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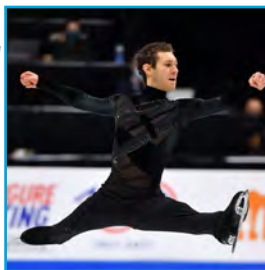
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**GRAB** MAGAZINE  
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# GRAB JASON

## Meet JASON BROWN, Chicago's Gay Olympian!

By David Zak

Jason Brown is indefatigable, relentlessly cheerful and beloved the world over. He has been recognized for decades for his championship-level skating and cultured personality. His love for what he does – from social media posts and photo calls to on-ice performances – shines through for all to see.

If Jason ever retires, I would be surprised to see him bare-chested on Instagram or covered in feathers in a broadcast booth. He is not a heat-seeking guy but instead wears his gay confidence with the same grace, dignity and elegance that you see when he skates. I had a chance to Zoom with him before he left for China, seeking a second Olympic medal.

In his typical low-key style, Jason came out in a post on Instagram last June. Are you single, I asked him. "Very, very single. But I would love to be partnered and someday have kids. But I have a couple more steps to go through before that: I am only 27!"

Jason told me that thus far, his most important relationship has been with his sport, and that has served him well. He is the 2015 U.S. Figure Skating Champion, has won nine Grand Prix medals, and won an Olympic bronze medal in the team sport in 2016.

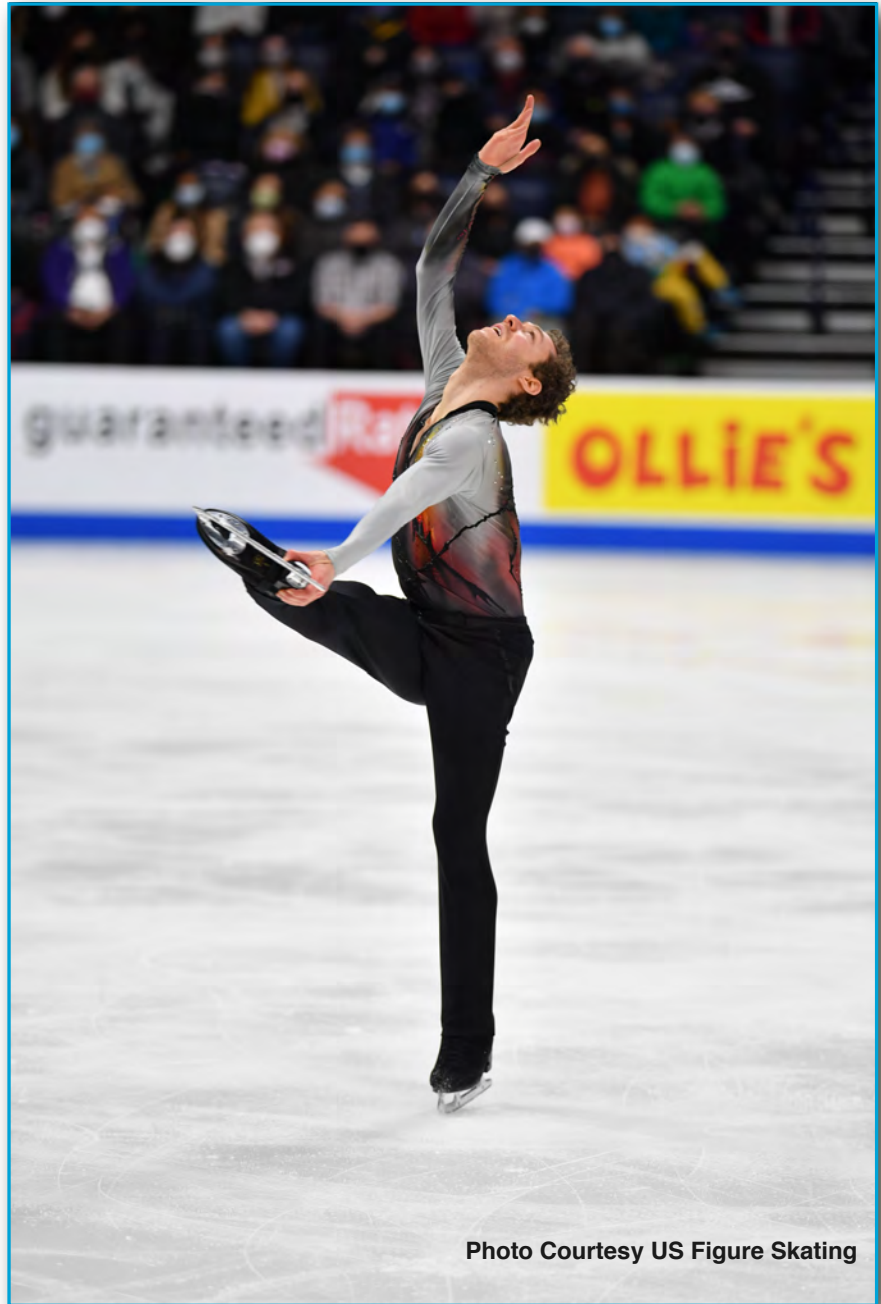


Photo Courtesy US Figure Skating

Jason was born in suburban Highland Park in 1994 and had unique opportunities to sample cultures around the world because of his sport. "The coolest part about the Olympics," he said, "is that you get to do what you love on the biggest stage – and in fabulous outfits!" He is delighted with Ralph Lauren's opening and closing ceremonies designs. Perhaps you will see him at Sidetrack wearing it someday!

We discussed homophobia in the sport, as the United States Figure

Skating Association has a well-documented history of celebrating skaters who were straight or could pass as straight. Male skaters with wives and kids were often featured, more flamboyant skaters pushed aside.

Outsports reports no openly LGBTQIA+ Winter Olympians until the 2018 games. Four years later, various countries have multiple out athletes, including Canada (ten), the United States (six), Great Britain (four), Sweden (three), France (two), and the Czech Republic (two). The list of LGBTQIA+





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Photo Courtesy US Figure Skating

Winter Olympians until the 2018 games. Four years later, various countries have multiple out athletes, including Canada (ten), the United States (six), Great Britain (four), Sweden (three), France (two), and the Czech Republic (two). The list of LGBTQIA+ figures skaters, besides Brown, includes Filippo Ambrosini (Italy), Kevin Aymoz (France), Guillaume Cizeron (France), Lewis Gibson (Great Britain), Amber Glenn (USA, reserve), Timothy LeDuc (USA), Paul Poirier

(Canada) Simon Proulx S  n  cal (Armenia), and Eric Radford (Canada).

(Italy), Kevin Aymoz (France), Guillaume Cizeron (France), Lewis Gibson (Great Britain), Amber Glenn (USA, reserve), Timothy LeDuc (USA), Paul Poirier (Canada) Simon Proulx S  n  cal (Armenia), and Eric Radford (Canada).

Radford and Cizeron have medaled at World and Olympic championships with their partners. LeDuc and Poirier are national

champions in pairs for their respective countries.

When NBC hired out skater Johnny Weir as an NBC analyst for skating, his costumes and demeanor raised eyebrows. Now his style is what many fans eagerly await. Yet last summer, a controversy erupted when a Russian coach called out Cizeron for being openly gay, saying it destroyed the relationship with his partner Gabriella Papadakis.

So, what is it about a sport that everyone assumes they know which





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team you play on if you are good at it?

When I asked about his experience, Jason said, "You know what was so incredible? I did not realize how fortunate I was as a kid. Two of my coaches were gay, so I think I always had that influence of it being normal. It was just another part of who they were. It was not a big deal or flaunted in your face, but it was the reality of it."

"I also had five cousins who are part of the LGBTQ family," he continued, "I was so fortunate that I had all of these people around me so I could debunk unpleasant situations right off the start."

I asked Jason if there was ever a time he felt negatively judged because of homophobia? He answered, "For me, no. When I started the coming out process, I wanted to be sure about myself. I wanted to make sure I had gone through that whole cycle – this is me 100 percent. It was never discussed negatively. It was normal to be who you were."

"I didn't date much being in the sport, as I was keeping my head down and doing the work. I was not exploring that scene. But once I was sure of who I was, I had to come out. It was my way of thanking everyone that came before me. It is because of them that I was able to be who I wanted to be and be comfortable with that."

Did being gay influence your choice of music or costuming? I asked him, remembering his youthfully athletic early programs, notable for his long flying ponytail. He said, "I think what was cool was that my choreographers and coaches let me express myself. I fell in love with skating because of the performance aspect. I was never put into any box. They allowed me to push the boundaries to a massive range of different music – finding my own identity through the music."

Jason continued, "Every kid is so open-minded – not tainted – they see a beautifully colorful world. That was another huge piece of my story. I did not realize how fortunate I was – not being constantly judged, not wanting to act a certain way. I always knew – but the generation before me – they went through difficult stuff."

Do you think it's better now for kids that are coming out? "I do believe that the sport has made progress. The number of people who are being vocal – proud of who they are and what they are – standing tall, saying, 'this is me.' People are inspired to be themselves and express themselves in whatever way they choose. Each athlete can perform to the same piece of music, but we would interpret it uniquely. The more people can push the



Photo Courtesy US Figure Skating

boundaries means the next generation can feel the support."

I was curious to know if he watched his competitor's skate. He said, "I don't typically watch. When you are on the ice, you are all alone, so you must go out there and skate your skate. That is all you can control. I leave the strategizing to my coaches. I try to execute to the best that I can. Keep your head down and do the work."

What's next for Jason? "It's a great question. Everything has been working and planning, with the Olympics the end game. But now is the time for lots of discussions to be had. I have been locked up for the last two years, and I will have time to start meeting with my team to figure out what I want to do next."

His free program for the Olympics is a technically challenging and beautifully nuanced skate to John Williams's famous score to Schindler's List performed by Itzhak Perlman.

Jason Brown's skating features fine detailing, excellent musically and soul. His technical scores may not top those of rivals who complete multiple quads, but his work ethic and effervescent

personality have brought him legions of fans worldwide.

While currently living in Toronto, he is open to returning to the city of Chicago, which he still calls home.



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# GRAB BRIDGET



## Bridget Everett Takes on Small-Town Queer Family

The alt-cabaret performer's queer-aligned life becomes an HBO series about the power of chosen family

By Chris Azzopardi

Bridget Everett is surrounded by queer people in her everyday life. She's got queer friends, queer family, queer fans — the latter of which she courted while performing her alt-cabaret (alt as in she's been known to sing about buttholes to a ukulele-accompanied tune) at New York City gay bars.

Everett, who Amy Schumer featured in her sketch show "Inside Amy Schumer," is straight but, at this point, you'd have a strong case for making her an honorary member of the LGBTQ+ community. And now, with her new HBO series "Somebody Somewhere," in which she acts and produces, her queer-filled real life extends to the heart of this moving, semi-autobiographical show. That's because a major part of the show is about chosen family, and in the case of Sam (Everett), who doesn't fit her small-town Kansas mold, it's the town's

queers who make her feel at, well, home. Among them are Joel (openly gay actor Jeff Hiller) and Fred Rococo (Murray Hill, comedian and NYC drag king performer).

In a recent Zoom interview with Everett, the actress talked about how the queerness of "Somebody Somewhere" mirrors her own life in some ways, her longtime relationship with Murray, and why she feels queer people "rescued" her.

**CA: I thought I knew you, until I started writing all these questions last night as if you were queer. Am I the first one to assume you're a member of the LGBTQ+ community?**

**Bridget Everett:** I think that, you know, the people I run around with [are], and people make some assumptions. But you know, we're all doing the best we can. [Laughs.]

**CA: It must have something to do with your immersion in queer culture. Is the show a reflection of your real-world queer chosen family?**

**BE:** Oh yeah, most definitely. Murray Hill is one of my closest friends, and we've known each other for, like, 20 years. He was the first person to give me a job, to give me stage time, and was so supportive. And I started meeting people like Murray in New York, and I suddenly felt seen and encouraged to be more of myself. So I feel saved and rescued by the queer community [laughs]. So, I definitely wanted to be a part of this show because that's who I think I would be looking for, you know?

**CA: How did your queer chosen family translate into "Somebody Somewhere"?**

**BE:** Paul [Thureen] and Hannah [Boss],



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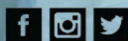
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the showrunners, pitched this world and the idea and had the character of Joel and the character Fred Rococo. They know that I'm friends with Murray. So that was nice. That also helped solve the concept for me. I was like, "Oh, well my buddy can be in this show. This is it [laughs]."

But I think that's the thing: When you live in a small town, and you don't feel like you fit in, you have to find your chosen family anywhere. We all look for our chosen family, right? But for me, thinking about what that might look like in Kansas was really interesting. I just know that if I still lived in Kansas, I would've found people like Murray.

**CA:What was it like for you growing up in Maine?**

**BE:**I spent summers in Maine at this "Dirty Dancing" kind of resort, and I would sing at night and wait tables during the day. And I went to school in Arizona, so I'd be there during the year. And then I finally moved to New York and left both of those behind. But in high school and growing up, I had a lot of friends. But I didn't always feel seen by anybody. I had a foul mouth, I was dirty, I always got in trouble with my teachers for saying raunchy shit. I mean, even from the time I was a little kid. I was just always like that and always getting reprimanded for it. But also it made my friends laugh, you know?

When I got to New York, I remember doing this show with Murray, and we had this song called "Can Hole," which is about butt sex, and I sang that. The response that we got, I was like, "Oh my god, people think this stupid shit is funny. These are my people."

**CA:You got your start in gay bars, right?**

**BE:**I was doing a lot of Murray's shows [at] gay bars. It feels like queer culture is always on the cutting edge; queer culture usually identifies what's next and what's new, and encourages you to be yourself. And the only way you're ever going to succeed and have an original voice is if you're holding true

to yourself. That's what I felt like I was getting.

**CA:As you were building a career, it must have felt like a real esteem booster for you to have your LGBTQ+ audience believe in you and your work.**

**BE:**Yeah, because I struggled with self-worth and all those things growing up, and low self-esteem. And even though I had a lot of friends, I just didn't feel special. And I felt special when I got to the gay bars and the gay clubs, and also, encouraged to push it even further. [Laughs.] The reason I am the way I am is because of those days.

**CA:**

**You get to sing in this show, you get to act, there's a bunch of queers, you get to do Zumba. This feels like what you were born to do, am I right?**

**BE:**I mean, I hope so. I feel like I wouldn't have been able to do it until this exact point in my life. I would've been too nervous or not comfortable in my skin. But because I got to be such a part of the whole process, I felt really at home in it and I didn't let myself get in my own way, and I felt not just a part of it, but I felt celebrated, you know? I felt like we tried to make everybody feel like that on set. But we felt like we were doing something a little bit different, and let's just be ourselves, and cut loose and see what happens.

**CA:You've come a long way since "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat."**

**BE:**Fully. Believe me, I remember... oh my god, that's so funny. We did

[that] in Maine at that resort, Quisisana, where I worked for many summers. I was singing "Those Canaan Days." I felt like such a star. I didn't know that I could go further. I didn't know that life would get better from there, but it did. [Laughs.]

**CA:Going back to Kansas, where you were born, what was your introduction to the queer community?**

**BE:**Two of my favorite cousins were both gay. And my oldest sister, Brinton, who has since passed away, I remember her and my cousin Bruce, we would be at a big family event, and they would sort of take me under their wing.

And I still love my cousin Bruce. He's great. Every Friday night, he goes and plays a piano at a nursing home. Super sweet, and he's fabulous and works for Ralph Lauren. But I didn't have a lot of queer friends in high school. College, yes. I mean, there were some. But now, I have found the queer people in my hometown, so when I go home, I see them. When I moved to New York, that's when I found all my people, and my friends. All my queer friends. It was just the community I was looking for and waiting for. And I know that there were friends of mine that have since come out of the closet. But in Kansas, in the '80s, it just, sadly, wasn't as easy as it is now. And maybe it's not easy now. You know, I don't know. I don't know the right answer. Please just edit some of this out because I sound like a real ding-dong. [Laughs.] But my heart's in the right

photo Courtesy of HBO







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**CA:**How close is the series to your actual family dynamic?

**BE:**We tried to make the character of my mom like my mom, who you can't even believe she's real because she's so larger than life. I don't even know how to describe her. We tried to make the character work, and it was just like, "No." Every time, it just seemed like a clown. I'm like, we can't do this. And then the dad, I didn't have a close relationship with my dad at all, and I have a close relationship with my dad in the show.

But the dead sister was something that was really great for me, because like many Midwesterners, and many people from Kansas, I dealt with my grief in a very solitary, sort of bottled up way. And this show has been a nice way for me to grieve her and honor her.

I wish you could've seen me here while I binged it. I mean, I was watching this alone the other night eating a turkey sandwich and just, like, blubbering into the turkey sandwich.

Oh, Chris. [Laughs.]



photo Courtesy of HBO

**CA:**It's very, very moving, Bridget.

**BE:**Thank you, thank you.

**CA:**And this also feels like a big moment for you, career-wise. Do you feel like Hollywood has had a hard time figuring out what to do with you?

**BE:**Yeah, most definitely. And, you know, it's not their job. [Laughs.] I'm lucky to be in this position. I'm lucky

that HBO wanted to take a chance on me. And HBO's been super supportive and patient and helpful. But it's hard for me to not get emotional. Even when we're just watching edits and the HBO logo comes on and the sound — I grew up, like, thinking HBO was the shit. And now I'm on HBO. And not just on HBO, but I'm in my own show. And I can't really stop and think about it that way, because it's too much, and I'll be the one crying into my turkey sandwich.

[Laughs.]



photo Courtesy of HBO

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



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# GRAB WAYNE

## The End is the beginning: an interview with Wayne Hoffman

By Gregg Shapiro

Writer Wayne Hoffman's name will be familiar to readers of gay fiction, including those who enjoy an erotic edge to what they're reading. His novels include *Hard*, *Sweet Like Sugar*, and *An Older Man*. Hoffman's journalism career has also earned him a following via publications such as *The Nation*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Billboard*, and *The Forward*, as *Tablet Magazine*, where he is presently editor. For his new book, the non-fiction work *The End of Her: Racing Against Alzheimer's to Solve a Murder* (Heliotrope Books, 2022), he called on his skills as a journalist and storyteller, to unravel a family mystery, all the while coming to terms with his mother Susan's Alzheimer's diagnosis and subsequent decline. The result is a kind of PBS' *Finding Your Roots* crossed with Agatha Christie's *Hercule Poirot*. Wayne was kind enough to answer a few questions about his book in February 2022.

**Gregg Shapiro:** Wayne, you're known as both a journalist and a novelist. When thinking about writing your new book, *The End of Her: Racing Against Alzheimer's to Solve a Murder*, did you always know that you would tell the story in a non-fiction format, or had you considered writing it as a novel?

**Wayne Hoffman:** I knew it'd be non-fiction because my goal was to find out the facts about what really happened to my great-grandmother—was she really murdered, and if so, by whom? I could have made up a story and turned it into a novel. But that's what other relatives had basically already done, with the outlandish legends about her that they'd passed down as family lore. I wanted to focus instead on uncovering the truth, as much as possible.

**GS:** After having written three novels, what impact did creating a work of nonfiction have on you as a journalist?

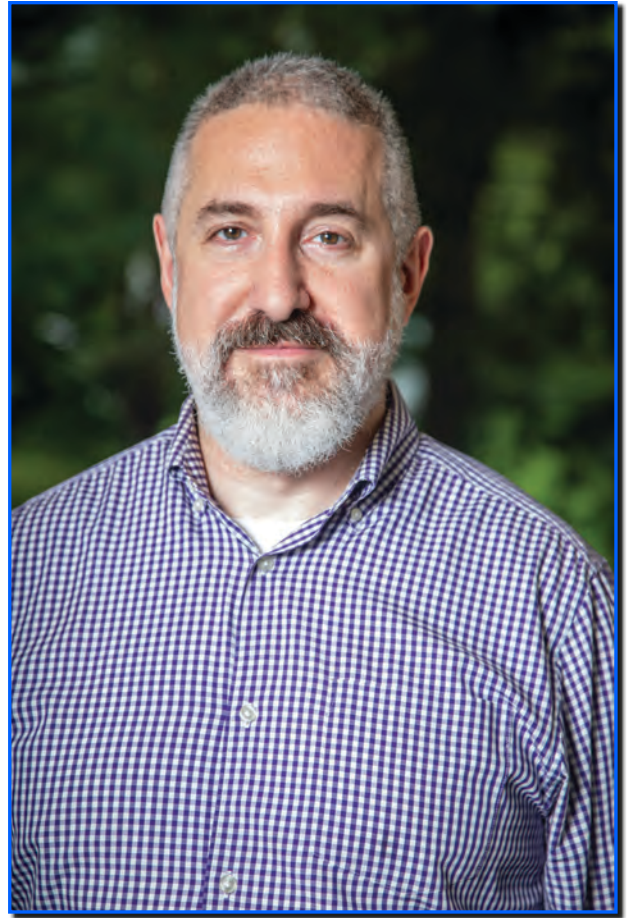
**WH:** I'm used to daily and weekly journalism—reporting quickly, writing

quickly, publishing quickly, and moving on quickly. And I'm used to writing novels—having years to write and revise. This was a new combination: I was reporting, but without any solid deadline. I could go back and rethink things, look for new sources, change conclusions, rewrite a thousand times. That's a luxury journalists rarely get. If I hadn't had that time—if I'd had to publish what I'd found after the first few weeks or months—I wouldn't have understood what really happened.

**GS:** How much did your time as an editor at the *Forward* and *Tablet* come in handy in your research?

**WH:** Being a newspaper and magazine editor allowed me to imagine what I'd say if a writer turned in what I'd written, and see what pieces were still missing. But working specifically in the Jewish press—the *Forward* and now *Tablet*—for the past 20 years also gave me a broader understanding of the larger context around my great-grandmother's murder: the waves of Yiddish-speaking immigrants coming to North America from Eastern Europe in the early 1900s, how they did and didn't assimilate, how they tried to build not just families but larger communities, how they found new ways to make a living.

**GS:** I'm glad you mentioned immigration because *The End of Her* is many things including an immigrant story, both American and Canadian, with an emphasis on Jews in Manitoba, a subject that may be new to many readers. What was it like exploring that, both on a



personal and professional level?

**WH:** It was fascinating because so much of the story was both unknown to me and unexpected. I knew there were plenty of Jews who immigrated to Manitoba—Winnipeg in particular, which is where my family settled, and where my great-grandmother was murdered. But I couldn't have imagined what their lives were like. My great-grandfather was basically a cowboy, riding horses and buying cattle on the prairies of Saskatchewan; his brothers were (almost certainly) bootleggers. Who knew? When I went to the tiny town of Canora, Saskatchewan, to dig into that slice of my family's history, I had never imagined I'd end up there. But then I thought, I bet my great-grandfather, who grew up in Russia, thought the same thing when he arrived a hundred years ago!

**GS:** Religion and religious traditions also figure prominently. What makes it unique is that they are written about from a gay perspective. In what ways do you think religion has made you the person you are today?

**WH:** I grew up in a traditional Jewish





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home—I kept kosher, went to synagogue every week, went to Jewish summer camps, attended Hebrew school, took classes at the Jewish Community Center. So, it certainly had a huge influence on who I am today. Coming out as a teenager—as gay and atheist—complicated all of that. Some things fell by the wayside: I don't keep kosher or go to synagogue anymore. My brother is a rabbi, and he goes to synagogue enough for both of us [laughs]. But I'm still strongly culturally identified, and working in the Jewish press, I spend every day steeped in Jewish culture and the Jewish community—all of it as a very public, very open gay man. Yeesh! Look at my novels—there's no way to pretend I'm not super-gay [laughs].

**GS:** As you said earlier, *The End of Her* is about family lore and learning as much as possible about it while your mother, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, can both provide details, and benefit from the solving of your great grandmother Sarah's murder. Do you think with this book



you may inspire others to clarify longstanding family myths?

**WH:** I hope so. We have so many tools now to help us understand our personal histories in terms of genetics and DNA. Those are things you can discover from a drop of blood, or a swab. But what about

the parts of our history that aren't stored in our blood or our genes, but in our memories? You can find out a lot from documents—whether they're official documents like birth certificates or personal documents like letters. But some things you can only find out from relatives and friends who remember things. The more of those people you can contact—before it's too late—the richer picture you can create of your family's history, and your own. That might clear up mysteries and scandals, or it might reveal mysteries and scandals you didn't know existed, which might even be more interesting.

**GS:** In writing about your own, and your

immediate family's, experiences in dealing with your mother's Alzheimer's diagnosis, you share heartbreaking and devastating details. For example, the frustration with physicians unable to comprehend the intricacies of treating an Alzheimer's patient as in chapter 29. Was it your intention for the book to be a tool for others going through a version of something similar?

**WH:** Definitely. There are a lot of resources for people trying to understand what someone with Alzheimer's is going through—or will go through. But there aren't enough stories for those same people trying to understand how the disease will affect them, too, as family members or friends, or caregivers. We have our own journey, and I hope that people who read what I went through, and how my family dealt with things—the parts we got right and wrong, and the choices we made—will understand a bit more about what they're really facing.

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

**WH:** I have a few projects sketched out, and even begun. At some point, I'll sit down and spread them out on my desk, and one of them will (I hope) call out to me, "Me, me! I'm next [laughs]!"







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# GRAB HARVEY

## Better than ever: An interview with Harvey Fierstein

By Gregg Shapiro



One of the best things about reading a memoir by someone with a distinctive voice – both spoken and written – is that you hear them as you read their book. Let's face it, award-winning writer and actor Harvey Fierstein qualifies as someone who has a distinctive voice and while reading his revelatory memoir, *I Was Better Last Night* (Knopf, 2022), you'd swear he was in the room with you, dishing away. Harvey was gracious enough to make time for an interview shortly before the book's March 2022 publication date.

**Gregg Shapiro:** Harvey, why was now the time to write your memoir, *I Was Better Last Night*, and does having a milestone birthday (70) in 2022 have anything to do with it?

**Harvey Fierstein:** What's really funny is that so many sources, if you look online, have my birthday as 1954, even though it's actually 1952. The

reason is that when I turned 22, my friend Eric Conklin, who directed the original production of *Torch Song*, said "You should tell everybody you're turning 21." I said, "Why?" He said, "Because if you lie when you're older, nobody believes it. But if you start at 21, who the fuck's going to care!" That year, I moved my birthday to '53. The next year, we decided we'd do it again. But I never took it seriously. Things just got picked up by this one or that one. I think it was in *New York Magazine* that they got the facts wrong and said my parents were Eastern European immigrants. They were actually third-generation Americans. But it got picked up by everyone and everywhere it said I was the son of Eastern European immigrants. My mother was born in Brooklyn and my father was born in the Catskills. So, I wrote the book, and there's a fact checker, of course. Every time I mentioned my age

he sent back a note, "Wikipedia says you were born in '54. This one says you were born in '54," I had to keep saying, "Why would I lie and make myself older? I'd only make myself younger!" It's another one of those examples of why you should never lie. I am indeed as old as the mountains. So, did I write the memoir because of the birthday? No. Like everybody else in the fucking world, this pandemic hit. I was a very good boy. I sat down and did all the work on my desk. At that time, we were supposed to be doing a production of *Bye Bye Birdie* at the Kennedy Center. I finished the rewrites on that. I had rewritten *Funny Girl* which was done in London and then went on tour in England, and we were bringing it to Broadway. I wanted to make some more changes to it, so I got all those changes done. *Kinky Boots* was sold to cruise ships, so I had to do an adaptation, a shortening



of the show, as I had already done for *Hairspray* and other shows. That was off my desk and done. I'm working on a new musical with Alan Menken and Jeff Feldman, the guys I wrote *Newsies* with.

**GS: Yes, I read about that in the book.**

**HF:** So, I was all caught up with that. Basically, I was done. Then I sat down and, as I say in the book, I make quilts. I owed a couple of quilts as gifts. I went down to my little sewing room and I made seven quilts in a row [laughs]. Usually, I turn out one a year. Everybody got their birthday quilts, their wedding quilts, whatever it was that was owed. I had cleared my desk and we were still in the pandemic. Then my agent said to me, "Why don't you write your memoir?" I said, "Because I don't write sentences."

**GS: You wrote the children's book. That has sentences.**

**HF:** But that's kid sentences. I've written Op Eds, but for that you just have to get the voice of Edward R. Murrow in your head or something like that. That's like writing dialogue, as well. All of a sudden, you're Aaron Sorkin. I thought, "What the fuck? I've got a computer. Let me try." I wrote four chapters, and I sent them to my agent. She said, "This is great!" She sent the chapters out to I think nine publishers, and eight of the nine made offers.

**GS: There are numerous powerful moments throughout the book. Without giving away too much...**

**HF:** Oh, go ahead, give it away! I already know what happens.

**GS: But I don't want to spoil it for the readers.**

**HF:** That's right. Goddammit.

**GS: Chapter 57 contains one of the most emotional sequences involving your parents. Would it be fair to say that writing the book was a cathartic experience?**

**HF:** Yes, the whole thing really is. When I started, I asked Shirley MacLaine because she's written 300 books about her 700 different lives. She said, "Write what you remember



because your brain has a way of editing, and it will give you what you need for this book. You'll remember things for other books and other things, but write what you remember and just be true to what comes up." I said, "Even about other people?" She said, "Yes. When you're writing about other people, you're really writing about yourself. Just trust that." That's what I did. There were hundreds of stories that I could have told. I just tried to sort of follow a line of thought and let it be.

**GS: That's interesting because the chapters in *I Was Better Last Night* are presented in chronological order, beginning in 1959 and concluding in 2022. Is that how they were written?**

**HF:** Yes, I wrote it exactly as it is. As you say, that particular chapter, I knew was coming because I knew what happened to bring that memory back. I'm trying to say it as you said, to not give it away. What happened between me and my brother, when he sat down to watch the last revival of *Torch Song*. My editor was incredibly gentle with me. Now and then he'd say, add more here or there. But the only real note that I got from him was he wanted to move that story into chronological order since the rest of

the book is. I said, "No. That's in emotional order."

**GS: It needed to be where it was.**

**HF:** Exactly! Most celebrity autobiographies begin "I was a kid and I saw a show and I said, 'I wanna be a star, too!'" Which is obviously not my story. I never wanted to be in show business. I didn't want to be a writer. I didn't want to be an actor or a drag performer. It was not my dream at all. That's why it was so important to do it chronologically. I wanted to show how I lived my life being true to the moment I was in.

**GS: In *I Was Better Last Night* you take readers on a journey through modern theater, from *The Gallery Players* and *La Mama* to off-Broadway and Broadway. With that in mind, would you agree that in addition to being a memoir, the book also functions as a theater history lesson?**

**HF:** I guess it does. I have certainly been told that by a bunch of people who've read the book. When I was talking to Patti LuPone about it, she said, "Geez, I wish I had done what you did. She came through theater school and right into the legitimate, not through the experimental. As I say in the book, I came from an art school, so I always approached is an art. Theater



history there. Certainly, when I look around me, and I look at the people that I grew up with – Kathleen Chalfant and Obba Babatundé – and, of course, La Mama became something bigger. There were lots of others. Meeting Matthew (Broderick) at 18, or Estelle Getty who was a housewife from Bayside, Queens. She wouldn't even admit she was from Bayside. She told everybody she was from Long Island [big laugh]. I said, "Estelle! Bayside is in Queens. Shut up!" What is history? After all, history is just day after day after day after day. I did start, as a baby, in this experimental theater. I wish that experimental theater still really existed. There were a few of us that I would say destroyed off-off-Broadway. I think greed is what destroyed off-off-Broadway. I think what happened was when people saw Tom O'Horgan make it, when Hair became a hit, that had a lot of people going, "Where's my Hair?"

**GS: But don't you think that experimental theater might exist in cities where it's a little more affordable to do that kind of thing? Say, Austin, Texas.**

**HF:** There will always be experimental theater. It's just, how is it looked at? Is the government funding there for it? I hear a lot of people saying, "Let's not waste money on theater." *Torch Song Trilogy* wouldn't have been what it was if not for a government grant. I don't know if you know this, but I just gave a grant to the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center to build a theater laboratory because rehearsal space is incredibly expensive in New York and almost impossible to find. David Rockwell is designing it and I'm hoping it'll be open in two years. I tell a story in the book about how (years ago) we were rehearsing up at the YMCA, and the director just disappeared and left us with the bill for the rehearsal room. If I can leave a rehearsal room behind... Lin-Manuel (Miranda) developed *Hamilton* in the basement of the Drama Book Shop. For my shows, I used the basement of La Mama which was this small space, but big enough for us to rehearse and develop what we needed to do. I even did a couple of shows down there.

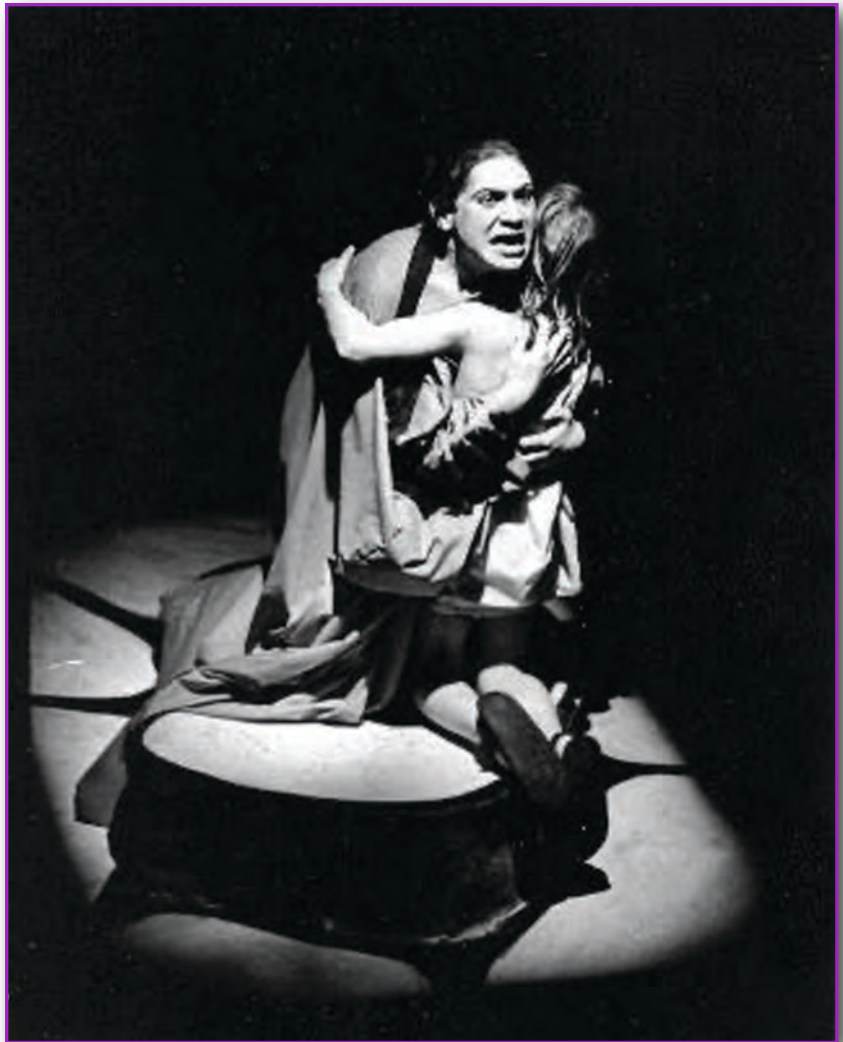
**GS: Chapters 19 through 22 give readers insight into the inspiration for and the writing of *Torch Song Trilogy* and then much later you write about the recent revival with Michael Urie. What was it like to revisit the creation and the revision of *Torch Song Trilogy*?**

**HF:** They're your children, so they never really leave you. You may not think about them in the same way all the time, but they don't leave you. You ask a mother about her son when he was six, and she can tell you a story about that time. It doesn't mean you live with those stories every day. But they're always there. Unfortunately, as you get older and people die on you, you remember them, or you go back to those stories time and again to remember how you all met and all that. With something like *Torch Song*, which is so much a part of my life, there was no real shock to going back and looking at that stuff again. Seeing Michael do it was not a shock either, because I cast all of my understudies. The show ran on Broadway for five years, but I didn't play it all five years. There were other Arnolds and I saw all of them. There were matinee Arnolds, and then we had a bus and truck tour, and a regular tour. I saw all of those guys play it. I saw it in London with Tony Sher, who died a few weeks ago. He won the Olivier for *Torch Song*.

Writing a memoir is not a time to blame other people [laughs]. When you're writing plays, it is.

**GS: I'm so glad you said that because one of the things that I think will strike readers about *I Was Better Last Night* is the brutal honesty with which you write about alcoholism and sobriety, as well as your suicide attempt. What do you hope readers will take away from that?**

**HF:** There's a certain point when you're writing something like that... I don't really care [laughs]. I needed to tell the truth and you hope that the truth will do good. When you're writing fiction, you care more about how it's read and what somebody gets out of the fiction. When you're writing non-fiction, it's like, "This is what happened, like it or not, Cookie." The only hope is that I hope you know I'm telling it the best I can and being truthful. Because the truth does affect people, that I know. When you're writing drama, you are manipulating an audience, and a story, and emotions.





When I was writing the book, of course, there's still an art to it, but I'm not turning away from something because it's not comfortable. I'm going to say it. If somebody thinks I'm an asshole, let them think I'm an asshole. You read the book, and thank you very much for doing so.

**GS: That's my job!**

**HF:** You see in the book that I don't have an answer for my own gender. Had I been born in 1980, instead of 1952, would I be a woman now? I don't know. I don't have those answers. I don't have the luxury of being born in a different society. The first (trans) person I knew was Christine Jorgensen, who died owing me money, that bitch [laughs]. When I was writing the book, I was going through photographs. There's a picture in the book of me and Marsha P. Johnson and Jon Jon marching in a Gay Pride march. I put that picture up and somebody wrote to me telling me about Marsha, like you should know who this person was. I was like, "What are you talking about? This was a friend of mine!"

**GS: Thank you for mentioning pictures. I live four blocks south of Wilton Manors in Fort Lauderdale. In**

**the book you include a photo of the WiltonArt.com street sign that features a quote by you. What does it mean to you to be immortalized in this way?**

**HF:** While it's very flattering, another place I looked had it that Walt Whitman said it! With one hand, you're flattered, and with the other, you're slapped across the face.

**GS: At least they got the attribution right in Wilton Manors.**

**HF:** That's lovely, it really is lovely. It's a lovely thing to see something link that. I was watching some interview with Billy Porter and as if by accident, they walked down the block where there was a mural on the side of a building of his portrait. As if, "Oh, I didn't know that was there!" You sort of laugh, like, yeah, right! You brought a film crew because you didn't know your picture was there on the wall [laughs]. That sort of stuff of celebrity is always funny. Especially when you have friends who are famous



and you try to just be human beings together, but then you go out in public, and you realize that they mean a whole other thing to the public than to you. Harvey will be attending an event at the University Club of Chicago on March 16th—audience will go to the club and he'll be beamed in via Zoom. <http://www.ucco.com>

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<b>Tuesday</b>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> \$5 Well Cocktails &amp; Draft Beer 6-8pm, Game Night with Tony. <b>Cell Block:</b> Open 4pm-2am. <b>Charlie's:</b> TuneUp Tuesday Karaoke 7 – 11PM, Tag Team Tuesdays 11p – 2am, Dancing until close. <b>Houndstooth:</b> \$2 Tacos, ½ Off Bottles of Wine, \$5 Red or White Sangria, \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. <b>Hydrate:</b> 8/10 Tat Tuesday XXL Doors open at 8pm. <b>Kit Kat Lounge:</b> Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis <b>Lark:</b> 50% Off Bottles of Wine with any Entree Purchase, Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. Open auditions for male dancers 7pm. \$5 drink specials. <b>Meeting House Tavern:</b> \$6 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$3 House Shots, \$5 Jäger, Fireball &amp; Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>North End:</b> Open at 11am, \$5 Canned Beers, Seltzers &amp; Ciders. <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts &amp; Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm. <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 3pm, Trivia Tuesday 8-10pm, TRL Tuesday: Totally Rad Line-up of 90's-to-Now Music Videos 10pm-2am, OUTspoken LGBTQ+ Storytelling 1st Tuesday of the month from 7-9pm. <b>Steamworks:</b> Every Tuesday 4 pm – 4 am Guys Under 25 Get In Free* (*Free 30 day membership and free locker). <b>Touche:</b> Hardcore Cruisin' Sponsor Leather 64Ten. No cell phones/Wifi.</p>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> \$5 Well Cocktails &amp; Draft Beer 6-8pm. <b>Cell Block:</b> Open 4pm-2am. <b>Charlie's:</b> Country Line Dancing 7 – 10pm, Sapphire's Secret Shadows 10pm – 1 am, Dancing until close. <b>Houndstooth:</b> \$4 Appetizers, \$7 Burgers, \$3 Domestic Drafts, \$5 Premium Drafts, \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. <b>Kit Kat Lounge:</b> Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis <b>Lark:</b> Free Bingo, 50% Off Nachos &amp; Totchos, \$8 Villa One Margaritas Frozen or on the Rocks, Traditional Flavor only. Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open at 6pm Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. <b>Meeting House Tavern:</b> \$3 Miller Lite Drafts, \$4 Stolis (All Flavors), \$5 Jäger, Fireball &amp; Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>North End:</b> Open at 11am \$5 Lagunitas Draft &amp; Cans. <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts &amp; Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 3pm, All Things Beyoncé 2nd Wed of month, All Things Gaga 3rd Wed of month, All Things Taylor &amp; Ariana 4th Wed of month – all 9pm-2am. <b>Steamworks:</b> Bear Hump Every second Wednesday 6-9pm A monthly mid-week gathering of Furry Men. <b>Touche:</b> Jockstrap Night Sponsored by Full Kit Gear, Free Clothing check.</p>
<b>Thursday</b>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> \$5 Well Cocktails &amp; Draft Beer 6-8pm, RuPaul Drag Race All Stars 6 Viewing Party - 7pm. <b>Baton Show Lounge:</b> Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm &amp; 11:30pm. <b>Cell Block:</b> Open 4pm-2am. <b>Charlie's:</b> Survivor 10 pm – 1 am, Dancing Until Close. <b>Houndstooth:</b> \$2.50 Minis • \$3 College Beer, \$6 40'S, \$5 Absolut Bombs, \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. <b>Hydrate:</b> RuPaul's Drag Race Season All Stars Viewing Party Doors Open 6:30pm, Bubble POP Hosted by Khloe Coulee 9pm. <b>Kit Kat Lounge:</b> Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. <b>Lark:</b> RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars 6 viewing party &amp; Bogo Pizza 7pm, Buy One Pizza, Get One Pizza Half Off (Dine in Only), Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. <b>Meeting House Tavern:</b> \$5 You Call It's, \$5 Jäger, Fireball &amp; Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>North End:</b> Open at 11am, \$5 Deep Eddy Cocktails <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts &amp; Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 3pm, Chicago's RuPaul's Drag Race Viewing Party 7pm, Drag &amp; Games Dance Party 9pm-2am <b>Steamworks:</b> Lights Out Thursdays, The Club goes Dark Every Thursday 4pm-4am. <b>Touche:</b> 111/17St. Patrick's Day Party, Specials &amp; Raffles Best Kilt Legs Contest.</p>



# GRAB YOUR FRIENDS

Daily  
Specials

## Friday

**@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. **Houndstooth:** \$6 Pulled Pork or Pulled Chicken Sandwich, \$6 Absolut Mules, \$12 Domestic Pitchers, \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. **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 Lite Drafts, \$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.) **Shakers:** \$4 Domestic Bottles \$5 Well Mixed Drinks, \$10 Giant 23oz Long Islands in 22 flavors. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, T.G.I.F. Show Tunes 4-9pm, Friday Night Dance Party 9pm-2am. **Touche:** 3/18Cowboy Round Up Full Moon party & Contest. 3/25 ONYX Club Night

## Saturday

**@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. **Houndstooth:** Brunch 11am-3pm \$15 Bottomless Mimosas, \$6 Michelada's, \$2 Breakfast Sliders, \$5 Stadium Cups (ALL DAY), \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets.. **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. **Touche:** 3/19 Gear Night with BLUFBarber & Boot Black Dress Code in Clubroom BNC6p3/26: RIPE PARTY Dim Lights, Deep Beats Go-Go Dudes zzzDJ Harry T.

## Sunday Funday

**@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, Singational Sunday Karaoke 7pm – 11pm Mas Leche 11pm – 1am, Dancing until close. **Houndstooth:** Brunch 11am-3pm \$15 Bottomless Mimosas, \$6 Michelada's, \$2 Breakfast Sliders, \$6 40'S (ALL DAY), \$12 Domestic Pitchers (ALL DAY), \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. **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 Frozen's, \$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 **Touche:** Beer Bust \$2 Bud Light Drafts, Bears vs Ravens at Noon, Movie Night 7pm



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## GRAB A HIT



**Top 40 Dance Chart this week**  
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	Artist	Title
1	Sonny Fodera	You ft. Sam Tompkins
2	NEIKED x Mae Muller x Polo G	Better Days (Regard Remix)
3	SLVR & offrami	Do Anything ft. LOUIS III
4	Joel Corry x Mabel	I Wish
5	David Guetta	Family ft. Bebe Rexha x Ty Dolla \$ign & A Boogie Wit da Hoodie (Hook N
6	Rozell & Sebastian Perez	No One Knows My Face (Radio Edit)
7	Dom Dolla	Strangers ft. Mansionair (Radio Edit)
8	Zack Martino	Let Me Down ft. Amanda Collis
9	The Chainsmokers	I Can't Make You Love Me (Remix)
10	The Knocks	River ft. Parson James
11	Disco Fries & Danny & Tariq	Weight Off
12	Mahalo & Milkwish	Careless ft. Lena Leon
13	tyDi & Jes	Just Believe
14	Martin Jensen x Cheat Codes x Theresa Re	Running
15	Martin Garrix x Matisse & Sadko x John Ma	Won't Let You Go
16	Farius	A Big Life (Radio Mix)
17	Nicky Romero & GATTUSO x Jared Lee	Afterglow
18	Majestic	Tricky ft. Autumn Rowe
19	MEDUZA	Tell It To My Heart ft. Hozier (Radio Edit)
20	Poo Bear	Distant Shore (Joel Corry Remix)
21	John Summit	Human ft. Echoes
22	tyDi x Electric Polar Bears	You Never Know ft. Neverwaves
23	Tiesto	Motto ft. Ava Max (Tiesto VIP Remix)
24	Alok x Steve Aoki	Typical ft. Lars Martin
25	Sophie Francis	Famous ft. CVBZ
26	Keanu Silva x Toby Romeo x SACHA	Hopeless Heart (Radio Edit)
27	Kungs	Lipstick (Dubdogz and JORD Radio Remix)
28	Jennifer Lopez	On My Way (TELYKast Remix)
29	HRVY	1 Day 2 Nights
30	Anabel Englund	Midnight Rapture
31	Jonasu & JC Stewart	On My Mind
32	Tritonal & Codeko	Superhuman (Ferry Corsten)
33	MelyJones & Charles B	Do You Remember (Coopex Edit)
34	Purple Disco Machine	Dopamine ft. Eyelar
35	Zookeeper & Jen	Taking Over Me
36	Allegra	If You Wanna Love Me (Majestic Remix)
37	Sam Feldt x Rita Ora	Follow Me (Radio Edit)
38	Jonas Blue & Why Don't We	Don't Wake Me Up
39	Charli XCX	Good Ones (Joel Corry Remix)
40	Ashley Paul	Come And Get Me (Until Dawn Remix Radio)



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# GRAB HOLLY

## You Pick Your Nose, I'll Pick Mine

By Holly Maholm

There is an old saying, "You can pick your friends, and you can pick your nose, but you can't pick your friend's nose." Now, when I first heard this pithy expression, I was appalled and disgusted that anyone would imagine trying to do such a thing. To begin with, the thought of me picking my own nose was unpleasant enough, but my mind absolutely recoiled from any attempt to picture how I might "pick my friend's nose." Nevertheless, after much deep meditation, I finally found what hidden wisdom is to be found in that old saying: Wisdom which I will now share with you.

I was sitting in a booth at Donut Time, sipping coffee and savoring a peach fritter (made from peaches harvested at our very own Horse Rescue orchard), while outside – waiting none-too-patiently – was Victor, disguised as Biscuit, retired carriage horse. I had promised to pick up several dozen donuts for the unicorns sheltering at the stable, and I was waiting for Cindy to assemble my order.

Meanwhile, I was observing the new waitress, who had been hired when Aly betook herself to the new Ice Cream Palace recently opened at No. 9, Wellington Square. The new waitress –

"Blair" – was doing her best to "fill the shoes" of Aly, whom she had replaced, but honestly, no one was interested in her footwear. What most customers cared about was how well she filled out Aly's skin-tight pencil skirts and push-up bras. In this department, sadly, Blair could do no more than remind the straight male customers of how good they had it, back when Aly minced provocatively back and forth between kitchen and booth.

Cindy emerged from the kitchen and called to Blair to join her in the back. I wanted to check on my order, so I followed them, but only got as far as the kitchen door before I heard Cindy's voice inside, so I waited there to do a little free-range eavesdropping.

Cindy spoke, "Blair, what have you got hanging from your name tag?" Blair answered, "It's my pronouns. People can see my name tag says 'Blair,' and they have to guess if it's a boy's name or a girl's name, but in my case it's neither, cause I'm non-binary. My pronouns are 'They/Them.' That's what I've got on the tag." I could hear Cindy pausing to consider this unexpected provocation, after which she launched into a well-modulated tirade.

"What the fuck! Who told you to do that? If your actual name is too ambiguous for our customers to figure out, then you need to wear clothing that reflects your proper gender. Can't you wear a skirt – preferably a short one? Aly always wore a skirt, and no one had any problem using She/Her when she was around."

Blair replied, "Yeah, that was Aly, who was transgender, but I'm not like that. I'm non-binary, so I don't use any of the 'cis' pronouns. I use They/Them, and I want customers to know what my pronouns are – and use them when I'm around." There was a pause as Cindy cogitated. "Look, Blair," she resumed, "I can see you want to crawl in under the 'transgender' umbrella and claim sisterhood with the rest of us trannies, who have been 'smashing the gender binary' for decades. But if you want to do that, you need to understand how things are in our little world.

"See, back when Xandra and I used to stand out on the corner, hooking, we knew we were



peddling a very special, unique 'product.' We were wearing female apparel – what little clothing we wore – but underneath, we still had those male 'parts' our customers desired. So, if a customer used a He/Him pronoun with me, I let it slide, cause after all, how wrong was he, really?

"But more importantly, those men getting my pronouns wrong was the least of my worries. Cause often, they would say rude and abusive stuff like 'Down on your knees, bitch' or 'That's too much money for a tranny faggot.' They called me the most horrible names you can imagine, but if the worst they did was to get my pronouns wrong, I considered myself lucky they didn't beat me up and steal my money.

"Blair, honey, even if they call you a 'fuck-hear' or 'piece of shit,' there's nothing you can do about it! You can't control the words people use – even the words they use when they're talking to you or about you. Honestly, if they don't use your 'preferred pronouns,' you need to 'man up' and shrug it off.

"Bottom line: Here at Donut Time, if a customer calls you a 'tranny' or gets your pronouns wrong, we don't care. But if any customer does get out-of-line, the one pronoun everybody working here uses is 'you' – as in 'Fuck you.'"

(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](http://www.hollymaholm.com).*

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# Touche

Photos By Anthony Meade





# GRAB A PLANE



## OUTDOOR FUN IN THE FLORIDA SUN: Your Visit To Fort Lauderdale

By Bill Malcolm

Now is the perfect time to plan a visit to Fort Lauderdale (and the Island City of Wilton Manors which is the gayborhood). I spent two weeks there recently and had a COVID safe vacation by doing most stuff outside or on the beach. With temperatures in the high 70s to 80s, it is the perfect escape from the dreary winter weather in many parts of the country.

### **GETTING THERE**

I snagged a low fare to Miami on American. The Tri-Rail goes right to Fort Lauderdale from the Miami (MIA). On the way back, I took Southwest out of Fort Lauderdale (FLL) where the Broward County Transit Bus takes you

to Fort Lauderdale Airport. Getting around is a breeze on Broward County Transit. Skip the rental car and parking hassles (and the traffic). Or take Uber or Lyft. The new Brightline high speed passenger rail serves Miami, Fort Lauderdale, and West Palm and is also a great option.

### **WHERE TO STAY**

I stayed in the new Home2Suites by Hilton just north of downtown (315 NW 1st) in the Flagler Arts and Technology District (FATVillage). You get a full furnished apartment. Across the hall are the more affordable TRU by Hilton rooms. Either way you'll enjoy the outdoor bar/pool/laundry room/gym

on the fifth floor. Two food trucks are right outside if you get hungry and they also sell food and drinks at the check in area. You are steps from the FATVillage, Sistrunk Marketplace & Brewery (a food hall), the C&I Next Door Brew Coffee House, and Henry's Sandwich Station (a sandwich shop with great cookies). Just down the street is the Broward County Transit Center where you can take the #50 bus to Wilton Manors or catch another bus to Sebastian Street Beach. A short walk away is the GreenWise Market which has a great salad and hot food bar plus you can pick up some super sweet Florida strawberries.





#### **WHAT TO DO**

Take the new Brightline Train to down to Miami. Once in Miami, check out the Wynwood Arts District as well as the Design District. Or take the express bus to South Beach and visit the free Botanical Gardens as well as the Holocaust Memorial on your way to the beach.

Walk around FATVillage and take in a Saturday evening art walk. In Ft. Lauderdale.

Walk along the Riverwalk in downtown Ft. Lauderdale.

Run or walk with the Fort Lauderdale Frontrunners which meets three times a week.

Hang out on the beach at the Sebastian Street Beach.

Enjoy the Sunday farmer's market in the MASS Arts District sponsored by the Sunnyside Up Market.

#### **WILTON MANORS**

Wilton Manors is up the road from downtown Fort Lauderdale. The "Island City" is Palm Springs east. Lots of bars and restaurants in the LGBTQ village along Wilton Drive. There are no chains – just independent boutiques. Try the salmon at Rosie's Bar and Grill and enjoy the outdoor seating. Hamburger Mary's across the street has the Sunday drag brunch. Sit outside and enjoy a cocktail at Hunters. Happy Hour runs from 6-8 p.m. at Johnsons and I hear they have dancers. The Pub is a lot of fun as is Georgie's Alibi Monkey

Bar. The Gym Sportsbar also is another option.

Most of the bars and restaurants have outdoor seating.

#### **WORK OUT**

Keep in shape by working out at the Powerhouse Gym at The Galleria at Fort Lauderdale.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO PLAN YOUR TRIP**

HOTspots! Magazine (which has run my column) has the latest on bar specials, upcoming events, restaurant reviews and more. Read it online at HotspotsMagazine.com. OutClique is another resource (a monthly magazine as is South Florida Gay News. Visit Lauderdale, the official tourism marketing agency for Broward County/ Greater Fort Lauderdale, provides insights and tips for visiting the

area: sunny.org.

Bill Malcolm is America's only value LGBTQ+ syndicated travel column. He received no compensation of any kind from anyone during his visit. His opinions are his own.





## Lambda Legal to 11th Circuit: Affirm Decision That Ordered Florida School to Provide Equal Restroom Access to Transgender Student

Lambda Legal last week urged the full panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit to affirm a lower court ruling that required a Jacksonville, Florida-area school district to allow a male transgender student, **Andrew Adams**, to use the restroom that matches his gender.

"All students should be treated with respect and care in our schools. All I asked was to be treated the same as other boys and to be recognized for who I am, but the school discriminated against me simply because I am transgender," said plaintiff Andrew Adams, now a college student. "I hope that this court sees this exclusion for what it is, discrimination, with painful consequences."

"Today we asked the full Eleventh Circuit to uphold the well-reasoned ruling of the U.S. District Court that treating Andrew Adams differently because he is transgender is discriminatory and unconstitutional," said Tara Borelli, Senior Counsel,

Lambda Legal. "As state legislatures increasingly target transgender youth for clear and harmful discriminatory treatment, we hope that the Eleventh Circuit will continue to stand as a bulwark against these attacks and protect this vulnerable population."

Lambda Legal argued that the district court ruled correctly in finding that the school district's policy to exclude transgender students from the restrooms that match their gender is unlawful because it discriminates based on sex in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Lambda Legal filed the lawsuit on behalf of Adams in June 2017 in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida. Andrew Adams' case was the country's first trial involving a transgender student's equal access to restrooms. In July 2018, the district court ordered St. Johns County School District to allow Adams to use the boys' restroom at Nease High School, like all the other



boys. The school district then appealed that ruling to the Eleventh Circuit.

In August 2020, and again in July 2021, a 3-judge panel from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit affirmed the lower court ruling. The full court subsequently vacated the rulings and agreed to hear the case before the full court.

"I just hope that this Court will put an end to the hurtful discrimination my son was subjected to when the school banned him from the boys' restrooms. We remain optimistic that our son will prevail, and that a decision in his favor will send a strong message to transgender kids that they are valuable and worthy of equal treatment," said Andrew's mother, **Erica Adams Kasper**.

## LGBTQ Victory Fund Endorses 80 More LGBTQ Candidates, Including Robert Zimmerman for U.S. Congress



– LGBTQ Victory Fund, the only national organization dedicated to electing LGBTQ leaders to public office, endorsed 80 more out LGBTQ candidates running in the 2022 midterms. This is the largest number of LGBTQ candidates endorsed by Victory Fund in one month ever, further illustrating the historic momentum behind LGBTQ people running for public office across the country. Victory Fund has now endorsed 206 candidates for 2022. Candidates endorsed today include U.S. House candidate Robert

Zimmerman (NY-03), who would be the first out LGBTQ member of Congress from Long Island. Zimmerman was given Game Changer candidate status. Mayoral candidate Ty Penserga, who would be the first out LGBTQ mayor of Boynton Beach, Florida, was upgraded to Spotlight candidate status. Mayor Annise Parker, President & CEO of LGBTQ Victory Fund, released the following statement about the new endorsements:

"Today's endorsements signal a historic moment for the LGBTQ community – this is the most out LGBTQ people we have ever endorsed in a single month and there are more out LGBTQ people running for public office than ever before in history. This midterm election is about enthusiasm. Voters across the country are excited – and determined – to elect candidates with diverse perspectives who instill messages of hope, acceptance and courage. This is just the beginning. The Rainbow Wave is stronger than ever."

For more information Visit [www.victoryFund.org](http://www.victoryFund.org)

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Photos By Anthony Meade



March 1, 2022

GRAB Magazine

37



# GRAB KEVIN

## 'Scream' King Screenwriter Kevin Williamson on the real-life gay killers who inspired Stu and Billy, and what Sidney means to him

By Chris Azzopardi

Malesuada quis, egestas quis, wisi. Donec ac sapien. Ut orci. Duis ultricies, metus a feugiat porttitor, dolor mauris convallis est, quis mattis lacus ligula eu augue. Sed facilisis. Morbi lorem mi, tristique vitae, sodales eget, hendrerit sed, erat lorem ipsum dolor.

If you're still wondering about those homoerotic undertones 25 years after Billy Loomis and Stu Macher terrorized Woodsboro in Wes Craven's "Scream," you've been on the right track all along.

Ahead of the new "Scream," openly gay screenwriter of the first "Scream," Kevin Williamson, has confirmed that Billy (Skeet Ulrich) and Stu (Matthew Lillard), who are thought to be queer by many LGBTQ+ fan theorists, were based on infamous mass murderers Nathan Freudenthal Leopold Jr. and Richard Albert Loeb, both of whom reportedly admitted they were gay and in a relationship.

In May 1924, Leopold and Loeb, who've been called the "LGBTQ+ prototype for Bonnie and Clyde," killed 14-year-old Bobby Franks as an act of intellectual superiority. It's been called the "perfect crime," one that has influenced Alfred Hitchcock's "Rope" as well as the 2002 crime thriller "Murder by Numbers." Both are noted for their homoeroticism.

Now, nearly three decades after "Scream" came out, theorists can officially categorize "Scream" in that same queer-coded realm.

"It's very sort of homoerotic, in the sense that there were these two guys that killed this other person just to see if they could get away with it," Williamson said, drawing parallels between the Leopold and Loeb case and Billy and Stu. "And one of the reasons that one could get the other one [to follow] is because I think the other one was secretly in love with him. And it was

sort of a fascinating case study on double murderers. If you Google 'Leopold and Loeb,' you will see. And you'll read about it and you'll get, OK, that's Billy and Stu."

This wasn't lost on "Scream" queen Neve Campbell, who has starred as the film's Ghostface-fighting heroine mainstay Sidney Prescott. When I recently asked Campbell about Billy and Stu, she acknowledged a "burgeoning love relationship," before elaborating on exactly what that means.

After calling them "pretty confused guys," she said, "Maybe some of their anger comes from not being allowed to be who they want to be, if you wanna go there." Was Stu more in love with Billy than Billy was with Stu? "Yeah, yeah. Yes," Campbell answered definitively.

"One was the follower and one was the leader," Williamson said. "And that alone sort of sets up the dynamic of a hidden relationship."

"Is Stu secretly in love with Billy? Maybe. Did Billy manipulate that? Possibly," added Williamson, who created "Dawson's Creek" and wrote



the screenplays for "I Know What You Did Last Summer" and "The Faculty." "It's all left up for you to wonder, because clearly Billy's the one who was leading. Billy was the one who had the mother. Billy was the one who was sort of orchestrating it. And Stu was the person who helped carry it out. So it sort of put Stu in that position of, what was his feelings toward his best friend? That we do not know. It's just left to keep you wondering."

Not everyone wondered. Some just knew. The 2000 comedy "Scary Movie," which parodied scenes from "Scream," picked up on the queer vibes between Billy and Stu. In one scene, Ray (Shawn Wayans), based on Stu, and Bobby (Jon Abrahams), based on Billy, joke about being gay, divulging to a Sidney-like character called Cindy (Anna Faris) that, "That's right, Cindy, I'm gay. And in case you haven't noticed, so is Ray."



Williamson admits that when he wrote the original "Scream," which was released in 1996, he was "very hesitant to present the gay side of me in my work," resulting in the queerness of characters Billy and Stu being "a little coded and maybe accidental."

Now, he said, "maybe I'd be braver. Maybe I wouldn't be that shy little gay writer who felt like he couldn't get away with it."

Williamson grew up in the South in both Texas and North Carolina, places where he understood "that fight for survival that you feel, like you're trying to hide yourself. And then just trying to survive until you can get out of that small town and be yourself and express yourself."

Recently, in an interview with The Independent, Williamson confessed that the "Scream" movies are "coded in gay survival," with Sidney being, essentially, a manifestation of his struggles as a gay person.

"It's always the survival tales that connects us," he told me. "And so I think that's one of the reasons Final Girls are so important to us as a gay audience." Before he wrote Sidney, he related to Jamie Lee Curtis' Laurie Strode in "Halloween" because, being gay, "he understands the 'plight of the Final girl.'"

"I know what it's like," he added. "I think gay kids everywhere understand that survival element that we have to sort of create in ourselves. And when we're watching that Final Girl have to prove herself and rise to the challenge and save her life, I think that's something gay kids anywhere can relate to."

Touched by how many LGBTQ+ people have felt inspired by Sidney, Campbell told me her heroic character "gives people that confidence that they can overcome" and that she understands why "it makes sense

certainly for the queer community and gay men. But I think also just for anyone who has struggled with bullying or challenges, and in their youth especially."

And then, of course, there's pushy, stubbornly pertinacious TV journalist Gale Weathers (Courteney Cox) who, Williamson said, "would fit right in with the 'Will & Grace' crowd."

"She represents one side of my voice," he said, "which is part of who I am."

In the new installment of "Scream," titled the same as the original that was released to massive and ever-growing fandom 25 years ago, Williamson is reveling in the fact that there's an openly queer woman of color, Mindy (played by Jasmine Savoy-Brown, a queer actor of color), among the new teen cast. Battling Ghostface alongside the new teens is the legacy cast, which includes Campbell, Cox and, returning as deputy sheriff Dewey Riley, David Arquette.

Of course Mindy is a result of a shift in LGBTQ+ representation — now, to queer-code characters would be an embarrassing step backwards — but Williamson also attributes the character to a shift in his own growth as a gay man. That growth, he said, led him to write the character of Jack McPhee, an openly gay teen who appeared as a "Dawson's Creek" series regular starting in 1998.

"I felt empowered," he said. "I felt like, OK, now I can start expressing myself and really write that part of me that I really want to write."

With Mindy in "Scream," he feels great affection for the character who he says "just exists."

"We're in a place now where she's just part of the group," he added. "And it's just part of life. I think that was beautiful." Campbell, too, agreed it was "a beautiful thing."

When Williamson received the director's cut of the new "Scream," which he executive produced but didn't write, he watched it with his partner. His affection for Sidney runs so deep that, as he watched her appear for the first time onscreen, jogging down the boardwalk with her baby carriage, turning to the camera to answer a call from Dewey, he cried.

"I did," he said. "I teared up."

*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.*



*photo courtesy of Paramount Pictures*



**Easter Bunny Bingo: Jesus, Resurrection, & Peeps! Returns to the Greenhouse Theater Center**  
**For the 2022 Lenten Season**  
**March 18 through April 16**



Is it a sin to answer your cell phone during Mass? Can you text your confession to your priest? Is it a sin to eat meat on a Friday during Lent? You'll learn the answers to these and more as Vicki Quade's comedy, *Easter Bunny Bingo: Jesus, Resurrection, & Peeps!*, reopens on March 18, just in time for the Easter season, at the Greenhouse Theater Center, Chicago.

The show had its world premiere in March 2020 and ran exactly one weekend, closing when the pandemic forced the closure of theaters throughout the city. "It's a real joy to celebrate this reopening," Quade says. "It's been a long two years."

The premise is that Mrs. Mary Margaret O'Brien, a former nun, is here tonight to play bingo and talk about Easter traditions, why Easter is never on the same day, the history of no-meat Fridays, why we either love or hate Peeps, Easter movies, and much more!

It's a crazy night of Easter trivia, audience interaction, and a wacky contest all built about the concept of sin! Add to that a box of wacky prizes, some Easter candy, fun bingo cards, and a lot of Catholic humor for a night of entertainment you'll never forget. And in this interactive bingo show, you'll actually play bingo. What could be more fun?! You'll be laughing so hard, you'll have to be careful watching your bingo cards!

Sharing the role of Mrs. O'Brien on stage will be the show's creator, Vicki Quade, and veteran Chicago comedy actresses **Liz Cloud** and **Nancy Greco**. *Easter Bunny Bingo* is the latest

installment in Quade's bingo series, which also includes the long-running hits *Bible Bingo*, *Christmas Bingo*, and the Halloween comedy, *Holy Ghost Bingo*. She is also the co-creator of the long-running hit comedy, *Late Nite Catechism*, and a host of other religious comedies.

As the creator of *Late Nite Catechism*, **Vicki Quade** knows a thing or two about what makes a one-person show successful," says Pioneer Press, Chicago.

*Easter Bunny Bingo* will run for five weeks only during the Lenten season, starting Friday, March 18, through Saturday, April 16. There is no show on Easter Sunday. Show times are Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. All performances are

at the Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago.

For tickets, call the box office at **773-404-7336** or go to: <https://greenhousetheatercenter.thundertix.com>

**The Den Theatre Presents**  
**Comedian**  
**RIVER BUTCHER Friday, March 11,**  
**2022 on The Heath Mainstage**



The Den Theatre presents comedian River Butcher for two stand-up performances on Friday, March 11, 2022 at 7 pm & 9:15 pm on The Heath Mainstage, 1331 N. Milwaukee Ave. in Chicago's Wicker Park neighborhood.

The Den currently requires proof of vaccination for all guests, staff and performers and adheres to all CDC, state and local safety guidelines. Additionally, masking is required for all guests during performances. For the most current information on The Den's COVID guidelines, visit [thedentheatre.com/covid19-policy](https://thedentheatre.com/covid19-policy).

River Butcher, originally from Akron, Ohio, is a Los Angeles-based stand-up comic, actor and writer, who Variety named a "Top Ten Comic to Watch" in 2017. River has performed as themselves on television programs such as *The Meltdown with Jonah and Kumail*, *Adam Ruins Everything*, *@Midnight*, *Conan*, *2 Dope Queens* and *Ellen*.

As an actor, River plays Lindsay in *Good Trouble* for Freeform. You can now stream his half-hour comedy special, *A Different Kind of Dude* on the Comedy Central YouTube channel, as well as both their comedy albums, *Butcher and Pull Yourself Up by Your Bootleg*. Tickets (\$18 - \$40) are currently available at [thedentheatre.com](https://thedentheatre.com) or by calling (773) 697-3830.

**Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts set to host comic ballet company Les Ballet Trockadero de Monte Carlo Thursday April 7th**



The Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts is set to host the world's foremost all-male comic ballet company, the Les Ballet Trockadero de Monte Carlo, are slated to perform on Thursday, April 7th on the BCPA mainstage.

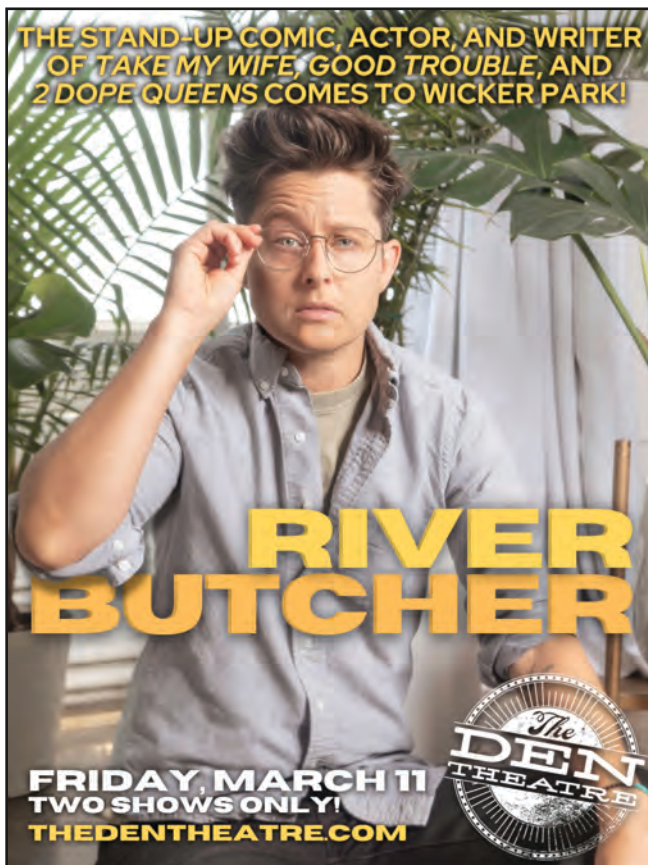
"We are really excited to have the Trocks' at the BCPA as their only performance in Illinois," said **Thom Rakestraw**, City of Bloomington's Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts Marketing Manager, adding "this is the perfect show for ballet fans and for those who might not know that much about ballet and modern dance but can appreciate the pure athleticism and who want an evening filled with laughter."

*Tickets for Les Ballet Trockadero de Monte Carlo are available now, and can be purchased online via Ticketmaster at [www.artsbloomington.org](https://www.artsbloomington.org), or by calling the BCPA Ticket Office at 309-434-2777; toll-free at 866-686-9541*

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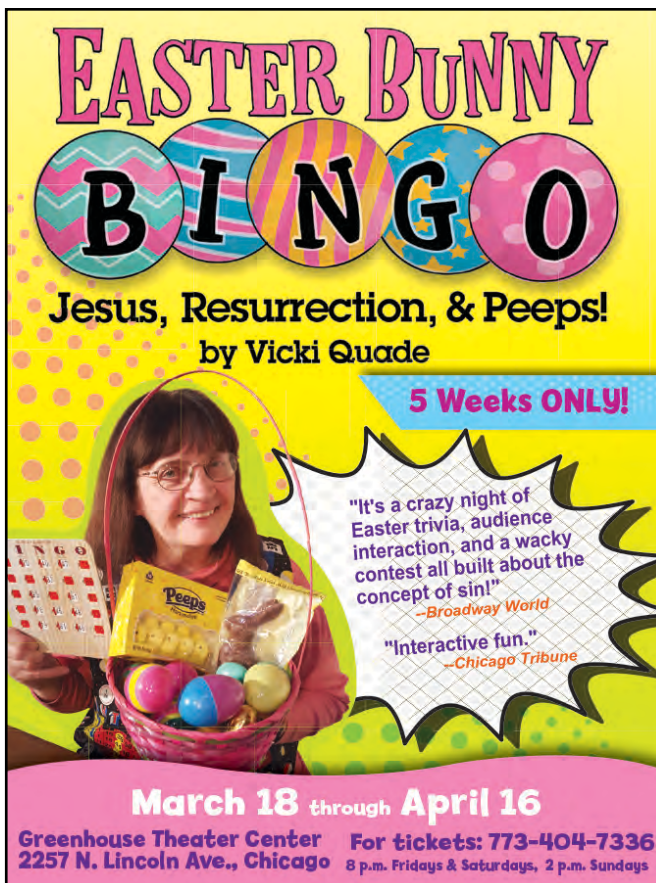
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Proof of vaccination and masking required to attend

[www.handbagproductions.org](http://www.handbagproductions.org)



Hell in a HANDBAG PRODUCTIONS



**BY POPULAR DEMAND, PRINCESS DIANA EXHIBITION:  
ACCREDITED ACCESS ANNOUNCES EXHIBIT  
EXTENSION THROUGH MARCH**



Due to an overwhelming response, Princess Diana Exhibition: Accredited Access, has extended their limited time exhibit through the month of March at Oakbrook Center, 19 Oakbrook Center. The exhibition has been running Wednesdays to Sundays since December, with tickets in high demand, and an average rating of 4.9 stars on Google. This extension will offer guests the chance to encounter this exclusive journey that traces Princess Diana's emotional path as she modernized Motherhood, revolutionized Fashion, and showed the world how to be Human. For the first time, world famous Royal Photographers, Anwar Hussein and his two sons Zak and Samir, share collections of their original images and the intimate, never-before-told stories behind them. The Husseins collectively spent four decades working side by side with the iconic Princess and her family and now reveal what they witnessed first-hand, both in public and private moments, within an intimate audio guide.

Tickets are available [www.PrincessDianaChicago.com](http://www.PrincessDianaChicago.com).

**12th Annual Chicago Tattoo Arts Convention  
Donald E. Stephens Convention Center March 18th-  
20th**



The 12th Annual Chicago Tattoo Arts Convention is returning to Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, March 18th – 20th, 2022. Villain Arts is excited to host another award-winning show this year. "Best of Rosemont, Arts & Entertainment 2019" The Chicago Tattoo Arts Convention is for industry professionals and tattoo lovers as well. General public is encouraged to attend.

Come get tattooed by 1200 of the world's best tattoo artists, including the top local, national & international artists. Meet & Greet TV celebrities from Ink Master. Tattoo TV stars will be on hand to tattoo the public! In addition, there will be numerous vendors with everything from industry supplies to clothing, artwork & jewelry. Daily tattoo competitions for you to show off your tattoos. Performances by Americas Got Talent's Captain & Maybelle, Ringling Bros. James Maltman and Verona Fink Burlesque Sideshow are just a few of the other exciting things happening throughout the weekend. The 12th Annual Chicago Tattoo Arts Convention is a don't miss event, with something for everyone. formore information visit: <https://villainarts.com>

**APRIL 7**

Photos by Zoran Jelenic

"They make you believe that the Statue of Liberty is a drag queen." - *The Express, London*

**Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo**

Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts

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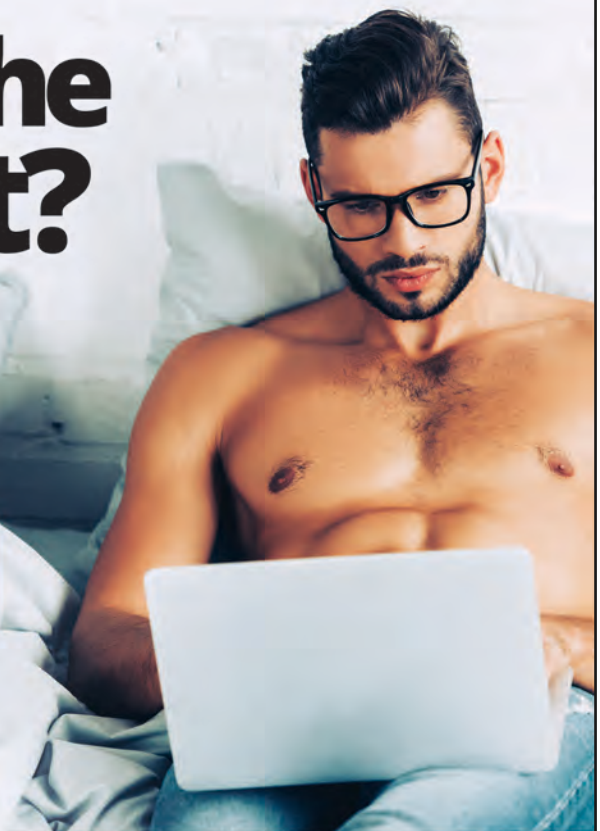
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Photos By Anthony Meade





# TATTOO FESTIVAL



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