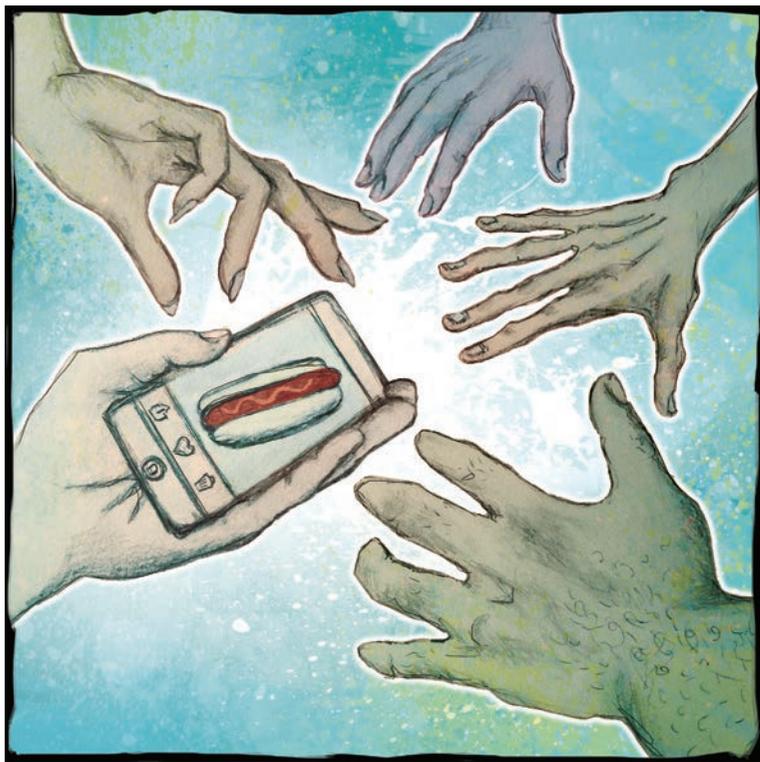


# Dates & nuts

## Sexts, snaps, and videotapes:

You show me yours and I'll show...everyone

By Stacey Rowe



I'll never forget the time I came home for college break and handed a roll of film to my mother to get developed while she was grocery shopping. (Yes, I'm of an age where one-hour photo service was kind of a big deal.) "Don't you ever do this to me again!" she later yelled as she tossed the package of pics at me, complete with a red slip indicating there had been something inappropriate in the mix. I had forgotten about a classmate who had a tendency to display his wares at lacrosse parties after a few beverages. This time, said wares made it into the background of one of the photos. I was mortified.

Today's use of mobile devices or apps like SnapChat and Kik has made "dropping-trou" for the camera fairly commonplace. In a recent study, fifty-four percent of college students admitted to sending or receiving sexts (sexually explicit texts or images) before turning eighteen. With the likelihood of recipients sharing said risqué messages with others, many states (including New York) have introduced anti-sexting laws

to curtail criminal activities such as child pornography, harassment, stalking, and bullying.

Males generally have more positive or excited feelings about sexting, but one man I spoke with said that he frequently receives unsolicited naked pictures from a certain woman. He has absolutely no interest in dating her but offered me a peep. Before passing judgment on him, know that the sharing of racy images with others is not a behavior specific to one gender. I recently attended an all-female party that was crashed by one woman's new boyfriend. As he stood quietly in a corner sipping a beer, several party guests exchanged whispers that they had already perused pictures of his privates. Thankfully, the host was vegetarian because after that awkward convo, the partaking of pigs in a blanket was no longer of interest.

Women are more likely to report feeling pressured or uneasy about sexting and the receipt of unsolicited photos. However, there are some empowered ladies who prefer an extensive review of what I'll call

"Herman Melville's most notable work" prior to entertaining the thought of going on a date. One woman informed me that her best friend requests said pictures in advance and simply tells her admirers, "I am a tall woman with tall needs."

Let's jump forward a bit and say a couple is in a committed relationship and trusts one another. What's the harm? Taking nude photos or making a video could be sexy and serve as a means of spicing things up in the bedroom, which brings us to the story of Aimee\*, who made a video with her longtime college boyfriend. Aimee had been dating Richard\*, a film major, for two years prior to making an intimate tape. They lived together for three years afterward. During the last year of their relationship, Aimee relocated for a job in Rochester, and Richard followed. Problems surfaced, and they unpleasantly parted ways and didn't speak for a few years.

With her bright and outgoing personality, Aimee developed a network of friends and business contacts and accumulated a few awkward dating stories along the way. She began sharing funny anecdotes with her friends on social media and was approached by a local radio station about hosting a podcast about pop culture, entertainment, and her dating life. Excited about the opportunity, Aimee began writing in preparation for her upcoming show. When she finally brought her material to a meeting with the CEO, he asked if she had ever done anything that would make her ashamed.

Confused by the inquiry, Aimee responded, "Well, sometimes I lie on My Fitness Pal about calories, but I'm getting better about it."

When the CEO informed her that the station had received a copy of the video, Aimee, understandably shocked, tried to explain that she had only been twenty-three at the time and that the movie was made with her longtime boyfriend. The station rescinded the offer, but they kindly let her know that while she wouldn't be doing her podcast, the tape was very well done and that she looked great. She later discovered that Richard heard about her potential show and, in an act of the purest cruelty, released the tape. Time has passed and Aimee has not let Richard dull her sparkle, her sense of humor, or her other professional endeavors, but it was a painful experience to say the least.

I'll conclude with a notion that will likely render me as old-fashioned as my 35mm camera, but whatever happened to getting to know someone before getting naked? That being said, I realize people of all ages will continue to take tremendous risks for the sake of a good time. By all means, enjoy. I do hope some will learn from Aimee's experience and have the common sense to delete what they create in the present to protect their future—because nobody deserves a Dick move. (585)

Stacey Rowe is a freelance writer based in Rochester.

\*Names and identifying details have been changed.

Illustration by Lissa Mathis