

# / Cream of Craig

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If we task the internet with obscuring most of our bullshit, like physical characteristics, penchants for edible lubricant, and advice on the best clothing, it's no surprise that we've also evolved it to contain one of the most unifying – and gratifying – modern wonders: the bulletin board. Yes, it's craigslist, the most sought after invisible arbiter, possessor of jobs, apartments, and that great Piss Christ knockoff you've always wanted. But what's the real cream contained in the bowels of craigslist?

The missed Connections board, of course. Each city deigned important enough to be showcased on craigslist is, thanks to Missed Connections, in possession of one of the most interesting phenomenal devices to hit us in a long time. At once furiously passionate and coolly disinterested, jammed with rival voyeurs and haughty participants, the Missed Connections board stands as a vital supplement not just to the internet, but to the contemporary city. The

purpose of the board is to provide an easily viewable blank screen onto which you can pine (in lower case) after that person you a) locked eyes with, b) bitched about on the subway, or c) bicycled into when drunk. Log-on during any given week, and Missed Connections is a veritable sandbox of random bar hookups “with the most to-die-for eyes I've seen,” angry missives about fellow cubicle-dwellers, or poetic outbursts about that guy with “just the most beee-autiful small dog imaginable.”

Yes, it's what you've always wanted to do when you're in the big city. Be anonymous, but connect with those who looked at you in just that way. Remain independent, but open yourself to that stranger walking next to you who has an entire fucking universe buried within them. Or, failing that, Missed Connections is a place to hang out, have a laugh, or just vent with someone you meet who's having a similar experience as you. While it's true that cities, especially New York, allow for many of these moments to occur within their public spaces, it's also true that in public

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places we remain visible. On the street, on the subway, or out shopping, we are still surveillanced at every point, our bags checked, our anxieties dangerously pushed; and, – fueled by money, success, or pride – we rarely share our inner-most thoughts with the beautiful randoms we sight. Missed connections allows us to enter another level of the city. And it is not any old online board on which people meet each other – what makes it different is that on which it is premised: fleeting or faintly suggestive physical contact.

Although the digital divide ensures that craigslist is manned by a pretty definable socioeconomic class, the site is still the great leveler. Black or white, upper-class or lower class, male or female: all participate, and fiercely. The involvement of women on Missed Connections can be particularly revealing. If the media portrays a woman as a passive toy, waiting for the right man to ask her out, on Missed Connections she can reclaim an entire sphere where her words will be eagerly read, and where she can be as fucking dirty as she wants without anyone judging her if she's not playing her appointed old.

Of course, like all potent drugs, Missed Connections is – much of the time – a disappointment. Filled with dunces inquiring about “hot girls” or buffoons flinging the feces of their interminable light-idiot bon-mot, the site can – and does – degenerate into a young persons' forum, the virtual representation of St. Marks Place in the East Village.

Still, for those times when somebody feels they've really had an electric connection to somebody else in the big city; or when some boy feels he can finally confess the crush he's had on another boy throughout high school, Missed Connections can't be beat. So if you have something to post, do go ahead and lovingly ooze yourself onto that plain white background. Other people at night, in the rain, in the Laundromat, on the subway, in the bakery, in the freemason lodge – they're all watching.

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