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# facial discrimination

Beards and moustaches can seriously damage your wealth. Dominic Joyeux finds that stubble can be trouble in the job market

THERE ARE A QUARTER OF A MILLION MEN IN the UK who would be sacked if they grew a beard. And believe it or not there are millions more worldwide whose jobs specify that they must shave every day. These days facial hair is a hotly contested workplace issue which has caused some militant men with beards to sue companies on the grounds of sexual, racial and religious discrimination. But the fact remains that the majority of employers do not want their male staff to go around looking like the blokes from ZZ Top.

Khalid Aziz, who runs a management consultancy business in Winchester, thinks that beards are seen to be bad for business. "We get sent middle management, high fliers and individuals of high net worth, and their chief executives often say to me, 'If you do nothing else with him, at least get him to take his beard off.' There are presumptions made about people with beards. I've often heard it said that if a man can't be bothered to shave in the morning, then he can't be bothered to work."

There is even a maxim in the City that dictates, "Never lend money to a man with a beard", and this reflects the widely held prejudice that bearded men are trying to hide something and are therefore not to be trusted.

Andrew, a futures broker in the City is aware of this kind of prejudice. "A few guys may grow goatees while on holiday, but when they return they receive so much flak that they have to shave them off. At Lloyds, they prefer the beardless look; this means short hair and a clean shaven complexion for the young traders. There are no rules as such, it's just peer pressure."

Peer pressure? Boss pressure? Surely there is someone who likes the estimated 400,000 bearded men in Britain? My own partner was definitely underwhelmed when I grew one last summer. She liked the initial swarthy look (very George Michael) and the new sensation bristling over her skin. But she lost her enthusiasm in the second week of growth, when the chin is caught in that fuzzy no-man's land between designer stubble and kosher beard.

She gave my fortnight's growth the thumbs-down with the A A Gill line, "Beards on anyone under 150, look absurd." It would seem that my girlfriend is one of the 85 per cent of women who disapprove of full facial hair on their partners.

Margaret Thatcher certainly didn't beat about the bush. She said, "I wouldn't tolerate any minister of mine wearing a beard" and not one dared try. New Labour is so worried about the 30

men with facial growth in its party, that the image consultants are urging them to come clean. Moustaches are seen as the trademark of wide boys – spivs like George Cole at *St Trinians* and James Beck in *Dad's Army*. Spin-doctor Peter Mandelson was the first to sacrifice his tash for the cause. But the bearded front line of David Blunkett, Robin Cook and Frank Dobson are holding onto theirs, and it's unlikely that Tony Blair will risk splitting hairs with his heavyweights.

Face fuzz might just about be acceptable at Westminster, but you'll never see a bearded fireman, soldier or airman among their combined ranks of 200,000 men. Unless he is working undercover, the most any soldier can grow is a moustache, and that mustn't come down over the upper lip. A recruit has to ask permission if he wants to to grow one, and if it is granted he has to do so on his fortnight's leave or while on night manoeuvres. No stubble on duty. No excuses.

The navy doesn't allow moustaches (Queen Victoria insisted that her mariners shouldn't have one) but a 'full set' [a beard] is permitted. Some sailors even have beard-growing competitions at sea with the captain deciding on the best and worst beards. Woe betide the poor sailor who can only manage a straggly covering of bum fluff à la Shaggy in *Scooby Doo*. A failed beard is an ex-beard, and is shaved off before reaching shore.

Back on British soil, there are few professions that have written rules prohibiting beards but where it seems to be a matter of practice or convention to go bare-faced. Traditionally, barristers and judges have not had beards, and butlers, too, tend to go clean shaven. (Geoffrey, the bearded butler in *Fresh Prince of Bel Air* is a television misrepresentation.) Ivor Spencer, who tutors butlers in London, explains: "Butlers have very, very high standards. To avoid body odour and bad breath, they must clean their teeth seven or eight times a day and bath twice a day. Of the 130 butlers that I've trained up and sent to royalty or abroad, only four have kept their beards. I know for a fact that these four go to a hairdresser twice a week for a trim and that they wash their beards at least once or even twice a day.

Tradition may not play as large a part in beard discrimination in the United States, but money counts for a lot. Entrepreneurs Ross Perot, Walt Disney and Thomas Monaghan have all run hugely successful businesses while employing strict anti-beard policies for their US and UK workers. ▷



# THE LOCKER

Texan billionaire Perot also allowed no beards on his Presidential campaign staff, and he issued a "code of ethics" for workers at his EDS computer company that prohibited the wearing of beards and insisted that women wore tights at all times. Walt Disney's UK Casting Department for Florida's Disneyworld and Disneyland Paris will still not allow facial hair, even though Walt himself always wore a moustache. Thomas Monaghan's Domino's Pizza, with over 5,000 outlets worldwide, has spent six years in US courts defending its company policy, which bans beards.

In Britain, the Domino's chain sticks to its founder's preferred no-beards policy on the grounds of kitchen hygiene. The company confirms that if one of its motorbike delivery drivers did grow a beard – even though he would never touch the boxed pizza – then he would have to wear a rather less than stylish beard net.

This was such a lovely image that I contacted the BBC's *Food and Drink* programme to ask why Michael "Crafty Cook" Barry didn't wear a net over his beard. Luckily for Barry, the programme's producer Tim Hincks intercepted the call. "We've done 250 episodes of *Food and Drink* with an average audience of five million, and we've never had a single letter complaining about Michael's beard," he told me.

"If a cook had long hair dangling down with little animals dropping out of it, then we'd have complaints. But Michael, Anthony

## FACE THE FACTS

EIGHT COMPANIES SPLIT HAIRS OVER POLICY...

COMPANY	BEARDS	SIDEBURNS	MOUSTACHES
Domino's Pizza	no	yes	yes (but closely clipped)
McDonald's	no	yes	yes
British Airways (cabin crew)	yes (but closely trimmed)	yes	yes
Disney	no	no	no
Harvey Nichols	yes	yes	yes (but closely clipped)
The Dorchester Hotel	no	yes	yes (but closely clipped)
Holmes Place (Gym)	yes (a full grown beard is acceptable, stubble is not)	yes	yes
The Ritz (Employees in restaurant areas)	no	yes	yes (but closely clipped)

Worrall-Thompson of *Ready, Steady Cook* and the famous Nico Ladenis, all have closely cropped beards that they keep clean and tidy."

Furthermore, all three celebrity chefs can sleep soundly at night, safe in the knowledge that they'll never get hit on by Margaret Thatcher at a party ■

# VARNISHING ACT

Nail polish for men? It's finger lookin' good says

Kathleen Baird-Murray

My mate Mica is a strapping six-foot, 200lb hulk of testosterone with a killer smile. He lives in Joshua Tree, California, and spends his weeks working on film sets; his weekends mountain biking, rock climbing, practising power yoga, soccer and martial arts; and his evenings, well, Mica spends his evenings painting his nails. A high kevlar content notwithstanding, Mica doesn't wear polish to protect his nails from all those manly outdoor sports. He pinches his girlfriend's polishes; shades of dark metallic purples, blues and greens from hip Californian nail polish company, Hard Candy.

It's not just a stylist's dream and your nightmare; nail varnish for men really has arrived. Not since David Johansen of the New York Dolls flashed his painted talons on stage while belting out "Personality Crisis" has there been such a penchant for polish. Mica joins the ranks of the Nineties' answers to glam rockers: Quentin Tarantino, Donovan Leitch, Steve Tyler, Lenny Kravitz, Perry from The Cure, Billy Corgan of the Smashing Pumpkins, Brian Molko from Placebo and the male models at the Alexander McQueen show all wear their talents on

their talons. They know that, far from being emasculating, painted nails suggest sexual confidence. Back in the Seventies, David Bowie, Alice Cooper and Kiss camped it up with gothic nails, but off stage they had reputations as the kind of debauched womanisers today's rockers can only wet-dream about.

Quick to spot a trend, the more innovative polish producers, Hard Candy and Urban Decay, have now launched ranges for men. The idea is, if you want to wear nail polish, you won't have to fight your way through the women's products to buy it. Of course, any man brave enough to paint his nails is unlikely to be put off by a little

thing like the cosmetics counter, but the butched-up names and androgynous packaging of the men's lines are definitely a plus for the less initiated. Candy Man, the line from Hard Candy, renames existing women's colours to the harder hitting Gigolo (metallic black), Testosterone (metallic steel gun-metal), or Cowboy (metallic gold). Urban Decay offers up DTs (lime), Bruise (purply green) and Asphalt (a dark metallic grey which leaves your nails feeling like sandpaper). Miners Nails for Males is a collection of twelve metallic nail polishes, at a bargain £1.49 each.

But, while that's fine if you're wielding a guitar before thousands of screaming fans; directing your latest blood-letting massacre; or being photographed for cKOne posters, it doesn't have quite the same cachet when you're queuing up at the bank in, say, Rochdale. And although Dennis Rodman puts the ball through the hoop with lacquered nails and British footballers David James and Jamie Redknapp have been known to do a turn on the catwalk, it's unlikely those two will be parading the pitch with nails to match their strips.

So how do real men wear it? Mica says, "It's just a connection through the spirit to the many expressions of other cultures, like tattoos or piercing." But then that's California for you. To put it through its paces here, my mate John wore it to football practice and noticed a predictably negative reaction from his team-mates, with one big advantage. "I scored a goal, probably because of the nail varnish - the goalie didn't want to get too close to me."

Miners Nails for Males (13ml) £1.49, from selected chemists. For more information call 01264 350379.

Candy Man (13.3ml) £9.95, from Space NK Apothecary, Covent Garden, London, WC2 (tel: 0171 379 7030).

Urban Decay (14.8ml) £9.50, from Space NK Apothecary and Harvey Nichols, Knightsbridge, London, SW1 (tel: 0171 235 5000) ■

