

# U.S. Gay Swimmer Writes Open Letter to 'Downright Hot' Putin

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In the media, Putin has adopted an aloof stance with regards to the discrimination of homosexuals.  
**elmada**

"As much as a world leader, you are an international celebrity as a proud, buff dude. Millions who admire sportsmen have seen photos of you shirtless."

This is how openly gay U.S. swimmer Richard Alther began his letter to President Vladimir Putin, published in the Huffington Post on Oct. 12.

The flattery does not end there, with Alther calling the leader a Daniel Craig lookalike, and saying that "compared to most political heavy hitters ... you're downright hot."

In the letter, Alther described the upcoming Olympic Games in Sochi as "a sterling moment for Russia" but made an appeal for a more respectful attitude towards homosexual athletes and spectators attending the sports event.

"Now, we're not asking to wear pink Speedos in the pool or basket-prominent leotards on the

track and field. We simply want to strut our stuff (sound familiar?), which is sheer, bloody perseverance and skill at our sport," Alther said.

Alther referred to the brutal killing of a gay man in Volgograd in May as a sign of the Russian intolerance towards gays, but added hate crimes take place all around the world, including in the U.S.

The athlete ended his letter to Putin with a plea for tolerance.

"We all know you're a macho man, which can be cool. Show that it takes a real man to treat others — meaning everyone — with grace, compassion, and respect."

Alther competed in the U.S. Masters Swimming national championships and won four gold medals and one silver medal in the Chicago Gay Games.

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