

Blue House Monthly

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by Poliwhirl

About the Cover

“Adam Unto Eve” by Rabbit (@r4bb1t)

“Adam unto Eve” does not cast Satan as a trans figure, nor one we should aspire to be, but as an inevitable part of human nature that many struggle with. Envy is a driving force for Satan's plans, spurring self-destructive tantrums from a being that can no longer see a way out past their own envy and misery. Even in a paradise, Satan cannot see past his own envy of mankind to appreciate the beauty of where he stands. It's a thought I've been reflecting on a lot lately and something I can relate to. Satan in Milton's *Paradise Lost* is a tragic figure, and the tragedy is in our own reflection that we can glimpse from the page. It's not everything all at once, as Satan in Milton's work is multifaceted in his tragedy, but I think envy is one many can relate to. This isn't an advocacy for God or theology, but a chance to examine a great work on the human condition. If you haven't read this classic, I would recommend taking the time to do so. Facing our flaws can be a challenge, but it can also be a chance for growth. Take care of yourself. Be kind. Above all, be you.

Community News for February 2024

- For Valentine's Day, it was decided that a “Singles Night” event would be held. This achieved moderate success with a peak of 14 people in attendance at one time and 19 total making an appearance.
- There is a Blue House Canada meetup planned for March in Toronto
- Melodie got her FFS scheduled (congratulations, Melodie)
- Inactive accounts were pruned

About Next Issue

The April issue of Blue House Monthly will have slight changes made to the submission categories and deadlines. In line with the day it will be set to release on (April 1st), we are looking for at least one “satire” type article to include (An example of a previous BHM satire piece can be found here: <https://bluehouse.lgbt/blue-house-monthly/f/review-the-communist-manifesto?blogcategory=review>). If you intend to do the feature article or cover art, we ask that you reach out and formally commit no later than the 10th of the month and all article drafts will be due by the 25th to give ample time for editing and formatting. Additionally, a page will be created on [Bluehouse.lgbt](https://bluehouse.lgbt) that lists submission criteria for each category.

Hazbin Hotel: a Helluva Review

By Hydra

(@diphenhydramine)

Hazbin Hotel is the internet's latest hyper fixation. Written and directed by Vivienne Medrano, known online as Vivziepop, it is a show characterized by its colorful



cast, even if all are in varying shades of red. The show centers on the hijinks between the characters as they try to make a new life for themselves under Charlie Morningstar's vision. Finally having released its first season at the beginning of 2024 after five years of searching for a patron, *Hazbin Hotel* has been able to make a tremendous splash online.

I was able to watch the show twice with two groups of friends as the episodes initially debuted, during which I was impressed by all that it was able to accomplish over the course of its short first season. *Hazbin Hotel* has a knack for enrapturing its target audience of the online queer people and it's already apparent that there is a resurgence in and even growth of the colossal fandom it was initially able to garner with its pilot back in 2019. While not without its flaws, the series has room to grow and clearly has passion behind it which was enough to get me eagerly looking forward to where it decides to go next.

Hazbin Hotel is a show set in a fictional underworld very loosely based on the Christian depictions of Hell from the Bible and Dante's *Inferno*. Hazbin's Hell is a realm of existence separate from Earth and Heaven where 'sinners', identified as humans who did wrong and acted horribly during their life on Earth are reborn to spend eternity living alongside the region's natives who were born in and have always been from Hell; all are collectively known as 'demons'. Normally, demons aren't capable of dying in hell. If their physical forms are destroyed they will just reform after a while- however, every year the Angels of Heaven come down to conduct a purge to deal with Hell's overpopulation. Any demon killed by them during their annual 24-hour period of extermination suffers true death and is destroyed for good.

There are numerous key players in hell who are known as 'Overlords'. Each Overlord possesses a significant ability and rules over certain aspects of Hell's society. The ones most prominent in the show's plot are Alastor, the Radio Demon and the sponsor of the Hazbin Hotel, the Veeps, Valentino, Vox, and Veltette, who function as Hell's media

conglomerate, Carmilla Carmine, the premier Arms Dealer within Hell, and a slew of others such like Rosie, who serves as the head of a town of cannibals. There is also of course Lucifer, ruler of Hell and its first and most powerful demon, who was an angel cast out of Heaven for giving humans free will.

The show centers around the daughter of Lucifer, Charlie Morningstar. Charlie is a bright eyed young lady who was born and raised in Hell and has the dream of resolving Hell's overpopulation through more humane means than the annual extermination. She wants to redeem sinners so that they might be allowed into Heaven and to that end, sets up her "Hazbin Hotel" where residents can check in to live in a less toxic environment and work on themselves as people to become worthy of living in Heaven. This results in varying degrees of success, with each of the characters the show follows at least somewhat improving and beginning the long path towards redemption. With Charlie's at times clunky but well-meaning guidance, the Hotel is a learning experience for her just as much as everyone else.



Charlie Morningstar (voiced by Erika Henningsen)

More broadly on the show, I'll say this: it falls into the cycle that many animated shows do for their first season. First it more or less collects the characters that make up the cast, only paying limited attention to fleshing them out compared to what they deserve. Next it spends arguably too much time setting up neat plot points that'll be really cool to explore in future seasons, and finally the plot is steered in such a way so that the season finale can theoretically suffice as somewhat of a final ending in case the show doesn't get renewed for more seasons (it has, thankfully. Season 2 was officially declared and it's currently in production.) Even still, with the limited timeframe of eight 20-minute episodes, it's able to get quite a lot done and sets a good stage along with starting off the development of some of the show's most iconic characters with a bang.

The highlight of *Hazbin Hotel* has to be the characters who are more than able to make up for the somewhat clumsy pacing of the series.

Charlie, the show's protagonist, is a breath of fresh air, both in- and out-of-universe. She's a pure-of-heart heroine who's biggest goal is to avert what is effectively a genocide on her people and give them all better lives so they can look forward to something beyond the ratrace that is life in Hell. She's naive, but not unreasonably so, and able to keep her ears

open to advice when it's offered, though this might not always be for the better. She functions well as the group Mom and is a neat, though currently not too in-depth look at the burdens that leadership can place upon a person. It's refreshing to the characters that are overtly tainted by their cynicism to have someone who's a genuinely good person in what is literally Hell. To me, Charlie epitomizes the attitude of the show as one that's not supposed to be, ironically, hellish, and instead crystallizes one of the show's big themes into a character. She represents the everpresent hope that things can and will be better.

The trials she faces while trying to wrangle the cast into a better direction morally along with protecting the broader realm of Hell are ones she responds very interestingly to, especially given the reveals that take place over season one. I want to note though, that her continued adherence to her single goal of rehabilitating sinners doesn't fully shift when I think it should, and her attitude towards what to do with Hell becomes a bit dissonant from what she experiences, especially towards the tail-end of the season. I do think if she were a less morally upstanding character, she'd be approximately three canon events away from turning Hell into a centrally planned machine and preparing to fight the Sacred War, but that's not the direction the show is headed nor do I think it is the direction that it should head. Nevertheless it is a funny thought and maybe the fandom will do something with it in times to come.

Regardless, I enjoyed Charlie's character a lot in the show! I think she's an excellent fit for the show's protagonist. Where Season 2 will take her is something I'm immensely anticipating, and she's earned a personal spot as a favorite of mine among many franchises.

Angel Dust is another one of the main characters and is one of Hell's biggest porn stars. He's the premier example of Hell's worst, behaviour-wise, and Charlie's effort to rehabilitate him is one of the biggest plot points of the show. Initially, he comes off as a shallow man who is stuck in a life of debauchery. The show however rapidly dives into



Angel Dust (voiced by Michael Kovach and Blake Roman)

his struggles as a person which are explored with a surprising amount of nuance. His desire to escape and live a more fulfilling life beyond his day-to-day drug-fuelled haze is arguably the hardest journey any of the cast has to face, but there's no motley gang better to help him through it than the friends he finds at the Hotel.

Even given his popularity within the fandom, the show did much more with Angel Dust than I was expecting. He is a great exploration of what it means to seek agency in the world beyond control, especially when everyone around would prefer to subdue rather

than uplift. Him learning to put others' interests first and hold himself accountable instead of running on autopilot was a very big highlight of the show, and his position as the hotel's first resident is given the attention it needs for the show to thrive. His humor is a bit crass, and I find it to detract from the show overall, but I'll concede that's half due to personal taste more than sex jokes in themselves being unpalatable. Plus, given the setting, I can't say it's really out of place. Overall, *Angel Dust* has my approval.

Frankly, I don't completely like Alastor, which I know is a very unpopular take as far as the fandom goes. He's charming, threatening, and his motives are an enigma to both the characters and the viewer. He's one of the show's stars and is becoming a recognizable face even outside of the show's sphere. This, I believe, is earned. He's the patron of the Hotel, and uses his powers to help Charlie set up shop and get outreach to the rest of Hell given the latter's reluctance to use her own status and powers. Alastor is the muscle behind many of Charlie's words to non-Hotel residents and brings a lot more charm to the cast, having a distinct mid-atlantic accent and an iconic deer motif, along with the pleasant cadence of a radio show host. But... personally, I always felt like he was leaning too much into his persona and at times, trying too hard. A part of this is justified in-character, but even still, I felt at times he could've been more... 'earnest'? We do get more than a few snippets into what Alastor's attitude actually is towards his situation and the face behind the broadcast, but at times it just seems like there's too much icing on the cake. However, he has by far the most potential for character development and what the show will even begin to do with him is a big draw for the viewer. My personal qualms with him are certainly outmatched by how much he's able to do for the story and interact with the other characters.

Hazbin Hotel's first season is a pleasant ride for viewers, regardless of a person's familiarity with the show. It's not a fit for everyone, but it's not meant to be, and Medrano has done an excellent job defining the show's purpose and providing a fun experience for everyone to watch. The attention *Hazbin Hotel* has received online is warranted, and I hope that it's taken in stride as development continues and more seasons are produced. I wanted to give the show a 6.66/10 as a neat pun, but I do believe it sits a bit higher, resting at around a 7.4 overall.

The show as well as the primary source for images used in the article can be found at:

<https://www.amazon.com/Hazbin-Hotel-Season-1/dp/B0CLM8LHS7>

Trans in Hong Kong:

Interview with a Jellyfish Dealer

By Lapis (@lapis_lazuli) featuring ExoticAquaculture

Originally a Chinese territory, Hong Kong was ceded to the British in 1841 after the First Opium War and would become a colonial trading hub. In 1898, it grew to include the Kowloon Peninsula after an agreement was reached with the Chinese government for the territory to be returned after a 99-year lease. In 1997, the British government officially returned the territory to China where it has since remained as a mostly distinct entity existing as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the country under the “one country, two systems” policy. Today, Hong Kong is a multicultural city that sits at the confluence of the world’s financial market and China’s geopolitical ambitions. It is also home to a jellyfish expert and trans icon, Sam, known better on Instagram as ExoticAquaculture.

Following the ‘Trans in Russia’ interview from the February issue, this month I had the opportunity to continue the international trans spotlight series and sit down to have a conversation with ExoticAquaculture about a variety of topics from what being trans is like in Hong Kong, to everything jellyfish, and get their opinions on recent events pertaining to the region. This is: *Trans in Hong Kong, an interview with a jellyfish dealer.*

Trans Stuff

Lapis: So first off, would you mind introducing yourself?

Sam: My name is Sam, I’m a 21-year-old transwoman born and raised in Hong Kong. My parents moved here shortly after the handover and while they are expats, I am not. My parents are both German, though my dad was born and raised in India, lived in Kenya, and studied in the US. I speak English and German fluently, I speak Cantonese well enough, and I was taught Mandarin at school so I can do a little bit of that too.

Lapis: How long have you been transitioning?

Sam: I’ve been on HRT for 3 years this June!

Lapis: What was coming out in Hong Kong like?

Sam: Coming out in Hong Kong is kinda weird- queer things are extremely invisible here unlike the West where our existence is a very prominent topic. That being said, the vast majority of people are very and growingly queer friendly even if the state is very much not. People are also not very confrontational here, so the majority of the transphobia I would experience is systemic.

Lapis: What is transitioning there like? I understand Shanghai recently opened its first gender clinic. Are there any in Hong Kong?

Sam: Transitioning here is interesting. We don't have a gender clinic or anything like that but we do have a public healthcare system that does offer HRT. That being said its pretty much only for binary trans people and the waitlist is at least a year long. You also have to see like 3 different physicians to get it prescribed in the public health system. You can go to a private clinic.



Wan Chai, Hong Kong

There is one endocrinologist in the city that is well known in the trans community for prescribing HRT with very few hurdles and you can usually get HRT within 2 weeks. This endo doesn't advertise these services though so its very much a grapevine kinda thing. Funnily enough, because being trans is so invisible, you can often go to pharmacies and ask for estrogen over the counter even though its prescribed. Its entirely illegal but no one knows this is happening, again because we are invisible.

Lapis: How are trans people treated there?

Sam: I've been treated well enough in my day-to-day life, like in the workplace. But it is extremely important to note that I work in very international offices with people from all over the world. They tend to be more open-minded. I have heard from friends who work in more local businesses that this isn't always the case there. It's a case of white privilege.

Lapis: Tell me more about the trans community there. Are the white and Chinese trans communities largely separate? Is there a difference in how society treats each one?

Sam: The trans community in Hong Kong is very small, in no part thanks to the fact there is currently a mass exodus, especially of young people leaving the city. Almost all the trans Hong Kongers I know are now abroad. The queer society in Hong Kong is very mixed and the borders between the expat and local are extremely blurred. This is in large part due to the fact that the community is extremely small, but also because western families and more liberal Chinese families are more likely to accept their queer kids and therefore the kids are more likely to be out of the closet. It is a survivorship bias kinda thing.

Jellyfish

Lapis: So, I guess the obvious starting question is what led you to getting a job where you work with jellyfish?

Sam: Well, I had been keeping and breeding freshwater fish for the better part of 3 years in my bedroom as like a hobby, and one day I spotted a job ad in a Hong Kong fishkeeping group I'm active in and applied! I studied CS [computer science] and although I didn't have a biology degree, my background with fishkeeping basically landed me the job instantly.

Lapis: What do you like about jellyfish? What's the appeal?

Sam: They are weird little creatures, so little is known about them on an academic level despite us knowing about their existence for centuries. There's really not much research out there only because biologists aren't the best aquarists and can't keep jellyfish alive. Because of this I end up doing a lot of research, albeit not academic research, in the lab and find out things that sometimes not even scientists know about yet. It's fascinating! And also, ..I mean, they are free-floating creatures without brains.. how weird is that?

Lapis: What in your opinion is the best and worst part of working with them? Have you been stung?

Sam: The best part is that there is never really a dull moment with jellies, you are constantly finding out new and weird things about them. Just today my boss and I discovered literature that suggested that a certain species of photosynthetic jelly is able to sustain itself just with photosynthesis! The worst part for sure is the frustration when something goes wrong. Jellyfish aren't very complex animals at any life stage and so every sickness manifests in the same few ways which makes it extremely hard to figure out where things went wrong. On top of that there is no research to fall back on, no forums to visit and few experts to ask.

Lapis: What does getting stung feel like?

Sam: I get noticeably stung a few times a week. The jellies we keep can be painful but only in the same way a mosquito bite is so you quickly get used to it. It's annoying and itchy but goes away after 30 minutes or so. This does not apply to all jellyfish of course. Some don't have a noticeable sting at all but some can be really painful. Some can even be fatal, but those stings aren't from what people would call true jellies.

Lapis: So how many hours does a jelly breeder work? What's the industry like?

Sam: The hours are very normal. I work 10 to 6 just like any office worker though I usually stay overtime to mess around with corals and whatnot. There are very few emergencies a jellyfish can have so you don't have to be on call 24/7 or anything like that. That being said- fish benefit greatly from routine and consistency, which means that if there is a 3-day weekend, or even a 5 day one like we had with the Lunar New Year, someone still has to come in to the lab and feed the jellies to maintain that consistency.

Lapis: If someone reading this wants to do what you do- where should they start?

Sam: Keep fish at home! Even if it's just a 5-gallon betta tank with some plants. As I said before you don't really learn aquaculture in a bio degree and so having any experience at all with that will put you at a massive edge over other applicants.

Lapis: Okay... here is an important one. What is your favorite kind of jellyfish?

Sam: Oh god this changes so often, but I gotta say it's either the upside down jellies [Cassiopea sp.], *P. punctata* or the Dwarf Lions mane (*C. versicolor*). I could explain why but this article would be thousands of pages long LOL

Lapis: I understand jellyfish are very hard to care for. Are they worth keeping as pets? Do you have any personally?

Sam: I think this is a common misconception that stems from people doing some fundamental things wrong with their jellyfish care rather than them being difficult. In my experience they are actually super easy to care for and are extremely forgiving. The term "bulletproof" is often given to fish and coral that can survive water quality swings and mistakes etcetera but really nothing is as bulletproof as a jellyfish. I'm half convinced they could survive a nuclear winter. I personally have 3 upside-down jellyfish in a reef tank. They live with my coral and my clownfish. To further prove my point, I had a poor encounter with some sick clowns that ended up dying, their decomposing bodies caused a spike in toxic chemicals in the water. The corals really didn't like it, the jellyfish didn't seem to care in the slightest. Just pulsing away!



P. Punctata, also known as the White Spotted Jellyfish

Lapis: Wowza... So how do you go about doing water changes? Minor changes to salinity, PH and temperature can kill them, right? I imagine it is a very delicate process.

Sam: In my personal reef tank I actually do water changes more with the corals in mind. They are far more sensitive to those things than jellies are! When I do water changes on our tanks in the lab I do it pretty indiscriminately as well. As long as I don't get air bubbles into their bells then it'll be fine.

Lapis: What do you feed them?

Sam: The staple "power food" we feed them at the lab is live baby brine shrimp. It seems to be the cleanest and easiest way to feed them and so far no other food has matched live baby brine shrimp in its ability to grow jellyfish... even frozen ones seem to get the jellies to grow slower. At home though I'm less concerned about the speed of growth so it's a mixture of live baby brine shrimp, frozen baby brine shrimp, coral food and sometimes the big ones catch flake food meant for the clownfish too.

Lapis: Where can your company send jellyfish? I see you can purchase them online so I assume they can be shipped, right?

Sam: We send jellyfish to the Americas, Europe and most of Asia! Though that's currently on hold until March 1st while we reorganize our livestock logistics. It's tough to get jellyfish to other parts of the world while still staying in line with livestock import regulations and bio-security. This is something I'm personally working on actually!

Lapis: Okay, last jellyfish-ish question- have you seen a trans anime called "Princess Jellyfish"? I saw it when I was young and really liked it.

Sam: I have begun watching it! It's a charming little anime that's really quite funny. I find it so funny that the jellyfish girl is a NEET [Not in Education, Employment, or Training] loser LMAO.

Recent Events and Politics

Lapis: Moving on to more serious topics if that's alright... In 2020, under influence from China, Hong Kong passed the National Security Law largely against the will of the majority of the region's populace. In addition to further integrating Hong Kong with China, it is widely acknowledged by the international community that this law eroded the business-friendly reputation of the region, its press freedom, religious liberty, and the independence of its educational institutions. Do you have any opinions about the law or those assertions? Is there a noticeable difference in your opinion to how people in Hong Kong live now versus prior to its passing?

Sam: It's tough for me to comment on these things in much detail as the NatSec [National Security] law is super vague and I don't want to be caught in its crosshairs. I have a... shall we say history with the police in 2019 [see FAQ at end of article] so I've gotta be a little careful. There is certainly a noticeable difference within Hong Kong since the NatSec law passed. During the protests there was a real feeling of comradery and community in Hong Kong. You could feel that everyone was more friendly with each other, I mean we had entire malls with random people spontaneously erupting in a several hundred strong choir every other weekend or so. This is gone now- partly because most people have left. I read a newspaper headline stating that 1 million people have left the city...keep in mind that Hong Kong is a city of 8 million people.



A protest in Hong Kong in 2020

Lapis: The future of Hong Kong is uncertain, but it is likely the region will continue to lose its autonomy as its further integrated with the mainland. Does this make you concerned? How do you think this will affect the trans people living in it?

Sam: I am extremely concerned for many reasons but especially for queer people. We used to have a pride event here in Hong Kong every year. It wasn't large and it wasn't a big parade or anything, but it existed. Ever since the NatSec and public gathering laws have been passed, the organizers have been routinely denied a permit for the pride event. It's been 5 years now. This will certainly not change when the central government takes further

control. I don't think that the systemic marginalization will get any worse, at least in part because short of imprisonment or whatever, it can't get any worse. I do worry that as Hong Kongers flee and mainland Chinese people move in, there will be a rise in interpersonal transphobia. Hong Kongers are growingly becoming queer friendly. This is still lagging way behind in the mainland.

Lapis: If you could decide the future of Hong Kong, what would it be? Autonomy? Integration with the mainland? Self-determination? ...Independence?

Sam: If I answered this question truthfully, I think it would be considered high treason. All I'm going to say is that I don't think this SAR [Special Administrative Region] system works, and I have justified concerns with the idea of integration with the mainland. I hope you can pick up what I'm putting down.

Lapis: In 2020, Jimmy Lai, a well-known business tycoon, Hong Kong activist, and founder of the region's only opposition newspaper was arrested and charged with "conspiracy to collude with foreign forces" under the then new National Security Law and "conspiracy to publish seditious publications" under a colonial-era sedition law. Until last month he was held in solitary confinement before being brought forward for his trial that is now ongoing. He is facing life in prison. What are your thoughts regarding him or the situation he now finds himself in?

Sam: This one is tricky. I don't think he should be imprisoned for conspiracy or sedition or endangering NatSec, but at the same time I'm not losing a whole lot of sleep over it. He was slash is a millionaire in a city with extreme wealth disparity. He also was the owner of the tabloid Apple Daily before it got shut down. Before its popularization with the protests, it was known as a shitty tabloid rag that often posted racist and anti-Filipina sentiment. He is an embarrassing figurehead for the movement.

Lapis: As someone who lives on the edge of the South China Sea in what is technically China, are you concerned China may try to take Taiwan? If China does try to, do you think the United States should respond militarily?

Sam: Fuck, this question is even trickier. I think given the unwavering popularity of Taiwanese independence and the growing disillusionment with the quality of life in the mainland leading to more and more civil unrests especially during covid, I wouldn't be surprised if the Chinese government did something so rash in an attempt to win back some popularity and nationalism and such. As for the US- on the one hand I do not want the US involved. I do not want Taiwan to become politically bound to the wills of the US and looking at other conflicts with similar conditions of an aggressor trying to take land from a fiercely passionate populace like in Vietnam or Palestine I think that Taiwan would be able to fend for itself in an all-out war. That being said, I wonder how many extra lives would be lost if the US didn't get involved and chose not to flex its political and military might to end a war like this. It really is two shitty options. I can't decide to be honest; I just really hope a war never breaks out.

Lapis: What is something people in the west get wrong about Hong Kong?

Sam: There is a lot, but I think the main thing to keep in mind is that Hong Kong and the mainland have completely different histories and cultures. For instance, the communist revolution never happened here, the same with the great leap forward and the cultural revolution. We don't speak the same language, don't have the same writing system, don't even drive on the same side of the road. Another important thing to note is that the political systems in Asia are extremely different to the ones in the west. The whole paradigm is different. So, when you see people framing the Hong Kong protests as "communism vs freedom and liberalism" or whatever, you can instantly tell they are full of shit and are approaching the topic with a western lens. Its like trying to jam a square peg of western discourse into the round hole that is Asian politics.

Lapis: You mentioned earlier that a lot of young trans people have left Hong Kong for greener pastures abroad. Have you considered leaving?

Sam: Of course, I think everyone who is still in HK has considered leaving. But with the way my life is set up right now I am doing okay here. Hong Kong is my home and always will be so I want to delay leaving for as long as possible though I have no doubt it's only a matter of time.

Thank you, Sam, for letting me interview you and giving candid answers in a place that now might not appreciate that. For anyone reading this who is potentially interested- you can find Sam on Instagram under the tag 'exoticaquaculture' (<https://www.instagram.com/exoticaquaculture/>) and if you are looking to buy a pet jellyfish, look no farther than Exotic Aquaculture (<https://exotic-aqua.com/shop/>).

FAQ

2019-2020 Hong Kong Protests – “On June 9th, 2019, one million Hong Kong citizens marched on the street to protest a proposed extradition bill that would allow the city government to extradite suspects to mainland China. ... Since 30 June 2020, after China's imposition of the National Security Law, Hong Kong has been experiencing an even more unfavourable political climate, with protests activity coming to a halt.” Source: <https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/digital-revolution-how-social-media-shaped-2019-hong-kong-protests-30756>

Image Sources

Wan Chai, Hong Kong: <https://www.expedia.com/Hong-Kong.dx184245>

P. Punctata: <https://www.calacademy.org/explore-science/white-spotted-jellyfish>

2020 Protests:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hong_Kong_IMG_8563_%2849325875333%29.jpg

Borrasca V:

Echoes of the Past by Pearl (@generic.catgirl)

Inside were dozens of guns, at least thirty of them.

There were rifles, handguns, a shotgun, and boxes upon boxes of ammo.

“Are you planning to storm the Alamo?”

This review is a follow-up, and I will proceed assuming that you are familiar with the original thriller story. If you're keen on avoiding spoilers about the predecessor, I strongly suggest looking into it firsthand. Like the previous installment, this story is exceptionally long, surpassing the length of the entire series that came before it. *Borrasca V* serves as the conclusion to the original *Borrasca* series that I reviewed in Volume 2 Issue 5 of this publication [<https://bluehouse.lgbt/blue-house-monthly/f/borrasca-a-true-thriller>]. It takes place roughly a decade after the horrific events at the *borrasca*, with the protagonist Sam Walker now a heroin addict living in Chicago and using drugs to deal with his trauma of witnessing the haunting “stables” only compounded by the anguish of seeing his closest friend reduced to a vegetative state. Sam is tracked down by Kimber, who resurfaces on his apartment doorstep after a decade to enlist his help on her mission to storm Drisking, with the goal of exposing its dark underbelly to the world, and to seek vengeance on those responsible for the atrocities that took place in the abuse camp.

In contrast to the original story, unfortunately *Borrasca V* stumbles a little bit. I felt that some of the characters veered into caricature, which took away from the emotional magnitude and exceptional writing style of *Borrasca*. The pace remained captivating, however I don't feel that it was entirely enough to make up for some of the downfalls of the story. Overall, I have mixed opinions on this, and I believe whether you should read it or not depends on how you tolerated the lurid ending of the previous one. While I didn't like the ending, I am glad that I read the story due its the focus on my favourite characters like Kimber, and how things ended for her.

The ending felt rather incomplete and disappointing to me as well for a story about retribution. With the narrative intent shifting, it was lacking in what you would expect or want to see, with the author giving you some of what you want but falling just short of everything being wrapped up neatly. Sometimes a bitter or sad ending can make for good storytelling, so if you liked how things were left off with *Borrasca's* ending, then it might be the best course of action for you to leave this sequel unread. However, if it was upsetting and you feel that you might need just a little bit of closure, then I would suggest that you give *Borrasca V* your time.



“Propaganda Poster” by Miku (@miku_not_hatsune)

Codependency in the Coffin of Andy and Leyley

by Bella (@bellamustdie)

(Content Warning)

The Coffin of Andy and Leyley is a morbid look into how codependent relationships develop and function. In a codependent relationship one person acts as the caretaker while the other depends on them. The caretaker feels the need to sacrifice their own wellbeing in order to provide for another person who depends on the caretaker emotionally. In the context of the game Andrew is in the caretaker position and Ashley is dependent on him. Both do things that feed into the codependency and they both rely on the other to function. The game begins with Ashley and Andrew Graves trapped in the family apartment and running out of food. The residents of the apartment complex were forced into lockdown over parasites in the water supply. After completely running out of food, the siblings witness their satanist neighbor have his soul stolen by a demon after a failed ritual and eat his body out of desperation. The two break out of their room but not before being forced to kill one of the wardens keeping them captive. Soon the player learns that the parasites never existed and are being used as a cover up so that ToxiSoda, the water company, could starve undesirable blood types to death and steal the organs of the people with desirable blood types to sell off. They complete the ritual their neighbor had attempted before using the soul of another warden and make a deal with the demon they summon. By the time they've made their escape out into the city they've killed 3 people.



From the beginning of the game, it is implied that the Graves family has always been incredibly dysfunctional. We find out very quickly that during the siblings' upbringing they were neglected and almost entirely ignored by their parents, who left Ashley's older brother to take care of her. As the only real parental figure in her life, Andrew was the only person she felt she could truly rely on. She's terrified of losing him and is willing to do anything to prevent it. At the same time, Andrew depends on Ashley for comfort and his own sense of purpose and will never voluntarily leave her despite threatening to do so again and again. Oftentimes the things she does to prevent being abandoned by him are harmful to others. Through a series of flashbacks to the siblings' childhood the player is told that their mutual friend Nina developed a crush on Andrew. After becoming aware of this Ashley has him lead Nina to an abandoned warehouse to play hide and seek. She convinces

Andrew to help her lock Nina in a crate as punishment for attempting to get in between the two. While Nina is having an asthma attack in the dusty crate Ashley guilts her brother into jamming the crate shut. The next day they find their friend dead and bury her in the forest. This traumatic event is something Andrew continues to struggle with for years after and the only person he can go to for comfort is Ashley. At multiple points in the game Ashley wakes up with her brother holding her in bed crying because he had a nightmare. Ashley often hints at sexual and romantic feelings for Andrew which he appears to be disgusted by but secretly doesn't mind. She does this because she knows she can use it as another way to keep her brother around should all else fail. To Ashley it's no different than when she uses coercion or violence to get what she wants, nothing matters to her except preventing Andrew from leaving her. Even though their relationship is turbulent and unhealthy they both provide something the other desperately needs and that's why they continue to stick together through the events of the game.

Almost immediately upon its full release in October 2023, *The Coffin of Andy and Leyley* gained a level of notoriety for having incestuous themes. Shortly after the game's release, Nemlei, the author and original developer of the game was doxxed and harassed which led to her handing off development to Kit9 Studio. Despite this, development hasn't stopped and two more episodes are supposed to be coming out later on in 2024. The way the game portrays incest is exactly the same way it portrays any of the other terrible things that happen in the game like murder, cannibalism, and human sacrifice. The hate both the game and the author have received is unwarranted and the fact that the author was doxxed over supposedly glorifying incest is ridiculous. The game's depiction of the extremely unhealthy and toxic codependent relationship is over-the-top yet surprisingly reasonable. Don't make a judgement based on what the internet has to say before playing it yourself.

Source for images:

[https://store.steampowered.com/app/2378900/The Coffin of Andy and Leyley/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/2378900/The_Coffin_of_Andy_and_Leyley/)



Why You Should Host a Home Server

By Hopeless (@hopeless8944)

In today's digital epoch, the internet has woven itself into the fabric of our daily existence, revolutionising the ways we connect, seek knowledge, and engage with our surroundings.

A home server operates as a specialised computer or device, strategically integrated within a home setting to execute a diverse array of functions. These functions include, but are not limited to, the storage of digital files, the hosting of websites or software applications, the organisation of multimedia libraries, and the enhancement of communication across a local network. At its core, it functions as the pivotal nexus for the management and retrieval of digital assets within a household. The spectrum of home server configurations spans from rudimentary arrangements utilising available hardware, to sophisticated systems equipped with purpose-built hardware and software. Regardless of the level of complexity, the fundamental objective of a home server is to empower users with a heightened degree of sovereignty over their digital data and services. This, in turn, makes your at home internet experience more convenient and accessible.

Owning a home server does more than just making file storage and running programs more convenient; it signifies a profound commitment to digital independence. When I chose to establish and manage a home server my decision was deeply rooted in me valuing autonomy and self-sufficiency within the digital landscape. Server ownership is a step towards taking charge of your virtual existence and freeing yourself of internet surveillance. Personally hosting data, applications, and services is a declaration of one's dedication to privacy and decentralisation. My choice was also rooted in my belief in the inviolability of personal data and the necessity of a robust internet framework. This kind of commitment in my opinion, through individual empowerment nurtures an ethos of transparency, responsibility, and communal solidarity in our ever-more connected world.

The theory involved in operating a home server is one that views expansive governmental powers and centralised authorities through a critical lens. For those wary of governmental intrusions, surveillance, and the gradual dilution of personal freedoms, the choice to maintain a home server is both a practical decision and an ideological act. At its heart, it symbolises personal freedom and the critical need to protect privacy and liberty in the face of rapid technological advancement. It only takes a few cursory google searches to find news of sweeping government digital surveillance programs or companies suffering major data leaks compromising the personal information they were trusted with the custody of. Hosting personal data and services on a private server offers a kind of shield against unwarranted scrutiny, allowing for enhanced digital sovereignty. With that in mind, from a

philosophical perspective, hosting a home server is a democratising force for the internet and is a choice to side with freedom.

A home server diminishes the vulnerabilities inherent in centralised data and communication control. Moreover, it is an act that champions a more dispersed and resilient web infrastructure. From a political perspective, this stance aligns with libertarian and free-market ideologies, advocating for the salience of competition, novelty, and personal endeavour. By diluting the concentration of data and service control, home server ownership facilitates a marketplace brimming with diverse ideas and innovations, empowering individuals to customise their digital realms to suit their tastes and necessities. This shift towards decentralisation also acts as a safeguard against censorship and media manipulation, ensuring the flourishing of varied expressions and perspectives within a free online community.



A home server made from a Dell OptiPlex

If you want to own and host a home server so long as it is local it is not terribly difficult. Your best bet would be to go to eBay and find a second hand Dell Optiplex which can be found readily for under \$100. A home server is less about hardware and more of a role hardware can be given. A Dell Optiplex is an office computer. Some older variants of it are widely available, cheap, and no longer see regular use. After you've procured your new "home server" I recommend changing the operating system to a hypervisor which sits on top of the bare metal server and has direct access to the hardware resources. Proxmox is a hypervisor tool which allows you to portion the bare metal resources of the server to the virtual machines which will run in the environment. I would recommend beginning with a localised cloud such as Nextcloud for all of your storage needs. If that all sounds confusing, don't worry. You can find a guide to it all through the link at the bottom of this article.

I hope this all was able to convince you of the utility and feasibility of having your own home server. Remember- attaining your digital autonomy is easier than you think.

Guide to setting up a home server:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfddZHhOj4&t=0s>

Image Source:

https://www.reddit.com/r/homelab/comments/rwl1tl/my_first_and_rather_simple_home_server/

Homosexuality and Blood Donations:

Updating an Outdated System

By Poliwhirl (@poliwhirl61)

BACKGROUND

The year is 1983, and the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issues a lifetime deferment on blood donations from "men who have sex with men" (MSM) even once in their lives.(1) Only two years prior had HIV/AIDS been discovered, and the scientific community was two years away from developing the first in vitro test to detect HIV. To call the initial HIV epidemic an international emergency would be an understatement. It would be well over 20 years, and after 10 years of recommendations by the American Association of Blood Banks (AABB), for the FDA to change their recommendation to deferment. In 2006, the lifetime deferment was changed to a one-year deferment since the most recent contact for MSM, or any woman who had sex with MSM.

As recently as May 2023, due to overwhelming evidence of the safety of screening methods and the ever-present need to maintain a strong blood supply, the FDA has changed their deferment guidelines. Now, anyone who has been monogamous for three months will not be deferred from donating blood or blood products due to their sexual activity, regardless of their sexual orientation and gender.(2)

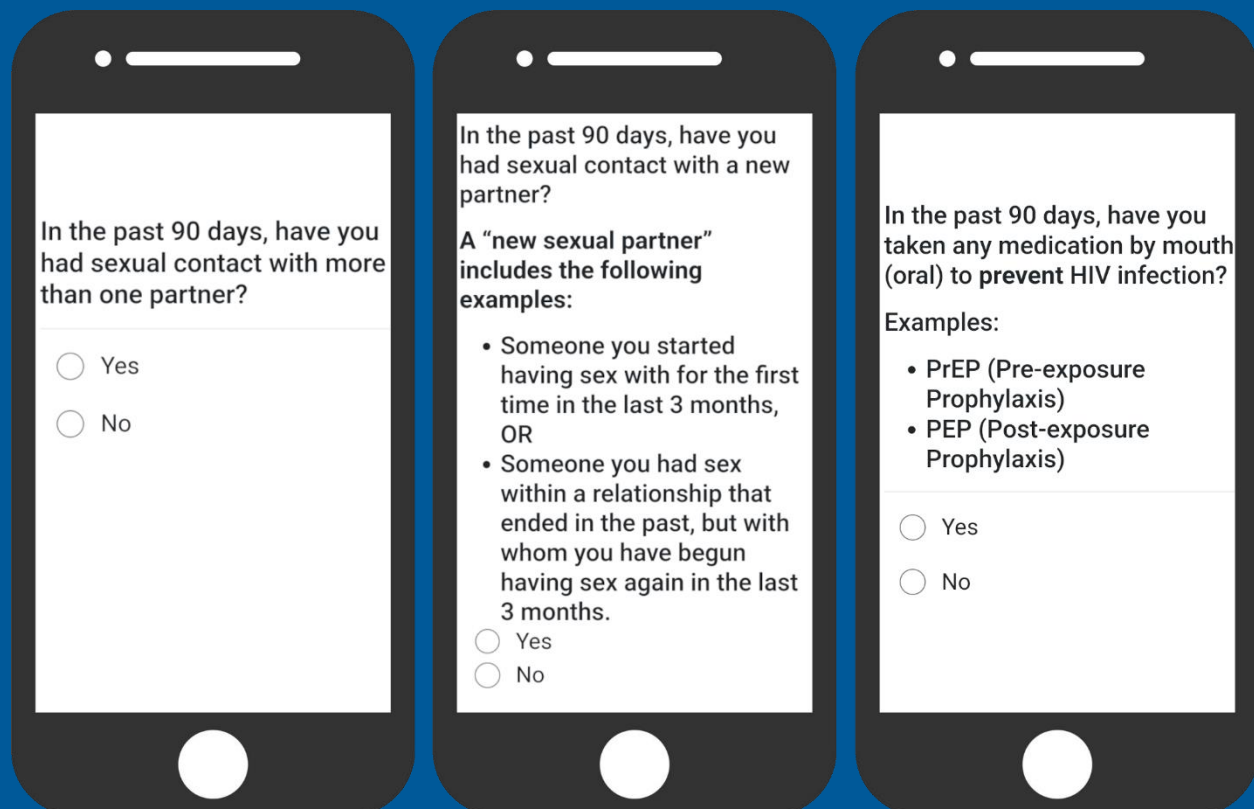
By the time of this writing, most blood donation centers in the United States have changed their donor eligibility questionnaires based on the new FDA recommendations, to include the American Red Cross (3), and American Blood Centers (4) which together represent the majority of all blood collection centers in the USA. The new gender-neutral blood donor questionnaire screen has been titled the "Individual Donor Assessment," and no longer will male donors be given one set of questions and female donors another, everyone will receive the same donor screening questionnaire every time they visit. This represents a gigantic shift not only for the scientific and medical community, but also for everyone who has not had the privilege and honor to donate their blood to help others in need.

I recently donated blood at a donor center that had implemented the new Individual Donor Assessment criteria established by the FDA. Conveniently enough, the donor center

switched from a tablet-based donor questionnaire to a phone and QR code based questionnaire system. Since I was researching for this article, I took screenshots of the updated questions (Figure 1). The FDA doesn't control the exact wording of the questions used by donor centers. Your local donor center may use a different wording, but the same basic questionnaire is now given to every donor, regardless of their gender or orientation.

Additionally, the most well-known blood donor center in the USA, the American Red Cross, specifically states: "There are no donor eligibility criteria related to being transgender. Donors can report the gender with which they identify at the time of donation," "There are no donor eligibility criteria related to being intersex," and "There are no donor eligibility criteria related to being non-binary or gender non-confirming." (5)

While donor centers may ask for a photo ID to confirm your identity, they will not cross-reference your photo ID with how you fill out the donor questionnaire. This monumental change in blood donor eligibility criteria has been encouraged by donors (6) and medical professionals for decades (7), and we are finally here. Given these new changes in blood donor eligibility, the rest of this article will give a detailed overview of transfusion medicine, the state of the blood supply in the USA, how they screen donated blood for infectious diseases. Towards the end, this article will address common objections, misunderstandings, and do some myth-dispelling about blood donation in the United States.

The image shows three black smartphones arranged horizontally, each displaying a white screen with a questionnaire question. The first screen on the left asks: "In the past 90 days, have you had sexual contact with more than one partner?" with radio button options for "Yes" and "No". The middle screen asks: "In the past 90 days, have you had sexual contact with a new partner?" followed by a definition of a "new sexual partner" including examples like starting sex for the first time or resuming sex after a relationship ended. It also has "Yes" and "No" radio button options. The third screen on the right asks: "In the past 90 days, have you taken any medication by mouth (oral) to prevent HIV infection?" with examples of PrEP and PEP, and "Yes" and "No" radio button options.

In the past 90 days, have you had sexual contact with more than one partner?

☐ Yes

☐ No

In the past 90 days, have you had sexual contact with a new partner?

A "new sexual partner" includes the following examples:

- Someone you started having sex with for the first time in the last 3 months, OR
- Someone you had sex within a relationship that ended in the past, but with whom you have begun having sex again in the last 3 months.

☐ Yes

☐ No

In the past 90 days, have you taken any medication by mouth (oral) to prevent HIV infection?

Examples:

- PrEP (Pre-exposure Prophylaxis)
- PEP (Post-exposure Prophylaxis)

☐ Yes

☐ No

Figure 1: actual questions based on the new gender-neutral Individual Donor Assessment criteria.

In Figure 1, you will notice that they ask about pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV. It is true that undetectable is untransmissible, often shortened to “U=U.” However, that only applies to sexual intercourse. Per the FDA, U=U “... does not apply to transfusion transmission of HIV because a blood transfusion is administered intravenously, and a transfusion involves a large volume of blood compared to exposure with sexual contact.”

The FDA goes on to recommend that no one should stop taking PrEP in order to become eligible to donate blood. And if you choose to stop taking it, you will not be disqualified from donating blood only due to past PrEP use.

DID YOU STUDY? TESTING BLOOD

During a blood donation, small individual vials of blood are collected to perform a set of standardized testing, which covers well over a dozen diseases. They of course test for HIV, Hepatitis B and C, syphilis, and many others. (8) Additionally, every single time a unit of blood is collected, or received into a new blood bank, the unit of blood is tested to confirm the blood type and screened for antibodies which could react with the recipient’s red blood cells.

Since the 1980s, testing methodologies and blood screening practices have advanced by leaps and bounds, particularly for HIV. The first generation of HIV tests developed in the 1980s could detect HIV antibodies 10 weeks after initial infection, and a sensitivity as low as 99%. This means that theoretically even after being infected for 10 weeks, one in one hundred HIV positive donors could be mistakenly classified as HIV-negative. This presented a huge and scientifically insurmountable problem to prevent HIV transmission from blood donations without restricting blood donor criteria.

The newest generation of HIV tests, both the DNA-based assays and the antibody-based assays, have a sensitivity of 100% with an undetectability window of two weeks. That means that if someone has contracted HIV, after two weeks there is a fundamentally absolute certainty that the current generation of tests will detect it. They are still not perfect, however, as there is a statistic called “specificity”, which still hovers around 99.5%. (9) This means that even if you do not have HIV, you may have something in your blood that is chemically similar enough for the test to react with it, leading to a false positive. Thankfully, there are confirmatory tests that are used to investigate these false positives.

BLOOD BY ANY OTHER NAME

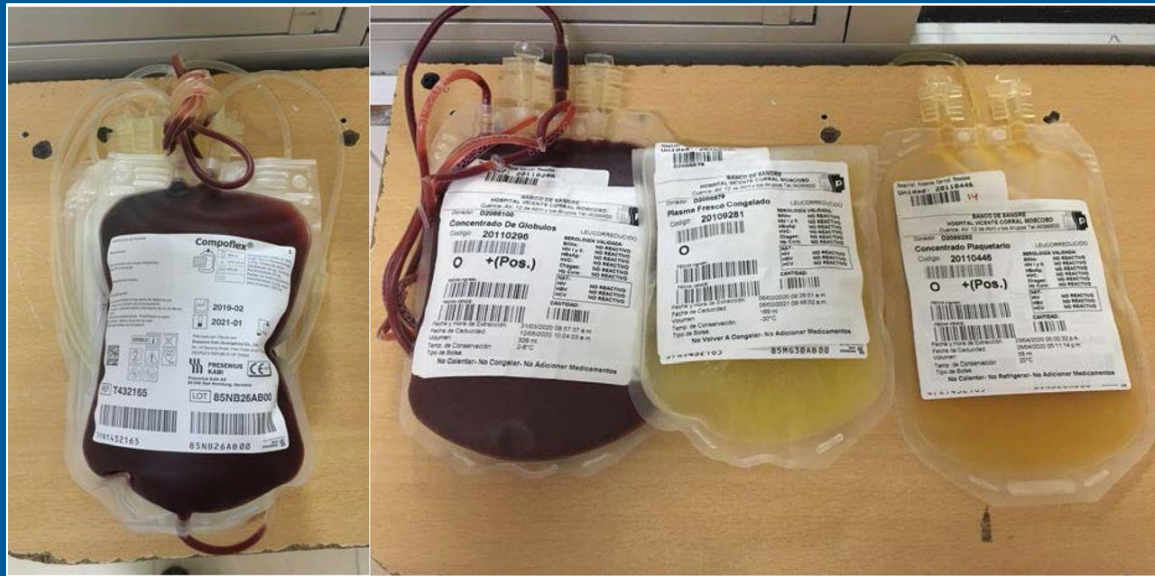


Figure 2: left to right, two units of pRBCs, FFP, and platelets. (14)

The most commonly donated blood component is whole blood. “Whole blood” is exactly what you think of when someone says the word blood; it’s the liquid portion of blood, called plasma, and all the cellular components like the red blood cells (RBCs), the white blood cells (WBCs), and platelets. The RBCs sole purpose is to transport oxygen and carbon dioxide to and from the cells and lungs. The WBCs purpose is varied, but generally are used to fight infections. The platelets are used during clotting to help form a platelet plug or patch around wounded tissue. The blood plasma – which is normally a pale-yellow liquid – carries literally everything else that has to be transported to and from your cells. Most importantly for transfusion purposes, it provides several important clotting factors without which blood cannot clot, and also carries tons of very reactive antibodies.

Although whole blood is most commonly donated, it is generally not transfused as whole blood. Once a bag of whole blood is collected, it is separated into different components, which each have their own specific uses: packed RBCs (pRBCs), fresh frozen plasma (FFP), and platelets. (10)

The bags of whole blood are spun down at high speeds in a refrigerated centrifuge to separate the plasma and cells. With a sterile closed-tube system, then the plasma is squeezed from the original collection bag to a new bag only for the plasma. What’s left behind in the original collection bag is a unit of pRBCs.

A bag of pRBCs is very straightforward. Assuming there’s no crossmatching reactions, blood type compability for pRBCs is something most of us are familiar with: O-Neg is the universal donor, and AB-Pos is the universal acceptor, and all other combinations (Figure 3). This blood component is fundamentally only for replacing lost red blood cell volume due to disease or injury. Once collected, a unit of pRBCs has a shelf life of only 42 days

when held at strictly monitored refrigerated temperatures. Since freezing will destroy the RBCs, a unit of pRBCs cannot be frozen to extend its shelf life without a technique called glycerolization. This technique is expensive and time consuming, as it requires adding glycerol to the pRBC unit, and then removing the glycerol after thawing and before use. However, this extends the shelf life of pRBCs to up to 10 years. The combination of the utility and expense of this process means that in practice only the military uses it for strategic reserves. (12)

The fresh frozen plasma (FFP) contains a dilute amount of clotting factors, which are the chemical precursors that activate to help form a clot. FFP is often administered to patients who have depleted clotting factors due to disease or from extensive trauma. What may, but should not, surprise you about FFP is that the compatibility is entirely backwards compared to pRBCs. AB-Pos FFP is the universal donor, and O-Neg is the universal recipient for FFP, also detailed in Figure 3. The fantastic thing about FFP is that since it is stored at -30°C to -18°C , it has a shelf life of 1 year. (9)

The good news about platelets is that platelets only need to be compatible with the ABO group of the donor and recipient. However, everything else is a challenge with them. A unit of platelets is usually pooled from several donors of the same ABO type, or they are collected in a special type of donation called a platelet apheresis donation. Platelets cannot be frozen for long-term storage, nor can they be stored at refrigerated temperatures for medium-length storage. Instead, they are typically stored at ambient temperatures on a mechanical plate that constantly swirls the unit to prevent spontaneous clot formation. This puts them at high risk for becoming contaminated. Platelet units are often irradiated and periodically checked for bacterial contamination to help ensure that the patient receives a safe life-saving treatment. (13)

	You Can Give Red Cells To:	You Can Give Platelets To:	You Can Give Plasma To:
O-	O-, A-, B-, AB-	O-	O-
O+	O+, A+, B+, AB+	O+	O+, O-
A-	A-, AB-	O-, A-	O-, A-
A+	A+, AB+	O+, A+	O-, A-, O+, A+
B-	B-, AB-	O-, B-	O-, B-
B+	B+, AB+	O+, B+	O-, B-, O+, B+
AB-	AB-	O-, A-, B-, AB-	O-, A-, B-, AB-
AB+	AB+	O+, A+, B+, AB+	O-, A-, B-, AB-, O+, A+, B+, AB+

Figure 3: blood types and their compatibilities for different blood components. (11)

WASTE AND USE OF BLOOD

Waste is an unfortunate and unavoidable inevitability when it comes to any perishable product. Whether about food or medicines, some waste is bound to happen. Some attitudes that I've heard from people are "there are warehouses full of blood anyway" or "most of it just gets thrown away". These are not only false, but are insulting to the people whose entire professions revolve around ensuring that hospitals receive the blood they need for the patients who need it.

There is even a handy tool published by America's Blood Centers that can show you the current blood supply levels around the country. Theoretically, if we stopped collecting blood today, 54% of the USA's blood banks would run out of blood by the 3rd of March. (15)

Every effort is made to ensure that each unit of blood is used to its maximum therapeutic potential. There is a treasure trove of information published in the biennial National Blood Collection and Utilization Survey (NBCUS), the most recent of which was published in April 2023. This past decade has seen the least amount of wasted units of blood consistently since 2013 (Figure 4).

According to this, of the roughly 11.8 million units of blood collected in 2021, about 5% had to be rejected based on the results of safety testing, about 2.5% expired before use, and the remaining roughly 92.5% of those 11.8 million units were successfully administered to patients. For such a fragile and sensitive product, this is an astounding success.

Specifically for platelet units, it's difficult to predict when and where and how many units of platelets will be needed. This represents one of the largest challenges for a blood bank manager. Given all the machine learning and AI buzz that's going on recently, blood bank inventory managers have turned to machine learning models to try and predict the levels of platelet stocks that they should keep, which hopefully in the future further lowers the number of expired units. (17)

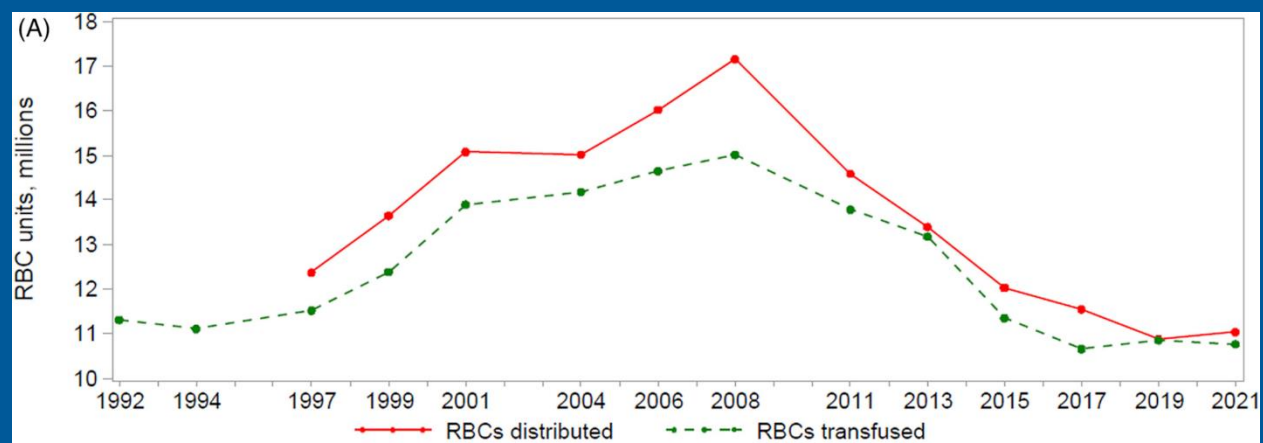


Figure 4: Units of blood collected compared to units of blood issued to patients.(16)

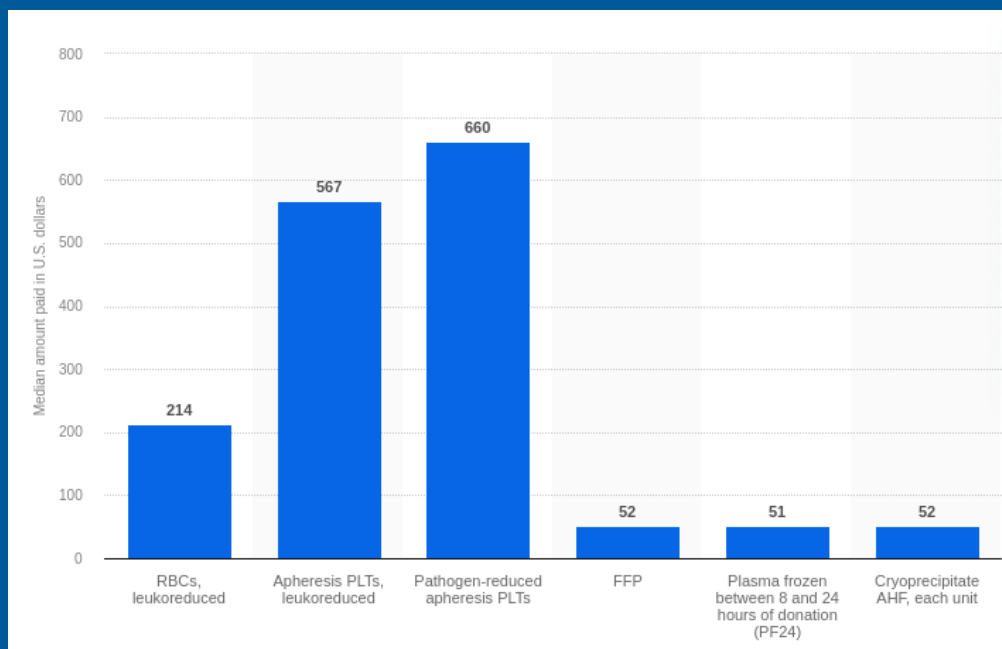
MAKE IT RAIN – THE ECONOMICS OF BLOOD

Pop quiz: True or False? In the United States you can pay someone to donate blood that will be transfused into someone else.

The answer is actually “true.” It is completely legal to pay someone to donate a unit of whole blood that is meant to be transfused into another human directly. It only has to be explicitly labeled as a paid donation. Coincidentally, ever since the introduction of that rule in 1970s, the number of paid blood collections for transfusion is practically zero. (18) It seems that the experts who have dedicated their professions to ensuring a safe blood supply have maintained a strong consensus that paid donations risk the health of both the donor and recipient. The ever-persistent concern is that someone who needs money will lie on the eligibility questionnaire.

Of course, money does change hands, even with free donations. It would be impossible otherwise. Insisting that every piece of the blood supply chain to consist of unpaid volunteers, using donated supplies and real estate, using donated diagnostic testing equipment to screen for diseases, unpaid drivers to transport the blood, using free electricity to refrigerate or freeze blood components would ensure that no one who ever needed blood would receive it.

A chart using data from the NBCUS details the median price that hospitals compensate their blood suppliers for each component (Figure 5). An average of about \$200 per unit of pRBCs, which alone can be the difference between life and death, is an easy cost-benefit analysis to make. FFP is even more forgiving, at about \$50 for one unit. As you recall from earlier in the article, FFP can be frozen and stored for up to one year. And given the extremely short lifespan for pooled platelets, and the extensive safety monitoring that needs to go into that, about \$600 per unit of platelets is understandable.



Blood plasma “donation” centers, where people can sell their plasma directly for money, are littered throughout the USA. These are primarily concentrated in low-income neighborhoods, and prey on people short on money. (15) The risks are different, of course. Whenever someone sells their plasma at one of those centers, that plasma will never be directly transfused into another person. Sold plasma is harvested for the special protein composition, which is fractionated and sterilized before being turned into a plethora of biological products, always sold at a premium price. (16)

In the entire planet, 70% of the plasma used for plasma-derived products comes from one place: the USA. (17) For the value the blood plasma sellers provide, they are given pennies in return. The poor American is the proverbial Atlas, holding up the global plasma derivative market.

For an analogy, imagine two trees. Both trees are healthy and want to donate one of their limbs. The first tree donates one of its limbs for free, so that it can be grafted onto another tree that might die without it. The second tree is approached by a lumberjack, who will pay the tree for one of its limbs so the wood can be turned into wood products. These wood products might indirectly benefit other trees, but the primary use of it will be to create products for sale like chopsticks. That lumberjack is the American blood plasma “donation” (selling) system.

THE PIPE DREAM OF SYNTHETIC BLOOD

Synthetic blood periodically pops up every few years in the news. One industry announcement states “Artificial blood is no longer a pipe dream.” I hope that you didn’t hold your breath, as that was announced back in 2019. (18) Synthetic, artificial, or even laboratory cultured blood has been researched, announced, and funded for decades (19), but given nearly a dozen “promising” different approaches to synthetic blood (20), none of them have made a dent in the needs of patients. They can be scientifically interesting and worthwhile to study, and I fully support any safe alternative. However, promises don’t transport oxygen. Only real blood does that.

PREDICTIONS

22,000 donors were deferred from donating blood due to “high risk behavior” in 2021, according to data sourced from the NBCUS. (21) It’s important to note that although published in 2023, it uses vast amounts of data from 2021. This is all before the Individual Donor Assessment recommendations came out in 2023, which were adopted by most major donor centers throughout that year.

Of course, there’s nothing to guarantee that all those potential 22,000 donors would be eligible to donate under the new Individual Donor Assessment. I could see an argument

that the new donor assessment could increase the number of people deferred for “high risk behavior.” High risk behavior primarily meaning more than one sexual partner within a 3-month time period.

However, I believe in data, and I am an optimist. In 2021 11,784,000 units were collected. 121,000 of those units were rejected based on testing. 630,000 were rejected for non-testing reasons, with a total supply for 2021 being 11,033,000 units of blood.

In 2025, about one year from now, the next NBCUS will be published based on 2023 data. This will include most of the year with the largest blood donor centers having implemented the new Individual Donor Assessment. In preparation for that, I will attempt to predict the statistics for 2023.

Though we’re still recovering from the Covid slump of blood donations, they are still increasing. I predict there will be at least 12,370,000 units collected in 2023. 145,000 of those units will be rejected based on testing. 661,000 of those units will be rejected based on other non-testing reasons, and there will be a total supply of 11,564,000 units of blood. Representing nearly an extra half a million units of blood delivered to patients who need it.

Of course, I hope that I’m wrong. I hope the numbers are a lot higher. In 2021, the blood donation statistics were still recovering from the Covid slump, but fingers crossed.

HEMOGLOBIN DEFICIENT, MORALLY SUFFICIENT

There is a pervasive sentiment worldwide that LGBT people are somehow morally deficient and untrustworthy. There have been a lot of citations in this article, but for the consideration of the reader’s time, and likely personal experience with the topic, I will consider that a well-established fact. Many people do not like and do not trust anyone LGBT.

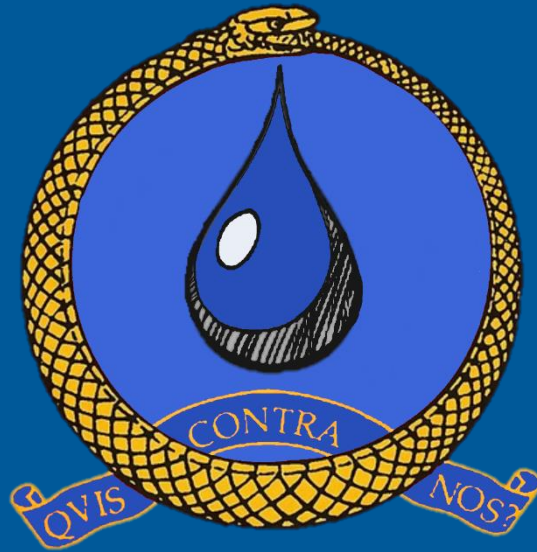
On the contrary, perceptions of people who donate blood are overwhelmingly positive. The donor becomes associated with a nurturing, trustworthy, and morally superior station. (22) Despite that, only about 1 in 50 people per year donate. (23)

Donating blood as an LGBT person is a chance to upend that misconception of moral deficiency. You are a moral person, whether you donate or not. You can demonstrate your commitment to the well-being of others by literally giving your blood so that they may live. It is one of the most consequential things that you can do.

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Blue House is a trans-centric, LGBT online community established October 2020. Blue House Monthly is the bi-monthly webzine created, edited, and published by our community.

Link to Blue House: <https://discord.gg/tttt>

Link to Blue House Monthly Site:
<https://bluehouse.lgbt/blue-house-monthly>

Link to Blue House Server Status:
<https://bluehouse.lgbt/blue-house-canary>

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