

A SHOT AT...DIVERSITY? TILA TEQUILA AND REALITY TV

by *Racialicious* special correspondent [Latoya Peterson](#)

I'm no girl next door...I'm the bitch down the street.—Tila Tequila



I was not going to do this review series. I hardly ever watch TV. I am not as well versed in queer issues as some of the other writers on this site. And in my heart of hearts, I am endlessly amused by the antics of Tila Tequila so I can't really muster up any righteous indignation. (Wendi can though - if you missed it, check out [No Tequila for me. Thanks](#) to get a more critical look at Tila's persona.)

Still, I decided to tune in to Tila Tequila's ultra hyped new reality show "A Shot At Love with Tila Tequila."

Whoa...this actually reflects some form of reality

Watching the guys and girls parade around, lobbying for the attention of Ms. Tequila, I have to wonder - who did the casting? This is one of the most racially diverse casts I have seen on reality TV. Three black girls? Multiple people who look like they are checking a few different boxes on the census? Obviously, someone in the casting department got the memo that hot people come in all colors. I also wonder how much influence Tila had over the casting. No Asian men, unfortunately. But is [Eddie](#) Middle Eastern? And is [Rami](#) part Desi? Inquiring minds want to know...

A Quick Thought on the Sex Wars

So far, the men are coming off pretty bad. They seem pretty vapid and one-dimensional...as if many of them missed the casting call for "I Love New York" and ended up on this show. Personal gimmicks were heavily used. [There's a verbal pissing match between two guys with grating accents.](#)

Tila places a lot of emphasis on how then men act typical, and the show is edited to highlight that. None of the guys comes off as caring or engaging. After episode one, I'm kind of bored with them and I don't remember enough to tell them apart. The socially awkward guy was cute, trying to be cool and spilling his drink. And then there is that guy who is a virgin, which is interesting. The guys with the accents stand out...but isn't that kind of a given? One guy sounds like Mr. Garrison from South Park. (Since when is it [Ms. Garrison](#)?) Here's to hoping the men actually get personalities in episode two.

Pornification

While there were a lot of questionable scenes playing to the sexual tension in Tila Tequila's reality show (i.e. why did the women cat walk in skimpy outfits for their first challenge, while the guys got to just sit around; Tila being comfortable kissing multiple women, but not multiple men; the various sexy Tila shots), by the far the weirdest moment was when contestant Greg broke out the Kama Sutra kit. Sensually rubbing oil on Tila's neck, he takes the opportunity to slide down her top when she asks him to do her arms. Six other contestants look on during the massage, apparently titillated.

Now, maybe it's just me...but didn't that look like a (staged, porn style) gangbang waiting to happen? The editing of the shot there was kind of freaky - and I guess Tila thought so too, as she scrambled to get out of that situation. No surprise to me that dude got sent home.

Of Sense and Sexuality

The ladies come out strong and positive. In fact, I almost feel bad for them. Most of them came on the show excited that there was going to be a mainstream lesbian reality show. Proud pioneers, they dutifully whooped it up for the camera, oozing enthusiasm. There is a lot of discussion of affirmation. I found it interesting, particularly as you do not see a lot of lesbian stories on television. While watching the show, I realized that lesbians - especially lesbians of color - are often portrayed in these shallow roles and rarely get to enter the limelight the way that gay males have. By watching their hopes for show, it finally dawned on my hetero self what I am NOT seeing on television.

There's also a virgin girl on the show. I am highly interested to see the conversations that come out of this - particularly once the guys find out she is a lesbian AND a virgin - and if she is eroticized by the other contestants.

[Unrelated side note: Umm...the girls that were picked for this are gorgeous. Ashli could work a damn runway. Can someone please call some of these racist fashion editors and ask them to turn on MTV?]

I am also interested to see if something pops off between the other girls on the show. Will everyone fall in love with Tila? Or will there be some side dalliances going on? Hmm...

Homosexual Hierarchies?

"I think that a butchie girl is so creepy," states Amanda. And that is apparently is the sentiment shared by most of the girls on the show. Not too many butch girls to be seen, with the exception of Dani. Dani, a self-proclaimed "futch", gender bends and works in a firehouse - yet stays on due to her unconventional appeal.

It kind of makes me wonder how this reflects life in the queer community. Are more femme lesbians prized (in the same way more "straight-acting" gay men are?) Is there a stigma with being butch?

Gender Stereotyping

Tila, as is fitting her image, has some very definitive ideas about women and attractiveness. In explaining her preferences in women, she does note that she is not into women who are more butch. She indicates that women are to be pretty and smell nice. She also states that women talk too much and always talk about feelings - something that a guy would never do. I find it interesting that she continues these stereotypes - even while defying her own as a foul-mouthed, tattooed girl with an attitude.

Also of note - one guy presented her with pricey looking earrings. Tila derisively replies in confessional that "This bitch can't be bought." But a second later, she flirtatiously adds "Well, maybe she can." Interesting line...and it was made more interesting when the promo for the next few episodes includes the Good Charlotte line "Girls don't like boys/ girls like cars and money." What are we really saying here?

Other randomness

Fascinating. The biggest train wreck on the show, Ms. "[Hey Girl Hey.](#)" was removed off the jump! She started drama, got excessively drunk, and had a crazy personality - that should have lead to reality TV success, right? But instead, Tila "got a weird vibe" and told her to drop the key. Wow. I'm sure the execs weren't too happy about that one.

The Reveal

I was actually surprised at the reveal. The girls freaked out at the male presence, and justifiably so. The men also seem like they are not as happy about the bi-sexual thing as mainstream media would have us expect.

Blatant Foreshadowing: Questions After Seeing the Promo

- Are they actually going to explore being polyamorous on television?
- Why does it feel like this has higher stakes than a regular reality show? Aside from winning Tila Tequila, I'm getting a vibe that the contestants also feel like they need to rep their gender/sexuality...and that whatever gender she picks would be a blow to the other gender.
- A "futch" and man friendship on TV? Torn asunder by a woman? Oh snap...
- Tears? From both genders? Dealing with heartbreak, instead of the normal bravado that comes with elimination?
- Why does Tila seem to show both loneliness and sincerity in the final scenes?
- [From the MTV bonus footage] Apparently, some of the guys seem to think lesbian and bi-sexual are interchangeable terms. I wonder how that conversation is going to go...

Crazily enough, I'm starting to think that the show I largely tuned in to ridicule may be one of the most important reality shows on television...