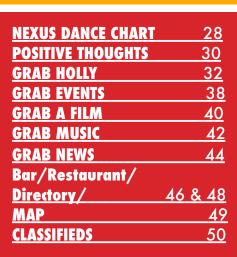


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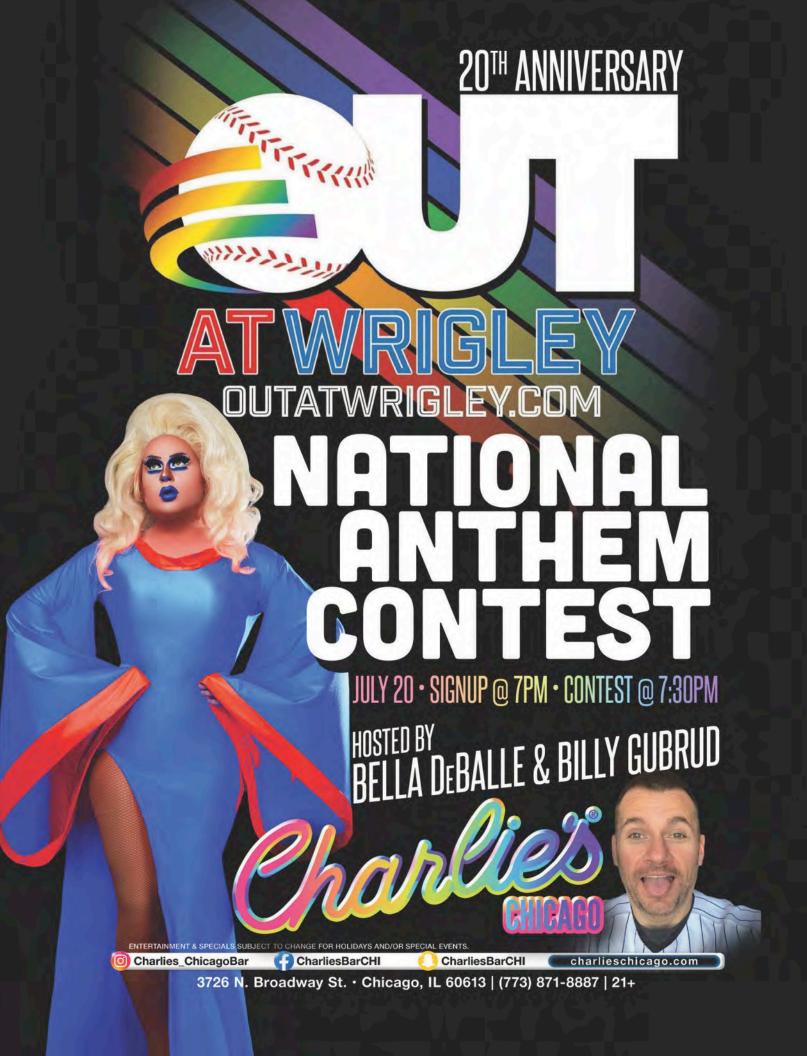
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## GRAB JAKE



# Much more than "Momentary": An interview with Jake Wesley Rogers

By Gregg Shapiro

Video-sharing social networks continue to be the format of choice for launching and discovering new queer artists. We've seen how well it worked for JORDY and his song "Long Distance." TikTok lightning is striking again, this time for gay singer/ songwriter Jake Wesley Rogers. With more than 155 thousand followers and two million likes on the platform, as well as mounting YouTube video views (the official video for "Middle of Love" has nearly 330k views), Rogers appears to be virtually unstoppable. Add to that a deal with major-label Warner Records and a slot on the 2021 Lollapalooza roster and Rogers' future looks brighter by the minute. Plus, you know he's the coolest of cool because he drinks tea!

Jake was kind enough to speak with me during Pride month 2021. [Jake Wesley Rogers performs on the BMI Stage at Lollapalooza on July 30.]

Gregg Shapiro: Jake, since we're talking in June, I'd like to begin by wishing you happy Pride.

Jake Wesley Rogers: Thank you!

GS: In what ways are you planning to observe Pride month 2021?

JWR: It's felt like a different Pride for me in a few ways. Obviously, we're still getting back into normal life slowly. This year, releasing music this month, I pretty intentionally wanted to be more reflective and honor the path that has led us here. And also just be aware of

how far we have to go still. Not making it sad, by any means, but just at least in my art and my music just acknowledging the fight isn't over. We have so much to be proud of.

GS: For those not in the know, would you mind saying something about why you go by three names – Jake Wesley Rogers?

JWR: [Laughs] I don't know if anyone's ever asked me that. I mean, it's my name. I've been on this path for 10 years. I started when I was 14. I chose that, but I don't really know why. I knew I didn't really want a stage name. I like how the full name sounded. Jake Rogers feels like absolutely, very typical. There's probably like 400 million Jake

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Rogers in the world. Jake Wesley Rogers also has good SEO. Not many other things are going to come up when you search that [laughs].

GS: There are probably a lot of people who got their first glimpse of you when you competed on season seven of America's Got Talent. Looking back on that experience, how would you rate it?

JWR: On what scale [laughs]?

#### GS: Pick a scale.

JWR: On a learning experience scale? 10 [laughs]. On a recommendation scale?

Never [big laugh]. I had to learn a lot of pretty heavy and big lessons about the entertainment industry pretty young. How the quick rise and the sudden attention is never arounded or gratifying. Actually, the true path of the artist is long. It's intuitive and lonely and hard and amazing and rewarding, because of that. I had learn when I was 15 that all the things you think you want you don't actually want. The real beauty of

being an artist is in the creation. That's the meat, and everything else is bonus. I'm also saying that because I have to remind myself of that every day. I'm kind of saying it to hear it.

GS: Your early YouTube videos were covers of late 20th century standards - Psychedelic Furs' "The Ghost In You," Yaz's "Only You" and the Pretenders' "I'll Stand By You." Aside from the "you" theme, what was it about those songs that you found appealing?

JWR: I will give you very non-glamorous answer. I wish I had a better one. When I signed a publishing deal with Sony/ATV in Nashville I was working on my music, but in the meantime, the person I was working with said I could do some covers and they sent me a long list. I guess I picked "I'll Stand By You" because my mother loves the Pretenders. She raised me on them. "Only You" and "The Ghost In You," I actually wasn't familiar with before I was sent a list. I fell in love with those songs. That's kind of the reason those are the first songs. It's not an amazing story, but it is what it is. They did really well

don't know why, I can't shake it [laughs]. I think it's because I just find it beautiful and I find the heart of it and the truth of it beautiful in a completely secular way. It's kind of like the mythos of it. And using it to paint a queer story is something perhaps I wish I would have had when I was younger. I think on the one hand it's the turning on its head of everything that was around me growing up. But it's also quite earnest in its depiction. Like in the "Momentary" video, being crucified. Really believing that sacrifice is the engine of love and using that imagery to relate that to Marsha P. Johnson, Oscar Wilde and

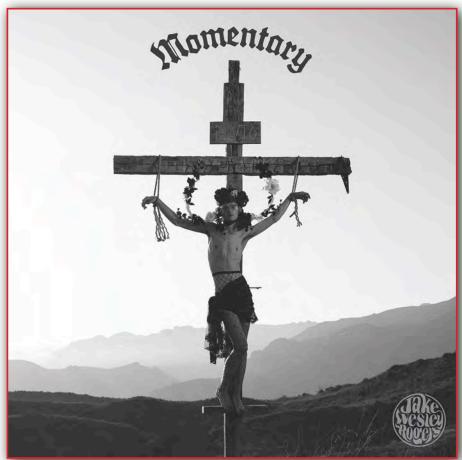
the list goes on and on. These people, in a way, sacrificed their lives, their freedom. for us to be on this phone call today, to be able to talk openly about this stuff.

**GS: Very insightful** and very true. I'm so glad that you mentioned Wilde because one of the things that I have loved about your TikTok videos are the literary references, including Mary Oliver, Toni Morrison, Walt Whitman and, of course. Oscar Wilde. Can you please say something about the role of literature in your life? JWR: Day-to-day I feel like I get fed more from poetry and prose writing than music during the past year. I think I hit an end with

diving into poetry in a way I never have. interesting to me. How openly queer he

#### listening to music and writing music. I just kind of stepped back and started Walt Whitman, in general, is wildly was over 150 years ago. GS: He laid the groundwork for so many that came after.

JWR: Exactly! It really feeds my soul. Even though my medium is music I think finding that common ground in poetry and literature breaks up the...when you're making music all the time, it can be hard for me to find inspiration from



streaming, so that opened doors. I'm grateful for them being there, for sure.

GS: The religious imagery in your work, in songs such as "Momentary," "Holy Man" and "Jacob From The Bible," is right up front. Please say something about that, particularly from the perspective of a queer artist. JWR: I think it's immediately ironic, which I love. But it's also not ironic; it's really earnest for me. I grew up in the Bible Belt, but I didn't grow up fundamental by any means. But, obviously, that was all around me. I



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music. I have to look to different art forms.

GS: Because of the importance of Tik Tok and YouTube videos, when it comes to your creative process, is there a specific order. Does the visual precede the audio or vice versa?

JWR: I've been writing this project.

**JWR:** I've been writing this project for the past 21/2 years, and for the project before that, Spiritual, I had made a mood board before I even had the song. I think that's just because although it's music, visuals are pretty close behind in importance for me. I think they just inform each other, and they take breaks from one another. I make the mood board and these beautiful images really inspire me and I just let them marinate. Then I sit down, and I write and I explore the world and write from the heart. Then the visuals come back. It's like, "OK! We get to make a video for this now." They kind of go hand in hand. I grew up with Gaga. She was my number one in middle school. Obviously, her visuals were almost more important than the songs. That's how I make art. It's been thrilling to make these videos lately. Some of the new videos we're making are so fun!

GS: Would you mind saying something about what the major label love you have received from Warner Records means to you?

JWR: On a queer level, I think I recognize that to be given a platform like this, a budget like this, is novel. Not that I'm by any means the first, but in the past few years to see a major label supporting these explicitly gay visuals is new. It isn't a new thing. I had it growing up. I had (the) Katy Perry

"Firework" video. There were gay people in it, but it wasn't her.

GS: You had Rufus Wainwright. JWR: Yeah! I love Rufus Wainwright so much. Sooo much! He was coming out 20 years ago, so you can imagine the kind of pushback he got from people. But, thank God he did it. Then, in general, just as an artist on a more human level, I guess I'm keenly aware of the privilege of having this label behind me. I really hope every day that I'm using it in a way that spreads the message I want to spread. Not getting too caught up in whatever downside there might be. I'm getting to make the music I've always really wanted to make. There are a little

bit less road-blocks in the way.

GS: You are performing at Lollapalooza in July. There are a number of other queer artists performing as well, this year, including Brittany Howard, Orville Peck, Miley Cyrus, Kim Petras, and Tyler, The Creator. What does it mean to you to be included, not just on the Lolla roster, but in such a line-up? JWR: It is such a line-up! It's gorgeous!

It's my dream. Performing is my favorite part of all of it. I could be on a tiny stage behind the porta-potties and I'd be like. "Hell, yeah [laughs]!"

**GS:** Hopefully, you won't have to be. JWR: I don't know. I haven't seen it yet. I say that and I think, "Maybe I just predicted that [laughs]." To be on the same poster with these people is endlessly cool and shocking to me [laughs].



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# GRAB SIGOURNEY



# 12 Years Later: Sigourney Weaver Reflects on 'Prayers for Bobby'

## Weaver says the movie about LGBTQ+ activist Mary Griffith is 'in the top three' of her career

By Chris Azzopardi

Sigourney Weaver almost didn't make it to Michigan to film "Prayers for Bobby." In fact, the star of "Ghostbusters" and "Alien" didn't think she could even make time to shoot the TV drama, which has resonated deeply with LGBTQ+ audiences everywhere since it premiered on Lifetime in 2009.

At the time, the actress had another job, and her daughter was about to graduate from high school. But Weaver couldn't say no once she read the Lambda Literary Award-nominated book — a harrowing and inspiring true story, written by out journalist Leroy

Aarons — and Katie Ford's script about the real-life Mary Griffith, a Christian woman who becomes a devout LGBTQ + crusader after her gay teenage son, whom she once vehemently condemned, commits suicide. (Griffith died just last year at the age of 85.)

In addition to portraying Griffith, Weaver also co-produced "Prayers for Bobby" alongside executive producers Daniel Sladek, Chris Taaffe and David Permut, who had been trying to get the film made for 11 years before it finally aired on Lifetime.

"I just felt it was so important,"

Weaver told me when we spoke in June 2008, during a break from shooting.

"Prayers for Bobby" has gone on to be screened globally, at festivals, conferences, universities and faithbased organizations. It was even, by invitation of European Union Parliament then-Vice President Ulrike Lunacek, screened by members of Parliament on International Day Against Homophobia in 2015. To this day, both PFLAG National and the Trevor Project consider the film a valuable educational tool. As for Weaver, in addition to receiving Emmy, Golden Globe and





Screen Actors Guild nominations, she was honored with the Trevor Life Award from The Trevor Project for her participation in the film.

An encore presentation of "Prayers for Bobby" is available to watch during Pride season on Lifetime on demand for cable subscribers. The movie is streamable through the end of July.

Without her even saying it, it's clear the film is still important to the veteran actress, who tells me at the onset of our conversation that she's "really glad" we get to reconnect about the film 12 years after its premiere. During our interview, Weaver talked about why she considers "Prayers for

Bobby" one of the most significant films she's ever made.

Chris Azzopardi: It means a lot that you'd take time out to talk about this movie still, after all these years.

Sigourney Weaver: Well, unfortunately, it's still as relevant as ever. Maybe even more so during this weird year where they're trying to pass so many anti-LGBTQ laws. They need to see the movie. (Laughs.)



CA: Well, recently in Michigan, Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed an executive order that will bar state or federal funds to be used for conversion therapy in the state. SW: I read that. I'm so shocked that conversion therapy was being done in Michigan, which I think of as a very (laughs) sophisticated place. And even state funds were being used to conduct conversion therapy against teenagers, which is heartbreaking because I believe that the attempted suicide rate for kids who have been through that is higher, understandably. I think that after this COVID year where there was so much more isolation for LGBTQ youth, it's really the opposite of what one would hope would happen this year.

CA: The governor's executive order, though, is a positive step forward. Hopefully, other leaders follow in her footsteps.

**SW:** Very positive. I hope it's being picked up all over, you know? Because good for her. Start banning conversion therapy instead of banning LGBTQ youth from sports teams and bathrooms.

CA: I had such an emotional response the first time I saw "Prayers for Bobby." I rewatched it two nights ago and felt it just the way I felt it 12 years ago, which is to say that I was just in a puddle of tears the whole time. As a gay man, it hurts so much to see a young gay person in pain.

**SW:** The irony is that when Mary Griffith was conducting her campaign against her own child, she was also in terrible pain. So this whole business of trying to keep people from being who they are is such a pointless exercise for everybody. I mean, part of the point of doing this movie for me was this idea that you watch it as a family, and it just prepares you to tell your story to your parents.

CA: I bet when you made the movie





12 years ago, you didn't realize that you'd be talking about it every June for Pride Month, but it sure seems that way.

SW: Yeah, and I'm glad because I think it's taken the producers quite a bit of work to continue to get the movie out there. It wasn't shown enough when we first did it, and I think they're constantly working on showing it all over the world. Every time Pride Month rolls around, I wish we could show it more than once, but at least it's playing on Lifetime and that's great. I don't know if it's available on Netflix or on any of those other venues. I've never looked. Do you know?

CA: It seems to be available on YouTube, at least.

**SW:** It should be available on Prime, that's ridiculous.

CA: You thanked the state of Michigan in your GLAAD acceptance speech when the movie won for Outstanding TV Movie or Miniseries. Why was Michigan important to the filming of this movie for you? SW: Michigan really gave the film a home, and Michigan is an interesting

place because I feel like it has very strong political sides there. And what I felt about the production of "Prayers for Bobby" is that we had a lot of crew from Michigan. We were in a very kind of upscale neighborhood shooting, and I felt everyone that I came across seemed to be there for a personal reason, fighting for the same thing. You know, a crew member would have a member of the family or a good friend who was LGBTQ. Everyone was trying to make a movie that would help in some way. And I felt that also about just where we were in Michigan, even though it has this reputation, I guess, of being a very corporate state. It's such a complex place, Michigan. (Laughs.) We just had the best reception there. I imagine there were states that probably didn't want us to shoot there. And I think it would still be the same, unfortunately.

CA: Did shooting in Midwestern
Michigan towns that aren't all that
big provide the film with benefits that
maybe shooting in a big city sprawl
like LA or Atlanta couldn't have?
SW: Oh gosh, yes. I felt that very much.
I felt that it contributed to the intimacy

of the story. Here they were, this family that was so close, and Mary idealized family life and she felt that Bobby's being gay went against that. But I hope that other mothers who are conservative would have a different outlook, 'cause it seems to me that even all across the political spectrum, people are wanting more recognition of LGBTQ problems and solutions. I think that's across the board because I see these state legislatures trying to pass very punitive, insensitive laws against the LGBTQ community.

CA: I remember being on the sidelines of the Pride parade scene that was shot in downtown Royal Oak. What stands out to you most about shooting that scene?

SW: It was at the end of the shoot, and it was at the end of the film story for Mary. Mary's evolution was such a powerful thing. I think her being there was so healing for her, and it was so healingfor any of us who watched the story: We can't save Bobby. We've lost Bobby. But there's all these Bobbys all around us, and so that's what Mary dedicated the rest of her life to. I think the movie is still very, very

relevant. I hope that more things are being made specifically about a young person coming out. I feel like there should be many more stories about even younger kids. I don't even know if they have after school specials anymore, but it's a very good subject for an after school special.

CA: Daniel made a real effort to shoot in as many naturally gay environments as possible. How do you think that might have enhanced the film's authenticity and also the experience for you in this role?

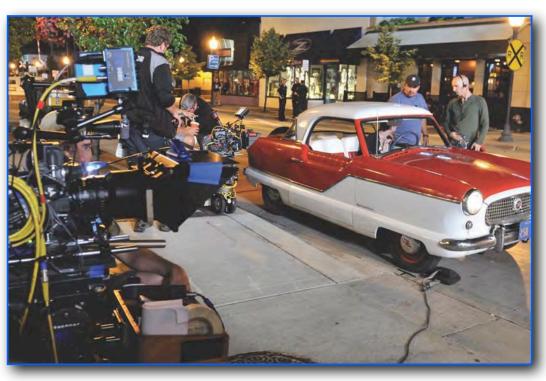
**SW:** There's one place that I can remember: the church where she goes (in Royal Oak), and

I considered that a normal place. (Laughs.) I have to say, I've never been more terrified of playing a part. I just thought, "How am I ever going to do this? How am I going to turn myself into someone who has these ideas?" Luckily, there is something called acting that takes over (laughing). But as a mother it just broke my heart to read this story.

CA: The amazing thing about what you've done with that role is that you've allowed the viewer to even sympathize with Mary, which is difficult for gay viewers like myself, watching somebody condemn their gay child. And yet, you come to an understanding of where Mary has come from and why she is the way she is.

SW: I'm glad you feel that way. The day I spent with Mary was such a powerful experience, because her desire to make amends is much too small a concept. Her conversion into a person who sees people and accepts people for what they are, it was so profound, so you see someone who is blind but they're trying to find their way out of this thing. I guess that reminds me, especially during this very political time, not to demonize (laughs) the people who are behind these laws. It must be about fear and ignorance.

All we can do is continue to, in your case, put out these stories and articles about how things are changing and how much more needs to be done, and in my case I've just finished a movie



called "Call Jane," which is about the group of women that came together in 1968 (the Jane Collective). They formed a sort of clandestine abortion service and ended up performing the abortions themselves and performed almost 12,000 abortions without losing a single patient. It was very clear to me when I read the script, even though it's not overt, that this woman was in a gay relationship. And, actually, the next woman I play in this miniseries in Australia, she also has a relationship.

#### CA: Is she gay?

SW: Well, that's not the focus, but her dearest friend is another woman. In fact, she only lives with women and takes care of women who've been the victims of domestic violence. A lot of these things are coming together, I think, in a very realistic and holistic way, and I've been noticing that scripts are sort of breathing differently. In my case, I felt like my character had the right to decide who she was, and part of who she was, was that she was in a relationship with another woman. There's an opening up of relationships in ways that I think, if we were making these stories 10 years ago, we just wouldn't have looked at in the same way. So I feel just tremendously hopeful that we're beginning to see just each other differently and trying to see the whole person and listen to how they speak about themselves.

CA: You've done so many iconic movies, but when it comes to the impact of your work, where does

#### "Prayers for Bobby" rank?

**SW:** It's very high up there in terms of making a movie with a very specific endpoint, to make this movie for this community. To encourage them. To let them know that we're here for them. I think that I would put it in the top three.

I can never even remember what I've done when I get a question like this (laughing), but I would say I'm grateful to have had an opportunity to tell a story in a movie that was made for such an important purpose. That makes me very happy, to use my work and come together with other artists to put something out there that's going to make a difference for young people and their families around the world. There's nothing more powerful than that. That's what an actor dreams of: to make a difference with their work. And it's very gratifying to me to be able to talk to vou. This year, I think, has been a bit shocking in terms of how much legislation there is out there, and yet, at the same time. I feel that things have opened up in the LGBTQ world. There's much more attention and compassion riveted on young people in this regard.

CA: My hope is that every 10 years or so we get to check in and talk about "Prayers for Bobby" in the scope of the larger world. So next time we talk, hopefully a lot more will have changed for the LGBTQ+ community. SW: Well, let's not make it 10 years. I may not even be here. (Laughs.) Let's make it two.

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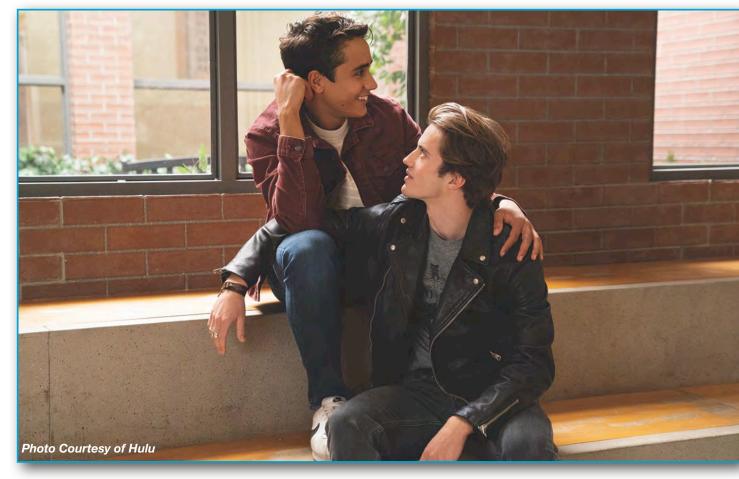


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## GRAB MICHAEL & GEORGE



## Normalizing Queerness, One Gay Kiss at a Time

### 'Love, Victor' stars Michael Cimino and George Sear on bringing gay sex to their YA series and impacting LGBTQ+ youth

By Chris Azzopardi

"Love, Victor," now in its second season, refuses to navigate coming out as simply a one-note experience.

The gay teen-romance, a series spinoff of the groundbreaking "Love, Simon" feature film, launched its debut season last year on Hulu. The first season was created for Disney+, but the company declined to air it after filming was complete. The show, Disney execs decided, was too grown-up for its young audience. Season 2, then, was created with Hulu audiences in mind, which means more mature emotional themes and a good amount of gay nooky — in fact, an entire episode is devoted to the show's romantic leads, Victor (Michael Cimino) and Benji

(George Sear), having sex.

This season, the series follows Victor as a newly out high schooler, from all sorts of Benji-Victor ("Venji," as they've been collectively coined) romantic side plots — meeting the parents, learning about gay sex — to how homophobia, when complicated by deep-rooted cultural and religious beliefs, has to be unlearned.

Before you read any further, know that this interview with Cimino and Sear, who talk about all that making out (and why they opted out of an intimacy coach for those sex scenes), includes some spoilers.

Chris Azzopardi: You guys owe me a

few boxes of tissues for all the crying I did last night binging this season. George Sear: Yeah, it's an emotional one.

Michael Cimino: It's a roller coaster, for

**Sear:** I, myself, was tearing up yesterday because I watched the first three episodes, and particularly the scenes with the parents.

CA: I also just have to start by saying that if I saw two boys making out as much as you two do in this season of "Love, Victor" when I was 16 years old, I would have made out with a lot more guys. Like, where were you in 1995?



Cimino: I was still, um, not even a thought! I wasn't even a thought in either of my parents' heads. But no, I think we're moving in the right direction. I don't think we're in a very different time, but I think that we're moving in the right direction (with) shows like this, where young LGBT youth can watch it and be like, "Oh, this is normal. This is OK."

I feel like a lot of straight teens are like, "Oh yeah, I can make out with this person or this person, and it's completely fine." But it should be exactly the same for the LGBT community. They should feel no pressure and (it) should be completely normal to just kiss people in public.

CA: Or have sex with your boyfriend and have your mom or dad catch you, because that also happens with gay people.

Cimino: Yes — yes, it does. It totally does. And I think that, obviously, right now, we're definitely talking about... this show is definitely (about) queer Latinos and I love that about it. I think that it's kind of exactly like every other straight teen show but except through a queer lens. I love that part about "Love, Victor."

Sear: It does show the difficult realities

of coming out in today's age, which is a difficult thing for most people, but also just the joy in celebrating who you are and embracing who you are on the other side of that. And living your truth.

CA: I think gay sex has been really neglected on television and I was pleased to see the second season of "Love, Victor" really go there with the sex. What did you appreciate about the way that this season tackled sex, George?

Sear: I think just having LGBTQ writers bring their stories and their experiences into the script brings this authenticity and realness to the stories. So the writing is all there. You know, as an actor to be able to play this part and then have such great quality writing is really kind of everything. What about you, Mike?

Cimino: Honestly, the whole representation of Victor's sexual awakening and his sex life with Benji definitely relies a lot on George and I's chemistry. I think that George is — sorry to give you your flowers on here — so easy to work with and so incredibly understanding and so willing to just do things and try different things (to) see what works and what doesn't.

Sear: Yeah, it felt very explorative on

set, didn't it?

Cimino: Yeah, for sure.

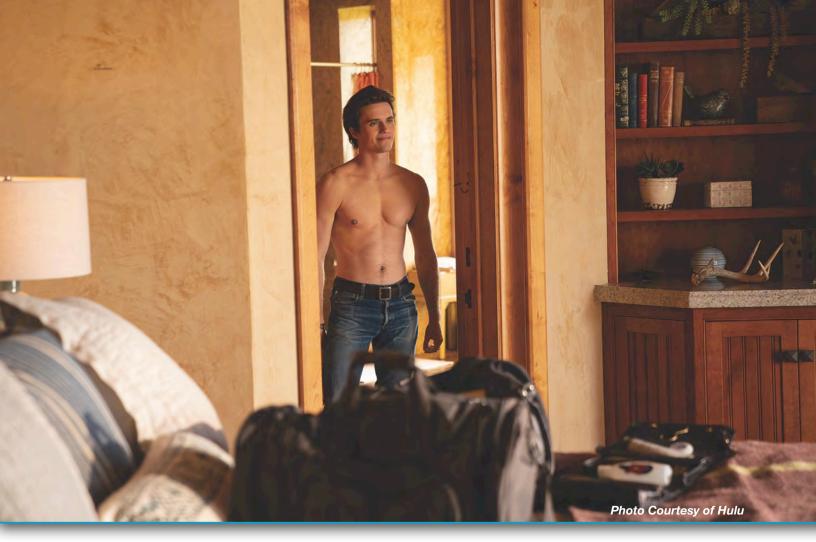
**Sear:** They did say, "Do you want an intimacy coach?" and we felt, to be honest, both really dedicated to these characters and wanted to honor this writing and we just sort of felt like we had a closeness and were able to do that on set.

Cimino: We actually completely opted out of having an intimacy coach. George and I both felt like we were very comfortable with each other already. We really just went for it, and I think that that kind of reads on screen, where it felt very explorative. It felt very new and exciting, and I think that's something that's really, really cool.

CA: I don't know how you guys identify, but there's this conversation about straight people playing queer roles and if you are straight, you know what, you did your job. You were so believable in these parts. I really felt this relationship was a real relationship.

Cimino: Thank you.

Sear: Thank you for saying that. Cimino: That means a lot to hear because that is obviously a topic for discussion, and I'm glad it's a conversation we're having. I think conversations such as those should be



had, but I think, realistically, it relies purely on an actor-to-actor basis. I feel like there are actors that are taking LGBT roles and not representing the community in an accurate way. They're taking it as a cash grab and then they don't represent the community afterwards, where it's like you're not advocating for the community. They're not donating money to LGBT charities, they're not trying to do things that will help the LGBT community, but they're just taking the role because it's a cash grab or, "Oh, it seems like it will make a difference in my career."

## CA: What has it been like for both of you to bring this Venji romance to life on screen?

Sear: It's an ever-ongoing journey, particularly the difference between Season 1 and Season 2. Being on Hulu this time around, being able to tell more realistic stories, it's been great to be able to continue playing these characters and exploring their journeys collectively and individually and just exploring it in other areas, really, that we maybe weren't able to do in Season 1 (on Disney+). So, it's been great, and I hope we get the chance to get back to it

Cimino: Definitely.

CA: You have to do it again. You cannot leave me like you left me at the end of this season.

**Sear**: No, no. We'll manifest it. **Cimino:** Yes. For sure, for sure. We've got to manifest it.

### CA: Michael, are you Team Venji or Team Vahim?

Cimino: Oh, man. I feel like... I don't know. I haven't been able to watch the show in its entirety, so I can't really say. I'm so torn.

**Sear:** Yeah. He doesn't want to let you down on this interview, that's what he's saying.

Cimino: I feel so torn.

**Sear:** No, I think ultimately you probably just want Victor to be happy.

**Cimino:** Yes, exactly. We just want Victor to be happy.

**CA:** That's a pretty good non-answer. **Sear:** That's a very good deflective

answer, isn't it?

Cimino: I'm just... I'm confused, OK!

## CA: My opinion on the third season is that you three just form a throuple. Sear: Hey, we'll pitch it.

Cimino: (Laughs.) Yeah, yeah, yeah, we'll pitch it. We'll put you in the "special thanks."

CA: Because the show has had an immense impact on LGBTQ+ youth — I mean, it would have changed my life, like I told you, when I was 16 — what's one letter you've received from a queer fan that really made you feel like what you were doing here was really affecting lives?

Sear: Off the bat, one that sticks out to me — because there have been many — (was a) message from someone who's in the military. I don't think they had a very good experience with their sexuality, obviously, with the way things are in the military. And they said watching the show really just made them feel some sort of acceptance, and heard.

Cimino: I've gotten so many messages, but some of the ones that stick out to me the most are (from) people that are literally Latino and they're like, "This is my exact story and this is exactly what I've been going through with my mom, or my dad, or my uncle." It's crazy to know that we're still not in that place where people can just accept their children or their family for just being true to who they are as people. I think that it's really inspiring for me as an artist to continue to push myself harder and to continue to represent the community in an accurate way because



I get to see the impact it's making on people's lives.

This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.

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.

## GRAB A RIDE



# Beaches and Peaches-Saugatuck/ Douglas is the Art Coast of Michigan

By Bill Malcolm

The Saugatuck-Douglas villages in Southwest Michigan are the only LGBTQ focused vacation areas between Provincetown and the Russian River in California. Nestled with sandy beaches along Lake Michigan (and fresh, shark-free waters), the area is not only an artist colony but now features a plethora of wineries and microbreweries and is a fruit basket (blueberries, peaches, apples, and more are all grown here). With no less than two LGBTQ+ resorts (Dunes Resort and Camplt), there is something for everyone and for every budget. Don't forget to take home some blueberries and peaches.

#### WHAT TO DO

Oval Beach in Saugatuck is an award winner. The sunsets are incredible. You can hike for miles in the nearby dunes or walk along the beach. You can also climb to the top of nearby Mounty Baldhead, a high sand dune on

the west side of the river.

Take a tour of the Kalamazoo River out to Lake Michigan on this authentic stern wheel paddleboat. I loved the sunset cruise. Snacks and drinks available (cash only). Your will find them at 716 Water Street in Saugatuck (www.saugatuckboatcruises.com). Check out the new 1860s era fish shanty and Fish Market next door. It features posters telling about the colorful fishing history of Saugatuck.

Take a hike to the beach at the Wau-Ke-Na Nature Preserve at 116th Street just south of West Side County Park. Further north you will find the historic Pier Cove Beach (2290 Lakeshore Drive, Fennville).

North of Saugatuck you can take a hike up the dunes and down at Laketown Beach. It's free but parking is limited.

Take a walk around historic downtown Douglass which even has a park honoring the Dunes Resort founders who turned the area into an LGBTQ destination. Enjoy "Unmasked: Photographic Portraits After 2020" at the new Douglas Library.

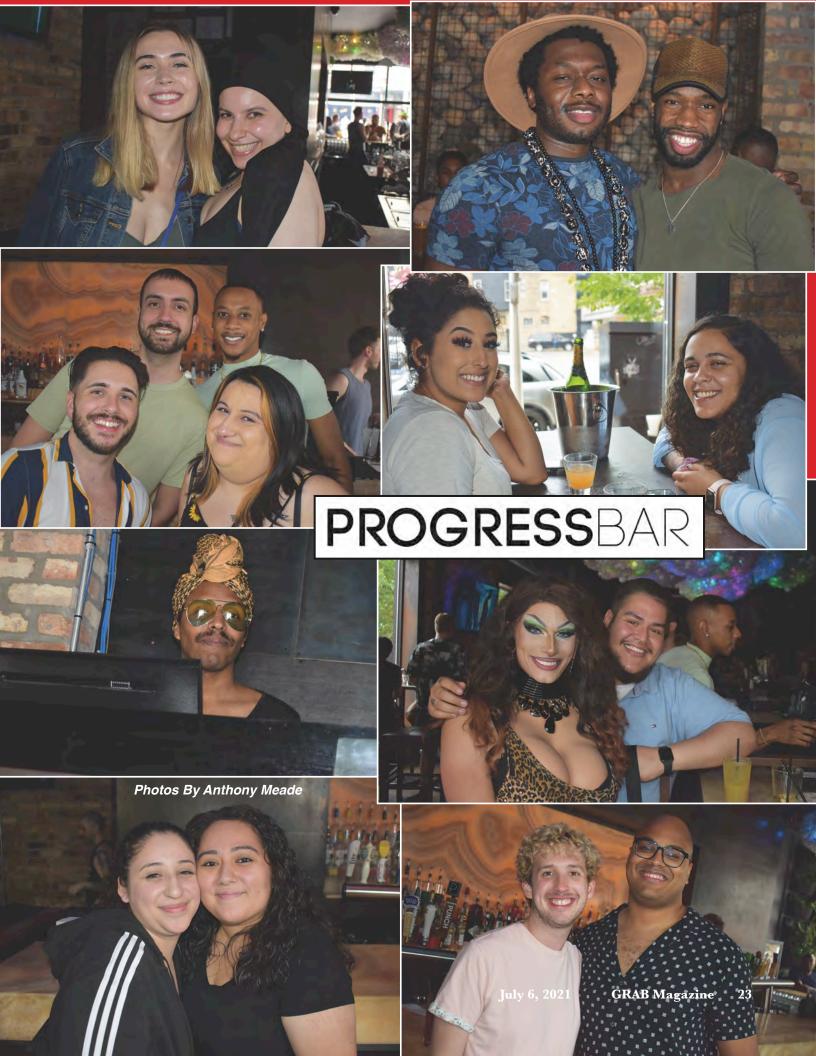
The Saugatuck Center for the Arts has shows all summer including Dixie's Tupperware Party and Just Too Big: Songs from Broadway Blockbusters. Details and tickets at **sc4a.org**.

Pick blueberries at Blue Star Farms or just grab a pint to go. (bluestarblueberries.com)

Take a hike through the sand dunes and forest down to the beach at Saugatuck Dunes State Park.

#### WHERE TO STAY

The Dunes Resort in Douglas (333 Blue Star Highway) offers cabins and motel rooms which are affordable at the weekday special rate (Monday-Wednesday). Don't miss the bar scene, the outdoor bar and dance floor, and the many special events. The T Dance on Sundays includes a barbeque. The





pool scene includes cocktails and food to order as well as cabanas. It's another must and is great for people watching. Upcoming events include: August 6-8 Mardi Gras Weekend. August 20-21 White Party Weekend For more information, go to *dunesresort.com*.

Other nearby motels include The Blue Star Motel next to the Dunes or the AmericInn just down the road, both in Douglas. The Northern Lights Condos also are an option.

Down in Fennville, stay at the Camp

It Resort which is located at 6635 118th Avenue in Fennville (campitresort.com). This Michigan LGBTQ resort welcomes everyone. They just had their first Trans Week. Camping, cabins, bunkhouse, and other lodging options make this a place your affordable option. The Biggie Food Truck is perfect for a meal or snack. The pool scene is a lot of fun and they often have shows. Set on 33 acres, there store has everything you need and is open late on weekends. They too have a lot going on this season including: July 23-25 Christmas in July. September 17-19 Wine and Dine Weekend includes a tour of nearby wineries. October 8-10 includes a tour of 3 new nearby microbreweries.

#### WHERE TO EAT

The new women-owned Guardian Brewery and

restaurant has a great Sunday Brunch. Their micro brews are very good. They are just off exit 41 off I-196 in Saugatuck.

The Farmhouse Deli (100 Blue Star Highway, Douglas) features farm to table deli sandwiches, soups, and fresh squeezed juices. They are at 100 Blue Star Highway in Douglas. Try the carrot blend, Zing, fresh juice creation.

The new Isabel's Market and Eatery (across from the Dunes Resort at 310 Blue Star Highway) features local

products and has an Italian theme. Try the pastrami sandwich. You can even take a cooking class.

Don't miss the pizza and subs at Lakeshore Convenience and Pizza, 155 Blue Star Highway in Douglas.

The Uncommon Coffee Roasters in downtown Saugatuck is perfect for a coffee. Pick up some beans to go.

The What Not in Fennville is another local favorite. Don't miss the fish fry on Fridays.

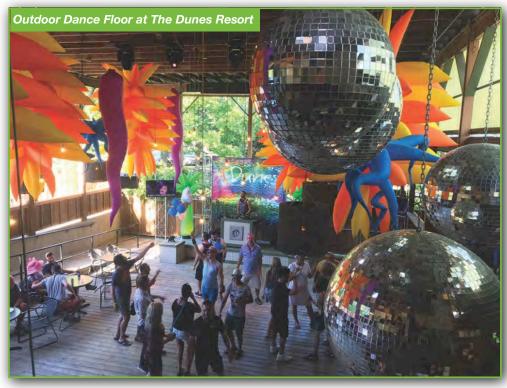
#### **GETTING THERE**

The area is about two hours from Chicago and three hours from Detroit. You can also fly into Grand Rapids or take Amtrak to Holland. If you stay at the Dunes, you might be able to get away with no car. Otherwise you need one although they do have an ondemand bus and bike rentals in downtown Saugatuck.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Stop by the Saugatuck Douglas Visitors Information Center in Douglas (95 Blue Star Highway) or visit their website, *Saugatuck.com.* 

Bill Malcolm is the nation's only LGBTQ+ value travel columnist. Based in Indianapolis, his columns have appeared in publications from LA to Washington and from Chicago to Miami. His opinions are his own. Special thanks to Oval Beach, the Saugatuck Douglas Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, Douglas Dunes Resort, and Camp It Resort.





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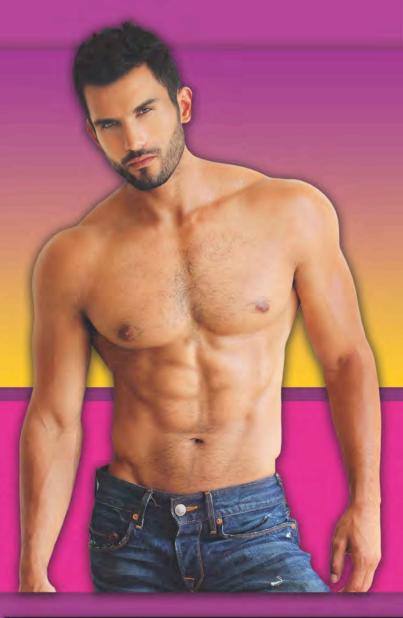


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# GRAB A HIT



## Top 40 Dance Chart this week Visit nexusradio.fm

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	Artist	Title
1	Galantis x David Guetta x Little Mix	Heartbreak Anthem
2	London Grammar	Lose Your Head (Dave Glass Animals Remix)
3	Mike Williams & Felix Jaehn	Without You (Radio Mix)
4	VASSY x Bonka	Chase
5	Louis The Child	So What ft. A R I Z O N A
6	MK	Lies ft. Raphaella
7	Cheat Codes x Tinashe	Lean On Me (Michael Calfan Remix)
8	JANNEY	Leave You Now (Boye & Sigvardt Remix)
9	Becky Hill	Last Time
10	Jonas Blue & Leon	Hear Me Say
11	Lucas & Steve	I Want It All
12	Lucas & Steve x Blackstreet	No Diggity
13	Dimitri Vegas & Like Mike x DVBBS x Roy Woods	Too Much
14	Audien	Learn To Love Again
15	Anabel Englund x Yotto	Waiting For You
16	Robin Schulz & Felix Jaehn	One More Time ft. Alida (Quarterhead Remix)
17	Noizu	Summer 91 (220 KID Remix)
18	Henri PFR x CMC\$ ft. Laura White	Faith (Radio Edit)
19	DubVision x AMNL KNGDM	I Wanna Be There (Radio Edit)
20	Lost Frequencies	Rise
21	Dom Dolla	Pump The Brakes (Short Radio Edit)
22	MOTi	In My Head
23	Matt Nash	Ready Or Not
24	Rompasso & Leony	Love Me
25	Wrabel	Nothing But Love (GOLDHOUSE Remix)
26	Harry Styles	Watermelon Sugar (Tommie Sunshine & Breikthru Remix)
27	Sunnery James & Ryan Marciano	Let It Lie
28	Zara Larsson	Right Here (ALOK Remix)
29	Love Harder x HUGEL x Tobtok	My Bed ft. RBVLN
30	Niiko x SWAE	I Ain't Going Home
31	Drove & Justin Caruso	Intoxicated
32	Timmy Trumpet & Afrojack	Stay Mine (Radio Edit)
33	ILLENIUM x Valerie Broussard & Nurko	Sideways (Quintino Remix)
	Alesso x CORSAK	Going Dumb
	Zookeper	Think Of You ft. Marlhy (Morgan Page Remix)
	Afrojack & David Guetta	Hero
	Shift K3Y & Tinashe	Love Line
38	Years & Years	Starstruck (Radio Edit)
	Raye	Call On Me
40	TELYKast with Loren Gray	Nobody To Love (LM Mix)





## 

### **The Activist Doctor Demetre Daskalakis.** MD, MPH, is tackling HIV prevention nationally

**By Alicia Green** 

Demetre Daskalakis, MD, MPH, remembers the day he felt called to become an HIV doctor: April 23, 1995. He was a college student working on a display for the AIDS Memorial Quilt when he witnessed people paying homage to their lost loved ones.

"I remember saying, 'My job is to not let anybody get sick or die from HIV/AIDS," says Daskalakis, the director of the Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

But Daskalakis, 47, is not your average doctor - he's also a gay activist with strong ties to the LGBTQ+ community.

"When I realized that the single largest health threat to my community was HIV, the intersection became really clear for me," Daskalakis explains. "It's important and possible to be both a physician and an activist and to work in government and have an activist heart."

For eight years, he was an attending physician at the New York University School of Medicine before serving as the medical director of three HIV clinics at Mount Sinai hospital.

In 2014, Daskalakis joined the New York City health department as assistant commissioner of HIV/AIDS prevention and control, his first job in public health.

Daskalakis was promoted to deputy commissioner of disease control in 2017. During his three years in that role, he led NYC's "Ending the Epidemic" initiative and helped reduce HIV diagnoses to a historic low.

Having effectively reduced HIV transmissions and deaths in America's largest city. Daskalakis is now tackling HIV at the national level. Since December 2020, Daskalakis has led HIV prevention efforts at the CDC. He aims to apply what he learned in New York City to the epidemic across the country.

Health equity is top of mind for Daskalakis. He plans to identify ways to improve HIV outcomes for all by interrupting racism, sexism and other isms. Additionally, as the senior

COVID-19 data and engagement equity lead at the CDC, he has been tasked with ensuring a fair and equal distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

"We also want to really identify ways that we can cross-link HIV with STDs [sexually transmitted diseases] and viral hepatitis as well as mental health and drug user health to be able to

achieve a more global approach to addressing syndemics," he explains.

Daskalakis also hopes to eliminate the divide between people living with HIV and those who could benefit from prevention strategies through what he calls "status-neutral care" - giving patients the same initial treatment and care regardless of HIV status.

"The status-neutral framework is addressing stigma at its root," he says. "Let's not worry about building a service based on a test result. Let's worry about who the people are and what we can do to make them comfortable getting services and care."

Despite being called a "radical doctor" (for doing outreach at sex clubs, for example), Daskalakis insists that what makes him stand out in the fight against HIV is his love for the communities affected by the virus.

"All I've ever done is listen and learn," Daskalakis says. "When you listen to the community and the science and figure out how to marry them, really good things happen."



Alicia Green is an assistant editor for POZ. This column is a project of TheBody, Plus, Positively Aware, POZ and Q Syndicate, the LGBTQ+ wire service. Visit their websites thebody.com, hivplusmag.com, positivelyaware.com and poz.com for the latest updates on HIV/AIDS.

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## GRAB HOLLY

#### Now Let Us Punish the Wicked!

By Holly Maholm

I was sitting at the kitchen table in my room at the stable when Sassy Pants peeked around the corner and caught my eye. "Come in!" I invited her. This she did, betraying her purpose in visiting me by the crestfallen expression on her face when she realized I had no donuts sitting out on my table.

Despite her obvious disappointment, I took the opportunity to bring up a subject that had been puzzling me. "Can I ask a question?" I inquired. "Sure, go ahead," she answered, despondently. Seeing the problem, and being aware that some conversations are only possible when had upon a full stomach, I volunteered, "After we chat, I was thinking of going out for a second breakfast at Donut Time, if you'd like to come with me." Sassy instantly brightened, "Great! Ask away!" So I did.

"Recently," I began, "I see that social media are overflowing with endlessly vile and vituperative condemnations of what are claimed to be instances of sin, error and wickedness. Posted by persons who claim to be 'Social Justice Warriors,' these outpourings suggest that we are entering a new era in human history wherein all right-thinking citizens will be drafted into a relentless, merciless "War" upon aspects of human behavior

previously unrecognized as 'evil' (or perhaps merely accepted as the price we pay for modern civilization). To many, this looks like progress. Do you agree?"

Sassy gave me what I can only call a withering glance and replied, "Once again, Holly, you fail to step back and observe these events from a higher perspective. Since, as you know, we unicorns live so much longer than humans, let me share with you how I would evaluate what you have described.

"You are too young to have experienced this, as I did, but this country once embarked upon a great social experiment. Your lawmakers saw that there were many who suffered greatly from those who over-indulged in alcohol, and accordingly, they passed laws prohibiting the production of any form of alcoholic beverage. This solution was nothing less than a 'War on Booze.' But it did not take many years for you humans to conclude that 'prohibition' was impossible – for two reasons.

"First, a substantial minority – and later, certainly, a majority – of you humans decided they could not live up to a standard of 'absolute prohibition.' Those 'backsliders' were among many who participated in a black market in illegal alcohol.

"That was one reason: Humans cannot resist temptation 'absolutely,' or if they do, they can do so for only the briefest interval. And the other reason was this: Your countrymen were unwilling to countenance the establishment of an all-powerful police force we might almost say a 'Secret Police' - that would have had the power to enforce absolute prohibition. You humans rightly distrusted the creation of a police force having such power, as once put in office, how could you ever get rid of it, if you repented of your mistake?

"It is to your credit that in not many years you discontinued that losing 'War' you sought to wage upon alcohol, but tragically, you soon replaced it with an equally disastrous 'War on Drugs.' For the past sixty years, you humans have attempted to impose that same, failed 'scheme of prohibition' upon a wide



variety of substances, some of which are honestly harmless.

"But now, Holly, you humans seem finally to have awakened to the damage this War on Drugs is causing. You have countless prisons full of men whose only crime is to have trafficked in illegal substances - so many lives wasted, to no good end. There is, now, a national movement to do away with this prohibition, and we can only hope that those who suffer from the misuse of such substances - and they are many - will receive medical treatment, instead of incarceration."

Sassy summed up. "Here is the mistake you humans repeatedly make: First, you observe that there are persons who suffer by reason of some... 'commodity or device' (a 'Tool of the Devil,' we might say) which is freely available in the marketplace. Next, reasoning that you might reduce such suffering by reducing the availability of such Tool, you institute criminal penalties - including lengthy terms of imprisonment, in harsh confinement - for anyone found guilty of 'producing, possessing or trafficking' in that Tool. Such persons are declared to be irredeemably, unforgivably 'Wicked.'

"Finally, invariably... you humans declare a new 'War' by which you set out to Punish the Wicked! Losing sight of the suffering which was the impetus for this violent, domestic Crusade, you embark upon a new and ever more relentless 'War on Wickedness' – as who among you does not thirst to 'Punish the Wicked' even more than to 'Comfort the Afflicted?' You humans do this every time; it is in your nature."

(To be continued)

Holly Maholm is a transgender woman living in Cleveland, Ohio. Look for Volume 2 of What Would a Unicorn Do? (now available on Amazon) which contains additional episodes of Holly's on-going story of her life among the unicorns, plus additional articles and a short story of a transgender woman confronted by Satan! Send a message to Holly www.hollymaholm.com.

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# GRAB GARRETT

### The Boy Next Door Garrett Kinsley Cashes In on His Pin-Up Looks

By Max Jimenez

Garrett Kinsley has only been in the adult industry for a year and a half, but in that short time, he's been so prolific in his work and popular with fans, that Helix Studios is already releasing a DVD collection of all of his top scenes. "This collection showcases my best scenes, but they're definitely not my last!" he clarifies. He confirms that he has plenty more to do in adult film, including promoting his latest films, Helix Academy Wrestling and Let's Hit It!. "There are lots of unexplored scenarios and kinks that I want to expand on in the near future. One goal I have before leaving the adult industry is to write a film script. Writing is something that comes easy to me and having my story put into action would mean the world.'

"Paris Hilton once said, "If you're not having fun, then leave," he continues. "That's my attitude in life, too. Right now, I'm having lots of fun."

We spoke with the film star from his college dorm.

Max Jimenez: Let's start with the obvious question. How did you find your way into adult film?

Garrett Kinsley: I became a dominatrix my freshman year of college. I needed easy cash in college and DC has plenty of wealthy, closeted men, so my business was booming. When I started sophomore year, I decided to apply to studios, and I landed with one of the best companies for people my age and body type. I still work as a dominatrix today.

### MJ: Do you have the support of family and friends?

**GK:** I have a great support system. My mother and brother think it's so cool that I live life by the beat of my own drum. My father doesn't know what I do, but his goal as a parent was to raise his kids to chase their dreams, choose happiness, and be financially stable. I would say he was successful in raising me.

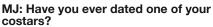
MJ: Where did you grow up?
GK: I was born in Fort Worth, Texas,

but I spent most of my childhood in small town Tennessee. I came out when I was fifteen.

## MJ: Did you date in high school?

GK: Yes. I had my first boyfriend when I was seventeen. Our most memorable date was camping on a plateau that sits above mountains overlooking the rolling hills of North Carolina and Tennessee. It was almost like a movie, waking up to

the beautiful sunrise with my first high school boyfriend.



**GK:** Not officially but we did all the things a couple would've done without putting a label on it.

## MJ: Other Helix actors have said it takes you three hours to get ready for a scene. Is that true?

**GK:** No! I need at least four hours. I don't know why it takes me so long, honestly. I just get ready, play some music, say my affirmations, pump myself up, and boom, four hours have passed.

MJ: Who is your favorite co-star? GK: I think I have the best connection with Dallas Preston. We've had four scenes together and we always feed off each other's energy. We are also great friends outside of the industry.



**GK**: Sure! If the vibe is there, I'm down to explore where it can lead, even if it's just a friendship.

## MJ: What does Garrett Kinsley like doing when he doesn't have a camera on him?

**GK:** I write a lot of poetry because it gives me a way to work through my feelings. I'm currently working on publishing a poetry collection about the struggles I've faced as a gay man. The content varies but it's focused on confronting my sexual trauma, my past eating disorder, and my journey to find solidarity in myself. Other than writing, I like hiking, soccer, and playing piano.

MJ: Soccer?

**GK:** I competed in the 2014 US National Soccer Tournament. Our team







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MJ: What's your biggest pet peeve?

GK: When I let someone borrow something and I don't get it promptly returned. I'm like Mary Poppins because I'm always the go-to guy if you need anything random. I always lend but then I get stressed out my belongings are in someone else's possession. Just return things when you're done using them, it's that simple! If not, I'll send you a shipping label and a text with an address to send my stuff.

MJ: Are you a neat freak?

GK: I am 100% a clean freak. I was diagnosed with obsessive compulsive disorder when I was in middle school. People with OCD are often stereotyped as manic because people don't understand the motivation for our obsessions. Mine often present from counting things out to satisfy my needs. I do a lot of things in threes, like turn a bottle cap three slight times instead of once, use three napkins, triplechecking my work, or opening the microwave at three seconds left. It doesn't affect my day-to-day life too intensely because it's something I'm used to. I often forget I have it until someone asks me why I'm re-opening and reclosing a door three times.

### MJ: What is one thing you never leave home without?

**GK:** I never leave home without my planner. I love it because I have a lot to do and not enough mental capacity to remember it all. It also helps me keep a running journal of what I've been up to.

## MJ: What is something you would like to add to your journal this year?

**GK:** I have always wanted to go to Hawaii. I know everyone wants to go to Hawaii which makes me not want to go, but I don't care. I just want to drink my strawberry daiquiri on the beach with tropical music in the background while I wait for the fire spinning show to start.

MJ: If you weren't in porn, what would you be up to right now? GK: If it wasn't for porn, I would be more involved in my fraternity because



I love my brothers and the friendships I've built through Greek Life.

## MJ: Have you had to give up the college experience because of adult film?

**GK:** Not exactly, but I have had to give up a few things. I enrolled in my current university because I was offered a scholarship to compete in Speech and Debate. I was so excited to be a part of a recognized team and get my

voice out there, but I had to quit in order to concentrate on paying my student loans and becoming financially stable. I was also the pledge educator of my fraternity before porn but gave that up, too.

### MJ: Do you worry you may regret that decision?

**GK:** Not really. I don't regret much, except, maybe, how I treated people in high school. When I came out, I felt



almost pushed into being that mean, sassy gay that every show about high school students cast. Looking back, I used that as a defense mechanism so people wouldn't pick on me for being gay, but there are better ways to do that besides being aggressive and scaring people away.

# MJ: What would you say to young Garrett?

**GK:** Respect yourself and never forget

your worth. You are capable of achieving great things in life. There's nothing that can stop you from taking the world by storm.

# MJ: Where do you see yourself in five vears?

**GK:** I see myself making steps towards a better future for all. It would be amazing to still be a part of the industry while I'm established in my professional life.

# MJ: Would you give up porn for the right guy?

**GK:** If it's the right guy, me doing porn wouldn't be an issue. How else am I going to be a sugar momma without sugar?

For more of Garrett visit http:// helixstudios.com/



#### CHICAGO AUTO SHOW DETAILS NEW OUTDOOR STREET FEST JULY 15-18th



The Chicago Automobile Trade Association (CATA), producer of the Chicago Auto Show, detailed a brandnew element to the upcoming special edition show, July 15-19 at McCormick Place: an outdoor street fest featuring today's latest vehicles, food trucks, local brews and music. The street fest will take place the first four evenings of the show, July 15-18, along Indiana Avenue, adjacent from McCormick Place's West Building.

"What a great combination of the Chicago Auto Show's first street fest and the city's historic Motor Row District," said Alderman *Pat Dowell.* "We're thrilled to host this event in the South Loop and shine a light on the growing number of businesses opening and re-opening here."

"We are very appreciative of the cooperation from Alderman Dowell and McCormick Place officials who have been so accommodating as we bring the vision of our special edition auto show to life," said CATA Chairman *Kevin Keefe*. "The Chicago Auto Show street fest is a prime example of the cooperation extended to us."

Attendees who visit on the evenings of July 15-18 will be treated to an array of shiny new cars, trucks and SUVs parked along Indiana

Avenue; local food from pop-up food trucks and tents including Smoke Daddy, Tuco and Blondie, Connie's Pizza, Monk's Burger Bar, Sausage Fest and Nice Buns; tasty sweets from places like Andy's Frozen Custard, Cookies w/Flavor and A Sweets Girl Cupcakes; local brews from Chicagobased Goose Island; and music by varying local musicians spanning an array of genres.

Tickets for the 2021 Chicago Auto Show are sold exclusively online visit *ChicagoAutoShow.com.* 

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AUGUST 15 - SEPTEMBER 26

# **VAN GOGH** for All

Step into the 19th-century genius of Vincent van Gogh's incredible works this Summer as the exhibit that took Chicago by storm and "Starry Night" travels back into town for a limited-time. Popping up at an allnew location on the bustling Magnificent Mile on the corner of Michigan and Wacker at 333 N. Michigan Ave., the experiential homage is dubbed Van Gogh for All and will be open to the public Sunday, August 15 through Sunday, September 26.

The immersive exhibit will be open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and is proudly produced and designed by the *Dolores Kohl Education Foundation*, in collaboration with *Luci*, and fabricated by *Ravenswood Studios*.

Painting a whole new picture on the world's most famous creative, the Instagrammable experience is focused primarily on Van Gogh's work from his time spent in Arles, Saint Rémy, and Auvers sur Oise. Exhibit explorers will become a part of the landscape themselves by stepping into many of his works to learn in a whole new way, from discovering Van Gogh's bedroom from a fresh perspective, capturing a video of themselves flying through the Starry Night or animating a larger-than-life 12-foot-wide interactive rendition of that same iconic painting. Guests will be able to take a step behind the shutters of his iconic Yellow House and walk through a recreation of his studio. Visitors are invited to discover the artist within themselves by creating their own still-life or self-portrait, to be framed alongside Van Gogh's own work. The exhibit will encapsulate the painter's most famous landscapes to both engage the senses and spark creativity in visitors of all ages.

Prior to the pandemic, Van Gogh for All was installed at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston to both critical and public acclaim, welcoming more than 175,000 visitors of all ages, making the exhibit the second-most-visited in the Museum's history. After a hugely successful first engagement, the exhibit travelled to art museums around the country and now returns as hands-on experiences can be conducted in a safe, socially distanced manner.

Van Gogh for All will be open to guests seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for kids ages 12 and under. To learn more about the exhibit or purchase tickets visit https://vangoghforall.org

# BRISTOL RENAISSANCE FAIRE ANNOUNCES 2021 SEASON

The iconic, summer-long Bristol Renaissance Faire will open the gates for the 2021 season after its voluntary shuttering last year due to the worldwide pandemic. 'Our team is working hard to literally set the stages for world-class, immersive entertainment that will put a smile on your face as we recognize that what we do best is needed now more than ever. We are working closely with the local health department and the most current CDC recommendations to ensure the safety of our guests, vendors, volunteers and staff,' stated *Linda McFeters*, Owner and Producer.

Voted "Best Renaissance Faire" for the ninth consecutive year in 2019, the Bristol Renaissance Faire will open Saturday, July 10, for nine weekends closing on Labor Day Monday, September 6. The Faire offers an exciting, eclectic mix of fun and frivolity located on thirty-plus acres and just a short drive from either Chicago or Milwaukee. Leave your burdens in the 21st century. Show up as a King, Queen, pirate, sorcerer or anything you want to be for the day and you will find many who will play along! Or don't come in costume at all. It's your day. Enjoy it your way. Go on a stroll through the village with a gigantic turkey leg or

one of the many scrumptious vegetarian delights like the perennially-popular Garlic Mushrooms or Chocolate-Covered Strawberries. For the thirsty, craft brews, ciders, cocktails, teas and other refreshing beverages are readily available. Take home a memory from one of the nearly 200 artisan shops where you can find everything from handmade chain

maille, Scottish kilts and handcrafted leather masks to Steampunk adornments, soaps, jewelry and beautiful floral wreaths for the hair. Interesting, educational demonstrations by potters, glass blowers, blacksmiths and other working artisans offered many times throughout the day. For more details visit http://

www.Renfair.com/Bristol



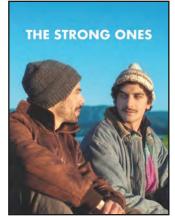


# GRAB A FILM

By Delven Shaw



**THE STRONG ONES** is a good date night choice.



We have seen this one before. Handsome man in a small town who is struggling with his sexuality meets someone who is passing through on the way to a new and better life. In the case of *The Strong Ones*, the performances by *Samuel González, Antonio*Altamirano are honest and touching, make a familiar story fresh.

Samuel González is the lucky one who – despite, or because - of disagreements with his family has already left his hometown and is now back for a visit before he heads to Canada.

Antonio Altamirano is the homebound troubled one, dealing with his sexuality in a town which will never accept it. And boy does he have a sexy house tucked in the hills and woods.

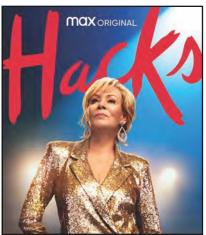
The threat of violence as the pair explores their connection never goes away completely. But the scenes of their hiking, going to the carnival, and the historical re-enactments, are charming and well played.

Omar Zúñiga Hidalgo directs his own screenplay. The setting is beautiful, and the sexual energy is well captured. What is most interesting is that the screenplay stays completely away from any conversations about the men's status. There is no talk of love or leaving.

There are no fights about staying connected. The men do all the work with the deep eyes.

The Strong Ones is a great date night movie.

**HACKS** is poignant and lovely fun..



Watching HACKS on HBO Max will be a highlight of the summer. *Jean Smart* is riveting and brilliant as Deboarh Vance, a stand-up who has clawed her way to decades-long success first on TV, then in the clubs. It is an award-winning caliber performance.

Hannah Einbinder is equally spellbinding as Ava, a young non-binary writer who had a flash of early success that went up in flames due to an awful tweet. As the series starts, Deborah is told she will lose her prime-time Vegas slots as her shows are too stale. And Ava, who shares her agent, is given no choice but to work with Deborah to write new material. It is comedy heaven.

The two women have great chemistry, first as foreigners, then enemies, and finally partners. Their journey is full of surprises that will leave you binge watching and enjoying each episode.

Creators Lucia Aniello, Paul W. Downs, and Jen Statsky deserve a standing ovation as much as Deborah does.

**EVERYTHING AT ONCE** is sexy with the sound off.



Director *Alberto Fuguet* had an interesting conceit: follow two well-known photographers who have worked together for decades for the magazine *Kink*. We follow along on a series of photo shoots – both indoors and outside, with men – sometimes partnered, sometimes alone.

The images are striking, beautiful, erotic. And watching two men with cameras working with a model – often simultaneously – is fascinating. And photographers **Paco Moyano** and **Manolo Rodríguez** are both immensely talented, and together make a great product.

The problem for me came with the script as Paco and Manolo – like so many long-term couples – continually bicker and talk over each other. And the dialogue is not related to the specific shoots we are watching and gets repetitive. I found that I missed extraordinarily little if I turned the sound down and kept an eye on the captions and the photography.

There are a lot of queer culture available screening right now. Check out the two-minute reviews at **DelvenShaw.com** for more!



#### SECOND TRACK, "RAINBOW CONNECTION" FROM BARBRA STREISAND'S EAGERLY-AWAITED RELEASE ME 2



A second track from *Barbra Streisand*'s Release Me 2, "*Rainbow Connection*," was released last week via
all digital service providers. Two
superstars join forces to create "The
Rainbow Connection"!

Barbra Streisand sings with Muppet legend *Kermit the Frog* (voiced by Muppet's creator Jim Henson) on this contemporary classic.

The Oscar-nominated song was originally written and recorded by Kermit (Henson) in 1979 for the motion picture *The Muppet Movie*. Barbra's solo version of "*The Rainbow Connection*," also recorded in 1979 (making her the first artist to cover the song) was originally recorded for her album Wet. When her duet with *Donna Summer*, "No More Tears (Enough Is Enough)" clocked in at 8 and ½ minutes, the unmixed "*The Rainbow Connection*" was shelved due to lack of space on the vinyl LP for both songs.

Barbra's appreciation for Muppets music was a result of her watching *The Muppet Show* and *Sesame Street* with her young son Jason Gould.

In 2020, when Barbra was considering various tracks for *Release Me 2*, the idea of creating a virtual duet of "*The Rainbow Connection*," uniting her 1979 vocal with Kermit's (Henson's) 1979 vocal was first conceived. The new duet version was produced by Barbra with *Jochem van der Saag*.

When asked why she wanted to sing with Kermit, Barbra states, "The opportunity to duet with a legend like Kermit was irresistible. I think of him as ageless and ever-GREEN!"

Release Me 2 available Friday, August 6 through Columbia Records and Legacy Recordings, a division of Sony Music Entertainment, is a new collection of ten previously unreleased exquisite songs and sublime studio performances recorded over the course of Barbra's astounding career which were shelved for various reasons.

Release Me 2 will be available as a digital album as well as a CD digipak with a 32-page booklet--featuring liner notes by Barbra Streisand and Jay Landers, the album's executive producers. Several collectible 12" vinyl editions, art directed by Barbra

Streisand, will be available in a variety of color packages, color vinyl pressings, and a special picture disc.

For more information visit http://www.BarbraStreisand.com

#### BRITTAN SMITH EXPLORES THE FEELINGS OF COMING OUT WITH NEW VIDEO FOR "PEACH"



Emerging pop artist *Brittan Smith* is introducing audiences to another chapter of the Going Rogue universe. Following the release of "Fiend,", Brittan Smith is back with the music video for his latest single, "Peach." The video for "Peach," directed by *Heather Ballish* and Brittan Smith, is a visual representation of the different emotions felt when putting on a facade of being happy to the outside world, but feeling alone on the inside. For Brittan, the video is a reflection of his personal journey as a member of the LGBTQ+community and the headspace he was in before coming out:

"The Peach cinematic explores a fantasy universe inside the head of a solemn, pre-out of the closet version of me. The pre-out version of me pops soma, a euphoric drug reference to Brave New World, in order to escape into this flower field with a very lively version of myself that doesn't feel quite right. One that is euphorically happy to a level of being almost creepy.

As the video progresses we see this internal storyline begin to fragment as the fantasy world cannot remain intact as my waking life remains in disarray. This all comes to a head as different glitches appear in the video including a Rabbit headed mascot, glittering banana and a true depiction of how I feel confident: me in all black wearing looking directly into camera knowingly telling myself to take the leap. On the surface, the video is fun, playful and full of effects so there is broader appeal for those who don't want to dive too deep into the metaphor." said Brittan Smith

Emerging from the prairie lands of Kansas with an avant-garde, rockeresque - pop sound Brittan Smith, now a Los Angeles based musician, is crafting dramatic musical worlds bathed in neon. A vocalist from a young age, Brittan turned to his mother in the car one day while jamming out to Bon Jovi and said "I'm going to be a rockstar." He has been on that artistic path ever since. With inspiration from artists such

as Lady Gaga and Chester Bennington, Brittan Smith began to craft his sound while maintaining a message of embracing all the things that make you unique.

For more information or to check out the video visit https://www.brittansmithmusic.com/

#### K.D. LANG AND ORVILLE PECK RELEASE "MISS CHATELAINE (Iron Hoof Remix)"



k.d. lang and country artist/ songwriter Orville Peck released "Miss Chatelaine (Iron Hoof Remix)" last week (June, 25th) on Nonesuch Récords. Like lang's recently released remix album makeover, which comprises classic dance remixes, made between 1992 and 2000, of some of lang's best-loved songs, "Miss Chatelaine (Iron Hoof Remix)" celebrates Pride Month. lang explains, "I had the idea of putting together a dance remix compilation, as I mused about how we built community in those days before the internet, mobile devices, and dating apps. Those dance clubs were a key to a world, which was still called 'underground' in the '90s." Working on the album got lang wondering how today's top new artists and producers would interpret her music. She reached out to Peck and says his remix of her Grammynominated hit from 1992 "marries his music with my own beautifully. Orville and I have a lot in common and similar perspectives, I was honored when he agreed to remix one of my songs. I wanted to give him total creative freedom to do whatever he wanted with it and now I'm thrilled with the end

"I've always been such a huge fan of k.d.'s," says Peck. "Not only is she a queer icon but an incredible musician who blazed a lot of trails. I was so honored when she asked me to remix the song, and couldn't wait to put my own spin on it."

Earlier last month, makeover debuted at #1 on the electronic album chart, and it also includes the #1 dance chart hits 'Lifted By Love' and 'If I Were You'. The cover art features a previously unseen 1995 portrait of lang by David LaChapelle, and the album is available on all formats, including transparent turquoise vinyl.



#### In Victory for Transgender Student, Supreme Court Declines to Hear Bathroom Dispute



The United States Supreme Court declined to hear *Gloucester County School Board v. Grimm*, the case of a former Virginia high school student, Gavin Grimm, who was denied the right to use the facilities that matched

his gender identity. The ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, which upheld a district court ruling in favor of Gavin affirming the right of transgender students to use the facilities that match who they are, stands.

Lambda Legal Counsel and Students' Rights Strategist, *Paul D. Castillo*, has issued the following statement:

"This is an incredible victory for Gavin Grimm and transgender students' right to be themselves at school. There should be no doubt that federal law requires schools to protect all students. Courts all over the country, as well as the federal government have made crystal clear that LGBTQI+ students are protected by federal law and have a right to an equal education, to be protected

against harassment and discrimination, and to a school environment where they can be their authentic selves.

"Congratulations to Gavin Grimm and the ACLU, who fought for six years so that Gavin and all transgender students would be treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve. This year, state legislatures across the country introduced a record-breaking number of bills aimed at hurting transgender young people and their ability to play on teams and access gender affirming health care. Gavin's persistent fight for the rights of transgender young people stands as a reminder that the fight is far from over; he is a beacon of hope. Thank you, Gavin."

For more information visit http://www.lambdalegal.org

# Victory Fund Endorses 24 More LGBTQ Candidates



LGBTQ Victory Fund the only national organization dedicated to electing LGBTQ leaders to public office – endorsed 24 more LGBTQ candidates for the 2021 and 2022 election cycles and elevated New Jersey state Senate candidate *Vincent Solomeno* to Spotlight Candidate status. Solomeno would be the first out state senator in New Jersey history if elected in November.

Among the 2021 endorsees is **Sheila Nezhad**, running for mayor of Minneapolis, who just placed first at the DFL Endorsement Convention last week. Also endorsed are **Heather Mizeur** of Maryland and Rep. **Michele Rayner** of Florida – both candidates for U.S. Congress in 2022. Mizeur would be the first out LGBTQ member of Congress from Maryland and Rayner the first Black out LGBTQ woman member of Congress

Congress.

"The LGBTQ candidates we endorse today will champion equality at the local, state and federal levels – blocking bills attacking anti-trans students, passing laws that ban conversion therapy and changing hearts and minds in their communities along the way," said *Mayor Annise Parker*, President & CEO of LGBTQ Victory Fund. "We have groundbreaking candidates running across the country this year and next and together we can help them cross the finish line."

The complete list of candidate endorsements announced today is below:

2021 General Candidate Elevated to Spotlight Candidate

Vincent Solomeno (he/him/his) New Jersey State Senate, District 13 General Election: 11/2/2021

2021 General Candidate Endorsements

Willie Burnley Jr. (he/him/his) Somerville City Council, At-Large-MA Primary Election: 9/14/2021 General Election: 11/2/2021 Will Garcia (he/him/his) Mayor of Adrian. MI

Mayor of Adrian, MI General Election: 11/2/2021 **Don Guardian** (he/him/his)

New Jersey State Assembly, District 2 General Election: 11/2/2021 Charlotte Kelly (she/her/hers) Somerville City Council, At-Large-MA Primary Election: 9/14/2021 General Election: 11/2/2021

Alex Myers (he/him/his)
Hatboro Borough Council – PA
General Election: 11/2/2021
Sheila Nezhad (she/her/hers)
Mayor of Minneapolis, MN
General Election: 11/2/2021

Xander Orenstein (they/them/theirs) Magisterial Court Judge- PA General Election: 11/2/2021 Michael Poppa (he/him/his) Roeland Park City Council – KS General Election: 11/2/2021

Carmen Rivera (she/her/hers) Renton City Council- WA Primary Election: 8/3/2021 General Election: 11/2/2021 Jimmy Sabatino (he/him/his) Luzerne County Council – PA

General Election: 11/2/2021 Minita Sanghvi (she/her/hers) Saratoga Springs City Council Finance Commissioner- NY General Election: 11/2/2021

General Election: 11/2/2021

Gabriela Santiago-Romero (she/her/hers) Detroit City Council- MI
General Election: 11/2/2021

2022 Game Changer Candidate Endorsements

Heather Mizeur (she/her/hers)
U.S. House of Representatives,
MD-01 Primary Election: 6/28/2022
General Election: 11/8/2022

Michele Rayner-Goolsby (she/they) U.S. House of Representatives, FL-13 Primary Election: 8/23/2022 General Election: 11/8/2022

2022 General Candidate Endorsements

Kevin James (he/him/his) Los Angeles City Attorney Primary Election: 6/7/2022 General Election: 11/8/2022 Thomas Wong (he/him/his)

California State Assembly, District 49 Primary Election: 6/7/2022 General Election: 11/8/2022

General Election: 11/8/2022
2021 Incumbent Endorsements
Liz Breadon (she/her/hers)
Boston City Council, District 9– MA
Primary Election: 9/14/2021

Primary Election: 9/14/2021 General Election: 11/2/2021 **Megan Kilgore** (she/her/hers) Columbus City Auditor- OH General Election: 11/2/2021

Kerry McCormack (he/him/his)
Cleveland City Council, Ward 3 – OH
Primary Election: 9/14/2021
General Election: 11/2/2021

Cesar Stewart-Morales (he/him/his) Framingham City Council, District 2 – MA Primary Election: 9/14/2021 General Election: 11/2/2021 2022 Incumbent Endorsements

**Ricardo Lara** (he/him/his) California Insurance Commissioner Primary Election: 6/7/2022 General Election: 11/8/2022

Matt McCoy (he/him/his)
Polk County Supervisor, District 5 –
IA Primary Election: 6/7/2022
General Election: 11/8/2022
Dana Nessel (She/Her/Hers)

Michigan Attorney General
Primary Election: TBD, June 2022
General Election: 11/8/2022
Neil Rafferty (he/him/his)

Alabama House of Representatives, District 54 Primary Election:

5/24/2022 General Election: 11/8/2022

More information about all of Victory Fund's endorsed candidates is available at *victoryfund.org/ourcandidates*.



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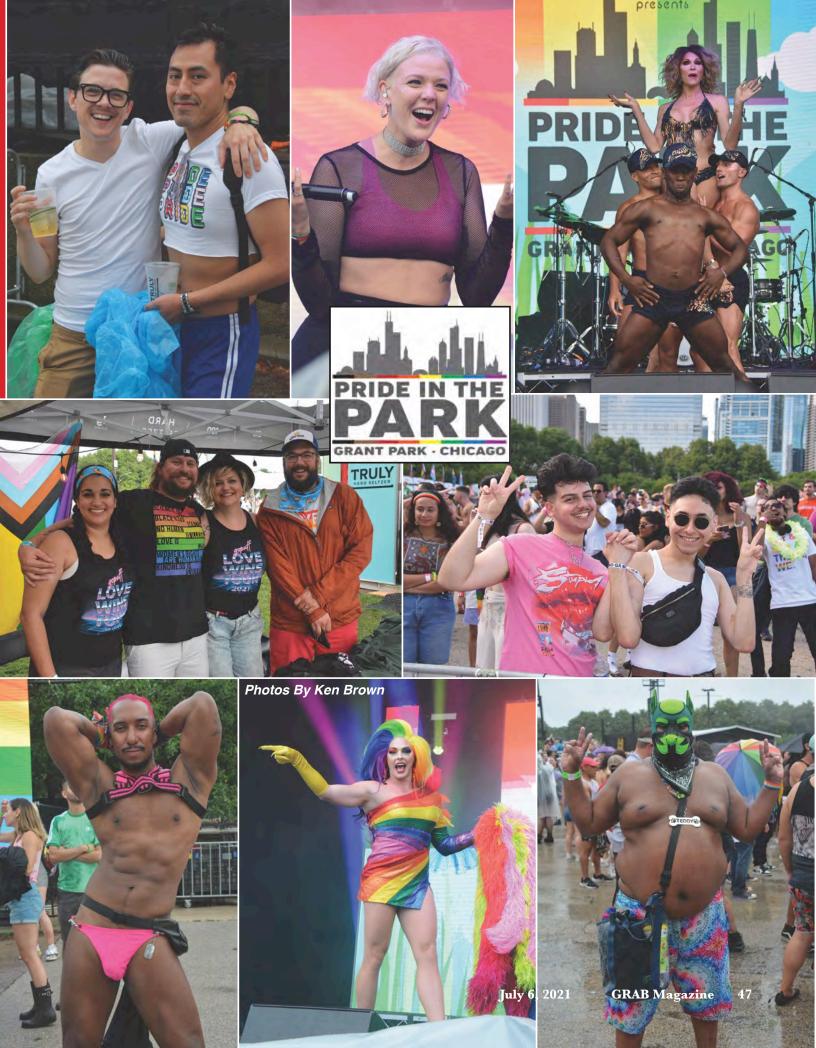
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Gregs Indy- 317-638-8138 231 E. 16th St, Indianapolis (Bar) The Club Indianapolis-317-635-5796 620 N. Capitol Ave (Bathhouse)

#### **MICHIGAN**

Dunes Resort - 269-857-1401 333 Blue Star Highway, Douglas FIVE 15 - 248-515-2551 515 S. Washington, Royal Oak (Bar)

MISSOURI (ST LOUIS)

Club St. Louis - 314-533-3666 2625 Samuel Shepard Dr (Bathhouse) Rehab Bar & Grill - 314-652-3700 4054 Choteau Ave (Bar)

The Club Columbus- 614-291-0049 795 West 5th Avenue (Bathhouse)

#### WASHINGTON DC

DIK Bar - 202-328-0100 1637 17th Street NW Annie's Paramount Steakhouse -202-232-0395 1609 17th Street NW



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10
YEARS!

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