



Sexual Discretion: Black Masculinity and the Politics of Passing

Jeffrey Q. McCune Jr.

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African American men who have sex with men while maintaining a heterosexual lifestyle in public are attracting increasing interest from both the general media and scholars. Commonly referred to as “down-low” or “DL” men, many continue to have relationships with girlfriends and wives who remain unaware of their same-sex desires, and in much of the media, DL men have been portrayed as carriers of HIV who spread the virus to black women. *Sexual Discretion* explores the DL phenomenon, offering refreshingly innovative analysis of the significance of media, space, and ideals of black masculinity in understanding down low communities.

In *Sexual Discretion*, Jeffrey Q. McCune Jr. provides the first in-depth examination of how the social expectations of black masculinity intersect and complicate expressions of same-sex affection and desire. Within these underground DL communities, men aren't as highly policed—and thus are able to maintain their public roles as “properly masculine.” McCune draws from sources that range from R&B singer R. Kelly's epic hip-hopera series *Trapped in the Closet* to Oprah's high-profile exposé on DL subculture; and from E. Lynn Harris's contemporary sexual passing novels to McCune's own interviews and ethnography in nightclubs and online chat rooms. *Sexual Discretion* details the causes, pressures, and negotiations driving men who rarely disclose their intimate secrets.

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