



SAM DE BRITO



All tainted by a love of hate

USE the word "gook" or "coon" at a party nowadays and you'll more than likely have someone object or at least shake their head in total disgust.

Call someone a "dirty Leb", however, and you'll probably draw a crowd of nodding social commentators, spouting their own rationales for dissing Lebanese; wombats who confuse subjective "bad" experiences with objective insight into culture.

That's because in the pantheon of Sydney's racists and their loathed nationalities, men of "Middle Eastern appearance" (MEA), particularly the Lebanese, now occupy a position below Asians, all other types of "wogs", South African Jews, even Aborigines. Trashing and discriminating against Lebs is now officially a free kick for racists, which will come as no surprise if you're a young man of MEA who's tried to get into a nightclub east of Hurstville.

Socialising in Sydney can be a frustrating business if you don't have a certain look and men of MEA are not the only ones who get knocked back by

Treasure trove

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from a nanny that survived in this country for more than 70 years and produced a member of parliament, still can't get into three-quarters of the nightclubs in their city.

The human brain learns via generalisations. We come to understand that a knife looks a certain way and it cuts, so all knives do the same. Unfortunately, there are people who extend this kind of rudimentary cognition to people and cultures: a Lebanese man did this to me, so all Lebanese men do this.

Sure, there are aggressive, antisocial Lebanese men in Sydney, just like there are

a little defensive, maybe a bit pissed off?

Any time we run across a surly Leb, wince at the music coming from a stereo in a car driven by swarthy men or see the same guys pick a fight, we add it to prejudice's putrid soup, use it as further justification for our hate.

This hatred doesn't require logic - which is why I've heard morons saying it was Arabs who planned the Bali bombings, why Sikhs got hate mail after 9/11 because they wear turbans, why an Indian student got attacked by crowds of "patriots" during the Cronulla riots.

Meanwhile, the crimes of so-called Anglos like outback murderer Bradley Murdoch, the aforementioned Gap geek Gordon Wood, Melbourne CBD cheater Christopher Wood...

Bit on the side

Successful formula

If you didn't catch the first run of Showtime's excellent new series *Breaking Bad*, it's airing again in a mini-marathon next weekend on Showcase.

The drama, which stars *Malcolm In The Middle*'s Bryan Cranston, chronicles his character's descent from high school chemistry teacher to crystal meth manufacturer, dealer and murderer.

It's dark, bleak and surprisingly funny - everything good TV should be.



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On a Saturday night, I'd rather be