

Zinczenko Vs. Abrams: Are Men Done For?

By: Noreen Malone | 9/22/11 at 7:16 PM

On Tuesday night, the fate of men hung in the balance: The event that evening at NYU was an Intelligence Squared/Slate debate on the bold resolution that Men Are Finished. Representing his gender was famed Men's Health dudeitor David Zinczenko in a shiny aubergine tie that coordinated nicely with the pinky-beige top worn by his debating partner, American Enterprise Institute's Christina Hoff-Sommers. Opposing him across the stage was his very good friend Dan Abrams, who, as if preemptively sloughing off the totems of masculinity, skipped the whole tie thing. Meanwhile, his partner, Atlantic/Slate scribe Hanna Rosin, displayed a sleek bicep in a one-shouldered black dress.

According to moderator John Donvan, everyone was acting very intense in the green room beforehand. "One of them is, like, speaking aloud to the wall." Who? "That would be that Mr. Abrams." Zinczenko, too, was taking the whole thing very seriously, according to his brother, Field and Stream/Outdoor Life group publisher Eric Zinczenko.

Was his brother macho enough to represent the whole gender? "He's a man's man! I'm gonna say the right thing. Yeah."

One woman in the audience, a high-ranking member of one of the armed forces confirmed with a decidedly unmilitary giggle. "They're really hot!" As for whether Zinczenko and Abrams might be able to make it through basic training ... Looong pause. "They might be a little like poodles. I think they might require more attention than they would get."

The two buddies sparred only indirectly, lovingly. Zinczenko spoke of the "rugged individualism" of men like "Mark Zuckerberg." His debate demeanor called to mind a student-body president running on charisma. "Men are not finished," he repeated several times by way of reasoned argument, to amused chuckles. "And that's why you have to vote against the motion."

Next it was time for questions from the Internet; upon hearing that, an elderly man in an orange tweed jacket walked out. That man was finished. Then to the audience: One long-haired young man wondered whether they thought men with more feminine qualities — like social intelligence, say — might be better suited for this new economy. "I feel like people have told me I have traits that are more like a woman." The crowd tittered. In a delightful bit of social intelligence and comedic timing, he specified, "not physically."

An earnest young woman asked a question that involved the phrase "deeply rooted structural patriarchy." Zinczenko decided it was time for the trump card. He whipped out a copy of *Cosmopolitan*, followed by a copy of *Men's Health*. The man was ready to rest his case on the superiority of his own cover lines: "Times he wants you to be jealous" is no "gym-free abs." Zinczenko explained, "It seems like women are concerned a lot with men." Rosin rejoined, of *Men's Health's* focus, "We've just proved men are obsessed with themselves" Her side won, in a landslide.