

POZPLANET

The HIV Magazine By Us For Us - JAN 2021



POZPLANET

January 2021 Issue - CONTENTS

Page 2 - POZPLANET Magazine 2nd Anniversary

Page 3 - Being A Daddy In An Epidemic
Guest Contributor: Francisco Ibáñez-Carrasco

Page 10 - UP CLOSE & PERSONAL: Lemington Ridley

Page 15 - EAR CANDY with DJ Relentless



MADE EQUAL

HIV CANNOT be passed if the virus is undetectable.

HIV treatment makes the virus undetectable so it cannot be passed through sex.

Condoms offer protection against sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancy.

In New York, HIV testing and treatment is available regardless of your ability to pay or your immigration status.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Text **CARE** to 877877 or visit nyc.gov/health and search **U equals U**

Message and data rates may apply. Text 11/11/20. © 2020 NYC Health + Hospitals. For more information, see nyc.gov/health or visit www.nyc.gov/health.

#UequalsU

NYC NEW YORK CITY



CELEBRATING TWO YEARS OF
POZPLANET MAGAZINE

Being A Daddy In An Epidemic

Written by Francisco Ibáñez-Carrasco

I made it through the wilderness of the 80s and 90s to 2020! From the rags of a Chilean son of a maid to a transplanted Canadian educationist and social science researcher (no riches). I lived through a dictatorship, sucking catholic priests' dicks while keeping my gaze down and bearing flags of secrecy and shame. Made it to my 50s being POZ and a full blown addict to pharmaceuticals aka HIV meds.

My back is a bridge between a turbulent past and emerging vibrant queer generations. Typically, I have filtered all my experience, knowledge and skill through sex, sexuality, illness, and social class. These are the moving forces in my life. They are my political foundations with which to understand pandemics, politics, global warming, stigma, violence, racism, and the minutia of the everyday. In this article, I intend to tie into knots several nerve endings related to ageing, queer men, and being long-time HIV positive (POZ) to see how they come together to compose the body and mind of a "daddy". A Frankenstein daddy.

Historically, the trope of the "daddy" is ubiquitous in western gay subcultures: "the sugar daddy/ rough trade arrangement [mirrors] the class-based structure of illicit heterosexual relations in the early twentieth century" [1]. I did my part for this history in Chile under Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship. I was exposed to daddies early on. Often, I had sex (and dinner) for pay with unmarried men in their fifties with good taste and cushy jobs in order to learn about their tastes, their manners and their values. In 1985, I came to Canada to escape this dictatorship and its cultural

obscurantism. In provincial Vancouver, BC, I found Anglo-normative repression, ho-hum homo sexuality, and I got AIDS

Let us say, for the sake of argument, that many gay daddies are trans and cis-men over 40 maybe 50 years old. Ageing in resource-rich countries is a health and social calamity of loneliness and abandonment [2], as is clearly demonstrated by the irruption of COVID-19 in aging lives. Having lost the 90s nostalgic patina of the young (white), beatific man dying of AIDS, surviving pozzies are adapting to invisibility, invalidations, insults, stereotyping, consistent medical surveillance, and subtle micro-everything. My poz contemporaries are living in a quiet storm in double closets in small-towns, or power-bottoming high on meth, at the mercy of clinical and social services and pervasive stigmas. The push-back of the political AIDS movement exists no more.

When my 37-year-old boyfriend sees me as calm, cool, and collected, I am just terrified.

In the 2000s, younger guys started calling me Daddy, viva voce, to my face. They also offered me a seat in the subway. Bullying was replaced by some sort of respect. Accepting all of this was hard. Telling myself, "this is the daddy I have become."

What makes them see me as a daddy? A combination of belonging to a generation without queer male role-models, most of whom died of AIDS in the 80s and 90s. Daddies often represent the forbidden “sex” of the 70s, a finely embroidered nostalgia for a past that never really was. Maybe boys are seeking an absent father in their fragmented families. Maybe they crave what is perceived as filthy—and filthy is vogueish. Maybe daddy is a psychological glorification of the absent father of the 80s and 90s (biological fathers were busy making money then, I guess) or a way to escape the doldrum heteronormativity? Maybe it is only a cheap incest fantasy acquired online. Hard to tell.

Here, I describe things that make me be a Daddy.

1. **Techno-Daddy!**

Bio-tech in the form of ingested/inhaled/injected drugs is central to the lives of intergenerational pozzies and to our many queer cultures. Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PreP) and Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U) bring the drug technologies to the fore, to your home, to a health centre near you. No drugs, no game. Scientists around the world have stamped the algorithm PreP/U=U as genuine. Threat of transmission, the thing that made us sexual bandoleros into barebackers, bug chasers and gift-givers, is no more. Next, we will inoculate meth users, sex trade workers, and those who stigmatize others with booty bumps. It seems a matter of measuring and correcting.. The predictions of full-blown medicalization of our societies made by Ivan Illich and Peter Conrad [3], have come to happen. Why such fuss about some substances and not others, then?

However, how bio-technologies are circulated and taken up in everyday cultures is a whole other ballgame. Culturally, the spit-and-push of PreP and U=U does not erase 30 years of sexual and legal apartheid against pozzies. It has not changed the laws mostly inflicted upon the ethnic, bisexual, transgender and immigrants. PreP and U=U reinforce the narrative of “safer sex” written especially by and for gays. PreP/U=U does not exempt daddies from being the whipping boys of stigma(s).

I am one of those pozzies lost in a quagmire between treatment and consumption, the illicit and the polypharmacy [4] mixing the Pristiq with the Cialis, cannabis and HIV meds. I see the experience of the young as similar and amplified. It seems to me that the party & play (PnP) polypharmacy and the use of substances ranging from alcohol to injectables is how youth experience the world. Hence, drug consumption brings this daddy closer to youth than not.

My bottom/top line? I accept a responsibility anytime a boy is with me and using anything even if I don't know what the substance is. My advice? Always have a plan to get to the nearest

emergency room, Narcan in hand. Have enough money to support your use, a modicum of good health, and fortitude to endure the judgements of others.

I “act” my age! Being a daddy is ageist. We bring on the vintage. Young men are attracted by a brand of ageing authenticity. When I put my insecure, quirky, somewhat desperate self on the line, the response is amazingly positive. Trying to recapture one's youth by paying a young man for sex and company, Botox, and cool kicks is expensive. What's left for the long-term pozzies on reduced income? Becoming a daddy might help you deal with previous relationships rebound, aging, or your andropause. However, role-playing daddy might not be the optimal way of doing any of this.



Author
Francisco Ibáñez-Carrasco

Portrayed by Photographer
Matheus Amorim

Not saying you shouldn't roleplay. I am saying, if you were emotionally and sexually fucked-up before, you still will be no matter how much youth-by-proxy you purchase. Not to pathologize daddydom, but I suggest that you find support to understand the complexity of your motivations. Why? Because we, gay men, often cave under our aggressive self-branding narrative of being gay, young, witty, ripped, and potent.

2. Acknowledge leftover patriarchy? I acknowledge the patriarchal elements that buttress my daddy congress and not fully disassembled yet. A boy may say he wants to be your young trophy, devoted lover, companion but he is not really bio-family, as hot as father-son incest fantasies may be. He will never be family, partly because the heteronormative bio-family fantasy is in decay. Our relationships or "arrangements" are nuanced, ephemeral, and brittle, what Paul Virilio called "semi-detached." A Boy-Daddy relationship might be founded on a patriarchal notion, but the execution of the idea is fully contemporary; a mashup of fantasy, sex, and sincere mentorship. Daddies might be running against the grain and supporting patriarchal heteronormative values, unknowingly or knowingly, but we are also key in dismantling it.

3. I (more or less) know when to (let) go. I am an emotional hoarder. I have a hard time letting go of even the most fleeting relations. I have always had an abnormal need to relate to everyone, even strangers in the subway. It is maybe the result of not having had a biological family. Till today, I'm mocked for my penchant to start a conversation about life after a three-way, in a park, or at a glory hole.

The love, respect and memories from a boy are for always, but the young learn, fuck and go. I became a high-school teacher at 22 years of age; I was an escort, I was a pozzie at a tender age. No pupil, follower, lover, disciple, or "slave" stays forever. We are busybodies on the go, as unfocused as we have ever been with the aid of fast and furious media. The love and company of a good boy might not be around forever, but the memories will help you through the dark days..

You need to learn to remember and forget to be a daddy. Forget 30+ years of insults and continuing public ignorance about the resilience of poz daddies. You have to. On the more technical side, the very research I contribute to reports that the threat of (HIV related) dementia is upon the poz daddy[5]. Forgetting helps, even when every deluded health services provider expects you to remember everything. Forgetting helps me letting go. Remembering keeps me sad and lonely.

4. Autopathography

I have only the sweetest contradiction of affection and affliction to offer to the young. Having survived paedophilic Catholicism, medical body disfigurement, imprisonment and exhaustion in a hospital ward, and risk-aware consensual kink, my own forays into hard substances, etc. I can only offer contradictions. Autopathography, the patient's tale, our cumulative, individual and collective "lived-experience" is revered by some boys and dismissed by others as inconvenient. Some boys do not want to hear that you started taking "PreP" way before it was cool and U=U. Some boys want to hear how our sexual communities were before AIDS. I stick to those who want to understand, or have had a brush with illness and disease. I see them as stronger, aware and even sexier. Telling your patient story, autopathography, does not make you sacred; it only makes you wise. And...we gay queers, can fetishize anything.

5. Accept the media and avoid the headlines. Our use of media goes hand in hand with the use of substances. Cell phones are twinkling prosthetics of our bodies. Boys will be perched on your sling, high and connected. Fluffy pink satellite birds beaming to the globe while old you sit there, piston fisting, faster, faster, feeling nostalgic for the slower, olden days of eye-to-eye connection. Verbal sex is supplanted by “sexting”. He who spares the gadget, kills the joy and a faint promise of connectivity. Daddies in remote and rural areas, displaced by city costs or seeking sanctuary, those who have to enact a sort of Phantom of the Opera avatar to have a sexual, emotional or social life, know well the vagaries and ecstasies of media. Enter COVID-19 and the co-morbidities. You better connect online.

Boys are obsessed with recording and watching everything, albeit briefly. Cavities, fluids surging from dripping rosebuds, indelible moments photographed, barely edited, and launched into the ethernet—forever. No media release form will protect you from such blockbuster beaming. Deal with it. However, a modicum of inhibition should keep you away from social media networks in unimaginable acrobatic poses. I am old fashioned in this regard: showing my fuckhole to the world at 20 was defiant; showing my pixelated pruned butthole today seems desperate.

6. HIV stigma still hovers over sexual health. Boys know their rights; they are vociferous about “laws” and “policies” and the use of non-binary pronouns. However, young queers continue to have rigid and misguided understandings and practices of sex. In fact, we know that the young today were born in anxiety and fear and are not having sex. They say that “contrary to popular conceptions, more Americans in recent cohorts are not having sex as adults, with 15% of those born in the 1990s sexually inactive since age 18 in their early 20s, twice as many as among those born in the 1960s”[6]. That explains why cock cages and various versions of chastity belts are all the rage these days. Kids tell you how long they can go without shooting. Weeks! Months!

Social science research tells us that the young and old queers are still not having sincere and courageous conversations about loneliness, anxiety, use of substances and sex. Since 2017, I have co-facilitated a young troupe of community-based researchers called The Investigaytors from U of Toronto, spearheaded by my delightful queer colleague Dr. David Brennan. I am often reminded of how difficult it is for young queers to integrate an emancipatory sexual health in their lives, even today: stuff about HPV, mental health, exploratory practices such as fisting or felching, and complex open, monogamous or in-between relationships with one or more.

A daddy has a role bridging between generations of disinformation and sexual apartheid. HIV continues to be the only medical information you ask in the hookup lines. The rest? Mental health? Don’t ask, don’t tell. Okay, we don’t want hookup sites to be sexual health surveys, then why not take HIV out? Scared?

7. Stigmata(s): Stigma is portrayed by social scientists as one blunt, violent, visible mallet, but it is a set of refined scalpels. St. Cassian was punctured to death by his grammar students with styli and penknives— a precursor of cyberbullying? HIV stigma feels like this to me, a thousand punctures with words and silences, mostly coming from my contemporaries, less from young queers and little or nothing from straights. Even though we know that stigma is not one static or universal thing that can be isolated, targeted and eradicated – like HIV – my clinical colleagues use and abuse facile technocratic solutions [7]. Public health experts think we can do this with racism, misogyny, or homophobia; measure and eradicate, inoculate, there has to be a pill for that. The fact is that we are socialized into using HIV stigma and other sex-phobias to make helpful and/or harmful distinctions.

As a daddy, I am in a prime spot to understand and raise awareness that HIV stigma is a tool that we use socially, not a simple result of bad shit we feel, others feel, say or do to us. Stigmas can be a bonding glue with the young, only if I understand their complexity and how we circulate them. Not an easy task, when a young gay asks me if I am “clean and sober.” My gut reaction is exhaustion, but I overcome it to show that no one is ever clean and sober. I am amazed that boys feel the entitlement to ask point blank about my HIV, and are offended by my asking them whether they are using meth.

8. Time to Flip-Fuck! This is my “always break every rule” advice. Role playing is not my thing. I don’t purchase expensive leather and rubber haute couture and go to their IML, Claw or Dore Alley pageants. I wear what makes me feel comfortable. I am aware and malleable and attuned to the situation and the young man in front of me. Nothing stops me from switching on the spot when a Boy says, “Now it’s my turn. You be the low sub, bitch clit, humiliated, raped bottom.” Do we really allowed ourselves openly and proudly to “have the sex we want”, as GMSH states in their website? I write in my hookup profiles, “I fuck the way I want” and this statement is confusing to many. We are in the slow cultural process of dismantling heteronormative sexualities.


9. ...and here is my money shot: wisdom. It is hard to philosophize about daddies, dicks, orgasms, kinks, and intergenerational relationships in an environment plagued by counsellors, experts, and life coaches with cheap solutions in hand. If you make what you know the law, or a doctrine, or a lesson learned, or medical information, you might lose the young.

Wisdom is not an immaculate and compassionate virtue and practice. Wisdom can be tawdry and brash. This is a time ripe for a Daddy to offer a sincere alternative, not chaste, not disinterested but deeply transactional, intergenerational, and viable. Yup, you read it, transactional. I am critical of transactional relationships, but this is what we have today. However, transactions can be somewhat beneficial if not always balanced and equitable. I show wisdom when I keep my mouth shut instead of judging a cub for their use, their fleetingness, or their fumbling about trying to find their way in sex, relationships, work, and studies. I show wisdom when I am shyly asked a question and I offer concrete information and not what I think a twink should be doing with their life.

There you are: my bare ass soul. Off I go into the foggy sunset of the aging poz.

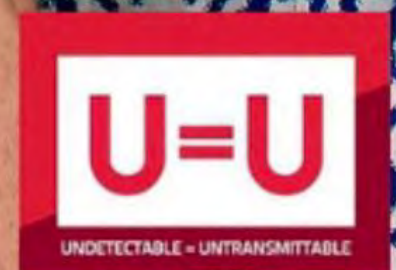
References

1. Richardson, N., Queering a Gay Cliché: The Rough Trade/Sugar Daddy Relationship in Derek Jarman's *Camvaggio*. Paragraph, 2005. 28(3): p. 36-53.
2. One is the loneliest number: insight into a silent epidemic. *Perspectives in Public Health*, 2017. 137(3): p. 156-157.
3. Maturo, A., Medicalization: current concept and future directions in a bionic society. *Mens sana monographs*, 2012. 10(1): p. 122-133.
4. Race, K., *Pleasure Consuming Medicine: The Queer Politics of Drugs*. 2009.
5. Terpstra, A., et al., “I’m Just Forgetting and I Don’t Know Why”: Exploring How People Living With HIV-Associated Neurocognitive Disorder View, Manage, and Obtain Support for Their Cognitive Difficulties. *Qualitative Health Research*, 2018. 28: p. 859-872.
6. Twenge, J.M., R.A. Sherman, and B.E. Wells, Sexual Inactivity During Young Adulthood Is More Common Among U.S. Millennials and iGen: Age, Period, and Cohort Effects on Having No Sexual Partners After Age 18. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 2017. 46(2): p. 433-440.
7. Manzo, J.F., On the Sociology and Social Organization of Stigma: Some Ethnomethodological Insights. *Human Studies*, 2004. 27(4): p. 401-416.

A man with a short beard and intense gaze is the central figure. He is wearing a black leather motorcycle jacket that is open, revealing his bare torso and well-defined abdominal muscles. He is also wearing white briefs. He holds the lapels of his jacket with both hands. The background is a blue and white patterned fabric with a repeating geometric and floral motif.

I CAN
GIVE YOU
Hheart,
Iidentity,
Vvalues.

I
CAN'T
GIVE U
HIV.



UP CLOSE & PERSONAL:

with Ballroom Dancer & Fashion Designer Lemington Ridley



An old friend of writer Alphonso King Jr shares his journey as an HIV+ person from the 90s and how he survived life and adversity to beat the odds for a better life today.

Over the years I have had the privilege to work with many creative and talented people. It's taken a while to catch up with this individual but I finally got the opportunity to sit down with Mr. Lemington Ridley. Back when we met in 1992, I knew him best as a drag performer named Tyra Colbaire. It's been a long journey from your old days as a New York City sex worker to where you have gone now...successful dancer, instructor and designer. Lemington has not only survived but also thrived as an HIV+ black man.

AK: How are you today and could you tell our readers a little bit about who you are and where you came from?

LR: Hello Alphonso, I am well...glad to be talking with you. Well, I was born in upstate New York and raised in Princeton, New Jersey. I am a professional coach for competitive ballroom dancers as well as a costume designer for dance and theatre.

AK: So, we met when I was a DJ at a transsexual hooker bar called Sally's in Times Square (which was featured in the *Paris Is Burning* documentary). I think you entered the Monday night talent show hosted by The Electrifying Grace. Tell us about where you were in your life at this time...what was life like in 1992 for you?

LR: I moved to NYC in 1991 to attend Parsons School of Design to study fashion design and illustration. When you and I met in 1992. I had just left school because my parents realized I was gay and decided not to support me any longer. Before we met at Sally's, I was fending for myself to survive...had a short time of homelessness. I stumbled into Sally's and was quickly taken in as a part of the family.

As I had no money I did fall into prostitution but really Sally's was my outlet for fashion and creativity. From participation in the shows to the everyday preparation to be beautiful, it's where I showed my talents and soon began designing for the performers. These were my first stage costumes and I how began to support myself.

I was lucky to meet a partner who took me out of the prostitution side of things. I got a job running an Upper East Side millinery and started designing hats and bridal headpieces. I kept pursuing my desire be a New York fashion designer and soon had a showroom on 7th Ave. I became a featured designer at New York Fashion Week (three times)...as well as being featured in Vogue, Modern Bride and other fashion publications.

I began dancing at 10. And from the moment I moved to New York, I took classes while studying fashion just because I loved it so much.

After my third fashion week show, I became disenchanted with the world of high fashion. I wanted something else. That is when I became a dance teacher. I taught at the *Fred Astaire* and *Arthur Murray* dance studios. I discovered the world of ballroom dancing and fell in love with the pageantry and costuming.. I then became a costume designer for dancers and stage. I began dancing professionally...dancing on Broadway and touring with companies. After dancing with female dancer partners, I turned to a male partner and became the US champion in *Same-Gender Ballroom* and *Latin Dancing*.

AK: I ended up asking you to be a part of my drag revue, The Illusions (Jade Elektra, Sybil Barrington, Tyra Colbaire and Harmonica Sunbeam). I was impressed by your dancing ('cuz *child despite the stereotype, I cannot dance*) and your ability to create costumes. We travelled a few places and even became historic like The Jewel Box Revue when we revived drag shows in Harlem back in the mid 90s (performing at Copeland's Restaurant and The Cotton Club). What were those days like for you and did that time change how you felt about life?

LR: The days with our performances group were great. That was my first taste of drag performances outside of Sally's, and a major learning ground for how to perform for an audience who might not be so familiar with the art form of female impersonation. These shows where were I really realized what it meant to be on stage.. And it was great to work with such talented and professional performers.



AK: Now, I asked this of every person we interview for this column. How long have you been HIV+ and are you out about your status?

LR: I was diagnosed with HIV when I was 21. I am now 47. I am very open my status now but I did not tell anyone for years. I dealt with it silently. Lots of positive thinking that I would not get sick...and I didn't (to the shock of doctors). I wasn't taking any medication. I refused because they made me have hallucinations and seizures when I did take them. I didn't get on a regular regiment till I moved to London and luckily never was ill. However it caught up with me two years ago when I realized I had full blown AIDS and Stage 4 cancer. After being secretly ill and a workaholic for a couple of years, I was rushed to ICU and put on immediate intensive chemotherapy. Almost losing the battle, I woke to fight again on Easter morning of last year and began my road to recovery. I am happy to say that I am fully recovered and have a changed my view of life.

AK: So, how did you end up going to the UK and becoming a dancer, instructor and designer?

LR: I moved to London eight years ago. I had travelled there many times for dance competitions, but then fell in love and married an Englishman. We were married for three years but the relationship ended. After a long battle with depression due to being in a new country without friends or family plus a lost relationship, I started to teach and design again to develop my career in London. I became the UK and World Champion in Same-Gender Dancing, I have developed a name for myself as performance coach. it has been hard but very rewarding.

AK: Tell us about your latest clothing line and how someone could get it...

LR: I am still designing costumes, but am in the process of creating and launching a line of fabulous wrap dresses. The label is called Wrapturous Wraps...simple dresses that are stylish elegant and easy to wear. The website will be launched coming this year (2021).

AK: If you could give your younger self some advice, what would it be?

LR: I would tell my younger self..."Keep pushing forward with a smile no matter what. Life has its plan for you. Be open to every turn and twist. It all will form you and make you strong..

AK: Well, it has been a pleasure talking with you...just like old times. Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedule for this interview. I feel blessed to still have you in my life and to call you a friend. I look forward to seeing more wonderful clothes from your brand and perhaps I could even get something made for Jade Elektra in the future. I would definitely wear and promote your line!

LR: It was lovely to talk to you too. Thank you for the opportunity and thank you for your amazing work in highlighting our beautiful POZ Community.





**I AM HIV
POSITIVE,
SO
WHAT?**

**A WORLD CHAMPION'S FIGHT
AGAINST DRUGS, DISEASE AND
DISCRIMINATION!**

EAR CANDY with DJ RELENTLESS



Every year I do a REWIND mix and this year I decided to incorporate it with my New Year's Eve mix. So, obviously we begin with the countdown and **Mariah Carey's** version of "**Auld Lang Syne**". Since New Year's Day is actually on a Friday this year I chose "**The Weekend**" by **Michael Gray** to start the party.

So, let's dive into the mix head first!

Pharrell Williams confirmed on The Daily Show that he is producing Rihanna's new album. To celebrate that fact I chose "**Don't Stop The Music**" by **Rihanna**. In the same theme followed by "**Don't Stop Til You Get Enough**" by **Michael Jackson**. Apparently his daughter, Paris Jackson has a new Folk album out with her boyfriend. I never just play what's new. I often get Retro and Throwback-ish. So, "**Move Your Feet**" by **Junior Senior** and "**I Wanna Dance With Somebody**" by **Whitney Houston** screams "**LET'S PARTY!**"

One of my favourites from 2020 is "**Dance M.F.**" by **Tituss Burgess** featuring **Imanni Coppola**. And I was thoroughly pleased that **Toni Braxton** came out the gate with "**Dance**" as her debut single for her album. Given that **Drake** surpassed Aretha Franklin and Stevie Wonder this year with the most Billboard #1 charted singles with "**Laugh Now Cry Later**" it was only fitting to include this massive hit. "**Head & Heart**" by **Joel Corry** featuring **MNEK** became another fave of mine as well. And it was a huge year for **Dua Lipa**. "**Levitating**" did well. I just felt bad for Madonna. She wasn't in the video and her vocals weren't strong enough to stand out while Missy killed it on her verse (but I didn't hear here).

Kylie Minogue released an album called "DISCO" but unfortunately for me it didn't hit with me. I included "**Say Something**" because that's what I had hoped she would have done. However, another artist who came back in 2020 was **Lady GaGa** with her duet with **Ariana Grande** for "**Rain On Me**". It was cute for a hot minute but quickly became annoying with all the Tik Tok videos and use in TV commercials. And continuing in the annoying category, **BTS** released a Michael Jackson inspired music video for "**Dynamite**". As someone

who grew up in the MTV generation of the 80s, watching these twinkies rehash Jackson's style and moves is so boring! And if we're gonna go to some Bubblegum Pop, **Taio Cruz's** version of **"Dynamite"** is much better.

In a year where we were stuck at home, it was easy to be stuck on last year's hits. And **"Piece Of Your Heart"** by **Meduza** featuring **The Goodboys** still gets me movin'. Another banga for me was **"SAXY"** by **Sak Noel & Salvi**. Which led me to another Pop collaboration, **"X"** by the **Jonas Brothers** featuring **Karol G**. **"Girl Like Me"** by **The Black Eyed Peas** featuring **Shakira** squeaked in at the last minute. I often say that **Pitbull** is one of the biggest man-whores of the music industry and I often ignore his releases these days. But his collab with **Sak Noel & Salvi** on **"Que Rica (Tocame)"** is so fuckin' good! And I just had to include my remix of **"WAP"** by **Cardi B** featuring **Megan Thee Stallion** followed by my new Gay Anthem **"Hokie Pokie"** by **John Duff**. I believe this is the WAP sequel.

I didn't include **Missy Elliott** before so I could use this hot House mix of **"Get UR Freak On"**. And if we're gonna go back to the early 2000s we can't forget **"Goodies"** by **Ciara**. **Saweezie's** **"My Type"** always gets asses shaking. **50 Cent** made headlines for the wrong reasons when he said he was supporting Trump in the presidential election but Chelsea Handler promised to give him **"Just A Little Bit"** and he changed his tune.

Felt like throwing a Classic House track, so **"I'll House You"** by **The Jungle Brothers** felt right. It's funny how what's old is new. **"Acid"** by **Toddla T Sound** gives me all the life of my old days of stompin' the floor to **"Acid"** by Maurice. And for the 2020 Pride mixes **"Bounce Back"** by **Little Mix** turnt the gyrls out for the **"Back To Life"** hook. I was really hard on **Billie Eilish** in my reviews because I didn't feel like she deserved all the Grammys but I have to say she faired well with her track **"Therefore I Am"**. Another one who did well in 2020 was **Doja Cat**. After doing **"Boss Bitch"** for *Birds Of Prey* soundtrack she went on to claw her way up the charts. Now one of my pet peeves this past year and for the past five years has been this trend of producers and remixers stealing songs and not giving credit to the original artsits. I knew *Moi Rene* and it burns me up that **Eats Everything** stole her track **"Miss Honey"** and she's not mentioned anywhere!

Now, we can't talk about 2020 without talking about COVID-19. It played a huge part in all of our lives. Our next track comes from Tik Tok and is **"Pamela Pepkin's Quarantine Workout"** followed by **"Mask, Gloves, Soap, Scrubs"** by **Todrick Hall**. Another stolen track is **"Bored In The House"** by **Dillon Francis**. I hope *Tyga* got paid handsomely. And no other song says it all like **"Days Go By"** by **Dirty Vegas**. I lost tracks of months at a time from being at home all the time. A more recent title that covers it as well is **"365"** by **Zedd** featuring **Katy Perry**. Tip of the hat to Miss Perry for the birth of her daughter.

As the pandemic wore on sexual tensions rose and many were stepping out to get laid. So, **"Fastlove"** by **George Michael** seemed appropriate. The brilliant *Barry Harris* mashup **"Horny Pony"** by **Mousse T & Ginuwine** was the perfect drop in BPMs to get to our Hip Hop section. I have to say that it was surprising to find out that Cardi B and Offset of The Migos got back together. One of my faves by **The Migos** is **"Walk It Like I Talk It"**. Truthfully, I don't have Disney Plus so I have not seen the latest **Beyonce** project. But I needed to give props to her and **Jay Z** for all the rent relief they gave to help those who were about to be homeless due to the lost of income during this time. The slow moving Congress votes were **"Ape Shit"**. **Drake's** **"Toosie Slide"** started the 2020 off pretty nicely. And I was furious with **Kanye West** tryin' to better his **"Good Life"** while destroying ours by jumping into the presidential race at the last minute. But no one ruled the Hip Hop game in 2020 like **Megan Thee Stallion**. Her rise to Queen-dom was **"Savage"**! That's why her performance on SNL and on HBO's *Legendary* were needed for my mix.

The rise of Ballroom Culture into mainstream was also epic after *POSE* hit the airways. So, **Angel X's** **"Hey Revlon"** was necessary as well as **"WTP"** by **Teyana Taylor**. She announced that she was quitting the music business because she felt unappreciated. Shortly after other artists like *Janet Jackson* expressed support *Dionne Warwick* tapped her to play her in a bio pic. And imagine my surprise when I found that someone



made a music video for my 1999 mashup of *T-Pro's* mix of **"The Wonder Woman Theme"** and *Masters At Work's* **"The Ha Dance"**. Talk about Ballroom Culture...my *Relentlessly Cunt* series has been considered the bible of Bitch Tracks and even written about in Europe. Not bad for a smalltown DJ. And I included this in my mix to talk about the second movie. I wasn't in love after seeing it. It seemed weaker compared to the first one. Not enough 80s music or looks and the plot was not strong enough. *Kristen Wiig* seemed miscast but the studio has already announced there will be a third Wonder Woman movie. (I think to counteract the bad reviews). Let's hope that it returns to the energy of the first one.

For the promos of *Wonder Woman 1984* they used **"Blue Monday"** by **New Order**. Wasn't even in the movie at all! For some reason that 80s classic made me think of Barry Harris' mashup of **"Let Me Think About It"** by **Ida Corr** and **"Blinding Lights"** by **The Weeknd**. Someone else who had a great year was **Miley Cyrus** and her duet with **Dua Lipa** on **"Prisoner"** was very popular. Mr. Harris returns again with another mashup of **"Psycho Killer"** by **Talking Heads** and **"Sweet But Psycho"** by **Ava Max** followed by **"Toxicity"** by **Reblok**.

Speaking of toxicity, there were some violent incidents that hit the news and a lot had to do with gun toting Americans who were 45 supporters. So, I chose **Madonna's** **"God Control"** followed by **"This Is America"** by **Childish Gambino**. And one of the best protests that I saw in 2020 was the *"Mitch Better Have My Money"* in front of Mitch McConnell's house in D.C. (Obviously a play on **Rihanna's** **"Bitch Better Have My Money"**). But my mix of **Kimberly Jones' "We Can't Win"** viral video and **"Black Action"** by **Glen Underground** explains why there was looting in 2020. And after the death of *George Floyd*, **Angie Stone's** **"Brotha"** seemed very appropriate to lift up our brothers of color. His and *Breyonna Taylor's* murder really made many stop and take a fresh look at how black people are treated in the world.

But along with all the heartache and anger came some good news...the vaccine! So, **"I Will Survive"** by **Gloria Gaynor** is now a hopeful anthem. And we have to give props to **Dolly Parton** for donating a million dollars to help develop the vaccine...just another reason to love and adore her. And her feature on **Galantis' "Faith"** was ahead of its time. Unfortunately for some, their faith was tested with the pandemic. I chose **"Losing My Religion"** cover by **Colton Ford**. And *Erik Elias' House* mix of **"Bohemian Rhapsody"** by **The Braids** seemed right in that moment.

In a year of protests plus polarizing opinions and viewpoints, **Billy Porter** offered a warning with “**For What It’s Worth**” that we need to help each other and think of others. It was a call to go vote. So, I honestly believe that for the first time in many years African-Americans saw the strength and power of their right to vote. Let’s hope that this continues for many years to come. Don’t get complacent or comfortable. Just because Biden got in does not mean we need to relax!

So, I say “**Follow Me**” by **Aly-Us** is an anthem that we need to keep in our heads. Watching *Van Jones* cry after hearing *Biden and Harris* being called the official winners of the election did feel like a “**Brand New Day**” from **The Wiz**. And since I am hopeful for 2021, I feel as optimistic as **Lizzo** on her hit “**Feel Good As Hell**”. I may look like hell because I haven’t had a proper haircut in months and I’ve put on a few pounds without being able to workout at the gym but I feel like we can only move in the right direction in this New Year. It’s gonna be hard for some to accept new leadership and a change in course for the United States but we had to hit rock bottom and see how low we could go before beginning to right some of the wrongs that happened over the past four years. We’ve got a long way to go before we see change.

And how we get there is by holding our politicians accountable. Engage in your local politics and elections. These are testing grounds for future leaders. And most importantly, start looking after each other. You will be surprised how what good you do can spill over into other aspects of your life.

I have no idea if anyone even reads this column but I am committed to trying to mix current events with popular music. If I can get just one person to look up any of the things I reference in my articles I’ve done my job. I am hoping that we get a new start in 2021 and that we learned from 2020 that we cannot go backwards. We no longer need to stand in lines to vote. We have to be our brother’s keeper. If we aren’t, who will take care of us when we need help. So, that means everyone has to do their part and no one gets left behind. And lastly...what side of history do you want to be remembered on?

Thank you for supporting **POZPLANET** and **POZ-TO**.

You can listen to this mix here:

<https://www.mixcloud.com/djrelentlessny/relentless-new-years-eve-rewind-2020>

And you can download the video version until January 4th, 2021 here:

<https://wettransfer.com/downloads/811cc789981b19cd7ad729d94972302520201228231008/9ffd00195dabcfce344938c229bb74a820201228231008/121850>



HIV RESISTANCE ORGANIZATION

**YOU DON'T
HAVE TO BE
POSITIVE TO
THINK**

POSITIVE

**GET INFORMED.
GET TESTED.
GET INVOLVED.**

For more details:
visit www.fighthiv.com for free testings