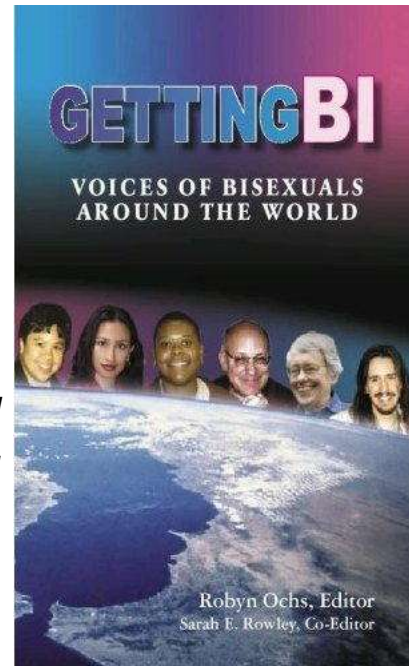


## Excerpt from "Untitled"

By Amy Andre

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*This essay described my experience at a 2003 conference on bisexuality. While attending a workshop on social research on bisexuality, I heard an attendee describe "bisexual behavior," when combined with choosing a gay identity label, as normative; this statement came after the group learned that white men who have sex with men and women are more likely to identify as gay, while black men who have sex with men and women are more likely to identify as bi. The attendee surmised that black men break from this "norm" because of homophobia in black community.*



The comments implied that black men who have sex with men and women would call themselves gay – ie., would do what [a survey on male sexuality reported that] white men [who have sex with men and women tend to] do – were it not for some [black] community-based hindrance. It's as though the choices white men make are the norm against which we should be comparing men of other races.

Research shows that no group, apart from IV drug users, is more stigmatized than bisexuals. Therefore the attendee's implication – that blacks choose a bi label because it's so much harder to be gay [in black community] – doesn't make much sense. Moreover, the implication is racist, because it marginalizes the experience of black men making choices in identity. It presumes that no black man would choose "bi" were it not for the strength of homophobia in the black community.

I went to the Bi Conference excited to immerse myself in community. I saw workshops on defining bisexuality, bi health issues, bi relationships, love, sex, science, art, and so much more. I put it all together and thought, "These are my people, my fellow bisexuals, my lovers and friends, my advocates and allies, whom I fight for and with every day that I out myself and speak my truth." Wouldn't you know it, just like out there in the monosexual-centric world that I butt heads with every time I give myself permission to love and breathe, here too we have those among us who would internalize biphobia, give voice to racist notions, and marginalize me?

I came away sadder and wiser, realizing that we [in the bi community] are made up of the same people who challenge my race politics and my bi politics across the board. Nevertheless, I'm still glad I came to the conference because the experience strengthened my resolve to keep fighting racism and biphobia, wherever I find them.

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