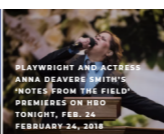




## FRIENDS WITH WHITE WOMEN

CHRISTELYN KARAZIN × MARCH 27, 2018 AT 8:00 AM

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\*When I was a child growing up in the 80's in the ill-famed Southern California high desert, I was surrounded by white girls. At 9 years old, I remember walking five doors down to Michelle's house and marveling over her vast Barbie collection, with Ken dolls propped up against the walls with plastic, unchanging gazes of adoration and expectation for love never consummated.

Because ... well ... Ken had no penis, and Barbie no vagina. I would skip up the steps with my clutch of Barbies and greet her mother, who barely acknowledged me between sips of wine while her father grimaced in the background. He would later be completely absent after the divorce.

Michelle and I paid no mind to the weirdness. Barbie and Ken had a date and she was driving to the Dreamhouse in the Corvette.

And so it would go with my little white girlfriends—bonding over Barbies and baby dolls. While there were playdates galore, there was a closeness that was missing from my black girlfriends once I hit middle school. As I outgrew Barbie, I outgrew my white playmates.

White girls were always (well, mostly) friendly to me, but ... they were on the periphery. During high school, I would spend most of my time with other blacks and a handful of Mexican kids. The older I got, the more foreign the behaviors, interests, and communication styles of white girls became until they were all but foreign to me.

It would not be until college that white women would once again re-enter my ecosystem (or was it me entering theirs?) that I would learn some very interesting and valuable lessons.

**First Lesson: White women have as many weird and misinformed notions about us that we do about them.**

In the absence of actual facts, it's natural for us mere mortals to fill in the blanks. There's been a few times when I went out with a group of white women for drinks and they would expect me to be some sassy, neck-twirling cartoon of a black female reality star. They would be shocked when they learned that the last book I read was Charlotte Bronte and I couldn't even tell you who's doing what on Real Housewives are Basketball Baby Mamas or whatever. Conversely, some "Beckys" could out-dance, out-cook, and could cut and flat iron my hair to silky sleekness and do makeup on a chocolate face that was fit for a magazine cover.

**Second Lesson: Their conflict resolution looks different. When I and my black girlfriends fell out of favor with one another, there was little room to misinterpret our displeasure.**

As black women, if we felt you did us wrong, you would *know* it because we would *tell* you—often quite boisterously. Oh...and we can get mean about it. We'll recruit others to join in the pile on, and cackle at the person who had the misfortune of crossing us. As a result of this cultural norm, I honestly thought everyone handled conflict in this way. If someone does something to offend, you tell them and get on with life. It wasn't until I entered Corporate America and interacted with non-black women did I see that many white women have a much more subtle (and initially unrecognizable) form of passive aggression that can be quite confusing. I learned the hard way that is was a bad idea to tell my insecure, horror show of a boss that I didn't appreciate her using me as a fall guy for an oversight *she* made, or how she told my co-workers how much more money I made than them. From then on, I would experience one nightmare after another on that job. The torture started with all the girls falling silent when I entered a particular office. Then no more invites to lunch. Oh...and my boss deliberately withholding vital client information so that I looked foolish and incompetent during board meetings. I would call her on the coldness, but it it was crazy making as she would completely deny everything. It felt like I was living in that old movie, *Gaslight*.

**Third Lesson: Upper-middle-class white women have absolutely no compunction about their desire to marry up and preserve their wombs for the wedding.**

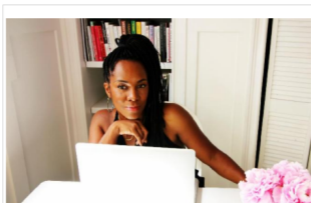
They regularly reject less successful men and aim for the best deal their looks, charm and their pedigree can attract. While I lumbered through my junior year of college, pregnant and unmarried, my white female classmates enquired with rapt fascination at my decision to carry on without the benefit of marriage. "I couldn't do it," one of my classmates told me. "You're so strong."

Yeah. Strong and dumb.

**Fourth Lesson: White women can be your biggest allies and advocates.**

There are so many times that the white women in my life have been kind, helpful, and downright scrappy on my behalf. One such encounter happened recently when a horrible excuse for a human took my child's photo to exploit it in social media. My bestie from college, who just so happens to be an attorney, put the fear of a lawsuit and jail time into him and made sure he lost his job as a grocery store bagger. She was one of those white girls who walked alongside me while I was heavy with child, sharing her impeccable notes with me on the days my morning sickness or fatigue were unmanageable.

I guess it was a good thing she didn't judge me for being just another tragic black baby mama, and I didn't dismiss her as a spoiled, silly white girl. Love you, PJ.



Christelyn Karazin

Christelyn Karazin is the creator of **The Pink Pill**, the best-selling personal improvement course for black women, and is the co-author of *Swirling: How to Date, Mate & Relate*, *Mixing Race, Culture and Creed*. She runs a blog called **Beyond Black & White**.