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'Pride is the People'

***Bob The Drag Queen
on Creating Connection
During Pride in Era of COVID-19***

Photo by Jacob Ritts

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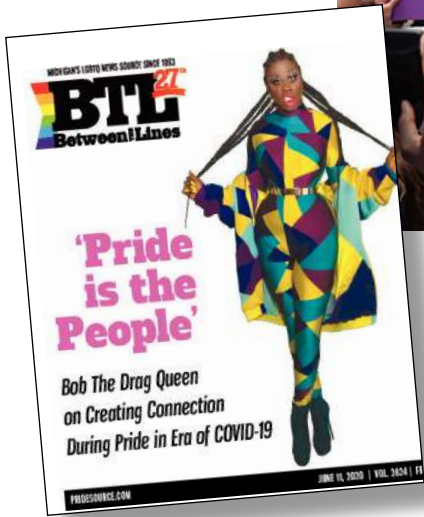
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'Pride is the People'

Bob The Drag Queen on Creating Connection During Pride in Era of COVID-19



Photo by Jacob Ritts

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Maintaining a packed schedule can be tricky for drag queens at the best of times, but for Bob the Drag Queen, even a global pandemic can't keep her down. Despite heading into a Pride season filled with nearly across-the-board event cancellations and postponements due to the novel coronavirus, the season eight winner of "RuPaul's Drag Race" is regularly making appearances across the virtual stage everywhere. Fans can catch Bob in the HBO series "We're Here," a brand-new comedy special "Bob The Drag Queen: Live at Caroline's," MTV's "Drag My Dad," on her "Sibling Rivalry" podcast with fellow "Drag Race" winner Monet X Change and across YouTube.

But as much as this June showcases Bob's wide range as a performer, she's also using some of her platforms as an opportunity to make note of, and show support to, the nationwide police brutality protests. In the midst of a packed-despite-the-odds schedule, Between The Lines met up with Bob via phone to get a feel for drag

in the age of COVID-19, the importance of increased visibility for black queer performers and the deep personal connections people create through drag.

What does it feel like to be a drag queen going into a June that celebrates Pride virtually this year?

Well, I mean, I'm not saddened by it. I think that it is going to be different. I also think that part of it is going to be different not only because of COVID-19 but because of the Black Lives Matter Movement, and I'm excited, actually, to focus on a lot of black queer stories.

A lot of Prides are certainly taking a similar approach. New York City Pride is using its platform to protest police brutality, and there's a lot of talk about how the first Pride was a riot and really going back to Stonewall's beginnings. Do you think that given the roots of drag and gay culture stemming from people like Marsha P. Johnson, that it's the responsibility of fans and

performers of drag to really educate themselves on the culture?

I mean, I think it would give you a more fruitful experience in terms of celebrating Pride. Of course, it's not my job to tell anyone what their job is. But I think if you want to have a fruitful experience with Pride, a fully well-rounded experience to know what it is you're celebrating, then yeah, do your research, which, by the way, is not even hard. Like, it's not 1999 where you have to go down to the library or get an Encyclopedia Britannica or something. There's tons of documentaries and movies, articles [and] entire Instagram accounts dedicated to this stuff.

I was looking at your YouTube channel and you've had conversations with Peppermint about racism in the drag community. How do you confront conversations about race in drag, whether it be face-to-face or online?

Well, every once in a while I will have to confront things face-to-face if I confront a microaggression or an "aggression"

aggression against myself or my tribe. And online it happens a lot [italics]. People feel online to say potentially whatever they want to say because they don't actually have to see your face. And if I think there's a moment of growth, then I'll address it. If not, especially if it's online, I'll just let it fly over my head because, you know, some people online are just trolling. You know, looking to elicit a response.

Now more than ever it seems that performers have to be aware of what's socially and politically going on. Does being "on" all the time in that way get exhausting?

I felt exhausted kind of as a person in general and I haven't done drag in over a week, and I just didn't feel up to it. I canceled a couple of things, quite frankly, because I just felt so affected. But then again, I would also say as a black, queer artist I do think that it is important for me to share my success stories and let people know that there are—you know, I know how much it means for me to see those things from black queer artists. So

I'm definitely picking myself up by the [boot] straps and getting back in there because I think it's important for people out there to see a successful black queer artist, frankly.

Moving onto your HBO show "We're Here," what was your reaction when you heard the pitch that you're going to go to small-town America and do drag?

Well, at first I was nervous that it was going to be a show where I go from town to town and just go and put a bunch of straight people into drag, and that I didn't want to do. But when I found out that wasn't the pitch I was really excited. There's no dig or nothing against any show that does do that or that — I mean, "Drag My Dad" is a show where we put straight people in drag — but I just felt like I would like to have a different impact on a different show. I'm so proud of the show; I'm so happy with the way it turned out and the fact that we're telling diverse stories. That's what I'm probably the most proud of.

You're from the South originally. Did doing the show actually make you confront some of your issues with small-town America or go face-to-face with that?

I moved all around the South as a kid, and I did have this feeling of, "I have no community here," especially after I was out of college. Once I got out of college and I saw all the other theater department people leave and I had no one, and what I'm realizing now is, that there almost certainly was a community in probably all of those towns — they probably were small, they probably were reflective of the population, and maybe I would not have felt so compelled to leave or just — I didn't necessarily leave the South with a great case of, "I'm out for the South," you know?

You've said that HBO really respected the craft when they approached you.

Yes.

OLD Do you think that sometimes drag is not thought of as high of an art form as it could be?

Well, I think it depends on who you're talking to (laughs). In my circles it's regarded as an extremely high art form, but I'm sure there's someone out there who doesn't see the value in it. But, I mean, my craft has been respected. And when I say respected, I mean, like, sometimes you're doing a TV show or movie and they want you to do drag and you're like, "OK, but this is all the things that go with being in drag." Like, if we tell you that we need to do it at a really elevated level, it's really not just going to your local Halloween costume store and buying a couple of costumes. It is a lot of work to craft a really beautiful drag queen from custom garments to custom hair — everything that goes into it. And HBO really, really rose to the occasion.

In many of your projects it seems like you're connecting with people when you put them in drag. What do you think is so disarming about that process?

I think it's disarming because someone is completely out of their element. They have to trust you because they don't know what they're doing at all. So they're in your hands, like, "I have to trust you because I'm so clueless." And I not only want to take advantage of that trust but utilize it to the best of my ability.

Was there a drag moment in one of the projects that you've done where there was a connection that occurred that caught you off guard?

Well, I really loved the conversation that I had with Nate, Darren and Lady Shug in Shiprock, New Mexico. That was really beautiful, to hear them talk about what it means to be indigenous and the intersectionality between being queer and indigenous. That's probably one of my favorite moments, and I also really loved the moment that I had with Tanner in Branson, where I basically told them my story with, you know, Christianity and homosexuality. It helped me come to a conclusion on that.

Do you think COVID-19 will impact the way people do drag not only in the near future but permanently in some way?

As I was navigating the land of the internet and drag shows in quarantine and folks were saying, "I've never gotten a chance to see you before because I can't leave the house for a list of reasons." Some people have anxiety, some people are disabled, some people just don't have enough money, some people live in an area where they don't have access, some people are in the closet. And they finally got to see some of their favorite drag queens perform, like finally, that just, I was like, "Maybe I should continue with this." I would like to be able to keep this going for people who, you know — I mean, maybe not as much as I'm doing in lockdown — but maybe I can continue these kind of performances for people who can't get out of the house.

Do you have a message for people who might be feeling especially vulnerable during this Pride season?

Just think about it like this — this is something I'm pulling from the church, and I'm not religious, but I did go to church for quite some while — church isn't the building, it's the people. And Pride isn't the parade. Pride isn't the parties. It's the people. It's what we bring to Pride. So, you can still have Pride without having to be surrounded by thousands of people. Pride is a feeling you have deep inside yourself. That's why we call it Pride.

Find out about all of Bob the Drag Queen's projects online at bobthedragqueen.com.

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Photo credit: Ka'Juan Hill (left) and Kendell Jones.

2 Detroit Activists Seek Help Handing Out Care Packages to Fight COVID-19

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

For Ka'Juan Hill, doing HIV/AIDS advocacy and outreach is not just a job. It's a calling. By day, he's a community outreach specialist for Unified HIV Health and Beyond, and, whenever free time allows, he carries the title of Let's Stop HIV Ambassador for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. Earlier this year, Hill partnered with Kendell Jones, research and outreach representative for the Wayne State University Prevention Team, to start planning something new for the community.

"Before the pandemic happened, we were planning a new group to be called Once Upon a Friday," Hill said. "It was just going to be a safe space to have conversations about safer sex and mental health issues. Just a place where people could come and be themselves. There wouldn't be any age limit, like at the Ruth Ellis Center. We were going to do this in collaboration with the Detroit Recovery Project."

Then COVID-19 hit.

"We saw that people couldn't go anywhere or do anything and we started giving away bags of food, supplies and, in conjunction



with my work, safe sex materials and supplies," Hill said. "We were inspired by the work that the Trans Sistas of Color Project - Detroit does, but we thought there were more people who needed help than just trans women."

Initially, Hill and Jones pulled together and purchased the supplies - things like toothbrushes, tissues, food, socks, hand sanitizer and masks - themselves. They gave out 20 bags on the first go around. Then they received assistance from their jobs and did another round of bag giveaways. This time they gave out 42. Now, once again sponsored by their respective agencies, Hill and Jones are doing yet another giveaway and the goal this time is 100 bags.

To request a bag, people need only to reach out to Hill via email or social media. Bags can be delivered throughout metro Detroit.

"We would like to be able to help more people, to that end we are looking for some additional drivers," Hill said. "That would be a big help."

To request a bag or for more information, or to offer assistance with deliveries, contact Ka'Juan Hill at KhaosTalks on Instagram or Facebook or email Khill@miunified.org.



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Planned Parenthood: ‘Care. No Matter What’ — Even During a Global Pandemic

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

Tried and True

It’s more than a slogan. “Care. No Matter What” is Planned Parenthood’s guiding principle and a mandate now more than ever as the organization faces its latest external threat: the novel coronavirus. But because of its ability to adapt swiftly in times of crisis, Planned Parenthood has, thus far, been able to meet its latest challenge by not only surviving but expanding certain offerings to provide easier-to-access services to patients — in some cases, from home. Lori Carpentier, Planned Parenthood of Michigan President and CEO, described the ways her organization has been nimble amid the pandemic and also the effects it’s had on Planned Parenthood as a whole.

“The governor, in one of her first executive orders, made it clear that procedures and services that had to do with pregnancy care — and in our case avoiding pregnancy — were appropriate,” Carpentier said, explaining that Planned Parenthood provides an “essential service” and was thus allowed to remain open at a time when many health services were forced to temporarily suspend operation. She said that every measure is being taken to protect staff and patients.

Proof of how quickly Planned Parenthood responded to the needs of its patients and the constraints of our current environment can vividly be seen on two fronts: the rapid expansion of access to medication abortion via telemedicine and a new smartphone app designed to order birth control and urinary tract infection treatment.

How it Works

“We started the expansion in January,” Carpentier said, in reference to telemedicine access to medication abortion. As she explained, the telemedicine arrangement works the same as a regular medication abortion, but the patient who comes to one of the health centers meets virtually with the physician who is somewhere else in the state. Carpentier pointed out this is the law in Michigan, but that an advanced clinician is perfectly capable of talking with the patient, ensuring the patient provides appropriate informed consent and explaining how the procedure works. After that, one of the licensed personnel at the health center where the patient was seen dispenses the pills and monitors the patient afterward.

“The original plan was to roll that out in our nine centers that were presently offering medication abortion in the center over the next nine months or so, with about one a month,”



Carpentier said. “But instead ... once the COVID virus hit, one of the first things we did was to accelerate that with some group training ... and we rolled it out in about 10 days instead.”

The rest of the 15 health centers that had not offered medication abortion services will be offering it both in-person and via telemedicine within the next six weeks.

Another service, Planned Parenthood Direct, was introduced just recently. It allows any user of an Android or iPhone to download an app, fill out a health questionnaire that is reviewed by a Planned Parenthood clinician, and if approved, receive a prescription for birth control (pill, patch or ring) or treatment for a urinary tract infection. In the case of birth control, it can be purchased through Planned Parenthood’s online pharmacy and sent to the person who requested it or the prescription can be sent to a local pharmacy. About 90 percent of the requests for birth control are approved. Because the treatment of urinary tract infections is a little more involved, about half of those requests are able to be fulfilled, but Carpentier emphasized that if someone can’t get treatment via the app, they can access care at one of Planned Parenthood’s health centers.

So far, Planned Parenthood Direct has been a huge success in Michigan.

“We had the largest kickoff in the country,” Carpentier said. “I think that is very much due to the coronavirus situation. I think people are really eager to do whatever they can from home.”

She said the organization plans to continue offering the service once the shelter-in-place orders are lifted; an added benefit is that it reaches people who don’t live near one of their health centers. Soon, Michigan will be the beta test site to offer emergency contraception pills through the app, too.

“We are diligently working to offer other services that will allow people to get services without being seen, and that would be direct-to-consumer where people would actually have an interaction with a clinician from their handheld or tablet device and get whatever they

need through the mail, etc. and never have to leave their home,” Carpentier said.

People can expect direct-to-consumer offerings beginning in the coming weeks. In addition, starting this fall, Planned Parenthood health centers will offer the flu vaccine for the first time, in anticipation of being a coronavirus vaccine provider once it is developed and becomes widely available.

Tough Time

Just as Planned Parenthood’s services have adapted well to meet the needs of the community, Carpentier acknowledged it’s been challenging for her staff.

“I think that the observation that we are going to be a society that has to deal with a whole group of people that are now dealing with some level of post-traumatic stress disorder is really true,” she said. “I think this has been a trauma.”

She said some of the organization’s employees were furloughed, but that Planned Parenthood tried to ensure that workers were able to secure all the unemployment and stimulus relief for which they are eligible.

“The fact of the matter is this is just a tough time,” Carpentier said, mentioning workers who might be less food secure or facing intimate partner violence concerns.

“We’ve made sure that our employee aid program is really available to them for counseling for financial issues or a whole host of things. I think we’ve been lucky; we’ve had very little in the way of COVID infections among our staff members but we understand the level of stress this has put on them,” she said.

Now the organization is making plans to bring some people back to work and manage the organization’s culture in light of collectively enduring this ongoing crisis.

Carpentier further described how Planned Parenthood is proactively responding to forces beyond its control, as it has throughout its 100-plus year history.

“There’s never been a more difficult time. We know that’s true for so many organizations... we need to make sure that people understand the importance of the care that Planned Parenthood gives and that we continue to be the haven place for folks that have reproductive and sexual health care needs, including abortion services.”

—Lori Carpentier, Planned Parenthood of Michigan President and CEO

“I happen to be part of a Southeast Michigan CEO group ... and what I found when this pandemic hit was that they were significantly less prepared to deal with something that was an outside force that really took control out of their hands and they have not developed the kind of musculature, if you will, that Planned Parenthood does, of being able to roll with these kinds of things,” Carpentier said. “We took this seriously; we are absolutely tapped into public health ... so we took a very active public health stance.

“We know how to adapt. We know what it’s like, because our history ... has always dictated that we are ready for the next punch that comes from an external source — usually, whoever’s in the White House and the administration that’s involved,” she continued. “So we do know how to do this. We are uniquely equipped to be able to manage something like this and I think that’s why our response was so swift and we have had really good outcomes.”

Community

In further spirit of adapting, Planned Parenthood’s two spring fundraisers were transformed into online events.

“There’s never been a more difficult time,” Carpentier said. “We know that’s true for so many organizations. So far, we’re seeing people really step up and are always awed in terms of the response we get from Michiganders. As we are innovating faster than we ever dreamed that we could, which is a good lesson for all of us ... we need to make sure that people understand the importance of the care that Planned Parenthood gives and that we continue to be the haven place for folks that have reproductive and sexual health care needs, including abortion services.”

Find out more information at plannedparenthood.org.



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Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Fundies! Go Fly Ben Franklin's Kite!

If one person single-handedly pushed this country into a War of Independence from England, it is patriot and pamphleteer Thomas Paine (1737 - 1809). His book "Common Sense" is a clarion call to open rebellion. Today's religious right hates and ignores him with an unholy passion.

When "Common Sense" appeared in January 1776 it sold 50,000 copies. One copy for every eight citizens. Its stirring prose and cogent reasoning motivated Americans to defy King George III. The rest is glorious, 13 stars-and-stripes history. Don't tread on me!

Tom Paine's second book "The Age of Reason" — a well-crafted Bible sandblasting — terrifies Christian fundamentalists who, in their misguided zeal, would have us believe America's founding fathers were gung-ho for making this a Christian Nation. And to hell with separation of church and state.

(Scary, too, for Bible Belters who seldom publicized the religious background checks of George Washington, John Quincy Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and a majority of the original signers of the U.S. Constitution.)

The main reason Paine's name is foam on the parched and cracked lips of the biblical boob-ocrats is because Paine was a caustic skeptic.

"Every national Church or religion has established itself by pretending some special mission from God," he wrote in "The Age of Reason." "Each accuses the other of unbelief; and for my own part, I disbelieve them all."

Paine said that, "If someone claimed to hear the voice of God, it is a revelation to that person only. When he tells it to a second person it becomes hearsay; and consequently no one is obligated to believe it."

He questioned important and key Christian religious doctrine.

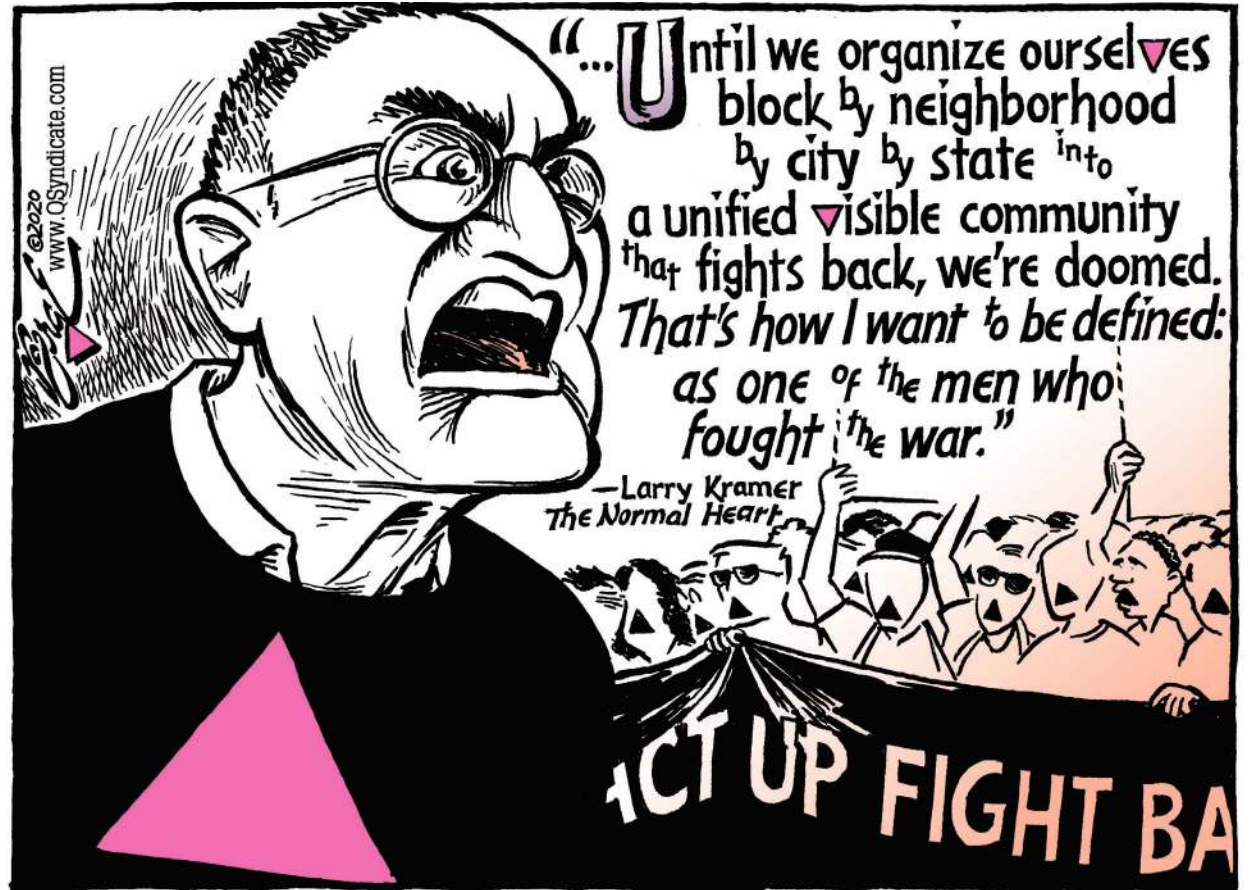
"It appears that doubting Thomas did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus, and would not believe without ocular and manual demonstration himself," he wrote. "So neither will I: and the reason is equally good for me and every other person as for Thomas."

Paine called himself a Deist. He found that God was revealed in Nature. That Jesus was human, not God. That both Old and New Testaments are replete with myths and errors. He gave hundreds of examples to prove it. Reason, rather than blind faith and revelation, is mankind's greatest gift from the creator, Paine maintained.

Other important American patriots challenged Christianity. John Adams was a Unitarian — and we all know what they're like — as was his son, John Quincy. Thomas Jefferson put together his own version of the New Testament, editing out mythology and dogma in favor of ethical content. Jefferson urged his nephew to, "Question with boldness even the existence of God." (Would that he had said the same of slavery.)

James Madison was jailed for criticizing the Episcopal Church when it was Virginia's established religion. Benjamin Franklin, another freethinker, was a Mason and a Rosicrucian

See next page



Transmissions



BY GWENDOLYN ANN SMITH

Stereotypes, Biases and Bad Theories

At the heart of many of society's "-isms" is a laundry list of stereotypes that seek to characterize a group in ways that both provide an easy, if inaccurate, method of describing that group, while also confirming already inherent biases against the group.

While some stereotypes may be born out of some facts about a group, they most often are limiting and harmful, relying on cultural beliefs that do not reflect the lived experiences of those who exist within a group. At worse, these stereotypes are directly harmful to a group, leading to decades of discrimination and hurt.

Enter Dr. Ray Blanchard. Blanchard is an American and Canadian sexologist.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Blanchard refined a theory that there are two types of transgender people in the world. One is the "homosexual transsexual," whose desire to transition is based largely on their attraction to men and their innate — perhaps even stereotypical — femininity. The second is the "autogynephilic transsexual," who is sexually aroused at the idea of having a female body.

I should note that while Blanchard did also coin "autoandrophilia" — which means "paraphilic tendency of a biological female to be sexually aroused by the thought of becoming a male" — he is primarily focused on transgender

women in his work.

A lot of Blanchard's work would likely be relatively unknown if not for the book "The Man Who Would Be Queen" by J. Michael Bailey, who discusses Blanchard's theories heavily in his book. Blanchard has also become a darling of modern anti-trans forces, using his theories to further anti-transgender sentiment by pathologizing transgender women, treating us as nothing more than paraphilic men.

Further, his theory has a very heterosexual view of transgender people and their sexuality, assuming that those who are attracted to men are more feminine than those attracted to women, going so far as to place the latter into a fetishistic category and delegitimizing their gender identity in the process.

Of course, his theories have received plenty of push back over the years from transgender people, who have pointed out both flaws in the theories as well as concerns about his ethical standards in doing his studies at the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry in Toronto. The Clarke Institute is now part of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, and it has faced controversy over accusations of practicing what See **Viewpoint**, continued on next page

► Transmissions

Continued from p. 14

amounted to conversion therapy of your transgender people.

Now, a study published in the Journal of Sexual Medicine in March called into question Blanchard's whole theory. The study, titled "Sexual Behavior, Desire, and Psychosexual Experience in Gynephilic and Androphilic Trans Women: A Cross-Sectional Multicenter Study," reported that, "Clinical Translation Data of this study indicate that sexual orientation does not appear to be a good predictor for sexual behavior, desire, and psychosexual experience in trans women."

In short, the reductionist views of Blanchard do not fit the reality that these researchers have uncovered — a fact that transgender people have been saying all along.

To those of us who are trans, we understand that our gender identity and our sexual orientation are largely separate things. One may influence or enhance another, but they are not the prime mover.

When I first heard Blanchard's theories in the 1990s, they seemed absurd from the get-go. My life didn't fit either category. I identify as bisexual, predominately lesbian, but I've never had a sexual arousal towards feminizing my body. I simply do not fit the model, like so many others. This calls the whole thing into question.

Unfortunately, few have bothered to listen to the lived experiences of transgender people, preferring the words of a non-trans person like, oh, Dr. Ray Blanchard.

Long before he published his theory, transgender people have had to navigate stereotypes. For one, we have been assumed to be mentally disordered. I assume that those who are not trans can only relate to this by assuming that if they faced gender dysphoria, it would be because they've "gone crazy." It doesn't help when transgender people are portrayed in popular culture as being mentally unstable. Therefore, they are

unwilling to listen to the "ravings of a lunatic."

I also have to note that Dr. Blanchard's theories themselves only help to reinforce this notion of transgender people as being mentally disordered.

The only other option would be, a non-trans person might assume, that we are doing something dishonest. This is where all that "sexual deviant hiding in the women's restroom" stuff comes from. It's the notion of Cpl. Maxwell Q. Klinger trying to use cross-gender presentation to escape the army on the classic television show "M*A*S*H," amongst plenty of other portrayals of people using cross-gender presentation as a conceit.

Once again, this means they can discount anything we happen to say, because we clearly must be willing to twist our words to get something we want.

As a result, Dr. Blanchard is able to spend decades successfully promoting a theory that doesn't fit the lived experiences of countless transgender people, helping to create careers for not only himself, but for several other sexologists and others who promote a theory that transgender people fit into two ill-fitting categories where we can continue to be called deviant.

Meanwhile, all this time and attention is going into sexologists and others who create pet theories of transgender behavior, rather than towards the bettering of transgender lives in this society.

We have spent endless decades living in these stereotypes, initially having to play guinea pig to people like Dr. Blanchard, then learning to navigating the stereotypes they created in order to get the care we need. Now it is your turn: I want to see people reach beyond the stereotypes, and their own biases.

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Gwen Smith believes in the power of listening. You can find her at gwensmith.com

wingers like to pretend, we are actually a Masonic nation, with not six, but 32 degrees of separation. I belong to the Fraternal Order of Moose myself. Or, is it the Odd Fellows? Or DAR?

Charles Alexander is prolific both as a BTL columnist (700-plus columns) and as a well-known LGBT community artist (1000 Facebook images). He is a Spirit of Detroit Award recipient and an Affirmations LGBT CENTER Jan Stevenson awardee. Connect with him at Charles@pridesource.com.

Creep Of The Week

Donald Trump

June may be Pride Month, but it isn't official any more. Not since Donald Trump became the president. He has never issued an official proclamation declaring June Pride month.

But this year is different. Not different in the way that the Trump Administration has treated LGBTQ people. I'm sorry if this is a shock to anyone reading this, but Trump does not care about you. At all.

What's different, of course, is that across the country Americans are taking to the streets to protest racism and police brutality. Also different is a highly contagious virus spreading across the country. The novel coronavirus is, of course, the reason cited for canceling Pride celebrations across the country. A wise decision, even after we've seen the spread slowing in previous hot spots like New York and Michigan.

And yet there are crowds of hundreds and thousands out protesting together, often with no social distancing and sometimes without masks.

That has led to some folks coming to the conclusion that, "Huh, I guess social distancing either isn't that important and/or COVID-19 was all a big hoax."

Let me be clear, those people are dumb.

The presence of protesters in the street demanding that police not murder Black people is not evidence that COVID-19 was a hoax, it is evidence that people are willing to risk their lives to fight against injustice and racism. They shouldn't have to, of course, but that's where we are.

We've seen law enforcement out there, too, often inciting violence and abusing their power. We've seen police departments that resemble military using force against peaceful protesters.

Have we seen some protesters rioting and looting? Yes. But the vast majority of protesters are peaceful. The protesters that Trump had pepper sprayed and pelted with rubber bullets in Washington, D.C. so that he could walk across the street to St. John's Episcopal Church and hold up a Bible like he'd never actually held a physical book before were peaceful. Included in the attacked protesters? Clergy members from St. John's who were out supporting protesters who were handing out snacks and water.

Over and over we're seeing images of violence at these protests. And over and over again these acts of violence are being done by the police. To quote Alexandra Erin, who I highly recommend following on Twitter @AlexandraErin, "What is happening across this country is that the police are rioting in response to attempts to hold them accountable."

It should, truly, terrify all of us. We're seeing

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

The presence of protesters in the street demanding that police not murder Black people is not evidence that COVID-19 was a hoax, it is evidence that people are willing to risk their lives to fight against injustice and racism.

what is happening when the police KNOW that they have cameras on them and the whole world is watching. This is not a problem we can blame on a few "bad apples." This is systemic violence and unchecked power and the man in the White House? He loves it. White supremacists love it. What looks like fascism to most of us actually looks quite comforting to those whose power will be protected by said fascists. It's important to remember that there are people who watch a video of a police officer shooting a Black man in the back has he retreats see it as how things should be.

To my fellow white people who are experiencing discomfort right now: good. That's the least you can do. But you need to do more. As Ahmed Ali (@MrAhmednurAli) put it, "It's a privilege to learn about racism instead of experiencing it your whole life."

Use that privilege wisely.

As for the LGBTQ community, we use the word "community" pretty loosely. There is actually a lot of division among LGBTQ folks, and a significant part of that division falls along racial lines. It is a sad reality that racism exists in a community that supposedly should know better, having faced discrimination ourselves.

There are LGBTQ people supporting Trump. The Log Cabin Republicans love him. In response to Ivanka Trump's June 1, "Less hate, more love" Tweet, LCR retweeted with the comment, "We're proud of your dad's work towards LGBTQ equality and happy to count you as a strong ally in our movement!"

Clearly they don't live on the same planet as the rest of us. But for those of us who inhabit reality, especially white people, we need to take a good hard look at our own bias, whether implicit or explicit. It's not enough to say, "Oh that's too bad" when you see Black people being killed and persecuted and harassed. White people must stop voting for racists. Racism has got to be a deal breaker no matter what else a candidate supposedly stands for. If you support Trump, you are a racist. Full stop. If that makes you feel defensive, good. If that makes you think about who you are and what the fuck you're doing, even better.

► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 14

occultist. He told many a true believer of his day to go fly a kite!

George Washington, nominally an Episcopalian, rarely attended church, although he spoke of the importance of religion in the life of the newly independent nation. Our first president was also a Mason, as were some 26 signers of the U.S. Constitution.

Come to think of it, instead of being a Christian Nation, as political right-



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Anger Over Racism, Police Brutality Directed at Trump in White House Protests

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

Protesters gathered outside the White House on Saturday to direct their anger at President Trump after days of demonstrations over police brutality against Black individuals, including George Floyd.

The portion of 16th Street leading up to the White House, where D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser had imprinted in large yellow letters “Black Lives Matter,” was filled with demonstrators, including LGBTQ protesters expressing solidarity and anger over racism and police brutality.

Thomas Smith, a gay 40-year-old D.C. resident, said he came to the protest to “stand in solidarity with my brothers and sisters of all races and ethnicities and backgrounds because of really horrifying things that have happened in this country over the past few weeks.”

Watching these events unfold, Smith said he was taken by “the horrifying nature of it all and that there’s a segment of this country who refuse to speak out and stand up for what’s right.”

The viral nine-minute video of Minneapolis police killing George Floyd — which ignited a firestorm of protests across not just in the United States, but across the globe — is but one incident in a series of incidents against Black Americans in recent days.

Others are the killing of Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia; the death of Breonna Taylor in a shooting with police in Louisville; a white woman in New York City calling the police on Christian Cooper, a black gay man who told her to obey the rules in Central Park and leash her dog.

Demonstrators before the White House held up signs reading “Black Lives Matter,” “Fire Bad Cops,” “Fuck Trump,” and “How Many Weren’t Filmed.” Visible among the messages were rainbow Pride signs as well as individuals wearing rainbow-themed clothing.

At several points during the demonstration, protesters took a knee in a symbolic stand against systemic

racism, at one time amid chants of “I Can’t Breathe.”

One incident of violence not as high-profile is the killing of Tony McDade, a Black transgender man at the hands of police in Tallahassee this week.

At one point, a Black trans activist approached protesters to urge them to remember “All Black Lives Matter,” including the lives of transgender people and transgender kids.

“Kids, black men, black women,” the activist said. “You want to acknowledge

out the military nationwide to crush the righteous George Floyd protests against police murder,” the flyer says. “An uprising has begun. Day after day, night after night, coast to coast, the streets fill with Black youth refusing to face another day in fear and people of all backgrounds who have had enough of white supremacy and a culture of soul-crushing cruelty.”

The White House didn’t respond to the Washington Blade’s request to comment on President Trump’s message for the



Washington Blade photo by Michael Key

us, too? We are standing right beside, ya’ll. And guess what? All Black lives matter.”

Much of the anger at the protests was directed at Trump, who has faced criticism for his administration’s response to incidents of police brutality, including the forcible removal of protesters from Lafayette Park on Monday just before Trump posed for a photo with a Bible before St. John’s Church.

Following the forcible expulsion of protesters on Monday, the area around the White House and Lafayette Park remained closed to demonstrators, who nonetheless affixed on the fencing in rainbow letters the messages, “Police-Free Schools” and “Defund MPD.”

One flyer distributed among protesters by RefuseFacism.org called for Trump and Vice President Mike Pence to be #OutNow and denounced police killings of black people and a “fascist police state.”

“Trump has unleashed the U.S. military police and threatened to call

protesters. Trump at the White House on Friday spoke favorably about Floyd and imagined him “smiling down” on a “great day for equality,” although those comments were criticized for being tone-deaf.

Steve Taylor, a gay 35-year old D.C. resident, told the Blade on his way to the protest he hopes it would advance visibility for issues around racism and police brutality.

“I think a lot of people don’t truly understand that this is a problem that not just affects Black Americans, but it’s a police brutality problem, a problem with our society in general, and we need to change,” Taylor said. “It’s not just about electing certain people, but it’s about prioritizing the issues that they stand for.”

This article originally appeared in the Washington Blade and is made available in partnership with the National LGBT Media Association.



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Tori Amos Meets the Muses in Quarantine

Musician Talks New Book 'Resistance,' Bad Days and Wearing Your Big Boy Boots

Photo: Des Willie

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

In her second book, “Resistance: A Songwriter’s Story of Hope, Change, and Courage,” flaming piano queen Tori Amos shares her personal stories against a world-in-crisis backdrop and discusses how they’ve shaped songs from her three-decade career. She ruminates on personal and collective grief and traces her social and political activism as an outspoken LGBTQ activist, feminist and democrat back to Washington D.C. There, as a teenager, with a seat on the stage of a seedy political underworld, Amos played for immoral, powerful political officials; these men, she writes, were “laying the groundwork for a compromised future.”

Recently, I spoke with Amos on the phone from her home in Cornwall, England, where she is quarantining with her producer-husband, Mark Hawley, and their daughter, Tash. On this afternoon, Amos was comforting and jovial as she talked about bad days, how the Muses (capital M, in Tori’s world) showed up one recent morning, where she falls on the Winnie the Pooh pantheon, and the healing power of licorice.

Tori, I had a bad day yesterday and, to be honest,

I didn’t think I was in the right headspace to do this interview. That feeling brought me to a part of “Resistance,” when you write, “I have looked up and out desperately talking to anyone saying, Help, please help – I am not prepared for what is in front of me.” So, I put on my big boy boots today; you taught me how to do that.

I’m so proud of you. It’s not easy for anybody. And yeah, I think everybody, Chris, in different ways because of different circumstances are being challenged.

How are you being challenged?

The unknowns. There are so many unknowns. One of the main things I’ve been doing since I can remember is playing live for people, whether that was as a little girl at church, then weddings and funerals, and then turning pro at 13.

First, gosh, and you know this story: first place that gave me a professional chance, a venue, was a gay bar (Mr. Henry’s in D.C.). And then from then on playing all kinds of different establishments. So not being able to play live with that kind of connection and collaboration with an audience has been a bit of a grief process, just knowing that that’s off the table for a while.

What you create thrives on having those in-person interactions and hearing people’s stories. When that doesn’t exist, where do you go?

Well, that’s a good question. I’ve compiled a lot of emotions from this experience, and hearing from people. People have been sending me questions with all the virtual sessions we’ve been doing. We’ve done about six virtuals, I think; my brain’s hazy. But a lot of questions have come in. And people’s state of mind has really shown me the depth of this cataclysm and how people are being shaken to their core either emotionally, mentally or spiritually. And some people have physical issues that have really opened my eyes. I heard from somebody who doesn’t have antibodies, or I heard from somebody that they have real concerns of leaving their apartment. There’s so many different ways people are feeling overwhelmed.

I get the impression the energy of the album you’re working on has shifted from the time you wrote the book. Where is the energy for this work currently?

The energy is whatever was true before the pandemic because it was talking about events that had happened and that were real whether

that was someone’s personal experience or an observation about the corruption and our loss of democracy, and having a fragile democracy. And it’s been shaken. Really shaken. And those foundations, some are being gutted from the inside out, as we know. So that material can still resonate.

But there are other elements that have to get woven in because like, you said, you’re wrestling with having bad days. Everybody is. And these are the kinds of bad days that have to be addressed in the music and what takes people to a bad day, and then addressing those things. And with other songs it’s about how to help bring somebody out of that.

So it seems there’s a healing element you’re exploring in the music.

Yeah. Some of the songs are on their knees with you, and then others are, “Come on then. OK. (Laughs.) You guys are doing your job. You ladies are doing your job really well, sitting there in the mud. In the tears. With the cuts. And the glass. (Laughs.) The broken glass. The margaritas. And now there’s no more of that tequila, honey. And your shoes are muddy. And your heels, broken. And I’ve got no party dress in my bag for you. Here’s a Mac. And I don’t mean a computer. I mean a

little raincoat. And I don't have Welly boots for you. No galoshes. So you're gonna have to walk barefoot, sister."

And you've just written a song. That is a Tori song.

(Laughs.) It might come to that, Chris! And it might be called "Chris's Crap Day."

I've been thinking about grief as it applies to our various experiences with this pandemic. What have you learned from your experience with grief, both personal and beyond, that could serve anyone and everyone facing grief in letting go of normalcy?

I have to thank (my mother) Mary for taking me through it because I went to a really dark place when she died in May of last year. It didn't settle in until two weeks later when I was there with Tash and we were back in Florida on our own, and then it just took me to a place where I think people are going right now. Having been there recently, it's been a long haul out of it. I just came out of it around the new year, and then this happening and being thrown back into something we never experienced. We won't be the same, and we can't go back to where we were, Chris. It's not back. We have to move forward. And we will see each other again. But not for a while, not in the way that we might have hoped it would be sooner.

So knowing that, there is a place for grieving. I think it's the right answer because by doing that then we realize that something bigger is happening to all of us. A change to our world. We have to remember that with 9/11 a lot changed. War. All kinds of things. There were cities intact; there were other places that were physically decimated and the infrastructure had to be rebuilt. And this is the whole globe. There's no place for us to go. We can't hop onto Mars and the station there. That doesn't exist.

One recent morning I was really missing my mother; we're social distancing right now. So I sent your song "Promise" to her, which you sing with Tash. She called me because she was so moved by the song and the purpose it was serving on that particular day. It brought us closer in that moment. It made me think of what you write about "Girl" in the book and how that song bent to the times in 2017 because it, you write, "understood that America was under attack." Are there songs that you are aware of in your catalog that are currently experiencing a shift?

I'm waiting to hear that one. It's happening right now, so I think there's a little delay in me getting that info from the gang. But yeah, I'll be curious to know what that is.

In the book, you talk about "Reindeer King" from your last album, "Native Invader," and how it was, in part, written with your mother Mary in mind. For me, now, I hear it as a message to my mind to get back where it was before the pandemic.

That's fair enough. And yeah, "Reindeer King" was many, many years in the making. It started as tiny fragments in 2006 for the Doll Posse rebellion (laughs) in a song called "Crystalline" and then it morphed and moved and was kind of just dormant. Dormant until it wasn't anymore. And there was a moment of Tash evolving and finding her voice, and Mary losing hers. And it was that paradox, that tension of the opposites that just shot me from either side, like an arrow made of light. So it didn't wound me, but it kind of took me to the reindeer king.

There's a photo of you in the book giving side eye and the caption is, simply, "Side eye." But there's no context, Tori! Do you have context for that pic, and what is it? I mean, personally, I'd like to think the side eye is in response to every man who has ever stood in your way.

(Laughs.) No. It's not confrontational. It's fun! Somebody who I know really well was compiling these photos with me and we were laughing our heads off. It's not a meanie, you know? It's not an indignation, or a confrontation.

No shade, no tea?

No shade! It's, "You thought you were hot and so did I." (Laughs.)

What do you do as a creative person when your mind can't hold space for anything but taking care of yourself?

Go eat some licorice. (Laughs.)

And that cures you?

(Laughs.) Well, you know, it might be licorice. It might be popcorn. As everybody knows: microwave popcorn with some pepper. And then life can maybe just get a little bit better. But then, look, there's some days it's gonna be useless. Then I go research and I get my notes down. I try to read something whether I'm looking at an art book or a book of photographs. Drawings, paintings. If I'm reading, researching about *something*.

It could be anything. Tash comes in and tells me about some documentary she's watching about how they're building environmentally friendly houses somewhere and she says you have to check this out. (Laughs.) Then you kind of go, "OK. So that took me out of, "There's no live music, (my) kind of Eeyore (mood)."" And I'm traditionally not an Eeyore. If we're on the Winnie the Pooh pantheon, Chris, I don't know who you are, but I'm not Eeyore, normally.

I'm a Piglet.

You're Piglet? I love Piglet!

Who are you?

Tash thinks I'm a hybrid of Owl and Roo. She thinks I'm Roo when I get into my jumpy-jumpy side.

See **Tori Amos**, continued on p. 19



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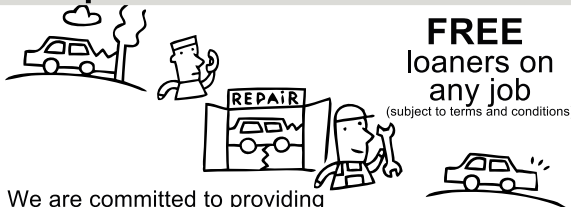
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Puzzle P. 21

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► **Tori Amos**

Continued from p. 17

You seem a little Roo-like right now, actually. I can't see you, but I can feel your Roo energy. It's making me very happy, I will say.

Today was a good morning. That's because the Bösendorfer that I tour with has not been well. I can't describe why; it'll take too long. But just trust me: She needed some help. She had to wait until she was allowed to get the help she needed by the tuner; that's been social distancing and going to the studio and then the touring piano is in the back ... not a storage place, it's got books. It's a nice storage. It's a little library kind of place. I wouldn't call it storage, but it is where it is stored, OK? So it's in a little room, and it got fixed. It got helped. It was like the piano hospital back in the back.

And so I got up before the sun was up, really early, and I raced out. I just put on some trainers and raced out into this space on my own and started playing. I was playing something I've been working on for a little while for the new record, and then after a half hour this thing started to come through. And it's called ... hold on. I couldn't hum it to you if my life depended on it. I just called it something. I think I called it "Bluebell Forest." But the mist was coming in, and the sun was coming up. I saw rabbits in the

distance. It was barely sunrise, and it was foggy. But not cold, you know? We're in Cornwall in farm country. And I looked out the window and it was just a moment when this music was coming and I wasn't writing it. That doesn't happen all the time, but it was happening this morning. It was just one of those things where I thought, "Yeah. The Muses. They're still there."

Tori, thanks for this. You are one of the threads connecting me to home and the feelings of home and the people who remind me of home. I wish you and your family well.

I wish you and your mom and everybody well. And guess what? I'm gonna see you when we're out again. And God knows, it might be a year; it might be a little longer than a year. It might. But it won't be endless, you know? When we can, we'll be out there.

And listen: Thank you, Chris, for putting those big boy boots on because I so enjoyed this. And I'm gonna tell Tash that your mom called you about "Promise"; that'll give her a real twinkle.

As editor of Q Syndicate, the LGBTQ wire service, Chris Azzopardi 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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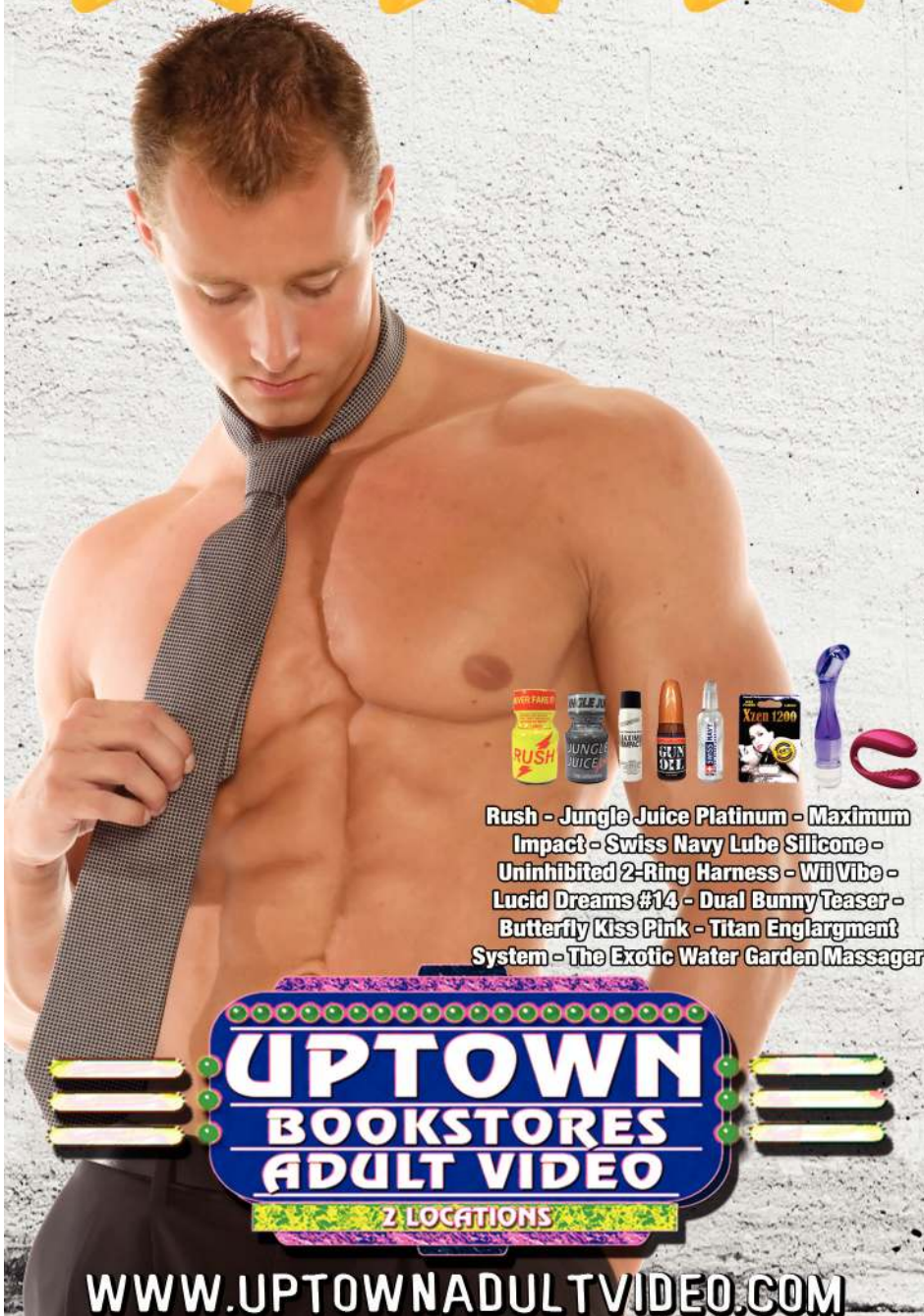
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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

Finally, the future of 'Smash'

Hey "Smash" fans, remember how that short-lived NBC musical drama series was intended to actually make a literal Broadway musical happen out of its storyline about the making of a Broadway musical? Well, after all this time, something like that is in development. A musical stage adaptation of the series itself, with producers Steven Spielberg, Robert Greenblatt and Neil Meron, along with a book from Bob Martin ("The Prom") and score from Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman, is in the works. There are no production dates yet, obviously, but this has been a passion project for Spielberg for some time now, so it's exciting to know that when Broadway shows eventually return, this will be on the docket. And while we're all waiting, this is the perfect time to reach out to the cast of the series and see if anyone's going to be too busy to recreate their roles on stage. Who has phone numbers for Debra Messing, Jack Davenport, Katharine McPhee, Christian Borle, Megan Hilty, Anjelica Huston, Leslie Odom Jr., Jeremy Jordan, Krysta Rodriguez, Andy Mientus, Raza Jaffrey, Brian d'Arcy James, and Jaime Cepero? It's not urgent, really, but it "is" important.

Closer to a fine documentary about The Indigo Girls

Did you know that the beloved and legendary Indigo Girls have a new album out? It's called "Look Long." But wait, there's more: Amy Ray and Emily Saliers will also be the subjects of an upcoming documentary from filmmaker Alexandria Bombach ("On Her Shoulders"). They've always been really private about their lives, although thankfully not with the all-important information about being extremely cool lesbians, but now Ray is loaning out her film and video archive of the band members' lives and work. It's a collection that spans nearly 40 years, much of it never-before-seen and very personal, so there'll be plenty of material and plenty to thrill longtime fans. In production now, the untitled film is currently scheduled to be finished by early 2021. Expect a release on some sort of platform - Open movie theaters? HBO? Streaming services? What even is the future, anyway? - not so long after that.

Say hello to my little 'Scarface' remake



Luca Guadagnino. Photo: KathClick

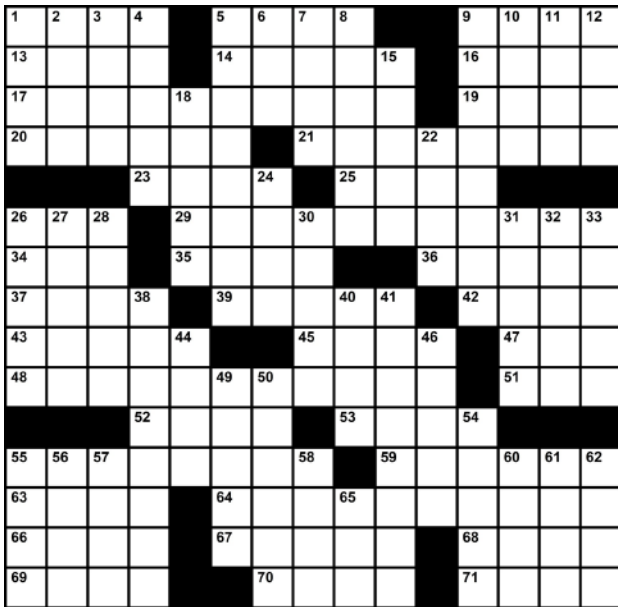
The much-loved 1983 Al Pacino-starring version of Scarface (which was itself a remake of the 1932 original) seems to be getting yet another shot at a new life. The idea of a new version has been floating around Hollywood for a while. Screenwriters like Gareth Dunnet-Alcocer ("Miss Bala"), Jonathan Herman ("Straight Outta Compton"), Paul Attanasio ("Quiz Show"), as well as Joel and Ethan Coen, have all taken a turn with the material, and filmmakers

like David Ayer and Antoine Fuqua were both attached at various points. But now the reins have been handed to Luca Guadagnino ("Call Me By Your Name") and all we can think about is how we need a queer Tony Montana right now, in a setting that involves the influence the '83 film has had on hip-hop culture, as well. It can be accomplished just as easily as any other premise, and it should. It'll add a whole new dimension to the "Be Gay Do Crimes" meme, and that's what cinema needs.

Justin Vivian Bond enters 'Sandman'

You're a responsible person. You're still in quarantine. Maybe you're stuck inside a house full of people from whom you could use a little break. That's where the world of headphones comes in, and Audible - the audiobook and spoken-word entertainment powerhouse - has announced a new audio adaptation of Neil Gaiman's best-selling graphic novel series, "The Sandman," to take you away from all this. Gaiman is known for turning the metaphysical into the physical, so when we say that the plot involves the human manifestation of all dreams and desires, please just accept that this is possible because explaining more would take all day. Queer entertainer Justin Vivian Bond is part of the huge all-star voice cast, and that's wonderful news; Bond is joined by Riz Ahmed, Kat Dennings, Taron Egerton, Bebe Neuwirth, Andy Serkis, Michael Sheen and many others. The first part drops in July and will extend through at least the first three volumes of the series, so here's to many, many hours of private listening.

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Remembering Lynn

Across

- 1 Mark Bingham of 9/11
- 5 "I ___ Kick Out of You"
- 9 Desperate cry
- 13 Bird, to Brutus
- 14 Come together
- 16 Estimating words
- 17 Kerry, who plays Mia on 48-/64-Across
- 19 Animal that's no breeder

Q Puzzle

- 20 Martin of "Grace and Frankie" et al.
- 21 Without pausing
- 23 Where to look, in "Misty"
- 25 Women on top, at times
- 26 Intelligence agent
- 29 Reese who plays Elena on 48-/64-Across
- 34 Word before kwon do
- 35 Guy into bottoms?
- 36 "Così fan ___"
- 37 Series ender

- 39 Anne of "Girls in Prison"
- 42 The L.A. Sparks strip them
- 43 Cruising, maybe
- 45 Georgetown athlete
- 47 Eligible for soc. sec.
- 48 With 64-Across, Hulu series directed by Lynn Shelton (1965-2020)
- 51 Tax-collecting agcy.
- 52 Bear market order
- 53 Boats like Noah's
- 55 Ax wielder
- 59 Trojan War hero killed by Achilles
- 63 "And another thing..."
- 64 See 48-Across
- 66 Taylor of "Six Feet Under"
- 67 "Air Music" composer Ned
- 68 Ethnic acronym
- 69 Tie it to become wife and wife
- 70 Straddled a stallion
- 71 Israeli author Oz

Down

- 1 Hesitating sounds
- 2 Porter's "Well, Did You ___"
- 3 Get out of bed
- 4 Actor Milo of "Oz"
- 5 Professional who helps you shoot off
- 6 W. H. Auden's tongue
- 7 Jermaine and Michael's brother
- 8 When sex addicts need it
- 9 Like Gomer's humor
- 10 Plenty, informally

- 11 Lounge about
- 12 Chicken, to a chickenhawk
- 15 Penetrate
- 18 Bisected
- 22 Ellen, for one
- 24 Ending for Jean
- 26 Get to second base, perhaps
- 27 Evita portrayer on stage
- 28 It helps a baker get it up
- 30 Part of Saigon's current name
- 31 Cheri of "Scary Movie"
- 32 Skinny bear
- 33 Egg holders
- 38 Cole Porter song from "Paris"
- 40 Time for Frida
- 41 "Bear" and "rear," e.g.
- 44 Britten's beers
- 46 Cockeyed
- 49 Recipient of Bugs' kisses
- 50 Fruit, to Froot Loops
- 54 E with a queer orientation
- 55 Result of four balls
- 56 "Brothers & Sisters" producer Ken
- 57 Northern metropolis
- 58 Burning software
- 60 The Seattle Storm, for one
- 61 Roughly
- 62 Muscle Mary stat
- 65 Carpet color at the Oscars

Clues P. 18

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www.oakland.edu/gsc
248-370-4336

Eastern Michigan University

LGBT Resource Center
emich.edu/lgbtrc
734-487-4149

The Lawrence Tech LGBT Resource Center

ltu.edu/student_affairs/lgbt.asp
Wayne State JIGSAW
[Facebook.com/groups/WayneStateJIGSAW](https://www.facebook.com/groups/WayneStateJIGSAW)
wsujigsaw@gmail.com

Community Centers

Michigan has eleven active LGBTQ community centers, with a tenth planned in Lansing. Here are three of them.

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Ruth Ellis Center

77 Victor Street, Highland Park, MI 48203
info@ruthelliscenter.org
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Sinai Grace Hospital

For more information about PrEP and prevention services please contact our Lead Prevention Specialist Keith Hughes at khughes@miunified.org

WWW.MIUNIFIED.ORG



Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a way to help prevent HIV by taking a pill every day

PrEP must be taken every day to be most effective

- ✓ HIV Testing
- ✓ PrEP Assessment
- ✓ Insurance & Payment Guidance.
- ✓ PrEP Education



When taken consistently, PrEP has been shown to reduce the risk of HIV infection in people who are at high risk by more than 90%.

Your risk of getting HIV from sex can be even lower if you combine PrEP with condoms and other prevention methods.



SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS Treatment and Prevention

GET THE FACTS.
LEARN THE RISKS.
PROTECT YOURSELF.

SERVICES INCLUDE

- Free same day HIV results
- Free Hepatitis B and C testing
- HIV education and testing
- PrEP education and referral
- Early intervention services
- Medical and non-medical case management
- HIV care for uninsured
- Primary and infectious disease care
- Other STI testing and treatment

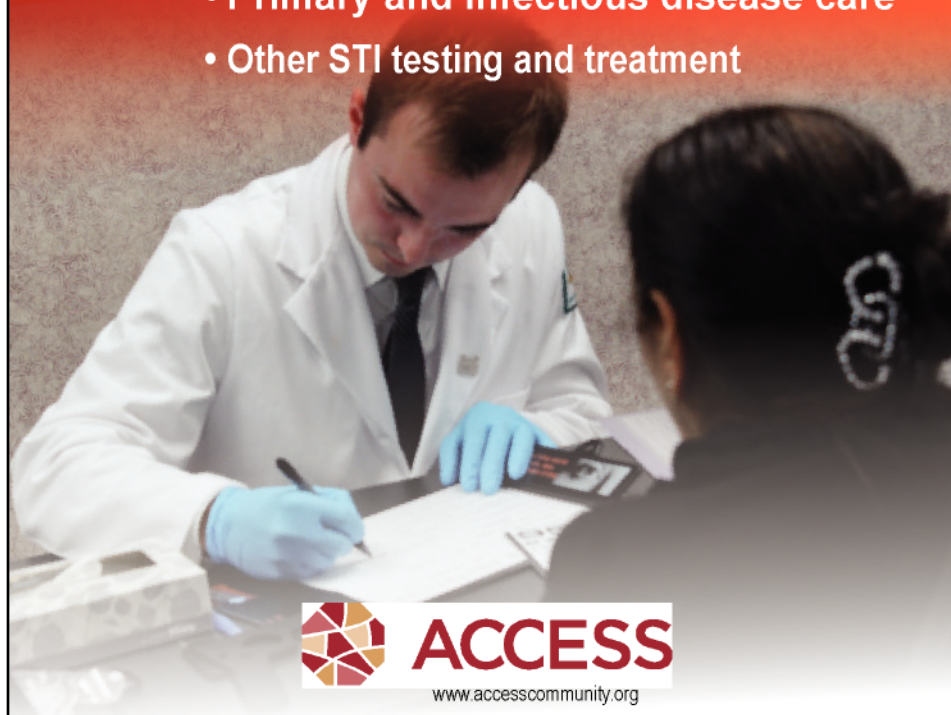
I Stay Ready. I Use Condoms.

Using condoms can protect you from sexually transmitted infections, HIV, and pregnancy.



Free condoms delivered by mail to residents of **Detroit, Highland Park, and Hamtramck.**

Order yours at:
www.detroitmi.gov/health



Sterling Heights Center

4301 East 14 Mile Rd., Sterling Heights, MI 48310
586-788-6235

Part of the MetroCare Coordination Network

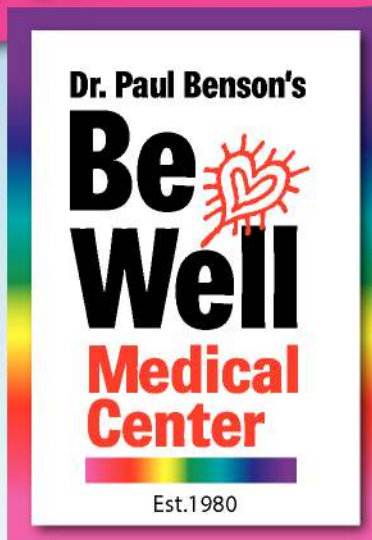
On the Edge of Primary Care PODCASTS with Dr. Paul Benson



Dr. Benson is launching a new podcast series for 2020!

Use your cell phone to capture the QR code above, or visit our website, Spotify, Apple, or Google for access.

Since 1980, our medical team has been committed to providing compassionate, sensitive care for all lifestyles. The topics and specialists featured on the podcast will help you keep pace with the most up-to-date info to improve your health!



1 Why We Sleep? (Dr. Benson) Release: **1/2/2020**

Sleep is one of the most important, but least understood aspects of our lives and wellness.

2 Living with HIV in the 21st Century (Dr. Benson & Caleb Youngblood) Release: **1/16/2020**

HIV is a chronic manageable disorder, perhaps easier to live with than Heart Disease or Diabetes. Learn the latest about the HIV virus, new therapies, and the lessons learned from our history of dealing with HIV and its social stigma.

3 On the Edge: Transcending the Standard of Care

(Dr. Paul Benson, Dorea Shoemaker & Gretchen Haughton) Release: **1/30/2020**

Take matters into your own hands and become an active participant in your health. We'll discuss Cannabidiol (CBD) and its properties to improve and manage health with an expert, Dorea Shoemaker. CBD may be a new and safer alternative for pain instead of Tylenol or ibuprofen. We'll also discover benefits of whole food supplements to keep us healthy.

4 The Transgender Population – Understanding and Embracing this Population (Leon Bullough) Release: **2/13/2020**

A report from the World Professional Association on Transgender Health's (WPATH) Annual Conference. Hormone Replacement therapy is only a part of the transitioning process. Community and mental health support is essential for success. Individualized care plans based on evidence based

medicine and created to match each individual's desires and pace is essential to make the transition process a safe and healthy journey.

5 Sexual Health and HIV Prevention

(Dr. Paul Benson & Mark Rosen) Release: **2/27/2020**

We'll discuss sexually transmitted infections and their prevention. Many healthcare providers sweep this topic under the rug, but outcomes improve when we talk about how to stay healthy and infection free. Sexual health is not simply the absence of disease. It's living comfortably without fear or stigma; and embracing your sexuality while living day to day in your comfort zone.

6 Living Well Over the Age of 50

(Dr. Benson and Colin Colter) Release: **3/12/2020**

We'll discuss simple steps you, with the assistance of your doctor, can implement to live longer and healthier. Proper health maintenance makes a big difference at any age, but becomes even more important as the decades pass. We'll talk about prevention and aggressive strategies to manage co-morbidities sometimes encountered as we age. We can't turn back the clock, but you *can* improve your heart, liver, brain function, kidneys, and virtually every organ system.



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