



Radio Singles

Extreme dating on the air

By [Damon Hodge](#)

A confession: when i'm bored witless—when I've watched all the nightly reruns of Sportscenter, flipped through every HBO channel twice, checked ESPN 2 for anything resembling watchable sport (billiards and the X-Games don't count), run through every video in my collection (all three; still haven't figured out my DVD player), checked all nine of my e-mail addresses, along with work and cellular voice mail, talked to Mom, chatted with the girlfriend, nodded off, gotten up, fixed my pillows just right, and still can't sleep—I might, might, sneak a peek at Blind Date.

Like millions of others, I find something appealing about watching the misadventures of unlucky-in-love types go for broke on national television. Better them than me.

I'm inside Hamburger Mary's on Paradise and Harmon with a bunch of locals unhappy with Vegas' dating scene. I've come in as half of the six folks (contestants) are talking about (what else?) penis enlargement e-mails.

Across from us, computer equipment salesman Dave "Dateman" Ross and comedienne and Second City alumn Cathe "CatheB" (pronounced Cathy B) Alleger, radio equipment surrounding them, microphones in front of them and headphones on, babble to callers and each other during a live broadcast of Dating Response, Ross' 3-month-old show on KLAV 1230 AM. As Dateman reads about what Mike likes in a woman, CatheB adds sexual retorts:

Dateman: "Mike likes flexible women."

CatheB: "Gotta be able to put your legs behind your head ... Sure, I can do that."

And on they go for an hour, playing off each other—Dateman the nerdy setup guy (think a slimmed-down Telly Savalas), Alleger his potty-mouthed cleanup hitter (she resembles Rita Rudner and talked in orgasmic tones during several commercials)—accepting calls from lovelorn locals and chatting with contestants about their dates.

Ellen, a single, black mother with Angela Bassett's build and flowing braids, talks glowingly about her date with Robert, an anesthesiologist. They went to the Las Vegas Soaring Center in Jean, where they sat together in the made-for-one backseat of a gliding plane. Intimacy at 2,000 feet. She brings up his soft hands. "He can stick me anytime," she tells CatheB. Her daughter is mortified. CatheB offers penis-related humor, then gloats, "I just made a black woman blush."

Like the dozens who've used Dating Response, Ellen says the show provided welcome respite from the bar and club scene.

Dating Response was created out of Ross' own hit-and-miss experience with love: married four times; dated his share of losers between breaks; been disappointed by fix-ups from personal ads and homie hookups; duped eight times via Internet dates, some of the women looking beastly. "People don't always put their pictures up. Why?"

Sitting on the couch last summer, bored, he brainstormed the show's premise: Call in, describe

Your next great date is

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yourself and what you look for in a person. He plays matchmaker, the couple goes out on a free, prearranged date on Saturday and come back on Thursday to talk about it. Sponsors foot the bill and the dates are wide-ranging—comedy shows, lounge performances, hiking, flying. He dubbed it "extreme dating."

After landing sponsors, a spot on the dial and luring CatheB—twice married, now "happily shacking"—it was ready, set, go set up dates.

Terry and Kathy have been an "item" since meeting on May 17 at the Greek Isle casino for a Rat Pack tribute show. A single mother, Kathy had neither the time nor energy to go out and rarely met men at the places she frequented—the grocery store and at events for her child. Terry's problem: "I'm not the bar scene or club type, so it's hard to meet people when you don't go to places where people are." Listening to the show, Terry heard Kathy's profile and learned they both worked in the legal field. After the date, they spent hours talking in the car. They're a cute enough couple. Kathy's skin glows; Terry is soft-spoken, with a Ward Cleaver look. Going strong after three weeks.

After talking on-air with CatheB, Cheryl, a leggy blonde dressed in a fire-engine-red business suit, looks worried. She just agreed to date a guy she thinks she knows, a persistent charmer who boasted that "we could have great sex together." She accepted, she says, because she's nice. She never had these problems in San Diego. Internet hookups put her with doctors, lawyers and engineers. Some she's kept as friends. "I'm a chicken when it comes to dating in Vegas because people here are so fake," she says, sitting under a poster of Russ Meyer's "Ode to the Violence in Women" (Kill! Kill! Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill! Faster!) "I have a big friend I'm going to tell, so he knows where I'm at."

The theme woven through nearly every contestant's story: You'd have better luck dating in Riyadh. Vegas is too transient, lacks neighborliness and culture and has few places for enlightened folk to meet; everyone here is out to get laid and paid, in that order.

Ellen will have none of it. She blames the people, not the city. "Everyone here is from somewhere else," she says. "People are going to play games and the field no matter where they are. A player is going to be a player."

Next up for an interview: "Slutpuppy" (real name: Richard). Being in a wheelchair hurt his dating prospects—before the show, that is. CatheB's running joke: "It used to be the 'Get Dave and Richard a Date Show'; now Richard's a dating whore." He set up his fourth one that night. The caller picked him.

Midway through the show, a dark-haired woman in a tight top and black jeans saunters into Hamburger Mary's and sits next to Ross. His head is sweating. It's warm in here. Flo, his squeeze, sits through the show, laughing at the interplay. They met via the show several weeks ago.

He's not only the president, he's also a client.

Dating Response airs 8 to 9 p.m. Thursdays on KLAV 1230 AM. Those interested in being on the show can call 371-1230. For more information, log onto www.datingresponse.com.

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