

# ALL BOYS AREN'T BLUE

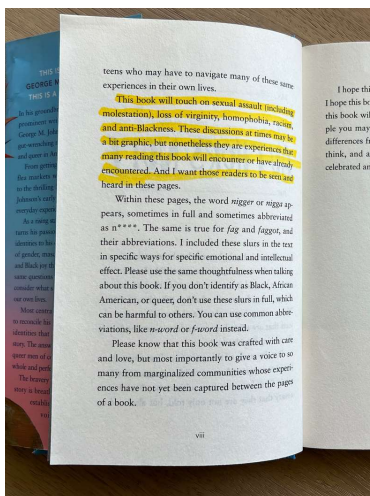
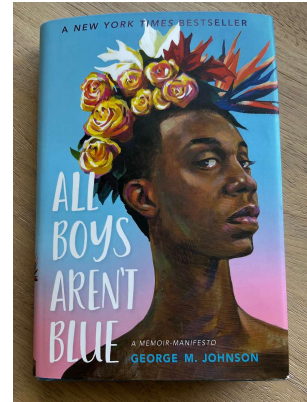
George M. Johnson

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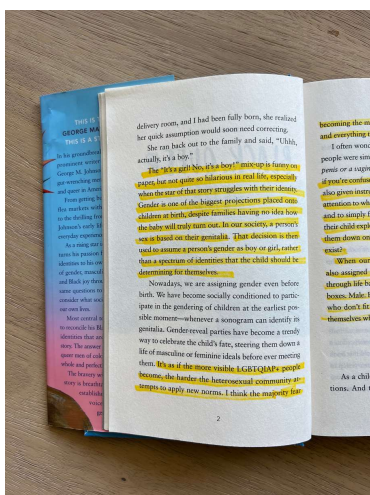
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## PAGE VII

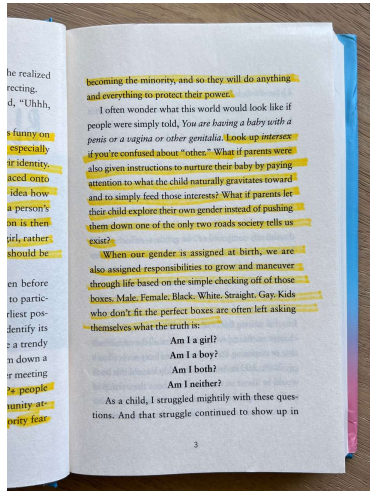
This book will touch on sexual assault (including molestation), loss of virginity, homophobia, racism, and anti-Blackness. These discussions at times may be a bit graphic, but nonetheless they are experiences that many reading this book will encounter or have already encountered. And I want those readers to be seen and heard in these pages.



## PAGE 2

The "It's a girl! No, it's a boy!" mix-up is funny on paper, but not quite so hilarious in real life, especially when the star of that story struggles with their identity. Gender is one of the biggest projections placed onto children at birth, despite families having no idea how the baby will truly turn out. In our society, a person's sex is based on their genitalia. That decision is then used to assume a person's gender as boy or girl, rather than a spectrum of identities that the child should be determining for themselves.

... It's as if the more visible LGBTQIAP+ people become, the harder the heterosexual community attempts to apply new norms. I think the majority fear

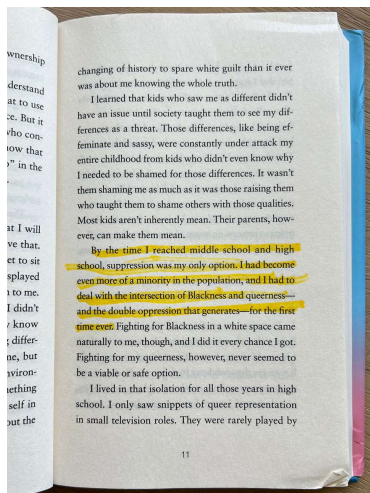


## PAGE 3

becoming the minority, and so they will do anything and everything to protect their power.

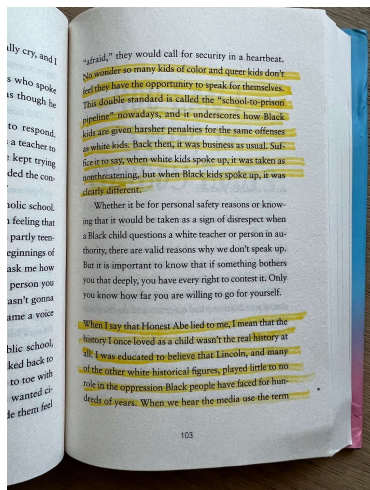
...Look up intersex if you're confused about "other." What if parents were also given instructions to nurture their baby by paying attention to what the child naturally gravitates toward and to simply feed those interests? What if parents let their child explore their own gender instead of pushing them down one of the only two roads society tells us exist?

When our gender is assigned at birth, we are also assigned responsibilities to grow and maneuver through life based on the simple checking off of those boxes. Male. Female. Black. White. Straight. Gay. Kids who don't fit the perfect boxes are often left asking themselves what the truth is: Am I a girl? Am I a boy? Am I both? Am I neither?



## PAGE 11

By the time I reached middle school and high school, suppression was my only option. I had become even more of a minority in the population, and I had to deal with the intersection of Blackness and queerness—and the double oppression that generates for the first time ever.



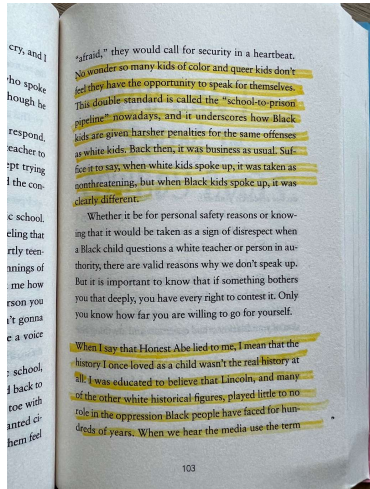
## PAGE 103

No wonder so many kids of color and queer kids don't feel they have the opportunity to speak for themselves.

This double standard is called the "school-to-prison pipeline" nowadays, and it underscores how Black kids are given harsher penalties for the same offenses a white kids. Back then, it was business as usual. Suffice it to say, when white kids spoke up, it was taken as nonthreatening, but when Black kids spoke up, it was clearly different.

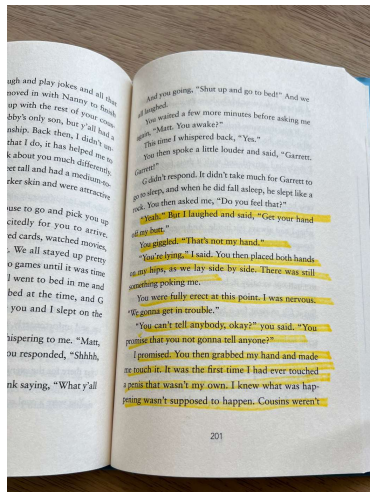
## PAGE 103 (CONT.)

... When I say that Honest Abe lied to me, I mean that the history I once loved as a child wasn't the real history at all. I was educated to believe that Lincoln, and many of the other white historical figures, played little to no role in the oppression Black people have faced for hundreds of years. When we hear the media use the term



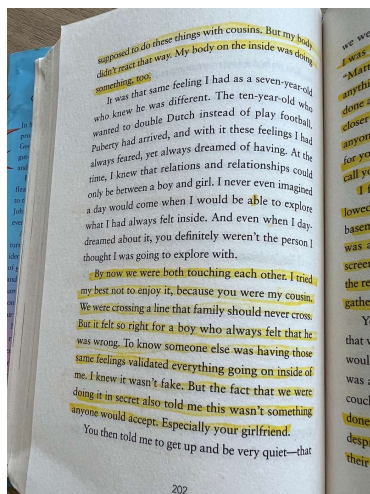
## PAGE 201

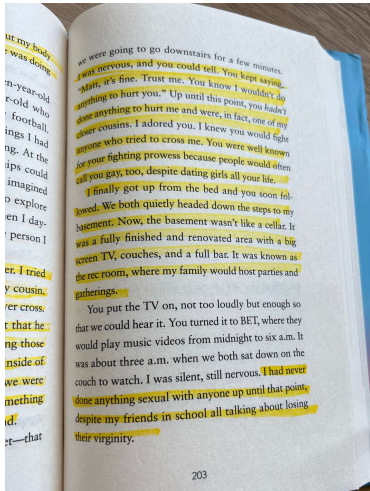
Yeah." But I laughed and said, "Get your hand off my butt." You giggled. "That's not my hand." You're lying," I said. You then placed both hands on my hips, as we lay side by side. There was still something poking me. You were fully erect at this point. I was nervous. "We gonna get in trouble." You can't tell anybody, okay?" you said. "You promise that you not gonna tell anyone?" I promised. You then grabbed my hand and made me touch it. It was the first time I had ever touched a penis that wasn't my own. I knew what was happening wasn't supposed to happen. Cousins weren't...



## PAGE 202

...suppose to do those things with cousins. But my body didn't react that way. My body on the inside was doing something too. ...By now we were both touching each other. I tried my best not to enjoy it, because you were my cousin. We were crossing a line that family should never cross. But it felt so right for a boy who always felt that he was wrong. To know someone else was having those same feelings validated everything going on inside of me. I knew it wasn't fake. But the fact that we were doing it in secret also told me this wasn't something anyone would accept. Especially your girlfriend. You then told me to get up and be very quiet—that



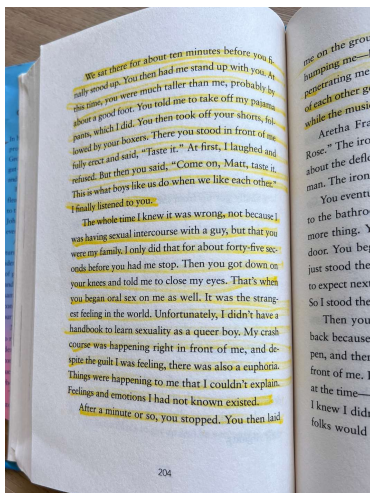


## PAGE 203

I was nervous, and you could tell. You kept saying, "Matt, it's fine." Trust me. You know I wouldn't. do anything to hurt you?" Up until this point, you hadn't done anything to hurt me and were, in fact, one of my closer cousins. I adored you I knew you would fight anyone who tried to cross me. You were well known for your fighting prowess because people would often call you gay, too, despite dating girls all your life.

I finally got up from the bed and you soon fol. loved. We both quietly headed down the steps to my hasement. Now, the basement wasn't like a cellar. It was a fully finished and renovated area with a big screen TV, couches, and a full bar. It was known as the rec room, where my family would host parties and gatherings.

...I had never done anything sexual with anyone up until that point, despite my friends in school all talking about losing their virginity.

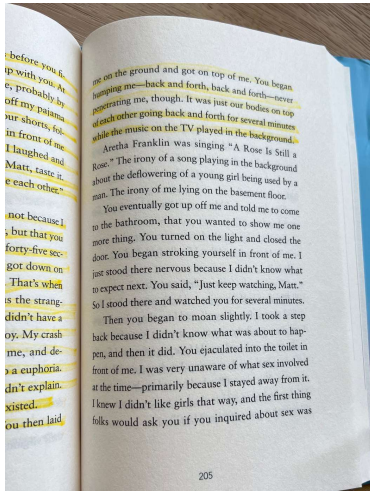


## PAGE 204

We sat there for about ten minutes before you finally stood up. You then had me stand up with you. At this time, you were much taller than me, probably by a good foot. You told me to take off my pajama pants, which I did. You then took off your shorts, followed by your boxers. There you stood in front of me fully erect and said, "Taste it." At first, I laughed and refused. But then you said, "Come on, Matt, taste it. This is what boys like us do when we like each other." I finally listened to you.

The whole time I knew it was wrong, not because I was having sexual intercourse with a guy, but that you were my family. I only did that for about forty-five seconds before you had me stop. Then you got down on your knees and told me to close my eyes. That's when you began oral sex on me as well. It was the strangest feeling in the world. Unfortunately, I didn't have a handbook to learn sexuality as a queer boy. My crash course was happening right in front of me, and despite the guilt I was feeling, there was also euphoria. Things were happening to me that I couldn't explain. Feelings and emotions I had not known existed.

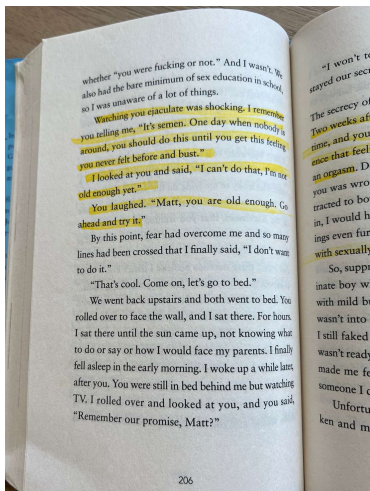
After a minute or so, you stopped. You then laid...



## PAGE 205

me on the ground and got on top of me. You began humping me— back and forth back and forth—never penetrating me, though. It was just our bodies on top of each other going back and forth for several minutes while the music on the TV played in the background.

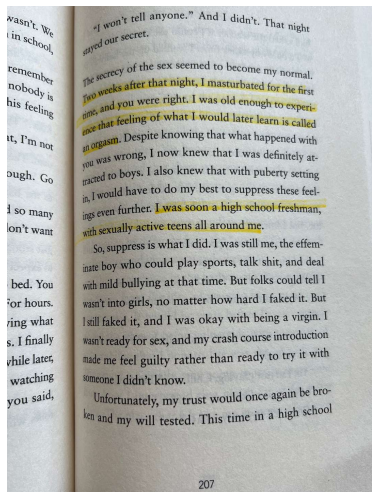
...You eventually got up off me and told me to come to the bathroom, that you wanted to show me one more thing. You turned on the light and closed the door. You began stroking yourself in front of me. I just stood there nervous because I didn't know what to expect next. You said, "Just keep watching, Matt." So I stood there and watched you for several minutes. Then you began to moan slightly. I took a step back because I didn't know what was about to happen, and then it did. You ejaculated into the toilet in front of me. I was very unaware of what sex involved at the time— primarily because I stayed away from it.



## PAGE 206

Watching you ejaculate was shocking. I remember you telling me, "It's semen. One day when nobody is around, you should do this until you get this feeling you never felt before and bust." Watching you ejaculate was shocking. I remember you telling me, "It's semen. One day when nobody is around, you should do this until you get this feeling you never felt before and bust." I looked at you and said, "I can't do that, I'm not old enough yet."

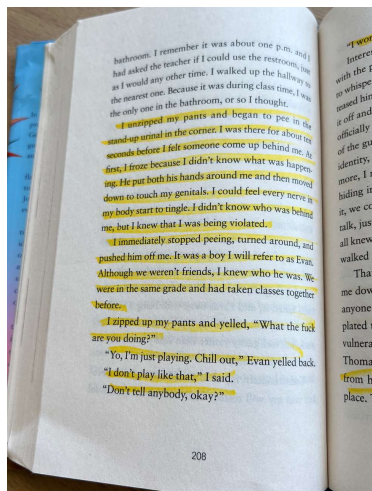
You laughed. "Matt, you are old enough. Go ahead and try it." By this point, fear had overcome me and so many lines had been crossed that I finally said, "I don't want to do it." "That's cool. Come on, let's go to bed." We went back upstairs and both went to bed. You rolled Over to face the wall, and I sat there. For hours. I sat there until the sun came up, not knowing what to do or say or how I would face my parents. I finally fell asleep in the early morning. I woke up a while later, after you. You were still in bed behind me but watching TV. I rolled over and looked at you, and you said, "Remember our promise, Matt? "



## PAGE 207

Two weeks after that night, I masturbated for the first time and you were right. I was old enough to experience that feeling of what I would later learn is called an orgasm.

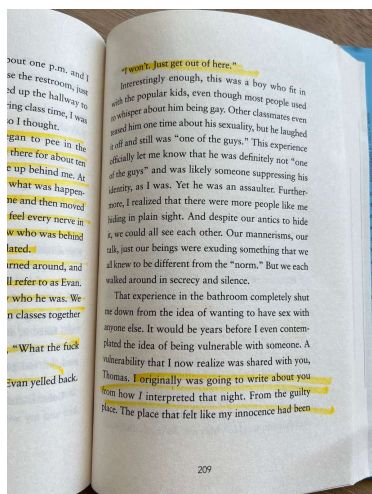
...I was soon a high school freshman, with sexually active teens all around me.



## PAGE 208

I unzipped my pants and began to pee in the stand-up urinal in the corner. I was there for about ten seconds before I felt someone come up behind me. A fist, I froze because I didn't know what was happening. He put both his hands around me and then moved down to touch my genitals. I could feel every nerve in my body start to tingle. I didn't know who was behind me, but I knew that I was being violated. I immediately stopped peeing, turned around, and pushed him off me. It was a boy I will refer to as Evan. Although we weren't friends, I knew who he was. We were in the same grade and had taken classes together before.

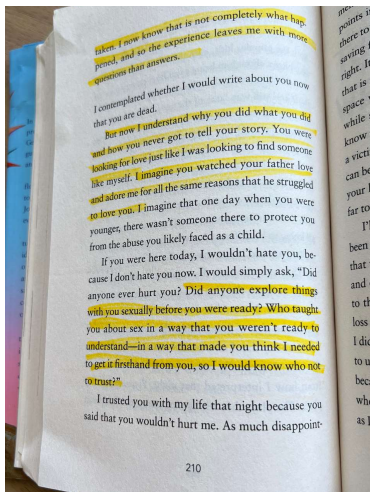
I zipped up my pants and yelled, "What the fuck are you doing?" "Yo, I'm just playing. Chill out," Evan yelled back. "I don't play like that," I said. "Don't tell anybody, okay?"



## PAGE 209

"I won't. Just get out of here."

...I originally was going to write about you from how I interpreted that night. From the guilty Place. The place that felt like my innocence had been..

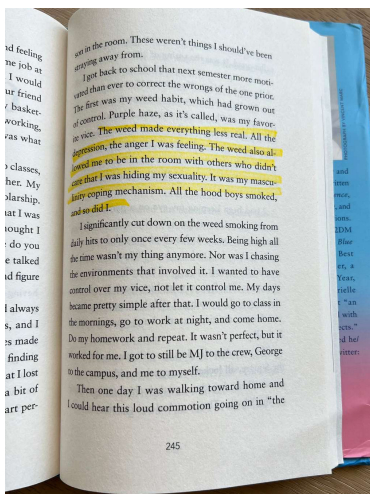


## PAGE 210

...sate. I now know that is not completely what happened, and so the experience leaves me with more questions than answers.

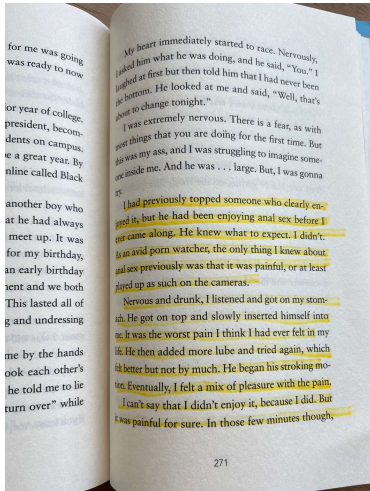
... But now I understand why you did what you did and how you never got to tell your story. You were boling for love just like I was looking to find someone The myself. I imagine you watched your father love and adore me for all the same reasons that he struggled to love you.

...Did anyone explore things with you sexually before you were ready? Who taught you about sex in a way that you weren't ready to understand--in a way that made you think I needed to get it firsthand from you, so I would know who not to trust?"



## PAGE 245

The weed made everything less real. All the lepression, the anger I was feeling. The weed also al. loved me to be in the room with others who didnit are that I was hiding my sexuality. It was my mascu-inity coping mechanism. All the hood boys smoked, and so did I.



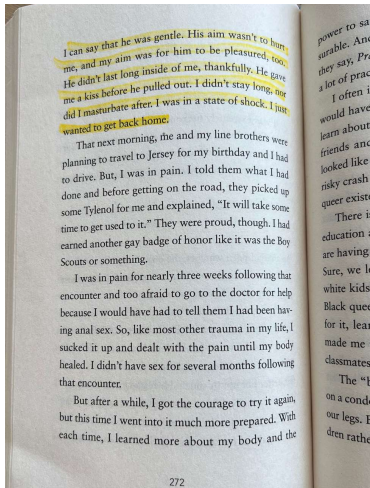
## PAGE 271

I was extremely nervous. There is a fear, as with most things that you are doing for the first time. But this was my ass, and I was struggling to imagine someone inside me. And he was... large. But, I was gonna try.

I had previously topped someone who clearly enjoyed it, but he had been enjoying anal sex before I ever came along. He knew what to expect. I didn't know and porn watcher, the only thing I knew about anal sex previously was that it was painful, or at least played up as such on the cameras.

Nervous and drunk, I listened and got on my stomach. He got on top and slowly inserted himself into me. It was the worst pain I think I had ever felt in my life. He then added more lube and tried again, which felt better but not by much. He began his stroking motion. Eventually, I felt a mix of pleasure with the pain.

I can't say that I didn't enjoy it, because I did. But it was painful for sure. In those few minutes though,



## PAGE 272

I can say that he was gentle. His aim wasn't to hurt me, and my aim was for him to be pleased, too. He didn't last long inside of me, thankfully. He gave me a kiss before he pulled out. I didn't stay long, nor did I masturbate after. I was in a state of shock. I just wanted to get back home.

I was in pain for nearly three weeks following that encounter and too afraid to go to the doctor for help because I would have had to tell them I had been having anal sex. So, like most other trauma in my life, I sucked it up and dealt with the pain until my body healed. I didn't have sex for several months following that encounter.

But after a while, I got the courage to try it again, but this time I went into it much more prepared. With each time, I learned more about my body...

...Sex should be pleasurable.

...Like they say, Practice makes perfect, and I eventually got a lot of practice.



#### **PAGE 4**

Unfortunately, we are still struggling to move the conversation past an assumed identity at birth. And LGBTQIAP+ people are not just fighting for the right to self- identify and be accepted in a society that is predominantly composed of two genders...

...I started writing this book with the intention that every chapter would end with solutions for all the uncomfortable or confusing life circumstances I experienced as a gay Black child in America. I quickly learned this book would be about so much more. About the overlap of my identities and the importance of sharing how those intersections create my privilege and my oppression.

#### **PAGE 6**

I believe that the dominant society establishes an idea of what "normal" is simply to suppress differences, which means that any of us who fall outside of their "normal" will eventually be oppressed.

#### **PAGE 9**

But now I know that queerness is a part of Blackness, and that there is no Blackness without queer people.

Then, early in 2012, Trayvon Martin was killed by George Zimmerman- and my entire perspective shifted on being a Black person in this society.

...My eyes were opened by seeing the shooting of Black people at the hands of police. Seeing the killing of Black children like Tamir Rice at the hands of police. Seeing that it didn't matter whether you were an affluent Black, a poor Black, a child, or an adult. In the eyes of society, I was still a n\*\*\*\*.

#### **PAGE 22**

Unfortunately, my life story is proof that no amount of money, love, or support can protect you from a society intent on killing you for your Blackness. Any community that has been taught that anyone not "straight" is dangerous, is in itself a danger to LGBTQIAP+ people.

#### **PAGE 31**

There can be both fear of your own community and a fear of dealing with bullying from other children who don't respect your identity.

...As an adult, I have gone through the unlearning to understand that my community's treatment of Black queer children is in fact a by-product of a system of assimilation to whiteness and respectability that forces Black people to fit one mold in society, one where being a man means you must be straight and masculine.

#### **PAGE 47**

This is about identity. This is about culture and how it dictates what is a "good" and "bad" name, especially in the Black community. This is about the politics around sex and gender, and that when our parents choose a name that we as children are uncomfortable with, we have the right to change it.

## **PAGE 49**

When we see our children not conforming to the societal standards of heterosexuality or we see them gravitating to things of the "opposite gender," I would love for us to ask the deeper questions about who and what they are.

## **PAGE 50**

As we continue to grow through sex and gender, many people will take back their power and change their names- choosing one that fits the person they are, not the one society pushed them to be. ...Suffice it to say, respect people for their names, and for how they choose to identify. This also goes for respecting people and their choices of pronouns- he/him, she/her, they/them, go, goddess, or whatever. We are conditioned to think these things should be the expectations. People being allowed to be called by their chosen names and their gender pronouns is the rule. Let yourself unlearn everything you though you knew about yourself, and listen to what you need to know about those who navigate life outside the margins of heterosexual box. I bet most of you never thought to ever question if you even like your name. Or question if that was something you had the power to change if you didn't. I hope you will now...

## **PAGE 57**

Boys were supposed to speak one way. And girls were supposed to speak another. So, I would do my best to not use girl lingo when I was around boys, and vice versa. I was "code-switching" long before I knew what code-switching was.

## **PAGE 58**

I had created my first term in gay lingo, even though I didn't know what being gay was. ...Lingo that children like me were ostracized for using. Lingo that queer children today still get ostracized for using. And yet straight people use it out of context safely. This lingo or slang was created by "Black femmes," which is an umbrella term that captures Black trans women, Black queer men, nonbinary folk, cishet Black women, and anyone else I may be missing. However, a lot of this history has been erased from those who identify as queer, which has allowed the notion that queer culture comes from emulating Black cishet women to spread. But it's not true. That erasure also allows the hetero community to get "a pass" for using language that would often get queer folk harmed.

## **PAGE 63**

...I realized the only place that was truly safe for me would be in my imagination. My ability to be a kid came at the expense of my gender identity.

## **PAGE 71**

...I would sit with the boys and talk about "boy" things, but then immediately go to recess and get with my girls. Code-switching like that, navigating disparate spaces like that, was pretty much normal.

## **PAGE 75**

People who are straight that associate with me now, as an adult, still get questioned about their sexuality. Simply because they are friends with me. Adults who participate in homophobia create kids that do the same.

Homophobia denies queer people happiness.

...Homophobia is the reason that so many who currently play sports are closeted- as there is no way football, baseball, and basketball are 99.9 percent heterosexual.

...Dominant culture's inability to integrate his queerness into a masculine- centered sport like football stole the opportunity of a lifetime from him.

## **PAGE 84**

My K-12 education mirrored my other systems that oppress the Black community- with Black children being taught by predominantly white staff. From the principal down to the guidance counselor, we were surrounded by white authority figures in my elementary school. We had a minimal number of Black teachers, but Black folks were always the janitors, lunch ladies, and secretaries, which wouldn't be a problem if they also held positions of power.

...Our being the "center of attention" meant we got to learn about people that looked like us for a change.

## **PAGE 86**

There are levels to the oppression.

...White history didn't need a month; we were always learning about it. And because we had one teacher teaching various subjects, we learned history every day, but mainly centered about how much the white forefathers did to create the United States.

## **PAGE 90**

I wrote all the lyrics to the rap and taught them how to flow. There were two white boys in our group and I remember them struggling, but me and another Black kid go them up to par.

...Again, it was easy to pay homage back then to white historical figures because we learned about them through the lens that they were concerned about us all. The interesting thing about studying history is how much it starts to change based on the school setting and who is teaching it. And it's not always about how those teachers view history, but how they view you. And your place in history. The history I learned in elementary school began to unravel once I hit junior high. Here, all my teachers were Black, and the population of students was overwhelmingly Black. We began learning history that was inclusive to slavery, as well as those historical figures like Washington and Jefferson and how they had some not-so-great history to them. We had teachers who wanted to make sure we really knew what it meant to be Black in America.

## **PAGE 91**

It's important that I say this, because the white community has long prevented Black progress in every arena. Even today, institutions are still having "the first Black person to..."

## **PAGE 96**

Leaving junior high, I had a whole new outlook on Black history and race in this country. Even though I was only fourteen, I was well aware of what it meant to be a Black "man" in the eyes of society. It wasn't lost on me how racist the Rodney King beating was. Or how divided the world was shown to be with the O.J. Simpson verdict- which many in the Black community saw as a win against a justice system that rarely, if ever, would let a Black man get off. Especially one accused of killing a white woman.

## **PAGE 97**

Though my dad was a cop, he knew that being his child wouldn't protect me from how police interacted with Black boys. So my parents taught me early about how you behave so that you don't end up a statistic. "The Talk" is what we call it in Black families.

...about the dangers of interacting with non-Black people, because they will assume the worst of you as a Black boy.

..."...You just can't be so trusting of white people with your history."

...These sentiments were echoed by my father, who worked on a predominantly white police force.

## **PAGE 99**

Microaggression is the academic term for what I was experiencing. Simply put, it's when a person insults or diminishes you based solely on the marginalized group you are in. It's called "micro" because that person isn't outright calling you a n\*\*\*\* or a fa\* or both. Instead, they're calling attention to your differences in a low-key way. At times it can seem almost innocent or naïve, but make no mistake, these small things become big over time. These little assumptions grow to create an entire stereotype. This kind of microaggressive behavior often leads to overt racism or homophobia, eventually.

Sometimes it's intentional, like non-Black kids asking questions with a negative, condescending type of vibe to rattle you. But other times, a person doesn't even know that they've insulted you or your culture.

...If someone asks you a question and you have to squint your eyes and twist your face a little to make sure heard them correctly, you've probably just dealt with a microaggression.

## **PAGE 158**

I watch Black men criticize Black queer boys every day. And that's not to say my community is more homophobic than others or that I don't see where Black straight men affirm me, but by and large, it's not enough

## **PAGE 164**

I watch Black men criticize Black queer boys every day. And that's not to say my community is more homophobic than others or that I don't see where Black straight men affirm me, but by and large, it's not enough

## PAGE 266

As we kissed, he began unzipping my pants. It was clear to me in this moment that he wasn't new to this.

He reached his hand down and pulled out my dick. He quickly went to giving me head. I just sat back and enjoyed it as I could tell he was, too. He was also definitely experienced in what he was doing, because he went to work quite confidently. He then came up and asked me if I wanted to try on him. I said sure. I began and he said, "Watch your teeth." I didn't want to let him know I was inexperienced. So, I slowed down and took my time and luckily got into a good rhythm. He didn't know I was a virgin, and I did my best to act dominant like my favorite porn star. I was an actor, and this was my movie.

There was so much excitement running through my body: This was much more than losing my virginity. For once, I was consenting to the sexual satisfaction of my body. This moment also confirmed that sex could look how I wanted it to look. And that it could be passionate and kind, but most importantly, fun and satisfying. His body felt great in my mouth.

I came up after a while and kissed him again. We both got up and went into his bedroom, where we got completely naked. He took off his clothes and immediately lay on his stomach. I then took off my shirt, and then my boxer briefs. I got behind him. There was moonlight coming through the shades of the dark room. Two Black boys under the glow of blue moonlight. How poetic, dare I say ironic? Now, I was scared as hell. One, because I didn't know what I was doing and clearly, he did. Two, because it was still college, and my fear of word getting out that I was inexperienced or bad in bed would have been too big of a campus rumor. Let alone that I was having sex with men and a friend of someone in my chapter.

For the first few minutes, we dry humped and grinded. I was behind him, with my stomach on his back as we kissed. After a few minutes of fun and games, he got up and went to his nightstand, where he pulled out a condom and some lube. He then lay down on his stomach. I knew what I had to do even if I had never done it before. I had one point of reference, though, and that was seven-plus years of watching pornography. Although the porn was heterosexual, it was enough of a reference point for me to get the job done.

I remember the condom was blue and flavored like cotton candy. I put some lube on and got him up on his knees, and I began to slide into him from behind. I tried not to force it because I imagined that it would be painful; I didn't want this moment to be painful. So I eased in, slowly, until I heard him moan.

As we moved, I could tell he was excited and I was, too, but the pride in me told me not to show it. I felt like I was in control and proud of myself for getting it right on the first try—all the while still being nervous. I wanted to stay dominant in that moment. We went at it for about fifteen minutes before I started to get that feeling. Weakness in the legs, numbness in the waist. I finally came and let out a loud moan—to the point where he asked me to quiet down for the neighbors. I pulled out of him and kissed him while he masturbated. Then, he also came.

That night was glorious. I had conquered a fear and had sex with a man on my own terms.

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For me, I was finally on my journey of sexual exploration and couldn't wait to do it again. He and I had sex a second time two weeks later, before school let out for summer. ...I had several sexual encounters that involved mutual masturbation and kissing and fooling around, but I just couldn't bring myself to have penetrative sex again. I was hesitant because I still had a lot of questions. As much as I enjoyed being on top, I wasn't sure if I always wanted to be the dominant person in the bedroom. I was still a novice at sex, and even more at gay culture and sexual positions. I wasn't sure if because I "topped" him, that meant I always had to be the top. I also wanted to try the bottom position, which I associated with being the more submissive person. ...I just needed time to reflect, and figure out if sex for me was going to be the casual hookup thing or if I was ready to now seek something more.

**PAGE 270**

By that time, I was using a dating app online called Black Gay Chat.

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When I say I'm not blue, I'm referring to the blue on the police uniform my father wore. How I've watched too many in that same blue harm Black and brown people. I know for myself that although I respect my father with all my heart, it is my duty to fight against how that institution has harmed us.