

Cruising the Sexual Superhighway

Stan is a personable and outgoing man in his early 40s being tested for HIV in our health department clinic. He volunteers to participate in a study about how people remember their sexual partners. The ultimate goal is to develop effective interviewing techniques to obtain more complete recall. (See “Magnetic” on page 34 as an example.)

I’ve interviewed hundreds of STD patients who reveal unusual and even exotic details about their sex lives, yet Stan amazes me with the scope of his sexual adventurism and uncanny memory. In just 20 minutes, he happily rattles off the names of the 112 male partners he’s had sex with during the last dozen months—sampling these men in 19 different cities sprinkled across 7 American states and 3 Canadian provinces. Some of these men hailed from yet other states and countries.

Stan seemingly has radar for fun partners. For example, one of his partners he meets using his CB radio, while another is an anonymous motorist with whom he “plays” following a spontaneous game of tag on the freeway. From a public health perspective,

Stan’s vivid accounts highlight the global sexual network that facilitates rapid STD transmission among gay men.

Yet I can’t help thinking that many straight men would kill to live the heterosexual equivalent of Stan’s sex life.

(DDB)

Too Good-Looking to be Real

This young man is exceptionally good-looking, and the nurses, including me, in our sexually transmitted diseases clinic, notice his beauty right away. He’s here to find out the result of the HIV test he took a week ago.

The test is positive, and he absorbs the shock of this disturbing news (seemingly too) well. After explaining its significance and counseling him about safer behaviors and the importance of conscientious medical follow-up, I ask him about his sexual partners during the preceding year. Without hesitation he names twelve different women for that period. (Sort of a “Woman of The Month Casanova”, I secretly think.)

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**IN THE SHADOW OF
VENUS**

*Vignettes from the
Venereal World*

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