Varsity Blues

A very queer straight man makes a Hail Mary pass for community

April 1, 1999 By Shawn Decker

One night in junior high, a handful of friends and I played spin the bottle on the front porch of my parents' house on Main Street, USA. You all know that game of randomatic lip lock, a perennial favorite among kids looking for an excuse to kiss with no strings attached.

We had one special rule that night: No matter whether the bottle pointed to a boy or a girl, you had to share a kiss. No tongue, mind you, just a peck on the smoocher. With three boys and four girls playing, the odds were pretty even.

That summer night was exceptional. The soft wind seemed to blow through our very souls, and something incredible happened. In our minds, we were the first 13-year-olds to ever play the game this way—we were the Beatles with beards, discovering a deeper sense of what made us tick while still simply wanting to hold hands.

I hear you asking, "Where was the parental guidance during this sexual revolution?" My folks were the coolest: They went to a movie, leaving us to fend for ourselves. Had they been at home to witness the magic, I can honestly say that they wouldn't have minded. They would've seen their little thin-blood do more ridiculous things than kissing a friend. But a lot of parents probably *would* have told their son, "If you go around kissing boys, you might become a homosexual!"

I wish.

It's a shame there's no truth in that dumb logic. Is sexuality a choice? Not on this planet. Recently I've taken to telling all my gay friends with HIV that my sexual *orientation* is hetero, but my sexual *preference* would have to be homo.

If there was a decision to be made in this matter, do you really think I would choose to be warming the bench on one team when, quite frankly, I could be the star quarterback on the other?

And what about training for the big game of love? The gay community has a wealth of resources and support for its positoid brothers. There are opportunities to practice, play and become a stronger team together. Unfortunately, as far as the hetero so-called community goes, your gym teacher was wrong—there most certainly is an *I* in the word team when you're a positoid on the

straight squad.

Don’t get me wrong. The burden of hetero-serodiverse-sexuality in the late ’90s isn’t all bad, even if most of the good parts are fantasy. My favorite is a *Beverly Hills, 90210* dream. In it I’m Donna’s longtime platonic pen pal who has just opened up to her about my, er, secret. Tragically but valiantly, I have The AIDS Virus. Saintly Donna invites me to 90210 to educate her friends about the dangers of HIV. My candor and courage are a bracing reminder to the gang to Protect Yourself Because Your Life Counts. But wait: There’s a last-minute positoid twist. Departing with a friendly hug is not enough this time. Gina, the show’s new vixen, is looking way too sexy in that body-hugging black getup. Why should I be the only cameo not to get a chance to knock those boots? Slide that condom off the banana and give me a go, I say.

Not to say I’ve struck out entirely while dating in the real world. It’s just harder without the HIV potlucks my gay friends are always organizing. Still, one perk of being an infected loverboy is that the dumb and dumber have no interest in me whatsoever. They weed themselves out.

The downside is that even smart girls sometimes cringe at the thought of being with a positoid stud. Embracing yours truly goes against almost everything the ladies were brought up to look for in a man: a good job, healthy sperm and a few manners. One out of three doesn’t cut it.

But I’ve accepted the fact that there’s more to me than my sexual preference, orientation and HIV status. Anyone who has ever focused on exposing herself to my charms, rather than to my pet virus, will tell you: I’m a big goof like everyone else. And I may not take the field too often, but when I do, it’s the Superbowl, baby. Every play—touch or tackle—has meaning.

So, even if it’s all a lot more complicated than spin the bottle, no matter which team you play for, know that we are all in this HIV game together. Everyone wants to be the star and score that emotional touchdown before the game’s over.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/Varsity-Blues-9567-3944