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Photo courtesy of Kevin Heard

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By Chris Azzopardi

Parting Glances: Dutch Scientists Sound Alarm About Groundhog-Sexual Day

By Charles Alexander

First Patients Receive Clinical Trial of HIV Vaccine Using Moderna's mRNA Tech

By Jason A. Michael



"Jeopardy" champ and trans icon Amy Schneider. Photo: Sony Pictures Television

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# 5 Queer Things You Can Do Right Now-ish

BY JACKIE JONES

Claim Valentine's Day from the greeting card companies and make it your own this year. It's a day to celebrate all kinds of love, whether you're queer, straight, coupled, singled, throupled, or just really enamored with your pets. It's a moment to cherish yourself and/or your loved ones, to consume copious amounts of chocolates and to fully indulge in all things amour. So whether you're celebrating leading up to, on or after the big day, here are five queer things you can do right now-ish.

## Revel in Trans Visibility at Detroit Invasion 22

Transgender Detroit (TG Detroit) is back with their first "invasion" of the year: Detroit Invasion 22. For eight years, their invasion events — celebrated throughout the U.S. and Canada — have offered a social opportunity and visibility for the trans community, and this upcoming event will be no different. Feb. 17-20, indulge in three nights of empowering representation. Throwback a few at Adam's Apple, witness erotic performances at Detroit Dirty Show and splurge the night away at MGM Grand Casino. Samantha Rogers, president of TG Detroit, said the three-day event "not only empowers the girls themselves, but it creates a different impression among the mainstream people who are there."

Register on TG Detroit's website.



Photo courtesy of TG Detroit



Photo: T. Den Team

## Foresee Your Future at Royal Oak's 'Love Fest'

We foresee a day full of love with this event. Explore your spiritual side at Royal Oak Farmers Market's Psychic and Holistic "Love Fest." The free event offers psychic readings, mediums, aura photography and reiki healing. Laura Moody, promoter and director of Rock Your World, said, "It's an opportunity to come and explore the body, mind and the spirit." For those who don't want a peek into their future, check out various goods from spiritual vendors or check out the Royal Oak Farmers Antique and Collectible Market, open at the same time. Rock Your World will be offering a free gift to those who attend, so make sure you stop by their booth. The "love fest" is from 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. on Feb. 13.

Register at Eventbrite.



Photo: Executioner-4

## Recharge With Femme, Them Comedy

The them, femmes and gender non-conforming baes are ready to gift you with a night of nothing but laughter this Valentine's weekend. Valentine Distillery is back with their third installment of Galentine's Comedy Gala, a fundraiser for the domestic violence organization First Step of Wayne. "Valentine Distillery is the perfect venue; it feels so much like a speakeasy," event facilitator Hailey Zureich told BTL. With this comedy event, Zureich hopes "that folks can feel special and seen and that they can celebrate friendships." Expect an evening that showcases local femme, them and nonbinary stand-up comedians, with a prize drawing with offerings from Kismet Studio, Essential Massage and more. The event is 7-10 p.m. Feb. 13.

Get tickets at Eventbrite.



Photo: Denis Makarenko

## Rock Out at Elton John's Retirement Tour

Mark your calendars because the rocket man is set to land back in Detroit soon. Catch Elton John as he continues his retirement tour "Farewell Yellow Brick Road" with back-to-back shows Feb. 8-9 at Little Caesars Arena. The eight-time Grammy winner is known for classic hits such as "Tiny Dancer," "Cold Heart," and "Can You Feel The Love Tonight," from "The Lion King." Since launching his first solo tour in 1970, he has performed over 4,000 shows in more than 80 countries — a true icon. See the man, the myth, the legend take over the stage while you can.

Get your tickets at [Ticketmaster](#).



Photo: Chelcea Stowers

## Vibe With Friends and Lovers at El Club

Are you looking for a sultry Valentine's night for the girls? Look no further than Friends and Lovers at El Club in Detroit. The evening is presented by Mona, an event company, and Lesbian Social, a pop-up party brand based in Detroit. "This event is different from our rooftop pop-up parties," said Chelcea Stowers, Lesbian Social and Mona creator. "We wanted to provide a change of pace and give women in the city another platform to come together and vibe." Detroit personality Ask Jenn will host. Performers include local acts such as Laurie Love, Lique, Ashley Sorrell and Maya Mereaux. Doors open at 7 p.m. on Feb. 12.

Get your tickets on [El Club's website](#).

Due to Omicron and the recent surge of Covid cases, events are more likely to be postponed and canceled last-minute. Please check event pages for the most up-to-date scheduling information.

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# If Detroit Wins, He Wins

Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber Of Commerce Founder Kevin Heard on His 'Baby'

BY JASON A. MICHAEL AND JACKIE JONES

As a kid, Kevin Heard, Detroit native and founder of the Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce, never felt like he belonged.

He grew up “in a lower to middle-class home” and went to the public schools Ann Arbor Trail and Cass Tech, which were outside his neighborhood. Heard’s siblings, who are eight and six years his senior, couldn’t relate to his experiences. And his parents were always working. Because Heard spent a lot of time by himself, he knew he was gay at an earlier age. However, with his peers calling him “white gay boy,” “the F word,” or “gay bob,” he stayed closeted. All he knew was he “had to get good grades because that is the only way [he would] be able to leave Detroit.”

Heard put all his energy into excelling at school. Then, in his senior year at Cass Tech, still quiet about his sexuality, he found “a space to be creative” in dance. That was his outlet until he received an offer from Clark Atlanta University, a historically Black college. It was in Atlanta that he started to embrace who he really was.

“Going to college, I had to learn how to be myself, and Atlanta does that to young gay men pretty easily,” he tells BTL. “Seeing so many Black gay men and women in one city out in the open — masculine, feminine, and in between — I felt comfortable enough to be myself, and that is when I started getting actual friends.”

He said Clark was an “amazing” and “eye-opening” experience that allowed him to be exposed to other people outside Detroit. Though he loves his city, Heard said he needed a change.

“[Going to Clark] really reinforced that my culture is not a monolith,” he says. “We come from different areas of the globe and different school systems.”

“[B]eing in Atlanta,” he continues, “I saw many Black queer men taken away from us with the hard lessons of the lifestyle. One can fall in love with fantasy and some of the influences that come with that — quick money scams, sex, drugs, HIV, gay dating sites, and the club scene. Many people were disowned and did these things to survive. I imagined they felt alone like I did growing up, but with adult problems. It was heart-breaking to see.”

In 2010, after receiving his bachelor’s degree in mass media arts with a concentration in public relations, Heard stayed in Atlanta, hoping to pursue a career in communication. But Atlanta’s “horrible economy” made those plans challenging to fulfill. “I moved back to Detroit in 2012 after two years of working in retail and PR,” says Heard. “I wanted to kind of start over and reassess where I wanted to go in my career. And my family is here, too.”

Soon enough, Heard had secured a position



Photo courtesy of Kevin Heard

with Gannett/USA Today in customer service. He went on to earn an MBA from Walsh College in Troy and soon began moving up in the company. Today, he is the diversity and engagement program manager, where he oversees Gannett’s Inclusion, Diversity and Engagement initiatives, working closely with employee resource groups and social campaigns.

“My job is to manage the employee resource groups and the overall Go Forward initiative,” Heard says. “So, Go Forward is including the strategic partners we work with. And I manage that program and try to build and grow the employee resource groups for the community.”

## Creating the Chamber

Heard might have never gotten the position with Gannett/USA Today had it not been for

another passion of his, one that ignited in 2013 when he founded the Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce.

“I went through five interviews, and what really separated me from everyone else who was being interviewed was my work with the Chamber and the fact that I had built something from the ground up, and it’s still growing and thriving,” he says. “They were impressed that I created something out of pure passion.”

Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce came out of a project spearheaded by former Detroit City Council President Charles Pugh that aimed to create an LGBTQ+ business district in the city.

“We had a great idea about creating an LGBTQ+ business district,” says Heard. “They said we needed to create a Chamber of Commerce. And I said, ‘OK, what’s a Chamber of Commerce?’ Then I nerded out in a corner and researched

everything about what a Chamber does. I came back into the next meeting and gave them all my information and said, “This is what we can do.”

Soon after, the Chamber applied for the Hope Fund grant, which launched their ability to file for nonprofit status. The status allowed them to expand their mission to help the LGBTQ+ community, upgrade their systems and brand. Heard was a significant part of that expansion.

“After moving over to president in 2015, I noticed we had to streamline some systems and rebrand ourselves,” says Heard. “I navigated us through that process by integrating a CRM system on our website, finding non-profit resources to assist with email marketing and communications, [and] hiring a Black queer website designer to recreate and host our website and refocus our mission to sow into our community.”

Since its inception, the Chamber’s mission has evolved to focus on LGBTQ+ business and development while also offering resources to the community. As local members of the National LGBT Chamber, the Chamber can offer LGBT certification to all members who join the Chamber as local businesses. In addition, certified businesses are included on a national registry, allowing small businesses to connect with larger corporations.

After all the Chamber’s work throughout the years, Heard now considers the Chamber his “baby.” And, with a new, diverse board in place, he said he’s excited about its future.

“I’ve noticed that a lot of our LGBTQ+ organizations across the country don’t have that diversity, and because my day job is in diversity, I have to walk that walk if I’m going to talk that talk,” he says. “I have to begin with the organization that I’m a part of. So building a diverse board will only help us in the long run.”

Heard’s inspiration to have a diverse board went beyond his day job. His decision was also based on his own (literal) reflection.

“I’m a Black gay man, and I didn’t see any other Black people on our board, so we needed more people of color, and I wanted to make sure we’re gender-focused and gender-balanced,” he continues. “We are looking for trans people to join our board as well.”

Heard said his battle with imposter syndrome is constantly reminding him he is often in spaces where he is the “only person of color, as well as the only gay person.”

“I am consistently learning, and I consistently doubt myself, but I push through,” he admits. “That’s why I am so excited about the new members on this board. Diverse, successful and dynamic.”

See **Kevin Heard**, page 24



# Proposed Settlement Would Allow Michigan Faith-Based Agencies to Discriminate Against Same-Sex Couples

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

In a stunning blow to LGBTQ+ families, a proposed settlement filed in Federal Court on Tuesday, Jan. 25 would allow faith-based adoption agencies in Michigan that contract with the state to decline to place children with same-sex couples.

The settlement stems from a lawsuit filed in 2019 by Lansing-based St. Vincent Catholic Charities after Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, in response to a previous lawsuit filed by a lesbian couple who claimed they were being discriminated against by faith-based agencies, decided that faith-based agencies could not refuse to provide services to same-sex couples. But U.S. District Judge Robert Jonker ruled that the policy conflicted with state law, contracts and established practice. The settlement talks began after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled for a faith-based charity based in Philadelphia in a similar case, effectively ending

the Michigan case.

“This is a disappointing turn of events in a case that has been ongoing for a few years,” Equality Michigan Executive Director Erin Knott told BTL. “Unfortunately, it’s going to be LGBTQ+ kids and LGBTQ+ parents that are going to be impacted most. Qualified prospective adoptive parents are potentially going to be impacted.”

Knott pointed out that statistics show same-sex couples foster and adopt at a larger rate than straight people do.

“I think it’s obvious denying services to gay and lesbian parents reduces the number of potential homes and that impacts our kids — LGBTQ+ kids [and] kids who are straight — and deny them the opportunity of finding a permanent and loving home to provide that safety net.”

Under the terms of the proposed settlement, Michigan cannot cancel or prevent renewal of St. Vincent’s contracts and the state must pay St. Vincent’s legal fees, which total \$550,000.



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# Gay U-M Sexual Abuse Survivors Speak Out

## Survivor Keith Moree Says Jim Toy Supported Him When the University Wouldn't

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

Robert Anderson, the former University of Michigan Health Services director and, later, senior physician for the athletic department, who sexually abused countless students — mostly men — died of pulmonary fibrosis in 2008. Today, his “legacy” lives on as survivors step forward to recount Anderson’s decades-long reign of terror.

It started with Robert Stone, a gay man, and his essay, titled “My Michigan Me-too Moment, 1971,” that he sent to school officials. The essay described his experience in Anderson’s exam room as a graduate student in the 1970s. After officials received it, the first public airing of allegations was held in February 2020. Only then did the university take steps to establish a hotline and begin an investigation. Keith Moree, who is also gay, joined Stone Tuesday, Jan.

18 for a press conference.

A report conducted by the independent law firm WilmerHale reveals that numerous complaints were made against Anderson as early as 1975, but no decisive action was ever taken. It was an open secret that Dr. Anderson “always makes you drop your drawers,” regardless of the reason for a medical appointment, former UM wrestler Tad Deluca wrote to then-coach Bill Johannesen and Athletic Director Don Canham. Anderson didn’t retire until 2003.

“What I learned is that Dr. Anderson became more and more empowered,” Stone said. “He was untouchable.” Stone described Anderson’s barbaric practices, which included attaching electrodes meant for muscle stimulation to Anderson’s own and his victims’ genitals. “This is a Dr. Frankenstein, and these are the kinds of things that went on,” Stone said. “I’m not pleased to be bringing

you these stories, but you need to know.”

Stone decried the “tenure and toxic masculinity” that allowed Anderson’s assaults to continue unchecked for over 30 years.

“Many of [Anderson’s victims] are afraid to speak at all; they don’t want to come forward because they’re traumatized, because they feel some guilt — which is completely inappropriate,” Stone said. “They had nothing to do with being sexually molested; they just showed up in an exam room.”

Instead of “stuffing it down,” Stone encouraged more survivors to come forward.

“In cases of sexual assault, you man up by speaking up, and I would encourage all of those people who feel like they can’t speak about this



See **UM Survivors**, page 19

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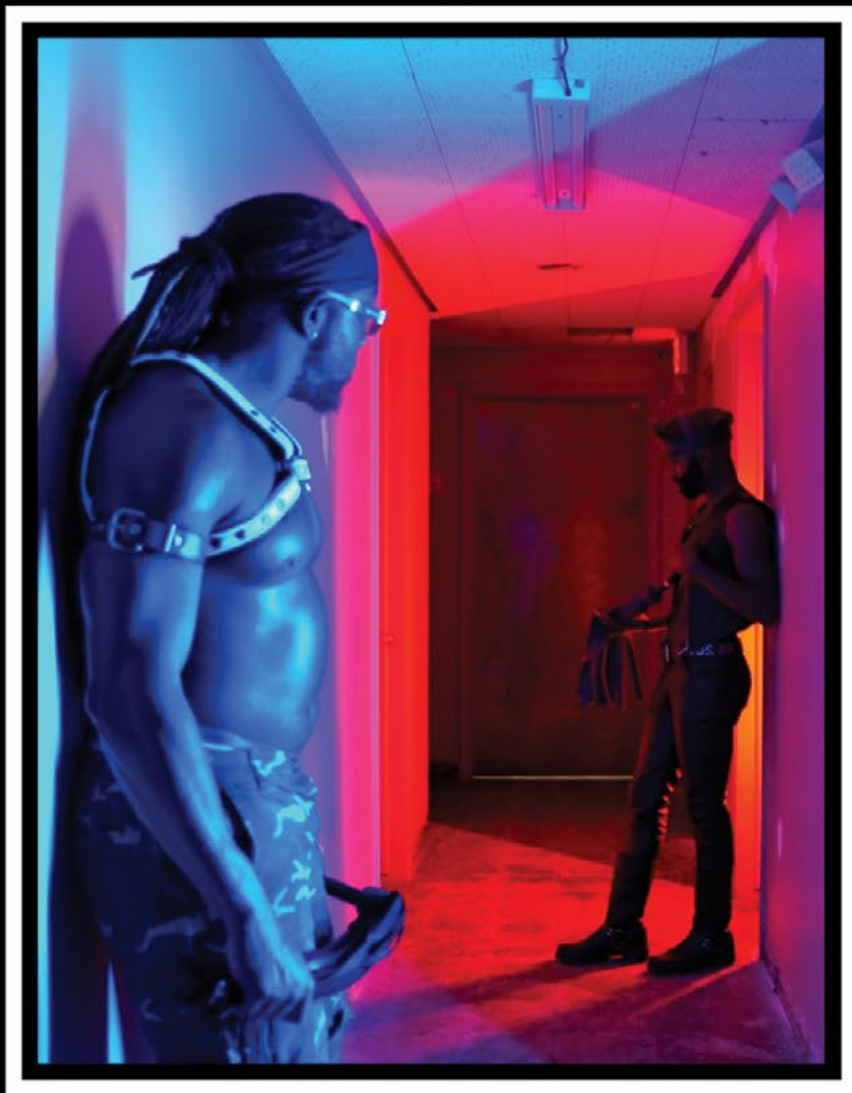
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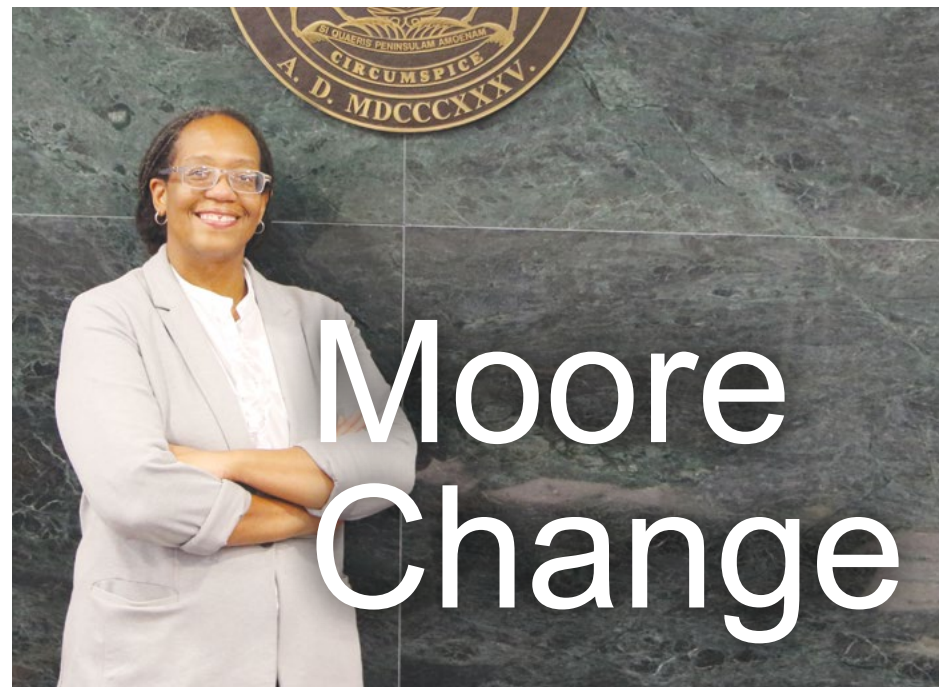
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# Moore Change

Photo courtesy of Kim Borger

## This Openly Gay Black Woman Wants to Bring ‘Better Representation’ to Michigan Judicial System

BY JACKIE JONES

Kerene Moore has never had a problem speaking up. Before her current position as judicial attorney in the Washtenaw County Circuit Court and before announcing her 2022 candidacy for Michigan’s Third District Court of Appeals, she advocated for a fair and equal education system at Detroit’s Taft Middle School.

As a kid, Moore took part in the Detroit Area Pre-College Engineering Program (DAPCEP), but the experience was lacking due to overcrowding — an issue that didn’t feel right to her. Instead of a trained professional, Moore and similar students had a substitute teacher teaching their core classes. So, she spoke up against inequitable change.

“I thought: How is this fair? How can this school not have actual teachers?” explained Moore to BTL. “[The substitute teacher] was just assigning. I don’t even think she knew Spanish.”

As a result, Moore did what any future attorney would do. She voiced her opinion.

“I got into a lot of trouble because I was vocal about it, and she didn’t like me,” she said. “It resulted in me getting kicked out of most of my classes in middle school.”

Moore said eventually her “disturbance” was an issue for the teacher. She and the teacher had to come to an agreement in which she would stay for the first 15 to 20 minutes and then leave and go to the library to study.

“I didn’t have any real power as a child, so when I grew up I decided that I wanted to be in situations where I’m allowed to challenge, where I’m allowed to elevate people’s voices,” she said.

Fast forward to 2022, and the little girl who “talked too much” is running for the open seat on Michigan’s Third District Court of Appeals.

### Developing her law career

“I remember, sometime in elementary school, I had to write a speech about who I wanted to be when I grew up,” she explained with a chuckle. “I said an attorney, the president and a journalist. I long ago decided that I did not want to be the president; that’s not for me. But [being] an attorney has always been at the back of my mind.”

Though that was her plan as a kid, she initially went back and forth about her major in college, eventually deciding to follow through with her dream to be an attorney. She attended the University of Michigan for undergraduate and law school, where she was named the first Dean’s Public Service Fellow. When she was not researching, she was found, once again, at the library studying or editing articles for Law Review.

After graduating, Moore spent a year focusing on voting rights advocacy work throughout the country before working with Legal Services of South Central Michigan, where she handled civil cases for low-income clients in counties such as Ingham, Eaton, Barry, Clinton, Livingston, Shiawassee and Washtenaw.

In 2009, Moore accepted a position funded by the Department of Justice’s Office on Violence Against Women, where she represented over 1,000 crime victims and other marginalized community members. And in 2019, she accepted another position with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights.

See **Kerene Moore**, page 24

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# Golden Con in Chicago Will Thank You For Being a Fan

## And Honor Betty White's Life and Legacy in the Process

**BY DANNE WITKOWSKI**

Zack Hudson is not a “Golden Girls” fan. Nope. When it comes to the sitcom featuring four women of a certain age living together in Miami that aired from 1985 to 1992 (but we don’t have to tell you that), Zack Hudson is a superfan.

“I’d say most people who have television sets

in the United States are ‘Golden Girls’ fans,” Hudson tells BTL. “It’s hard to meet somebody who doesn’t have a fond memory of the ‘Golden Girls.’”

As for people who say they don’t like “The Golden Girls”? “I automatically don’t trust them,” he says.

A superfan, however, is more than just a casual viewer. “A superfan can tell you the name of guest stars who were only on the show for

one episode,” he says. “A superfan can tell you trivia about minute aspects of the show.”

Some superfans will also show you their Golden Girls tattoo. While Hudson doesn’t have one, he’s seen quite a few since the announcement of Golden Con, a “Golden Girls” fan convention scheduled to take place April 22-24 at Chicago’s Navy Pier, the new location after high demand forced organizers to find a space that could accommodate more fans.

Hudson is co-producing the event along with his producing partner, Brad Balof.

A superfan will also have a “Thank you for being a friend at Christmas” tree, “Which I do,” Hudson says. The tree is decorated with Golden Girls tchotchkes, memorabilia, ornaments and art. It includes a full set of Golden Girl Funko Pops at the top.

See **Golden Con**, page 26

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- Alzheimer's Association 24/7 helpline at [helplinegmc@alz.org](mailto:helplinegmc@alz.org) or 800-272-3900

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## IMPORTANT FACTS FOR BIKTARVY®

This is only a brief summary of important information about BIKTARVY and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and your treatment.

(bik-TAR-vee)

### MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BIKTARVY

**BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:**

- ▶ **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** Your healthcare provider will test you for HBV. If you have both HIV-1 and HBV, your HBV may suddenly get worse if you stop taking BIKTARVY. Do not stop taking BIKTARVY without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to check your health regularly for several months, and may give you HBV medicine.

### ABOUT BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults and children who weigh at least 55 pounds. It can either be used in people who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before, or people who are replacing their current HIV-1 medicines and whose healthcare provider determines they meet certain requirements.

**BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.** HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS.

**Do NOT take BIKTARVY if you also take a medicine that contains:**

- ▶ dofetilide
- ▶ rifampin
- ▶ any other medicines to treat HIV-1

### BEFORE TAKING BIKTARVY

**Tell your healthcare provider if you:**

- ▶ Have or have had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis infection.
- ▶ Have any other health problems.
- ▶ Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if BIKTARVY can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk.

**Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:**

- ▶ Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- ▶ BIKTARVY and other medicines may affect each other. Ask your healthcare provider and pharmacist about medicines that interact with BIKTARVY, and ask if it is safe to take BIKTARVY with all your other medicines.

### POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF BIKTARVY

**BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:**

- ▶ Those in the “Most Important Information About BIKTARVY” section.
- ▶ **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that may have been hidden in your body. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ **Kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys. If you develop new or worse kidney problems, they may tell you to stop taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- ▶ **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- ▶ **The most common side effects of BIKTARVY** in clinical studies were diarrhea (6%), nausea (6%), and headache (5%).

These are not all the possible side effects of BIKTARVY. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking BIKTARVY.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit [www.FDA.gov/medwatch](http://www.FDA.gov/medwatch) or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

**Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with BIKTARVY.**

### HOW TO TAKE BIKTARVY

Take BIKTARVY 1 time each day with or without food.

### GET MORE INFORMATION

- ▶ This is only a brief summary of important information about BIKTARVY. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more.
- ▶ Go to [BIKTARVY.com](http://BIKTARVY.com) or call 1-800-GILEAD-5
- ▶ If you need help paying for your medicine, visit [BIKTARVY.com](http://BIKTARVY.com) for program information.



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See Hugo's story at [BIKTARVY.com](https://www.biktarvy.com).

Featured patient compensated by Gilead.

Please see Important Facts about BIKTARVY, including important warnings, on the previous page and visit [BIKTARVY.com](https://www.biktarvy.com).

 **GILEAD**

# Delta, You're Grounded

Michigan Orgs Criticize Airlines For Delay in Accepting Gender X Marker on Legal Travel Documents

BY JASON A. MICHAEL



An Arizona mother recently tried to purchase a Delta airline ticket for her adult nonbinary child only to be told they would have to fly as either male or female. This is despite the fact that their state-issued ID and birth certificate both have the gender marker X on them. Like Michigan, Arizona allows a gender marker X for those who identify as neither male nor female. Likewise, TSA policy is to accept the gender marker X on travel documents.

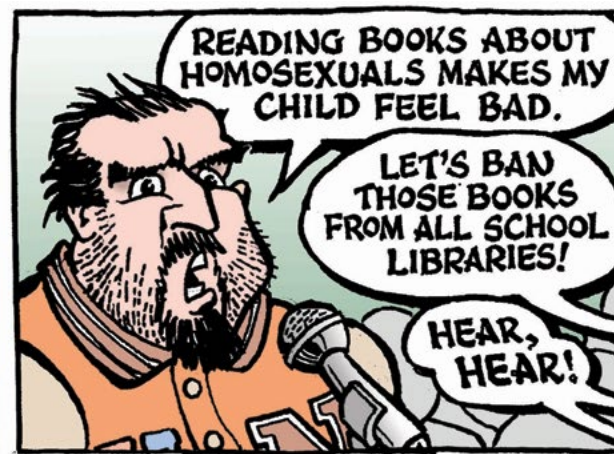
"TSA requires that the boarding pass reservation matches your state-issued ID," Dawn Henry, the mother, said in a series of tweets. "TSA accepts X as a gender marker on state IDs. The problem isn't with TSA. The problem is airlines, like @Delta and @AlaskaAir. ... @Delta is discriminating against #nonbinary individuals and not allowing them to fly despite legal ID issued by states that allow X on birth certificates and state-issued IDs."

For their part, Delta issued a statement to USA Today saying they were "a proud, long-time supporter of the LGBTQ+ community and we understand that being seen and acknowledged is part of having an equitable travel experience."

The airline said they have begun the process of updating their booking systems to accept a gender marker X. However, the statement said the airline does not anticipate having the necessary changes in place until the fourth quarter of 2022. What's more, it's not the first time they've made that promise.

Delta joined Alaska Air, American, JetBlue, Southwest and United in announcing in February 2019 that they were in the process of adding the gender marker X option. However, nearly three years later, it still has not been completed. At that time, the airlines promised NBC News that the changes would be made "in the next several weeks." Currently, American

See **Delta**, next page



## Our Commitment to LGBTQ+ Representation Through Voting Rights

BY BTL STAFF

Dear reader:

Without free and independent media, a publication like *Between The Lines* wouldn't exist, and a community would go underserved when it comes to accessing vital content not found in traditional media outlets.

Since the first issue of *Between The Lines* hit the stands more than 25 years ago, we've been a part of a historically important, unified voice of those who are often ignored, discriminated against, and who live with a constant risk of physical and mental violence for merely existing. Our staff is diverse in many ways, including our individually unique political values. But together, we are united by a shared experience of what it is to be "othered" and misunderstood.

This united vision and deeply felt recognition of the importance of representation in government guides us as we consider political endorsements. We seek to only endorse

those candidates who will respect the LGBTQ+ community in every way — candidates who will fight for our freedoms and rights and who always prioritize our ability to participate fairly in the government processes that impact all our lives. We demand respect for facts, science and representative democracy.

By that same token, we reject those candidates who relent against the veracity of the 2020 presidential election, as well as every politician who supports the Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol Building.

As we look ahead to the upcoming presidential election cycle, we fear that our nation is headed for a repeat of the misinformation campaign and ensuing violence that underscored the 2020 election. One key example

includes dozens of Republican legislators throughout the country who are determined to implement voter suppression tactics that are uncomfortably similar to the Jim

Crow tactics that our nation faced only a few decades ago. Regardless of the way it is implemented, the outcome of these laws are objectively measurable and entirely predictable: longer voting lines in Black and brown communities where local communities

support Democrats.

A reminder to these Republican legislators: Voting rights are LGBTQ+ rights.

In Michigan, our community has been fighting for basic protections at

*"We demand respect for facts, science and representative democracy."*

See **Viewpoint**, next page



## → Viewpoint

Continued from previous page

the workplace, in housing, and justice from those in positions of power who disagree with our fundamental existence as equals. We must not be comfortable with the status quo. We cannot ignore our Black and brown communities as if they are not also our community.

Every election year presents a new opportunity to act transformatively. The LGBTQ+ community in Michigan is sizable and powerful — let us demand representation through our vote, and let us ensure our democratic process is guaranteed for those who will come after us.

*Join the discussion at editor@pridesource.com. Please include your full name, address and telephone number for verification only. Letters are limited to 200 words.*

## → Delta

Continued from previous page

and United accept the gender marker X. Alaska Air, Jet Blue and Southwest still do not.

The reason for the delay? Delta blames COVID-19.

“While we quickly shifted focus due to COVID in early 2020 to helping customers navigate the rapidly changing environment and government regulations, we are back on track to be able to offer a nonbinary gender option in our booking systems in 2022,” the Delta statement read.

“To say this situation as reported is unfortunate would be an understatement,” Brayden Misiolek, founder and executive director of Transcend the Binary, told BTL. “It’s the kind of thing that leads to increased anxiety for folks in the trans and nonbinary community who have taken the steps, or are planning to, live their life authentically.”

Roz Keith, founder and executive director of Stand with Trans, had some harsh words for Delta. “It is ridiculous,” she told BTL. “Shame on Delta. If the TSA requires ID and boarding pass to match, then the airlines need to expedite the process of updating their software. This is not a new topic and Delta, et al, should have been working on this already to be in compliance with the TSA.”

Keith said the problem the policy presents continues to grow. “This lack of planning affects thousands of travelers who identify as nonbinary,” she said. “As states are changing their policies to reflect an X marker, this number will only increase.”

At the end of last year, Michigan updated state IDs with a gender marker X option, joining 20 other states and the District of Columbia in offering a gender marker X on state-issued IDs. Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson announced the

change at a November press conference at Affirmations LGBTQ+ community center in Ferndale.

“I am proud to offer state identification that bolsters the safety and accurately reflects the identity of more Michigan residents,” said Benson at the press conference. “For years we have been working with the LGBTQIA+ community and upgrading our own technology to make this possible in order to ensure that government works for all people of Michigan.”

And that’s all that the non-binary community wants, Misiolek said, adding, “We are simply humans who want to go about our daily life just like anyone else. Our community can and does face barriers at every turn that we are forced to mitigate or overcome.”

Still, Misiolek said he is hopeful for the future.

“Fortunately, these issues can also be rectified by willing parties, and that is what we hope will happen as we increase awareness about our community, our struggles, and our strengths. That is exactly why Transcend and other organizations do the work we do — because we believe in our community and our potential to create change.”

Henry told NBC News that her work will not be done until all airlines have changed their policy to offer a nonbinary option.

“I am committed to fixing this, not just for my child, but for everyone who holds a legal ID with an X gender marker,” she said. “My hope is that pressure on the airlines — not just Delta, but the others that have not updated their systems — will get this done.”

Henry said she’s glad the airlines are finally promising to follow through on a commitment made “almost three years ago,” but “a promise is not enough.”

“I will not stop pursuing this until every U.S. airline with a discriminatory reservation system has made the long-overdue changes,” she said.

# Creep Of The Week

## Let’s All Read ‘Maus’ and Punch Nazis in Figurative Face at the Literal Ballot Box

BY D’ANNE WITKOWSKI

Great news, everyone! “Maus,” Art Spiegelman’s graphic novel about the Holocaust, is a bestseller 30 years after it was first published! In the book, Spiegelman, the son of a Holocaust survivor, depicts Jews as mice and Nazis as cats. It is one of the best and most important graphic novels ever created and something everyone should read.

Everyone except kids in Tennessee’s McMinn County, whose school board voted unanimously to ban the book, just in time for International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Hence the surge in demand for the book (there are actually two books, “Maus I: A Survivor’s Tale: My Father Bleeds History” and “Maus II: A Survivor’s Tale: And Here My Troubles Began”) as Americans respond to outrage in the best way we know how: by shopping!

Look, it’s not a bad thing that people are buying this book. But the “bright side” spin in the media is hard to take considering we’re living in a time where a not insignificant number of Americans are on Team Fascism.

Take NPR’s Jan. 31 headline: “Why a school board’s ban on ‘Maus’ may put the book in the hands of more readers.” According to the story, not only have online sales of the book exploded, but bookstores and comic shops are selling or even giving away plenty of copies, and Nirvana Comics in Knoxville has raised over \$83,000 in a fundraising campaign to buy the book for students across the country.

Look, bad publicity is still publicity, and the more people who buy and read this book the merrier, but this ban, as well as bans of books about LGBTQ+ people being yanked from school and library shelves across the country, is, uh, very concerning!

NPR reports that the “school board reportedly objected to eight curse words and nude imagery of a woman, used in the depiction of the author’s mother’s suicide,” which sounds like straight up bullshit to me. A group of adults voting to keep a book that teaches that the Holocaust was a horrible thing out of the hands of students isn’t concerned about some swear words. And as much outrage as this has stirred up, the fact remains that a school board in the U.S. in the year 2022 successfully voted to ban “Maus.”

As writer and historian David M. Perry points out on Twitter, “In a Tennessee country, ‘Maus’ will

no longer be in 8th grade classrooms, presented by expert teachers with well-curated supporting materials. The ban worked.”

The media can frame this story as an unintentional backlash resulting in the opposite of what that school board intended, but that’s not accurate.

Banning a book isn’t just about trying to keep that book from being read; it’s an ominous message about power and control. It plants a seed that “Hey, maybe there is something controversial about ‘Maus.’ Maybe the Holocaust is too intense for kids to learn about. Maybe the Holocaust is ancient history. Maybe the Holocaust wasn’t that bad after all...”

We see this play out when anti-vaxxers compare showing a vaccine card for entry into

a restaurant to Jews being forced to show their papers in Nazi Germany, when white nationalists are given implicit and explicit support by the Republican Party, when conspiracy theorists with wild claims about George Soros and the Illuminati are amplified by the right-wing media.

And, sadly, too often mainstream media, instead of shouting from the rooftops with the necessary intensity, tries to find a middle ground and manages to “both sides” fascism. Which only helps fascism succeed.

So if you want to buy and read “Maus,” do it. But also run for school board. Support candidates for local, state and national office who aren’t running on platforms that claim the biggest problem our nation faces is the fact that students are learning about the Holocaust and that American history classes teach about slavery.

Don’t elect yahoos like Ridgeland Mississippi mayor Gene McGee who is illegally withholding funds from the library until they purge their collection of LGBTQ+ books.

“I explained that we are a public library and we serve the entire community. I told him our collection reflects the diversity of our community,” Tonja Johnson, the executive director for the Madison County Library System, told the Mississippi Free Press. “He told me that the library can serve whoever we wanted, but that he only serves the great Lord above.”

Serving the Lord is literally not what he was elected to do, but apparently he’s incapable of balancing his job and his religious practices. Bottom line: LOCAL ELECTIONS MATTER.

Fighting fascism starts at home, folks.



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Image: Lynn Davis, *Ken Moody, New York City (Dancer #31)*, 1985-90, gelatin silver print on paper. University of Michigan Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Agah, Class of 1989 (BBA), 2012/2.99 © Lynn Davis/Courtesy Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York.

Lead support for *Oh, honey...* is provided by Alan Hergott and Curt Shepard and the University of Michigan Office of the Provost.

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umma.umich.edu





LGBTQ+ activist Jim Toy served as Gay Male Advocate at U-M's Gay Advocate's office and mentored sexual abuse survivor Keith Moree.

## → UM Survivors

Continued from page 9

to do so," Stone said. "If you can't speak about it personally with the people you love, speak about it with a therapist, because you're not helping any of us or yourself by continuing to remain silent."

Moree was abused by Anderson in the late '70s, when he volunteered at the Gay Advocate's office, where legendary LGBTQ+ activist Jim Toy served as Gay Male Advocate. Moree was just coming out, and Toy quickly became a mentor.

The scene that played out when Moree appeared in Anderson's exam room for a possible STD was truly bizarre, as Moree described. He told BTL it didn't amount to physical abuse, per se; it could be categorized as emotional or psychological abuse. Either way, it was abuse, and it was traumatic.

"While I had my pants down waiting for an exam of my genitalia, [Anderson] starts talking to me about how families who were having a kid often wanted to know about what were the differences between circumcision, and having the child left uncircumcised," Moree recalled. "And then I'm thinking, 'Well, what is he talking about?' And he starts commenting about himself... and he said sometimes families want to see an uncircumcised penis, so they

know what it looks like, so he would show them his."

Anderson then talked about what masturbating with an uncircumcised penis felt like while Moree believes the doctor may have been stimulating himself. Stunned, Moree wondered if he misperceived what had happened.

The serial sexual abuse that Anderson inflicted on gay men in those earlier years was especially

egregious, because it occurred at a time that it was often unsafe to come out, and both Stone and Moree were examined by Anderson for reasons related to their sexual orientation, which meant disclosing that information to the doctor. Anderson counted on many of his victims feeling too fearful or ashamed to report the abuse.

"When I decided to make a complaint about what had happened to me, I had to think, 'Well, who's gonna find out about this?' said Moree. "Is my family gonna find out about this? Is it gonna end up in the newspaper?' Those kinds of things. And those were very, very difficult possibilities for me to entertain at the time."

When Moree reported to Toy what had transpired, he discovered his experience was not

unique. Unknown to Moree, another student had reported a similar interaction with Anderson but there was, until then, no corroborating evidence. With Toy's support, he and Moree convened a meeting with Thomas Easthope, then assistant vice president for student affairs and Anderson's supervisor.

An investigation was held and Easthope promised that Anderson would be removed from contact with students. However, that's not at all what happened. Although Easthope later testified he "tried to fire" Anderson in 1980, he was overruled by Vice President for Student Affairs Henry Johnson, despite Johnson's knowledge of Anderson's behavior. Anderson was "shuffled around" and reassigned as senior physician for the athletic department in 1981, a position he would hold until retiring in 2003.

Moree's interaction with Anderson had a profound and lasting impact on him.

"I think what happened was that I met Dr. Anderson at the time when I was still figuring out my own identity and figuring out how I would be in the world and how I would live my life," Moree said. "And I was kind of just shocked, and I thought, 'Is this how a gay man is, that there's no way to be with people or do anything other than to take advantage of people that you have

power over?' The whole experience was so disgusting to me. It really messed with my head."

Moree expressed appreciation to Robert Stone for bringing the story back out into the light.

"I also want to acknowledge Jim Toy, a dear friend and mentor, who in his role as a male advocate at the University of Michigan, walked with me through the difficult experience of filing a high-level

*"[Jim Toy] walked with me through the difficult experience of filing a high-level complaint against the practicing physician. Jim Toy died on New Year's Day. May his memory be a joy and an inspiration to us all. Jim Toy spoke truth to power."*

– Keith Moree

complaint against the practicing physician. Jim Toy died on New Year's Day. May his memory be a joy and an inspiration to us all. Jim Toy spoke truth to power."

## University agrees to settlement

A \$490 million settlement was announced on Wednesday, Jan. 26 that represents 1,050 survivors who brought allegations of sexual misconduct against the late Dr. Anderson.

Moree has mixed feelings about the settlement. On the one hand, he said, it's great that the university is finally taking responsibility for what happened.

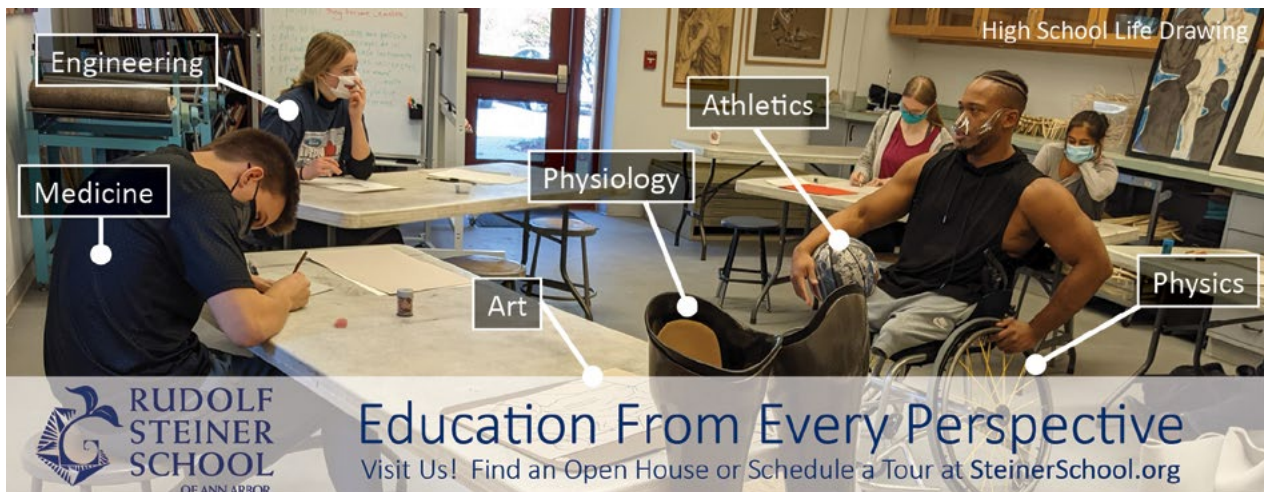
"All of the apologies and things that were coming from high levels of the university were things like, 'We're so sorry that this happened to you. We're so sorry that Dr. Anderson did this to you.' What I was waiting to hear was, 'We're so sorry that we let this go on years and years and years and years after we knew about it.'" Moree is also hopeful that restitution will help survivors heal.

However, Moree is suspicious the agreement was reached just as ousted university president Mark Schlissel is facing his own scandal, where lack of transparency played a key role as well.

"I think what happened was the Board of Regents decided, 'We cannot continue having the reputation of the University of Michigan dragged through the mud like it's been, and now we've got [Schlissel's firing] on top of it, we need to get this all settled,'" Moree said. He said he suspects they're eager to have the university community talking about something else: winning at football or wrestling, for example.

Moore said he wants the university to have a serious conversation among students, faculty, alumni, and the Board of Regents focused on how to approach similar situations differently in the future.

"I'm just a little concerned because I think that culture [is] so present," he said. "You make people into these untouchable figures that can pretty much do anything as long as they're winning or bringing academic accolades to the university. Whatever it is, that thing that they're supposed to be doing to boost the university, as long as they do that, they can be excused."



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Michigan-based TikTok influencer Rory Teasley was allegedly strangled to death on Jan. 6 by his longtime boyfriend.

# 'He Was a Gentle Giant'

## Friends Remember Pontiac-Based Viral TikTok Star Rory Teasley

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

TikTok influencer Rory Teasley was planning to spend a weekend in Dallas. His flights and an Airbnb were already booked — a much-anticipated trip to celebrate a good friend's birthday. But the only celebrations happening now are in Teasley's memory after he was

allegedly strangled to death Jan. 6 by his longtime boyfriend, Docquen Jovo Watkins, 31, in a dispute over the video game "Overwatch."

A candlelight vigil and balloon release took place Saturday, Jan. 15, outside the Pontiac apartment where the killing took place. Friends remember Teasley, 28, as fun and good-natured, the life of the party.

"If you live in Pontiac, Rory Teasley's house was definitely one of the drive-through spots, literally," said Teasley's friend Dawan Glover in a Facebook post. "He was serving egg rolls fresh out of his window."

Kehondre Leak, whose friendship with Teasley dates back to their days in high school, agreed.

"The eggrolls were everything," he told BTL. "[They were] the best eggrolls in Michigan, hands down. If anybody says otherwise, they are lying. He made them from scratch and also made his sauce from scratch. He didn't tell nobody the secret to his eggrolls, but he let me watch him make them, so I kinda know the secret."

On TikTok, as 2Pump4Tv, Teasley was also famous for rolls, but not of the egg variety. More like hip rolls. He has some 260,000 followers, including an increase of over 40,000 since his passing and more than 2.8 million likes. He referred to himself on the social media platform as "everybody's gay best friend."

His videos ran the gamut from jokes and silly routines to another of his skills: twerking. In fact, on his Instagram page, he billed himself as an "international twerk instructor."

"He loved to twerk," friend Damein Carter told BTL. "That ass moved, and it was fat."

Raven Turner Cassadine agreed. "He was like the twerkanator," she said. "I've never seen anyone that executed the dance the way that he does."

Leak said that his friend was garnering attention from across the globe. "He was very much loved and supported," he said. "He reached his audience by the skits he made. Then he went on to 'bouncing,' or as we all know it, 'twerking.' He went viral and caught the attention of the likes of Monique, Big Freedia, Gabrielle Union, Kash Doll and many, many more celebrities."

As his social media fame grew, Teasley began traveling across the country to perform.

"He loved traveling to different states and showcasing his talent," Leak continued. "New Orleans loved him, Flint, Atlanta, Detroit — he captured such a big audience it was crazy. He always said, 'I'm famous.' I said, 'Friend, shut up, you is not famous, yet' ... but you couldn't tell him he wasn't famous."

Leak said as Teasley's fame grew, his relationship with his boyfriend grew more troublesome. He said Watkins was "jealous of the attention [Teasley] was getting and how much he traveled."

Still, if there was physical violence in the relationship, Leak said he was unaware. "I never knew the relationship to be violent," he said, pointing out that Watkins was only 5'1" and less than 200 pounds. "Verbal, yes. Physical, no. Rory was 6'1" or 6'2." Three-hundred and something pounds. I couldn't imagine him hurting anyone. He was a gentle giant. ... But Rory was always telling me how he was tired of arguing and stuff like that. So

when I met [Watkins], I didn't care for him."

Teasley might have been known for his bouncing and his jokes on TikTok, but he took on more serious topics, too. On June 29, 2021, he posted about domestic abuse. "Stop ignoring those red flags, man," he said. "I know they might look like Six Flags when you're in love. But protect your mental health."

## Teasley's last days

So far, 2022 was turning out to be something of a mixed bag for Teasley. On New Year's Day at 7:10 a.m., he posted that the night was "by far one of the best New Years I had." Then just days later, on Jan. 5, only a day before his own untimely death, Teasley lost his grandmother, Blanche Teasley.

Glover partied with Teasley on New Year's Eve at Backstreet nightclub in Detroit.



Docquen Jovo Watkins

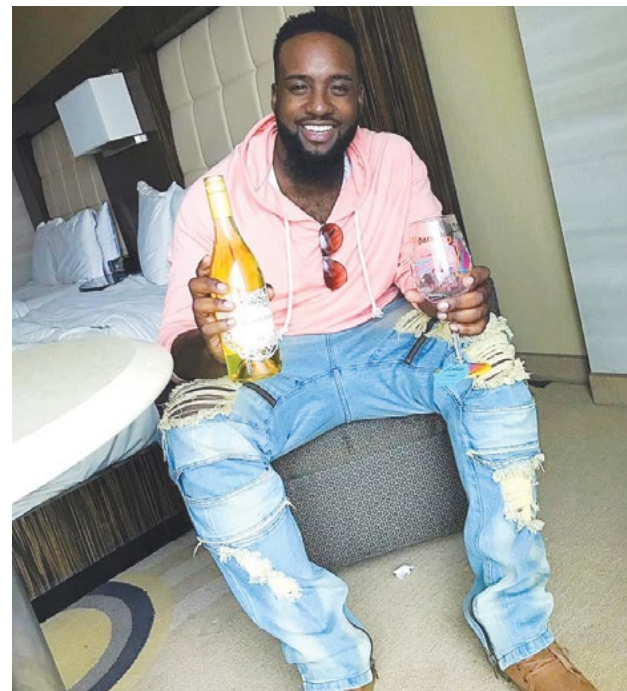
"He was very popular, he had scores of folks seeking his skills in twerking," Glover said. "We sat next to each other and we wished each other well for the year ahead, and then this. I did not even know he had a boyfriend."

The last video he posted lamented growing older, which for Teasley meant approaching 30 — an age he will now never reach.

In the wake of his tragic death, friends are left to wonder just what went wrong and why Teasley had to die. However, one thing is evident: He will not be forgotten.

"He always gives you the best hugs," said Cassadine. "He knew no strangers. None at all. He was truly the definition of a really good person. ... He had no enemies. Everybody loved him."

"Rory was the light of the room," Leak added. "When he walked in, he captured everybody's attention and demanded it with no questions asked. If you didn't get along with Rory, there was something wrong with you. Honestly, there's nothing negative that came out of his body. He always smiled, laughed and joked with everybody."



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# Jonathan Van Ness *Gets Curious*

Photo: Netflix

## The 'Queer Eye' Grooming Expert's New Netflix Show Explores Everything From Bugs to Being Nonbinary

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

**B**efore I talk to Jonathan Van Ness about their new Netflix show, “Getting Curious with Jonathan Van Ness,” they take me on a little on-camera adventure that involves them “needing cuter light.”

They do a 180 with the computer. They swivel in their chair. “I need more natural light in my life, I’m sorry,” they say, still shifting and “getting comfortable.”

And then once they find that magical spot where the light hits their face in just the right place, the 34-year-old “Queer Eye” grooming expert grooms their computer, gently wiping the lens with a tissue. If you’re going to wear what they’re wearing — it appears to be a chiffon kaftan — you don’t want a dusty ol’ lens muddying its bright pink radiance, honey.

“I did an outfit change for you,” they say, having slipped into their new, flowier ensemble just before our interview.

Van Ness, who is also a children’s book author and one of just a few openly nonbinary

public figures, rocks an entire closet of gender-nonconforming fashion on Season 6 of “Queer Eye,” which hit Netflix on New Year’s Eve 2021. On their new six-episode series, a TV adaptation of their podcast “Getting Curious with Jonathan Van Ness,” the multi-hyphenate even has an entire episode devoted to gender identity.

Featured in the episode, titled “Can We Say Bye-Bye to the Binary?,” are gender nonconforming activist Alok Vaid-Menon and Geo Neptune, the first two-spirit elected official in the state of Maine. With Van Ness, who says they hadn’t even heard the term nonbinary until the age of 30, Vaid-Menon and Neptune explore what their identity means to them and the history of our rigid gender binary. The show also intends to open up minds on other topics as well, such as why bugs aren’t so bad, figure skating’s minority barriers and, naturally, an entire episode on the history of coifs called “Why Is Hair So Major?”

All aglow through a freshly cleaned computer camera, Van Ness spoke to me about the “sense of ease” they feel now, a dream “Getting Curious”

guest star they’re not sure they could form words around, and their very personal reason for being completely theirselves around young queer people.

**I watched a lot of “Getting Curious” yesterday and wanted to thank you for modeling curiosity, first of all. I think as adults we tend to lose our imagination and we just accept some things for the way that they are. Is that what you felt going into the show?**

Well, I started “Getting Curious,” the podcast, in 2015. I’ve always been someone who loves to learn, and I’m just a very curious person. And I clearly love talking. So the idea — wanting to understand the world around me better — has been something that’s existed within me for as long as I can remember. So that was definitely something that I wanted the opportunity to break down on the Netflix stage ‘cause it’s a very big stage.

And I wanted to bring a more visual, multi-medium, multifaceted world in which the podcast — but as a TV show — could live. So I’m just really excited that we got the

opportunity and that Netflix believed in me enough and that we can go explore the world together. So I’m just really excited that I have the opportunity and I hope everyone loves it.

**You mention Netflix being a big stage, which it is. Is that why you were like, “You know what? We are gonna do an entire episode devoted to nonbinary people and gender nonconforming people?”**

Yeah. Being someone who is nonbinary is something that I think I’ve been my entire life. I only had language for it in these last few years. But the amount of trans misogyny that I’ve had to endure and live through in my own life pales in comparison to some of the trans misogyny that other people have had to go through within our community and within our trans community, specifically.

However, I wanted to humanize us. And it’s not only my job to do this, obviously. But I wanted to have a time where we could talk and be together and learn together and just have that humanity, ‘cause I think so often we are

portrayed in this way that it's just not human. It's only around, like, violence or this feeling of, trans people are coming for our way of life. Or trans people are coming for tradition. Or trans people are coming for sports. Or trans people are coming for public safety, or whatever it is.

And I wanted to show people that we are human and we are all sorts of different things that are not threatening, and actually very beautiful and amazing and are just as natural as the grass or rain. You know, we've been here forever. And I was really excited to get an opportunity to share that information.

**There aren't a lot of nonbinary public figures in the world, and you seem to be aware of that as you've been using your platform to really educate people.**

Absolutely. I think that for me, being someone who was very mercilessly bullied all throughout my childhood and formative educational years, I've always been very moved by this thought of, "If I could make it easier for other people like me or put a little bit of an end to other people's suffering, it would make my suffering more worth it." And so I've always liked the idea of using what I've learned to help make other people's lives easier.

**I love that you said that because my colleague, whose queer son loves you, wanted to know how you feel when it's a kid who looks to you as a huge inspiration as they're navigating their own gender and identity.**

That's a really good question. I think sometimes when I see much younger children, like in my standup comedy show, I just feel immediately guilty. I'm like, "Oh my god. I hope I don't traumatize them, honey, 'cause we are going there tonight." So in that sense, it can be a little bit harder, but so often I think about Margaret Cho when I think about how I want to live my life as a public figure. I was introduced to her work at a very young age. I was maybe 10 or 11 when I first saw one of her specials on Comedy Central. And she did not hold back. She was herself. She *is* herself. She's a full-bodied version of herself. And look at how I turned out. I'm fine.

So I just feel like I wanna be myself. I don't wanna totally limit my art or my creativity thinking about, like, "Oh my gosh, is this gonna be too much for someone?" I feel honored that people of any age would look to me and find more self-love, more self-acceptance, more comedy, more joy. More curiosity. So I think I wanna think about that because if I think about, like, "Oh my gosh, I'm a role model for a lot of young people," and even just success in general, if I thought about it too much, I would become really full of anxiety and unsure of what to do. And so I think in order for me to stay connected to myself and my own vision, I have to not think too much about the way that it's gonna be received.

**Do you have moments in your mind where you're like, "What would this have meant to little**

**Jonathan growing up in Quincy, Illinois?"**

Very much. And sometimes that's actually another one of those feelings where sometimes I think if I felt that feeling all the way, I know I'd just be in a corner crying because I can't believe that I've been able to do this with my life. But I do hope that other young people seeing me achieve what I've been able to achieve in my career won't find it so shocking when they achieve their dreams. Because for me growing up, I felt like it was unheard of. I didn't think that I was ever gonna see someone like me be so successful and beloved and accepted and able to create their own projects. It really is such an honor. And I want other people, especially young people, to look at me and think that they can do it too.

**Is this your first season on "Queer Eye" identifying openly as nonbinary?**

I came out about being nonbinary in 2019, before we filmed Season 5, but I don't know if me talking about it in that season made it to air.

**I wondered because you are fully yourself this season in a way that I hadn't really seen before. You're really embodying your whole self, even down to the fashion. Did you feel differently this season?**

Yeah. I think it's just been such a fast four years, you know? From shooting Season 1 and 2 in Atlanta in 2017, which is when we actually shot that, and then Season 3 and 4, which we shot in 2018, really soon after the show had come out. Season 1 and 2 we shot together. Season 3 and 4, together. And then 5 was its own thing. And then 6 was its own thing. And so each one of those chunks I feel like I was in just a wholly different life situation every single time. Just neck-spraining differences in life situations. So I do think that the season between being married and ... definitely this was the first season where I was public about my HIV status. Just very public in all of the things. And so I think that that maybe did lead to just a more overall sense of ease.

**In "Getting Curious," you've got some great guest stars, including Rachel Dratch, Lea DeLaria and Michelle Kwan. Who is on your dream guest star list for potential future episodes of the show?**

I mean, once you do have Michelle Kwan, I don't know where else you're gonna go from there. I kind of started with the most major one ever! But I mean, I feel like... is Adele ever available? Beyoncé? Michelle Obama, honey? Like, I'm shooting for the stars, but I don't know. Who knows?

**Oprah?**

Oh my god, Oprah. Aaah! I don't know if I could even have Oprah 'cause I think I would literally do that for the whole 22 minutes. Aah! Aaah!

**I'd watch it. I would.**

The title of that episode: "Can Jonathan Form Words Around Oprah?"



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## → Kerene Moore

Continued from page 10

Moore said these positions and her current one make her more than qualified for the Court of Appeals.

“Throughout my career, I’ve fought for civil rights, stopped countless evictions, stabilized families, advocated to expand human rights protections and challenged unjust legal decisions,” Moore said. “I embrace our justice system and, if elected, my commitment to [the public] is that I won’t just fill a spot — I will stand up for fair access to justice for everyone.”

Moore’s commitment to justice also shows through her community work. Currently, she serves as vice chair of the Ann Arbor District Library Board Trustees and as a supervising attorney for Outreach with Michigan Law’s Outlaws, an LGBTQ+ student law project she founded. In the past, she has served on the Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission and the boards of the Jim Toy Community Center and Equality Michigan.

Her public service has afforded her several awards, including the Washtenaw County Bar Association’s MLK “I Have a Dream” award and the University of Michigan Law School’s Kevin E. Kennedy Pro Bono Award.

## A working mom against the odds

Moore resides in Ann Arbor with her partner,

Kim Berger, and three children. Before she decided to run for the Michigan Court of Appeals, she said she was aware that she would represent change. She said there was some hesitancy because “you can’t be what you can’t see.”

“There are lots of issues with candidates of color — that is commonly known,” she said. “Also, the barriers for women are a problem. We have kids to take care of. We have a home life. We have all these extra roles we have to play. On top of running a campaign is crazy talk. You need a lot of support.”

The idea of being an openly gay Black woman candidate also caused her some concern. With the Court of Appeals race across 17 counties, she said she wasn’t confident about the conservative counties.

“I’m in Washtenaw County, which is 70 percent progressive,” she explained. “Other counties like Kent county [are] only 50/50. The others are close to 50, but they all are red. How is that going to play out?”

After looking at all of the data, Moore said she discovered that “progressives are more likely to vote down the ballot, which would help [her].”

Even with the odds against her and as a “relatively young” attorney, Moore, 42, believes that with her experience she can provide “better representation” if she is chosen to be a part of the 25-seat Michigan Court of Appeals.

“It’s a great opportunity to make sure that the justice system works,” she said. “I really want to be a part of that and to add [my] perspective.”

## → Kevin Heard

Continued from page 6

The success of the Chamber led by Heard is evident, says board member Mike Flores.

“Kevin’s vision introduced Michigan to a model of connecting LGBTQ+ businesses, non-profits and professionals,” says Flores, also chief financial officer at Corktown Health. “He continues to strengthen the vision by inviting leaders to join the chamber, and shape how Michigan LGBTQ+ businesses become preferred vendors across several industries.”

## Big plans ahead

Heard said he has some significant plans for the Chamber. As a person who’s “motivated by those who don’t have a fair shake at life,” he wants to use his platform to bring underrepresented voices to light and break down “negative stigmas in the world about the LGBTQ+ community.” As a result, Heard said the Chamber is looking to expand its programs.

“We’ll be doing a partnership with Google,” he says. “We’ll be putting on 10 workshops that are focused on small businesses and job seekers. We’ll help them develop their business skills and design better websites. These will be free for members

and a nominal fee for non-members. And our professional membership is only \$100 a year.”

Looking to the next five years, Heard said he predicts the Chamber will continue to grow. He also indicated that the Chamber and its members would have opportunities to diversify its initiatives through local and global impacts.

While Heard is excited about the Chamber’s future, he also plans to step down as board president to an advisor eventually. As an advisor, he believes the Chamber will be able to grow and thrive beyond him and that it’ll be like “seeing a child off to college.”

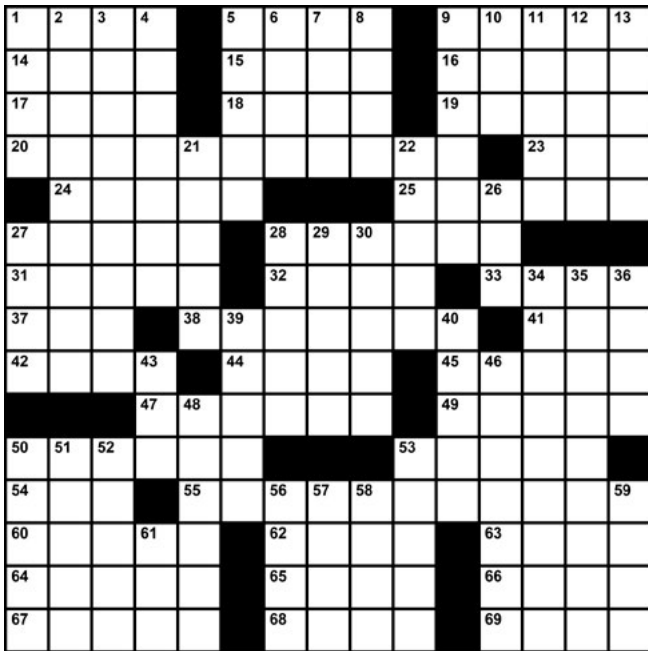
“I don’t want to be the face of anything when the Chamber’s work should be front and center,” he says. “The impact of the organization should be bigger and not just the person or group who started it.”

He also has goals for his personal life as well. He said he wants to become more active in his family business and grow at USA Today. “My father runs several properties in the city. I see myself growing at USA Today, probably either in operations or human resources,” he says.

Though Heard’s plans are varied, he said one thing remains the same: He wants to make sure “Detroit is winning.”

“That’s the bottom line,” he says. “If in five years, the city is winning, then I’ll be winning.”





- 33 Words before "small world"  
 37 Paul Newman role in "Exodus"  
 38 More of the quote  
 41 Speed meas. of a Johnny Mathis record  
 42 River of Flanders  
 44 R.E.M.'s "The \_\_\_ Love"  
 45 Midwest hub  
 47 Dancer Irene  
 49 Try to put a restraint on  
 50 Closing number on Broadway  
 53 Letter to Lorca  
 54 Man-mission connector  
 55 End of the quote  
 60 See 19-Across  
 62 Alec of "Desperate Housewives"  
 63 Field of study  
 64 "Good \_\_\_" (Young Rascals hit)  
 65 Porter's regretful miss  
 66 Young lady  
 67 Many go down on them  
 68 Penetrate the cracks  
 69 Maneuver slowly
- hosiery  
 9 Greek balls  
 10 It may come before long  
 11 Like a ballerina  
 12 "See ya"  
 13 "But of course!"  
 21 Adolf's intimate Rohm  
 22 Use a rubber  
 26 "Of God," of Gaius  
 27 More than tickle  
 28 Cary of "An Affair to Remember"  
 29 Beat off  
 30 Beatles manager Brian's nickname  
 34 Eatery in Armani's land  
 35 Legs, at times  
 36 Pt. of USA  
 39 Hirschfeld's flowers  
 40 Gimcrack (var.)  
 43 Sometime label of David Bowie  
 46 Leaves of grass, e.g.  
 48 Straights, to PlanetOut?  
 50 Birdcage dwellers  
 51 Words before water  
 52 Easily screwed  
 53 Fastener on a drag queen's pearls  
 56 Israeli author Oz  
 57 Sib of David on "Six Feet Under"  
 58 Photographer Catherine  
 59 Larry Kramer's alma mater  
 61 Cash for an actor between parts?

## The Luckiest Broad

## Q Puzzle

### Across

- 1 Sports bra "model" Mia  
 5 Lip service?  
 9 Greeting for Dolly  
 14 Top draft level  
 15 Rainbow, to some  
 16 Heep of fiction  
 17 Wins with bodies pressed together  
 18 \_\_\_ Mae Brown

- 19 With 60-Across, she called herself the luckiest broad  
 20 Start of a quote from 19-Across  
 23 Half a laugh  
 24 Place where a Greek would speak  
 25 Dykes on Bikes, e.g.  
 27 Expat who could hold her beer?  
 28 Rosie's Broadway musical  
 31 Byron and others  
 32 Sales people

### Down

- 1 Arizona tribe  
 2 Short drawers?  
 3 Williams' glass animals  
 4 Bone near the ear  
 5 Land of Margaret Cho's ancestors  
 6 Top's betting phrase?  
 7 Finland's queer rights org.  
 8 Problem for a drag queen's

See p. 21 for answers

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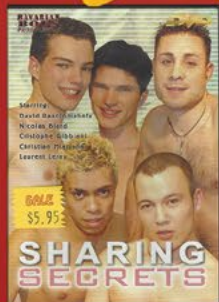
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Golden Con organizer Zack Hudson's "Thank you for being a friend at Christmas" tree. Photos: Zack Hudson



## → Golden Con

Continued from page 12

Hudson is also a Madonna and Dolly Parton fan, hence his "Like a Virgin Birth at Christmas" tree and his "I Will Always Love You at Christmas" tree.

"It's nuts, and I fully concur that I need help," he says.

Why does Hudson love "The Golden Girls" so much? "It's funny," he says, borrowing a quote from Betty White, the 99-year-old actress who played Rose and was the last living Golden Girl until her death on Dec. 31. Estelle Getty, who played Sophia, died in 2008; Bea Arthur, who played Dorothy, died in 2009, and Rue McClanahan, who played Blanche, died in 2010. The actresses were all considered great comedic talents, and White was still keeping busy — in 2019, she voiced a toy tiger in "Toy Story 4."

Hudson hopes Golden Con will give White mourners an opportunity to grieve our collective loss together as a community — "a chance," he says, "for them to celebrate her life and maybe process some of that grief." He said actors, writers, government officials and mere lovers of the legendary actress will be on hand to pay tribute to her one-of-a-kindness.

"Betty White seemed — to a TV viewer like myself — to be one of the happiest, most optimistic people who walked this planet over the past century," Hudson tells BTL. "Her death is sad, but not a tragedy. I believe that. ... Her work, her optimism, her spirit meant so much to me while she was alive even though I didn't know her. And I still feel little pangs of grief when I think about the fact that she's gone. May God bless the people far and wide who loved her and were uplifted by her positive thinking, hard work, and seemingly unstoppable ability to make folks laugh."

As for the timeless show, Hudson attributes its

appeal to its cast of "four vibrant women" who defy the shallow stereotypes so many women play on TV, then and now. "We're going to make our own lives, we're going to make our own happiness, we're going to make our own fun," Hudson says of the cast. "And they've also made millions of people laugh over the past four decades."

It wasn't just humor that fostered Hudson's love of the show. "The other thing I like about it is they are friends, they are people who love each other," he says. "I was just drawn to that as a very young gay kid."

The comfort that Hudson sought in these four friends living together in Miami is why "The Golden Girls" is more popular than ever. Hudson points to the show's performance on Hulu. The streaming service released a large number of "Golden Girls" episodes in April 2020, the beginning of

the COVID-19 lockdown. According to The New York Times, Hulu viewers watched 11 million hours of "The Golden Girls" in April alone.

"It's as big as it ever was," Hudson says.

It was also ahead of its time in a lot of ways, dealing with subjects like AIDS and homosexuality, not to mention the fact that it showed that women over 50 had stories worth telling and that there was a wide audience for those stories.

Hudson says that his favorite Golden Girl is Rose. "And the reason why is because when I am rising to my best self, which is not every day I can promise you, I am having an attitude like Rose has, which is optimistic, positive and helpful."

This attitude no doubt helps when it comes to planning Golden Con.

"Initially, I approached my co-producer Brad Balof with an idea about setting up a one-day thing and maybe getting some vendors and maybe one or two guest stars," he says. "Brad immediately said this is a good idea, but we need to go bigger."

Golden Con, which is not officially connected to or sponsored by the show, will include live "lost episode" parody shows from Hell in a Handbag Theater Company, a "Greatest Gift" vendor's market, a "St. Olaf and a Picture It, Sicily" story slam competition, a costume parade, special guests and, of course, some cheesecake.

"This is a convention for fans," Hudson says. "Come and laugh and celebrate friendship and jokes and comedy, and maybe forget our troubles for a while."

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TESTING POSITIVE FOR STDs CAN MEAN A HIGHER RISK OF HIV. WHEN'S THE LAST TIME YOU WERE TESTED? PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS WITH A FREE HIV TEST.