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In Memorium
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1961 - 2019

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GRAB YOUR SKIS



Elevation 20th Anniversary: We Came to Sleigh

It's that time, when speedo season has turned into sweater weather, when you consider trading sunglasses for ski goggles, tank tops for wool scarves, and shirtless THOT photos for...shirtless THOT photos in long johns. It's gay ski week season!

And there's no better option than one (or both) of the *Elevation* gay ski weeks. Kick your FOMO into high gear now if you're thinking of missing the 20th Anniversary because it will be one for the books.

A lifelong love of winter sports is what prompted LA event producer **Tom Whitman** to pursue his dream of bringing the gay community together for skiing and snowboarding in some of the most iconic ski destinations in the US. From learning to ski at 5 years old, to competing for UCLA on the ski team, then switching to a snowboard 16 years ago (and then back last year), skiing is in Tom's DNA.

Twenty years ago, he looked northward and upward from Los Angeles... 10,000 feet upward to be

exact. The first *Elevation* in Mammoth Lakes, California drew a core crowd of California boys that quickly grew into one of the largest gay ski weeks in the world. He expanded to Park City, Utah and then to Tremblant, Quebec and the rest is history. *Elevation* has now become the largest ski week series in the world, bringing more LGBTQ people to the slopes than any other event.

Whether it's *Elevation Mammoth* - the crown jewel of gay ski weeks - or Mammoth's 12-year-old baby brother in Park City, you know exactly what you're getting into with an *Elevation* event: superb slopes for shredding, damn-good DJs for dancing, and fun feisty dudes for... having a nice conversation by the fire ;)

"From apres-ski afternoons to evening dance parties, *Elevation* gay ski weeks are hands-down my favorite boarding trips every season," says attendee **Jordan Brusso**, "We have met so many life-long friends at these events and look forward making new ones every year."

While each *Elevation* event has its own local flavor and flair, there are a few events I personally look forward to every year: The Onesie Apres-Ski is an *Elevation* Gay Ski Week tradition that somehow manages to be sexy without losing its sense of humor. Where else can you find a collection of burner boys in rainbow bodysuits, gaymers in unicorn-horn hoodies, circuit boys in ass-less onesies and lumberjocks in wool socks?

The Saturday night event, *GEAR*, is the most overtly sexy party of the week, but again, doesn't take itself too seriously. It's like a warehouse party at altitude (don't think about it too hard). The dress code is gear - leather gear, sports gear, ski gear. Just put some THOT into it. (What's the difference between a straight ski week and a gay ski week? A harness.)

"I'm super excited about *Elevation 2022*," says Whitman, "and part of me can't believe it's been 20 years. I'm amazed at the number of attendees who have been coming to the *Elevation*





events for 5, 10 or even 15 years. We must be doing something right.”

He grins, “And yes, there will be a ton of surprises for the 20th anniversary, at both *Elevation Mammoth* and *Elevation Utah*. Not only is it a big birthday, it’s also been a full year since we were able to throw a full-size, balls to the wall *Elevation*. I think we are all ready.”

Whitman was praised within the LGBTQ community for his response to COVID. He offered full immediate refunds when lockdowns shut down the mountains 5 days before *Elevation Mammoth*, and he made the decision to postpone *Elevation Utah 2021* by choice. Park City venues were ready to welcome attendees, but it wasn’t quite time.

“Vaccinations weren’t widely available, and even though COVID was a brutal financial hit, the health and safety of my community are more important,” he says.

Choosing which *Elevation* to attend can be a tough choice. (And you don’t have to choose, do both!)

Park City is the largest ski resort in the US, with 7300 skiable acres, and Utah stakes a claim to the best powder in the world. Mammoth on the other hand, is also a gigantic resort, with snowfall and a season that lasts late into the year, which makes it the spring skiing capital of the US as well as the center of the universe for

shirtless ski selfies. An easy 45 min from Salt Lake airport to Park City, *Elevation Utah* provides easy access for a mix of ready-to-let-loose Mormon boys and LGBTQ skiers from all over the country. *Elevation*



Mammoth is ground zero for hot California ski bums, ‘nuf said.

Every year, regardless of which I pick, I have a different experience at *ELEVATION*. You can ski all day and crash early, party hard and sleep in, or

be the first-chair-last-call hero we all wish we were.

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Info on the *Elevation* events available at

<http://www.elevationgayski.com>.

GRAB CHRIS



Simply Marvelous: An interview with queer-conscious rapper Chris Conde

By Gregg Shapiro

Chris Conde, the ATX-based self-proclaimed “thicc, queer Mexican” rapper has returned with their second full-length album *Engulfed in the Marvelous Decay* (Fake Four Inc.), available on clear (and queer) vinyl. On this powerful follow-up to 2019’s *Growing Up Gay*, Conde draws on their various influences, something that comes across forcefully on the metal edge of “American Faggot,” the emotional rap of “Everyday,” the indie rap/pop of “Okinawa,” the dancefloor banger “Sun,” and the political statement of “Seat at the Table.” Chris was kind enough to make time for an interview in early autumn 2021.

Gregg Shapiro: According to the liner notes, your new album *Engulfed in the Marvelous Decay*, “was originally a post-rock project” by you and your friend Ed (Hirschmungl) that began

when you were teenagers in Annapolis, Maryland. How did it morph into a hip-hop creation?

Chris Conde: Before I wrote those liner notes, I sent the record to Ed. He said, “This album is just completely you. All of your influences are in here.” He’s known me since I was 16, 17, and he said “All of your metal, your rock, your hip-hop; all of your influences. If somebody knew you like I do, I see everything that you’ve been influenced by on this album.” I guess it’s just me starting to experiment with music. Especially really trying to create within those early teen years. [Laughs] when we were creating that music in Maryland, I remember we came up to the kitchen to have a snack or something at his parents’ house, talking about what we can call this project. Not really being serious, but just being kind of dumb, and it just

came out of nowhere, “Engulfed in the Marvelous Decay.” Bands like Explosions in the Sky and Fear Before the March of Flames had come out. Sufjan Stevens had all these long song titles. I wanted to do something a little bit extravagant, over the top and tongue in cheek. I always kept that phrasing in my head and in a weird way it made sense for this record.

GS: You’re now based in Austin. Are you finding support and camaraderie in both the LGBTQ+ and hip-hop communities?

CC: Yes. Initially I came up through the punk rock and rock and roll spheres and communities. I didn’t play my first rap set until six years ago or maybe a little bit longer. I didn’t really go to a whole lot of rap shows. I was really involved in the hardcore and indie communities. That’s where a lot of my



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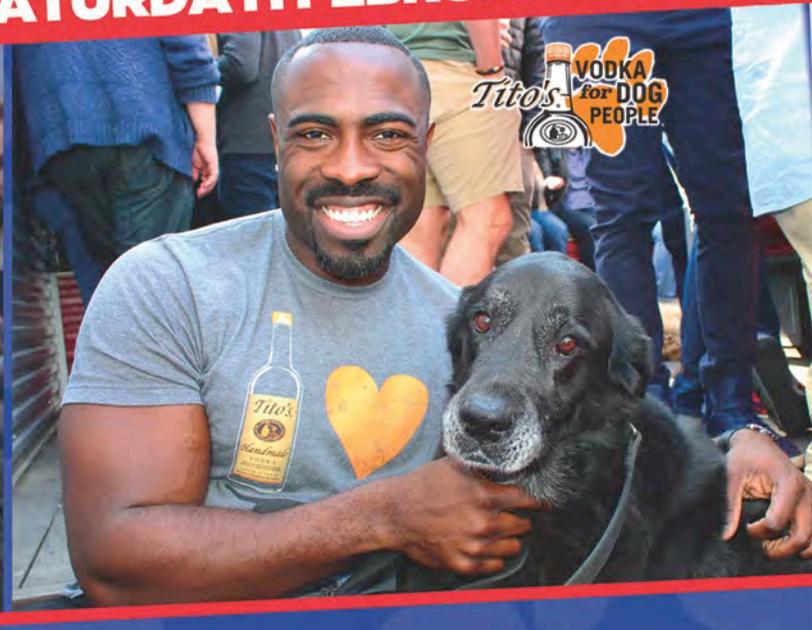
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friends were. They asked me if wanted to do my rap stuff at their show. I said, "OK." So, I didn't come up through hip-hop. To answer your question, yes, now I feel very accepted in both communities. I've been surprised about how well the rap community accepts me here in Texas. There are some great people here who love what I do and encouraged it and love that I'm doing it. There was a named Bushwick Bill from the Geto Boys. They were originally from Houston but then here in Austin for maybe the last 20 years. I opened up for him during SXSW event and I was rapping about being queer and overcoming internalized homophobia. At the end of my set, I said, "Thank you for letting me be here, for letting me be who I am. I think it's important that people like me are on these bills like this and I appreciate your support." I handed the mic to Bill who was next, and he was like, "That's what's up. That's what hip hop is." It was cool to get a shout-out from somebody who was as legendary as him. There was some affirmation from an older generation.

GS: From a forebear.

CC: Yes! There've definitely been artists, like San Antonio's Third Root, who understand and see the pedigree of influence I've digested from hip hop, growing up in the '90s. Listening to Missy Elliott and Busta Rhymes and them being able to see that influence on me. It's nice to know they know where I'm coming from. Obviously, every artist is trying to do their own thing, but I think it's important, especially with rap, to be able to say, "This definitely comes from these people and these spaces." I do feel very accepted in the rap community.

And the LGBTQ community. I think they love that I'm as flagrant as I

am [laughs]. Really in your face. I'm very unapologetically queer and subversive in that way. I don't care who knows or who doesn't. Part of my art comes from a place of spending so much time trying to not be gay. Being so concerned about trying to be straight and fit into some sort of mold that people expect me to be in. My art came from a very spiteful place. It just explodes with an earnest urgency [laughs].



Photo By Ismael Quintanilla

GS: "Mariposa" is a fitting name for the second song on the album, especially in the way it takes flight on the subjects of self-worth and survival. A mariposa also emerges from a cocoon, and the song "Re-emerge" visits those similar themes. Would you agree that there is a through-line connecting the songs?

CC: Yes, with those songs. But, also with the entire album. "Mariposa" is a statement of who I am now. My first record, Growing Up Gay, which came

out in 2019, talked about getting to a place of finally being OK. "Mariposa" says, "I am here, and I am ready and I'm ready to give back. I'm here to tell you what my journey has been like." (The song) "Re-emerge" is basically, this is what you do. "Stretch out your hand towards the ceiling/ rearranging holy healing/from way deep in." Giving people permission to transform themselves.

GS: Do you think that's another way that that sobriety comes through in the work?

CC: Sobriety was the start of me getting to a place of changing. I didn't realize that I even struggled with internalized homophobia. I wasn't in a place where I could even see that. When I got sober, I saw how much I was still not OK being queer. Back in 2014, on day one of my sobriety, I called a friend who is gay and had been sober for a few years. I was like, "I don't know how to live my life anymore." He said, "I'll come pick you up and we can talk." I didn't know who else to reach out to. I knew that he was gay, and he was sober and somehow, he was happy. I didn't know how you could get all those things together [laughs] and make it work. He picked me up and took me to his apartment. He said,

"I'm going to tell you my T, my truth, and then you'll tell me your truth, how you got here, and I'll tell you how I got sober. In the meantime, I'm going to put you in drag." We shared each other's stories, and he painted my face as a drag queen, and I put a wig on, and something healed in me on that day. It was this powerful moment. I look back at that as when everything pivoted. Something gave me permission to express myself however I wanted, and I could also be sober

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doing it.

GS: According to the Internet, so-called “cancel culture” came into being in the late 2010s. Would it be fair to say that your song “Cancel Culture Blues” is an attempt to cancel “cancel culture,” or at least to call it out for what it is?

CC: Yes. I think there are a lot of systems that we’ve tried to put in place that are not working and that are dangerous for our growth as a community. I think that cancel culture is one of these things that are more harmful than they are good. It’s definitely easier to tear down something than it is to build something. When we exercise cancel culture, we don’t allow people any sort of grace, any sort of communication, space for growth or redemption. It’s like putting somebody in the middle of a field, picking up stones and stoning them to death. “Cancel Culture Blues” was written to say, “This isn’t working anymore. We need to stop doing this.” I don’t think we shouldn’t hold people accountable. If you listen to the rest of my record, I think people would understand where I’m coming from. No one has challenged me on that song, saying that I’m defending abusers because that’s not what I think people

get from my music. Policing of people is ironic especially, in this day and age, so it’s challenging these systems, and asking “Why are you doing this? I think this is actually for your own ego, I think this is actually about you, and not about moving forward.” Because, at the end of the day, as I broke it down in the song, everyone has made mistakes. Not one person has not hurt somebody else, even if it was unintentional. To masquerade that you are the pure-hearted person and judge of everyone is just silly to me.

GS: Album closer “Sun” sounds like an homage to classic drum’n’bass and breakbeat. Is that something you plan to explore more of on future albums?

CC: Possibly. I don’t produce a whole lot of music. But “Sun” and “Light Repeating,” the intro and outro, I produced myself. Sometimes I struggle with states of mania and panic and depression. I just need to create sounds to help me feel differently in those moments. For the intro, I was feeling very depressed and recorded myself doing those “ahs,” and I felt better. The same thing with the outro, “Sun.” I was feeling kind of crazy and I started writing these beats and then looping them, and building this whole

little world. I felt like they worked.

GS: Yes, they function as brackets for the album. Finally, if you’ll indulge me, I don’t think an interview with a queer hip-hop artist would be complete without asking their opinion of Lil Nas X. Please say a few words about what you think of him.

CC: I don’t listen to a lot of Lil Nas X’s music, but I think that what he’s doing is amazing. I think that him being able to be in these spaces where he’s able to subvert these spaces into queer spaces. What he does is he gets naked and hangs out with a bunch of other people. I think that’s super important in the normalizing of queer culture. At the end of the day, we’re all human beings.

I think what he’s doing is important.

Am I impressed by his lyricism and syllabic patterns and cadences? Not particularly. He’s not my favorite rapper in the world. But I think it’s important that he exists and that he’s doing what he’s doing in the spaces that he’s doing it because no one has had gotten the type of success that he has. There’s no openly queer rapper getting invited to the Met Gala and being in the places that he’s at. I think it’s important that he’s doing those things and is able to be his unabashedly queer self in those spaces.

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GRAB DAVID

Hot Damn: An interview with David Pevsner

By Gregg Shapiro

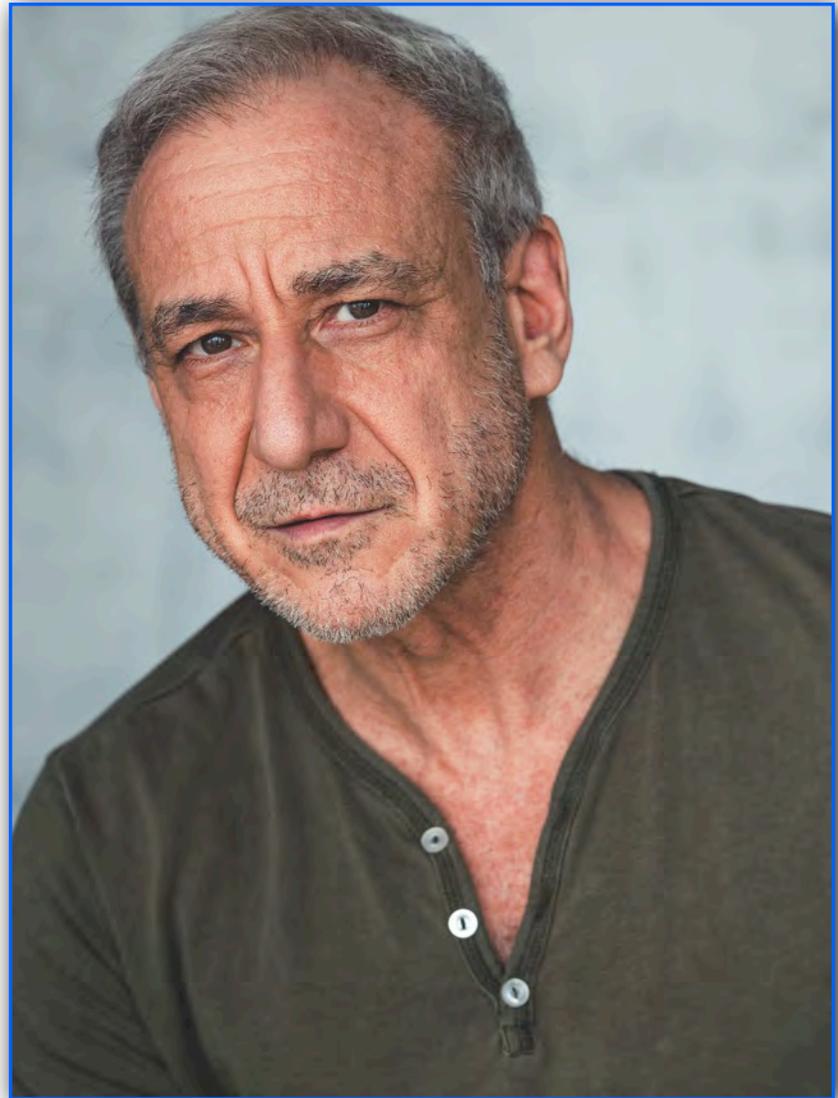
There is much to delight (and even titillate) readers in David Pevsner's memoir *Damn Shame: A Memoir of Desire, Defiance, and Show Tunes* (Random House Canada, 2021). A familiar face (and body) to fans of indie gay movies, popular TV series, Broadway and off-Broadway musical theater, and OnlyFans, Pevsner bares all in this no-holds-barred memoir. *Damn Shame* is the true story of "a little boy who knew what he wanted in his soul but had no idea what it meant." Readers can follow Pevsner from his suburban Chicago (Skokie) roots to college and the theater, with various side trips including being a naked house-cleaner, an escort, a professional organizer, and a songwriter. Pevsner manages to strike a balance between light and dark subject matter, telling his truth, (anal) warts and all.

Gregg Shapiro: David, your memoir *Damn Shame* is separated into two acts, which feels like a nod to your theater background. Am I on the right track and is that the way it was planned from the start?

David Pevsner: Absolutely. With the big ol' drama queen in me, I have always felt my life has unfurled in acts and scenes, so using those elements made sense to me, with some scenes – chapters – being shorter, some longer, some simpler and whimsical, some more involved and complex. However, it's not at all like reading a play with only dialog and stage directions. It's still prose, still biography, and is, I believe, a very emotional, funny, and brutally honest read.

GS: Having talked to, and interviewed, you over the course of many years, I can safely say that the book sounds like you. It's written in such a way that it feels intimate in the way you are sharing very personal experiences. Was there a specific moment when you realized that was happening and did you ever feel any hesitation?

DP: I've always been told I write like I



talk and I'm a pretty open guy who really doesn't hold back in conversation. I adore chatting with folks, I try to find humor in all situations, I get emotional when I talk about love and heartache, and if I'm angry about something, like politics or gay rights? Get out of the damn way! Outrage, snark, and sarcasm abound. I tried to put all of that into the text, no hesitation. It's written with the hope that it entertains because no matter what I do, I'm an entertainer at heart. Even my personal organizing clients would attest to that.

GS: In "The Boyfriend" chapter, you wrote about "my first journal." Were you a consistent journal or diary keeper or did you rely on memory when for reference while writing the memoir?

DP: I was not a consistent journal writer throughout my life. I started in high school and a little bit in college, but it became a lot of "Who am I? Why am I? I'm so depressed! I'm so lonely! I like him, he doesn't like me, blah blah blah..." Yikes! The journals are just so very angst-y and dramatic, but definitely a memory booster, and I did find some material that was pretty substantive and important to my story. They kind of yammer on but there was some pretty funny stuff in there that I filched. And though I don't think I have a great memory, while in the midst of writing certain chapters, getting as lost as I could in the story, details would pop into my head, truths that I had maybe forgotten but were important and resonant. And there's one story in the book about a guy I was involved with in the early '80s that I had totally

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forgotten about and realized it had to be in there. I had to hyper-apply my brainpower to it, but suddenly it flowed out of me into the computer, and with only a few tweaks, it's in the book. And when I finished that chapter, I bawled my eyes out.

GS: How much of the memoir is drawn from the scripts of your one-man shows?

DP: There are definitely chunks from both of my shows because they focused on important moments in my life in conjunction with sex and body shame, but even if you've seen either of them, there's plenty here beyond. Plus, I had to really whittle down the narrative for the plays, and there are so many details that I had to lose that really up the storytelling, emotional depths, and humor. So, though you may recognize a few situations in there from my shows, they are way more detailed and nuanced in the book. Also, what plays on the stage doesn't necessarily read well on the page, and my fantastic editor Scott Sellers was a champion at helping me adapt. But there's a ton of other stuff in the book beyond those stories. This is not a retread of my plays. This is my whole life, from birth to now, told through the lens of body shame and sexuality, covering much more ground, and way more provocative and involved than I could possibly get on a stage. And as you know, I did not hold back.

GS: That is true! In "The Music Man" chapter, which is set in 1996, you mentioned writing "essays and stories about my life." Have you, in various ways, been working on this book since that time?

DP: I never thought I had a book in me. I thought it was just creative writing to get some stories out of my system, but then I started to funnel some of them into my stage work. Most others did not make it into this book because they did not ascribe to the development of the sweet, smart little ham of a boy into this introspective, self-deprecating, erotically obsessed, somewhat damaged but ever hopeful and idealistic man, and the nudity/sexuality/ageism/shame themes that I set up in *Damn Shame*. Maybe down the line, I'll do a collection of essays with the unused ones.

GS: Throughout the book, you use real and made-up names for people that you are writing about. With that in mind, why did you choose to tell the story in memoir format versus fictionalizing it as a novel?



DP: I knew that I would be much more in the moment and forthcoming if I wrote the truth as it happened without fictionalizing; "truth is stranger than fiction" really holds in my experiences. There are some made-up names in the book, but when I wrote it, I used the real names. That kept faces, voices, and incidents much clearer in my head. But for either legal reasons or reasons of my own humanity and discretion (like when I talk about sex), I chose to change some names – especially the ones up to and including college (after, I do use more real names). I didn't feel it was right of me to drag some names into it when I was talking about my development sexually. I'm way upfront about it all, but not everyone is, and though I'm working hard to loosen folks up about sex, I had to respect that. I also found that if I used the real name of one person, it fully dragged in the name of someone they were connected with that I absolutely could not expose. It was tough, but really, the names don't count. The experiences do. But let's just say Topol, Kirk Cameron, a teacher from Carnegie Mellon, and maybe one or two others don't come out so well. Fuck 'em [laughs].

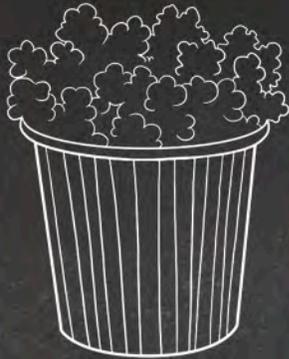
GS: Have your sisters read the book?

DP: I sent them the passages in which they're mentioned and they signed off. They haven't read the whole book yet and I'm not sure they want to. I actually

think they'll like it because though it sometimes gets a little graphic in the discussion of my personal and business life, I think it's also a lot of fun. And since they were my nemeses at times growing up, I asked my editor if I was being too harsh about them. He said that they don't come off as evil – they come off as typical older sisters, something so many can identify with. I make it clear before I mention them, and in the acknowledgments, how great they are and that I love them to death, but I had to use our relationship as kids to tell my story. And it's not like I could have made them up or changed their names. And in the end, they were okay with what I wrote about them because it's the truth, and I so appreciate them giving their thumbs up. They're the best.

GS: Did you have a target audience in mind while writing the book?

DP: I can't say that I did, however, I knew that gay guys my age would be able to handle the stuff that's a little more graphic, so I didn't feel the need to censor myself. What I've since learned, though, is that women love to talk about sex in a more graphic way as well, and as I've read passages of it to groups of all ages and genders, they get it, they love it, they totally identify. Plus, I talk a lot about ageism in the book from my standpoint as a 62-year-old gay man, but what I've written goes



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\$3 HOUSE SHOTS

WED: \$3 REGULAR MILLER LITES
\$4 STOLIS (ALL FLAVORS)

THU: \$5 YOU CALL ITS

FRI: \$5 TITO'S
\$7 BIG MILLER LITES



SAT: \$5 SIGNATURE MARGARITAS
\$5 PREMIUM WELL COCKTAILS
\$12 MIMOSA CARAFES

SUN: \$3 HOUSE SHOTS
\$5 PREMIUM WELL COCKTAILS
\$12 MIMOSA CARAFES

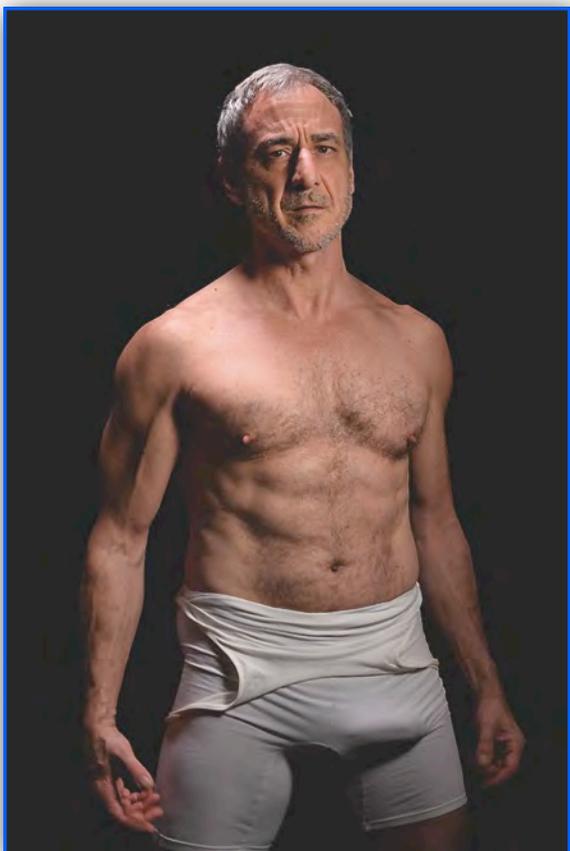
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beyond that age group. If you've ever felt irrelevant or overlooked, you'll appreciate it. And yes, I talk about being an escort and my sex life, there's some full-frontal nudity in the photo sections, and there are a couple of fisting jokes thrown in (because nothing makes me laugh more than a good fisting joke)[laughs] but I promise that readers will relate to my experiences, no matter their gender, age, or sexuality.

GS: In addition to being known as an actor, you have also had a prolific career as a songwriter and include song lyrics throughout. Please say something about why you chose to do that?

DP: I chose to include some of my lyrics because I wanted to have the essence of a musical, as they were so intrinsic to who I am. My lyrics have always come out of real situations in my life, so they were a natural addition, and I hope, a lot of fun for the reader. I also think some of my best writing is in my lyrics and I'm really proud of them. I'm a rhyme freak; I think a good rhyme crackles and can evoke a laugh or an emotion in a different way than prose. I assumed folks wouldn't necessarily want to read full sets of lyrics, and I certainly didn't want to stop the flow of the storytelling, so we were pretty



judicious about choosing them – little chunks or lines that help to either tell my story or add some whimsical or emotional texture to what's been written. So why not?

GS: Is David Sedaris, who you write about, aware of his inspiration and that he's mentioned in your book?

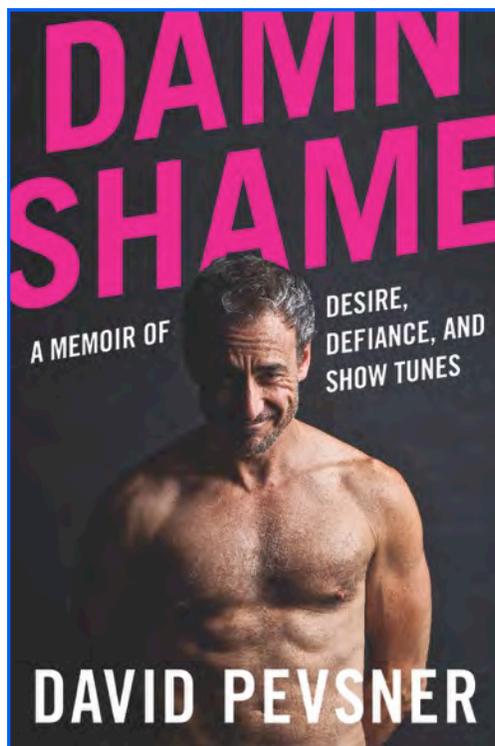
DP: I don't think so. I've not met him in person or been in touch since I randomly called him on the phone 26 years ago.

GS: In the chapter title "My One and Only," which is one of the longest in the book and closes out the first part of the book, you write about your difficult relationship with a boyfriend named Reid. Do you know if he is aware of the memoir, as well as his presence in it?

DP: I assume he does, but I don't know for sure.

GS: How different do you think the direction your professional life has taken would be if not for the internet and your social media presence on Tumblr, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and OnlyFans?

DP: If you're talking about my acting career and how my erotic presence on social media affects it, well, I was working up until COVID as an actor, jumping from stage to TV to indie stuff and the web, and right now, I'm focusing on the writing. There's some fun stuff in the book regarding my online presence and my legit acting career, and I know there are venues professionally I may not be invited into, but that's part of the book. I don't believe that should be and I make my case for it. As for the rest of my professional life, besides writing and acting, I have my personal organizing biz, I produce content for my OnlyFans, I dramaturg, I narrate audiobooks (including *Damn Shame*), I paint, and I will continue to stick my toes into every aspect of the business we call show, and I love all of it. Let me be creative and



I'm a happy guy.

GS: Finally, David, in addition to writing about your career triumphs, you don't shy away from writing about your negative performance experiences, which made me wonder if, in a way, you consider the book to be a kind of instruction manual for young performers.

DP: Lord knows there are things I discovered on my way to being 62 and being a professional performer for 40 years that I would have loved to have known back then, but I think we all have to go through what we need to by ourselves, not necessarily through advice, to really land the point.

However, I do feel as though some of my experiences trying to maintain the artist in me while going through self-esteem issues or stage fright or the difficulties of being fully out in the biz (it has come a long way since I started out) might inspire a kid who wants to perform but feels crippled in a way by his/her own mind. One overall theme in this book, regarding not just performing, but also becoming your authentic self sexually and personally, is confidence. I think confidence is the key, and I have struggled with it my whole life. And I know for a fact that I am not the only one. So, if young performers read my story and feel inspired to find their truth in regards to life and career, to find the confidence to achieve their dreams, nothing would move me more.



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\$4 TALLBOY BEERS
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\$3 MILLER LITE DRAFTS
\$5 BIG ASS LONG ISLANDS

TUE: \$4 PREMIUM WELL COCKTAILS
\$4 TALLBOYS

WED: \$3 HOUSE SHOTS
\$4 TITO'S COCKTAILS 
\$6 BIG MILLER LITE DRAFTS

THU: \$4 PREMIUM WELL COCKTAILS
\$4 TALLBOYS

FRI: \$7 BIG MILLER LITE DRAFTS
\$3 HOUSE SHOTS

SAT: \$4 LOST COAST TANGERINE WHEAT
\$5 SIGNATURE MARGARITAS

SUN: \$7 BIG MILLER LITE DRAFTS
\$6 CHICAGO HANDSHAKE
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GRAB PHILEMON

It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year for Philemon Chambers

Breakout star of Netflix's 'Single All the Way' on being merry about his gay new rom-com role

By Chris Azzopardi

Philemon Chambers can't believe he's in a queer Christmas movie. It's the kind Chambers, recently named "Next Big Thing" by the Hollywood Reporter, could only dream of watching when he was a little queer boy growing up in Compton, California. Then, Black queer characters in mainstream film and TV didn't exist, and when they finally did, those characters were in the closet or shamed for being out of the closet.

Much has changed since for Chambers, and for the better. Now, the 27-year-old actor, who could previously be seen in small TV roles on "Criminal Minds" and "All Rise," is the change he always hoped to see in "Single All the Way," Netflix's addition to the LGBTQ+ holiday rom-com boom of the last couple of years. Here, queerness is incidental to the sweet, marshmallow center of this love story.

In the film, Chambers plays the adorably likable Nick, who accompanies his roommate and longtime friend, Peter (Michael Urie of "Ugly Betty"), on a trip home for the holidays to see Peter's family in New Hampshire. It's an especially kind gesture given Peter has recently learned that his boyfriend is married to a woman. Though Peter's mom (Kathy Najimy) desperately wants to connect her newly single son with James (Luke Macfarlane), the rest of the family does everything in their power to help Peter and Nick see they're more than just friends.

Recently, Chambers chatted about the humbling responses he's received



about "Single All the Way" from LGBTQ+ people around the world, how he and Urie developed their chemistry over Zoom, and the message he hopes the movie delivers to young Black queer kids.

Chris Azzopardi: This seems like a really big moment for you. Does it feel that way?

Philemon Chambers: It still is a euphoric type of moment. I'm not overwhelmed because it's a good feeling to finally have this film out 'cause we've been talking about it for such a long time. To have it out and to see the response that people are having toward it and the love that it's garnering — wow, I'm gobsmacked.

CA: What's it like to be a part of the queer Christmas streaming movie

boom that started last year?

PC: It's nice that these types of stories are being told and that they're being told authentically by queer [and] gay actors. It's monumental in that respect because usually they hire a heterosexual actor to portray a gay character. So it's not an accurate depiction of them, of us. It's not.

I feel like the films that were released, we needed them at that time. But we really need "Single All the Way." "Single All the Way" is the first film of its kind to not hold onto the homophobia and not hold onto any negativity. It is pure joy, pure love, pure happiness. And I'm glad that we're moving in this direction. I can't wait to see what happens and what comes from it.

CA: Are you and Michael sharing in the splendor of what being a part of

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this movie feels like right now?

PC: Me and Michael actually had like a 15-, 20-minute conference last night just about how much love we are getting. Everybody is loving Peter and Nick. Everyone is loving the story. And I could not imagine doing this and going through this with anybody else other than Michael Urie. He is such a gem. But yes, we talk literally every day. He'll respond to me when he wants to respond to me, 'cause I know I'm a little bit annoying.

CA: I watched this with my mom, and it was a powerful thing to be able to watch something with her that's authentic to my experience as a gay man.

PC: Even my mom, she was like, "Oh, I'm gonna watch this film so many times." And I was just like, "OK, you're gonna watch it 'cause I'm in it. We get it." And she's just like, "No. It's just a really good story." She was just like, "I love that it's not about the characters being gay. It's about the character finding love, about the family wanting the character to be in a relationship no matter who it is."

It's nice to have something like this where you don't, again, see that homophobia, you don't see the negativity behind it. But you see a family rallying behind their son. I feel like that is so monumental to have. I got a Twitter DM yesterday from a gentleman; he lives in a different country. And he was saying where he is, it is a crime to be gay. He watched the film and he had said for the first time he felt like he had been seen. And that gave him hope.

CA: That must mean a tremendous amount to you.

PC: I cried. It means a lot to me that it's affecting people in the way that it affected me. It's a beautiful thing to be able to stand in the forefront for people and be that conduit. Like I said in another interview, Nick made me accept myself even more.

CA: In what ways did playing the character make you feel more comfortable with your sexuality?

PC: It's different when your life is private. It is such a difference when you're not in [the] public eye, when people really don't know who you are. It's easier to live your life how you wanna live your life. You can go out. You can be with your boyfriend or your girlfriend, whatever. But there is a



difference when now you are in [the] spotlight and people are trying to figure out who you are, what you do, who you're dating. I'm like, "Why do you wanna know who I'm dating?" I'm single. I do feel like I'm like Beyoncé — you know, the relationship is private until [points to his finger and motions putting a ring on it]. Just saying.

I just feel like that's a personal thing. But with accepting myself, I accepted myself. I did. If people would ask, I would tell them. But it was more the liberation that I got from playing Nick, because Nick is how I am with my family. My mom is just like, "OK, is this the boyfriend?" I'm like, "Mom, no. It is not. This is a friend."

When I got home and I really sat down and got to think about everything, I was like, this is the representation that I needed when I was a kid. And now I'm gonna have to talk to people about this and I'm able to now, versus before it was a touchier subject. I'm like, why not stand in the forefront? Why not be that vessel? Why not be that conduit to embrace fully who I am? I feel like as we get older, the idea of trying to put on for people should go away. I'm just at that point in my life where I genuinely love who I am. I owe a lot of it to Nick, in [the] sense of how he is and how the Harrison family was with him. It just showed that these types of things can be normal.

CA: Did Michael give you tips on navigating being out in the public eye?

PC: Michael gave me more tips on how to navigate the industry in a sense of just being an actor. He has been truly a

blessing. So has Jennifer Robertson (as Lisa, Peter's sister). So has Kathy Najimy (as Carole, Peter's mom). So has Barry Bostwick (as Harold, Peter's dad). Even Jennifer Coolidge (who plays Peter's Aunt Sandy) has given me advice. Rookie amongst veterans.

CA: What advice did Jennifer Coolidge give you? And was there any bend and snap action on set?

PC: You said bend and snap? You talkin' about [does a little snap]. Jennifer Coolidge, her advice was, "Have fun." Jennifer Coolidge's approach to everything — she does not know what she's gonna do until she does it.

CA: The chemistry between you and Michael seemed so easy.

PC: The thing about being in a pandemic is everything is over Zoom. Me and Michael, we did our chemistry read over Zoom. And we had to give chemistry over Zoom, which is kind of a tough thing to do because it's hard to sometimes articulate. But honestly, when me and Michael started, everything clicked. It was an automatic thing. It was not forced. We were able to play off of each other over Zoom. I remember getting off of Zoom and going into my sister's room and being like, "I don't know what just happened, but I love it."

CA: What does it mean to you to be a queer person of color playing this character?

PC: I echo this a lot: I am what I needed when I was younger. It's one of those things where I still have my pinch

me moments. To be at the forefront where there is a story out there for young Black men who are maybe questioning themselves or already know who they are, that is positive, that [says] you can come out, you can say these things, you can be yourself, and there is a family out there that will love you, genuinely and unconditionally for who you are — it still is one of those things where I am still taken aback, still humbled. I'm just very, very grateful to have this moment. I text my team every day — I even message Netflix [laughs] — And I'm like, "Thank you so much for allowing me the opportunity to be a vessel and to be a conduit." It means the world to me.

CA: What about a sequel? There's been talk, and you can tell me. This is a safe place.

PC: The non-answer answer to that is, Chris, if you must know, Netflix is amazing. And you know, there's no telling what you'll see from Nick and Peter.

CA: As much as I am interested in knowing what happens with Nick and Peter in a potential sequel, I am also interested in knowing what it means for them when it comes to Aunt Sandy's annual pageant in New

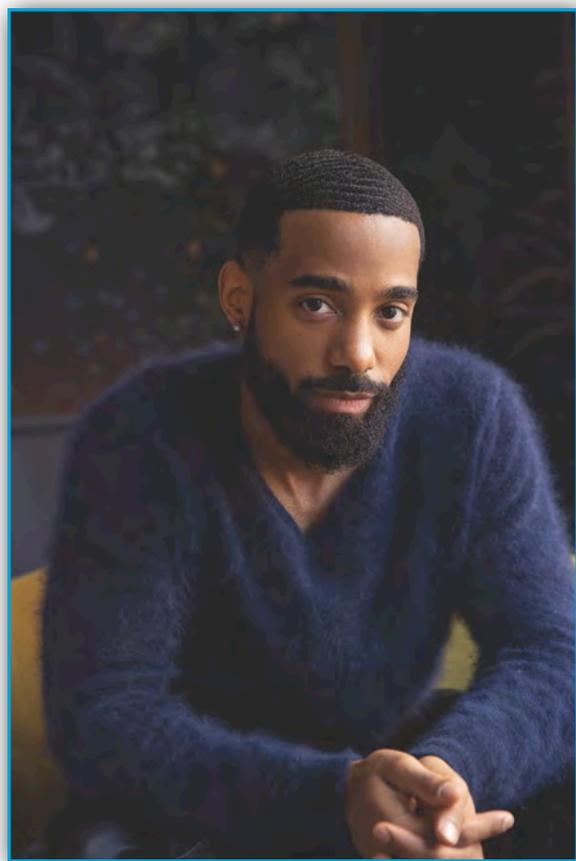
Hampshire.

PC: You know what? I feel like, if anything, what should happen is Nick and Peter should be in the pageant. We could do a whole little thing. We could act along with Aunt Sandy. I'm just saying.

CA: She's a tough director. Do you think you have what it takes to be in her pageant?

PC: You know, I can scream. And I can remember my lines.

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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<p>Tuesday</p>	<p>@mosphere: Open 6pm - 1am. Cell Block: Open 4pm-2am. Charlie's: TuneUp Tuesday Karaoke 7 – 11PM, Tag Team Tuesdays 11p – 2am, Dancing until close. Hydrate: 8/10 TatTuesday XXL Doors open at 8pm. Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis Lark: 50% Off Bottles of Wine with any Entree Purchase, Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm. Lucky Horseshoe: Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. Daily Drink Specials \$5 Jose Cuervo Tequila, \$5 Jim Beam Whiskey, \$5 Stoli Razberri Vodka, \$5 Whiteclaw Cans. Meeting House Tavern: \$6 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$3 House Shots, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open 3pm-2am. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts & Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm. Sidetrack: 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. Steamworks: Every Tuesday 4 pm – 4 am Guys Under 25 Get In Free* (*Free 30 day membership and free locker). The SoFo Tap: \$4 Premium Well Cocktails, \$4 Tallboys, \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Touche: Hardcore Cruisin' Sponsor Leather 64Ten. No cell phones/Wifi.</p>
<p>Wednesday</p>	<p>@mosphere: Open 6pm - 1am. Cell Block: Open 4pm-2am. Charlie's: Country Line Dancing 7 – 10pm, Sapphire's Secret Shadows 10pm – 1 am, Dancing until close. Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis Lark: Free Bingo, 50% Off Nachos & Totchos, \$8 Villa One Margaritas Frozen or on the Rocks, Traditional Flavor only. Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm. Lucky Horseshoe: Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. Daily Drink Specials \$5 Jose Cuervo Tequila, \$5 Jim Beam Whiskey, \$5 Stoli Razberri Vodka, \$5 Whiteclaw Cans. Meeting House Tavern: \$3 Regular Miller Lite, \$4 Stolis (All Flavors), \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open 3pm-2am. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts & Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, All Things Taylor & Ariana 1st Wed of month, All Things Beyoncé 2nd Wed of month, All Things Gaga 3rd Wed of month, FUN DMC: Dua/Megan/Cardi last Wed of month: all 9pm-2am. Steamworks: Bear Hump Every second Wednesday 6-9pm A monthly mid-week gathering of Furry Men. The SoFo Tap: \$3 House Shots, \$4 Tito's Cocktails, \$6 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers. Touche: Jockstrap Night Sponsored by Full Kit Gear, Free Clothing check.</p>
<p>Thursday</p>	<p>@mosphere: Open 6pm - 1am. Baton Show Lounge: Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. Cell Block: Open 4pm-2am. Charlie's: Survivor 10 pm – 1 am, Dancing Until Close. Hydrate: RuPaul's Drag Race Season All Stars Viewing Party Doors Open 6:30pm, Bubble POP Hosted by Khloe Coulee 9pm. Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. Lark: RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars 6 viewing party & 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 Lucky Horseshoe: Open at 6pm Dancers at 8pm. Daily Drink Specials \$5 Jose Cuervo Tequila, \$5 Jim Beam Whiskey, \$5 Stoli Razberri Vodka, \$5 Whiteclaw Cans. Meeting House Tavern: \$5 You Call It's, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open 3pm-2am. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts & Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, Drag & Games with Alex Kay & Friends 9pm-2am Steamworks: Lights Out Thursdays, The Club goes Dark Every Thursday 4pm-4am. The SoFo Tap: \$4 Premium Well Cocktails, \$4 Tallboys, \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Touche: Throwback Thursdays 70's-80's Music & Porn by Bijou Video.</p>

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Daily
Specials

<p>Friday</p>	<p>@mosphere: \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Dancers 10pm-1am. Baton Show Lounge: Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. Cell Block: Open 4pm-2am. Charlie's: 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. Hydrate: 8/6 Fresh Faces A New Drag Competition Second and Forth Friday of the Month. Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. Lark: Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm. Lucky Horseshoe: Open with dancers at 6pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$5 Tito's, \$7 Big Miller Lites, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 4-7pm. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: 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.) Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, T.G.I.F. Show Tunes 4-9pm, Friday Night Dance Party 9pm-2am. The SoFo Tap: \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$3 House Shots, \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Touche:</p>
<p>Saturday</p>	<p>@mosphere: \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 3pm-5pm, Dancers 10pm -1am. Baton Show Lounge: Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. Cell Block: Open 2pm-3am. Charlie's: Country Line Dancing 7 – 10pm, The Main Event 10pm – 1am Dancing until Close. Lucky Horseshoe: Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$5 Signature Margaritas, \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$12 Mimosa Carafes, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 11am-2pm. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: \$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.). Sidetrack: Open at 1pm, SaturGay Drag & Games 3-6pm, Saturday Night Dance Party 9pm-3am, Dog Day Saturday 1st Saturday of the month 1-5pm. The SoFo Tap: \$4 Lost Coast Tangerine Wheat, \$5 Signature Margaritas, \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers. Touche: 12/11 Dungeon Master Night S&M Demo @ Midnight CWB 5pm. 12/18 Gear Night & Full Moon Party, Dress Code in Club Room, BNC 6pm.</p>
<p>Sunday Sunday</p>	<p>@mosphere: \$6 Jack Products, \$4 Domestic Draft, House Shots \$2. Baton Show Lounge: Doors Open at 11am, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. Cell Block: Open 2pm-2am Charlie's: Queeriod! Every other Sunday 5pm – 7pm, Singsational Sunday Karaoke 7pm – 11pm Mas Leche 11pm – 1am, Dancing until close. Hydrate: Doors open at 2pm Northalsted's Official after Brunch party. Kit Kat Lounge: Divalicious brunch with Madam X 11am-3pm, Happy Hour 4-7pm \$8.95 Martinis . Lark: Free Flowing Brunch 11am-3pm. Lucky Horseshoe: Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$3 House Shots, \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$12 Mimosa Carafes, \$5 Frosens, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 7-10pm Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: \$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.) Sidetrack: Open at 1pm, Sunday Funday Show Tunes 4-9pm, Sunday Funday After Dark Dance Party 9pm-2am. The SoFo Tap: \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$6 Chicago Handshake, \$5 Prairie Vodka Cocktails, \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers. Touche: Football 7pm, Beer Bust \$2 Bud Light Drafts, Bears vs Ravens at Noon, Movie Night 7pm.</p>



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Top 40 Dance Chart this week
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	Artist	Title
1	Charli XCX	Good Ones (Joel Corry Remix)
2	Ewan McVicar	Tell Me Something Good
3	Riotron & GOLDHOUSE	Silent Night
4	Forester & Kidnap	To Feel Alive
5	Scott Forshaw & Joe Killington	Nightmoves
6	SACHI	Lift Off ft. Carla Wehb
7	3LAU	Worst Case ft. CXLOE
8	Noa Kirel	Bad Little Thing (Carola Remix)
9	Bingo Players & Oomlud	Holiday ft. Seb Mont (Festival Mix)
10	Don Diablo	Cheque (Clean Radio Edit)
11	Alesso & Marshmello	Chasing Stars ft. James Bay (VIP Remix)
12	Win and Woo	Good Catch ft. Sad Alex
13	Afrojack x Lucas & Steve x DubVision	Anywhere With You
14	Jonasu & JC Stewart	On My Mind
15	Mark Villa	Down The Rabbit Hole
16	Purple Disco Machine	Rise ft. Tasita D'Mour (Edit)
17	John Summit	Human ft. Echoes
18	Krewella x BEAUZ	Never Been Hurt
19	tyDi x Electric Polar Bears	You Never Know ft. Neverwaves
20	ACRAZE	Do It To It ft. Cherish (Short Radio Edit)
21	Alesso	Somebody To Use
22	Eden Prince & Karen Harding	Last Christmas
23	Kaitlyn Dorff	In My Dreams (Dave Audé Remix)
24	Mahalo	Nothing Matters
25	Tiesto & Karol G	Don't Be Shy
26	Steve Aoki x Jolin Tsai & MAX	Equal In The Darkness
27	ManyFew	Power ft. Jenny Adesanya
28	MEDUZA	Tell It To My Heart ft. Hozier (Radio Edit)
29	Lee Dagger & Melanie Fontana	Making It Up (Luca Debonaire Radio)
30	Manuel Riva	Modern Love ft. Iraida
31	Dom Dolla	Strangers ft. Mansionair (Radio Edit)
32	Zack Martino	Let Me Down ft. Amanda Collis
33	HRVY	1 Day 2 Nights
34	Jerome x Malou x Mokaby	Better Love
35	Riton x RAYE	I Don't Want You
36	Sonny Fodera & Vintage Culture	Last Thought ft. MKLA
37	Anabel Englund	Midnight Rapture
38	Oliver Heldens x Anabel Englund	Deja Vu
39	Nicky Romero	Why Do I Call
40	Bissett	Tonight Belongs To You

MARDI GRAS MONTH AT TOUCHE

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SATURDAY FEB 5
**MARDI GRAS
BEAR NIGHT**

BEADS & BEARS
DRAWING FOR TICKETS TO
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WEDNESDAY FEB 16
**MARDI GRAS
UNDER A
FULL MOON**

JOCKSTRAP FULL MOON NIGHT
CONTEST AT MIDNIGHT

FRIDAY FEB 18
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2022 CONTEST**

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COWBOYS IN LONG JOHNS
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PARTY**

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HOT GOGO DUDES

TUESDAY/MARCH 1
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PARTY**

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GRAB ROGER

Keep Your Estate Plan Problem-Free in 2022

By Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss, Esq.

Some common problems to avoid in 2022 are:

Old Powers of Attorney. Powers of attorney are wonderful documents in theory. Working with them can sometimes be a chore, though, especially when trying to convince others (like banks) to accept them on their face. An “old” power of attorney is more difficult to deal with than a fresh one because a question arises as to whether it is still good or whether it has been replaced. I suggest that you “refresh” your powers of attorney every two to three years by restating them.

Is the document the statutory form that requires a notary plus a witness? Will your LGBT partner/Spouse/Civil Union partner be able to pay living expenses for themselves if you are disabled but have not died? Powers should contain the authority for the agent to have a limited access to funds to maintain their standard of living if they can’t work while caring for their disabled spouse.

Outdated Beneficiary

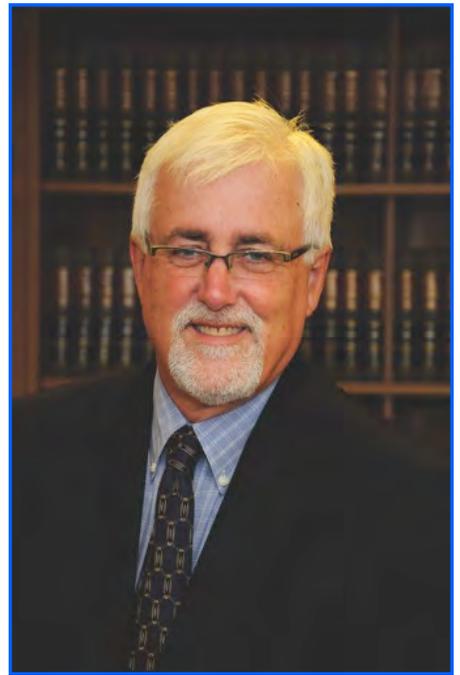
Designations. Always verify who the named beneficiaries are for each asset that does not pass through a will. Individuals will often name someone other than their LGBT partners as beneficiaries on employee benefits such as life insurance or 401(k) plans. It is extremely common for clients simply to forget that a previous unmarried partner or parent is still named on an IRA or life insurance policy.

Not Safekeeping Documents.

You need not always give copies of your trusts, powers of attorney, etc. to other people (agents and fiduciaries) who may need to implement them. However, you should communicate to the interested people their role, what kind of documents exist, and where they can find them if the need arises. If these people cannot reach the documents when needed, implementation will not be smooth. Many times clients do not know where their documents are. Keep copies in each person’s car and suitcase when you travel.

Power of Attorney for Health Care.

The agent and successor agent(s) under your health care power of attorney should be made aware of its existence and the location where it can be found in the event the agent needs a copy of it for purposes of implementation. The health care power of attorney is only effective if the agent is aware of it and can obtain a copy when it needs to be used. Further, it is your agent’s or your responsibility to communicate the health care agency to your health care providers. You



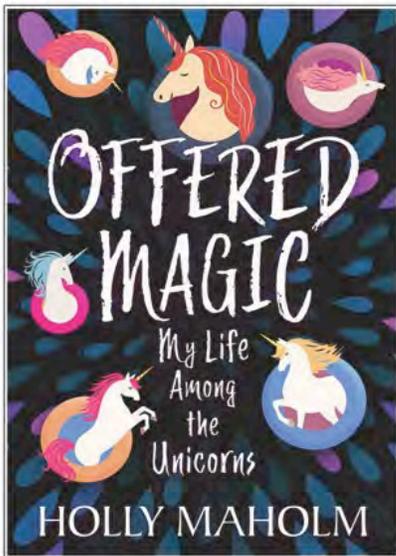
should make certain that you discuss with your health care agent (and successor agent) your general philosophy for health care treatment and confirm your agent’s willingness to act if circumstances so require.

Tenants by the Entirety. Couples who enter into a civil union or marry will have the right to hold title to real estate as tenants by the entirety. A judgment creditor of just one of the homeowners cannot enforce its lien against the residence of the homeowners owned as tenants by the entirety. This means that if you marry or enter into a Civil Union and sign and record a new deed conveying the title of your house, which has to be your residence, to yourselves, as tenants by the entirety, the creditors of one of you cannot take away the house. This is asset protection in its greatest form.

Funding Your Living Trust. Many times people will create a living trust but then put nothing in it. The advantage of funding your trust is the avoidance of probate in the event of death or disability and the accompanying probate administration complexities and costs. A partially funded trust will not avoid the necessity of probate because assets not in the trust still need to be probated.

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. He suggests that you consult your own lawyer for any specific questions regarding the issues raised in this column.

HOLLY’S NEW BOOK HAS BEEN RELEASED



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PROGRESSBAR



Photos By
Anthony Meade



GRAB HOLLY

A Houseful of Hand-Me-Downs

By Holly Maholm

“Move-in Day” had arrived at last. Recon declared the renovation of No. 9, Wellington Square “complete.” There was much excitement at Donut Time, as the would-be housemates made plans to take up residency. Nevertheless, the allocation of bedrooms in No. 9 was not to be accomplished without a “certain amount” of tension and disagreement (much as we might observe that Jerusalem has likewise been the site of a “certain amount” of conflict and hard-feelings over the years). But thanks to the gentle but firm diplomacy of Grandma Lilly, Cindy was at last appeased, rooms were finally assigned, and plans for the move could proceed.

Aly and Tuco were awarded the largest bedroom on the second floor, and Cindy and Xandra got the other two bedrooms on that floor. Recon and Fender were given the whole third floor, as well as exclusive use of the bath on that level. Back at Donut Time, with Cindy and Xandra having moved out, the two bedrooms on the second floor were assigned to Grandma Lilly and Phyllis, the latter of whom decided that anything was better than continuing to deteriorate both mentally and physically in that Dungeon of Dementia they call a “Senior Living Facility.”

But before anyone could move in, they had to solve one big problem: None of them owned any furniture. Cindy and Xandra left what they had at Donut Time for the use of Grandma Lilly and Phyllis, but none of the others owned even a stick of furniture needed to furnish their new bedrooms. Plus, Aly and Tuco needed tables, chairs and other “decorative pieces” to fit-out the public space for the Ice Cream Parlor they planned for the first floor. What to do?

Well, thanks to dozens of rapidly-aging Boomers who had providentially – and coincidentally – decided they could no longer occupy their ancestral homes in the village, there was an absolute flood of Victorian-era furniture available for pennies at the local resale shop. All those carved walnut beds and mahogany dressers, hutches and sideboards could now be claimed by an entirely new generation.

And everything was totally “in-sync” with the rooms in which they would soon be installed. No. 9 being entirely “Victorian” in both pedigree and design, it might even be possible that one of the big, glass-front china cabinets that would now decorate the Ice Cream Parlor might have started life in that very same room back when No. 9 functioned as a warehouse.

Thus, when move-in day arrived, there was no lack of beds, dressers, desks and tables to fit-out No. 9, and the Ice Cream Parlor, too, looked entirely authentic in its late 19th Century accouterments.

This month being January, now was not the best time to open an Ice Cream Parlor. Accordingly, Aly and Tuco opted for a “soft opening,” reasoning that this was not the time to try to tap into any (currently quiescent) consumer mania for an ice-cold treat.

But after four weeks of fighting the weather, Aly and Tuco were desperate. I was sitting with them in the Parlor, brainstorming what could be done to improve business, when Xandra came down the stairs and joined us. Aly spoke, “Xandra, we really need your advice. Is there anything we could offer that would bring in more customers? Nothing that would hurt Donut Time, of course.”



Xandra pondered briefly, then jumped up and ran back to inspect the kitchen on that floor in the back. Returning, she explained, “We sell donuts, but if that were all we sold, we would be bankrupt. That’s why we started selling egg and cheese and sausage fritters – and other ‘breakfast food.’ You need to do the same. You need to sell ‘dinner food,’ not just ice cream treats. I know just the thing.”

Next day, Xandra, Aly, Tuco and I visited the restaurant supply store over in the next county, and we found what Xandra recommended. By the weekend, the new menu for the Parlor was posted and was becoming popular on the Square.

Aly and Tuco now had access to a crepe maker with which to produce French-style crepes and shells. Also, they now made use of the big stove in the back kitchen to prepare fillings for the crepes – fillings that turned them into delicious, one-of-a-kind, dinner meals.

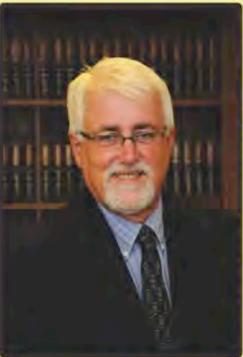
They offered stacks of crepes with Beef Stroganoff ladled on top; or crepes drenched with New England-style seafood gumbo featuring lobster, shrimp and scallops. And always, they had a vegan selection featuring fresh vegetables in season. But the biggest seller were the crepes smothered in strawberry, blueberry or apricot chutney, served piping hot with a scoop of French Vanilla ice cream on the side.

For weeks after this success, Xandra found that when she sat down for dinner in the Parlor, neither Aly nor Tuco could find her check.

(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

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Photos By Anthony Meade



POSITIVE THOUGHTS

I Don't Want to Stop Saying 'AIDS'

By Tim Murphy

Like many folks, I'm on a daily text thread with three of my closest Judys (as the young queers, perhaps in a sweet nod to the original gay icon Judy Garland, are calling their friends these days). It's Mark, Kevin, John, and me. We're all gay men in our 50s, and we've all been living with HIV from anywhere between the early to mid-'90s to the early to mid-aughts. Mark and Kevin were diagnosed in 1994, I in 2001, and John in 2005. That makes us all members of the "shoulda known better" generation — too young to claim we didn't see AIDS coming and too old to have shielded ourselves with PrEP.

Anyway, we all think the word "AIDS" is the best punchline ever, and we use it constantly in our texts. We'll say: "Leave me alone, I have AIDS!" or "I'm feeling AIDSy today!" Or about our longtime favorite (and now recently defunct) New York City diner, The Dish, an uber-gay hangout: "You could get AIDS just from walking in there!"

Now let me be clear: With the exception of Kevin, whose T cells once dropped slightly below 200 (the longtime medical definition of AIDS) even though he never had symptoms, none of us has ever actually had AIDS. As far as getting HIV goes, we were "lucky" to get HIV either a few years before or after the advent of highly effective, lifesaving cocktail therapy.

Yet when we joke about "AIDS," we're tapping into some collective shared history as middle-aged New York City gay men. Kevin and John moved here in the '80s, Mark and I at the start of the '90s. John was one of the fresh-faced babies of ACT UP. The rest of us have all been involved in HIV/AIDS work or activism in one way or another — me as a journalist, the others as intermittent fundraisers, community organizers, and activists. We all know people who died of AIDS.

As someone who was already writing about advances in HIV treatment in 2001 when I was diagnosed, I truly never worried I would die from HIV. But it was different for my friends. Says Kevin: "I 100 percent thought I was going to die and I wasn't happy about it." Says Mark: "I was positive I was going to die before I reached 30. It was pretty heavy hourly terror, to be honest." And even John, diagnosed in the mid-2000s, says: "I told my therapist a week after I seroconverted that I was now living life on a timeline."

Moreover, as sexually active gay men, we certainly lived, pre-diagnosis, with the fear of getting HIV, and post-diagnosis, with our share of angst about

disclosing our status to sexual partners — not to mention outright rejection because of our status. About a decade ago, right before PrEP, I had a hook-up who was virtually panting with lust, no mention of condoms, suddenly turned stone cold when I told him I was HIV-positive. As we arrived at our highly anticlimactic climax, after a long and mood-killing talk about "the issue" of AIDS, he stood three feet away from me holding up a strip of paper towels as though he were a toreador warding off, rather than luring, a bull toward him. It was unsexy, to say the least.

Joking About the Word 'AIDS'

For all these reasons, we feel we've earned the right to joke about the word "AIDS." And let's face it, there's something just funny about the word. Like "abortion," "Holocaust," or "slavery," it's so politically and historically charged that it almost begs to be made a punchline. I firmly believe that the group that "owns" an issue (gays, Jews, Blacks, women) has a right to joke about it. It's a way of letting off steam and turning pain into laughter.

Yet, as I wrote recently on my Substack, I don't think outside groups have a right to make jokes about painful stuff that is not part of their community and history. I'm speaking morally, not legally. I don't believe in censorship, and I generally believe that anyone has a right to say or write anything they want, but folks should at least be ready for the consequences. That's why I was among those who thought it was disgusting, rather than funny, when the comic Dave Chappelle, who historically I've considered quite brilliant, joked that the young rapper DaBaby in his recent onstage rant in Florida "punched the LBGTQ [sic] community right in the AIDS." That's how Chappelle put it in his recent Netflix special, "The Closer," which has gotten so much flack for Chappelle's long tirades against LGBTQ+ people — particularly transgender people, whose very authenticity he questions and mocks while, strangely, insisting he has nothing against them.

But that's another story. We're sticking to "AIDS" here! And let me be clear: I have ambivalence even when AIDS jokes are used in contexts not as pointedly hostile to queer folks as Chappelle was if they're coming from outside our affected communities. Take the comic Sarah Silverman, who I generally love and consider a queer ally. It's been years since she made AIDS jokes, such as "I have AIDS — billions of them." Or "When God gives you AIDS — and God does give you AIDS, by the way — make lemonAIDS!" Even today, just writing them out, they still make me

laugh. They're just so juvenile and wrong. And I know with certainty that Silverman is, and has long been, a friend and ally to queer folks and people with AIDS.

But hearing AIDS jokes from anyone who hasn't carried at least a little of the burden of AIDS, as either a person living with it or part of a community that's been heavily hit by it, still kind of rubs me the wrong way. Who exactly was she to make those jokes? (I should note that Silverman has since said she regrets or would no longer make the kind of jokes about Black folks, rape, AIDS, etc. that she did back in the mid-aughts.)

All of which makes me think more broadly about the word "AIDS" itself. Mainly, about its slow disappearance from our lives. Now, let me be clear — I know there are a small number of people in the U.S. and other wealthy nations who are technically living with AIDS, and (thankfully ever smaller) numbers of people who are not diagnosed with HIV until they have advanced to AIDS (which usually manifests in the E.R. in the form of PCP pneumonia). And according to UNAIDS, about 10 million people with HIV globally are still awaiting treatment, meaning that, certainly and unjustly (and hopefully not for much longer), people with AIDS still exist worldwide.

But generally speaking, we don't see or hear "AIDS" much anymore. Like aerobics, brick-size cell phones, or Bill and Hillary Clinton, it's becoming a relic of the '80s or '90s — a marker of a past era. Which leaves us with the question of what to do with the word. Will we soon be getting to the point where we replace "9/11" with "AIDS" for the joke: "Knock, knock. Who's there? AIDS. AIDS who? You said you'd never forget!"

A real-life version of this came up last year when NMAC, which has long sponsored the United States Conference on AIDS (USCA), had decided with input from the HIV community to rename the conference the United States Conference on HIV (USCH) based on the idea that not all people with HIV had AIDS, but all people with AIDS certainly had HIV. Wrote longtime NMAC head Paul Kawata of the change: "Over time, [the term] AIDS was seen as stigmatizing by many people living with HIV. NMAC believes [that,] like people of color, people living with HIV have the right to self-determination [in terms of what they are called]."

Yet enough longtime survivors swiftly complained, saying that the change amounted to an "erasure" of those who had died of (and still lived with) AIDS, that NMAC quickly decided to again change the name, to the all-inclusive United States Conference on HIV/AIDS (USCHA).

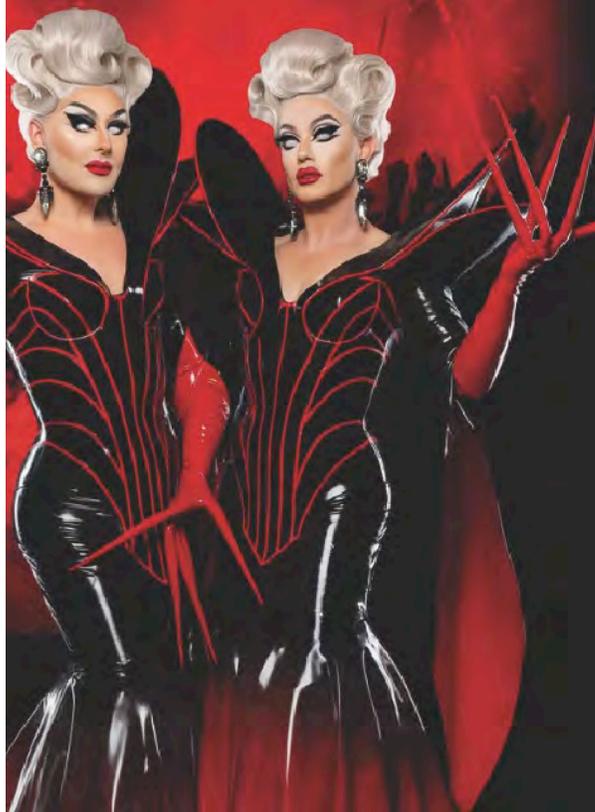
Wrote Kawata of the second change: "I would never intentionally do anything to erase People Living with HIV or AIDS. When NMAC announced the name

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change of USCA, we thought we were standing in solidarity with PLHIV. ... How can we reach the community if we were using a word that they considered discriminatory? Unfortunately, to some PWAs, our action looked like the opposite of its intention."

I think the second change was the right one. I'm moved that some longtime survivors felt that retiring the term AIDS was also mothballing not only their personal histories but that of a community that had fought for its collective life and dignity in the 15 years prior to the advent of effective treatment and often beyond. That's especially so for the Black community, where rates of AIDS (including AIDS deaths) remained disproportionately high well into the 2000s, due to late HIV diagnoses and treatment delay or resistance rooted in all the offshoots of mother racist — medical mistrust, dramatically lower access to services and care, community stigma, and more.

Just when you think that the world has evolved — that the stigma of having AIDS has evaporated along with the incidence of AIDS and the word itself — you get some ugly reminder that the bogeyman "AIDS" is still alive and well in the minds of the unenlightened and the AIDS-phobic. Take DaBaby's onstage rant in Florida on July 25. "If you didn't show up today with HIV, AIDS, or any of them deadly sexually transmitted diseases that'll make you die in two, three weeks," said DaBaby amid other lovely homophobic and misogynist sentiments, "put your cellphone light up."

Even from someone who is not yet 30 years old and did not grow up in the late '80s-early-mid-'90s golden age of AIDS education, it was shocking to hear a falsehood like the idea that HIV can kill someone in two or three weeks. (Untreated HIV generally takes years, up to a decade or more, to kill someone.) It seemed like the kind of idiocy some homophobic televangelist might have spouted back in 1985. Thankfully, a raft of organizations, including the Black AIDS Institute, rushed in to give DaBaby an "HIV 101" circa 2021.

But what I noted particularly about DaBaby's tangent was the conflation of HIV and AIDS: "If you didn't show up today with HIV, AIDS, or any ..." As though the two things were interchangeable. We might give DaBaby the benefit of the doubt and assume he meant "HIV/AIDS," as in the compound idea of just HIV or both HIV and AIDS. But I doubt it.

So maybe one reason for keeping the term "AIDS" alive is precisely so we can explain to people like DaBaby exactly what AIDS is not. It's not the virus itself, it's not something you'll ever get if you just take your HIV meds properly, and it's obviously not something that, despite its vanishing reality, has lost its stigma in some quarters of the popular imagination.

Why We Shouldn't Stop Saying

'AIDS'

But my main reason for wanting to keep it around is a perverse nostalgia. Call me weird, but I love the shameful, dark corners of gay history that we're supposed to look back on with a now-versus-then sense of "the bad old days" — or maybe even bury completely.

Take the 1980 movie "Cruising," in which Al Pacino plays an ostensibly straight New York City cop who goes undercover to nab a serial killer stalking the gay leather S&M community. Shot in the actual dark, seedy leather venues of the city's Village and meatpacking district, the movie was protested by the city's gay community when it was being filmed for advancing a sinister and extreme view of gay life. Yet when I watch it (and I have, every few years since my 20s), I thrill at its depiction of that shadowy, sexy, dangerous world. It strategically includes a character, Ted Bailey, to show the sweeter, homier side of gay men, and it doesn't shy away from depicting police hostility and abuse toward gay men and drag queens (or transsexuals ... or transgender women ... it's hard to know how the film at the time might have characterized those figures).

I understand why activists protested the film; at the time, right before AIDS, when gay people were striving to be counted as full citizens, the film risked portraying them as depraved perverts. But leather and S&M culture were — and still are — a part of gay life, and I cherish "Cruising" for its compassionate, raw honesty about that.

I feel the same way about "AIDS." It really happened. I don't want to forget it, and neither do Kevin, John, and Mark. It's the gay world we came of age in, and it shaped us in ways both good and bad. It's a complicated, horrible, heartbreaking history. But it's our history, and I feel a fierce, affectionate nostalgia for it, especially as PrEP, blessedly, makes the risk of even getting the virus that can lead to AIDS a thing of the past for generations younger than us.

If it weren't for AIDS, we wouldn't have some of the favorite icons and moments of my early adulthood: the kitschy and shallow yet also moving AIDS ribbon. The DIY collective mourning of the AIDS quilt. The televised heroism of people including Elizabeth Taylor, Mary Fisher, Bob Hattoy (RIP) and Magic Johnson. The elegiac '80s and '90s art of Ross Bleckner, Keith Haring, David Wojnarowicz, Marlon Riggs, Robert Mapplethorpe, Hugh Steers, Félix González-

Torres, and so many more. The writings and poetry of Paul Monette, Essex Hemphill, Reinaldo Arenas, Tory Dent, Melvin Dixon, and so many more.

The work of these people — most of them gone — is baked into my very identity not only as a person living with HIV, but as a gay man, a queer citizen, a New Yorker, and an American.

For all these reasons, I want to keep the word "AIDS" alive. Say it loud and say it proud: AIDS, AIDS, AIDS! Sing it, even, as they did in Team America — "Everyone has AIDS!"

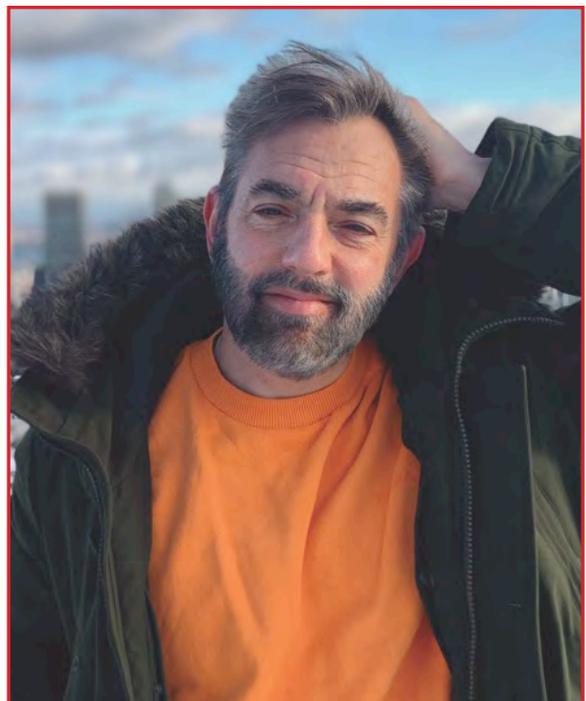
Every time I say it, I'll laugh. But I'll also think about every single person it's taken from us — people I could have been among had I been diagnosed a decade earlier than I was.

And you certainly won't get me to stop watching the (no joke!) "AYDS" diet pill commercial from 1982 — released, tragically and hilariously, the same year the CDC first used the term "AIDS."

The 40-year history of the epidemic proves that the gods may be cruel. But the debut of both "AYDS" and "AIDS" in the same year certainly proves they also have a sick sense of humor.

I'm glad AIDS is (almost) over. But I'm happy to say we'll always have "AIDS."

Tim Murphy, based in Brooklyn, has been writing about HIV/AIDS for 25 years, for publications and organizations including TheBody, TheBodyPro, POZ, New York Magazine, The Nation, Housing Works, and Lambda Legal. This column is a project of TheBody, Plus, Positively Aware, POZ and Q Syndicate, the LGBTQ+ wire service. Visit their websites — <http://thebody.com>, <http://hivplusmag.com>, <http://positivelyaware.com> and <http://poz.com> — for the latest updates on HIV/AIDS.





Photos By Anthony Meade



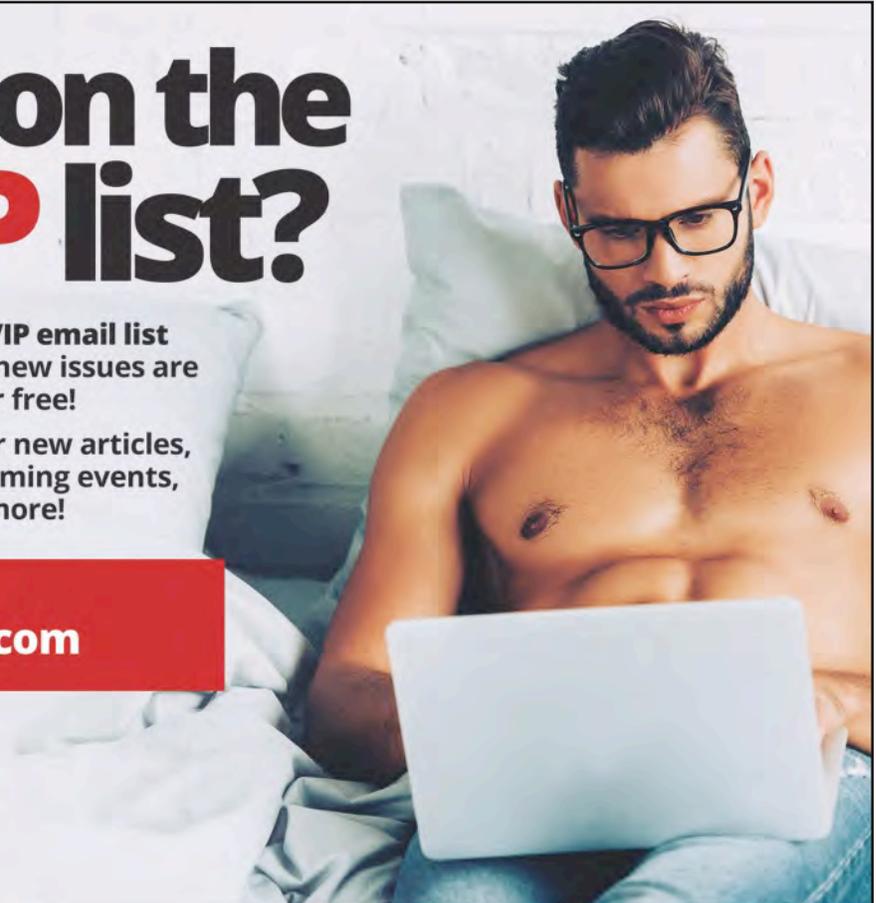
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Photos by Anthony Meade

**Cast, crew and director
announced for World Premiere
Ruth Bader Ginsburg play
WHEN THERE ARE NINE
Play to run February 10 - March
13**



Cast, crew and director announced for World Premiere Ruth Bader Ginsburg play WHEN THERE ARE NINE Play to run February 10 - March 13

Casting has been announced for PrideArts' production of WHEN THERE ARE NINE. This world premiere by American writer Sally Deering is a dream play in which the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg recalls the personal relationships and professional challenges she made on her life's journey as a feminist, lawyer, and Supreme Court Justice, as she struggles to understand her legacy before it's too late. WHEN THERE ARE NINE will be directed by Sam Hess (she/hers), who recently returned to the Chicago area after a three-year stay in Columbus, Ohio, where she directed and assistant directed several productions. WHEN THERE ARE NINE will play in The Broadway, Pride Arts Center at 4139 N. Broadway in Chicago from February 10 through March 13, 2022

Hess's cast will be led by Talia Langman as Ginsburg. Langman has acted with such Chicago companies as Strawdog, Silk Road Rising, Organic Theatre Company, and The Agency Collective; and in Frank Tovar's short film A LAST GOLDEN FLASH ACROSS THE SKY, based on a story by Sherwood Anderson. Gabriel Estrada will play RBG's husband, Marty Ginsburg, and Nicholia Q. Aguirre (of PrideArts' CASA VALENTINA) will be Gabby – the Justice's substitute caregiver for a day. The cast also includes an ensemble of seven actors who will play dozens of characters that Ginsburg encountered in her life of 87 years. The ensemble includes Shannon Bachelder (who will understudy the role of RBG), Hannah Boutillier (also U/S for Marty), Ginger DeLeon (also U/S for Gabby), Sarah Kinn, Zoe Nemetz, Ashlyn Seehafer, and Caitlin Wolfe.

WHEN THERE ARE NINE takes place largely in the mind of Justice Ginsburg and imagines how she might have recalled pivotal moments in her life, and how she viewed the challenges she faced and her work yet to be done. Deering's script shows Justice Ginsburg's deep concern for the welfare

of others and captures the wit and humor for which Justice Ginsburg was known as vividly as it documents her enormous contributions to the advancement of equality in the United States. For more information and to donate, visit www.pridearts.org or call 1.773.857.0222.

**'Something Rotten!' comes to
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thing**



It's not easy to compete with William Shakespeare, especially in the early 16th century when the famed playwright was at the top of his game. But the Bottom brothers give it their best shot when they come up with a "Renaissance revolution," a new kind of show — a musical. That's the premise of the 10-time Tony Award-nominated musical, "Something Rotten!" presented by The Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts at Northwestern University, Feb. 10-20. The musical takes over the Ethel M. Barber Theater for 10 hilarious performances. In the untold story of Shakespeare's greatest competition set in 1595, this musical comedy follows brothers Nick and Nigel Bottom on their creative journey. Thanks to a vision from Nostradamus's food-obsessed nephew, the brothers discover that the next big thing in theater involves singing, dancing and acting — all at the same time. While the struggling playwrights are stuck in the shadow of their Renaissance rock star William Shakespeare, their big dreams lead to the invention of musical theater and a whole lot of off-stage shenanigans.

"Audiences should come see 'Something Rotten!' because it's fun," said Wirtz Center guest director Rory Pelsue. "It is a love letter to theater and theatricality and theatrical convention and everything we've been missing during the past 18 months. "The beauty of 'Something Rotten!' is it's a show for people who love

Shakespeare and people who love musicals. It is also for people who hate Shakespeare and hate musicals because both Shakespeare and musicals are spoofed throughout." Songs like, "Welcome to the Renaissance" and "The Black Death," offer a wacky take on history. Audiences will revisit everything from Renaissance fashion to the bubonic plague through the twisted lens of this 120-minute performance, which includes a 15 minute intermission. Tickets for "Something Rotten!" are available online at wirtz.northwestern.edu or in-person

at the Wirtz Center Box Office, Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday, noon to 4 p.m., located in the Barber Theater lobby at 30 Arts Circle Drive or by calling (847) 491-7282.

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