

MARCH 15, 2022 • VOL XII • ISSUE #4

# GRAB

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1961 - 2019

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# GRAB MARIO



## ITSAHIMMM... MAARIOOOooo

By Jason Salerno

Mario Adrion's legions of fans on YouTube know him as the ITSAMEEE... MAARIOOOooo! guy. The Wilhelmina fashion model has been lighting up the internet with his man-about-town videos where he asks silly questions to unsuspecting men and women, all while wearing nothing but a skimpy speedo.

Mario came to national attention when he appeared on last season's American Idol. He wowed judges Katy Perry, Luke Bryan, and Lionel Richie, performing his audition song in his signature outfit. At one point, Perry challenged Mario to a cat walk duel! While Mario's fashion moves slayed, his song didn't quite measure up and he was eliminated. Still, the appearance introduced the funny male model to a national audience and he's now trading the runway for the stand-up comedy stage. In his act, Mario reflects on his life as an underwear model, revealing what really happens in model apartments and the importance of the big bulge. He also dives into the dark side of the fashion industry, discussing the sexual

propositions he encountered and even the time he was drugged and sexually assaulted by a photographer. "I don't make light of the experience," he confirms. "There is nothing funny about rape. But sharing my story openly and publicly has helped in the healing process. It has given the assault purpose."

We spoke with the popular YouTuber from his home in Los Angeles.

**Jason Salerno** How did you find your way into stand-up comedy?

**Mario Adrion:** I just started doing it. I have so much to learn, but nothing beats the energy of a room full of laughing people. It is magical.

**JS:** Were you always funny?

**MA:** I remember being a kid and putting on a performance at my uncle's 50th birthday, making little jokes about my cousins and all the people there. Everybody agreed I was a natural!

**JS:** Why did you decide to pursue modeling first, over comedy?

**MA:** I'm from a small town in Germany where nobody does anything creative. Out of nowhere, I was approached by a modeling agent from New York City who offered me an opportunity. I decided to pursue it, not because I loved modeling but because I loved the challenge and the possibility of travelling around the world!

**JS:** Was modeling filled with glamour and wild nights out?

**MA:** I've been to some of the most insane parties as a model. Especially the afterparties of Milan Fashion Week.

**JS:** Do you mind being objectified?

**MA:** I definitely like the attention and admiration I sometimes receive.

**JS:** What are some of the hardest parts about modeling?

**MA:** I found that having to fit into the body that fashion brands wanted was hard. I am a naturally athletic guy. My agents always wanted me to lose muscle mass so I could fit into tiny designer jackets for fashion week. One fashion week season, I starved myself and lost twenty pounds. Then my



grandmother unexpectedly passed away and I had to cancel my shows to attend the funeral. At the funeral, I realized how unhealthy I looked and promised myself to never do that again.

**JS: In your act, you discuss the sexual propositions. Can you tell us about those?**

**MA:** It all started with some underwear shoots where photographers would try to adjust my underwear and touch me inappropriately. I learned to tolerate it because I didn't want to lose the jobs. But then there were times when I would be offered a magazine cover in exchange for receiving a blowjob from a photographer. Nobody told me what to do in that situation. I didn't get much guidance from my agents.

**JS: Is it common for male models to engage in these propositions?**

**MA:** Yes, advances are quite common. It's an unspoken rule that models can't be too sensitive. We're expected to play along. I have often endured these advances because I was paralyzed and didn't know what to say without upsetting the photographer or casting director. One time, after being groped, I told the photographer that I didn't feel comfortable and he told me: this is fashion. You have to be more open if you want to succeed in this industry. I'll never forget how he accused me of not being open after sexually assaulting me. I am not saying all successful models have engaged in these propositions but I know a lot of guys who are doing big campaigns with huge designers after spending a weekend in the Hamptons with them.

**JS: You've been open about your experiences on your YouTube**

**channel.**

**MA:** My YouTube viewership went up once I started sharing my personal stories. Instead of showing some perfect life as a model, I chose to reveal my struggles which made my channel more relatable. I combine the boldness of doing embarrassing things in public with a clear inspirational message of getting out of one's comfort zone and being open and vulnerable.

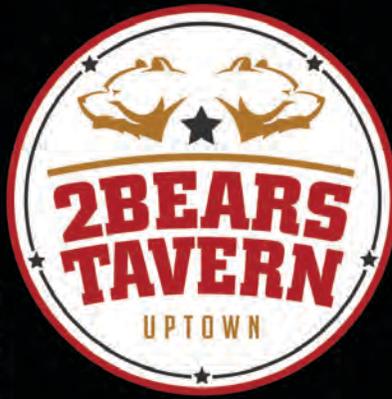
**JS: Is the ultimate goal of your videos – and now comedy act – to**

**inspire?**

**MA:** It really is! I want to inspire people to be bold, overcome fear and make fun a priority in life. I left the security of my small town and despite some of the challenges I have encountered along the way, I couldn't be happier.

For more Mario visit: [marioadriom.com](http://marioadriom.com)





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# GRAB A REMOTE



Photo Courtesy Fox

## Call Me Mentor

**Leslie Jordan and Cheyenne Jackson on what they've learned from each other on the set of 'Call Me Kat'**

By Chris Azzopardi

Leslie Jordan and Cheyenne Jackson, co-stars in the Fox multicam sitcom "Call Me Kat," are in separate locations on Zoom, tenderly admiring each other. As an openly gay actor, Jackson ("30 Rock" and "All Shook Up," his first lead role on Broadway) affectionately acknowledges that Jordan, who's also openly gay, has been a mentor to him ever since he saw him as Beverley Leslie on "Will & Grace." Jordan, who admits he doesn't know how to respond to younger generations who praise him for paving the way for them, recognizes Jackson

for being precisely the kind of actor Jordan is not.

Since January 2021, the "Call Me Kat" actors have come together weekly to make viewers laugh through a seriously unfunny and fraught time. The sitcom, which also features Mayim Bialik, as Kat, and Swoosie Kurtz, as Kat's mom Sheila, is now in its second season after premiering during the pandemic. As Phil, Jordan plays the gay head baker at Kat's cat café, while Jackson portrays bartender Max, Kat's former college boyfriend.

Recently, Jackson, 46, and Jordan, 66, got on Zoom to chat about shooting a sitcom during Covid, the potential for Jordan to get his first onscreen kiss, and why, during one episode, he moves so effortlessly in

heels.

**CA: How much joy and levity has doing this show brought you during one of the most challenging times we'll ever experience?**

**Cheyenne Jackson:** It's brought a significant amount of joy and stability and escapism. I think that's really what we are all craving right now, because the world feels off of its hinges. To be able to go to work every day with five other people whom you adore and love and are inspired by, but also just to get to do something that is just unabashedly joyful and happy... I mean, what other show at the end of it has a curtain call? An old-timey curtain call!

It's really just been such a gift. I know people overuse that phrase, but it

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truly has [been], being able to be home with my kids, go to work and then be home every day in time for dinner. I've only missed, maybe, two bedtimes this whole run. And when we have a week off, I definitely start to miss everybody and can't wait to get back.

**CA:What about you, Leslie? What has the show meant to you, especially as a source of connection during a time when it's been so hard to connect with people?**

**Leslie Jordan:** We had an amazing beginning because we were going to shoot the pilot and then the pandemic hit. We got to meet each other over Zoom. I don't think any of us really knew each other. I had worked with Cheyenne a couple times, but none of us were friendly-friendly. And all of a sudden during the pandemic, with the Zooms and getting things ready, they said, "The minute this is over, we're going back." When people didn't even know if they were going to get jobs back, we knew what was ahead, we knew what was coming, and we just kind of bonded. And so by the time we got all of us together, we were just giddy. We just loved each other so much.

And it's been hard because this show should be in front of an audience.

It's multicam, and it should be shot in front of an audience. And we're aiming toward that, eventually. But we haven't been able to have an audience. So we are doing comedy with very little laughter. We've had a director lately that screams at everybody and says, "Laugh!" Like those old camera men, they've heard it 20 times! You're not going to get a giggle out of any of them. So we just have to know that what we're saying is funny and that's that. It's been trying, but we have so much ahead of us, and I think this is a show that has some legs.

I read this article that what Fox was looking for with their pilot season was different kinds of shows [they] can pair with "Call Me Kat." So it seems to me like they're going to build nights around us. And I just want it to go for a while. I'm at an age. I'm 66. I was thinking if it went as long as "Big Bang Theory," I'd be like almost 80 [laughs] when it's over. I'll be ready to retire. I'd be so rich.

**CA:I have appreciation for the show's queer inclusivity, and I'm getting a real kick out of seeing Cheyenne playing one of the straightest men I've ever seen.**

**Jordan:** He'll walk over to me, and then he'll go, "Listen, girl," after he's

just been the butchest. [Laughs.]

**CA:What's it like being a part of a show that touches on some really important LGBTQ-specific topics?**

**Jordan:** You know, I feel so protected, I don't know what it is. I just feel like I'm [in] this cocoon because, you know, writers come, they go, this one in and out. But right now we've got some writers that came from "Will & Grace" and wrote my Emmy episode [Jordan won in 2006 for Outstanding Guest Actor in a Comedy Series]. So everything they write, I adore.

Listen, I've done some stinkers over the years. But every week the scripts just get better and better and better. And we're like, "Wow, they're touching on all kinds of topics." They were whispering the other day that they want to give me an onscreen kiss. I said, "Oh lord." [Laughs.] That'll be a first!

**CA:Who do you want to play that role, Leslie, is the question?**

**Jordan:** Well, we approached Rob Gronkowski, that football player. I'm making that up. We did not approach him. [Laughs.] I think he would be good, though; they should ask him. I've got such a crush on him. I don't even watch football, but I'm glued to that TV.

**CA:I have an appreciation for**



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one of the episodes this season that touches on LGBTQ+ aging. Leslie, how did that bit about the unique experience of aging for LGBTQ+ people make it onto the show? Was that your doing?

**Jordan:** People think that as actors we have a lot of say, and maybe other actors do, but I don't particularly... I'm the kind of actor that I think writers love because I show up and just say their words [laughs]. And I learned a long time ago that stage is an actor's medium. Film is a director's medium. TV is really a writer's medium. That's where you have wonderful, wonderful writers. And I know the process, that they sit around that table... "Will & Grace," at one point, had 25 writers. Can you imagine? Twenty-five people sitting around the table, going over [a script] line by line by line. And then you show up, and the actors take off and then speak the words. I'm very reverent. You do your job. I'll show up and bring it to life. Just give me the words. So no, I had nothing to do with that at all. They came up with it. I just loved it.

**Jackson:** First of all, I've never heard it put that way, the medium; that's really, really cool. I love to think of it that way, and I am of like mind with Leslie that my job is to be a conduit. I go in there, and I take what they give

me and portray it. But so much of what they're writing now, especially our new additions that Leslie was talking about, I do believe they're taking from our own lives and who we are in the world. So when they give Leslie a monologue like he did in the car about [aging] as Max, I feel like crying as Cheyenne because Leslie's so brilliant, and Swoosie is so brilliant. The two of them together, I just love their dynamic. Sometimes a paragraph or a scene or just a set of lines will just hit you in the guts, and that was definitely one where I thought it was a home run. And, yeah, I have to definitely remember, "OK, I'm Max right now." [Laughs.]

**CA:Cheyenne, how do you get through a take without laughing when Leslie is in a scene with you, particularly that episode where he learns to ride a bike?**

**Jackson:** [Laughs.] Oh my god, oh my god. OK, so usually we have a lot of material to do, and I'm from the theater, and I love to prepare, and I love to be super solid on my lines. So when I get down there, if there's going to be a bike or Leslie doing his thing, I don't break. But with that particular episode — Anthony Rich directed, and it was really fast, and we have tons of rapid fire, and Leslie with the pratfall — it's hard. To keep us on track is tough.

**CA:Did you two first meet on the set of "American Horror Story"?**

**Jackson:** We were trying to figure this out the other day. I think it must have been.

**Jordan:** I think it was the day that we were shooting in a big theater and they had Trixie Mattel. She was on "American Horror Story" very briefly. You had the actor, and then you had the actor playing the actor, and then it went all... I couldn't keep up with it. But that I think is where we met.

**Jackson:** But I've known who Leslie was forever and was a huge fan of "Will & Grace," and I can quote all of his stuff, and I constantly do to him. It's one of the joys of this.

**Jordan:** I just wish he'd butch it up a little bit sometimes when he's doing it. [Laughs.]

**Jackson:** One of the biggest joys of this has been to get to know Leslie on a true friend basis, because the queer experience in Hollywood is, you have to have lived it to understand it. And I'm in my mid 40s now, and you know, I've been around a while. So I love to have queer mentors, and I love to have queer mentors. And Leslie has stories and advice and just so much wisdom. And sometimes, if I'm stuck on a line, I will go to him and say, "How do I make this funny rhythmically?" and he'll say like, "Hit that, hit that, and then just drop

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it's one of my favorite things, being on a show with you.

**CA:** I'm sure Cheyenne is not the only person to have told you that you're a queer mentor to them. What is it like to hear that from other people in the LGBTQ+ community?

**Jordan:** I mean, I don't get up in the morning and think, "The mentor has gotten up." [Laughs.] You know, when I got to Hollywood in 1992, West Hollywood was where I dropped anchor. Queers were everywhere, and I thought, "Wow." And then the crisis hit — the AIDS epidemic, which I've seen so many parallels between this pandemic and the last one. I've been through it. I've been through a pandemic. I was on the forefront of Project Angel Food when it got started. I was right there in the meetings when Project Nightlight got started. I was around, and I did my share, and I'm very proud of that. And sometimes I look back and think, "Own it." It's so hard for us. My boyfriend constantly says to me, "When someone compliments you, Leslie, you compliment them back." I'm working on that. I'm working so hard on that. Anyways, whatever. Where were we? What was the question?

**CA:** You were just about to thank Cheyenne for what he said.

**[Both laugh.] Jackson:** Nice, Chris. **Jordan:** And then sing his praises, which Cheyenne... he's trained as an actor. I marvel. I go over there, and he's got a script marked with stuff and I think maybe I should do that. But we all have our process. We all have a way in which we approach it. And his is to be admired, that's for sure.

**Jackson:** Thank you, Leslie. We're all learning from each other.

**Jordan:** You know what I am? I met this girl, and I said "When did you decide to become an actress?" She said, "Oh honey, I'm not an actress, I'm a depictress." I said, "You're a depictress, what does that mean?" She said, "I don't do that whole method-y thing. I just depict; then I go home." And well, OK, so maybe I'm a depictress. [Laughs.]

**CA:** Leslie, you can really work some heels. I know you've joked before that you came out of your mom's womb and immediately stepped into her heels, so is that why you are such a pro at dancing around in them on "Call Me Kat"?

**Jordan:** [Laughs.] No, it's because I did drag when I was about 19. We would have drag parties and I was in my hometown; you couldn't get in the bars at 17. So we'd

have these drag parties up at this doctor's house — this very wealthy doctor — and we would put together drag shows, and I was Miss Baby Wipes, that was my name. The sweet and petite Miss Baby Wipes. And I could work that stage. I'd do Tina Turner numbers and stuff, when they were all doing Barbra Streisand.

**Jackson:** I knew that you'd be good in heels, but when we had that episode with heels the other day and you popped them on, he was like "bum, bum, bum, bum, bum!" It was amazing. I can't do that.

**CA:** This cast is



obviously very musical. And given that there's an actual stage right there on set, how much unprompted singing goes on behind the scenes?

**Jackson:** Mayim and I often find ourselves behind the pianos just playing, and Mayim is incredibly musical and plays a bunch of instruments, and I love that they write that into the show a lot. But I'd like to see Leslie have a musical moment.

**Jordan:** I will hear Cheyenne and Mayim just sit down at the piano and sing and think, "Oh, that's wonderful." I was on Reba McEntire's show many, many years ago and she'd do that. All of a sudden she'd start singing and it was like, "My god, that's Reba over there just singing."

**Jackson:** I want Leslie to do a number after his makeout scene.

**Jordan:** With the Gronk!

*Chris Azzopardi is the Editorial Director of Pride Source Media Group and Q Syndicate, the national LGBTQ+ wire service. He has interviewed a multitude of superstars, including Cher, Meryl Streep, Mariah Carey and Beyoncé. His work has also appeared in The New York Times, Vanity Fair, GQ and Billboard. Reach him via Twitter @chrisazzopardi.*





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# GRAB PHILIP

## Better than ever: An interview with Philip Dean Walker

By Gregg Shapiro

If you enjoyed DC-based gay writer Philip Dean Walker's 2016 debut short story collection *At Danceteria* and other stories, then you'll find even more to love in his new book *Better Davis and other stories* (Squares & Rebels, 2021). Closely related to its predecessor, *Better Davis*, Walker's third book, contains six short stories consisting of fictionalized situations involving characters whose names will be familiar to many readers. In "Very Special Episode," for example, actor Jim J. Bullock deals with a health crisis. "Elizabeth/Regina" takes readers back to 1981 when Elizabeth Taylor and Maureen Stapleton performed in a pre-Broadway production of Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes* at The Kennedy Center. Tony Award-winning director and choreographer Michael Bennett is the main character of the story titled "The Line." Philip was kind enough to make time in his schedule to answer a few questions about his writing.

**Gregg Shapiro: Your first book, *At Danceteria* and other stories, was published in 2016. What was the experience of having your debut short story collection in print like for you?**

**Philip Dean Walker:** I made the final edits to *At Danceteria* at the beginning of the 2016 Bread Loaf Writers' Conference in Vermont. The first proof copy then arrived from my publisher delivered to me on the mountain just in time for me to read from it at the final Blue Parlor Reading, which is a big Bread Loaf tradition. So, it was kind of a perfect way to debut myself as a writer. I was so excited to actually be holding my first book – it was a thrilling moment and felt even more fitting to be having it at a Middlebury College campus as that is my alma mater.

**GS: *Better Davis* and other stories (Squares & Rebels, 2021),**

**your new book, is dedicated to the late, gay writer and educator Richard McCann. Please say something about him and his influence on your work.**

**PDW:** Richard was a huge mentor for me in grad school and became a very good friend. I still can't believe he's even gone, such is Richard's behemoth. I cannot say enough about the fearlessness, the zest for friendship and life, the pure honesty of writing – all of that Richard inspired in me. Richard was one of the finest writers of our time and his loss is a profound one. He was so charismatic and generous. One of the characters in *Better Davis* is loosely based on Richard, something I was able to share with him before his unexpected death.

**GS: *Better Davis* and other stories, which is your third short story collection, is linked to *At Danceteria*. Did you know at the time that you were writing *At Danceteria*, that there would be a second collection in the same vein?**

**PDW:** The short answer to that is no, although, I did actually start the story "The Line" which closes *Better Davis*, three months before *At Danceteria* came out. My publisher, Raymond Luczak, suggested that we do another collection, and I did have some ideas clunking around in my head for additional stories.

**GS:** Both *Better Davis* and *At Danceteria* consist of short stories about familiar celebrities. Please say something about you select subjects for your stories.



**PDW:** The subject matter of my stories comes to me very organically and can be led back to something as simple as a small paragraph in a biography or watching an old movie.

**GS: How much research is involved in your writing process?**

**PDW:** For these stories, the research is pretty heavy. I don't feel like I can write these characters until I've located the essential "beingness" of them, which is something that has no definable timeframe. The research felt like all that practice you go through before a big race. As soon as the proverbial gun goes off, you almost aren't even thinking anymore, just doing the writing.

**GS: Some of the stories in *Better Davis* feature living people, including Jim J. Bullock, Robert Wagner and Christopher Walken. Are you at all concerned about repercussions?**

**PDW:** My book is a work of fiction. Even though famous people or celebrities (dead and alive) may appear as characters in the book, their actions or dialogue should not be construed as factual or historical truths.

**GS: Do you know if Jim J. Bullock, for example, knows about the story "Very Special Episode"?**

**PDW:** I don't know if he has or not. I am a big fan of his, so I would love for him to. Although, as I said previously, the character in that story is very much a "character" and is not supposed to

be him in any real, biographical way.

**GS:** Because of the mainly 1980s settings of the stories in *Better Davis*, AIDS features prominently. Other gay writers, including James Magruder, Bryan Washington, and David Leavitt, have also included the subject of AIDS in their recent novels. Please say something about the importance of continuing to include AIDS in your work.

**PDW:** I always wanted to tell a larger story in this collection about the titanic cultural watershed that AIDS was for this community. But, also, I wanted to show the small ways that it had a huge effect on the way we lived. The ways in which the disease democratized everyone – created, in a way, a level playing field where everyone was at some risk, obviously the gay world with which I deal directly in the book.

**GS:** Even though the stories in *Better Davis* are all stand-alone pieces, I noticed that there were threads that connected them in this way – *The World According to Garp* is mentioned in two stories “Very Special Episode” and “Gay Nineties,” Natalie Wood appears in both “Brainstorm” and “Better Davis,” while Maureen Stapleton can be found in “Elizabeth/Regina” and

“The Line.” Please say something about that device.

**PDW:** The big difference between the writing of the two books is that, for *Better Davis*, I actually knew that it would be a book. More than half of *Danceteria* was comprised of stand-alone stories that I had been publishing one after the other in a gay men’s fiction journal called *Jonathan*. And because *BD* was conceived as a linked collection, there are some characters who get to jump around the book, as you noted. There are also certain “Easter eggs” planted for anyone who’s looking. You might be the first person who’s mentioned the *Garp* one.

**GS:** Chalk it up to being OCD, I guess. If there was a movie made of one of the stories in *Better Davis*, which one would you want it to be and why? And who would you want to play the lead?

**PDW:** I think a limited series format would work best for an adaptation of this book. I’ve actually envisioned, in



my head, how some of this could be brought to the screen. I’d love to see what Natalie Portman could do with the role of Natalie Wood in the story “Brainstorm” which takes place on the last night of Natalie’s life.

**GS:** Finally, is there a third book in the series in the works?

**PDW:** There isn’t currently. I’m actually working on my first novel. But I never say never. I feel like I’ve told the stories of this era that I needed to tell for now, but there’s always the possibility that I could revisit. I was very happy with how *Better Davis* turned out, so it’s certainly a possibility.

A promotional poster for an event at Steamworks Baths. The background is dark with a man's muscular, tattooed back and shoulder in the foreground. The text is in white and yellow. At the top right is the Steamworks Baths logo. The main title is 'ROUGH TRADE' in large, bold, white letters. Below it, in smaller white text, is 'WITH THE MEN OF M.A.F.I.A. AND CUMUNION' and 'FEATURING LIVE FISTING DEMOS'. At the bottom, in large white letters, is 'FRI, MAR 18, 10PM-4AM WITH DJ HARRY CROSS'. Below that, in smaller white text, is 'WITH OUR PARTNERS' followed by logos for MAFIA, CUMUNION, and HOT HOUSE. At the very bottom, in yellow and white text, is 'STEAMWORKS BATHS 3246 N HALSTED CHICAGO 773.929.6080 STEAMWORKSBATHS.COM'.

# GRAB JAMES

## Ready when you are: An interview with gay writer James Magruder

By Gregg Shapiro

James Magruder is a funny guy. His wonderfully wicked sense of humor comes through in his plays (most recently, the 2018 Broadway musical *Head Over Heels*), as well as his fiction, including his 2009 Lambda Literary Award finalist debut novel *Sugarless* and now in his new novel *Vamp Until Ready* (Rattling Good Yarns Press, 2021). But *Vamp Until Ready*, which spans 1980-1992, isn't all fun and games. In fact, it has its share of heartache and heartbreak. It also contains some incredible literary sexual tension (Cary and Jon's budding romance) and a marvelous tribute to none other than Shirley Booth. James, who also teaches at Swarthmore College, was kind enough to make time for an interview in advance of the publication of *Vamp Until Ready*.

**Gregg Shapiro:** James, early in your new novel *Vamp Until Ready*, there is a reference to a Lily Tomlin routine involving her characters Lud and Marie, and Tomlin is referred to again near the conclusion of the novel. What can you tell the readers about Lily Tomlin and her influence on you?

**James Magruder:** Somehow, I got a hold of Lily's On Stage album when I was a junior in high school. Like many other gay boys, I wore it out until I had memorized it. "PLEASE STOP TALKING ABOUT THAT CAKE!!!!!!", from the "Lud & Marie Meet Dracula's Daughter" routine is as much a '70s comedy flashpoint as (Cheech & Chong's) "My name is Sister Mary Elephant" or (the Coneheads') "We come from Remulak, a small town in France." Tomlin's earlier album, *Modern Screen*, was equally formative/corrupting. My husband and I saw her once in a taqueria in Austin. She moved past our table, knew we had recognized her, and blew Steve a kiss.

**GS:** For the most part, *Vamp Until Ready* is set in Ithaca, New York. Why did you choose this setting?

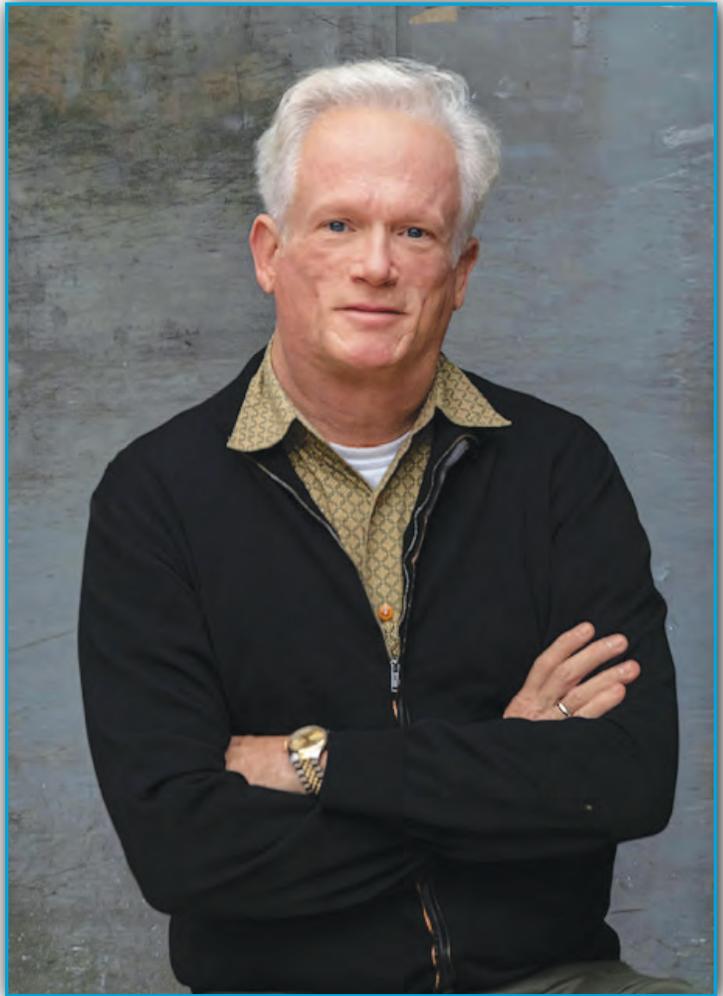
**JM:** I went to college at Cornell and spent three summers doing stock at the Hangar Theatre. It's a town I've loved for 40 years.

**GS:** The way you write about it, Ithaca is a character unto itself. Was it your intention to make the city as much a character as the others that populate the novel?

**JM:** Absolutely. Tompkins County is the blue island in all-red upstate New York, like Austin is for Texas. It's one of the great college towns, a very special place for those who know it.

**GS:** The other significant geographical location in the book is Africa. As someone who has traveled there, was this an opportunity to share your knowledge and experience?

**JM:** More autobiography, I'm afraid. My husband, who was monitoring HIV research studies for Johns Hopkins, and I lived in Kampala, Uganda for 10 months in 2013-14, before Dictator/President Museveni passed a "kill the gays" bill. We were airlifted out with our cats by Johns Hopkins. (The character



Judy Gabelson's experience in Part Three of *Vamp* was a way for me to capture the things I liked about Uganda and Ugandans before things went downhill.

**GS:** There's a line near the end of the book describing the life of Cary Dunkler – one of the main characters – prior to an important turning point as "vamping until ready," the phrase from which the book gets its title. Please say a few words about the title.

**JM:** The book needed a theater term for a title. For the longest time, it was called *Save Yourself*, which is what you do onstage if everything is fucking up. Lesbian comedian Cameron Esposito brought out a memoir with that title only last year, and that felt too close in time. "Vamping until ready" is what the orchestra does until the singer is ready to begin the song. What the major characters experience in the novel by making theater prepares them to begin life – or begin again. They've

been vamping, but now they're ready.

**GS:** The Cary Dunkler parts that bracket the novel are written in first person, while the other three parts – Kristy Schroyer & Isa Vass, Judy Gabelson, and Mark Shinner – are in the third person. What was involved in the decision to utilize these devices?

**JM:** A gay, first-person male narrator is my sweet spot, so Cary was easy to write. Kristy, Isa, and Judy were and are a departure for me – they are functioning heterosexual women, and I didn't feel it would be honest for me (at least not yet) to write them in the first person. Ditto Mark Shinner, the first straight man with whom I spend meaningful time in my fiction.

**GS:** Vamp Until Ready is divided into five parts, with each section having a specific time setting – 1980, 1982, 1987, 1990, and 1992. Vamp Until Ready isn't an AIDS novel per se, but were these years chosen as a way to allow you to write about AIDS?

**JM:** I've written so much about AIDS, and my own positive status, in Let Me See It and Love Slaves of Helen Hadley Hall, that I backed away from it in Vamp. But it cannot – and should not – go missing in a novel about theater people in the 1980s.

**GS:** At a time when the future of Roe v. Wade is increasingly uncertain, Vamp Until Ready shines a light on adoption, with the characters Cary and David having been adopted by the same family in what is referred to as “two for one orphan deal.” Can you please tell the readers something about the adoption theme at the heart of the book?

**JM:** Theater is a place where you form successive families that last as long as the show does. Sometimes you can make friends for life from members of a theater family. I worked at a big regional theatre for 15 years and always thought of it as an orphanage, peopled by birth family casualties who are looking for adoptive parents and siblings for a safe amount of time.

**GS:** Theater plays a large role, pardon the pun, in the novel. There's a wonderful description of the emotions stirred up during closing night of a show. As a playwright and someone who knows how a closing night feels, was it easy or difficult to put this experience into words?

**JM:** Closing night for a playwright is very different than closing night for a chorus boy. I've been both. Rather than go on at length about how bizarre the

October 2021. What do you think about the band finally receiving such an honor?

**JM:** Way, way overdue for the first successful (all-female) rock band that wrote and performed all of its own music.

**GS:** Regional productions of Head Over Heels are being mounted in a variety of cities, including one by Slow Burn Theatre Company in South Florida. What

does it mean to you to see the show being revived in post-Broadway runs?

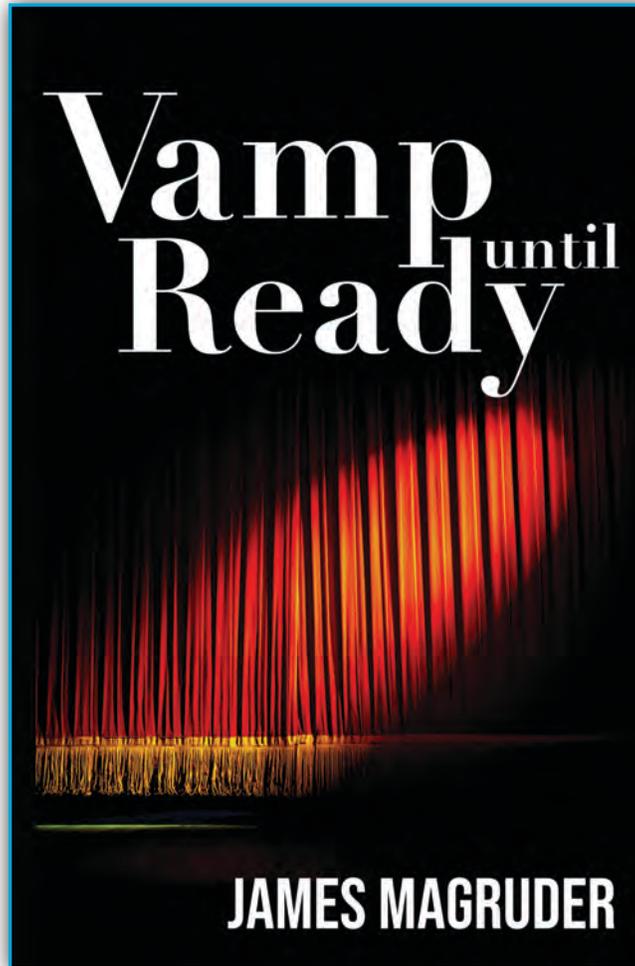
**JM:** Since the show closed in January 2019, I have seen productions in Atlanta, Chicago, and Sarasota. I love that our big-hearted musical for mean times has proven so popular.

**GS:** One of the regional productions features Lea DeLaria as King Basilius and RuPaul's Drag Race alum Alaska 5000 as Queen Gynecia. What do you think of that casting?

**JM:** The co-directors called me about Alaska, whose work I didn't know. I heartily approved the choice when I found out that they weren't going to cast the non-cis Oracle part, originated by Peppermint, as female-presenting. You can't have Alaska and a Peppermint-type actor in the same show, unless you're doing Schiller's Mary Stuart. I said that since they were messing even further with the gender spectrum than we had on Broadway, they could keep going. Hence Lea DeLaria, whose cross-gender casting as the King, was a lovely shock a few days ago.

**GS:** Have you started working on or thinking about your next theater or book project?

**JM:** The hardest thing I'll ever do, a non-fiction chronicle about the first fifty years of Yale Repertory Theatre, has currently, after five years of research and interviews, entered the physical production phase with Yale University Press. That should come out a year from now. I'm writing short stories after a long hiatus and have been writing the books for two new musicals that I can't talk about for the time being. Stay tuned.



experience is, it was easier for me to have Cary directly address the reader by saying, "I figure some of you have been in plays, and so know how a closing night feels." Their common knowledge keeps Cary from examining his own sad feelings about it. He transfers them to mention that the Damn Yankees diva, Suzy Skurnik, was as red and leaky as a fire hydrant at the curtain call.

**GS:** The musical Head Over Heels, for which you adapted the book, features the music of the Go-Go's who are being inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in

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## Daily Specials

<p><b>Monday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> \$5 Well Cocktails &amp; Draft Beer 6-8pm. <b>Cell Block:</b> Open 4pm-2am. <b>Charlies:</b> Darla Dae's Bingo 7 – 11 pm Dancing until close. <b>Houndstooth:</b> .75 Boneless Wings, \$12 Domestic Pitchers,\$15 Premium Pitchers, \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. <b>Hydrate:</b> Lips and Mascara Doors at 8pm Show at 10pm. <b>Lark:</b> Happy Hour 5-7pm, Bottles of Wine 50% off with dinner entree purchase. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open at 4pm, Dancers 8pm. <b>Meeting House Tavern:</b> \$5 Jäger, Fireball &amp; Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>North End:</b> Open at 11am, \$5 Well Drinks. <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts &amp; Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm. <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 3pm, Musical Monday Show Tunes 8pm-2am. <b>Steamworks:</b> Every 3rd Monday TM4M (Trans Men For Men) 8pm-2am. <b>Touche:</b>Euchre Might Come out and Play 7-10pm, Clubroom Open</p>
<p><b>Tuesday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> \$5 Well Cocktails &amp; Draft Beer 6-8pm, Game Night with Tony. <b>Cell Block:</b> Open 4pm-2am. <b>Charlie's:</b> TuneUp Tuesday Karaoke 7 – 11PM, Tag Team Tuesdays 11p – 2am, Dancing until close. <b>Houndstooth:</b> \$2 Tacos, ½ Off Bottles of Wine, \$5 Red or White Sangria, \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. <b>Hydrate:</b> 8/10 TatTuesday XXL Doors open at 8pm. <b>Kit Kat Lounge:</b> Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis <b>Lark:</b> 50% Off Bottles of Wine with any Entree Purchase, Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. Open auditions for male dancers 7pm. \$5 drink specials. <b>Meeting House Tavern:</b> \$6 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$3 House Shots, \$5 Jäger, Fireball &amp; Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>North End:</b> Open at 11am, \$5 Canned Beers, Seltzers &amp; Ciders. <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts &amp; Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm. <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 3pm, Trivia Tuesday 8-10pm, TRL Tuesday: Totally Rad Line-up of 90's-to-Now Music Videos 10pm-2am, OUTspoken LGBTQ+ Storytelling 1st Tuesday of the month from 7-9pm. <b>Steamworks:</b> Every Tuesday 4 pm – 4 am Guys Under 25 Get In Free* (*Free 30 day membership and free locker). <b>Touche:</b> Hardcore Cruisin' Sponsor Leather 64Ten. No cell phones/Wifi.</p>
<p><b>Wednesday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> \$5 Well Cocktails &amp; Draft Beer 6-8pm. <b>Cell Block:</b> Open 4pm-2am. <b>Charlie's:</b> Country Line Dancing 7 – 10pm, Sapphire's Secret Shadows 10pm – 1 am, Dancing until close. <b>Houndstooth:</b> \$4 Appetizers, \$7 Burgers, \$3 Domestic Drafts, \$5 Premium Drafts, \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. <b>Kit Kat Lounge:</b> Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis <b>Lark:</b> Free Bingo, 50% Off Nachos &amp; Totchos, \$8 Villa One Margaritas Frozen or on the Rocks, Traditional Flavor only. Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open at 6pm Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. <b>Meeting House Tavern:</b> \$3 Miller Lite Drafts, \$4 Stolis (All Flavors), \$5 Jäger, Fireball &amp; Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>North End:</b> Open at 11am \$5 Lagunitas Draft &amp; Cans. <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts &amp; Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 3pm, All Things Beyoncé 2nd Wed of month, All Things Gaga 3rd Wed of month, All Things Taylor &amp; Ariana 4th Wed of month – all 9pm-2am. <b>Steamworks:</b> Bear Hump Every second Wednesday 6-9pm A monthly mid-week gathering of Furry Men. <b>Touche:</b> Jockstrap Night Sponsored by Full Kit Gear, Free Clothing check.</p>
<p><b>Thursday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> \$5 Well Cocktails &amp; Draft Beer 6-8pm, RuPaul Drag Race All Stars 6 Viewing Party - 7pm. <b>Baton Show Lounge:</b> Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm &amp; 11:30pm. <b>Cell Block:</b> Open 4pm-2am. <b>Charlie's:</b> Survivor 10 pm – 1 am, Dancing Until Close. <b>Houndstooth:</b> \$2.50 Minis • \$3 College Beer, \$6 40'S, \$5 Absolut Bombs, \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. <b>Hydrate:</b> RuPaul's Drag Race Season All Stars Viewing Party Doors Open 6:30pm, Bubble POP Hosted by Khloe Coulee 9pm. <b>Kit Kat Lounge:</b> Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. <b>Lark:</b> RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars 6 viewing party &amp; Bogo Pizza 7pm, Buy One Pizza, Get One Pizza Half Off (Dine in Only), Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. <b>Meeting House Tavern:</b> \$5 You Call It's, \$5 Jäger, Fireball &amp; Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>North End:</b> Open at 11am, \$5 Deep Eddy Cocktails <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts &amp; Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 3pm, Chicago's RuPaul's Drag Race Viewing Party 7pm, Drag &amp; Games Dance Party 9pm-2am <b>Steamworks:</b> Lights Out Thursdays, The Club goes Dark Every Thursday 4pm-4am. <b>Touche:</b> 13/17St. Patricks Day Party, Specials &amp; Raffles Best Kilt Legs Contest. 3/24 Throwback Thursdays 70's &amp; 80's Music &amp; Porn by Bijiou Video.</p>

# GRAB YOUR FRIENDS

Daily Specials

<p><b>Friday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> \$5 Well Cocktails &amp; Draft Beer 6-8pm, Dancers 10pm-1am. <b>Baton Show Lounge:</b> Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm &amp; 11:30pm. <b>Cell Block:</b> Open 4pm-2am. <b>Charlie's:</b> 1st and 3rd Fierce Fridays 10p – 1am, 2nd Fierce Fridays - Traffic Light Party 10p – 1am, 4th Fierce Fridays - Glow Up Party 10p – 1am, 5th Fierce Fridays – Strut 10p – 1am, Dancing until close. <b>Houndstooth:</b> \$6 Pulled Pork or Pulled Chicken Sandwich, \$6 Absolut Mules, \$12 Domestic Pitchers, \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. <b>Hydrate:</b> 8/6 Fresh Faces A New Drag Competition Second and Forth Friday of the Month. <b>Kit Kat Lounge:</b> Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. <b>Lark:</b> Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open with dancers at 6pm. \$5 drink specials.. <b>Meeting House Tavern:</b> \$5 Tito's, \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$5 Jäger, Fireball &amp; Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>North End:</b> Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 4-7pm. <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> Weekend Buckets \$25 All Day, Miller Lite, Corona Extra, Truly Punch Variety, Truly Wild Berry Seltzer, Freshie Tequila Seltzer (5 Cans per Bucket - Cannot mix and match.) <b>Shakers:</b> \$4 Domestic Bottles \$5 Well Mixed Drinks, \$10 Giant 23oz Long Islands in 22 flavors. <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 3pm, T.G.I.F. Show Tunes 4-9pm, Friday Night Dance Party 9pm-2am. <b>Touche:</b> 3/18Cowboy Round Up Full Moon party &amp; Contest. 3/25 ONYX Club Night. 4/1CD4 Social8pm, M.A.F.I.A.Club Night10pm.</p>
<p><b>Saturday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> \$5 Well Cocktails &amp; Draft Beer 3pm-5pm, Dancers 10pm -1am. <b>Baton Show Lounge:</b> Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm &amp; 11:30pm. <b>Cell Block:</b> Open 2pm-3am. <b>Charlie's:</b> Country Line Dancing 7 – 10pm, The Main Event 10pm – 1am Dancing until Close. <b>Houndstooth:</b> Brunch 11am-3pm \$15 Bottomless Mimosas, \$6 Michelada's, \$2 Breakfast Sliders, \$5 Stadium Cups (ALL DAY), \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets.. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. <b>Meeting House Tavern:</b> \$5 Signature Margaritas, \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$12 Mimosa Carafes, \$5 Jäger, Fireball &amp; Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>North End:</b> Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 11am-2pm. <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> \$10 Champagne Bottles, \$5 Juice Kits, \$3 Bud Lights 12-2pm, Weekend Buckets \$25 All Day, Miller Lite, Corona Extra, Truly Punch Variety, Truly Wild Berry Seltzer, Freshie Tequila Seltzer (5 Cans per Bucket - Cannot mix and match.). <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 1pm, SaturGay Drag &amp; Games 3-6pm, Saturday Night Dance Party 9pm-3am, Dog Day Saturday 1st Saturday of the month 1-5pm. <b>Touche:</b> 3/26Ripe party.DIM LIHJTS, DEEP BEATS, GO-GO DUDES DJHARRY T.4/2 BEARNIGHT BEARS, CUBS, OTTERS &amp;MORE!, 4/9 MCL 2022 gear Swap noon KINK U 1-4pmMCL CONTEST VIEWING PARTY 107PM, VICTOTY PARTY10PM</p>
<p><b>Sunday Funday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> \$6 Jack Products, \$4 Domestic Draft, House Shots \$2. <b>Baton Show Lounge:</b> Doors Open at 11am, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm &amp; 11:30pm. <b>Cell Block:</b> Open 2pm-2am <b>Charlie's:</b> Queeriod! Every other Sunday 5pm – 7pm, Singational Sunday Karaoke 7pm – 11pm Mas Leche 11pm – 1am, Dancing until close. <b>Houndstooth:</b> Brunch 11am-3pm \$15 Bottomless Mimosas, \$6 Michelada's, \$2 Breakfast Sliders, \$6 40'S (ALL DAY), \$12 Domestic Pitchers (ALL DAY), \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. <b>Hydrate:</b> Doors open at 2pm Northalsted's Official after Brunch party. <b>Kit Kat Lounge:</b> Divalicious brunch with Madam X 11am-3pm, Happy Hour 4-7pm \$8.95 Martinis . <b>Lark:</b> Free Flowing Brunch 11am-3pm. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. <b>Meeting House Tavern:</b> \$3 House Shots, \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$12 Mimosa Carafes, \$5 Frozen's, \$5 Jäger, Fireball &amp; Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>North End:</b> Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 7-10pm <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> \$10 Champagne Bottles, \$5 Juice Kits, \$3 Bud Lights 12-2pm, Weekend Buckets \$25 All Day, Miller Lite, Corona Extra, Truly Punch Variety, Truly Wild Berry Seltzer, Freshie Tequila Seltzer (5 Cans per Bucket - Cannot mix and match.) <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 1pm, Sunday Funday Show Tunes 4-9pm, Sunday Funday After Dark Dance Party 9pm-2am <b>Touche:</b> Beer Bust \$2 Bud Light Drafts, Bears vs Ravens at Noon, Movie Night 7pm. 4/10 MCL2022 MCL2022 BRUNCH 11AM BEER BUST 2PM-4SM \$2 Budlight drafts- Sodas Clubroom Open6pmMovie night 7pm</p>



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# GRAB A HIT



**Top 40 Dance Chart this week**  
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DANCE

	Artist	Title
1	The Chainsmokers	High (Radio Edit)
2	Zookeeper & Jen	Taking Over Me
3	tyDi & Jes	Just Believe
4	Martin Jensen x Cheat Codes x Theresa Rex	Running
5	Warren	Before You ft. LEXI
6	Ashley Paul	Come And Get Me (Until Dawn Remix Radio)
7	Purple Disco Machine	Dopamine ft. Eyelar
8	Tritonal & Codeko	Superhuman (Ferry Corsten)
9	NEIKED x Mae Muller x Polo G	Better Days (Regard Remix)
10	MelyJones & Charles B	Do You Remember (Coopex Edit)
11	Diplo & Miguel	Don't Forget My Love
12	Jax Jones	Where Did You Go ft. MNEK
13	Keanu Silva x Toby Romeo x SACHA	Hopeless Heart (Radio Edit)
14	Poo Bear	Distant Shore (Joel Corry Remix)
15	tyDi x Electric Polar Bears	You Never Know ft. Neverwaves
16	Jonas Blue & Why Don't We	Don't Wake Me Up
17	Alesso x Katy Perry	When I'm Gone
18	Kungs	Lipstick (Dubdogz and JORD Radio Remix)
19	Mahalo & Milkwish	Careless ft. Lena Leon
20	Disco Fries & Danny & Tariq	Weight Off
21	HRVY	1 Day 2 Nights
22	Joel Corry x Mabel	I Wish
23	Majestic	Tricky ft. Autumn Rowe
24	Martin Garrix x Matisse & Sadko x John Martin	Won't Let You Go
25	Just Kiddin	Change My Mind
26	Allegra	If You Wanna Love Me (Majestic Remix)
27	Michael Calfan & Nadia Ali	3 2 1 (Radio Edit)
28	Farius	A Big Life (Radio Mix)
29	MEDUZA	Tell It To My Heart ft. Hozier (Radio Edit)
30	Armin van Buuren & Sam Gray	Human Touch
31	Sam Feldt x Rita Ora	Follow Me (Radio Edit)
32	Rozell & Sebastian Perez	No One Knows My Face (Radio Edit)
33	Jonasu & JC Stewart	On My Mind
34	The Chainsmokers	I Can't Make You Love Me (Remix)
35	Dom Dolla	Strangers ft. Mansionair (Radio Edit)
36	John Summit	Human ft. Echoes
37	SLVR & offrami	Do Anything ft. LOUIS III
38	Jennifer Lopez	On My Way (TELYKast Remix)
39	MO	New Moon
40	POLINA	Faena (Yves V Remix)

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CONTEST AT  
MIDNIGHT



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# GRAB ROGER

## ADOPTION – BECOMING A GAY PARENT

By Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss, Esq.

People often ask my husband and I how does it feel to be parents, as 24 years ago my husband, Christopher and I became parents having adopted two boys, one in 1997 who just turned 24 and the other in 2000 who is now 22.

I usually don't go too much into the details about the times I've been thrown up on, the diapers I've changed or the terror caused by a two-year-old moving through the house with an open bottle of Hershey's Chocolate syrup.

Nor do I go into the tales of the times in restaurants and stores when my perfectly polite and delightful child threw a full lung screaming fit to get his way demanding that a toy be bought or for something else. I've learned that these conversations are not for the faint of heart or for the uninitiated in the ways of parenthood.

People ask if it was hard becoming parents. Before adopting, becoming a parent seemed like an impossible hurdle with all the decisions and choices. Plus all the options, do we first become foster parents, then try to adopt a child placed in our care? We decided not to go that route because of the heartbreak if an adoption did not

go through or a child were returned to a biological parent.

Do we adopt internationally? This route to us seemed very complicated and expensive although we know quite a few families with kids from Russia and Guatemala.

Other men we knew were contracting with surrogate mothers, either with friends they knew or through a surrogacy agency. This route can be wildly expensive and was not within our value system. We felt that there were children already born who needed families. Our ultimate decision was to adopt through a local, domestic adoption agency.

It was in March of 1997 that we first met with the agency having breakfast with the executive director and talking about the adoption process and requirements.

The paperwork involved financial reports, application, health statements from our doctors and chest x-rays to prove that we didn't have TB. No other health test was required. We had to be fingerprinted to prove we weren't wanted criminals and draw a diagram of our house to show a fire exit.

The paperwork process was completed approximately three months later and the agency told us we could have a baby at any time. Then began the hard process, the process of waiting, wondering where we were on the list, and at times not actually believing that we would have a child.

We shopped for a crib, bought a car seat and some baby clothes but didn't redecorate the room or buy all the baby gear as part of us really wondered if it would happen. Then came the call on a November, Monday night at about 10:30 p.m. We had been out because we were moving into a different house that Wednesday and were making plans at the new house for the move.

The agency left a message on the answering machine but we couldn't call the agency back until the next day as our phone was transferred to the new house. We called back the next morning, had a long



conversation with our agency and said yes. We left that morning for our first visit with our son, who was eight days old and immediately fell in love with him. We knew he was our child.

We waited until Thursday, Thanksgiving day, to take our son home. The relatives bought dinner at Boston Market to eat in our new house on paper plates.

We left to pick up our son at 5:00 p.m. and as we were leaving my husband's sister said, "Say goodbye to life as you know it." Within the hour our son came home and we became parents. It was a day I will never forget.

*Roger McCaffrey-Boss is a graduate of Hamline University School of Law, St. Paul, Minnesota, and is a member of the Chicago Bar Association. You can email him at [RVMLawyer@aol.com](mailto:RVMLawyer@aol.com). He suggests that you consult your own lawyer for any specific questions regarding the issues raised in this column.*

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# GRAB HOLLY

## One Grateful Heir

By Holly Maholm

I was sitting just outside my room at the stable; which is to say, in the foyer of that rustic, barn-wood palace wherein reside a half dozen unicorns, one of them Her Most Serene Majesty, Penelope, Queen of the Unicorns. The big barn door in front of me was open to the street, and at that time of day – more than an hour before The Cocktail Hour – I was pondering the question: “OK, I know it’s not The Cocktail Hour here, but it is for my brother who lives on Cape Cod, and if I were to send him a supportive, brotherly text, would that bring us sufficiently together that I might toast our reunion with a drink?”

But before I could send that vital, timely text, Phyllis and Dave peeked around the corn of the barn door and – seeing me idle, as usual – walked in. “Nice to see you both” I offered. “Grab a seat and rest your feet.” (My greeting as sincere as it was childish.)

They took their seats, and by their silence I realized this was no mere social visit. Phyllis spoke. “Holly, we have something serious to talk to you about, and we need all the confidentiality you lawyers can promise. Can you do that?” “Yes, certainly,” I replied. “Very well,” she continued.

“Here’s the situation. There’s a girl at the high school who is pregnant. She’s not too far along, but pretty soon she will start ‘showing,’ and right now, the only person she’s told is me. I guess because the kids all trust me, from the time I told them about the Headless Horseman.

“She’s not one of Dave’s LGBT kids. She’s straight, and the father knows about the pregnancy, but neither he nor the girl – her name’s Lauren – are ready to be parents. Too young. So, frankly, she came to me to see if I would help her get rid of the baby – you know, an abortion. But that’s where things get complicated. You see, Dave already heard a rumor that Lauren might be pregnant, and he came to me first. So, we decided we would ask you if we would be breaking the law if we help her – a 16-year-old – terminate her pregnancy.”

“This is a new question for me,” I replied. “I’ll have to do some research and get back to you.” Phyllis thanked me and left for home. Dave remained seated, then spoke up.

“Actually, Holly, I’m here for my own, equally confidential reason, which is this. I want to try to convince Lauren to have the baby, and then let Mike and I adopt the child. I haven’t revealed this plan to Phyllis – or more importantly, to Mike – but I’ve got to act quickly if my plan has any chance of success.

And Mike and I would need your help – as a lawyer – with the adoption.”

I was speechless. Finally, I asked, “What made you reach this decision? It can’t have been easy.” “No,” Dave replied, “I will explain.”

First, let me tell you what this is not about. I’m not trying to preserve any ‘family heritage’ or racial or ethnic identity. Let others do that, if they wish. No. What’s driving me is this: Many times, I have watched Mike lead a Sunday school class for boys and girls, or older kids – teenagers. And I’ve been in awe of his patience, his gentle heart, and the caring, ‘fatherly’ way he has of finding just the right thing to say to help a youngster learn and grow and mature.

“So, I realized, ‘When I’m gone, who’ll be here to remember what a big heart Mike had?’ How – even when he had to explain to a child that he was making a



mistake – he could do so with so much gentle, quiet sympathy. I’ve gone with Mike to funeral services for several of our departed parishioners, and I’ve heard sons and daughters get up before the casket and reminisce about what a loving heart their parent had. Often, they were overcome by the love they were feeling, and started to cry, and couldn’t go on.

“That’s what I want for Mike – for my Mike – whose generous heart is as pure and good as any man or woman who has ever conceived a child. This is not about passing his DNA on to another generation. What I’m describing is more profound than that. I want there to be at least one child in this world who will reminisce about the father Mike was, and how lucky he or she was to have him for a Dad. I want – for Mike and me – the same grateful heir that every loving couple wants to leave behind.

“So you see, Holly, it’s just a common, selfish wish we would-be parents have.”

(To be continued)

*Holly Maholm is a transgender woman living in Cleveland, Ohio. Look for Holly’s new book Offered Magic: My Life Among the Unicorns (now available on Amazon) which collects the first 126 episodes of Holly’s adventures involving both magical unicorns and her LGBTQ friends. Send a message to Holly at [www.hollymaholm.com](http://www.hollymaholm.com).*

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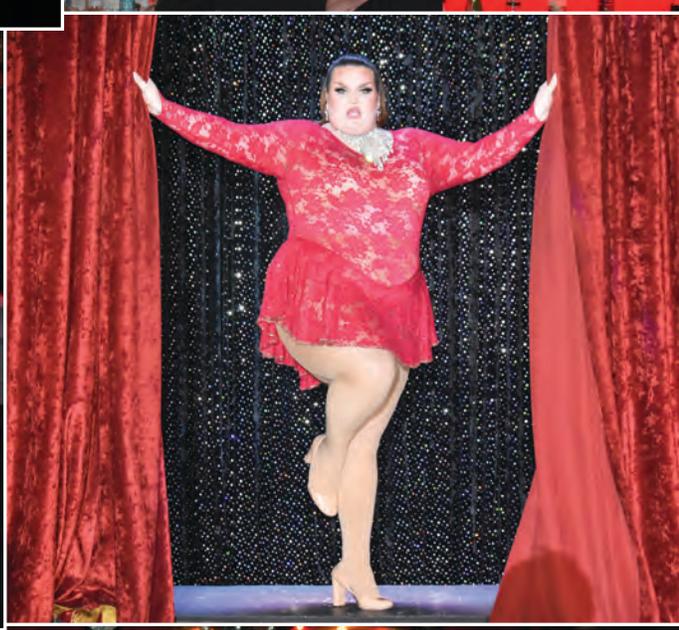
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PHOTOS BY ANTHONY MEADE



**Gerber/Hart Library and Archives Announces  
40 and Fabulous!**



Gerber/Hart Library and Archives is pleased to announce its

Spring Benefit on Thursday April 7 at 7pm: 40 and Fabulous! The Gerber/Hart Spring Soiree, an in-person event to celebrate its 40th Anniversary and support its mission to preserve

LGBTQ history in Chicago and the Midwest, and make it accessible to all. 40 and Fabulous! will take place at Chicago's historic Sidetrack (3349 N Halsted), and be hosted by NBC5's Emmy-nominated **Matthew Rodrigues** (Chicago Today).

This celebration soiree will be a fabulous party with food, drinks, dancing, silent auction and raffle, and a special performance from Chicago drag sensation **Coco-Sho-Nell**. Board of Directors Co-chairs **James Conley** and **Kevin Nunley** comment, "For the past 40 years, Gerber/Hart Library has worked to not only preserve the rich history and culture of our LGBTQ communities in the Midwest, but to also make all of those resources accessible to our community through programs, a lending library, educational exhibits, and more. This work is only possible due to our supporters, to whom we are very grateful. The future for Gerber/Hart is looking brighter than ever with the success of our podcast Unboxing Queer History and some exciting plans in the works. We hope you'll join in that celebration to kick off the next 40 years in style!" Tickets (starting at an early-bird rate of \$75 each through March 18) are available at <http://www.gerberhart.org/fortyandfabulous>. Tickets are limited, so early purchasing is encouraged.

**Pride in The Park SATURDAY June 25th and  
Sunday, June 26th, 2022**



Pride in the Park Chicago, which debuted in 2019, is a one-of-a-kind LGBTQ+ Pride celebration – committed to delivering all-star lineups, iconic performances, and unrivaled partnerships with diverse queer and allied small-businesses – returns for an inclusive and unforgettable 2-day Pride experience June 25th and 26th in downtown Chicago's Grant Park.

Last year, Pride in the Park welcomed over 30,000 attendees to experience some of the most jaw-dropping performances by Tiësto, Griffin, Chaka Khan, Tracy Young, Betty Who, Mila Jam, and legendary Drag Queens – underscoring the strong support from the LGBTQ+ community and allies that Pride is celebrated in many different ways by our diverse populations.

To further add more star power, Pride in Park will once again partner with the legendary CircuitMom Productions – a staple in the LGBTQ+ community for immersive event experiences – there will be no shortage of extravagant sets and performances. Early Bird Tickets On Sale Today Tuesday, March 15th at 10 AM CT at [PrideParkChi.com](http://PrideParkChi.com)

**TPAN Presents Ride For Life Chicago: June 18-19,  
2022.**



The TPAN Ride for Life Chicago is the only event of its kind in the Midwest to support services for people living with HIV or at risk. Hundreds of cyclists bike 200 miles to raise money for the event. There are also 100-mile and 50-mile options for those that feel the need for a shorter distance. The money raised helps TPAN and community partners provide housing, healthcare, and mental health services to thousands of Chicago's vulnerable. In the 18 years since the Ride began, TPAN has delivered care to tens of thousands of individuals. This year's event is June 18-19. The journey will begin in Chicago and travel along a scenic route around Lake Michigan up to Sawyer, MI where participants will spend the night at Tower Hill Camp & Resort Center. Whether you are an experienced cyclist or haven't been on a bicycle in years, everyone is welcome to join Ride for Life Chicago. There are free opportunities for training, fundraising support, and a welcoming community. If cycling isn't your thing, Crew positions, volunteer opportunities and cheering sites along the route are open for all. For more information visit: <http://www.TPAN.com>



**2Bears Tavern UPTOWN  
Grand Opening!  
Thursday March 10th**



Photos By Anthony Meade



**Lip Sync For Life Fundraiser for Excellence In Care Grant Recipients**



On Thursday, March 31, DIFFA/Chicago will host Lip Sync For Life at Center On Halsted, where guests will enjoy a hybrid event of creative lip sync performances, performances by local Chicago drag artists, plus the opportunity to win raffle prizes, all while raising donations to benefit those living with and vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

As one of DIFFA/Chicago's signature events, Lip Sync For Life, is a HYBRID event, to raise funds in support of our mission, to champion the fight to end HIV/AIDS through awareness, prevention, and the pursuit of a cure.

Individuals and teams from the Chicagoland community will be competing with pre-recorded performances to win the LSFL 2022 crown! Enjoy the performances of Chicago's best drag queens and celebrate with the in-person and virtual audience who will be cheering the teams on for what will be an absolutely fantastic event! The March 31st event will feature the pre-recorded performances of our seven teams and our audience will be able to donate towards their favorites to determine our 2022 Lip Sync Winner(s). The money raised supports Chicagoland service agencies that are helping those affected by and/or living with HIV/AIDS, through DIFFA Chicago's Excellence in Care grants.

Lip Sync for Life will be hosted by a top Chicago comedy queen, Ms. **Edna D. Mascara**, who is quite the hoot and sure to keep our audience laughing whether you are tuning in from home or are at the in-person event. Accompanying our lovely host, we will also be featuring three special guest performances from **Ginger Ambrosia**, **Jasmine Phoenix** and **The Haus of Phoenix**, and **Kalli Mauri**. Join us for drinks, bites, sickening entertainment, and supporting a great cause! Tickets available now at <https://LSFL2022.givesmart.com>.

**About Face Theatre Presents World Premiere of LACED by Samantha Mueller**

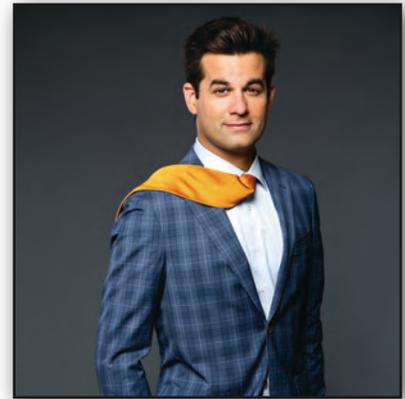


About Face Theatre begins its 27th season with the premiere of Samantha Mueller's drama *LACED*, running March 17 through April 16, 2022, at the Den Theatre. Set in the aftermath of the vandalism of a beloved queer bar, *LACED* is a timely story about the importance of queer-positive spaces and of what it takes to come back together after your world has been shaken. Directed by About Face Artistic Associate Lexi Saunders (American Blues Theatre's *ROAN @ THE GATES*), the production will feature **Mariah Copeland**, **Aida Delaz**, and **Collin Quinn Rice**.

for ticket information go online to [http://](http://www.AboutFaceTheatre.com)

[www.AboutFaceTheatre.com](http://www.AboutFaceTheatre.com), or by calling 773.697.3830, or in-person at the Den Theatre box office.

**The Den Theatre Presents Comedian MICHAEL KOSTA Friday, April 8, 2022 on The Heath Mainstage**



The Den Theatre presents comedian **Michael Kosta**, playing two stand-up performances on Friday, April 8, 2022 at 7 pm and 9:15 pm on The Heath Mainstage, 1331 N. Milwaukee Ave. in Chicago's Wicker Park neighborhood.

Tickets are currently available at [thedentheatre.com](http://thedentheatre.com) or by calling 773 697-3830.

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 Greenhouse Theater Center 2257 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago For tickets: 773-404-7336  
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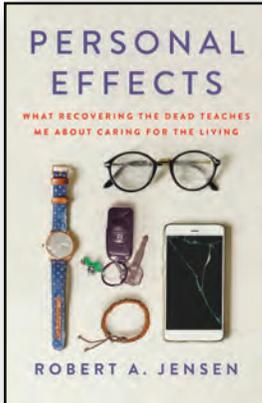


# GRAB A BOOK

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

**"Personal Effects: What Recovering the Dead Teaches Me about Caring for the Living"** by Robert A. Jensen

c.2021, St. Martin's Press \$28.99 / \$38.50 Canada 294 pages



Pick up eggs. Milk. Macaroni. Bread. If you don't jot down a list of things you need to find, you'll forget something. Apples. Light bulbs. Flour. Putting things on paper helps you to remember what you need and what's missing. But in the new book, "Personal Effects" by Robert A. Jensen, the pick-up is more personal; the items, more heart-wrenching... Robert Jensen's growing-up years were not what you'd "call a normal childhood." His mother suffered from mental illness; his father treated him as "a secondary concern." It perhaps didn't help that there was no room for discussion about Jensen's being a boy "who liked boys as much as girls."

Says Jensen, "I hope you never have to see the things that I've seen..."

He doesn't say that because of his personal life, though, but because of his job: Jensen is an expert in recovering human remains and personal effects when disaster, accidents, murders, and battles occur. He says it's not even his "first weird job," but as the Chairman of Kenyon International Emergency Services, he knows that it's one of the most important.

Jensen, for instance, was called to work after the Murrah Building was bombed in Oklahoma City. He's recovered the dead for the U.S. government in Somalia; helped recovery efforts in places such as Haiti, New Orleans, and New York, and he's worked to resolve what happened in devastating plane crashes around the world. He's brought back the remains of loved ones to their grieving families, and he's also been involved in the efforts to recover valuable cargo for insurance companies.

"Being prepared for a disaster is really not that hard," he says.

Just "don't prepare for the last

disaster that just occurred."

Something bad is going to happen to you. If not now, tomorrow; if not then, soon. Disasters happen, as author Robert Jensen indicates, and there are things you can do to minimize the damage and hassle. But getting the information you need to do so won't be easy, if you want advice from "Personal Effects."

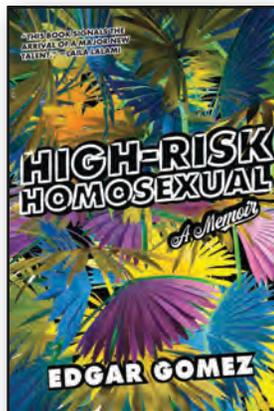
The thing is that this book is solid. For fans of the unusual, you can't get any more unusual than the story, both personal and professional, of a guy who searches for body parts. Jensen's tale is thrilling, cringe-worthy, and heroic; there's advice and little-known minutiae that only an insider would know. You won't be able to forget the gist of this book.

And yet, man, it's a rough read. "Personal Effects" is laden with choppy half-sentences, errant punctuation, and too much repetition – things which are relatively common, and forgivable. But then there's the irritatingly incorrect homonym usage, a maddening assumption of readers' prior knowledge, and an extremely unfortunate quotation from a grieving mother that really could've been told better, and you've got a book that'll make you sigh but not in a satisfied way.

For most readers, this'll be a deal-breaker and that's too bad. "Personal Effects" is basically very, very fascinating, but its errors might not make it worth picking up.

**"High-Risk Homosexual: A Memoir"** by Edgar Gomez

c.2022, Soft Skull Press \$16.95 304 pages



Here. Try this. It fits you, but the color isn't flattering. It's too long, too short, too tight, too loose. That's not your style, so try something else until you find the thing that looks like you. The perfect thing is out there. As in the new book "High-Risk Homosexual" by Edgar Gomez, when something's right, it's right.

He was thirteen when he figured out

that he was a problem to be solved.

Edgar Gomez' mother had left him in her native Nicaragua with his tíos, just for awhile because she had to return to Florida to work. He wasn't there without her for long, but it took years for him to understand that his time with his uncles was meant to make him more masculine.

In retrospect, he says, nobody wanted him to be a man more than he did. He wanted to be liked by other kids and so he told lies in school to make himself stand out. He wanted his mother to see his love of pretty things and say that it was okay. He wanted his brother to acknowledge that Gomez was gay, and to tell him that he loved him.

Instead, after his brother left for college, Gomez got his first boyfriend, a boy he came out to but who couldn't come out to himself. He was called names in school. He came out to his mother, who freaked out about it. He befriended a drag queen, but "Princess" used him.

Things he wanted: a real boyfriend. Love. A ban on the stereotype of a macho Latinx man.

Things he still had, while in college: his mother and older brother. A tormentor-turned-mentor. A part-time job. His weirdness. His virginity.

Things he wanted to lose, while in college: his room at his mother's house. His virginity, but that wouldn't happen until later, during a painful one-afternoon-stand with a hot man who said he had a girlfriend. That hurt, both physically and emotionally but like so many things at so many times, Gomez tried not to think about it.

If he never considered what he didn't have, he says, "I wouldn't miss it."

In a way, you could say that "High-Risk Homosexual" is a book in search of a point. It's really quite random and told (mostly) linearly, but not quite. It has its high peaks, but also low valleys. And you won't care about any of this, because you'll be enjoying every bit of it.

Yeah, this memoir is good: author Edgar Gomez's literary wandering makes it feel much like an honest conversation with readers. There are wince-worthy moments that allow empathy here, and experiences that are unique but oddly ubiquitous, that leave space for a sense of sympathy. There are passages that are so wistfully uncomfortable that you might squirm, or start "snort-laughing," or want to stop a moment and just think.

And there's room for that, too, so take your time. "High-Risk Homosexual" is an affable book with just enough seriousness to make it worth a try.

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# GRAB A FILM

By Delven Shaw

FILM

The **TOY BOY** Boys are back!



If you can't wait for Magic Mike Three to deliver Hollywood's version of a male strip club later this year, check into One Per Cent, the hot new club where Season 2 of **TOY BOY** takes place. This wildly successful Netflix show from Spain blends the dockside drama of On the Waterfront with the wealthy bitchiness of Dynasty, stirred together with G-rated Full Monty style dances. It adds up to a tasty dish.

**Jesús Mosquera** stars as Hugo, wrongly incarcerated for a crime and released from jail to start Season 1. His friend Ivan (José de la Torre) is the owner of the strip club, Inferno, and the gang of entertainers we meet is hale and hearty – and often shirtless. I especially enjoy Carlo Costanza, who plays Jairo, a deaf stripper with fantastic lip-reading skills. He does his share of the petty crimes that keep the gang afloat and Inferno open.

The rich are represented by the very devious Medina family, headed by Macarena (Cristina Castaño), who is as addicted to sex as she is to power. She does battle with her blue-haired gay son (Juanjo Almeida). María Pedraza plays Traina, the lawyer with the heart of gold who was seriously injured at the end of season one when the Inferno was bombed. Will she pull through and fall back in love with Hugo?

My favorite new character for Season 2 is The Turk, the new club owner. Alex González - all pearly teeth and steely pecs - is the boss everyone admires and fears. There are bad guys

of all nationalities it seems, but I don't think we are worried too much about the plot.

Season 2 raises the stakes in terms of sets, cars, scenery, food, jewelry, and clothes. Production designers Koldo Vallés and Mercedes Canales, Set Decorator Abraham Arias, and Costume Designer Alberto Luna have all done great work. Composer Alberto Luna keeps the tension rising, and the large cinematography and directing teams all deserve applause.

Perhaps most importantly, **TOY BOY** features abs for days. And while there is plenty of gay and straight lovemaking, the creative team of **César Benítez, Juan Carlos Cueto, and Rocío Martínez Llano** keep it - like the **MAGIC MIKE** series - relatively tame.

In a world full of doping and impending war, **TOY BOY** is classic escapism. Like a trip to the strip club, it is a little naughty and a lot of fun.

**CONSEQUENCES** Is A Good Take On A Familiar Theme



Watching **CONSEQUENCES**, I remembered substitute teaching in a public high school of 4000 students. My assignment for the week was the senior students who had been in the lowest level classes for four years. They did not read or debate. They sat, played on their phones, bitched, and fought me and each other. They sometimes talked of dares but never dreams. Mostly, they waited.

You may have seen a movie or two about young men doomed to reform school. It has been a Hollywood staple for decades.

But **CONSEQUENCES**, from Slovenia, and now on NetFlix, is well done. And while you suspect the sexual discord that the gang embodies will eventually explode, the script is taut, and the cast is good.

**Matej Zemljic** grounds the film with terrific work as Andrej, an 18-year old whose best friend lives in a box. As he learns the ways of the detention center, he - like the other men - is given great attention by Zeljko (**Timon Sturbej**) and his henchmen, who know precisely how to get what they want.

The dangerous environment of rap and rape is captured beautifully by writer/director **Darko Stante**. Production Designer **Spela Kropusek** and Cinematographer **Rok Nagode** do excellent work to bring us to the tense edge of danger and despair.

You can add **CONSEQUENCES** to the body of work that is well-meaning and potent. Could watching it change the trajectory of youth abandoned in our education systems?

There are a lot of queer culture available screening right now. Check out the two-minute reviews at [DelvenShaw.com](http://DelvenShaw.com) for more!



# REPLAY

beer & bourbon

Photos By Anthony Meade

## ANDERSONVILLE



## Steamworks Announces \$10K Match Fundraiser To Help The People Of Ukraine.



Starting Friday March 11, Steamworks Chicago will start collecting donations in house and online to benefit Sunflower of Peace. Sunflower of Peace "acquires and distributes first-aid backpacks, medicine, medical instruments, and other means of survival" to paramedics and doctors in Ukraine.

If you are like us, you are horrified by the atrocities and devastation the people of Ukraine are facing every day as they try and fight back the Russian aggression against a sovereign nation.

The people of Ukraine have become soldiers and their hospitals are being bombed. They need medical supplies to keep the wounded alive until they can get proper medical care.

We chose this organization because they focus on getting medical kits and supplies to soldiers and the civilian fighting force. We hope you will go to our GoFundMe to donate whatever you can or come to Steamworks and donate onsite by rounding up your entry total. Our fundraiser runs from Friday March 11 – Monday March 21. Steamworks will match all donations up to \$10,000. Steamworks stands with the people of Ukraine.



U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (IL-05), a member of the House Committee on Appropriations and Chair of the Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee, announced that the House and Senate included all ten of the Chicago-area community projects he championed in the final Fiscal Year 2022 Appropriations Omnibus. The bill passed the House and Senate this week and is now headed to the President's desk for signature, making the project funding the law of the land.

"I am thrilled that the House was able to include my community funding projects in the FY22 government

funding bill. Bringing this funding back to the 5th district of Illinois will have a real and positive impact on our community," said Quigley. "These projects will help provide healthcare and housing for some of the most vulnerable in our communities, and improve infrastructure of our schools, roads, and trails. It has been an honor to fight for these projects and to now see them cross the finish line. I look forward to working with local leaders to see this law implemented, and this funding distributed."

In 2021, Quigley submitted ten projects to the Appropriations Committee for consideration in appropriations bills for FY22. The ten projects were selected from nearly 100 applications and marked the first time members were able to submit specific community projects for direct funding in over a decade. The passage of all ten of Quigley's Community Project Funding submissions means that he has now secured more than \$10.3 million in funding designated specifically for local projects. For more information visit <https://quigley.house.gov/community-project-funding>

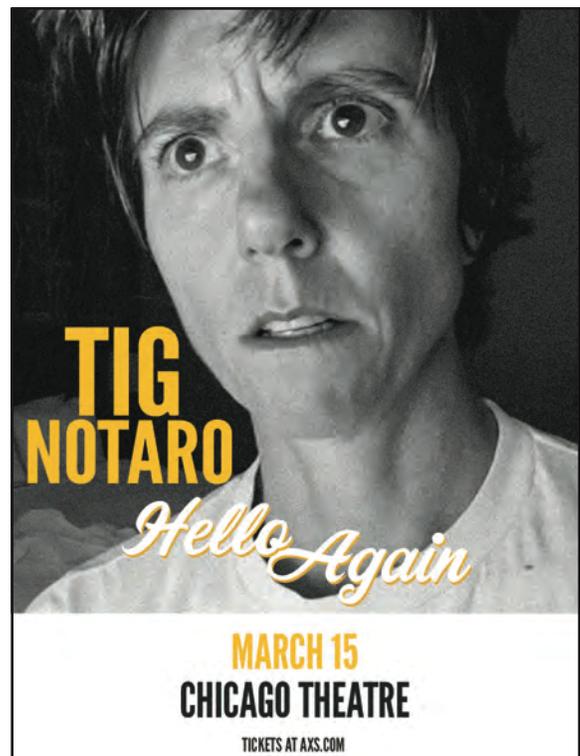
## AHF: Disney Opposition to 'Don't Say Gay,' a Step in Right Direction



– AHF is calling news that embattled Disney CEO **Bob Chapek** finally spoke out against the hateful "*Don't Say Gay*" legislation pending in Florida (FL HB1557 and SB1834) a step in the right direction, but vows to keep vigilant watch on Disney and the Florida legislation as the bill works its way toward becoming signed into law. News broke today at Disney's annual AGM (held virtually) when CEO **Bob Chapek** revealed that he reached out directly in a call to Governor Ron DeSantis to express Disney's "... disappointment and concern that if the legislation becomes law, it could be used to target [LGBTQ+] kids and families. The governor heard our concerns. He agreed to meet with me and LGBTQ+ members of our senior

team in Florida to discuss ways to address that."

Over the past week, AHF spearheaded protests targeting Disney in Orlando and Burbank, CA with hundreds of LGBTQ+ advocates and supporters. AHF also produced a TV spot urging Disney to speak out publicly and loudly to oppose the legislation. . AHF's 30-second spot is running on Orlando stations WOFL (FOX), WKMG (CBS), WESH (NBC) and WFTV (ABC). However, the TV spot was rejected or censored by the Disney-owned KABC-TV7 in Los Angeles.





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