

*my bachelorette application*

I am squeezed into my push-up bra and sparkly, ill-fitting dress. I've got the requisite sixteen coats of waterproof mascara, black eyeliner, and salmon-colored streaks of hastily applied self-tanner drying down the side of my neck. I'm sucking in my stomach, I've taken thirty-seven Imodium in case my irritable bowels have an adverse reaction to the bag of tacos I hid in my purse and ate in the bathroom while no one was looking, and I have been listening to Katy Perry really, really loudly in the limo on the way over here. I'm about to crush a beer can on my forehead. LET'S DO THIS, BRO.

**Are you:** Nominating someone [ ] or Applying yourself? [ x ]

**Name:** Samantha McKiver Irby

**Age:** 35ish (but I could pass for forty-seven to fifty-two, easily; sixtysomething if I stay up all night)

**Gender:** passably female

\* we are never meeting in real life.

**Height:** 5'9"

**Weight:** Lane Bryant model? But maybe on her period week. I have significantly large ankles.

**Occupation:** My technical job title is client services director at the animal hospital where I've worked since early 2002, which loosely translates to "surly phone answerer and unfriendly door opener." I'm pretty lazy, although I *am* quite good at playing the race card and eating other people's lunches in the break room.

**E-mail:** [redacted]

**What is the next big city near you and how far is it?** Chicago. And it's zero miles away. I mean, I'm in it right now, doing Chicago things. You know, eating a deep-dish pizza while wearing a beat-up Urlacher jersey and sprinkling pieces of the Sears Tower (no real Chicagoan will ever call it the Willis Tower) on top and reading *Oprah* magazine. CHICAGO.

**How did you hear about our search?** I have a television. And I do most of my reading while waiting in line to buy diet yogurt at the grocery store.

**What is your highest level of education?** High school, but I took a *lot* of honors classes.

**Where were you born?** Evanston, Illinois. A suburb along the lake, due north of Chicago and the birthplace of hella luminaries like Marlon Brando, the Cusacks, Donald Rumsfeld (gross), Bill Murray, Becky #1 from the TV show *Roseanne*, and pos-

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sibly Eddie Vedder. At least I think so? We all believe that the song "Elderly Woman in a Small Town" is about us, but we have *three* Whole Foods. That most certainly qualifies us as a medium town, at the very least. Maybe that dude really is from someplace else.

**Where did you grow up?** EVANSTON. And I'm still basically there. All the time. Unlike Eddie Vedder, I can't get out. I work there, my doctor is there, and even though I technically live within the Chicago city limits, if I need to go to the supermarket or the movies, I always think of the Evanston ones first. It's a trap. No one ever leaves this place. Not kidding, I see my junior-year English teacher at Starbucks every morning, which is down the block from the bagel shop this dude I graduated with just bought. It's gross. I gotta grow up.

**Do you have siblings? How old are they?** When I was born my parents were almost-forty and almost-fifty, which means I have never seen either of them: chase a ball, get down on the floor to help construct a Lego set, or run along behind me as I wobbled on a two-wheeled bike. I have three sisters who are currently, brace yourself, fifty-six, fifty-four, and fifty-one years old. HILARIOUS. My sister Carmen is going to be sixty real years old in a few years and that blows my mind. Is your mom even sixty yet?! S-I-X-T-Y.

**Have you ever been arrested, charged, or convicted of a crime of any type? If so, please give details:** I was arrested for shoplifting once, when I was fourteen. Before you write me off as a wayward little thug, hear me out. So I have that disease that a lot of poor people who claw their way out of the miserable depths of poverty suffer from, the one that makes you

want to blow your paycheck on all the special things because never before in your life could you ever have had anything even remotely fancy or expensive. But I was a teenage girl and I needed lipstick and I couldn't wait the two years it would take for me to pick up regular babysitting work, so I went to the Osco in downtown Evanston one afternoon and slipped tubes of Revlon's "Toast of New York" and "Iced Coffee" (it was the nineties, brown lips were the thing) into my coat pocket and tried to nonchalantly waltz out of the store like they hadn't had what I was looking for. I was met at the door by a stern-faced manager, an older black gentleman whose disappointment in me was palpable.

"Is this what Martin Luther King marched for?" he grumbled under his breath as he led me to the room with the mops where a handful of morose-looking degenerates were eating lunch. Pretty sure Revlon is owned by white people, but I didn't want to further piss him and the ancestors off. He sat me in a rickety office chair and I surveyed discarded Employee of the Month photos fanned like a deck of cards across the threadbare carpet while he called the police. When the portly, red-faced officer showed up, I was deep in a REM cycle, snoring hard with my head on someone's particleboard desk. As the cop escorted me to the waiting patrol car, we passed Morgan Freeman dragging a homeless-looking black dude with bottles of Tylenol and Advil spilling out of his overstuffed pockets back to the makeshift holding cell. Blood trickled from a gash on his forehead. "That guy must have some headache, eh?" The officer chuckled. What a tacky

"Arrested" might be a stretch. What happened next involved me lying as flat as humanly possible across the backseat of the police cruiser as the officer drove like he was in a

parade, seven miles an hour, through throngs of my recently dismissed classmates. I imagined them straining on tiptoe to see who might be in the backseat. My mildly disappointed sister met us at the curb and assured the officer it would never happen again. That is the extent of my criminal history.

**Have you ever had a temporary restraining order issued against someone or had one issued against you? If so, please give details and dates:** No, but when I was nineteen, I used to stalk this dude I went to high school with. I would close up the bread shop where I worked, take one of the loaves that was intended for donation to the soup kitchen, then drive my car to his parents' house and park close enough to see inside, but far enough away to be inconspicuous. Then I would sit there with the engine running, tearing off chunks of apple-cinnamon bread and listening to De La Soul while imagining our life together.

I am a deeply troubled person.

**Have you ever filed for bankruptcy or Chapter 11?** No, but I wish I had thought about that years ago before I decided to overdraw on an old bank account. **DO NOT WALK AWAY FROM AN OVERDRAWN CHECKING ACCOUNT, FRIENDS.** Why didn't anyone ever teach me that shit? I mean, someone should write a primer for adulthood that's just two or three sentences long:

1. WEAR CLOTHING THAT ACTUALLY FITS.
2. BUY DRUGS FROM REPUTABLE DEALERS ONLY.

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3. DO NOT WALK AWAY FROM AN OVER-DRAWN CHECKING ACCOUNT.

I could have been such a better human.

**Have you ever auditioned for or been a performer, participant, or contestant on a reality or other TV or radio show or in a film?**

What are the rules as far as comedy podcasts and rudimentary videos of stage performances recorded on shitty camera phones and uploaded to YouTube by \_\_\_\_\_ Do those count?

**Do you drink alcoholic beverages? DO I.**

**What's your favorite drink?** I don't believe in pretending to be cool anymore. If I did I would tell you that I enjoy two fingers of nicely aged bourbon, neat with a water back. In real life I drink daiquiris and Skinnygirl margaritas and shit like cupcake-flavored vodka. Also I really love beer, but not any of the impressive kinds that you order to show how exceptional you are. I basically drink like a sorority pledge.

**Have you ever been married or engaged? NOPE.**

**Do you have any children?** I'm counting the cat here. So, yes.

**Are you genuinely looking to get married, and why? Honestly?** I don't know, homie. Marriage seems so *hard*. I mean, even the ones on television look like they just take so much

*work*. I'm lazy. Plus, getting out of one seems ridiculously expensive. And then when you get divorced, after all of the crying and draining of mutual bank accounts before your

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partner gets a chance to, you have to cut the children in half, which is probably very bloody and messy. You know, what I really need is someone who remembers to rotate this meaty pre-corpse toward the sun every couple of days and tries to get me to stop spending my money like a \_\_\_\_\_ NBA lottery pick.

**Why would you want to find your spouse on our TV show?**

Have you been to the club lately?! *It's* dire, man. Also, I need someone to watch *Shark Tank* with, and I feel like that's a spousal kind of expectation. Can't just ask your casual \_\_\_\_\_ to commit to spending Friday nights indoors arguing over the valuation of some at-home mom's jelly and jam business. And I'm too poor to run multiple background checks.

**Please describe your ideal mate in terms of physical attraction and in terms of personality attraction.** Physical attraction?

Not a real thing. If, at thirty-six years old, I'm sitting over here talking about chiseled abs and perfect teeth, then I am undeserving of genuine romantic love. I have *been* with a handful of conventionally attractive humans, the prettiest of whom was this dude who worked at Best Buy and kind of resembled "So Anxious"—era Ginuwine. He was boring and lazy and totally caught off guard when I pointed those facts out to him. No one ever tells attractive children how much they suck, and then the rest of us get stuck with insufferable, narcissistic adults who can barely tie their shoes because someone else is busy either doing it for them or congratulating them on their effort. I do not have the energy to be in a relationship with someone exceptionally good-looking.

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I don't know what an attractive personality is. I like charisma and charm, but what I really need to find is someone who doesn't get on my nerves but is also minimally annoyed by all the irritating things about me. That is my basic understanding of relationships at this point in my life: that it all comes down to finding someone too lazy to cheat and who doesn't want to stab her ears out every time I speak.

**How many serious relationships have you been in and how long were they?** If I'm being honest, the answer is probably two. And if I'm *really* being transparent, one of those was mostly *platonic drama*, and the other spent half our relationship going to Barbados with women who weren't me, so none.

**What happened to end those relationships?** IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES.

**What have you not found but would like to have in a relationship?** Someone who will leave me alone for extended periods of time without getting all weird about it. I have a lot of audiobooks to listen to on the toilet.

**What are your hobbies and interests?** Hobbies: eating snacks, sleeping during the day, scrolling through Facebook quickly enough that people's stupid videos don't start playing automatically, listening to slow jams.

I pretend to be interested in a lot of things: art, theater, recycling, donating to things, expensive varietals of coffee. But mostly I just watch television and read celebrity gossip on the Internet while getting most of my important news from Twitter, which I don't even really like that much. I'm interested in animals and novels and red lipstick, but let's just say "world

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issues" and "social justice" so I sound kind of smart to the viewing audience.

**Do you have any pets?** I HAVE A CAT-CHILD NAMED HELEN KELLER; I believe we've been over this already.

**What accomplishment are you most proud of?** If this is in a real book that someone is actually holding between her sweaty, chocolaty paws, then *this* is my proudest achievement. Also, learning to drive stick while wearing flip-flops. You have to be kind of a genius to do that, for real.

*The Bachelorette* is my guilty-pleasure jam. That may come as a surprise to some of you, but you should already know that a show where a woman is surrounded by twenty-five slabs of brisket clamoring to brazenly drink her dirty bathwater and massage the corns on her toes in front of the entire country is 100 percent my kind of party. I love watching a man humiliate himself; I wish it was on every night. Particularly the introductory episode, when we get to meet all the software sales executives and tax accountants and telecommunication marketers as they line up in their finest suits, teeth flossed and smelling good, forced to do the "Hi, please date me!" tap dance women are perpetually performing. Seriously, I used to try to neatly cram everything remotely interesting about me into my "Hey, nice to meet you, I am . . ." elevator pitch. Now that I know impressing a stranger isn't worth the effort, I don't do it anymore; I just assume every man I meet is bored and hates me. I can barely be bothered to give one a high five before writing down my e-mail and saying, "Get at me if you want." So it is especially heartening to watch these smarmy, desperate clowns

crawling all over one another like rats trying to get the attention of these “free spirits” and “dog lovers” who will eventually make them burst into real tears on national television.

*The Bachelorette* proves that men are as petty and vapid and ridiculous as women are made to seem. They’re just better at hiding it, because they get to be Real Men and sulk and brood and bottle everything up. These dudes are backstabbing drama queens who are constantly cutting one another down, throwing shade all over the place, and casting more side-eyes than a Siamese cat, all for a girl who, I must remind you, could probably not do long division by hand. And why shouldn’t they? Because every single one of these dudes is as boring as a glass of tap water, while the bachelorette is beautiful and friendly and forced to sit in a dress in sequins that have got to be digging uncomfortably into the backs of her thighs. I have never sat down to watch a marathon of episodes stored on my DVR and thought “Boy, does he seem interesting” about any one of the candidates up for (Let’s hit pause on the remote for a second here and say that I do pay very close attention to one or two members of the cast: the black ones clinging for dear life to the inner tubes as they drift helplessly toward the deep end of the dating pool. No, she’s never going to pick Marcus or Jonathan, but she *will* keep them on life support for however many episodes it takes to satisfy the NAACP. I watch that like a hawk, like “This date better not include a ‘fun trip’ in a marsh boat on the ol’ Magnolia Plantation” or “If they serve these dudes a piece of fried chicken I will throw this TV out the window.”)

I usually fall off by the time they get down to the final two, because romance is a lie and true love an impossibility. Any *one* can fall in love on a private beach in a tropical

locale, surrounded by lush flora and adorable fauna, shining suns and chirping birds. Give me ten uninterrupted minutes without some ding-dong demanding something or subtweeting me or making me do work and I could fall in love with my worst enemy. Seriously. What’s not to love about being expertly lit and drunk at two in the afternoon?

But I’m going to need you to love me on the bus, dude. And first thing in the morning. Also, when I’m drunk and refuse to shut up about getting McNuggets from the drive-thru. When I fall asleep in the middle of that movie you paid extra to see in IMAX. When I wear the flowered robe I got at Walmart and the sweatpants I made into sweatshorts to bed. When I am blasting “More and More” by Blood Sweat & Tears at seven on a Sunday morning while cleaning the kitchen and *missing* up your mom’s frittata recipe. When I bring a half dozen gross, mangled kittens home to foster for a few nights and they shit everywhere and pee on your side of the bed. When I go “grocery shopping” and come back with only a bag of Fritos and five pounds of pork tenderloin. When I’m sick and stumbling around the crib with half a roll of toilet paper shoved in each nostril. When I beg you fourteen times to read something I’ve written, then get mad when you tell me what you don’t like about it and I call you an uneducated idiot piece of Lovebird city.

If there was an alternate universe where I could remake this show starring myself, it would be the best dating show in history. I smell a ratings juggernaut, and it smells like cat pee unsuccessfully laundered from a fitted sheet, seared pork, and adult diapers. Fetch me a camera crew.

Here are my qualifications:

1. I'm fat and black.

Isn't it about time they had a girl with a booty on this awkward date parade? I mean, come on. Welcome to your "after" photo, gentlemen. Prime-time television needs some real talk from a real person, and that person should be me. But they have to make sure they cast a bunch of Latinx and one white guy with dreadlocks who you can rest assured wouldn't be a real contender.

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3. I would plan realistic dates.

Do you really want to watch me giggle and squeal and pretend not to be scared out of my mind because we're going hang gliding or rock climbing or whatever other challenges these guys typically participate in? Do you really want to watch me bowling and roller skating with a group of sexy dudes? NO, YOU DO NOT. What you really want to watch is the "Can this dude pay for our meal at Alinea?" challenge and the "Can homeboy sort and wash his own laundry?" competition. Because if this show is really about marriage, my starry eyes and pinchable cheeks don't matter. That kind of thing only goes so far. I'm sure people get over my dimples easily within six months. And then what? Those sharp edges I filed down in front of the cameras are back in full effect, and my real flaws are now comfortable enough to come out and leave halfway through the concert to go take a , so to get prepared we're going to play sexy party games like "Can you take a sarcastic joke?" and "How mad will you get if the cat pukes in your shoe?" or "Be quiet and play on the computer while Sam is sleeping" and "Please don't be salty when I put our business on the Internet."

4. The network would save so much money on production.

We're shooting it in Chicago. And I don't need a fancy wardrobe or stylist, I'd wear my own terrible clothes. That's what these brothers are going to see once they drop to one knee and ask for my paw in marriage anyway, so why front? I don't wear evening gowns and booty shorts every day. I wear daytime pajamas and orthopedic shoes, and lately I have become a big fan of the "grandpa cardigan." I shave my head, so I don't

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need a fancy hair person; my barber cuts my hair for twenty bucks and then I rub some African oils on it so it smells good and glistens in the sunlight. Everyone wins.

**5. The winner would *totally* not be forced to propose.**

If you are ready to commit the rest of your life to me after a couple of weeks of getting drunk while a camera crew follows us around, you are not a rational person who makes good choices. It would be incredibly flattering, but ill-advised nonetheless. At the end of the season I'm always surprised when the dudes actually propose, yet not surprised at all when I read in *People* magazine two weeks later that the happy couple has split because he still has feelings for his college sweetheart and the bachelorette can't leave her career as a dental hygienist in New York to move to Montana and run the family dairy farm.

The season finale will go something like this: We're sharing a can of beer and watching Jimmy Fallon. I get



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