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CHICHI LARUE



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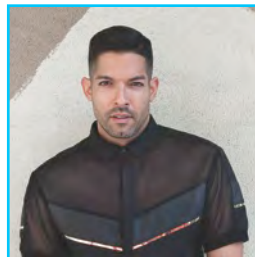
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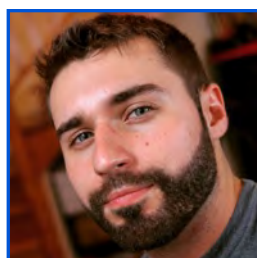
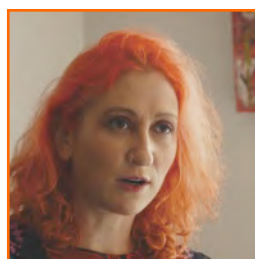
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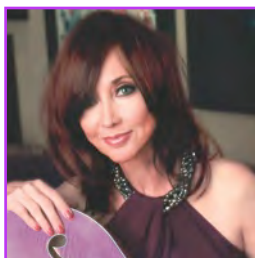
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GRAB MASS

Mass Luciano Dresses 'Fierce' The Former Mr. Gay World Gets Meshy in His Latest Capsule Collection

By John Thaler

Mass Luciano's rise to fame began five years ago when he was crowned Mr. Gay World. Winning the title motivated him to launch MASSBRANDED, the high-end men's streetwear label that pushes boundaries, revs style engines and leaves nothing—and everything—to the imagination. This month the label is introducing "Fierce", the next collection in its popular Mesh Series. Inspired by paratroopers and Mass Luciano's own memories from growing up on military bases, the capsule line combines complimentary tops and bottoms that create a uniform for the progressive, active man.

John Thaler: How did winning Mr. Gay World lead to your launching your own high-end fashion label?

Mass Luciano: I had been designing for other brands for twelve years and I never once considered having my own fashion label. During the Mr. Gay World competition, I was asked about the clothes I was wearing, most of which I had designed, and the idea of launching my own brand started to take shape. My partner challenged me to start with a small collection that we could produce ourselves and sell online. We didn't expect it to take off so quickly! The experience has been really exciting and gratifying.

JT: Were you always handy with a needle and thread?

ML: Not really, but I was always crafty and creative. In high school, I loved to sketch and design clothes for my friends who would then get a seamstress or tailor to make the garments. I didn't learn to sew myself until fashion

school. It took me a while to enjoy sewing as I lack the patience for it.

JT: How should the well-dressed man present himself?

ML: A good look should reflect the





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personality of the person wearing it. It doesn't matter how fashion forward or trendy the look is, if you're not wearing it with confidence, it will end up wearing you.

JT: MASSBRANDED seems to imply that the collection is made for the mass consumer, but that's not right, is it?

ML: The name MASSBRANDED is really just a play on my own name.

JT: It is designed with a specific guy in mind. Who is he?

ML: One that is individualistic who wants to dress casually without dressing down and likes to stand out from the crowd. He's an extrovert and an exhibitionist who uses fashion to express himself.

JT: Tell us about the "Fierce" collection.

ML: The FIERCE capsule collection is inspired by athletes. We wanted to give our signature striped mesh fabric a new look by treating it with a metallic print, echoing gold and silver sport trophies. The new tops, sweatshirts and shorts are designed to sculpt the body for a look that's sporty, sexy and bold.

JT: Why is mesh coming back so big right now?

ML: Peoples attitude towards fashion is changing, especially in menswear where dress codes are more relaxed and gender rules are becoming more fluid. It's okay for men to want to feel and look sexy and mesh is an approachable way to achieve that look in a more masculine way. It's also versatile. It can be sporty and elegant, technical and functional. And it's provocative. It is a way to show off skin without having to

take your clothes off. It allows you to reveal and conceal.

JT: Is the name "Fierce" intended as a nod to the gay party community?

ML: I think anyone who has the courage to wear a gold printed mesh sweatshirt with matching shorts is fierce!

JT: How has gay nightlife influenced your label?

ML: When we launched MASSBRANDED, the styles that sold out first were our mesh statement

pieces. Our customers would tag us on social media and we noticed that most styles were being worn at clubs, music festivals and on cruises. It's a scene I knew well. My first experience in the gay club scene was in the late nineties in Puerto Rico, where I worked at the best gay club in San Juan called Eros. When I moved to Los Angeles, I experienced my first circuit party and had amazing times dancing with my friends... and making new ones!

JT: Did you ever experience Chicago?



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ML: Unfortunately, no! I have always wanted to go to Market Days!

JT: Does heading a fashion label allow for much playtime?

ML: One of the perks of having your own fashion label is that you get to set your own rules and make our own schedule. When I'm in different cities, I always notice what people are wearing

and how they style themselves. It's research! I need to see what is already out there to make sure we're doing something different.

JT: Will you be introducing more colors to the "Fierce" capsule collection?

ML: Our capsule collections are unique with limited styles and limited numbers.

Once we launch a capsule, we move on the next one. What you see is what you get. So if you like it, make sure to get it now before it sells out forever!

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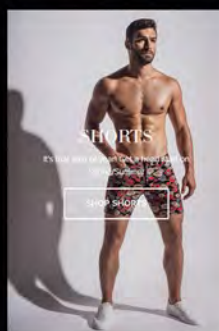
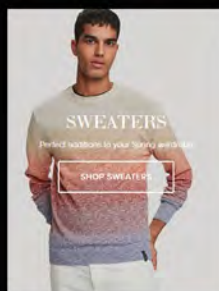
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GRAB JANELLE

Janelle Monáe Doesn't Know Time Either

The queer icon talks 'too on the nose' pandemic, LGBTQ representation and Pride plans

By Chris Azzopardi

I really hadn't planned on telling queer powerhouse singer-actress-activist Janelle Monáe that I made food for my boyfriend the night before I got on Zoom with her.

That afternoon, Monáe was feeling it all. This global pandemic, the quarantining. She told me she can't even create right now because she doesn't have the mental bandwidth. When we linked up, her mind was understandably heavy and momentarily adrift. While talking about Amazon's second season of its thriller *Homecoming*, Monáe accidentally called her character – a war vet who we first meet on a boat, alone and drifting, unsure of how she got there – an “ex-veterinarian.” “I said veterinarian,” she started, realizing her slip-up. “It's that quarantine mind!”

Then I diverted her attention to her neo-soul album *Dirty Computer*, a life-affirming celebration of queerness released in 2018.

I began by telling her about my night before we Zoomed, when my spiraling mind happened to find a rare moment of pure, unencumbered joy within that album as I prepared for our virtual chat. Songs from *Dirty Computer* had my boyfriend and I bopping in the kitchen. Emerging from her face was a smile so wide I could almost see my reflection in it. It was like I'd cracked a code. A pandemic-era topic universal enough that it got even Janelle Monáe curious that she, during a promo tour for a TV show, couldn't help but ask me a question everybody is asking everybody because all we do is cook now: “What were y'all eatin'?”

Monáe's in isolation too of course, trying to navigate not merely *_how_* to be an artist but *_if_* that's even possible for her right now. From lockdown, she

at least looks put together. Greeting me like the bots she sings about, she says, “Hi, I'm Janelle and I don't know who I am today.” She appears to be reclining on a couch, a white top hat perched on her head; her virtual backdrop is appropriately one for *Homecoming*. In August, Monáe leads the cast of the slavery-themed horror film *Antebellum*, which was initially scheduled to be released in April.

And though it was just in February, it seems like another life when Monáe opened the Oscars and celebrated diversity and being, as she proclaimed on national TV during her performance,

a “black queer artist.” Previously, in 2018, she came out as pansexual, after years of telling the press she was dating androids.

So no wonder she was looking forward to headlining NYC Pride Island on June 27. In a statement, she called it a “dream.” But summer gatherings, including NYC Pride Island, have been canceled.

Monáe is still doing what she can; recently, she took part in a special performance for Verizon's Pay It Forward Live, when she and Verizon made donations to small businesses owned by those in the LGBTQ





community and other minorities affected by COVID-19.

"Stay up, Chris," she gently consoles as we wrap, offering the same kind of bright-eyed hopefulness contained in "Americans," one of the songs that, for a few dazzling minutes, took me out of life as we now currently know it. She continues: "And send my love to your boyfriend." Even in a pandemic, even when she's not creating, Monáe has so much to give.

Chris Azzopardi: How are you coping with everything that's happening right now?

Janelle Monáe: I don't know. I probably won't know until, like, next month. Time is not real to me. I feel like I'm in a warped, alternate universe, especially watching everybody walking around with masks and avoiding each other, and dealing with an administration who hides information and is putting capitalism above the health and well-being of our people. I have no grasp of reality right now.

CA: It's like living in the twilight zone.

JM: Yeah. I write too much science-fiction to be dealing with this shit right now. It's too on the nose. (Laughs.)

CA: How does 'Homecoming' fit into the kind of stories you want to be telling?

JM: We're on a journey with her as she discovers her identity, and I think when you go back into her past there are some decisions that she makes that I just would not make as a human. But when I was creating her backstory and understanding her motivation I realized that this person could have been dealing with a lot of childhood trauma, and it gave reason to why she is the way she is.

I think that this show has a lot to say about capitalism over citizenship and community, and the well-being of our citizens. I think it has a lot

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to say about how we treat ex-vets and mental health. And it's a character study on minorities and those who are marginalized and how they go on their rise to being powerful and also having their freedom through living in their truth, so that was super important to me.

CA: And the show's queer representation – how is the fact that your character just happens to be in a relationship with a woman meaningful to you?

JM: Like you said: representation. It always matters. You think about the number of shows that are greenlit and films that are greenlit, and we're still in that minority. It's still not equal in terms of storytelling. There are so many cis, het-normative stories, and that's not a reflection of the real world. I don't want to give away too much, but there is a strong presence of (queerness) in *Homecoming*. I hope the folks feel seen.

CA: How would this kind of representation have changed your life as a young woman growing up in Kansas City?

JM: I would probably feel less alone. I'd be more intrigued. When you grow up in small towns and you have large families, and when being Baptist and going to church is the center of your family and your household – in addition to going through that and trying to love yourself and finding out who you are and what you want to be and deciding how you want to live your life – I think that having that representation would have made things easier for a lot of us.

CA: When was the first time you identified with someone from the LGBTQ community and what did that mean to you?

JM: That's a really good question. There were, of course, a lot of artists who have come before me that have walked in their truth, like (openly queer singer-songwriter and activist) Meshell Ndegeocello. Even if they didn't say, "Hey, I'm gay," there was just a certain freeness that I got when I looked at David Bowie, a freeness I got that blurred the lines of gender. And I've always felt a part of everything, and as I

find out more about myself and who I am, I look at myself and all of us as experiences. I just don't believe in those binaries. But I love identifying as a woman, and I'm not mad when I'm not called a woman. I feel so a part of everything, and I am a part of everything.

CA: Earlier this year, you tweeted #IAmNonBinary. Does that mean



you're using they and them pronouns now?

JM: I use free-ass-motherfucker pronouns. That's the pronoun that I use. Absolutely.

CA: Over the years you've gradually taken on more of an activist role, both as a vocal advocate but also in the way you've chosen projects. Your art is clearly a conduit for your messaging of unity and empowerment. How do you see yourself evolving as an activist and artist?

JM: I never considered myself an activist. I think there are really people out on the front lines who are doing that groundwork in our communities. I have

a mic; I have a studio; I'm doing film. I'm doing all those things. And I've never considered myself that.

People have kind of placed that label on me, but I don't feel pressure. I think I feel more pressure just as a citizen to lend my support and my voice. I think even if I never wrote another song in my life, if I saw something happening to someone who couldn't protect themselves or take care of themselves and they were in a marginalized group, then I'm gonna say something about it. That's just been me since I've been little. I've never allowed people to bully my little sister or people who were helpless and couldn't defend themselves. I'm just not gonna stand for that. I guess I look at myself as anti-bully, and I will whoop your ass in different ways if you try to oppress or harm other people that I love and I care about. And I care about my community.

CA: How do you feel about where we're at now with LGBTQ representation? And what do you hope is next in that regard?

JM: I think it's getting better. I think we have a long way to go. I think it's a more nuanced conversation because we're dealing with sexuality and we're dealing with gender. A lot of it is a journey, it's not just a destination. And there's new terminology that's coming, and we have to be open and nonjudgmental within our community.

I've definitely received a lot of judgment, and I can't say that I haven't judged myself, but at this point I think that life is a mystery. We are uncovering truths about us, just like this show does, and the more information we have, we should never feel ashamed to lean into that gray area. Don't become a prisoner or a slave of your past. Move forward accordingly once you discover who you are and what it is that you want to be.

But I want to say that I think that we still have a lot more work to do in terms of allies. Folks who are more privileged, who are the majority and the minority, I think that they can share the mic.

CA: Are you currently creating? And while I have 'Dirty Computer' on my mind – will you make music with the queer community in mind for your next work?

JM: I don't know what kind of music I'm gonna make. I'm not in a musical space. I'm not inspired. I'm just not inspired right now. I mean, I want to be; I want to be using this time and come out with five albums. But my heart is just so broken right now with everything that's going on. So I've been DJing; that's been inspiring. Deconstructing songs, my favorite songs. And I've been listening to Childish Gambino, and I love Megan Thee Stallion's Savage remix with Beyoncé. Been listening to that. But I've just been trying to figure out how to put my boots on the ground and how to thrive in a pandemic.

It's affected me. I'm not a black, single mom with five kids or a single parent trying to make ends meet because she got laid off. I'm not in that position. We're in this, but we're not all in the same boat. And for me, I feel a sense of urgency to figure out how we can come together as citizens. Once I get that down pat and understand what this all means and I can get some foundation then maybe I can go to a creative space, but right now my mental real estate is dealing with this pandemic.

CA: You were supposed to perform at NYC Pride Island this summer. What

message would you like to send out to all the dirty computers of the world who will be celebrating Pride in a very different way this year?

JM: I love you. I was looking forward to being there, but all of our health is important. I would hate to be irresponsible and hold a concert and bring people together and then people pass away as a result of us trying to have a concert right now. But I have a feeling that in the future I will come back. The organizers of Pride New York are trying to put together something special that I may be a part of, so just keep your ears glued. (On May 15, it

was announced that Monáe would be among the performers taking part in NYC's virtual pride celebration on June 28.)

And to answer your last question: I did say I wasn't really inspired to make music, but because I am a dirty computer at heart, whatever I do is always going to be through the lens of being a part of the LGBTQIA+ communities. That is who I am, so I can't help but to have that perspective. So I'm sure whenever I start making music (laughs) I will still be a free-ass-motherfucker making music.



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Photo Courtesy of Netflix

The Unlikely History of a Gay Porn Landmark

Filmmaker Rachel Mason on the Netflix doc she made about her parents who ran a gay porn empire

By Chris Azzopardi

Gay porn is not what straight, religious-conservative married couple Barry and Karen Mason thought they'd become known for. But for over 35 years, they owned a bookstore that sold videos like "Confessions of a Two Dick Slut" and "Meat Me at the Fair" in West Hollywood. And now thanks to their daughter, filmmaker and artist Rachel Mason, her parents' story is a Netflix documentary.

For the couple, however, selling and producing gay porn was just business as usual. Hard times forced Karen, a former journalist, and Barry, a former special visual effects engineer who worked on Stanley Kubrick's *2001*, to think fast, so they took over Circus of Books, which became a queer cultural institution. Karen and Barry, who still own the building even though Circus of Books closed in 2019, would go on to

become wealthy LGBTQ activists and PFLAG parents.

But in the 1980s, the business was kept a secret from their three children, including Rachel and her gay brother Josh, who appear in *Circus of Books*, along with former porn star Jeff Stryker and *RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars* winner Alaska Thunderfuck. TV titan Ryan Murphy executive produced the film.

Here, Mason discusses the power of straight parents as activists, what it says about porn that celebs who shopped at the store won't openly admit it, and the awkward dinner table talk her parents have with her partner, transsexual porn star and activist Buck Angel.

Chris Azzopardi: It's funny to hear your mom say in the doc, "I don't

know what you're gonna make out of all this filming. No one is going to be interested in this." And now, of course, it's on Netflix for the world to see.

Rachel Mason: That's her whole constant mantra: No one's gonna care, this is not interesting to anybody. I think that was her way of having a smokescreen. Of course it's actually fucking amazing that I'm like, "Deep penetration on these videos you made sent me to college." How could that not be interesting? You know, I think it's her way of misdirecting, but also at the same time it could also be true for her: It was not interesting. This was a boring job for many years. (Laughs.)

CA: It's like when she walks by the dildo wall but won't look at it.
RM: (Laughs.) I do have to say there's a



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part of her, sadly, that is really kind of prudish and disgusted by her whole thing. I find that offensive and sad because I love and appreciate everything that she was involved in, and I actually think that the work she did was critical.

CA: Do your parents bond with Buck over porn?

RM: It was really funny the first time we had a family dinner. My mom said, “Do not bring this up to my grandma,” my mother’s mother who is still alive. “Do not bring up the business at the dinner table tonight.” And of course, we’re sitting there and there’s dead silence; then my mom was like, “Buck, I have a question. I got an email today from one of these distributors – do you ever work with this guy?” I’m like, “Mom! You totally outed him as being in the business!” She’s just so business-focused that it’s kind of hilarious. But my parents and Buck can just talk shop together, and I can listen and be kind of coming up with the sequel in my head, or like an episode for the TV series.

CA: How do they feel about being Netflix-famous?

RM: In a weird way it’s a good time to be an anonymous celebrity because everyone’s wearing masks. (Laughs.) You know, my mom’s a totally reluctant

celebrity, if you want to call her that. She really is a subject right now. And I think on the one hand it’s uncomfortable for her when people walk up and know her for something she kept a secret for several years.

CA: Your mom seems like the kind of person who really knows how to command a room.

RM: She got up on the stage at Outfest and just said, “Had I known you guys were all going to be here, I never would’ve agreed to doing this.” The audience is laughing and it’s like, “Mom, you just got an audience of 2,000 people to laugh.” But she’s like, “Now can I go? I don’t like this.” (Laughs.) That’s part of her sheer brilliant comedic instincts. She kind of knows, like Woody Allen, that she has this kind of nebbishy, over-the-top insulting quality that is just so funny.

CA: And her dynamic with your father – the way she interjects when he doesn’t tell the full story – is really hysterical.

RM: I think that’s part of their comedic duo vibe that is so amazing. I have to say, I milked it for all that it’s worth in the documentary. (Laughs.)

CA: How did the idea for the documentary come to you?

RM: It really began in 2004. I had taken a lesbian and gay studies class, as it was called at the time, and it was about just sort of the history of LGBTQ experience. So the teacher, Jonathan D. Katz, a very prominent media studies scholar, his focus was on Robert Mapplethorpe, specifically gay imagery and photography, and the art that wasn’t above ground. It was sort of this subculture, and I remember my parents had Robert Mapplethorpe books in their store and I mentioned it to him. I said, “You know my parents carried his stuff?” And he was like, “What was their store?” And I said Circus of Books and he said, “Wow, Rachel, that is the most important store on the West Coast and that store really helped me to come out.” I think he was himself from LA; I was at Yale at the time. I was like, “What do you know about Circus of Books?”

I didn’t know my parents’ little LA weirdo store would’ve been something anyone would’ve known this far east, let alone at a fancy school like Yale. So it just gave me an impression that I needed to do something about it. And he said, “This is part of gay history. It’s not just a little store. It’s actually the historical record because gay history didn’t have a chance to be documented because it was underground.” So when the store started to close in 2015, that’s

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when I started really documenting it in earnest.

CA: And your mom had low expectations. She didn't think this film would amount to anything.

RM: Oh yeah – no.

CA: What does she think of the finished film?

RM: She just feels like I did a good job, basically. And that it just would be better if it were about anyone except her. (Laughs.) One thing she says that I have some sympathy for: "I don't picture myself looking this age." I'm following her around at age 75. A lot of it is unflattering because she let me follow her around, and she's, like, squatting down to pick up DVDs (laughs). It's kind of funny. I kept being like, "Mom, turn this way. I don't like this angle. It's not good." But at the same time, I'm chasing her – she moves like a motherfucker!

CA: Did your mom ever try to control the narrative?

RM: Kind of. But I know how to work around that.

CA: What was it like to learn about Josh's struggle to come out during the making of the film?

RM: That was one of the interviews that actually I reshot because I had shot the film in a different way going into it. I was working hand in hand with Cynthia Childs, my producer, and I was going to be more of a distant subject. When I started to cut the film together, the most

poignant moments were in all of the different interviews when people would look at the camera or look at me and say, "Your dad was going to go to jail." I was like, "Shit, they're talking to me; I need to actually be seen and heard on the other side of this." I didn't get that with my interview with Josh.

The second time around, I did the questions, and I didn't expect my own reaction to be so shocked by what he said. I was really so blown away, and it was so horrible to hear these things and to look back at myself with a sense of shame that I so was a self-absorbed teenager who loved everything gay and was wanting it, and here's my poor little brother who's trying to be so perfect and trying to hold it all together. And

here he has this freaky, insane sister being an artist, and maybe that's what gay looks like to him. And the store is also this crazy place where a lot of people died of AIDS, and he sees that world. So he's caught in between these images that are not realistic of what he could have for himself as a gay man.

CA: What was it like to hear the stories of your parents' relationship with those who were dying of AIDS, and how they kind of became surrogate parents to them because their families disowned them?

RM: I feel like that is part of the real untold story and untold chapter in gay history – it's not exclusive to my parents. When you think back to the AIDS crisis, these men were dying in these horrible situations alone in the hospital because people were afraid to touch them. The bravery of not just my parents but all the different people who would show up for these men was so profound. I really have to say I look at my parents in a really heroic light myself at that moment, but I also think back on the fact that there were other people like them.

CA: Before our call, I was talking to my dad. There's been some tension among family members on Facebook, and we're still having a hard time wrapping our



Photo Courtesy of Netflix



Photo Courtesy of Netflix

heads around the fact that some of them still support Donald Trump.

RM: I'll tell you: My partner and lover is Buck Angel and his parents are Trump supporters. What I think is really fascinating is he talks to them and he actually fully gets into it. I think it's important to address it full-on and be like, "OK, you can support the guy who is gonna actually take your son's right to exist." If you have the stomach to engage, it's actually a good idea to engage.

CA: Your parents remind me of my dad.

RM: Is your family Christian or religious?

CA: Yeah. They're Christian and Catholic. My dad identifies as a Baptist, but he supports me and he lets people know he supports me.

RM: That is really powerful, if he does let people know that he supports you.

CA: Well, our conversation stemmed from a Facebook war with family members who are anti-LGBTQ. My dad commented and said to them that he supports me and who I am, and that what they're saying could potentially harm LGBTQ people.

RM: That's very powerful when people like your dad and my mom similarly do that because those are the most important activists. You and me being queer and waving our rainbow flag is actually sort of not really tipping the scale for those people; it's people like your dad and my mom who are actually saying, "Look, I am still gonna go to church and I'm gonna find it in the Bible where Jesus says we can love everybody. And in the Old Testament, where you can reinterpret the word, the actual definition of what it means to lie down with another man, in fact, and totally recognize that there's the possibility that we have a wrong

interpretation here."

CA: The film comes at a time when queer spaces are vulnerable to the pandemic and are at risk of closing. Having gone through that experience with your parents, what are you feeling?

RM: First off, my heart's breaking for all the businesses. I look back at the strange timing: I could've never predicted that I'd be making a story about a story that's unfolding currently, and that we're in the time of a pandemic and the documentary is entirely basically based in the time of a pandemic for the gay community. It's almost like we're living in that active moment where everyone is deciding the thing that you see my mom trying to decide when she's talking about whether or not she can close the business. People are wrestling with that. All businesses.

CA: Did you ever wonder why the store catered to gay men and not queer women?

RM: I guess that's sort of interesting. Certainly there were lesbian clerks and women customers, and there were trans people. They had trans clerks and trans customers, and in fact they had Buck Angel work there – the very first trans guy to basically do porn at all. So there was a variety. But probably the vast majority were gay men. I think it's because that exact neighborhood was called Boystown (laughs) and it was located in a gay boys' neighborhood. I'm not an expert so you can't quote me on this, but it's pretty well known that men are the predominant consumers of

pornography, especially in a store where you have to walk in and physically appear. Also, it was a meeting ground. I think it just naturally became a hotspot for gay culture.

CA: What did you find out from Ryan Murphy about shopping at the store?

RM: Ryan basically said that store was so important to all gay men in LA. I think he was just no different. In fact, Ryan happens to be a very famous, powerful gay man – and I won't name names – but think of any gay man who was alive at that time in Hollywood and they no doubt went into that store.

CA: Did you try to interview any of these other men?

RM: Yeah, I've reached out to a few – again, I won't say the names – and I've noticed things have leaked out here and there and I'm like, "Wow, I don't know who said that. The gossip mill. I will just say think of a (famous) gay man over 50 and they were in Circus of Books."

CA: So the gossip is true?

RM: Absolutely. And celebrities who aren't even straight or gay or male. Rose McGowan posted that she loved the store's selection of Italian Vogue, and Kathy Griffin posted about how she did her Christmas shopping at the store. So the celebrities who've come out, that's awesome and fun and cool. It does speak volumes that people can't just jump out and wave the flag of, "Yeah, I went to that store; it's a porn store." Because porn still has a stigma. I think that's what we're looking at right here, and I really hope to be part of the change that destigmatizes it.

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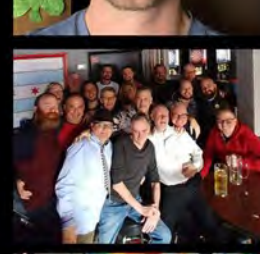


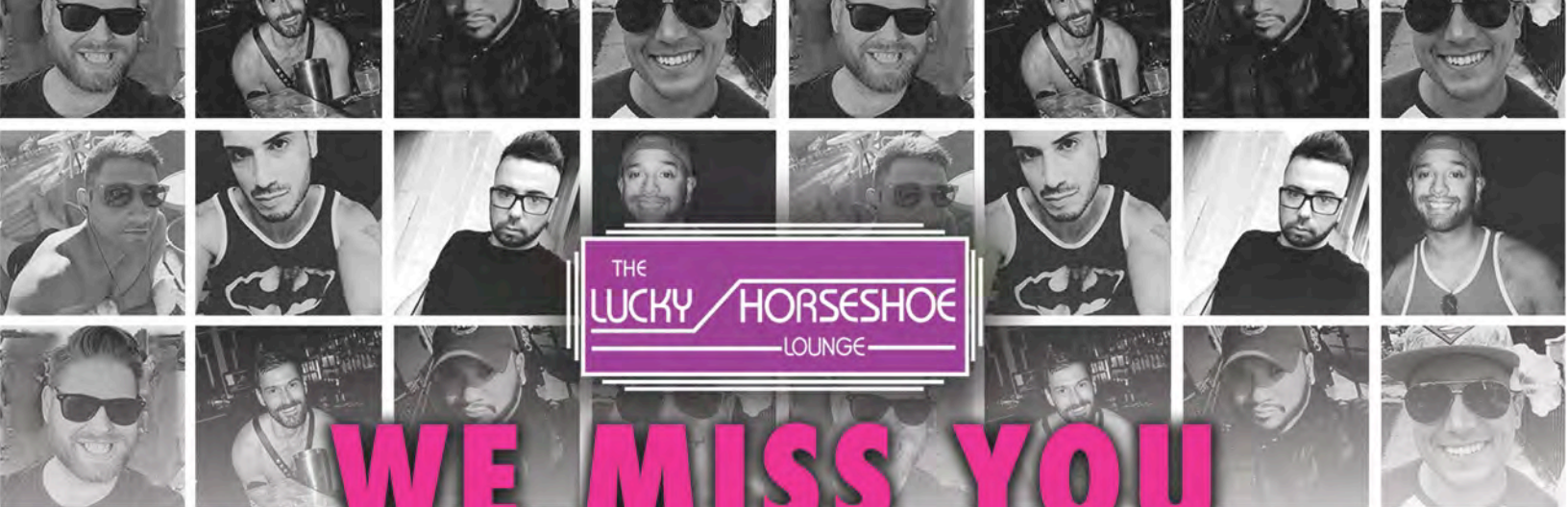
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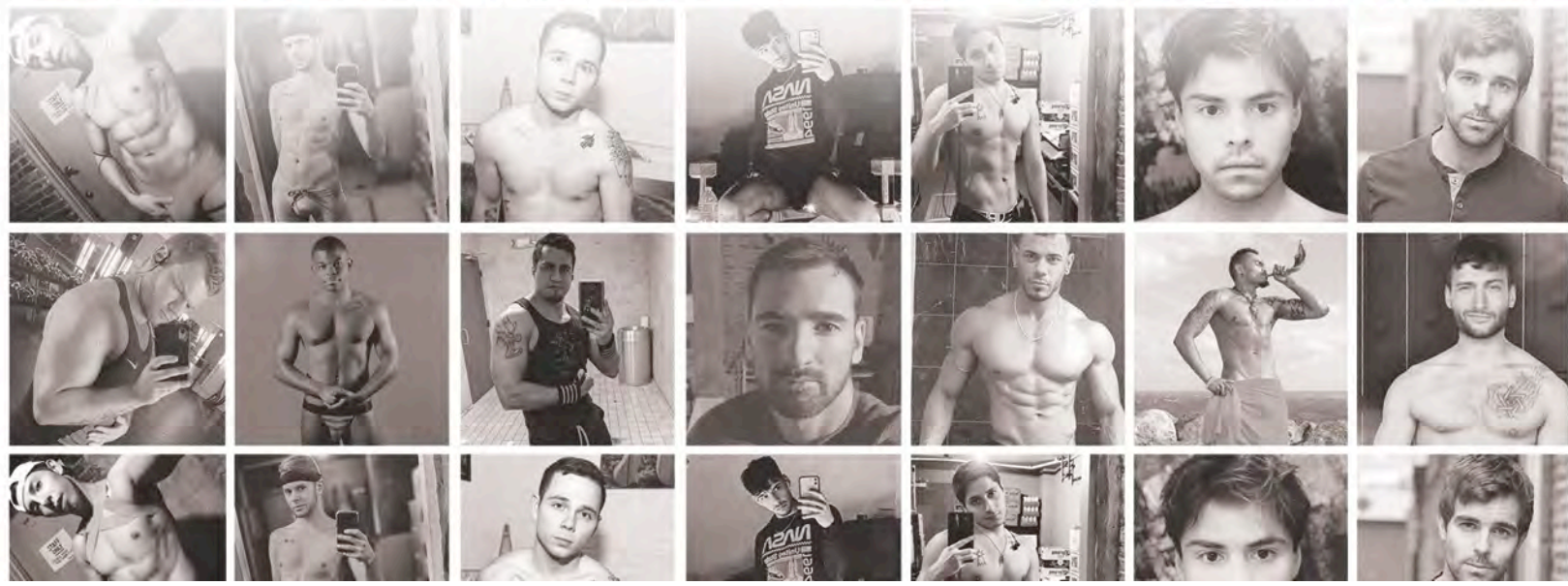


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GRAB DYLAN

What is there to do?

By Dylan Seitz

Picture it, the world, 2020. The year the world turned on its head. We started out with rumors of World War 3, Australia was on fire, and now we are in the middle of a global coronavirus pandemic with no end in sight. Lockdowns have put tens of millions out of work during the COVID-19 quarantine leaving everyone with a bountiful surplus of time. So, the question you may be asking is, "What is there to do?". Luckily for you, I have the top 10 things to do during quarantine.

Facebook Groups – Chances are, if you are reading this right now, you have access to the world wide web at your fingertips. Use it! I know I certainly have and took the opportunity to create a community of people on Facebook under a group called "Gay Quarantine Happy Hour". The group has attracted thousands of LGBTQ+ people from all over. It has been a great place to meet new friends and engage in fun discussions. I have also had the honor of interviewing some awesome people to support the community for the podcast I created under the same name of the group. Check it out!

Zoom – "What if I don't have Facebook?" you may be asking. Thankfully there are other places that you can socialize online. During this time in history, I have probably

FaceTimed or Zoomed with friends and family more than I have ever in my life. It has been wonderful seeing people's faces that I haven't in quite some time. It has also been a breath of fresh air since I haven't been able to go out especially when we can stream trivia games for hours on end together from the comfort of our homes.

Develop Some New Skills

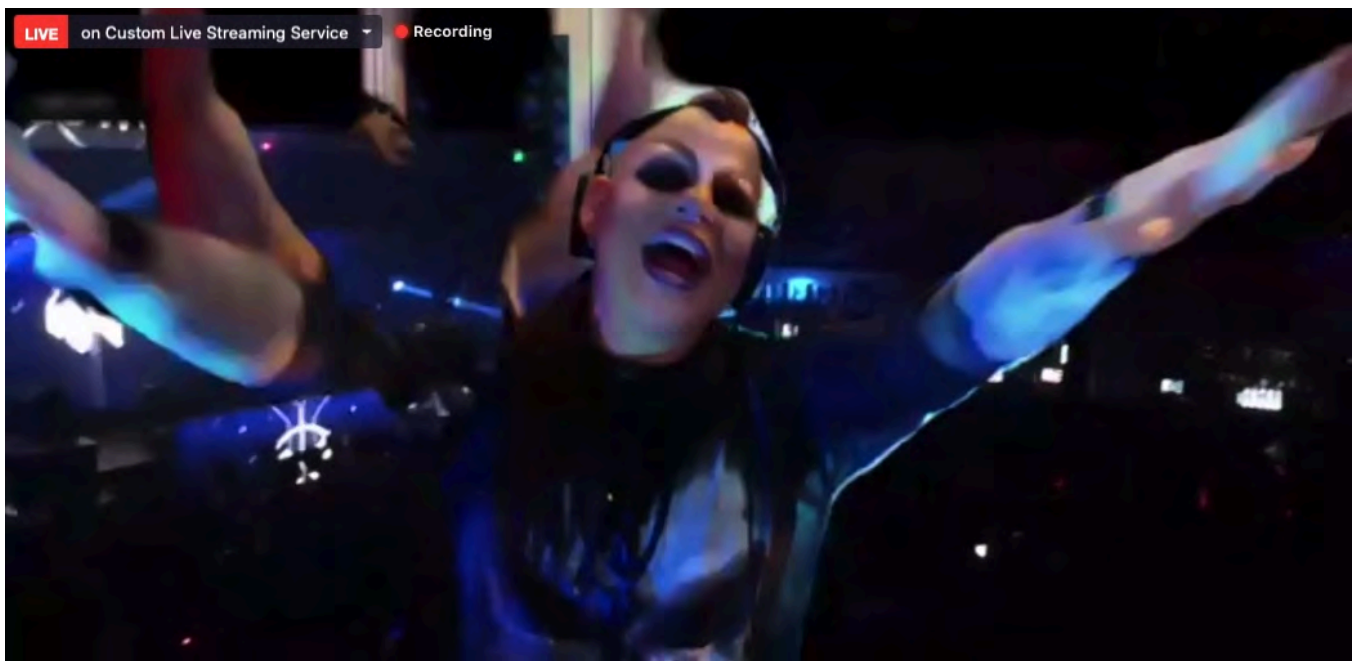
– Say you're an introvert and this quarantine has been a godsend for you. Why not take the time to develop a new and useful skill so you can emerge this quarantine like a beautiful butterfly having been stuck in your cocoon for far too long? I have taken the time to build on my IT knowledge so I can continue growing my career. I've taught myself how to make my own VPN, play around with coding, and other things like cooking. Give it a try and learn something new!

Virtual Circuit Parties – When all else has failed, have a kiki. A Quarankiki that is. Some of our bartender friends, drag queens, dancers and DJs haven't been able to work during the pandemic, but because of the magic of technology, that isn't stopping them. Welcome to Quarankiki, a digital event produced every Saturday night by Hydrate Nightclub dedicated to



supporting the international DJs who normally are at Hydrate each weekend and the local Chicago artists while having a party on a digital dance floor! Any donations go to people such as the ones aforementioned that are currently unable to get on unemployment. It starts at 8:30pm every Saturday and goes till 5am, so get dressed in costumes and have a gay ol' time! Check out <http://www.hydratechicago.com> for official details.

Pick up old projects – This quarantine offers the time that we will most likely never see again in our lifetimes so why not make use of it? That project of clearing those unused or unflattering pictures? Plenty of time to delete the 100+ selfies that didn't make the cut to post online. That box of papers and documents that have



accumulated? Time to start sorting them. All those old clothes you don't need? Time to get rid of them.

Work on yourself –

Mental health has never been so important as it is now in a time of isolation. People's mental health is degrading and we should not be afraid to admit it; we are all human and it shouldn't be a taboo subject. If you can afford it, look into therapy during this time. If not, try to reach out to a friend or family. Should neither be an option, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 if you are in a really dark place.

Try some yoga – Say none of the above worked for you, give something new a shot like yoga and meditation. Streaming these kind of classes have been popular lately. Daniel Sernicola, a renowned teacher in Columbus, Ohio, transformed his life through these practices and plans to share individual courses online beginning in June. "The pandemic has given many people the opportunity to turn their eyes inward to focus on healing and creating the life they desire. Yoga and meditation help find that authentic voice many are seeking." You can find Daniel on Instagram @danjayoga or visit his



website at <http://www.danjayoga.com>.

Plan a trip – We may not be able to travel as freely as we did a few months ago, but we can plan for in the future. Make a list of places you want to go and things you want to do there. When this is all over, prices will probably be at their lowest to make it easier to go on your dream getaway. Just make sure you abide by social distancing guidelines if you go anywhere, including wearing masks. I know I certainly will.

Watch a virtual drag show – During this quarantine you may know a few people in the service industry. Some of these wonderful people making a living off of drag so why not watch one of their virtual shows? One show in particular caught my attention called GeekHaus.

GeekHaus is a traveling cosplay group, based in Chicago, that puts on inspired variety shows providing a safe space for everyone to wave their geek flag high! This is a monthly show taking place the last weekend of every month on Friday's at 10pm.

Check out this latest show called GeekHaus: Social Distance Warriors on Friday May 29th on <http://www.twitch.tv/geekhauschicago>

hosted by Connor Konz and Jo MaMa!

Home workouts – Keep yourself physically healthy is an important as mental health. Try to get about 30 minutes of exercise a day. Things as simple as push-ups, jumping jacks, or stretching can make a huge difference in how you feel. You don't need much, just enough to make sure that your muscles don't atrophy.

Doing all of these things will help you get through quarantine. Make sure to check on your friends, keep active, and utilize this time to the fullest. Things will get better, just keep telling yourself that. We are all in this together.



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	Artist	Title
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2	Tritonal x Haliene x Schala x Jorza	Long Way Home (Original Mix)
3	Rat City x Kiesza	Naked (ZIDA Remix)
4	Meduza	Born to Love ft. SHELLS
5	Dark Intensity x Harry Cracknell X Sophia May	One Shot (Spin Sista's Radio Edit)
6	OMI	I Want You
7	Shanguy	Delosee (Paris Paname)
8	Luca Debonaire	I Found You (Dark Intensity Radio Edit)
9	Rush & Hydro x Rush & Crush	Give Me Your Lovin'
10	Da Buzz	Touch My Soul
11	Becky Hill	Better Off Without You ft. Shift K3Y
12	Michael Calfan & Martin Solveig	No Lie (Radio Edit)
13	Mowe	Talk To Me ft. Conor Maynard & RANI (Sam Feldt Edit)
14	Alok & Hugel	I Don't Wanna Talk ft. Amber Van Day
15	MOGUAI	Hold On ft. Cheat Codes (2020 Edit)



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Some of you have already asked how you may help our staff during this time of closure. So Touché is launching a GoFundMe page where you can "tip" the guys and help us take care of them all – bartenders, barback, security and more. All proceeds of this virtual "tip jar" will be split among the staff.

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GRAB PAM

MUSIC



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“Feeling” good: An interview with Pam Tillis

By Gregg Shapiro

Pam Tillis is country music royalty. The daughter of country music legend Mel Tillis, Pam has had her own lengthy career as a singer/songwriter with hits including “Maybe It Was Memphis”, “Cleopatra, Queen of Denial”, “Spilled Perfume” and, of course, “Mi Vida Loca (My Crazy Life)”. **Looking for a Feeling** (Stellar Cat), Pam’s 11th studio album and first solo album in more than a dozen years, is the kind of comeback we’ve been waiting for. A compelling combination of modern and traditional country tunes, featuring outstanding originals including the title track, “Burning Star”, “Karma” and “Last Summer’s Wine”, as well as knockout covers including “Dolly 1969” and “Dark Turn of Mind”. Pam was kind enough to take a break from some doing therapeutic gardening in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic to answer a

few questions.

Gregg Shapiro: *You co-wrote six of the 12 songs on your new album ‘Looking For a Feeling’ (Stellar Cat), including “Karma”, “Burning Star” and “Last Summer’s Wine”. What qualities do you look for in a songwriting collaborator?*

Pam Tillis: I think freshness. It helps if somebody knows how to craft things, but they don’t have to. If somebody brings great ideas to the table, that’s everything.

GS: *When it comes to the cover tunes on the album, including Gillian Welch and David Rawlings’ “Dark Turn of Mind” and Matraca Berg’s “Demolition Angel”, what can you tell me about your song selection process?*

PT: It’s somewhat random [laughs]. If something grabs me. It’s just like any kind of art, it’s all subjective. A song that might grab you the one day, might not the next. In the case of those two songs, they came to me at two different times. But they fit the themes of the album. I had “Demolition Angel” for a long time. If you cover a song, I’ve always said it has to feel like it could have come out of your diary.

GS: *When you were putting together the theme, the concept for the album, what was the first inspiration for the theme?*

PT: Every time somebody asks me about it, I’m also looking at it and trying to analyze it from a different perspective. It’s always something new coming up for me and I realize things about the album that I couldn’t see

when I was in the middle of it. I don't know where this comes from, but there's some part of me that struggles with the idea of needing to do things perfectly. I'm not saying that I'm Type A, it's just a part of me. But it rears its head at the most inconvenient times. I think perfection is so overrated. I feel like there is a theme on the record of imperfection. That's why I like "Demolition Angel". That song's about creative destruction. That's why I like "Dark Turn of Mind". Especially in this era of social media, a lot of people are trying to present this façade. I'm going, "What if I don't have it together [laughs]?" Are you going to love me then?

GS: You have to take people warts and all!

PT: Yes, especially somebody who's been in the public eye a long time. I love the book *Trick Mirror* by Jia Tolentino. It was so fantastic! She encapsulated some ideas that were free floating around in my head. She talked about how the public or culture likes to tear down strong women and then build them up and then tear them down and maybe redeem them. It's like you're a yo-yo; there's a certain weariness with that. That's why I put in "Looking for a Feeling" and "Better Friends", with all of these spiritually adrift people. "Burning Star" talks about it's a trick bag because there is an element of radical acceptance of the human condition and all of our imperfections.

GS: One of my favorite cover tunes on the album is your rendition of Bob Regan's "Dolly 1969". What was it about that song that appealed to you?

PT: I'm a sucker for imagery. I love songs that are mini-movies. It (the lyric) comes from a real picture taken by Jim McGuire, which I found out after cutting the song. I've always cited Dolly as one of my biggest she-ros. I've traveled a lot of that road. It's funny, but I'm more of a character. I'm traveling back in time to the young me, that wanted to get on board with Dolly and learn from her. A little bit of time travel there.

GS: I also love when a singer speaks during a song, that narration.

PT: That's a classic country tradition and I've always loved it. I'm one of those people who has never particularly loved my speaking voice; I'm glad I can sing. But you get to act. Any text, when there's no melody, you can read it 100 ways. I spent a long time trying to capture the nuance of speaking that.

LOOKING FOR A FEELING
DEMOLITION ANGEL
BETTER FRIENDS
DOLLY 1969
LAST SUMMERS WINE
LADY MUSIC
MY KIND OF MEDICINE
DARK TURN OF MIND
THE SCHEME OF THINGS
KARMA
BURNING STAR
BETTER FRIENDS REPRISE

Looking for a Feeling

for a Pam Tillis



GS: It really comes across. Talking about Dolly reminded me about your being a judge on RuPaul's Drag Race in 2012. What was that experience like for you?

PT: It was really kind of surreal. Especially when the drag queens sang "Mi Vida Loca". That song has taken me some really interesting places. RuPaul is a beautiful person, inside and out. He's just so brilliant. And tall [laughs]. He said a funny thing to me, he said, "If you know how much I loved your music, you'd be afraid of me" [laughs].

GS: That's kind of the ultimate compliment! Your first album was released almost 30 years ago, and in that time the country music world has seen the rise and fall and rise of the Dixie Chicks, as well as out country artists such as Brandy Clark, Ty Herndon, Lil Nas X and Brandi Carlile. Being a country music veteran, what do you think about the evolution taking place in Nashville?

PT: God, it's slow [laughs]. Really slow. Welcome to the party, everybody! I recently participated in a documentary, *Invisible: Gay Women in Southern Music*, about the untold story of that in country music. Nashville wouldn't be the same without that

talent. You want to say, "Let's just hurry up and get to a time when it's not even a topic. The same thing with race. I'm glad country music is getting more open. That really is wonderful, but it's just taken a long time. Hate and racism and sexism and ageism – none of that is going to go away, but you can tip the scale and things can be nicer, and they are nicer than they have been."

GS: I recently interviewed Rosanne Cash and a few years ago I interviewed your frequent collaborator Lorrie Morgan. All three of you are country music legacies and it made me wonder if there is any kind of club where the offspring of country music legends get together to share stories and give each other support when needed.

PT: Not officially. It's a loose confederacy. Not too long ago, I was at an event for the Lifetime movie about Patsy (Cline) and Loretta (Lynn), and both Patsy's daughter and Loretta's daughter, Patsy, and her granddaughter were there. It's like you know each other already. You understand each other so well. There is a comfort level there. Speaking of LGBTQ people, I want to recognize someone with my new single, the album's title track. Waylon Payne (who co-wrote the song), his story is

totally amazing. He wrote some songs for Miranda's (Lambert) last album. He's an amazing singer and songwriter. He's got an album coming out. We wrote together and it was magic. He's the son of Sammi Smith ("Help Me Make It Through The Night").

GS: Looking For a Feeling is being released in late April 2020. The interview is taking place in early April, and the world is still in the grip of the deadly coronavirus and we've been told to shelter in place. What have you been doing to keep yourself sane and healthy during this time?

PT: Oh my gosh! I don't suppose I can send you a picture on my phone, can I? You're going to laugh your ass off [laughs].

GS: You said you were gardening, right?

PT: Yeah! This project is a mother! I had to build the bed up so high to keep the rabbits out. We got roving gangs of ravenous rabbits in town. All this dirt has to be shoveled in a little higher. You're not working at ground level. You have to shovel it waist high. It's like working on the chain gang, but I'm determined to get it done.

GS: When things return to normal, which we hope will be soon, will you be embarking on a concert tour?

PT: Yes. I don't even know how to contemplate a world where that's not feasible. When you're onstage at a big festival and everybody's singing along – not to go woo-woo – you're kind of a shaman. It's all about the energy of it. When it's all happening and the music is right and the people are unified, it's like church. We need those kinds of

gatherings. The virtual thing is great. I'm trying to embrace that and do a few things online. My sister told me people are doing hilarious things online that are all kinds of cobbled together, warts and

all. The humanness of it is what makes it so appealing. That's all good and we can stay connected during this period of social distancing, but we need to get back together as soon as we can.



Photo By Matt Spicher



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GRAB ROGER

Living Trusts – Estate Planning Consideration for COVID-19

By Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss, Esq.

More and more LGBT couples are using revocable living trusts as a way to efficiently pass on their assets to their partners and spouses and to insure that they will handle their personal affairs if they ever become incapacitated.

A revocable living trust is a legal arrangement where a person executes a written trust document naming themselves as the trustee of their own trust and while alive they transfer their property to their trust so that the trust holds legal title to all their assets.

The document creating the trust allows the person making the trust (maker) to at any time dissolve the trust, change the trust or take assets from the trust; always retaining complete control of their property.

The trust document can provide for the appointment of a successor trustee (surviving LGBT lover/spouse) who

would only act upon the death or disability of the maker of the trust.

However, many clients create an estate plan, then put the documents safely away, until they are needed. However, they have forgotten to complete one final important step. Trust funding is the most overlooked estate planning tool.

Trusts can be used by the trustee during the lifetime of the grantor (person who created it) during incapacity to administer the trust assets for the benefit of the incapacitated grantor. It should be noted that the trustee only has authority over assets, which are owned by the trust. This means that if you (the grantor) want your trustee to be able to take care of you during incapacity, then you need to make sure that your trust is funded. To do this, you must change the title of assets owned by the grantor to

the trustee of the trust.

Please note that is often still the grantor, but the new title will state it is owned by the grantor as the trustee. This can be done with many assets, such as bank accounts, stocks, business, and real estate ownership.

After the death of the grantor, the trust assets are administered for the benefit of the beneficiaries (the grantor's named loved ones in the trust). If the assets were held in the individual name of the



grantor at death, without a designated beneficiary, then those assets must pass through the Last Will and Testament of the deceased grantor at the probate court. The probate court process to administer the assets is expensive and time consuming, usually lasting more than a year.

If you have a trust, then it is likely that your Last Will and Testament will pour over your remaining probate assets into your trust. This means that when the probate process is complete, the Personal Representative of the estate will transfer the remaining probate assets to your trust. The trustee will, at long last, have access to the assets and can administer and distribute them to the beneficiaries.

This long and tedious probate process can be avoided by funding your trust during your lifetime, or alternatively, by funding your trust upon your death by designating your trust as the beneficiary of certain assets, such as life insurance proceeds and retirement accounts. Trust funding allows the trustee to have immediate access to the funds to be administered for the benefit of the trust beneficiaries, and avoids the expensive and time consuming probate process. I recommend that you review your estate plan and discuss trust funding in further detail with your attorney. Take this last step, and your beneficiaries will thank you.

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.

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GRAB HOLLY

The Temptation of Barb

By Holly Maholm

As you may recall, in our little Limited Liability Company (through which Xandra, Cindy and I operate Donut Time) Cindy's executive title is "Chief Marketing Tranny." Now, the three of us have always considered this to be a joke, inasmuch as Cindy's true expertise (developed before she arrived at Donut Time) was "Solicitation."

What amused us was this: That back when Cindy's survival depended upon her ability to sell her body for sex, The Law pejoratively defined her activities as the crime of "Solicitation," whereas today, when she applies those very same skills (now glorified with the MBA-friendly title "Marketing") to donuts, bear claws and fritters, she is accorded the highest possible praise for her socially-beneficial exertions.

(But back to our story.) Cindy being unexpectedly and providentially provided with volunteers who were eager to do what she wanted done, she instantly formulated a plan to use the few brief hours of this last day before the launch of

our new venture to "Market" that business to every potential customer in Wellington. Cindy issued her orders, and not only did the Retirees, the Lunch Ladies and the High Priestess pitch in, but so did Aly, the Outlaws and Grandma Lily.

First, Cindy instructed the Lunch Ladies and two of the Retirees to assist Xandra in baking many dozen donuts, in the shortest possible time. Next, she instructed Aly and two other Retirees to brew multiple vats of coffee and fill all the carafes we owned. Then, Cindy requested the High Priestess (Phyllis) and me to accompany her to the stables, where we hurriedly harnessed two horses to the wedding carriage. (I was lucky enough to bring out Victor and Fletcher – in disguise as Percherons – to pull the carriage.) Soon we were on our way back to Donut Time.

Shortly after our return, Cindy deputized Phyllis to drive the carriage, and upon seeing the carriage pulled up in front, and noticing that it lacked a second driver, Xandra suggested to Cindy that Grandma Lily would enjoy the ride. Xandra and the Lunch Ladies brought out multiple dozen freshly-baked donuts – and Aly brought out two enormous vats of coffee – all of which were soon securely loaded into the carriage, following which the "Marketing" began.

Phyllis and Grandma Lily rode proudly in the driver's seat, each waving serenely to curious bystanders as if one of them were Next-in-Line-to-the-Throne. Meanwhile, Cindy and Aly rode in the back of the carriage, where they prepared themselves to engage in every act of "Solicitation" they could legally perform in public. The carriage – having the appearance of a sparkling, royal conveyance transporting a High Priestess, an Honored Great-Grandmother and two attractive trannies – processed in a stately manner through the streets and alleyways of the town.

And soon, the spectators lining the streets were excited to discover that this was a carriage bearing gifts. From time-to-time Aly would leap down to hand out free donuts with one hand and pour coffee-refills with the other. Cindy did the



same, but also ran into nearby shops and offices to hand out Delivery Menus listing the donuts, pastries and beverages that could be ordered for chariot-delivery.

While this promotion continued, I noticed that Recon, Fender and Tuco were prepping for the launch next day. Each man piloted one of the chariots smartly around the Green; stopping from time-to-time to jump down and pretend to drop off a customer's order. And what I could see (but others could not) was that extra element of "encouragement" which Queen Penelope had decided to contribute to our launch. I saw that each chariot was accompanied in its travels by two invisible unicorns following protectively behind (as if destroyers following a troopship in convoy), thereby providing calming reassurance to the rescue horses in harness.

At the end of the day, upon the return of the carriage to Donut Time, I asked Cindy if she had been able to make that one, extra-special "delivery" of donuts I had requested. She smiled at me and reported, "Yes, we stopped the carriage in front of that real estate office over on Pine. I went in and walked right up to the woman inside – so she could see who I was – and I put a half dozen donuts right there on the corner of her desk. I told her, 'Thanks for the heads-up on No. 9. We like it a lot.'"

"So... did she try any of the donuts?" I breathlessly inquired. "Can't say," Cindy replied. "She was tempted, but then she looked at me again and seemed to be all disgusted at me being a tranny. Then I had to leave, so I never saw whether she gave in to temptation... or stayed faithful to Scripture. I guess we'll never know."

(To be continued)

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

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Tubi offers a viable and cost-free streaming option – as a complement to subscription services or alternative for those wanting to watch budgets. With total view time rocketing to over 163 million hours watched last December, Tubi is an ad-supported video on demand service with over 20,000 movies and television shows from nearly every major Hollywood studio, including the #1 show on TV, *The Masked Singer*, *The Big Short* and *Spy Kids*. The service gives fans of films and television programs an easy way to discover new content which is available completely free.

Celebrate love and catch up on some of the most comedic movie moments with a library of LGBT titles that includes: *Appropriate Behavior* (2014) - Sundance

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Girls Like Us (2013)

God's Own Country (2017) - Won directing award at Sundance

Hearthstone (2016) – Won directing award at TIFF

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Latter Days (2003)

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Love is All You Need? (2016) – Starring Emily Osment

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CHICAGO PRIDE FEST TO GO VIRTUAL



Chicago Pride Fest will mark its 20th year with a virtual festival format. On June 20-21, the Northalsted Business Alliance brings Boystown to the world with a streaming Chicago Pride Fest celebrating the love, life and diversity of Chicago's LGBTQ+ community. Running from 7 pm to 9 pm both nights, the streaming Twitch event will feature a full line-up with entertainment, activism, greetings and more. Virtual gate donations will benefit Boystown community programming, the Center on Halsted and Howard Brown Health.

Northalsted President **Ramesh Ariyanayakam** acknowledges how different things will look this year. "Right now our focus is all about planning a Pride celebration for the digital ages. We know this virtual festival will bring much needed connection and hope to our community and beyond and are thrilled to produce this event."

More details available at <http://www.pridefestchicago.com>. A full programming line-up will be available in June.

Lambda Legal Urges Supreme Court to Uphold the Affordable Care Act



Lambda Legal and Ropes & Gray filed a friend-of-the-court brief with the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of 16 nonprofit organizations that advocate for people living with HIV. The brief argues in support of 19 states and DC, led by California, and the U.S. House of Representatives who are collectively defending the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and appealing a ruling from the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals that invalidates a key provision of the ACA and threatens the law in its entirety. In the brief, Lambda Legal

urges the Court to uphold the constitutionality of the ACA and describes the role it has had in expanding health care coverage for people living with HIV, particularly those with lower incomes or who have faced barriers to care in the past such as LGBTQ people and people of color.

"The COVID-19 pandemic highlights why broad and easy access to health care is so important. As a country, we must ensure access to health insurance and comprehensive, affordable care. The ACA, and in particular its expansion of Medicaid, has helped countless people obtain health insurance who were otherwise left to fend for themselves when they got sick. Its antidiscrimination protections on the basis of sex, race, disability, and those who have pre-existing conditions such as HIV have been critical to eliminating barriers to health care," said **Omar Gonzalez-Pagan**, Senior Attorney and Health Care Strategist at Lambda Legal. "If the Court does not uphold the ACA, the impacts to our communities, especially on LGBTQ people and people living with HIV who are people of color and lower-income, will be catastrophic."

ACA reforms have helped an estimated 20 million people obtain health insurance and with it access to lifesaving medical care, including many living with HIV who were previously denied coverage because their HIV status constituted a pre-existing condition or because they simply could not afford it.

"By making HIV testing, PrEP and antiretroviral medications more easily accessible, the ACA has ushered in an era of new progress in the fight against HIV," said **Scott Schoettes**, HIV Project Director at Lambda Legal. "We are starting to see the positive impact of this policy in reduced rates of HIV transmission in states like Louisiana and Illinois, which have reported significant drops in new cases. An end to the HIV epidemic is within reach and to dismantle a successful health policy that has made that level of optimism possible is unfathomable."

This is the third challenge to the ACA since its enactment in 2010 to come before the U.S. Supreme Court. The Justices will consider the constitutionality of the individual mandate, now that the penalty for failing to obtain health insurance was reduced to \$0, and whether it can be "severed" from the rest of the law, allowing the other provisions to stand, including such provisions as the

expansion of Medicaid and antidiscrimination protections for LGBTQ people and those who have pre-existing conditions such as HIV.

In March 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court announced that it would review the decision from the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which ruled that the individual mandate was unconstitutional and indicated in remanding the case that it likely cannot be severed from important aspects of the rest of the law. Oral argument is expected to take place in the fall of 2020 and a decision would likely happen by the end of the term in the summer of 2021.

The cases are *California v. Texas*, brought by 19 states led by California and includes New York, Illinois, Virginia, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, Colorado, Iowa, Michigan, Nevada, the District of Columbia, and the governor of Kentucky, and *Texas v. California*, led by Texas on behalf of that state, Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, and West Virginia. The U.S. House of Representatives intervened in support of the states led by California and in defense of the ACA.

Lambda Legal Senior Attorney and Health Care Strategist **Omar Gonzalez-Pagan**, Counsel **Gregory R. Nevins** and Counsel and HIV Project Director **Scott Schoettes** joined **Kirsten Mayer**, **Douglas Hallward-Driemeier**, **John T. Dey**, **Brendan McLaughlin**, **Ryan Sullivan** and **Megan A. McEntee** of Ropes & Gray LLP as counsel on the brief.

Signatories include AIDS United, American Academy of HIV Medicine, Black AIDS Institute, Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation, GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders, Housing Works, Human Rights Campaign, Latino Commission on AIDS, National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors, National Black Justice Coalition, National Center for Transgender Equality, National Minority AIDS Council, Positive Women's Network - USA, The AIDS Institute, and Whitman-Walker Health and the Whitman-Walker Institute.

Read the brief here: https://www.lambdalegal.org/in-court/legal-docs/california_dc_20200513_amicus-brief

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RUFUS WAINWRIGHT "UNFOLLOW THE RULES" ARRIVES ON JULY 10



GRAMMY® Award-nominated singer-songwriter **Rufus Wainwright** has unveiled the latest single from his eagerly anticipated new pop album, *Unfollow the Rules* "Alone Time" is available now at all DSPs and streaming services; an official companion video, created by award-winning animator **Josh Shaffner** and

featuring illustrations by Wainwright and Shaffner.

"'Alone Time' is the end title of my upcoming album, *Unfollow the Rules*," says Wainwright, "an old school record that attempts to take the listener on a rich journey through the myriad of experiences of this thing we call 'life.' It is my belief that with everyone and everything, ultimately, all conclusions are about solitude and the acceptance of that fact, and that often this is a very beautiful realization. But today, in these dark times, I'm thinking a lot about the thousands of people who, due to COVID-19, are forced to experience intense isolation at the end of their days in order to save others, and the incredible fear that that must entail. This track is humbly dedicated to them; it is a wish of hope and a prayer for grace that they feel some sense of joy and comfort in knowing they are performing such an

incredible act of sacrifice for humanity."

Wainwright is offering fans further solace with his ongoing #Quarantunes series of #MusicalEverydays and #RobeRecitals, presented each day via his official Instagram and Facebook. The daily videos see the singer-songwriter supreme performing new songs from *Unfollow the Rules* alongside classic catalog favorites, surprising rarities, and beloved cover versions.

An ingenious, compellingly charismatic live artist, Wainwright hopes to see his fans later this year on his epic *Unfollow the Rules* Tour, with worldwide headline dates and festival performances currently slated to begin this June and then continue into early November. For scheduled dates and other information, visit <http://www.rufuswainwright.com/tour>.

NECK DEEP LAUNCHES "ALL DISTORTIONS ARE INTENTIONAL" TARGET EXCLUSIVE PRE-ORDER



Neck Deep has announced they are partnering with Target on an exclusive version of their forthcoming album *All*

Distortions Are Intentional.

For a taste of what's to come, Neck Deep recently released singles "When You Know" joins "Lowlife" from the band's forthcoming album. Due out July 24 via Hopeless Records, this is no mere collection of songs. *All Distortions Are Intentional* is conceptually rich, with themes of disconnection, existential confusion, and the search for meaning.

The album tells the story of a loner named Jett, who lives in Sonderland, a combination of "Wonderland" and the somewhat obscure word "sonder": the realization that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own, with their own ambitions and worries. "It's that strange existential realization that you are not the entire world," explains singer **Ben Barlow**.

"Everyone around you feels and lives the same way that you do. You're just an extra in their story."

All Distortions Are Intentional marks Neck Deep's arrival as an arena-confident band. Having mastered all of the strengths of the scene that birthed them, Neck Deep have evolved to this next stage, and as their crowds grow larger, it's clearer than ever just how much this "silly little band" has come to mean to people.

Available for pre-order at **Target.com** today, this limited edition release will include 2 bonus acoustic tracks as well as alternate cover art and packaging. This is an extremely limited one-time only pressing and will only be available at Target.

THE USED RELEASE HEART- WARMING MUSIC VIDEO FOR "THE LIGHTHOUSE (FEAT. MARK HOPPUS)" DEDICATED TO FRONTLINE WORKERS

Last month, *The Used* called upon fans to submit videos of their frontline fighters as part of a very special project sharing "Every day you wake up and leave your loved ones to fight to keep us safe. We want to showcase them in our

new music video." Today, the band has unveiled the music video for "The Lighthouse (feat. Mark Hoppus)" featuring Nurses, Doctors, First Responders, Gas Station Attendants, Grocery Store Clerks, Delivery People and other Essential Workers as well as members of The Used and **Mark Hoppus** at home with their families.

It is a beautiful tribute to the people that are tirelessly working to keep all of us safe through these unprecedented times. The video also showcases how truly diverse and dedicated The Used family is.

Speaking to the message behind the track, front man **Bert McCracken** shared the following message:

"It is not in the stars to hold our destiny but in ourselves." - William Shakespeare

Doubt can be an avalanche. It can cascade out and infect

everything it touches. Inspiration is also infectious. The original chorus lyric was "I can't be your lighthouse", until I was reminded by my 6 year old daughter that I can be and I am. It helps to remember that we all have the capability to inspire someone in our own way. Please enjoy our song *The Lighthouse* as much as we do. Love, Bert

"The Lighthouse (feat. Mark Hoppus)" comes from the band's recently released eighth studio album *Heartwork*, which was released last month via Big Noise. *Heartwork* celebrated a strong first week, locking in #2 spots on both the Current Alternative and Record Label Independent Album charts, #3 on both Current Rock and Top Current Album charts as well as landing in the Billboard Top 200 at the #87 spot.

Fans can watch the heartwarming video today at <https://smarturl.it/BeYourLighthouse>.



What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

Yes, COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in parts of the United States. Risk of infection with COVID-19 is higher for people who are close contacts of someone known to have COVID-19, for example healthcare workers, or household members. Other people at higher risk for infection are those who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19. Learn more about places with ongoing spread at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html#geographic>.

Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.?

Yes. The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but is now spreading from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?

Some patients have pneumonia in both lungs, multi-organ failure and in some cases death.

How can I help protect myself?

People can help protect themselves from respiratory illness with everyday preventive actions.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What should I do if I recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19?

If you have traveled from an affected area, there may be restrictions on your movements for up to 2 weeks. If you develop symptoms during that period (fever, cough, trouble breathing), seek medical advice. Call the office of your health care provider before you go, and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to take everyday preventive actions, like avoiding close contact with people who are sick and washing your hands often.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.



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Photo By Jay Fuertez



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