orders), your partner benefits from your wanderings.

My college girlfriend and I were together for four years. The relationship ended 10 years ago when she cheated on me. She did eventually marry the guy, so, hey, good for them. She recently gave birth to a boy. She gave her son my name as his middle name. Nobody in either family has this name and it isn't an especially common name. I've asked dozens of people with kids, and nobody can think of a reason why a person would give their child a name anywhere close to an ex's name. Thoughts?

Nobody's Answers Make Effing Sense

Maybe your college girlfriend remembers you a little too fondly. Maybe a family friend had the same name. Maybe she met someone else with your name in the last 10 years, and she and her husband had a few threesomes with that guy, and she remembers those fondly. Maybe you'll run into her someday and she'll tell you the real reason. Now here are a few definitelys to balance out all those maybes, NAMES: This is definitely none of your business and you definitely can't do anything about it—people can definitely give their children whatever names they want—and there's definitely no use in stressing out about it.

I've been reading your column forever—like "Hey Faggot!" forever—and your response to CLIF (the guy whose wife could no longer orgasm from PIV sex after having a child) is first time I've felt the need to gripe about your advice. My wife was also the "Look, ma, no hands!" type, and it was amazing to be able to look into her eyes as we came together. But after a uterine cyst followed by a hysterectomy, something changed and that came to an end. It was a pretty hard hit for us sexually and emotionally. Toys, oral, etc. had always been on the table, but more as part of being GGG than as the main source of her coming. For a long time, it put her off sex as a source of her own pleasure. Things have gotten much better, but I'd be lying if I said we didn't occasionally talk wistfully about that time in our relationship. I can empathize with what CLIF is going through. When we went through this, we did research and spoke with doctors wondering the same thing: Is there some way to reclaim that PIV-and-her-orgasms connection. We even thought of writing you, the wise guru of all things sex, but am I glad we didn't. In response to CLIF asking for some fairly simple advice, you bluntly said that it's not a problem that she can't come from PIV sex. You ignored the fact that up until fairly recently, she could. Then you suggest that, because he hasn't mastered the subtle art of acronyms, he might be a shitty lover whose wife has been faking orgasms for years and is just tired of it. Dick move, Dan.

A Callous Response Only Negates Your Motivation

You're right, ACRONYM, my response to CLIF was too harsh. But as you discovered, there wasn't a way for you and your wife to reclaim that PIV-and-her-orgasms connection. So CLIF would do well to take Dr. Gunter's advice and embrace how his wife's body works now and not waste too much time grieving over how her body/PIV orgasms used to work then.

On the Lovecast, Nathaniel Frank on the marriage-equality movement: savagelovecast.com.