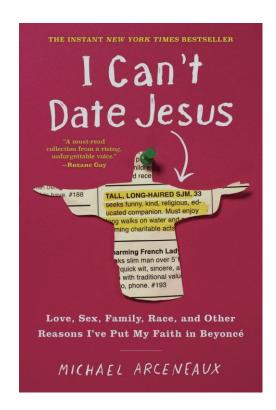


## I CAN'T DATE JESUS



## **Book Summary:**

An African American homosexual man speaks about his life, sexuality, and sexual activities.

## **Summary of Concerns:**

This book contains sexual activities; sexual nudity; excessive/frequent profanity; derogatory terms; alcohol use; references to illegal drug use; controversial cultural, racial, religious, and political commentary; references to discrimination: references to abortion; alternate sexualities; and alternate gender ideologies.

Adult

## By Michael Arceneaux

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	Maybe God is not a man at all. Over time, I've grown weary of using male pronouns to denote that Divine BeingAs for Jesus, I've swung back and forth from "That's my nigga!" to treating Him like a friend with whom I've fallen out because I hate a lot of His punk-ass friends (e.g., so many Christians) and never really had a proper sit-down with Him to make amends.
4	dré was different in that he understood my conflicting feelings about religion based on my sexuality better than most did—even if he didn't handle them in the same way.
6	Of course, there have always been gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and trans people inside churches, but although their talent might be on display in, like, say, the choir, their sexuality was far less pronounced.
9	These "faults," though, were simply the acts of a woman with autonomy over her body. Not abortion (not that it matters) but a medical procedure that she would later learn was considered to be a sin.
13	"Shh, be quiet! If they hear us, we'll get in trouble." That's what five-year-old me whispered to the boy in the cot next to mine. I don't remember his name, but I'll never forget the feeling he gave me. He was tickling me, which sounds innocent on the surface, but the spots on my body where he attempted to tickle me made it anything but. Typically, you tickle someone to make them squirm for the sake of laughter. Yet the touching felt tantalizing, its intentions differentI've never been one to nap, which meant that I spent much of the designated nap time at daycare doing something else. And that something else usually centered on an inappropriate touchy-feely game with other boys. I can't even recall how the game began. It just sort of did. And, obviously, I had a favorite boy with whom I'd play the game.
14	I once faced a similar scenario after I was caught behind the playground near the air conditioner pulling my pants down in front of another boy, who soon followed suit. It was like show-and-tell: the remix.
15	Sometimes I debate whether I'm violating child pornography laws while recalling my own childhood, but none of my actions were really all that different from those of the other kids who played "doctor." This was the same game, only with a same-sex spin. Besides, kids of opposite sexes got in trouble for getting frisky with each other tooI did try my nap-time shenanigans with a girl once"As I've gotten older, I've come to realize that I had a very active sexual mind at a very young age," she explainedAnd just picture an adult Janet Jackson having sex with Barry ManilowThanks to that interview, though, I realized that I wasn't some loose kindergartner. I was
16	just exploring my natural urges like Janet had. Still, back then I had no name to call these feelings that I had for other boys. At that time in
17	my life, I had not yet heard labels like "gay," "bisexual," or "queer."  With it being only 1990 and drugs having ravaged the Black community throughout much of the previous decade, his death signaled an opportunity to instill a valuable lesson in me: don't be like Daniel, the heroin addict. My dad didn't want me to be like Daniel either, though he said so in another way: "Fuck that faggot."  He was in the midst of a drunken stupor.



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	Say, the truth that my dead uncle probably contracted AIDS from gay sex, sharing needles, or some combination of the two.
	My father had a habit of disclosing information about a given person or situation he otherwise opted to forgo discussing whenever he had too much beer and brown liquor "I told you about sex when you were three," my mother once explained to me matter-offactly. This made perfect sense, because, even as a very young child, I couldn't recall a time when I didn't understand the mechanics of sex—or, at the very least, the context of where babies came from Nevertheless, it wasn't until Daniel, and my dad's tirade, that I learned that when two people of the same sex touched each other, it could lead to death.
	For starters, I couldn't even masturbate to girlsMy young penis didn't seem to care how nasty she was. Lil' Kim's infamous promotional poster for her debut album, Hardcore, where she squatted in a leopard bikini, did not have the same effect on me as the rapper Ma \$ e didI fought and I fought. I would lie in bed so many times telling myself, "Think of a woman! Think of a woman!" It would work a few times, but mainly my dick would turn into Play-Doh in protest.
20	We were sitting in pre–AP chemistry and she was explaining to me how some football player had had the audacity to fuck her with his socks still on.
	After I blurted out no, she quipped, "Oh, but you're so cute. I'll fuck you, Michael." As appreciative as I was for her offer of a mercy fuck, I declined. If I couldn't even force myself to try and kiss a girl on a date, I definitely wasn't ready to kiss another's crotch.
	It just seemed fruitless: I couldn't get myself to kiss a girl or have sex with one when she offered, and I failed at securing the heart of the one girl I had managed to care somewhat for without force. As a result, like many a gay, I used the Internet to vaguely explore an unshakable feeling. And through AOL Instant Messenger, Yahoo Messenger, and the private sections of far too many message boards, I did the virtual equivalent of what I used to do in those cots during nap time. I tried to look at women in porn too, but arousal always required far more effort in comparison to feelings that were always innate and urgent.  But while I was ready to finally give up on my pursuit of girls, I was not ready to go beyond that and finally move beyond adolescent sexual explorations with boys into a tangible same-sex encounter. I was physically ready for it, but mentally I was still caught up in the trauma of my childhood and the religion that told me that such a thing was an aberration of God's natural order.
24	Every once in a while, I'd push myself to make my penis rise at the thought of a woman. Eh. Masturbation was also considered a sin, but I rationalized my actions by telling myself that as long as I kept touching my own penis instead of someone else's, God wouldn't grab Moses's staff and knock the shit out of me with it. And T-Boz of TLC once released a promasturbation single entitled "Touch Myself."
27	The creators of these cartoons managed to leave out the way in which stories like these were used to subjugate women and promote patriarchy throughout history.
29	Besides, the only desirable Randy I've ever seen was Randy from Home Improvement, but he was white and probably grew up to be a Trump supporter.



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	Normally, I would tell the priest a few things here and there, but never did I get blunt enough to blurt out something like, "Father Marty, I keep watching Cruel Intentions on tape and fast-forwarding to the part where Ryan Phillippe steps out of the pool butt-ass naked in order to masturbate."
	And even if I were to disagree with that, technically all of the crawfish, shrimp, and crab I had been fed over the years made me just as hell-bound, if not more so, than the gay sex I wasn't having.
	Anyone can sign up for Facebook these days—including various democracy-soiling bots from a fake news factory based in Macedonia and founded by the Russians.
	As a consolation prize, he gave me head and threw that big, country booty in the air. I let him blow me, but I did not go all the way with him. That was for a few reasons. First, I was a virgin, so in that moment, he was the first person to suck my dick. (For that, I am forever grateful.)
	I had a plan in mind: I would rent a car and a hotel, we would hang out, party, get drunk, and then have sex. I knew he was far more experienced sexually than I was, so I was willing to let him, uh, lead, and formally introduce me to homosexuality. I had a sneaking suspicion based on my porn searches which side of sex felt more natural, but I thought, I am falling in love with this person, and with love, I will probably like it from him.
	The next morning, Jordan and I woke up around the same time, and I had an idea: teach me how to suck dick. He laughed at my phrasing, but while the act doesn't necessarily require instructions, he coached me anyway. I wanted to do more, but he said no. I wanted to have sex, but he declined.
52	I still wanted to have sex with him.
	We drank, we danced, we drank even more as we continued to dance. Adam told me he was fine, but then, nearly out of the blue, Adam told me that he had sex with Jordan and was very descriptive about everything they had done together. I kept drinking. I didn't need to be drinking anymore, as I was already drunk enough, but I had been given information that I wished I had never known. I recall knocking out a bit on the couch at the club and Adam helping me get up while letting his hands linger in places they shouldn't have. All I remember is we were walking in some residential area nowhere near where I needed to be and Adam was moving in to kiss me. I didn't push him off, but he had more in mind than just making out. He took me into one such place, pulled down my pants, and repeated some of the very acts he had described doing to Jordan. I didn't want this, but I didn't stop him. He pulled my pants down farther, lowered me down, and quite quickly put himself in me. And with that, he took my virginity. I had let it happen because I got drunk and drunker in reaction to information that, when it boiled down, had hurt my feelings.
58	His appearance had changed, but he remained cute enough for at least a (hate) fuck.
	Even in this country, which, with the assistance of voter suppression, sexism, racism, xenophobia, a hostile foreign government, and a complicit for-profit media, elected a bigot—a bigot who, in the past, may not have been overtly homophobic or transphobic, but like the opportunistic, careless person that he is, quickly sacrificed our safety and our basic human rights for his political interests.



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	And we would go to this club every Thursday night, me stupidly using the credit card I had no business owning in order to drink excessive amounts of alcohol. Part of this was to loosen me up, but much of it was rooted in my attraction to Chris the Bartender.
	Now, I imagine what truly tipped her off (you know, besides whatever mannerisms she deemed obvious: obsessing over the first half of Dangerously in Love; not hearing anything about my dick in some Howard girl's vagina) was when I once heard a very loud display of homophobia in class and promptly raised my hand to shut the dumb shit the fuck down.
75	"Man, it's so much damn pussy out there. They just throw it to you."
80	Oh, and the boobs. She had really huge, round boobs.
	After a while, I started to realize that this Fila-tracksuit-wearing fucker smelled like Kool cigarettes and more than likely had spent the previous two hours of the night tongue-kissing a bottle of Crown Royal.
91	For me, there was the ideal situation in which I desired to have sex in terms of penetration—someone I cared about deeply—and the reality that during immense fits of sexual frustration, I needed a release. Sometimes this meant engaging in sexual acts that assuaged some of that unsettling tension but left me feeling as though I was too loose with my own standards.
92	Going to the club and getting drunk out of my mind was a coping mechanism. I also went because my sex life was nonexistent, and that club was a good venue for me to work out some of my sexual frustration. I wasn't having sex, but I did feel up boys, get felt up myself, and, on occasion, exchange numbers with someone who ideally might become someone I would get to know, fall for, and, when I felt comfortable, consummate the relationship with.
	Then he asked if I wanted to take a shot. I said sure, so we took a shot. And then another. And then another. Suddenly, it had become some sort of competition. In between the shots, we ordered more drinks. I lost count of how many we took, but I do know in between those shots, my body turned into a placeholder for his hands, and I responded in kind.
96	I wasn't anticipating that we'd have sex on date number one. Sure, we did have chemistry and I was perpetually horny, but we hadn't discussed that
	So, did we roll around awhile? Yes, but we didn't have any form of sex. He did try to slide himself into my mouth, but I had already put too many things down my throat that night, so I was tapped out. I let him finish on me as a compromise. It was the least I could do.
	They were nicer because they were all primarily located in white neighborhoodsThe meat at the grocery stores in white neighborhoods was better than the meat found in the Black ones—once I bought ground turkey at one of the Black ones and was keeled over in pain for three days—so I tried to shop there instead.
101	After parking, we took off our seatbelts and engaged in no more than two minutes of empty conversation before he reached for my dick. Once he was finished, he asked me to return the favor.  Now, there are some people in this world who love sucking dick. I am not one of them. That's not to say I can't perform well (' cause someone fine as hell could be reading this) when duty calls, but I can be selfish as shit when it comes to blowing other men. Most dicks
	are ugly; therefore I reserve going down for people I sincerely care about (or if you're really really really fine and that spurs my generous spirit).



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	He made the most pitiful face in the world, and I guess since my dick was the first one he had ever had in his mouth, I begrudgingly returned the favorI didn't know the young lady, of course, but apparently she didn't give good head, and I imagined she didn't touch his ass in a way that prompted further internal inquiries about his primary sexual attractionThe next morning, I woke up and saw various scrapes across my dick. The lil' bastard had braces!
103	He was with some older man, and while I knew better than to run up on him like, "SO WE GON' FUCK NEXT TIME OR NAH?" I did at least try to say helloI would have had sex with Michael if the opportunity had presented itself, but it didn't because he was afraid.
104	I was leaving the bathroom and going back to the bar, because more brown liquor felt necessaryIt was 2: 00 a.m., so Los Angeles had effectively shut down because the city's nightlife was useless without alcohol unless you had weed and access to an after-hours spot worth your time.
105	And yet I asked him out anyway. Because he was incredibly attractive, and I wanted some ass.
108	After that, he randomly inserted that he was horny. It was the fringes of the day, so I was too. We took the conversation back to text after he sent a picture revealing just how horny he was.
109	He was a terrible person. Having said that, I know terrible people can be tempting, and despite his being an insulting, rude simpleton who needs to have his eyes examined, I would still fuck. Obviously, it would be a hate fuck. And for my own comfort, I would bring a book and pull a condom out of it.
111	He asked for options in Harlem, but with a caveat: "I need a frozen margarita. They're all I drink!" He liked dick and diabetes, I guess. To the shock of no one, Bill O'Reilly was apparently a racist asshole (and, as we would later learn, an accused sexual predator at the workplace, which led to his ultimate ejection). "Fuck Sean Hannity" was my response to that new nugget of intel. However, Megyn Kelly, like Bill O'Reilly, like Sean Hannity, like Tucker Carlson, like those morning simpletons on Fox & Friends, and like just about everyone on that network besides Shepard Smith, followed the Fox News model of stoking racial animus to pander to the old, white racists who watched the news network in droves. She magnified the New Black Panther Party in ways no sensible newsperson ever would—because their clout was virtually nonexistent within the Black community—to the point where journalists decried her work as a "minstrel show." She was a woman who, in 2015, claimed that the Obama administration intended to force "too white [and] too privileged" communities to embrace diversity "whether the communities want it or not." That same year, Kelly dismissed a DOJ report that found racial bias and stereotyping within the Ferguson, Missouri, police department based on the notion that "there are very few companies in America, whether they are public or private," where "you won't find any racist emails [or] any inappropriate comments." The same person who once declared that a speech by First Lady Michelle Obama played into a "culture of victimization." A woman who invoked racial stereotypes to portray Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor as temperamental. And the woman who,



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	despicably, described a Black girl needlessly tackled by police at a pool party as "no saint." Evidence of Kelly's on-air racism was far and wide.
113	Whenever there were accusations of racism leveled against someone likely guilty of being a racist, the peanut gallery would come with the retort that it was hard to gauge another person's racism because we didn't know what was in their heart. I didn't give a fuck what was in her heart.  That had nothing to do with whether or not she was racist. There are levels to racism. In the case of Kelly, stoking racial prejudices for professional gain was a racist act. This drinks thing also happened after the 2016 presidential election, so to that end, I thought of Megyn Kelly as the epitome of the 53 percent of white women who voted for that man, Sweet Potato Saddam: a white woman willing to sacrifice the humanity of nonwhites to preserve her privilege and status. She may not have presented herself in the same way as the loud, cantankerous, vile white men with whom she shared prime-time space, but she was guilty of perpetuating the same sins because she delivered the same ugly sentiments about Black people on her breath.
117	However, despite not knowing what the word "patriarchal" meant at the time, I certainly knew how to frown whenever I heard a man drown me in machismo and casual sexism.
118	In his deluded mind, gay men wanted every single man around—including his bugawolf, few-clients-having ass. "You know how those faggots get in the chair. They stick their elbows out, hoping to brush across your dick and shit. Punk-ass niggas."
119	He was one of those types who felt homosexuality was a conspiracy concocted by the white man to emasculate the Black man. By then, I had already taken a course on gender roles and relations. It was in that class—taught by a professor who looked exactly like my late grandmother—that I learned how most of our ideas of gender and sexuality stemmed from Western mores and customs that we traditionally had never embraced until they were forced on us through enslavement. I learned a lot about non-European cultures that didn't subscribe to gender binaries in the ways most of us have been conditioned into believing. Above all, I was informed that if not for the imperialistic, Bible-toting, and dogmabastardizing white men who swooped in and forced their rigid nonsense on us through colonialism, maybe, just maybe, this man wouldn't have sounded so damn foolish in the barbershop.
127	Then he told me, "I really hope you get to fuck someone without a condom. It's the best."
129	"Your dick is dry," Chris declared in an exquisitely executed matter-of-fact fashion. He was not wrong. It had been at least two years since I had had sex. I had moved and settled into life in New York, but true to form, my focus was much more on getting settled, making money (freelancers are always worried about making money, because you never know when a contract will be cut or some editor who just a week ago said you were everything mentions the words "budget slashed"), and working toward a future that didn't include me essay-hustling so much as getting laid. I had squandered my twenties by not having enough sex. If I were to rate my sex life in that decade through emojis now, I behaved like the yellow one with his eyes closed and a straight line where a smile should be. I should have acted more like a cross between the eggplant and the one nobody I know uses to signify actual raindrops. I had had plenty of ho moments, to be sure, but inconsistency over ten years riddled with the guilt that came with religious indoctrination and lingering insecurities had been the norm.



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	He advised me to "be a better gay" and have sex without having to engage in the getting-to-know-you process.
	I admittedly rolled my eyes when he said it. Hookup apps like Jack'd and Grindr were an acquired taste, and for the longest time, I had no interest in acquiring that taste. Some people loathe these sorts of apps for "ruining romance" and contributing to the decline of the art of conversation.
	So, about this: I too like the idea of two people meeting, connecting on some emotional-spiritual-whatever-phrasing-constitutes deeper-connection level, and going on to have amazing sex. To me, that gives way to the sort of fucking that leads to "Good lovin', body rockin', knockin' boots all night long, yeah / Makin' love until we tire to the break of dawn." But as I was learning with my sandy penis, there are also times that call for sex more along the lines of "Only ring your celly when I'm feeling lonely / When it's all over, please get up and leave."
	Ultimately, I fully gave in and signed up for Jack'd, which was described as a "gay men's social network." (Okay, sure.)
	"Nigga! Are you fucking somebody with fleas?"I mean, he seemed like he smoked weed as much as I drank water, but there were plenty of squeaky-clean weedheads.
138	Still, I let him blow me anyway.
142	My mother told me that she explained sex to me when I was three.
	T-Boz had a solid counterargument: "I don't think it's wrong to touch yourself / Ain't nothing wrong with making it feel good!"Then there was Lil' Kim, who rapped "I used to be scared of the dick, now I throw lips to the shit," on the iconic "Big Momma Thang."
	Extremes only work for me if I am ordering Popeyes following a long night of drinking or a good ole time with some weed.
	When I say I don't care about white people like that, I am referring to whiteness. Whiteness is why white people are placed higher in the social hierarchy than everyone who isn't white. Whiteness fuels racism, and that racism is designed to protect whiteness and the aforementioned hierarchy at the expense of everyone else. Whiteness is so pervasive and so powerful that I have to explain that when I say, "I don't care about white people like that," I have to be very clear that I don't mean I hate all white people—because it would be catastrophic for me to utter such a declaration. White men and women can create media companies, businesses, and accrue political power based on anti-Blackness, but even though I would never want to do the same with some similar shtick centered around contempt for white people, the fact is that such an option would never be afforded to me in the first place, since only white people can hate without repercussions. Like that punk-ass forty-fifth president of the United States of America.  Whether white people want to admit it or not, whiteness by and large informs their outlook on everything. How could it not? They sit at the top of the food chain in society, so their standards are considered, well, the standard. Whiteness is so pervasive and so powerful that many make it seem as if whatever opinion whiteness and white people have is of greater value.
	I didn't fixate on white people and whiteness because it was well established that, as a collective, they found no value in me.



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	Of course, I will always worry about interactions with law enforcement, as those pose life-threatening situations, but overall I look at white people like this: if you don't present prejudice and we can just enjoy each other, awesome; but if not, I will not let it eat me alive, because it's whiteness at work, and that's not my Black-ass problem.
	Here are the topics mainstream outlets love for me to write about from the perspective of a gay Black man: Black homophobia; AIDS; and sexual racism.
	The one who called me beautiful was the one who kissed me first, then had me kiss his friend, and then had me kiss the both of them at the same time. Then he kept kissing me. He also grabbed my dick a lot.
174	You would think that Martin Luther King had a dream that one day a Black dick and a pink dick would sword fight and then finish all over the rainbow flag.
	I suppose I learned this early, because as a little Black boy growing up without wealth in the South, whiteness and white people were already far removed from me. I already knew what price they placed on me, and it was very littleI want others to have this same feeling, because if you are a nonwhite person measuring any part of your value based on a system predicated on diminishing you and all those like you, you are on a fool's errand. You can't win by their metric. It's not designed with you in mind.
191	That's another thing I've learned to do: indulge him when he offers me alcoholAnd I'm not going to turn down free booze.
	Chris, the same friend who, a few years prior, had told me that my dick was dry and suggested I turn to technology in order to have a more active sex life, apparently believed that my penis was better moisturized now, which led him to offer me new advice.
	Being Black and growing up in this country often requires you to explain yourself in ways that you shouldn't have to.
	Those types tended to have Black Republican hairstyles: for Black men, a cut that lacked a proper lineup, or for Black women, some dry-looking ball of hair tied together in a way that screamed, "Help me find a hairdresser, my Democratic sister."
	I already knew that close-minded white editors needed to learn how to let nonwhite people control their own narratives and stop pathologizing us, so the only lesson I took away from that experience was that I didn't need to explain myself to begin with.
	Picture it: me drinking brown liquor and hoping to come across as charming when the conversation shifts to politics.
	It was days after the 2016 presidential election, and this white gay man couldn't believe that bigotry was so rampant in the United States of America. The fact that an apricot-hued asshole ran a vile campaign engulfed in racism, sexism, xenophobia, and audacious idiocy and was handed the presidency was unfathomable to him. I smiled when he said this and proceeded to raise my Black hand and rub my skin.
	However, as surprising as the result was, in the end, all Russia did was exploit the racial biases America has never truly addressedOverall, fragile white people in desperate need of an ego boost are why he won. It's a reminder that after eight years of a scandal-free Black president and his gorgeous, dignified family, white folks voted for a malignant-narcissistic sociopath with no political experience as his successor.



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	A serial liar and an admitted sexual assaulter. References in various rap songs from Black folks who just wanted to denote wealth and went with the known blabbermouth with lingering mythology notwithstanding, we never liked that asshole. We've long known he was racist. He sold a white electorate the dream of returning the country to the state in which Black people, Latinos, and Muslims all knew their places, where immigration was out of sight and out of mind, in which queer and trans people were relegated to dark corners and closets rather than standing tall on television or using the bathrooms of their choice. And, overall, he made white people feel less fragile about their standing in America (no matter how deluded such questions about it were). The revisionist history about the campaign that promptly began after the election results would be hysterical if not for the dangers it imposed on the rest of us.
228	Because fuck him. I owe him as much respect as he gave anyone not white, male, straight, and rich during the campaign: none. The same goes for his supporters. So many people in media—all of them white—have asked us to give his supporters the benefit of the doubt.
229	The man they voted for is a bigot. If you vote for a racist candidate, you are either an unabashed racist or you are complicit in racismOnly a minuscule number of folks in the mainstream media want to have an honest discussion about how pervasive prejudices are in America.
230	The people who don't deserve to suffer even more because far too many white people will put their whiteness ahead of everyone's benefit—including their own.
	I'm not turning down free alcohol on a Saturday night when I don't have any other plans besides obsessing over deadlines or watching Netflix and then mentally punishing myself for not tending to said deadlines firstThe image instantly took me back to Houston, where I saw Teddy, a classmate from middle school who had since transitioned, outside of a gay club fighting her ex-boyfriend.

Profanity/Derogatory Term	Count
Ass	73
Bitch	24
Dick	24
Faggot	10
Fuck	73
Goddamn	2
Nigga	10
Piss	4
Pussy	2
Shit	41
Tit	1