

► Chapter 3

“Sexy” and “Safe” Aren’t Mutually Exclusive

If you don’t believe it, just ask Iona Morris, Lola Love and Mariann Aalda (also known as *3 Blacque Chix*), who wrote, produced, and star in the naughty, bawdy play, *Herotique-Aahh ...* The groundbreaking theatrical production, which they call “a sexistential comedy,” celebrates the joys of sex for women over 40 and those planning on living to be older than 40, and the men (and sometimes the women) who love them.

“As rampant as AIDS is in the African-American community ... and especially with black *women* in the highest risk group, it would be irresponsible for us to talk about sex and not talk about protection,” says Morris, who plays Lady I, Goddess of Love & Sexual Freedom. “Right,” insists Love, who plays Lady L, The Dominatrix, “we don’t dwell on it, and we don’t preach on it ... but we had to bring it up.”

“Absolutely!” chimes in Aalda, who plays Lady M, The Ex-Stepford Wife. “If you’re gonna *bring it up* ... then you’ve *got to* bring it up!” Ba-dump-bump. The following excerpt from their show is how they (ahem) *cover* the subject in the spoken word ...

Lady I: Oh, and ...

Lady L: ... don’t

Lady M: ... forget

All: ... Your rubbers!!!

Lady I: You’ve gotta make sure you’re both covered ...

Lady L: Put a cap on it, baby. Keep it sexy and tight ...

Lady I: Lots of varieties to satisfy your *voracious* appetite!

Lady M: Ribbed, tipped, neon ... and choc-o-late tasting!

Lady I: And there are so many more of those fun dick casings!

Lady L: Full Body ... SUPERMAN!!! ... and Peter-Meter condoms ...

Lady I: And if he doesn't put it on before the entrance is made ...

Lady L: TAKE CONTROL!!!...so YOU won't later pay!

So, Do They Practice What They Preach?

MARIANN AALDA (Lady M): Well, I'm the only one of the three of us not in a committed relationship right now, so I'll go first.

I was already married when AIDS was first identified some 25 years ago, and I remained married—albeit to two different husbands—for most of my adult life. And I have to tell you, being divorced and in the dating scene right now and trying to have any kind of sex life can be tough to negotiate, especially when you discover that middle-aged men don't like wearing condoms any more than teenage boys do.

And, yes, I have allowed myself to be intimidated into having unprotected sex, but it was an *internalized* threat. I was concerned that the man I was dating would be insulted! Now, how dumb is that? And it wasn't even a man that I had a great love, or even a great passion, for. It's just that it had been a really long time, and I was really horny.

And then, of course, having done it with him *once* without a condom, I figured the cow was already out of the barn, so why go through *the embarrassment* of having "the conversation" with him after that?

I'll tell you why ... because waiting for the results from an AIDS test is *pure hell*, that's why! The relationship ended, but the *fear* lingered interminably. Every time I got a cold ... a sore throat ... a rash ... I would wonder, could it be?

Yeah, I was stupid; but thank God, I was lucky. I also smartened up enough to know that *I didn't want to press my luck*. So, after I got my results, I went right out and bought myself some condoms. Hopefully, I'll get a chance to use them sometime before their expiration date.



LOLA LOVE (Lady L): When I was younger, my partners made demands about how, why, and when they wanted to have sex. And, being an obedient slave, I acquiesced. Why? The reasons were endless: afraid of being alone, wanting to please, scared of being rejected, 'cause he or she was "soooo fine," marriage, peer pressure, social pressure, religious pressure ... blah, blah, blah.

But no more! Now *I'm* in control ... as we *all* should be. Each and every one of us must master the role of restraint ... and I'm not just talking handcuffs or silk scarves on bedposts. And it doesn't matter if you're mature or young and tender, female or male, black or white, or gay or straight. No one ... and I mean NO ONE, should be having unprotected sex—not today, not tomorrow, not ever ... NEVER! !

You see, role-playing as a dominatrix is more than just a sexual fantasy to me. In addition to insisting that my partners be sexy and obedient, I *command* them to be securely covered. That's right, baby, they've got to put a cap on it. *I want it sexy and tight!* I demand that. Because when you've been around for a while, like I have, and actively read the multitude of information about HIV/AIDS, and heard and witnessed the testimony from family and friends sharing their personal stories of the devastation, disruption, and destruction this epidemic has caused in our community, you don't want to put a decision that could cost you your life in someone else's hands. You ask questions and you TAKE CONTROL to protect yourself. So, if the man you're with says he doesn't like to wear rubbers ... well, let me just say that I know a lot of men who have acquiesced with the promise of *a good spanking!*

Now that I'm a seasoned and empowered woman, I want to

make sure that I'm around to enjoy life's magnificent treasures. I am in a committed relationship ... with life! And as a woman over 50—yes, I said 50! But, just in case you didn't hear me the first time, let me say it again ... I said, I am an intelligent, sensual, black woman over 50! And I love every year that I'm here, and I plan to be around for a lot more, so I *always* play it safe. And I have never, ever found that it interfered with me being *sexy* ... and believe me, I've never, ever had any complaints.



IONA MORRIS (Lady I): Having sex is one of the greatest pleasures in my life. But I've got to be safe, so I've developed some fun, sexy ways to talk about it, get that condom on, and still have great pleasure with my mate.

First of all, I ALWAYS carry my own rubbers. You can also have some fun. Go to a sex shop and pick out a variety to try. Make a sexy game of it. Or carry several different varieties with you and have fun choosing in the moment.

If this is a casual encounter, I try to keep the conversation about protected sex and AIDS tests in the flirtatious, pre-“doing-it” stage. For example, we're sitting on the couch, the moment is thick with sexual desire, and I whisper, “Baby, I've gotta ask you, have you had a recent AIDS test?” If he balks, I keep it sexy-sweet: “Ah, baby, I'm not trying to break the mood. It's not easy to talk about it, but we really have to.” I smile. Your sweetness should relax him. But, if he doesn't talk, send him home and take care of yourself, yourself. After all, an intimate moment alone is the safest sex I know.

However, if he is responsible, you'll have a terrific conversation about being safe. I find that women are the ones who usually take the lead in this regard, but men, too, can use this approach with that special someone, be it a woman or another man. Even in a woman-to-woman relationship the HIV/AIDS virus can be transferred, because it's not transmitted by penetration, but through the exchange of bodily fluids. *THAT* is the culprit.

If I sense that I want to have a deeper relationship with the man,

I suggest that he and I, together, get an AIDS test to make sure that we can be secure in delving into many sexual pleasures without restraint. We'd also have to agree to be exclusive.

My favorite part is putting on the condom. Use this opportunity to do something else sexy with your partner. Sure, those “rubber things” can challenge the fingers, but I have ways that won't break the moment. (Tip: Put the condom within arm's reach, and if it ends up across the room, sashay slowly or sensuously crawl over there to get it.)

You be the judge of when you need to put the condom on. (I make sure it's on before I let that beautiful thing get close to my legs.) So, in a very sexy moment, subtly begin opening the package while sensuously diverting his attention with sexy whisperings or kisses. Then, move the condom down his shaft, massaging him the entire time, continuing with nibblings and sexy talk, or just keep your focus on admiring your man's “appendage.” This allows you to get the condom on, hopefully, with as little difficulty as possible and with more excitement for both of you. But, if it all goes to hell in a hand basket, laugh together, keep it fun, and make him hurry up and put that thing on!

Live ... to make love ... another day.

3 BLACQUE CHIX

Lola Blank is president and CEO of LHB Entertainment in Los Angeles, CA, and has over 20 years of experience in the entertainment industry. She heads her own management company, LHB Management, where she specializes in guiding the careers of a very select group of young up-and-coming talent. In addition to entertainment consulting, lecturing, teaching and managing, she is the President of BX Girl Productions, a video and music industry production company.

Iona Morris is an accomplished actress with credits on stage, in TV, and in films. In 1997, Iona won a Hollywood NAACP Theater Award for Best Supporting Actress and the Best Ensemble Cast DramaLogue Award for her work in Kevin Arkadie's play *Up the Mountain*. In the same year, she

won a second DramaLogue Award for *Home* and *Piano Lesson*, which were staged at the Denver Center Theatre Company and *Blues for an Alabama Sky* at The Sacramento Theatre Company. Iona is a child of black Hollywood royalty; her father was Greg Morris, who played Barney Collier, the highly intelligent engineer on the hit '70s series "*Mission:Impossible*." She is self-publishing her first book, *Love, Death & Rebirth*, and has a new collection of poetry and short stories due out soon.

Mariann Aalda is a graduate of Southern Illinois University and the Negro Ensemble Company theater-training program. She made her New York stage debut with Ruby Dee and the late Ossie Davis in The New Federal Theatre production of *Take It from the Top*. She is best known for her work in television: a long-running role in the ABC soap opera *Edge of Night* as DiDi Bannister; she costarred in the films *Class Act*, *Nobody's Perfect*, and *The Wiz* (now cult classics because of endless TV reruns); and she had a regular role on the CBS sitcom *The Royal Family* as the daughter of Redd Foxx and Della Reese. Aalda also writes a humor-infused "ethnic etiquette" advice column with writer-producer Karen Greyson for BlackBerrySpeak.

For more information on these dynamic ladies, visit www.3BlacqueChix.com.