

Explore the Archival Materials

The following pages
include additional content
related to select archival
materials on display.

FEATURES

PATTI LABELLE AT THE FORREST

LABELLE POWER UNLEASHES LOTS OF LOVE

"An Evening with Patti LaBelle" at the Forrest Theatre, 1114 Walnut St., through Feb. 28.

By **JONATHAN TAKIFF**
Daily News Staff Writer

There's hydroelectric power. There's atomic power. And there's Patti LaBelle power — a force of nature as powerful as the torrents of Niagara Falls or the turbines of Three Mile Island.

Unleashed in concert at the Forrest Theatre last night, for an opening night audience as pent-up with enthusiasm and love as the singer herself seemed to be, Patti proved there really is "No Place Like Home" to experience her electrifying sound and personality.

Is there any singer on earth who gives more of herself? Unlikely. From her anguishing of things to come with "In the Air Tonight" (yes, the Genesis biggie) to her signature finale, "Over the Rainbow," Patti made each number seem like it was the best, the dearest, the only song in the world, and made us believe it, too.

Why, even at the end she refused to quit, continuing to wail on with "Rainbow" after the curtain fell and the house lights came up and the crowd had begun filtering out into the night! To be sure, all who witness this lady's show in the next 2½ weeks will take home some of the music's good spirit and her joyous benedictions.

More intimate than LaBelle's last hometown concert run at the Shubert three years ago, the Forrest gig finds this 25-year singing veteran working simply (and effectively) with her strong eight-piece band conducted by James "Budd" Ellison and backup vocal trio, the Sweeties. Just a couple of flashy costume changes and a laser light effect or two provide the visual enhancements.

No, there isn't a gospel choir, violin section or breakdancers, as the singer employed at the Shubert.

But given the way Earth Mother LaBelle now works her audience into the show — warmly luring them to the stage apron with her fluttering outstretched hands and her tears on "You Are My Friend," posing for their pictures to show her "New Attitude," even inviting a few young men up on stage to dance and sing along with her classic "Lady Marmalade" — she doesn't need any extras. For the whole theater is Patti's stage, and everyone in it is a player.

High points are hard to pick out when nearly every song's a full-blown showstopper. But this listener was especially impressed by LaBelle's sublime *a cappella* harmonies with the Sweeties on the gospel classic "How Great Thou Art." And I was tickled pink by her giddy rock oldies medley of Elvis Presley's "Blue



Patti LaBelle and fan reach toward each other during concert



Woman stands near the poster of LaBelle at the Forrest

Suede Shoes" and Little Richard's "Tutti Frutti."

All of her ballad performances were sublimely dramatic, of course, with Bob Dylan's "Forever Young" and Ashford and Simpson's "There's a Winner in You" best capturing the essence of LaBelle's philosophy about life and music — that a positive attitude and a lot of love makes all the difference, makes anything possible.

I couldn't help noticing that LaBelle did not roll around on the floor or sing flat on her back, as she had in past shows. Perhaps the entertainer felt constricted by her exotically tight, leg-flashing gowns (designed by Tony Chase and Felicia Farrar) or by her bird-like, winged hairdo.

Or has LaBelle finally taken to heart some criticism that her performances topple over the edge from fashionable frenzy into uncontrollable hysteria?

No matter. The bottom line was that everything she sang or touched last night seemed right, seemed full-powered yet in her control. Even when an ardent and slightly witty male admirer refused to leave the stage, Patti kept her sense of humor, never blew her cool, made it all seem part of the master plan.



Philadelphia fans Beau McCall and Saifuddin Muhammad (right) adorn the lobby before the show

Staff Photography by Rick Bowmer

Philadelphia Daily News clipping (digital print), 1987. From the Beau McCall Collection, Stonewall National Museum, Archives, & Library.

This is a clipping from the article titled *Patti LaBelle at the Forrest*, used in the collage, [Beau and Saifuddin Muhammad I.](#)

FEATURES

PATTI LABELLE AT THE FORREST

LABELLE POWER UNLEASHES LOTS OF LOVE

"An Evening with Patti LaBelle" at the Forrest Theatre, 1114 Walnut St., through Feb. 28.

By **JONATHAN TAKIFF**
Daily News Staff Writer

There's hydroelectric power. There's atomic power. And there's Patti LaBelle power — a force of nature as powerful as the torrents of Niagara Falls or the turbines of Three Mile Island.

Unleashed in concert at the Forrest Theatre last night, for an opening night audience as pent-up with enthusiasm and love as the singer herself seemed to be, Patti proved there really is "No Place Like Home" to experience her electrifying sound and personality.

Is there any singer on earth who gives more of herself? Unlikely. From her auguring of things to come with "In the Air Tonight" (yes, the Genesis biggie) to her signature finale, "Over the Rainbow," Patti made each number seem like it was the best, the dearest, the only song in the world, and made us believe it, too.

Why, even at the end she refused to quit, continuing to wail on with "Rainbow" after the curtain fell and the house lights came up and the crowd had begun filtering out into the night! To be sure, all who witness this lady's show in the next 2½ weeks will take home some of the music's good spirit and her joyous benedictions.

More intimate than LaBelle's last hometown concert run at the Shubert three years ago, the Forrest gig finds this 25-year singing veteran working simply (and effectively) with her strong eight-piece band conducted by James "Budd" Ellison and backup vocal trio, the Sweeties. Just a couple of flashy costume changes and a laser light effect or two provide the visual enhancements.

No, there isn't a gospel choir, violin section or breakdancers, as the singer employed at the Shubert.

But given the way Earth Mother LaBelle now works her audience into the show — warmly luring them to the stage apron with her fluttering outstretched hands and her tears on "You Are My Friend," posing for their pictures to show her "New Attitude," even inviting a few young men up on stage to dance and sing along with her classic "Lady Marmalade" — she doesn't need any extras. For the whole theater is Patti's stage, and everyone in it is a player.

High points are hard to pick out when nearly every song's a full-blown showstopper. But this listener was especially impressed by LaBelle's sublime *a cappella* harmonies with the Sweeties on the gospel classic "How Great Thou Art." And I was tickled pink by her giddy rock oldies medley of Elvis Presley's "Blue



Patti LaBelle and fan reach toward each other during concert



Staff Photography by Rick Bowmer

Woman stands near the poster of LaBelle at the Forrest

Suede Shoes" and Little Richard's "Tutti Frutti."

All of her ballad performances were sublimely dramatic, of course, with Bob Dylan's "Forever Young" and Ashford and Simpson's "There's a Winner in You" best capturing the essence of LaBelle's philosophy about life and music — that a positive attitude and a lot of love makes all the difference, makes anything possible.

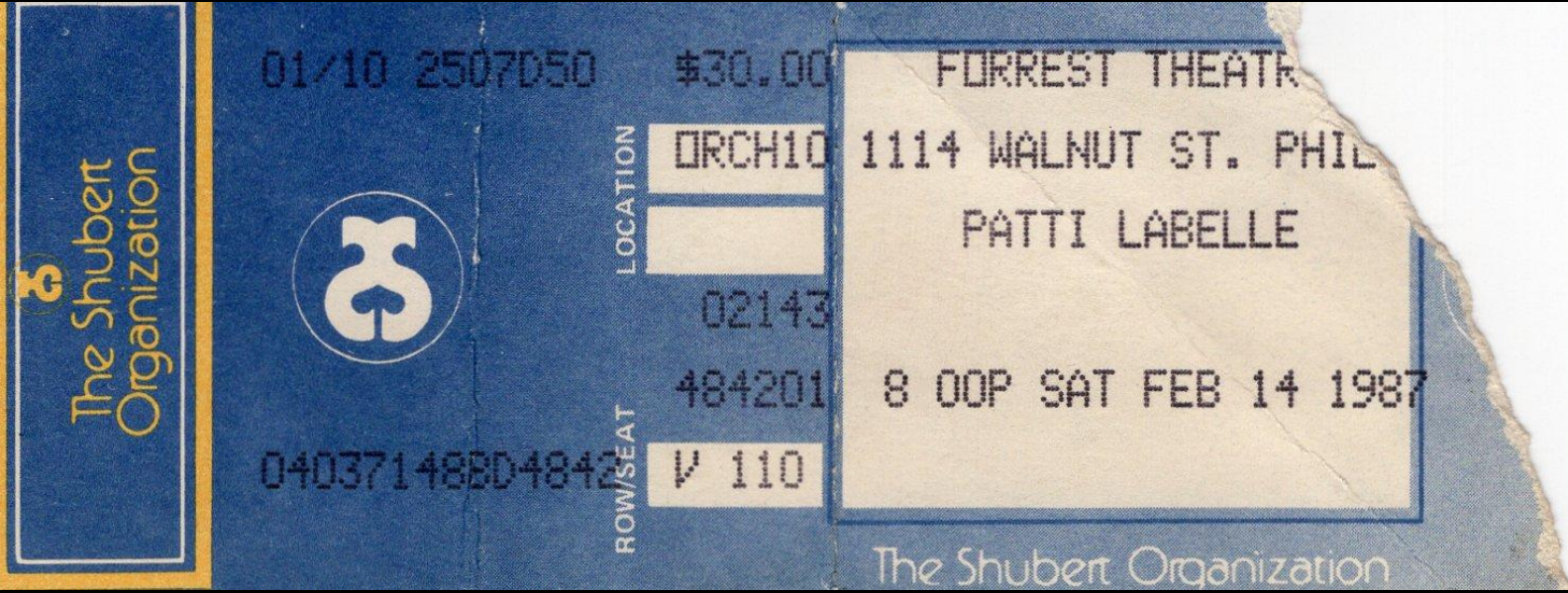
I couldn't help noticing that LaBelle did not roll around on the floor or sing flat on her back, as she had in past shows. Perhaps the entertainer felt constricted by her exotically tight, leg-flashing gowns (designed by Tony Chase and Felicia Farrar) or by her bird-like, winged hairdo.

Or has LaBelle finally taken to heart some criticism that her performances topple over the edge from fashionable frenzy into uncontrollable hysteria?

No matter. The bottom line was that everything she sang or touched last night seemed right, seemed full-powered yet in her control. Even when an ardent and slightly witty male admirer refused to leave the stage, Patti kept her sense of humor, never blew her cool, made it all seem part of the master plan.



Philadelphia fans Beau McCall and Saifuddin Muhammad (right) adorn the lobby before the show



01/10 2507D50

\$30.00

FORREST THEATR

LOCATION

ORCH10

1114 WALNUT ST. PHIL

PATTI LABELLE

02143

ROW/SEAT

484201

8 OOP SAT FEB 14 1987

04037148504842

V 110

The Shubert Organization

Ticket stub from *An Evening with Patti LaBelle* concert at the Forrest Theatre in Philadelphia, PA 1987. From the Beau McCall Collection, Stonewall National Museum, Archives, & Library.

① ~~Back in the Cell~~ Beau

Departing New York City
 Looking red pretty
 Around about 12 noon
 We hit highway 95th
 Passing through New Brunswick
 Stopped!
 By some County Hicks
 This time his shirt is grey
 Well what did he say
 Pull over buster, routine inspection
 The guns is a toy
 An were really boys
 This time the man in Oreg
 Is gonna take us away
 How we three can't be real
 Dressed in women's spiked high heels
 Impersonating females
 Now here's the Appeal
 Accepted if you will
 Were being booked on a bum deal

We hate your reflection
 in deflection
 Complication leads me be
 Isolation Set me free
 Incrimination why me
 Destination

① ←

Back in the Cell song lyrics, 1985. Private collection of Beau McCall.

This archival item is paired with the collages of McCall's punk rock band, Strange Beauties. These are the original handwritten lyrics by Beau McCall for the Strange Beauties song, *Back in the Cell*. The lyrics are about racial profiling and gender-biased policing experienced by the band. Their experience mirrors that of others within the Black LGBTQ+ community who have been discriminated against by law enforcement due to their race and/or gender-nonconformity.

Scan the QR code at the front of the gallery to listen to the demo recording.

②

→ Back Back, Back In The Cell
u u u u u u

Arriving to the Recipient

In a rush

joined by the cuffs

Being treated Rufft Rough

Please don't ARREST me

Why must you ~~under~~ dress me

Your EYE molest me

Oh shit what now

Bracelets, bracelet, I.D. bracelets

An of sudden there's an ink attack

my finger are block

my vision is doubled

Flash cube trouble

Oh no not you

not another Interview

Is there a chance

I can out on R.O.R.

Can a bit make bail

We note your Reflections

defection

Complication Label me be

Isolation Set me free

Incrimination Why me

Destination



The Philadelphia Inquirer

Vol. 314, No. 70

©1986, Philadelphia Newspapers Inc.

Tuesday, March 11, 1986

Thirty-Five Cents
Call 695-1234 for news home delivery rates

Among black people, AIDS is taking a heavier toll

By Vanessa Williams
Inquirer Staff Writer

It didn't take long for word to get around the black community in his small Virginia home town that he was gay. So at 16 he fled the epithets and moved to Philadelphia, where he thought he would be "a little more anonymous."

His aunt, who didn't know the real reason why he came north, took him into her house. He found a job caring for mentally handicapped people and enrolled at Temple University to pursue his dream of becoming a dancer.

He discovered a network of other gays with whom to socialize.

Then last year, at the age of 23, he learned that he had AIDS, and the anonymity he had been seeking turned to isolation. His aunt asked him to move out, he was fired from his job, he dropped out of school, his friends stopped coming by to see him.

Now, too ill to go out, he passes his days alone in his basement apartment in Center City.

AIDS, a disease that has stricken more than 17,800 Americans, is at-

tacking black people at a disproportionate rate. And some black people are angered that those in charge of AIDS public education did not sound the alarm sooner about the deadly disease's effect on the black community.

About half of the 267 Philadelphia residents who have contracted AIDS in the last five years are black, although black residents make up only 38 percent of the city's population, according to the Philadelphia Health Department. Statistics from the federal Centers for Disease Control

(CDC) show that nationally, black people make up 12 percent of the population but 23 percent of all AIDS sufferers. Hispanics, who make up 14 percent of the national AIDS cases, are also disproportionately represented.

AIDS, or acquired immune deficiency syndrome, is a viral disease that destroys the body's immune system and is known to be transmitted through the transfusion of contaminated blood products, the sharing of needles by drug addicts and intimate sexual contact, particularly among

homosexual men.

In Philadelphia, as elsewhere, the group hit hardest by AIDS has been homosexual men, who make up about 83 percent of the city's cases, the health department said. Nearly half of these homosexual men are black.

Statistically, the impact of AIDS on the black community has been apparent from the start. Both local and national figures show that since 1981, when the CDC began keeping statistics on black people have

been stricken with the disease at a higher rate than their percentages in the population.

But it has been only in the last two years that public health officials and some black spokesmen have attempted to alert the black community to the threat of the disease. Recently, they have begun to worry that their efforts have been inadequate and that many blacks at risk still do not know how to protect themselves.

Critics contend that early education (See AIDS on 14-A)



Goode, flanked by city officials, takes questions at news conference; he refused to respond directly to MOVE commission's criticism

Goode says he wouldn't be indicted in grand jury inquiry on MOVE

By Russell Cooke
and William W. Sutton Jr.
Inquirer Staff Writers

Mayor Goode, while refusing to directly answer the MOVE commission's harsh criticism of his administration, yesterday said that he would not be indicted if a grand jury investigates the city's handling of the May 13 siege on Osage Avenue.

Goode also announced a number of changes in city government operations that he said would "ensure that an event like May 13 will never occur again."

"I do not feel that I will be indicted," Goode said at a crowded City Hall news conference. "I do not feel there's a reason to do so."

Goode conceded only that he had made some mistakes and displayed "instances of poor judgment" in approving the police assault on a row house occupied by seven adult MOVE members and a half-dozen children.

The mayor refused to respond directly to questions concerning the MOVE commission's finding that he and his top aides were "grossly negligent," displayed a "reckless disregard for life and property" in planning and executing the siege, and "clearly risked the lives" of the five children who died when a police bomb dropped from a helicopter ignited a devastating fire that day.

In all, 11 people died in the MOVE fire, which destroyed 61 homes in

what had been a quiet, working-class neighborhood in West Philadelphia.

"I've said that the plan that we had did not work," Goode said. "I've also said that whatever you call it, poor judgment — or poor planning — that the plan did not work."

"I'm not going to get into a discussion of terminology," he said, "but I think that we all agree that whatever we had did not work, and it failed."

In declining to respond to questions about whether he was negligent, Goode explained, "I would let the conclusions speak for themselves, and... I believe in view of the fact that there are ongoing investigations that I should not express opinions."

(See MAYOR on 16-A)

2d MOVE panel report assails coroner's office

By Michael E. Ruane
Inquirer Staff Writer

The Philadelphia medical examiner's office is overworked, understaffed and some top employees are underpaid, according to a report released yesterday by the MOVE commission.

The office also has had poor leadership and management, bad maintenance and inadequate policies for matters ranging from dealing with the remains of the dead to relations with the news media, the report alleged.

And in handling the MOVE case, the report suggested, one of the office's major failures was that it, not

(See REPORT on 16-A)

Astronauts' remains are under study

By Mike Leary
Inquirer Staff Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — A team of military pathologists yesterday began examining some remains of the crew of the space shuttle Challenger that were recovered by Navy divers from the craft's shattered cockpit on the ocean floor, according to sources familiar with the search.

The pathologists, working for the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in Washington, D.C., started arriving here on Sunday, the sources said, and began preliminary examinations yesterday of the remains of the seven crew members — described as fragments of bodies. The remains were brought to the military hospital at nearby Patrick Air Force Base before dawn on Sunday.



Gov. Thornburgh Urges quick action by state House

One physician who had spoken with the pathologists said he did not believe that formal autopsies had begun.

The autopsies could show whether the astronauts were killed instantly by the blast that ripped apart the shuttle's external fuel tank on Jan. 28, just 73 seconds after liftoff from the Kennedy Space Center, or whether some crew members might have survived in the stoutly built and pressurized cockpit until the orbiter broke apart when it hit the water at high speed after a nine-mile dive.

Meanwhile, a team of Navy divers aboard the USS Preserver was hampered yesterday by high seas from salvaging the cockpit itself and more remains. The Navy ship is equipped with cranes capable of hoisting as much as 10 tons.

The cockpit was "not intact, we're talking about debris here," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Deborah Burnette, a spokeswoman for the search operation. But she was unable to say whether the shuttle had cracked into a few large chunks or broken into many smaller pieces. She had no comments about the remains.

Films of the explosion appear to show rockets in the shuttle's nose exploding after the external tank erupted. The second blast may have blown out the orbiter's windows, exposing the astronauts to poisonous fumes and flames.

Jim Mizell, a NASA spokesman and former shuttle engineer, said he believed the astronauts were killed "instantly." But he noted that the shuttle's thermal tiles and the shock absorbers that cover its bottom could have helped shield much of the aluminum alloy cockpit from the heat and shock of the main blast, allowing it to fall to the sea intact.

The fact that many tiles were found floating after the explosion, and that none were affixed with pieces of the cockpit, supported that theory, he said.

The high-speed impact with the water shattered the shuttle's much

(See SHUTTLE on 18-A)

Senate OKs convention center bill

By Vernon Loeb
and William W. Sutton Jr.
Inquirer Staff Writers

The state Senate yesterday overwhelmingly approved legislation that would create a nine-member authority to build and operate the proposed \$455 million Center City convention center, clearing the way for final legislative approval of the project as early as next month.

The Senate's 39-9 vote capped months of delays and high-level negotiations on the center, which the Goode administration and Philadelphia business leaders have said is essential to the city's economic well-being.

Senate passage of the authority bill also provides a sudden lift for Mayor Goode, whose political and governmental fortunes have been on the decline since a draft copy of the MOVE commission's report was published in the news media more than a week ago.

"It's a very fine project," said a relieved Joseph Egan, president of the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corp., who was the city's chief lobbyist for the center. "The project is not only good for Philadelphia, it's good for Pennsylvania as a whole. I've been in the development business a long time, and if you've got a good project, it will float to the top."

Mayor Goode and Gov. Thornburgh immediately applauded Senate passage of the authority legislation

(See CENTER on 10-A)



The first taskhous for fell out of Milan are feminine without being vulgar, with emphasis on the waist and derrick. People, Page 1-D.



The house on Capshire Drive is in a court dispute

In quiet Cherry Hill, a Marcos and his retinue made their homes.

Recalling Marcos' son and guards as neighbors

By Laura Quinn
Inquirer Staff Writer

For the most part, Mark Tandoorjian was saying the famous Filipinos who lived in his neighborhood in Cherry Hill kept to themselves. Occasionally, he would see the son of Ferdinand E. Marcos walking with a girlfriend.

Invariably, there was a car filled with security men driving ahead of them, another car driving behind.

"We really didn't care that he was Marcos," Tandoorjian, 26, said yesterday. "It was just the fact that so many people were living there. They had a hell of a lot of people there."

Between 1979 and 1981, Ferdinand E. Marcos Jr., the son of the ousted Philippine president, and as many as 10 security men lived in two colonial houses in the Fox Hollow development. Young Marcos was attending the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

Over the years, the presence of Marcos Jr. and his entourage in the quiet development of spacious single-family homes sparked a variety of reactions, ranging from indifference to a hostile petition drive to complaints about chickens in the back yard of the guards' house. Finally, last year, the Filipinos left the two houses, and one of the properties was sold. But the other one has become part of the growing dispute over the senior Marcos' real estate holdings in this country.

Yesterday, a New Jersey Superior Court judge issued a temporary injunction prohibiting a Cincinnati real estate firm from selling the house where the guards lived, located on Capshire Drive, pending another hearing. The injunction was requested by attorneys representing the new government of Corason C. Aquino, who contended that the Cherry Hill property and another

(See MARCOS on 18-A)

Weather & Index

Showers possible this morning. Partly sunny this afternoon. High in the lower to mid-60s. Clear tonight. Low in the mid-30s. Increasingly cloudy tomorrow. High about 50. Full weather report, Page 10-E.

Ray Milland, 78, who won an Academy Award as best actor of 1945 for his portrayal of an alcoholic young writer in "The Lost Weekend," has died of cancer. **Obituary**, Page 11-B.

National/International	Section A
Metropolitan	Section B
Business	Section C
People/Home/Entertainment	Section D
Sports	Section E
The Arts	4-D
Classified	10-C
Comics	9-E
Editorials	20-A
Newsweek	2-D
Obituaries	10-B
Puzzles	11-E
Television	6-D

Court limits tax authority of states for waste cleanup

By Aaron Epstein
Inquirer Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court yesterday restricted the authority of states to tax oil, chemical and other businesses to help pay the cost of cleaning up hazardous wastes.

The court ruled 7-1 that states could not impose taxes on businesses for purposes already covered by the \$1.6 billion Superfund law of 1980. The law was enacted by Congress to clean up designated waste sites with taxes from polluting industries.

Nevertheless, the court decision left states free to impose separate taxes for a number of other anti-pollution purposes, such as paying for state contributions to Superfund

cleanups, compensating property owners for damages caused by discharges of hazardous waste, and covering costs of administration, research, personnel and equipment.

The case decided by the court, Exxon Corp. vs. Hunt, involved a demand by five large oil and chemical companies for a refund of about \$10 million from New Jersey's Spill Compensation Fund, which was created in 1977. Because they won only a partial victory, they apparently would be entitled only to a portion of

(See COURT on 18-A)

Work in New Jersey is not expected to grind to a halt. Page 7-B.

Among black people, AIDS is taking a heavier toll

AIDS, from 1-4
tional efforts and media reports were primarily focused on gay white men. As a result, they say, black people were left with the impression that AIDS was a white man's disease and did not take precautions, such as using condoms and choosing sexual partners more carefully.

"Thank about it. Those prominent articles about AIDS in Time, Newsweek and on network TV never showed any black AIDS victims or health professionals," said Wesley Addison, a former disease intervention specialist with the CDC who last year co-founded Blacks Educating Blacks about Sexual Health Issues (BEBASH), a local group that holds seminars on sexual-health topics.

Adds David Fair, secretary/treasurer of the predominantly black Local 1199C of the Hospital and Health Care Workers of America: "Efforts to educate have not been made among nonwhite people at risk." Fair said that organized crusades by public and private groups have "so far relied totally on gay networks, which are all white."

Peppi Highsmith, who for 10 years has been the bartender at the Smart Place, a popular Center City nightclub, said that when the AIDS epidemic broke out, "I went to my doctor, got a complete checkup and said what can I do to protect myself."

Although the problem in Philadelphia, contaminated needles have been a major source of AIDS for blacks and other parts of the country. Dr. Harold Jaffe, chief of epidemiology at the CDC, notes that of the approximately 4,500 black people nationally who have contracted AIDS, 45 percent are homosexual and 35 percent contracted the disease through intravenous drug use. By contrast, only 5 percent of whites with AIDS are intravenous drug users.

In New Jersey, 52 percent of AIDS cases reported to date involve intravenous drug use, most of them concentrated in the heavily black North Jersey cities of Paterson, Newark and Jersey City, according to the state Health Department.

Sherrin of the Philadelphia Health Department said officials are cautiously relieved that the number of drug cases in the city is low because drug addicts are the hardest of any risk group to reach. Of all AIDS cases in the city, only 13 have been attributed solely to intravenous drug use; 19 others involved gays or bisexuals who also used drugs.

IFT said medical experts can only theorize about why blacks have been hit harder by AIDS. But, he said, he fears that the lack of education about the disease in the black community is likely to be a factor in the future.

"We do not want to see where suddenly blacks are claiming 40 percent of the national cases because white men have heard the message and reduced their risk and black gay men have done nothing," IFT said.

IFT talked recently about how the Philadelphia AIDS Task Force missed the target of 100,000 education campaigns, despite a \$400,000 education campaign.

When the task force was formed in 1982, it disseminated information about the disease through bars, publications and businesses, mostly in Center City, IFT said.

Later, he said, Ransome and other black members of the task force pointed out to him that few black gays circulate in the Center City gay community. Rather, black gays view themselves as part of the black community — they live in those neighborhoods, attend churches there and circulate in predominantly black social circles.

"We realized what we had to do was use the normal channels for getting messages out to the black community," IFT said. But when the task force went to the larger black community, it was not warmly received.

One of the first steps the task force took in early 1984 was to produce a series of posters, displayed on SEPTA buses and trains, warning of the threat of AIDS. One poster had a picture of a black man. Others had white, Hispanic and female faces.

Almost immediately, IFT said, the task force's telephone lines were deluged with calls from black people upset by the posters.

IFT remembers one call in particular. "It was from a woman who identified herself as a black and a nurse. She said, 'How dare you put a black face on an AIDS poster when everybody knows that only 1 percent of the cases are black — and those are Haitians.'" (The CDC has dropped Haitians from its list of high-risk

Black gays have additional prob-

lems finding health care. Dr. Brett Cassese, a physician at Thomas Jefferson University Medical College who treats gay patients, said gay men need doctors they can trust and "who are not going to get freaked out" about a patient's sexuality.

"It has been pointed out to me that ... no black physician has been identified as providing health care specifically to black gays," Cassese said. "The doctor has to have credibility. What you need to do is tell the people to change the way they are living their lives and that takes a lot of persuasion," he said.

Don Ransome, a former head of Black and White Men Together, an interracial gay rights organization, agrees that health care is a problem for black gays. Many still go to their family doctors and the doctor doesn't know — or doesn't acknowledge — their lifestyle," he said. "I've encouraged my friends to come out to their doctors or to change doctors."

Ransome said he receives care from a gay physician who does tests and examinations above and beyond the routine physical examination. He also said that when the AIDS epidemic broke out, "I went to my doctor, got a complete checkup and said what can I do to protect myself."

Although the problem in Philadelphia, contaminated needles have been a major source of AIDS for blacks and other parts of the country.

Dr. Harold Jaffe, chief of epidemiology at the CDC, notes that of the approximately 4,500 black people nationally who have contracted AIDS, 45 percent are homosexual and 35 percent contracted the disease through intravenous drug use. By contrast, only 5 percent of whites with AIDS are intravenous drug users.

In New Jersey, 52 percent of AIDS cases reported to date involve intravenous drug use, most of them concentrated in the heavily black North Jersey cities of Paterson, Newark and Jersey City, according to the state Health Department.

Sherrin of the Philadelphia Health Department said officials are cautiously relieved that the number of drug cases in the city is low because drug addicts are the hardest of any risk group to reach. Of all AIDS cases in the city, only 13 have been attributed solely to intravenous drug use; 19 others involved gays or bisexuals who also used drugs.

IFT said medical experts can only theorize about why blacks have been hit harder by AIDS. But, he said, he fears that the lack of education about the disease in the black community is likely to be a factor in the future.

"We do not want to see where suddenly blacks are claiming 40 percent of the national cases because white men have heard the message and reduced their risk and black gay men have done nothing," IFT said.

IFT talked recently about how the Philadelphia AIDS Task Force missed the target of 100,000 education campaigns, despite a \$400,000 education campaign.

When the task force was formed in 1982, it disseminated information about the disease through bars, publications and businesses, mostly in Center City, IFT said.

Later, he said, Ransome and other black members of the task force pointed out to him that few black gays circulate in the Center City gay community. Rather, black gays view themselves as part of the black community — they live in those neighborhoods, attend churches there and circulate in predominantly black social circles.

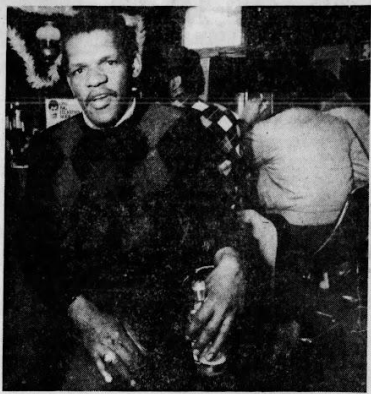
"We realized what we had to do was use the normal channels for getting messages out to the black community," IFT said. But when the task force went to the larger black community, it was not warmly received.

One of the first steps the task force took in early 1984 was to produce a series of posters, displayed on SEPTA buses and trains, warning of the threat of AIDS. One poster had a picture of a black man. Others had white, Hispanic and female faces.

Almost immediately, IFT said, the task force's telephone lines were deluged with calls from black people upset by the posters.

IFT remembers one call in particular. "It was from a woman who identified herself as a black and a nurse. She said, 'How dare you put a black face on an AIDS poster when everybody knows that only 1 percent of the cases are black — and those are Haitians.'" (The CDC has dropped Haitians from its list of high-risk

Black gays have additional prob-



Don Ransome, of AIDS task force, wants better education efforts

(The Philadelphia Inquirer / ED HILL)

AIDS groups.) Bob Kohmescher, education specialist in the CDC's division of sexually transmitted diseases, said other cities also have reported difficulty in reaching black and Hispanic people with AIDS education.

"It has been a concern in all project areas throughout the country, trying to reach minorities, not just blacks, but Hispanics as well," said Kohmescher.

Blacks and Hispanics "don't have the same sort of social networks to work through that you do in the white/gay community and that makes getting messages out very difficult," he said.

Recently, Mayor Goode joined the education effort with a filmed public service announcement urging those at risk of contracting AIDS to be cautious and to call the task force.

Suzanne Badoux, director of the Mayor's Commission on Sexual Minorities, said the announcements began airing on local television stations earlier this year. And while the mayor speaks to all groups, Badoux said, using Goode is a way to tacitly address the black community.

"Another major project aimed at the black community was a rap record produced by the task force with money from the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The record, "Respect Yourself," warned listeners that anybody — "be you a butcher, a baker, a candlestick maker" — is susceptible to AIDS.

But the record, which was produced in Philadelphia at a cost of \$13,477, received more air play in other cities than here, task force officials said. Ransome said he thought its explicit lyrics turned off listeners. McCrier, a former member of the task force, said he felt the lyrics were too childish — "a Sesame Street rap."

Fair of Local 1199C, which is more than 70 percent black, was disappointed that the CDC turned down a grant proposal last year to train union members to educate the public about AIDS. He believed the program would have been successful because "our members are considered health-care resources in their communities. Their neighbors go to them to ask advice and questions."

IFT, who is white, said he would prefer blacks to take the lead in spreading the word about AIDS to the black community. But the task force, which relies on about 250 volunteers for money and manpower, has not had much success in convincing black people to join. About 10 percent of the task force's volunteers are black, he said.

IFT calls it "a Catch-22 situation." Black men say, "You need more black volunteers." But they say they do not want to join the organization because it's too white," he said.

Still, he has been encouraged in recent months. "We're seeing some increase in awareness in the black community," he said, with more blacks using the task force hotline and seeking the AIDS antibody test. The ads, the record and meetings with community leaders, he believes, are beginning to have an impact.

What is still needed, Ransome said, is for black officials, entertainers, religious and community leaders to become active, much, the way that Elizabeth Taylor came to the forefront after Rock Hudson announced that he had AIDS. Hudson died of the disease last year.

Ransome said he believes that black people would heed the warnings about AIDS "if we could have

one prominent black clergyman, or someone very prominent ... someone who has credibility in the community ... do a public service announcement, in addition to the mayor. But we're too hung up on what's right or wrong. Don't tell me about being morally correct when people are dying."

The Rev. Albert F. Campbell, pastor of Mount Carmel Baptist Church in West Philadelphia, acknowledged that AIDS is a difficult issue for the church to address because the disease has predominantly affected people involved in activities that the church considers immoral. But after attending a forum on AIDS last fall, Mr. Campbell said he became convinced that the black community should be better educated about AIDS and that the black church should take a leading role.

Mr. Campbell said he is considering holding a program for his church members, who number 2,800, to provide information about AIDS.

"I believe the black church has an awesome responsibility to be informed and in turn inform the community on issues that impact on their lives, and AIDS happens to be an issue that we have to address," Mr. Campbell said. "We also have to develop a theology for [AIDS] other than that of Jerry Falwell's, which says that AIDS is divine retribution for misconduct. Just because the high-risk groups are gays and drug users, we cannot become bigoted toward these folks, because they are human and loved by God."

When Angela walks into the Smart Place, she is greeted with hugs and hellos and treated to free rounds of drinks. She says she likes to come to the bar because men buy her drinks without trying to pick her up. "I can just have a good time," said Angela, who said she is not gay.

But AIDS has made an impact on this small, inconspicuous bar at Ninth and Arch Streets, where friends used to greet each other with kisses.

Since the AIDS outbreak, he said recently, "They still hug, but they don't kiss."

A young gay man sitting nearby agreed. "You're afraid to meet people. Normally you would greet people with a kiss. Now they turn their heads," he said. "If somebody coughs, they step back. It doesn't dawn on them that maybe you got something caught in your throat. The first thing that comes to their minds is AIDS."

The change in the atmosphere at the Smart Place is an indication that black people are aware of AIDS, but health experts are still concerned that they do not know enough to adequately protect themselves against the disease.

Angela, who asked that her last name not be used, said she is concerned that her male gay friends rely on hearsay rather than expert information on AIDS.

"It's like when you were growing up and you heard about sex on the radio, you were going to the nurse at school or to your parents to get the right information," she said.

The lack of understanding about AIDS among black gays is evident in some of the comments that Highsmith hears from his station behind the bar at the Smart Place.

"They think it's mainly on the West Coast ... The majority of them don't go to the bathrooms, so they feel they won't come into contact with it. ... And they say they're not doing heavy drugs ... Then there are those who believe it only occurs with those who are into kinky sex. ... And some believe it's just a scare tactic to keep them from practicing their sexual desires."

Highsmith said seminars have been held at the Smart Place and that literature about AIDS is made available to the patrons at the bar, but he does not know how many read it or practice some of the safeguards suggested by health experts, including reducing sexual encounters with strangers and using condoms. He also acknowledged that some "just don't give a damn."

Angela also expressed frustration with some of her gay friends who brush off AIDS information or deliberately choose to ignore it.

Dorian, a small-framed 29-year-old with a boyish face, said he doesn't know much about the disease other than what he hears or reads in the media. He said that he uses a condom but that other gay men do not like to use the protective gear.

"It's like going to bed with a bandage," complained one man at the bar.

Dorian's feelings seem to sum up those of many on the gay scene. "I take precautions, but I'm not worried about it — if it's going to get you, it's going to get you."

Posters of slender leotard-clad figures on pointed toes decorate a wall of his small Center City apartment, which is simply furnished with a bed, coffee table and two wicker chairs. Most of the time the chairs remain empty because the young man from Virginia rarely gets visitors.

He said that he spends a lot of time trying to figure out where he might have caught his disease that has so drastically changed his life.

"I knew I was at risk because I was gay, but I never thought I would get it because I wasn't having sex with a lot of people. He said that he knew that condoms could further reduce his risk, but he didn't like to use them.

Most days, he said, it takes all of his energy to drag his tall, skinnny body out of bed and fix breakfast. "I feel weak and sick all the time," he complained, running his fingers through his tousled curly permed hair. AIDS, his doctor said, has caused him to contract a brain infection. His head throbs constantly and he has become forgetful. His dark, large eyes are reddened by his illness, and he frequently lets out long sighs of exhaustion.

"Sometimes he gets impatient with killing for death and thinks about writing himself. ... But," he said, "I just don't have the energy."

Patrons of library sit in to protest early closings

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Angry students, writers and scholars held a noisy sit-down demonstration in the reading room of the Library of Congress yesterday to protest budget cuts that have forced elimination of the library's traditional evening hours.

At 5:30 p.m., when the library's doors were scheduled to close under a new austerity plan, about 100 protesters remained at their desks, donned black armbands and applauded the first of a series of speeches demanding that the library remain open, as usual, until 9:30 p.m.

"President Reagan wants to turn the body politic into a mentally retarded body and that's why I'm here," shouted one speaker from the top of the high circular desk in the center of the ornate chamber. "Power to the People!"

They ejected the protesters, who cheered, pounded their desks and clapped their books open and shut as speakers tried to deliver anti-Reagan tirades. They vowed to stay until 9:30 p.m.

Associate librarian Donald Curran said that "it's our practice to avoid unnecessary confrontation," and that the demonstrators would be allowed to stay if they remained peaceful and caused no damage.

The largest library in the world has had in fiscal 1986 a budget of \$28.5 million reduced to \$29.3 million in recent months as a result of the congressional campaign to reduce federal budget deficits. Librarian of Congress Daniel J. Boorstin responded by ordering a wide array of cuts in services, including closing the library's reading rooms during weekday evenings, except Wednesday, and on Sundays and federal holidays.

"It could be the highest paying savings account ever invented!"



Switch your savings to Continental Bank's new

HARD WORKING SAVINGS

"A penny saved is a penny earned." Especially now that Continental Bank is introducing new personal Hard Working Savings. On balances of \$50 to \$499.99, Hard Working Savings pays 5 3/4% interest — compounded daily to yield 5.92%.

And when your balance reaches \$500, an amazing thing happens. You start earning high market rates!

ANNUAL RATE	ANNUAL YIELD
6.77%	7.00%

That's right, high market rates. On the entire balance. Compounded daily for maximum yield. You can even link your Hard Working Savings Account

with our new high-interest-earning personal Hard Working Checking Account—and enjoy automatic free checking.

A minimum savings balance of \$750 a bill takes. Hard Working Savings has other good things going for it, too. Like a minimum opening balance of just \$50. 24-hour access to over 9,000 CashStream, CIRRS locations with your Continental QuickBank™ Card. And of course, our depositors are insured by the FDIC.

No wonder we think it's the best savings account ever. So don't wait! Switch to the savings account that works hard to help you earn more money. From the bank that works hard for your business—Continental!

CONTINENTAL BANK
We work hard for your business.

*Hard Working Savings' Market Rate is subject to change. Information above is for personal savings accounts only.



Party was conceived, planned, written and directed by a team of Black Gay and bisexual men who included playwright Alan Sharpe, director Charles Searles, producers Alan Sharpe and consumers, and is produced by AIDS FILMS and consumers, including Alan Sharpe, Charles Searles and other leading makers of *Remain, Stragely Fresh* and the public television special *AIDS: Changing the Rules*.

Party is a collaborative project of Gay Men of African Descent (GMAD), GMAD, the leading organization of its kind in the New York City metropolitan area, and the Gay Men of African Descent (GMAD) health, education and political empowerment of New York's diverse community of Black Gay men. GMAD has a long-standing commitment to creating HIV/AIDS prevention and education programs and to collaborating with other organizations and increasingly sought out as a resource by policy makers and other community organizations in the development of HIV service programs.

Party was made possible by funding from the Charles Bronfman Foundation, AIDS Memorial Fund, Merz-Gilmore Foundation, New York City AIDS Fund, Our Fund for Lesbian and Gay Liberation, Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media, Public Welfare Foundation, Revson Foundation, and Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Foundation.



NEW YORK, NY 102
PM 3
19 MAY
1994

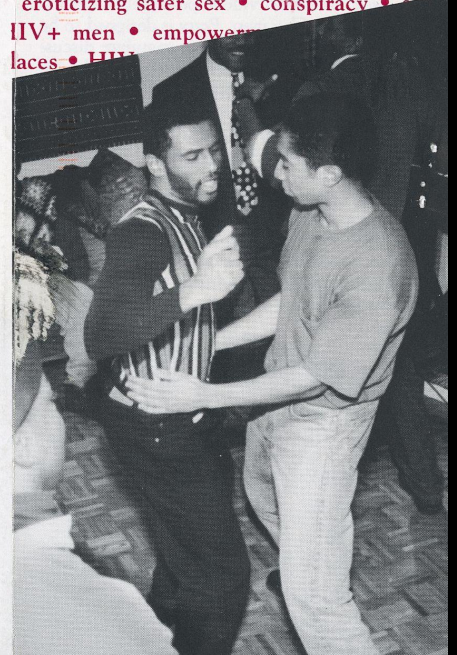
GMAD
Gay Men of African Descent
666 Broadway, Ste. 520
New York, NY 10012-2317

Christine Nolan
Body Positive Resource Center
187 N.E. 36th Street
Miami, FL 33137

Alan Sharpe
Wesley...

oral sex • condom use • sex with HIV+ men
relapse • negotiation skills • non-penetrative
sex • community support • risk assessment
safer sex in long-term relationships • substance
use • eroticizing safer sex • conspiracy • sex
for HIV+ men • empowerment • sex in public
places • HIV testing • abstinence • safe sex
condom use • sex with HIV+ men • relapse
egotiation skills • non-penetrative sex
community support • risk assessment • sa
sex in... abstinence

PARTY
a safer sex videotape
for Black Gay Men



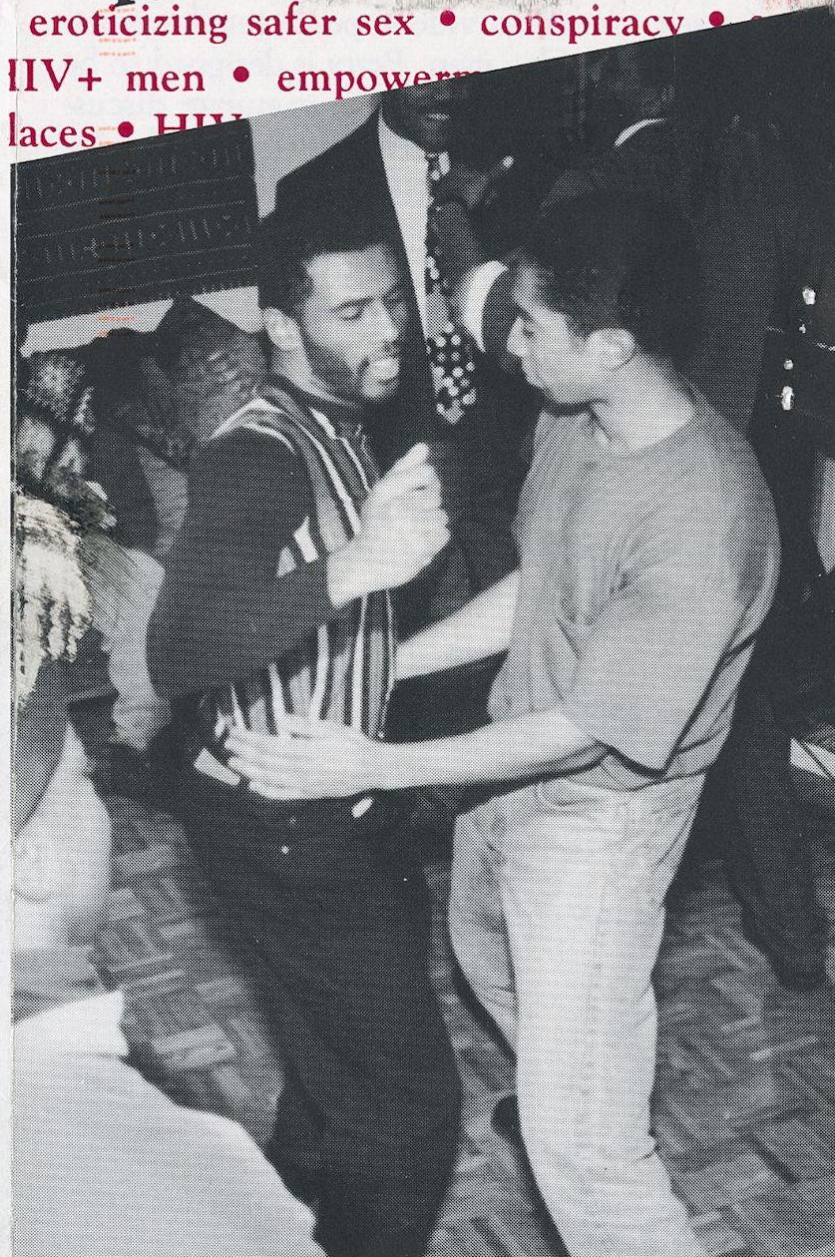
Pamphlet for Party: a safer sex videotape for Black Gay Men produced by AIDS FILMS and Gay Men of African Descent (GMAD), circa 1994. Stonewall National Museum, Archives, & Library.

This pamphlet is paired with the collage, [Tony I](#), since both pieces share themes of sexuality within the Black LGBTQ+ community. In the second decade of the AIDS epidemic, GMAD created the video to educate Black gay and bisexual men on safer sex and safer sex relapse.

oral sex • condom use • sex with HIV+ men
 relapse • negotiation skills • non-penetrative
 sex • community support • risk assessment
 safer sex in long-term relationships • substan-
 ce • eroticizing safer sex • conspiracy • s
 or HIV- men • empowerment • sex in pub
 laces • HIV testing • abstinence • end sex
 condom use • sex with HIV+ men • relapse
 negotiation skills • non-penetrative sex
 community support • risk assessment • saf
 sex in long-term relationships • substance
 eroticizing safer sex • conspiracy •
 HIV+ men • empowerment
 laces • HIV

PARTY

a safer sex videotape for Black Gay Men

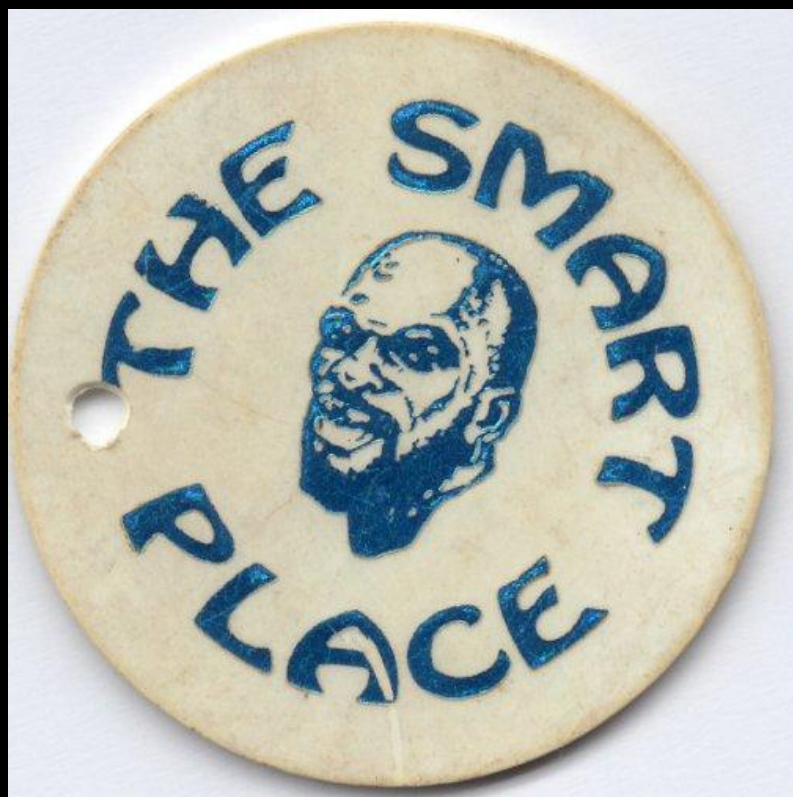


Party was conceived, planned, written and directed by a team of Black Gay and bisexual men who included playwright Alan Sharpe, director Charles Sesoms, professional AIDS educators and consumers; and was produced by AIDSFILMS, the award-winning makers of *Reunion*, *Seriously Fresh* and the public television special *AIDS: Changing the Rules*.

Party is a collaborative project of Gay Men of African Descent (GMAD). GMAD, the leading organization of its kind in the New York City metropolitan area, has been working since 1986 to provide support, advocacy and services which promote the health, education and political empowerment of New York's diverse community of Black Gay men. GMAD has a long-standing commitment to creating HIV/AIDS education and services for Black Gay men and to collaborating with other organizations; and is increasingly sought out as a resource by policy makers and other community organizations in the development of HIV service programs.

Party was made possible by funding from the Chicago Resource Center, Ittelson Foundation, Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation, New York City AIDS Fund, Out Fund for Lesbian and Gay Liberation, Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media, Public Welfare Foundation, Revson Foundation, and Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Foundation.





The Smart Place drink ticket, circa early-mid 1980s. From the Beau McCall Collection, Stonewall National Museum, Archives, & Library.

This is the actual drink ticket used in the collage, [Tony II](#). The Smart Place was one of the few Black LGBTQ-friendly bars in Philadelphia, PA.



Front



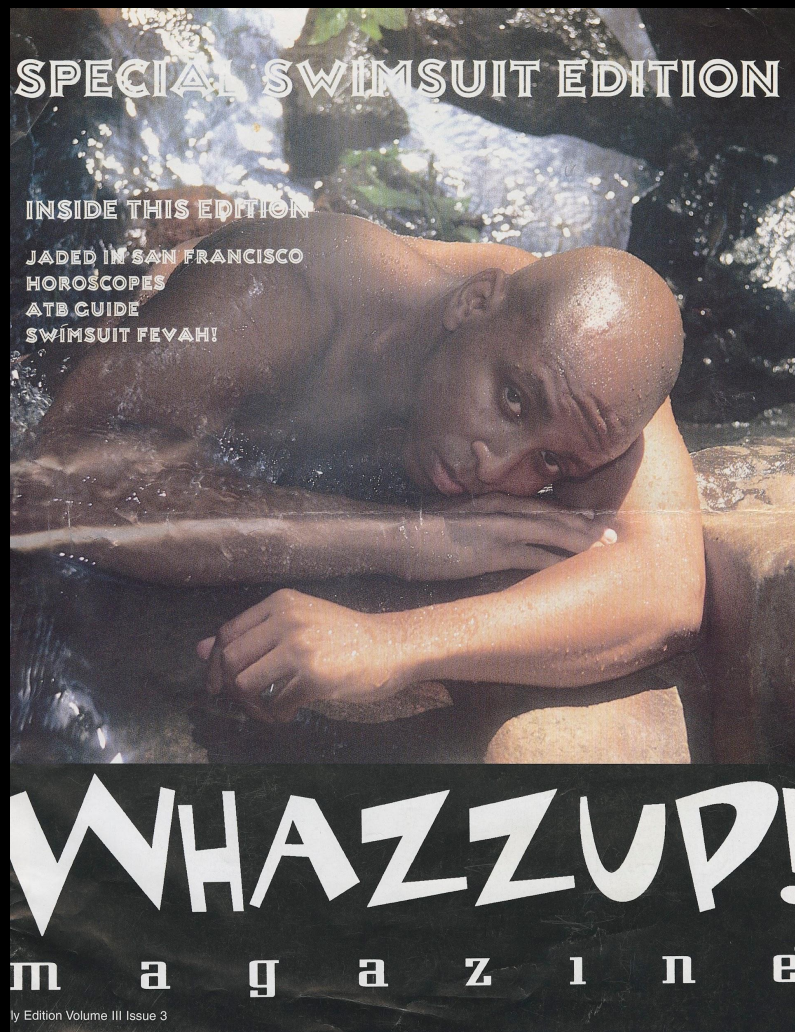
DISCO

922 Arch Street

Phila., Pa. 19107

(215) 627-8984

Back



WHAZZUP! Magazine, 1998. Stonewall National Museum, Archives, & Library.

This magazine is paired with the collage, [Tony I](#), since both pieces share themes of sexuality within the Black LGBTQ+ community. This issue of *WHAZZUP!* is their first swimsuit edition and covers nightlife, music, entertainment, relationships, sex, medical news, and has a column by activist and writer Cleo Manago.

SPECIAL SWIMSUIT EDITION

INSIDE THIS EDITION

JADED IN SAN FRANCISCO

HOROSCOPES

ATB GUIDE

SWIMSUIT FEVAH!

WHAZZUP!

m a g a z i n e[®]

July Edition Volume III Issue 3



Black Pride Resource Guide, 2004. Stonewall National Museum, Archives, & Library.

This archival item is paired with the collage, [Trey III](#) since it reflects the need for spaces that speak specifically to the Black queer experience. This need exists for several reasons including a desire to bond with those of a similar cultural background and to have an alternative to White queer dominated spaces that have often marginalized Black people. Presently, there are numerous annual events under the banner of Black Pride in cities across the United States of America.

BLACK PRIDE RESOURCE GUIDE 2004

*the ultimate guide to
black pride celebrations*

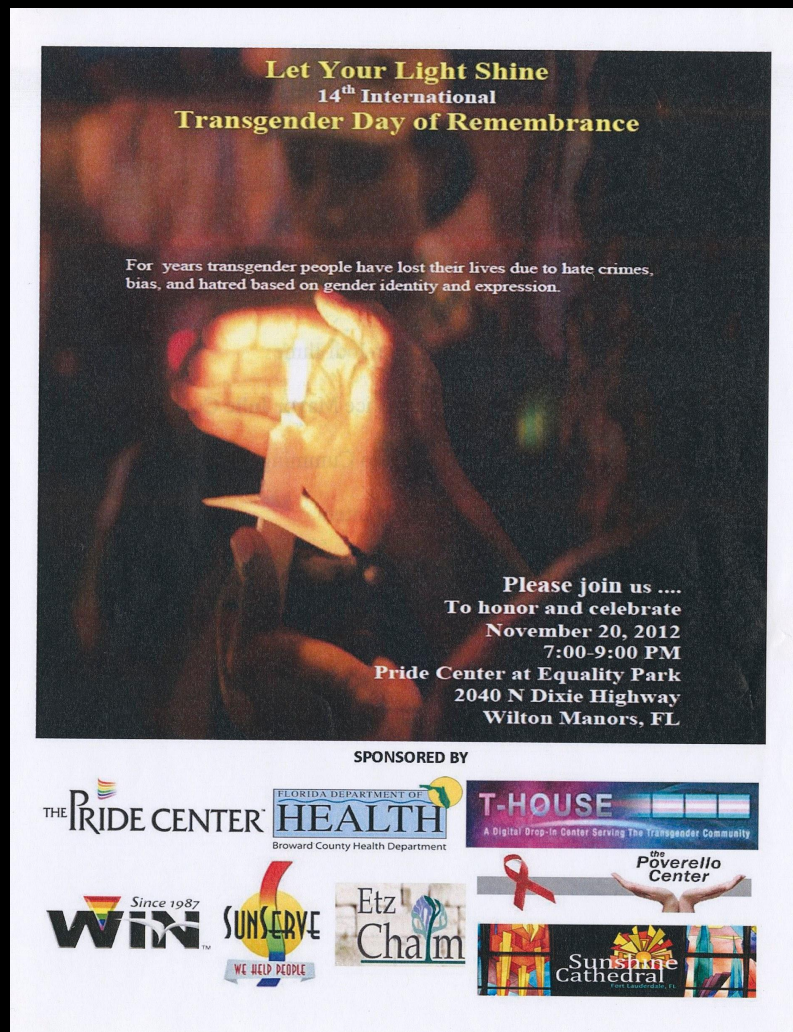
FREE

MIAMI'S
SECOND
SIZZLIN'
YEAR

KEITH
BOYKIN
GOES TO THE
ALTER FOR
GAY
MARRAIGE

THE NEW
NEW YORK
PRIDES

UMMAH
FUND'S
WHITE HOT
WHITE
ATTIRE
AFFAIR



Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) program, 2012. Stonewall National Museum, Archives, & Library.

This program is paired with the collages, [*In Loving Memory*](#) and [*Bianca III*](#). Each of these pieces speak to the importance of memorializing those within the Black LGBTQ+ community who are deceased and whose legacies are often underrepresented. In particular, events such as TDOR—which began in 1999—were established to honor those who died as a result of anti-transgender violence, an issue that disproportionately impacts the Black transgender community.

Let Your Light Shine 14th International Transgender Day of Remembrance

For years transgender people have lost their lives due to hate crimes, bias, and hatred based on gender identity and expression.

Please join us
To honor and celebrate
November 20, 2012
7:00-9:00 PM
Pride Center at Equality Park
2040 N Dixie Highway
Wilton Manors, FL

SPONSORED BY

THE PRIDE CENTER

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH
Broward County Health Department

T-HOUSE
A Digital Drop-In Center Serving The Transgender Community

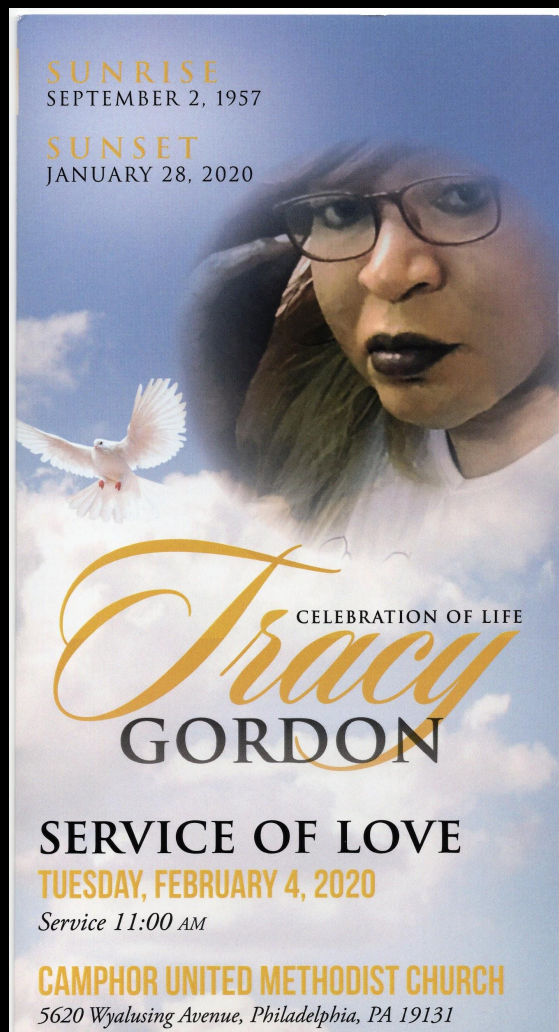
Since 1987
WIN™

SUNSERVE
WE HELP PEOPLE

Etz
Charm

the Poverello Center

Sunshine Cathedral
Fort Lauderdale, FL



Funeral program for Tracy Gordon (aka Tracy Monroe), 2020. From the Beau McCall Collection, Stonewall National Museum, Archives, & Library.

This archival item is paired with the multiple collages featuring Monroe, who was a member of McCall's punk rock band, Strange Beauties. Monroe died the day before McCall began working on his debut artists' book, *REWIND: MEMORIES ON REPEAT*. The funeral program lists her surname: Gordon. But McCall refers to her in this project with the last name she chose for herself: Monroe. Tracy chose the last name as a nod to one of her favorite queer icons, Marilyn Monroe.

SUNRISE
SEPTEMBER 2, 1957

SUNSET
JANUARY 28, 2020



CELEBRATION OF LIFE
Tracy
GORDON

SERVICE OF LOVE

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2020

Service 11:00 AM

CAMPBOR UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

5620 Wyalusing Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19131

Life Story

On January 28, 2020, *Tracy Gordon* slipped away to be with the Lord. Tracy was born September 2, 1957, in Philadelphia, PA unto Garold & Thelma Gordon.

Tracy was educated in the Philadelphia Public School System. Tracy brought joy to a lot of us with her smile, love, and kindness. When Tracy came into a room, everybody knew it. Tracy was a giving person. She gave freely to who ever needed it.

Tracy was a very understanding person; you could come to her with your problems, and with one conversation, you would leave with not only a solution, but a brand new look on life and a smile. With a tilt of her head and one her humerus witty comments, you could consider yourself FIXED.

Tracy had unconditional love for her family, loyalty for her friends, and a undeniable passion for her music. With big dreams of fame and glamour, Tracy moved to New York to start a long journey of excitement, new friendships and most of all to enjoy her lifestyle and start her own business, with ups and downs and turn arounds.

Tracy finally started to see her dream slowly come to life, with a host of song writers music producers, singers and other talented musicians, STRANGE BEAUTY PRODUCTIONS WAS BORN

Happy with the success of her passion, Tracy often shared with her family and friends. Although living in another state, Tracy had a tight relationship with her family, and often kept in contact through phone calls and visits. Tracy was the center of attention at every party; with her witty sense of humor, she could make you laugh no matter what kind of mood you were in.

Tracy was a big fan of some of the greatest singers like Diana Ross and Billie holiday, but one of her favorite artists she loved to mimic was blonde, and she was GREAT at it. Tracy loved to entertain; *"singing can cure anything,"* she would say, and as long as she had a microphone in her hand, EVERYTHING WAS ALRIGHT.

She was preceded in death by her sister Thelma and brother Randall. Tracy leaves to cherish her memories: three sisters, Betsy, Gerri, and Jackie; four brothers, Harold, Garold, Andrew, and David; two sons-in-law, Billy and Mike, and a host of nieces, nephews, great nieces, great nephews, other relatives and friends. She also leaves behind a dear best friend, Lisa Williams, that held a bond with her that was an unbreakable sister.

Tracy will always be in our hearts.

Family Tributes

*With happiness and sorrow we can say Aunt Tracy, you are loved
Please watch over us from the heavens above
You'll have a safe place, where you can rest and your songs can roam
God needed one more angel so he called his child home.
We wish we had more time, and if it was up to us,
your passing would wait
But you can't stop the inevitable,
besides God already opened his golden gates.
You will be remembered as a diva so glamorous yet fierce
Well use those loving memories to hold back our tears*

Love, LaSean and Ericka

NO MORE SORROW

*Let's celebrate TRACY, who lived life great
My tears are from joy your pain is done
The battle is over my love , you won
Excuse my sadness, it comes once in while ,
Because I'll never see again, that beautiful smile
Or other things , because your gone
Like watching Betty Davis until the dawn,
I'm happy your pain and hurt now cease
I love you aunt TRACY so Rest In Peace*

Love, Donna & Sean

OUR INSPIRATION

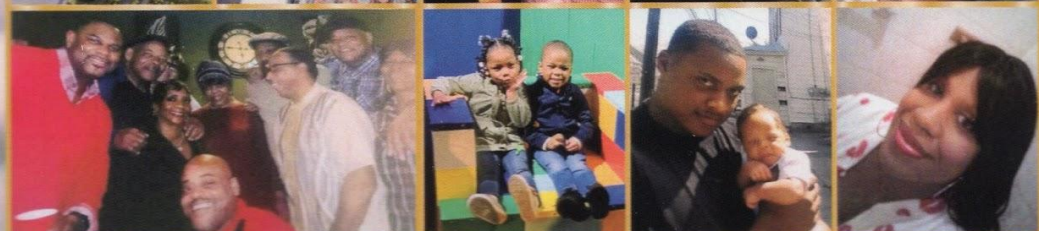
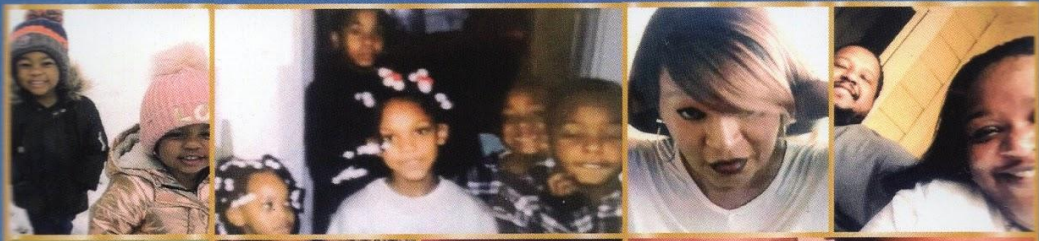
*Since a little girl you spoke inspiration into my life.
Our whole lives you told your nieces what we are worth,
Beautiful and strong, reminding us when we lost hope. Tracy our
love for you will never wither. We will always remember your voice
Beautiful, strong and worth it. We will miss you here on earth but
do believe in spirit you'll always be in your nieces heart.*

Love always, Pam

AUNT T.

*I love you
I will always remember you
Thank you for being a special aunt and friend,*

Love, Brian



Order Of Service

PROCESSIONAL

PRAYER

SCRIPTURE

SELECTION

REMARKS

(2 Minutes Please)

READING OF OBITUARY

SELECTION

EULOGY

BENEDICTION

RECESSIONAL

INTERMENT

PRIVATE



*I reckon I miss you
and I probably always will
this is so hard to get over
like swallowing a bitter pill*

*I reckon I shouldn't be crying
because this is not how you'd want it to be
knowing you're in your eternal home
now singing with glee*

*I reckon you are looking down on us
probably proud of us all
you always told me how God would hold me
and never let me fall
I reckon I have to get through this*

*I must try to be strong
on the outside you can't tell it
but on the inside something is very wrong*

*I reckon I'll be sad for a while
but soon I'll realize I'll see you one day up there
don't think I stopped missing you
don't think I don't care*

*we've had so many good times
tons of laughs as well
the memories are all coming back to me now
like a wonderful spell*

*girlie I hope you know
you will be missed a lot
you were loved by so many
you'll never be forgotten!!*

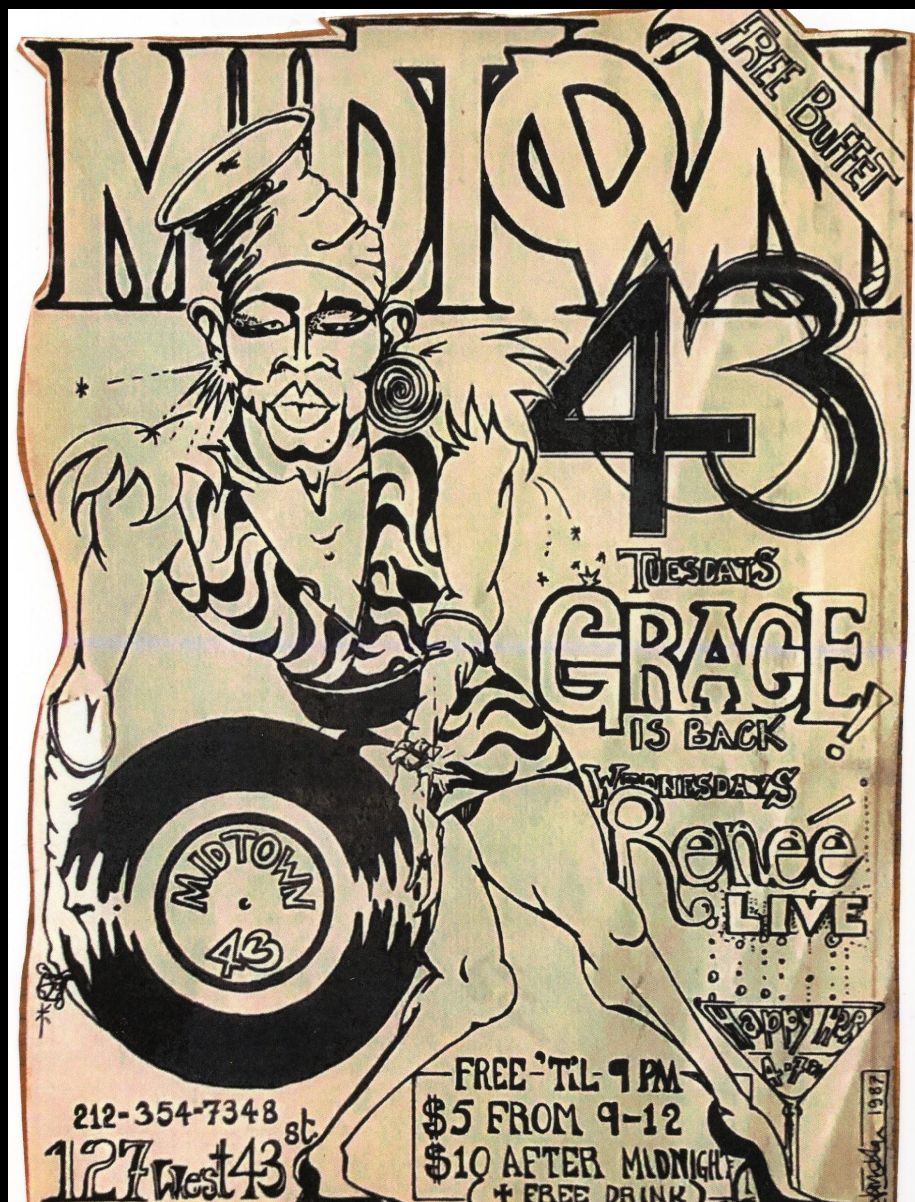
***Love You and miss you always,
Kisha***



Escamillio D Jones
FUNERAL HOME

4149 L. Street Philadelphia, PA 19124
215-743-4341

Design & Printing by:
Corporate Print Solutions • 215-774-1119



Midtown 43 promotional flyer, 1987. From the Beau McCall Collection, Stonewall National Museum, Archives, & Library.

This is the flyer used in the collage, [Moi Renee V.](#) Renee performed at Midtown 43, a now defunct LGBTQ+ club that was located in New York City. Renee is also the singer-songwriter of the cult classic dance song, *Miss Honey*.

FREE BUFFET

MIDTOWN

43



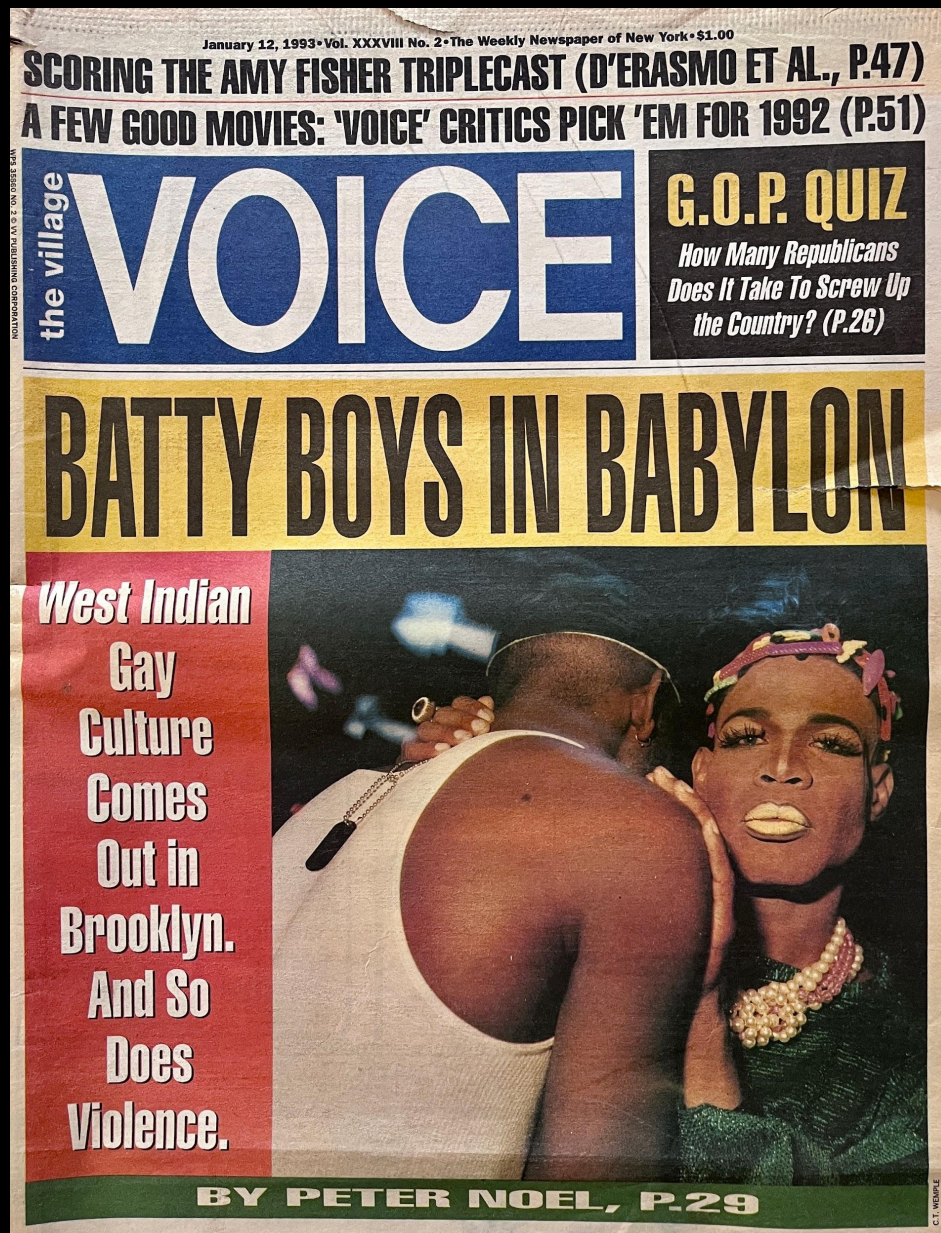
TUESDAYS
GRACE
IS BACK

WEDNESDAYS
Renee
LIVE

212-354-7348
127 West 43rd St

FREE 'TIL 9 PM
\$5 FROM 9-12
\$10 AFTER MIDNIGHT
(+ FREE DRINK)

1987



The Village Voice clipping, 1993. From the Beau McCall Collection, Stonewall National Museum, Archives, & Library.

This is the Village Voice article titled *Batty Boys in Babylon*, used in the collage, [Moi Renee III](#). Here, Renee discusses the anti-queer violence he experienced.



C. T. WEMPLE

BATTY BOYS IN BABYLON

CAN GAY WEST INDIANS SURVIVE THE 'BOOM BYE BYE' POSSES?

BY PETER NOEL WITH ROBERT MARRIOTT

"If a man is thinking of homosexuality, he's thinking of disease and wrongdoings, so God Almighty himself hates homosexuals. In Jamaica, if a homosexual is being found in the community, then we stone him to death."

—Shabba Ranks

"He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone."

—"God Almighty himself"

EIGHT YEARS AGO IN THE slums of Trench Town, Jamaica, a would-be murderer named Slicksta threw the first stone at Douche, a homosexual who loved to drag in *poom-poom* shorts and emulate the swagger of a rude batty woman.

"I stoned 'im. I beat 'im with sticks. I'm proud of it," Slicksta growls as he recalls

**Last exit to Brooklyn:
Gay night at a West Indian
club in Crown Heights**

Futon Convertibles

PACKAGE PRICE
\$179 \$189 \$199
 Twin Size Full Size Queen Size



COMBO FRAME **\$89**
 Twin Size

UNBEATABLE PRICE!

100% COTTON FUTON SPECIAL
 Twin **\$49** - Full **\$59** - Queen **\$69**

CHELSEA
 FUTON & FRAME
 Easy to open & close
 Solid maple frame
 In Stock Now
NOW \$299



2 PILLOWS FREE
 WITH PURCHASE OF ANY PACKAGE!
 Limited Time Offer
 Offer Valid with this ad only

EVERYTHING AVAILABLE FOR
SAME DAY DELIVERY

LIFE STYLE
 FUTON FURNITURE
 484 BROADWAY
 Corner Broome St. • NY, NY 10013
 (212) 226-5018
 245 W. 72nd ST.
 West End-Bway • NY, NY 10023
 (212) 580-4821
 2345 Central Park Ave.
 Yonkers, NY
 (914) 961-6447

JAPANESE UNCENSORED X-RATED VIDEOS

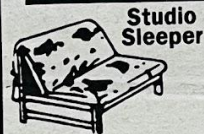
ただ今 入荷
 完全ノーカット 無修整
 AVスーパーソフトビデオ
 (超かわいい女ばっか!)

RENTALS SALES PRIVATE VIEWING BOOTHS

MANHATTAN ADULT VIDEO

60 W. 39TH ST. (212) 354-6890
 33 ST. MARKS PL. (212) 475-6884

WORLD of FUTONS



Studio Sleeper



Full Frame \$95

100% Cotton Futons
 Twin **\$49** - Full **\$59** - Queen **\$69**
 Custom Sizes Available

**FRAMES
 COVERS
 PILLOWS
 DINETTE SETS**
 Free Assembly & Same Day Delivery

361 BROADWAY
 Corner of Franklin St.
274-1852 Open Mon-Sat 10:30 8/Sun 12-6

L-Frame

Fed Up with Neo-Conservatism, Neo-Liberalism, Paleo-Nationalism and "Family Values"?—Come to:

SCATHING ANALYSIS

Towards a Radical Cultural Politics
 the founding conference of the
UNION OF DEMOCRATIC INTELLECTUALS

Hear (and talk back to)

RICHARD GOLDSTEIN, ELLEN WILLIS, WAHNEEMA LUBIANO, STANLEY ARONOWITZ, BARBARA KERR, PAUL LAUTER, and more.

Friday, January 15 • 7 pm Plenary
 Saturday, January 16 • 10-7 Panels & Organizing Meeting
 Saturday Night Party

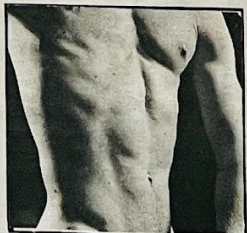
CUNY GRADUATE CENTER 33 West 42nd St.
 Information: (212) 642-2428 • \$15, Students & Low Income \$10

ELECTROLYSIS

FOR MEN & WOMEN

Permanent Removal
 of Facial and
 Body Hair.

CALL FOR A
 FREE CONSULTATION
**20% OFF
 ELECTROLYSIS**
 First Appt. w/this
 AD ONLY
212-420-1402



- Massage—
- Manicure—
- Pedicure—
- Facial—
- Waxing—
- Make-Up—
- Eyebrow Shaping—

My

TRANSFORMATION

406 6th Ave. (Corner of 8th St. & 6th Ave.—2nd floor)

10 am to 10 pm Mon.-Sat.
 Closed on Sunday

the incident for a reporter and friends while browsing in Ethiopian Taste, a record shop on Nostrand Avenue.

The ambush occurred the day Slicksta was being initiated into a rudebwoy posse that roamed the alleyways of the island's shanty towns in search of the much reviled batty bwoys, as homosexuals are known. In these tin-can *dungles*, it's a mark of manhood to assault or even snuff a batty bwoy in cold blood.

The only real family dirt-poor Jamaican youths like Slicksta have is the Trench Town rudebwoys, descendants of "Johnny-Too-Bads" and "steppin' razors" of the '60s—the West Indian version of gangsta homeboys. But rudebwoys are more than just "niggaz with attitude" running wild. Their posses are highly structured organizations, often led by a Don, the equivalent of a Mafia boss—and they can be as violent as L.A.'s Crips and Bloods. Their recruits, who signify with fustian patois, range from handsome waifs to snaggle-toothed "jungleness bad bwoys" and haunted *gundeleros* with their fingers on the trigger of a Mac-10, an Uzi, or a M-16.

Any rudebwoy wannabe would object to being called homophobic, insisting that he has no fear of homosexuals. He feels only rage. He would maim or kill in order to achieve his objective: the capture of a batty bwoy to guarantee rank in the posse.

With the attack on Douche still vivid in his memory, Slicksta bites the lyrics of a Buju Banton song—"Man haffi de'd fi mek man live"—and savors Douche's agony with raw and uninhibited relish. "As I was beatin' 'im, I told 'im, 'Douche, y'u shouldn't be like dat.' Then I beat 'im. I stoned 'im. I beat 'im an' I stoned 'im. I beat 'im till 'im bawl, 'Murder!' I stoned 'im till 'im get away."

In Jamaica, hunting batty bwoys is as instinctive as the craving for *sry fish an' bammy*, a national dish. The mere sight of them can trigger the bedlam of a witch hunt. When the toaster (rapper) Hammer Mouth discovers two gay men in a garage—"hook up an' ah kiss like... meangy dog"—he hollers: "Run dem outa di yard." Murder them, advises another toaster, Bunny General. "Kill dem one by one. Murder dem till dem fi change dem plan."

According to local legend, the batty bwoy is a cruising vampire who sucks the blood of slum dwellers, called *suffaraks*. He will "chew y'u neck like ah Wrigley." He's a *duppy*—an evil ghost from Sodom and Gomorrah—not a human being.

In the deeply religious West Indian culture, many people still cling to Old World ethics. Their beliefs, morals, and suspicions are rooted in the canons of the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches, whose teachings on homosexuality are even more virulent in the former colonies than in Europe or America. In the West Indies, a priest who spots a confessed sodomite during the 40 days of Lent might single him out before the congregation and banish him with a sprinkle of holy water, or a recitation of the 14 stations of the cross. Many Jamaican Catholics believe they can atone for their sins by informing on gay or lesbian parishioners.

"Jamaicans are the most homophobic people in the Caribbean," asserts gay playwright Godfrey Sealy, who lives in Trinidad. "I've traveled to Jamaica and I know what it is like. They refuse to accept the fact that people are homosexual. Anyone found out to be so can be killed."

"Let's not stigmatize Jamaica," says Dr. Marco Mason, a Brooklyn-based Panama-

Some names and physical descriptions have been changed at the request of the subjects. The authors acknowledge: The Rastafarians by Leonard E. Barrett Sr.; Creole Talk of Trinidad and Tobago by C.R. Outley; Lloyd Williams, N.I.C.A. Kingston; Virginia Turner, The Jamaican Weekly Gleaner (North American edition); Lizard Loebman, Reggae Report; Dawad Phillip, The Daily Challenge; Dr. Carlos Russell and Toni Hinton; Mali Olatunji; Ben Mapp; Julian Dibbell; and Donna Minkowitz.

nian sociologist. "Homophobia permeates the region. It is something that is Trinidadian. It is something that is Barbadian. It is part of the culture of the Caribbean. Homosexuality is taboo."

But taboos feed obsessions and obsessions create curiosity. In the West Indies there are many ways to broach the forbidden. Dancehall—the new "hard-kicking, raw and wild" style of reggae—contains references to all manner of sexual prohibitions, including fellatio: "No ice-cream sound." As for cunninglingus: "How a man fi live inna 'oman hole like ah crab?" On the other hand, it's perfectly acceptable to "hear di y'ung gyal ah bawl when she get up tuh nine inch tall."

In Trinidad, the gay man is a *buller*, the lesbian a *zami queen* cursed with a *jumbie*, an evil spirit sent by an *obeah man*, the master of black magic. *Bullers* and *zami queens* can only be made straight—so the legend goes—when the *obeah man* himself is lured with bark, calabash, Julie mango, and angel hair and trapped in a rum bottle under a silk-cotton tree. The spirit of a *soucouyant*—usually an old woman who turns herself into a ball of fire and passes through a keyhole to suck one's blood—can also be beaten out of a *zami queen* with a *cocoyea broom*. But many West Indians—especially devout followers of the Rastafari faith—do not favor exorcism. They believe in the medieval punishments of stoning and burning. The batty bwoy, particularly, must be hunted down and killed.

So the stoning of Douche was "biblical," and killing him would have been the ultimate rite of passage for Slicksta, who was only 13 at the time. It's unlikely that Douche would report the attack for fear of further persecution by the police. Even well-known victims of gay bashing won't find justice in this Third World paradise. Between 1983 and 1988, many suspected homosexuals were stabbed or shot dead in Kingston. Among the more prominent victims were a physician, the principal of a prestigious boys school, a professor, an executive of the Caribbean Council of Churches, and a priest from Boston who was killed in his rectory. None of their assailants was convicted.

Buggery, however, is a felony in Jamaica, where police sometimes raid the homes of suspected sodomites. A deputy minister was arrested during one such raid last month, and charged with "aiding and abetting" a schoolteacher and his friend "found having sexual intercourse." The worst punishment of all was the embarrassment of seeing their names in the Kingston papers.

Since tourism is the island's main industry, gay visitors frolic without fear of the police. But the rudebwoy posses are not so tolerant of "blue-eyed devils." Heed Hammer Mouth's warning: "Bwoy y'u nuh fi test de murderer/Bwoy y'u nuh fi cross di border/Ah gwaan lick y'u doun ah groun'."

The situation in New York is not much better. The city's Human Rights Commission does not break down bias-crime statistics by ethnicity, so there's no way to measure the danger for gay West Indians on the streets of Babylon.

But Slicksta has emigrated to America. He's come to *Foreign* like an avenging angel on a winged horse breathing fire through its nose, eager to "chant down" Babylon, the great Satan that breeds *duppies*, *jumbies*, and *soucouyants*. Whites need not fear his wrath; he hunts only West Indians. And in Brooklyn, Slicksta says, Douche is everywhere.

"I did it again on Empire and Bedford," he confesses, a bloodthirsty look in his eyes. "I saw a homo named Wilfred. I said, 'BOOyahka! BOOyahka! [the simulated echo of a gunshot, used as a salutation or death threat.] Batty bwoy, divert.' An' I stoned 'im. Dere is no rights fi batty bwoy. Ah lie, sah?"

"Y'u nah lie," answers his friend Passion, a 21-year-old Panamanian dancehall DJ who once played antigay reggae in Manhattan's Underground club, "jes tuh dis dem mama man an' batty bwoy." White gay men and their West Indian lovers bolted from the club. "Dey only have rights accordin' tuh Babylon society," says Passion, reaching for a popular dancehall 45.

"You ain't never heard of one great faggot prophet. Man, beat dem wid cable wire. Mih do it on mih block in Crown Heights aall di time."

"Papa San [a dancehall prophet] say, 'Put dem 'pon stick an' bu'n dem,'" a Trini Rasta scoffs, looking askance. "Jah kill ah whole city for dat."

Slicksta flashes a smile and waves the jacket cover of Bujy Banton's *Mr. Mention* as if it were a flaming crucifix. "Look 'pon 'im 'ere," he beckons, admiring the coy but deadly profile of the 20-year-old *duppy conqueror* whose hit song, "Boom Bye Bye" advocates the execution of gay men.

Among rudeboys in Babylon, Bujy is a dancehall Don. He is the narcissistic "stamina daddy," a paramour who makes "gyl

TWO MEN WITH DREADLOCKS HUG EACH OTHER. NOT AN UNLIKELY SCENE IN NEW YORK EXCEPT THAT THESE ARE CHILDREN OF THE WEST INDIES.

ben' doun backways an' accept di peg." The worship of his *womb turner* and conquest of the *punani* (bussv) are the subjects of his burlesque boasts. Bashing the batty bwoy as he did in "Boom Bye Bye" is, as Freud put it, the "libidinal complement to the egoism... of self-preservation."

"What Bujy is sayin' is dat dem [homosexuals] vex with *punani*," according to Slicksta. He insists that the reporter listen to the ultimate insult to the batty bwoy: "Can y'u please tell me," he toasts, "what 'appen with y'u an' di *punani*? Batty bwoy, why y'u sex-up Johnny? You're triple-freaky, sexin' man inna bottom aall night long. Kill di batty-fucker dem, one by one."

"How de fuck you could jes kill ah man?" I ask.

"Easy," Whiskey Bop Johnnie Walker, another Jamaican DJ, interrupts. "Batty bwoy haffi de'd 'cause dem ah eat di bread from Sodom an' Gomorrah."

Combine this Old World intolerance with New World homeboy *kulcha*, and the batty bwoy in Babylon is placed in a precarious position. As Bujy has instructed "all di New York crew," if any homosexual makes a pass at them, "is like, boom... inna batty bwoy 'ead" because "Brooklyn gyal" and "rudebwoy nuh promote no nasty man, dem haffi de'd."

CONFESSIONS OF A BATTY-BWOY HUNTER

Papa Bongo, a Grenadian ragamuffin with a nine-inch scar on his left cheek, checks his .380 magnum, kisses it, then tucks it into his waistband. He begins to tell the story of a *zami queen* he pistol-whipped in a Brooklyn dance hall for calling him "faggot" in the presence of his rudeboys, but he stops in midsentence as a friend, with the cartridge of an M-1 rifle in one hand, lowers the volume on Natty B's "Puss," a homily on the sins of oral sex.

"Meh 'ave ah new name fi aall di bow-cat dem/When y'u see dem y'u fi point 'pon dem/Cause dem ah puss, 'cause dem ah eat under frock/Dem ah puss, 'cause dem nah stop suck cock.../Y'u come inna meh face with di hair inna y'u teeth/Y'u mouth, it smell like di renkin' meat."

"What is dat ah hearin'?" asks Bongo, whose homophobia is hair-trigger sensitive to prompts from anti-gay and lesbian toasts. "Lick it up," he orders his friend, who raises the volume. They chorus with Natty B: "Me an' Pimple... sight two

bwoy 'ug up inna dance hall/So one ah dem 'ead inna di next one lap/So Pimple back he 'mattie fi go lick two shot/Di bwoy dem say, 'Wait!' an' make big splash..."

The words are all too familiar to Papa Bongo. He wants to "massacre all ah dem. Ah whole heap ah posses should be huntin'"—all dem Jamaicans, Trinidadians, Grenadians, Bajans, an' Guyanese batty bwoys an' lesbians go dead."

"So what happen tuh de *zami queen* who call yuh ah faggot?"

"Man, ah beat 'er mercilessly in she head," Bongo recalls. "It's ah word ah doh like. It leave ah lastin' stain on yuh."

A stain—like the stench of vomit and Old Oak Rum on the breath of his father, a stevedore who'd come home drunk, rip off his overalls, and beat Bongo and his mother. These days, the mere touch of a batty bwoy is enough to send Bongo running for his cutlass, which he used as a child to fend off his father. Did the *buller* who tried to touch Bongo at a fashion show in Flatbush have rum on his breath? This queer wearing Western chaps that exposed his batty—did he remind Bongo of his father?

"Ah wanted to kill him immediately," Bongo recalls. "Ah tell him not to touch me. But he touch me again, an' ah start to beat de batty bwoy like there was no tomorrow. If ah wasn't among so many West Indians who know meh, ah woulda shoot dis faggot in he head. 'Boom!' Like Bujy say. 'Bye bye.'"

The next day, Bongo went to see his barber. "Ah was asking how long 'til he get tuh me when dis batty bwoy squeeze himself between us an' rub he cock against meh friend ass. People pull us off of him. From that moment on, ah declare war on dem. Anywhay ah see dem is big stone an' bullet."

Some nights, Bongo and his rudies will wander about, high on "Vat 19" rum and Guinness Stout, hunting batty bwoys. They stand outside West Indian dance halls in Flatbush, Crown Heights, or Jamaica, Queens, waiting to pounce. Right now, they plan to beat a bisexual man who is having an affair with one of their women. "She, ah eh go mention she name, jes like contaminated food now," Bongo says. "She have AIDS as far as we concern. We eh go kill 'er. She kill sheself already."

"All yuh go kill de man?" I ask Bongo, who once set a house on fire in Grenada when he and a group of friends discovered two homosexuals having sex. "If he dead from all de licks," Bongo snaps, "then dat's de way it shoulda happen."

Another target of the vigilantes is a posse of gay Jamaicans from Queens who drive around in expensive cars, wear huge gold necklaces, and pretend to be drug dealers. "All ah dem gay," Bongo claims. "Dey make dey money by sellin' theyselt tuh rich white men. De rich men, dem is de 'oman, an' de batty bwoys is de studs."

One Friday, Bongo tried desperately to get through to *The Richard Bey Show* on Channel 9. The topic was gays in the military. "Ah wanted Richard Bey tuh know exactly what de gay soldiers did to de youts of Grenada," Bongo says angrily. He wanted to talk about the soldiers stationed in the rural district where he grew up. "De youts never see so much white men before. De white men had de guns. Dey had de power." Bongo believes the *lébé* (rumor) that some of the highest ranking officers were gay. "When de youts didn't succumb willingly, dey *man-rape* dem."

THE BATTY BWOY WHO FOUGHT BACK

It's dawn on Sunday. Most West Indians are ready to leave for early mass. But at The Shelter, a dank, cavernous underground in Tribeca, a loudmouthed Jamaican androgynous named Moei Renée is swinging his head to and fro, cocking his ass and twisting his hips with the grace of a Yoruban priestess possessed by an Orisha. He is wearing a body-fitted Emilio Pucci dress, black lace stockings held in place by garters, and Calvin Klein black suede pumps. His hair is festooned with colorful barrettes to imitate that West Indian *pickney* look.

"I am not a drag queen," he insists. And



ORIGINAL NEW/OLD BELL BOTTOMS

METROPOLIS VINTAGE APPAREL 96 AVENUE B 212-477-3941



Winter Shares

advertise your winter rental (category 5555)

or winter share (category 5560)

in

VOICE

Call 212 475-5555

USED COMPUTERS
WE BUY, SELL & RENT

We Now Carry MIDI Music Equipment

...Delivery Installation & Repair

Mon-Fri 9:30-7pm
Sat 11am-5pm

240 West 73rd Street, NYC, 212-769-3400
1518 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, 215-731-9600

Paris HEALTH CLUB

New Year's Special

Join Now and Save \$75 on a new prepaid membership

(offer expires January 31, 1993)

752 West End Ave (96th-97th) NY, NY 10025 212-749-3500

MEET ANGELA BOWIE

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 13TH 7:30-8:30 PM

396 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS AT 8TH ST.

BACKSTAGE PASSES

Life on the Wild Side with David Bowie

ANGELA BOWIE with David Bowie

Angela Bowie will sign *Backstage Passes: Life on the Wild Side with David Bowie*, an eye-opening odyssey through music history with more "sex, drugs and rock'n'roll" than you'd ever believe.

B. Dalton BOOKSELLER

396 Avenue of the Americas at 8th Street In the Heart of the Village

1ST TIME EVER



EST. 1982

**ONLY \$49 PER MONTH
NO DOWN PAYMENT**

Join now and pay only \$49 per month for a 12 month membership.

Come in or call for details

Better Bodies Gym, 22 West 19th St., 212/929-6789

**LUMBERSMITH
LOFTBEDS**



TWINS \$260 DOUBLE \$295
3/4 \$275 QUEEN \$320

Call For Free Estimate On All
Carpentry & Remodeling Work
(212) 330-0635

**GOOD
LOOKS**

To place your ad
call
475-3300

FUTON & FRAMES AT LOWEST PRICES



T.N.I.S.
Available in
Solid Oak, Ash
Black & Natural

FUTON PLUS

FUTON SALE

EVERYTHING AVAILABLE FOR
SAME DAY DELIVERY

OPEN 7 DAYS:

Mon-Sat 10:30-8pm • Sun 12-6pm



COMBO



KLAM FRAME
available in black
full & queen size

STUDIO SLEEPER
in Many Styles

BEST QUALITY • 100% COTTON • COTTON FOAM • STANDARD & CUSTOM SIZES!

At White Street
2 blks. from Canal

375 BROADWAY (212) 941-1384

SUPER SPECIAL ★ FREE ASSEMBLY ★ WITH COUPON ONLY

The Beach
GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

40% OFF Regular Prices of
TANNING SESSIONS

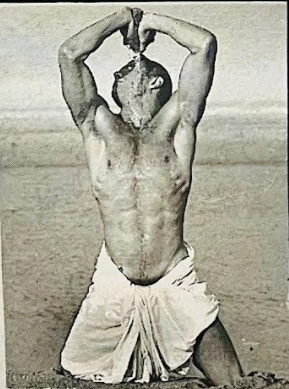
INTRODUCTORY OFFERS

4 Tanning Sessions For \$15/1st Time Clients*
20% Off Highlights Or Coloring*

Salon Services
for Men & Women

European Facials for \$50
by Board Certified Cosmetologists
Electrolysis, Waxing & Massage

*With Ad Only
Thru Dec. 31st



112 CHRISTOPHER STREET
(212) 924-8551

10am-10pm Mon-Sat • 12pm-8pm Sun
ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

LINGERIE • LEATHER • SAFE SEX TOYS • NOVELTIES • EXOTIC DANCE WEAR

bare essentials

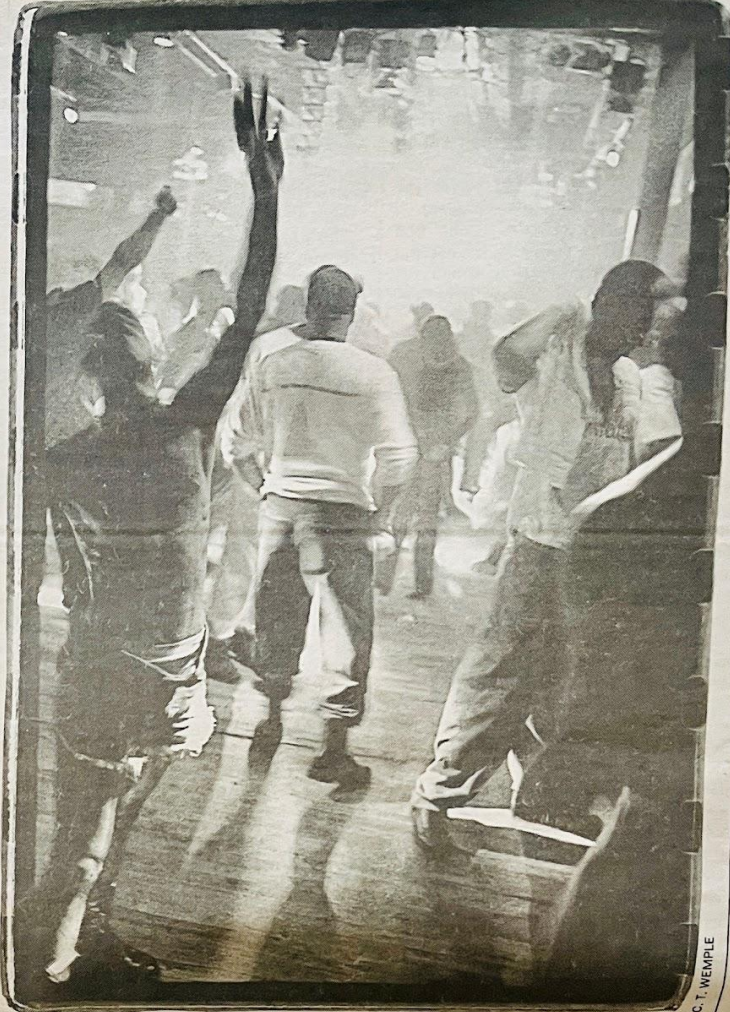


Cupid's
TREASURES

AN EROTIC LOVE BOUTIQUE

55 W. 38TH STREET NEW YORK • OPEN MON-FRI 11-7 • SAT 11-6 • 212-768-7965

VOICE January 12, 1993



At The Shelter, a loudmouthed Jamaican androgyne can cock his ass and twist his hips like a Yoruban priestess possessed by an Orisha.

in fact, there's an edge of defiance in his apparel. He looks like a dance hall version of *Ole Mas* [a burlesque of master/slave cuture] on *Jour Overt* morning [the start of Trinidad's carnival]. But his colors are pure Rasta: Red for the blood of Jamaican martyrs, black for his African ancestors, green for the fertile land and the hope of victory over oppression. And pink for his pride. "I'd go back to Jamaica dressed like this," Renée dares. "I have a cult following."

But the singer, songwriter, dancer, actor, and comedian has not visited his homeland in more than 20 years. In Jamaica today, Moi Renée would be the perfect target of the Trench Town rudeboys. If they ever ran into him on the streets of Kingston, they might "sen fi di matie an' di Uzi," as Buju Banton advises.

There was a time in Jamaica when Moi Renée, a shy, bedraggled *Dandy Shandy* playing nine-year-old, used to claw his brothers and sisters for calling him "oman man" and "Mother Long Tongue." At the age of 11, he got into a fight with another boy. "He called me a batty man and we got into a fight. He ripped my shirt and stained it with his foot."

In 1971, Renée and his family emigrated to Philadelphia. He arrived in Babylon with the soiled shirt. The footprint of the batty-boy basher still haunted him. It came alive, kicking and stomping him every time he asserted his gayness. But there was nothing Renée could do to suppress that part of him.

"My first crush was on a black kid in my junior high school class named Keith," he recalls. "I was in love with Keith. He was so beautiful." The makeup on his face begins to crack as he recalls how Keith died. He was shot to death by a relative who "didn't like what he was. It was the greatest loss of my life."

It seemed as if every "Yankee boy" wanted to leave a footprint on his gay ass. "While I was still in junior high school the most embarrassing situation of my entire life occurred. I was accosted by a group of

black boys and ordered at knifepoint to have oral sex with one of them. Of course I did it with reservation. I didn't want anyone to know, but the boys told and it got out into the school, and I was the big tease that semester. They were calling me homo, gay boy, and 'Faggot, faggot, you come from Jamaica and you're a faggot.'"

The taunting followed him to high school. One day, he ran into Vernon, the boy he'd been forced to blow. He heard those hurtful words again, but this time he lunged at his tormentor, stabbing him with a pencil. Renée had learned something about how to deal with bully boys in Babylon. The words didn't hurt him anymore.

Renée's life would become a series of struggles with potential assassins. One night, he was on his way to Mommy's, a gay club in downtown Philly, when two men approached him, asked for a dime, and when he said he didn't have one, called him a "Jamaican pussy." One of them, a muscular fella, slammed Renée in the back of his head. "I looked at him very calmly and said, 'You stand right here and I will be right back,'" Renée recalls. He'd seen a pretzel cart with a pipe iron propping up the wheel. Renée wasn't going for a pencil this time. He grabbed the pipe iron and began to pummel the stranger who had come out of the darkness like a *duppy conqueror*. He faded back into the night, tossing his afro pick at Renée.

In 1979, Renée moved to New York, to get away from his tormentors and increase his options. Here, a rangy West Indian man in Doc Martens and a designer frock could have a career. Renée has been a towel boy at the Continental Baths, a window designer at B. Dalton, and lately a *chanteuse* with his own single, "Miss Honey." He continues to test the tolerance level of West Indian heterosexuals by swishing through Flatbush. "If I feel like walking with a switch or behaving openly effeminate I do it," he boasts. "There are laws on the books here that people in my position should not be discriminated against. I feel proud to go out and be myself."

C. T. WEMPLE

UNDERCOVER LOVERS

It's late at Gill's Paradise, a safe house in Crown Heights where batty bwoys gather on Tuesday nights. Gill's introduces itself in burgundy letters daubed against a floodlit yellow facade. On a wall of the building is a mural depicting a Rasta crouching and petting a tiger in the shade of a palm tree. Some say he's taming the Conquering Lion of Judah. The symbolism springs to life on the crowded dance floor as two men with dreadlocks hug each other and bounce to the bass line of Tiger's "Come Again."

Not an unlikely scene in New York except that these are children of the West Indies *stick on like ants* and batty-riding in the face of the dominant culture. Other young men in baseball caps and Polo gear kiss, grind, and *wine* (a rhythmic pelvic motion) to the "hard and stiff" toasts of Shabba Ranks. Banjy boys check and re-check each other out in the corners of the room, while in the center of the floor, a hip-swinging Indo-Guyanese flames on.

The beat changes and soca music booms from the sound system. Everybody is jumping up to Crazy's "Take ah Man," a controversial song that has become an anthem of the gay West Indian underground. Now, its chorus becomes a sing-along: "She say, 'If yuh cyar get ah wooman, take ah man.'"

But they've come to Gill's searching for more than a man—and more than just a place to *shake dey kangkalang* like *jagabats* (whores). Under cover of disco darkness, they can *ramagé* (posture). In this hole, a *mamapoule* can be a rudebwoy. Or he can make his oppressor look like a *blasted koon-oomoonoo* (damn fool).

The DJ slips on Buju Banton's "Bogle"—"de wickedest dance from outa J-A,"—and the crowd is hyped. They contort their faces in a blowsy *pappyshow* (parody) of Shabba Ranks's funnel-nosed grimace and Buju's fatal attraction. Slouching and prancing like *court jesters* with a *snap-queen* attitude, they *burlesque* the peculiarities of the Bogle, as if this dance were invented by a gay *gundelero*.

"Fling y'u han' inna di air," Buju instructs, "then y'u rock an' y'u dip/Move tuh di drum an' mek y'u body kick/Step farwod an' come-up back quick."

"BOOyahka! BOOyahka!" the revelers shout back, their fingers extended in the shape of pistols, shooting up the night. "BOOyahka! BOOyahka!" But none of these batty bwoys "get up an' run,"—Buju's advice to gay men if they don't want to be shot. They're drawn to the rudebwoy *stylee*: to its power, its allure, its recklessness—its resistance to oppression. For them, the Bogle is not a show of aggression but of cultural connection despite rejection.

But the fantasy is short lived. One by one, these Ba'd Johns drop their "guns." All of a sudden, BOOyahka seems too real a threat. How can they make fun of such terror? How can they dance to the executioner's song?

At Gill's Paradise and other such clubs, gay and lesbian West Indians "may appear invisible because it is impossible to live safe and affirming lives," according to Colin Robinson, a Trini who is cochair of Gay Men of African Descent. "Many of us, like me, 'cross over' into the relative safety of the African American gay community where we become 'Black Gay Men'... We don't challenge our own communities and families. We laugh along with the *buller man* jokes [and] bite our lips at the hatred our mother casually displays at the dinner table for the people she doesn't know are us."

Desmond's mother never told such jokes at the dinner table. A traditional Guyanese mother would never discuss any aspect of sex with her children—not even with her Yankified 17-year-old son. But Desmond's stepfather, an Antiguan, felt no urge to suppress his disdain for *auntie-men*. He had his suspicions about Desmond's sexuality. One Saturday morning, he searched his stepson's dresser drawer and found some condoms. Desmond was shattered—his mother must not know. He told his stepfather that he'd bought the condoms because he was "bonin'" several hotties. The step-

father was not convinced.

A few minutes later, he interrupted a conversation between Desmond and his mother. "Me think you *pickney* ha' sum'n fu tell you," the stepfather snarled. For months, he'd been dogging the youth's every move. The badgering made Desmond's stomach wamble. He headed for the bathroom but the stepfather followed him and there he confronted Desmond again.

"Me find dis flyer inna you pocket," the stepfather growled. He produced a promo for The Men's Room with a photo of a naked man groping his dick. "Me min call dem an' dem tell me dat ah one big *auntie-man* place. Me tell dem, 'If you ever let a minor into your club again I would do whatever I have to do.'"

"What you talkin' 'bout?" asked Desmond, throwing his hands in the air. "Step off! Why you on ma jock?"

"Tell you muma," his stepfather demanded.

Desmond dallied in the bathroom for two hours before coming out to face her. "Is wha' goin' on?" she asked.

The stepfather interrupted: "Me think you *pickney* ah one big *auntie-man*."

"Desmond, dis true?" she asked. Her son looked away. Something in him wanted her to know. "I ain't nevu' slept with no man before," he mumbled. "But I *do* find them attractive."

IN JAMAICA, HUNTING GAY MEN IS AS INSTINCTIVE AS THE CRAVING FOR FRY FISH AN' BAMMY. THE MERE SIGHT OF THEM CAN TRIGGER A WITCH-HUNT.

His mother was the only woman Desmond trusted. He would talk to her about everything else except this. But now she stared at him in disbelief. The silence between them was an embarrassment he had never imagined.

"You think you could change?" his mother whispered. "Becuz as long as yuh livin' under me roof yuh gon can do dat."

Had this scene unfolded in Guyana, Desmond's mother might have made immedi-

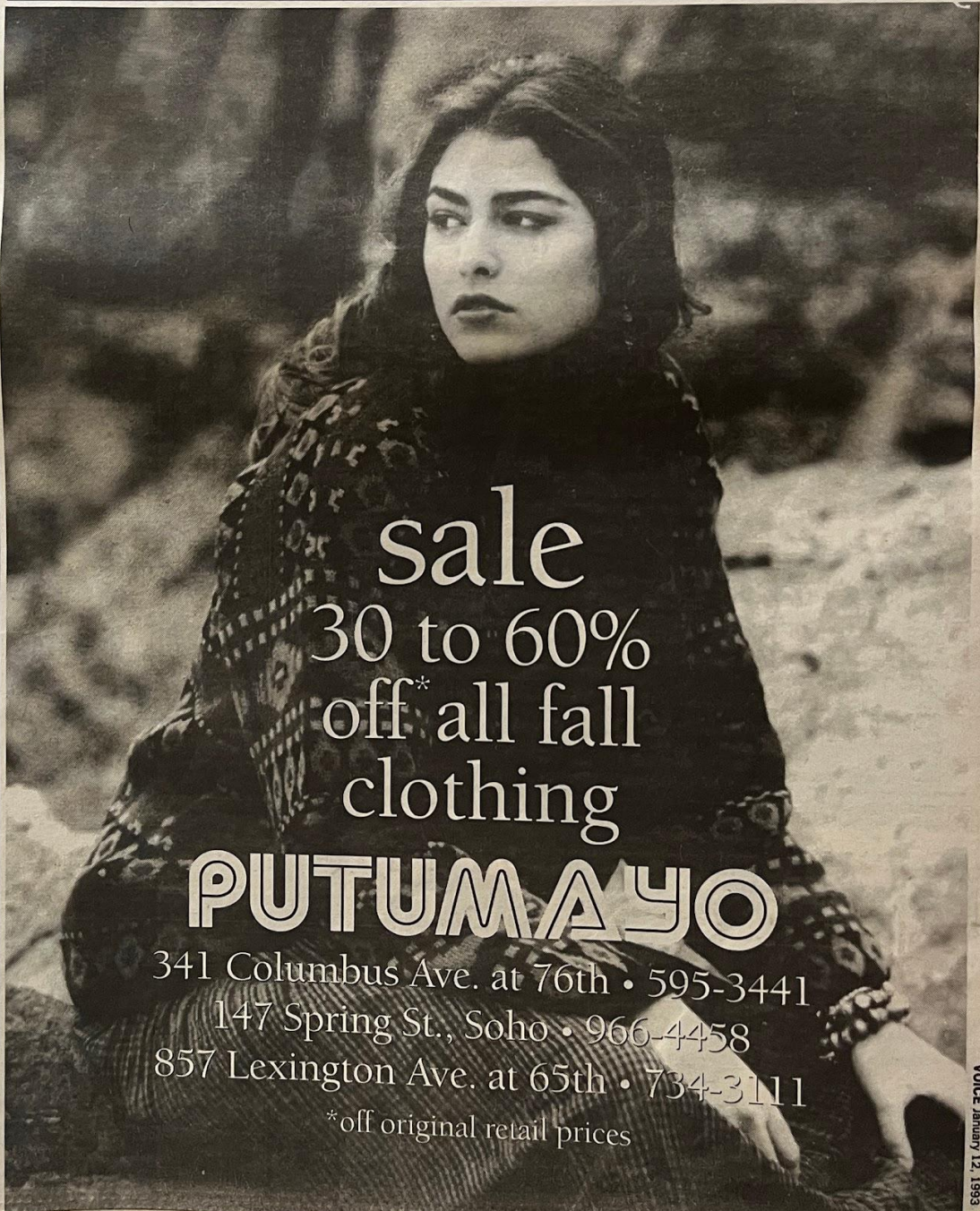
ate plans to drive the *obeah* from her son. But because they were living in Babylon, the youth was sent to a psychiatrist. Therapy, however, did not prompt the devil to depart. In fact, Desmond soon became engrossed in a relationship. "I was still in school and I was working part-time, but I would come home every morning at six. My stepfather was always on my case."

On the morning of his 18th birthday, Desmond came home late. His mother had waited up for him. She was dressed for church. "You gon can do dat an' live here," she said sadly.

Desmond reached for his teddy bear. "Guess what?" he blurted, glaring at his stepfather. "I'm outta here."

Few West Indian mothers ever find out about their gay sons and daughters. "No," says Mayaro, a 24-year-old Trini who is a regular at Gill's, "my family don't know. Dey would kick meh outa de house or try tuh beat meh straight."

Four months ago, however, Lopinot, another 21-year-old "middle-class Trini," bared his secret to his mother, a devout Catholic. "It was hard for her because of all the religious mythology around homosexuality in Trinidad. But I had to make my mother understand that Lopinot now is still the same Lopinot from before she knew I was gay. I had to make her understand that



sale
30 to 60%
off* all fall
clothing

PUTUMAYO

341 Columbus Ave. at 76th • 595-3441
147 Spring St., Soho • 966-4458
857 Lexington Ave. at 65th • 734-3111

*off original retail prices

it was still me."

Moi Renée understands their pain. He mourned his first love, Keith, alone. He learned to fight the bashers on his own. Even though his family has always "known," they've never talked openly about his life, until Renée called up his brother Naphtali to wish him a happy birthday.

They had not spoken in years. Naphtali is a member of the Twelve Tribes of Israci, an offshoot of the Rastafari movement. The Twelve Tribes is built around reggae, the music of the King. Bob Marley was their "chief singer and player of instrument." The sect, known as the Uptown Rastas, embraces *di black petty-booshwah* who were afraid to go into the ghetto to join the Vintage Rastas. It has chapters in Babylon and even accepts whites as members. But no Twelve Tribes member claims to "deal at a higher level of consciousness" would be caught dead accepting birthday greetings from a homosexual. Even from his own brother.

"I an' I nah want no happy birthday greetings from y'u," Renée recalls Naphtali telling him. "Y'u still into dat faggotism? If y'u still ah batty man, me nah want talk tuh y'u."

"That's my business," Renée choked. Under the anger, he kept thinking of his brother as a baby, and it made him want to sob. "When you were a child," he asked at last, "who do you think took care of you?"

The brother hung up.

In the West Indies, Twelve Tribes won't speak to their homosexual siblings. But here in Babylon, many devotees are rebelling against the strictures of their religion. Some have embraced gay friends and relatives. Others have discovered that they are gay.

LOST IN BABYLON

Yula seemed annoyed by the winny of the iron horse as it chugged through the belly of the beast. But the petite woman who sat across from her was a momentary distraction. The sister, whom she'd later come to know as Winsome, was dressed in a flowing white cotton dress hemmed with red, green, and gold sashes. Her matted dreadlocks were wrapped in a coarse white hairnet that identified her as a member of the Twelve Tribes.

Yula was a rebel Rasta born in Babylon. She was dressed in blue jeans and a white T-shirt. Other Rastas, disapproving of such attire, would go out of their way to condemn her. "Sistren," they would snap, "why y'u wearin' pants?" Accompanying that would be a Biblical rebuke—"Get thee hence, Satan"—because Yula "look good but t'un bad." Her mannish swagger gave her away as a *bow-cat*—a woman who would *nyam any niggle* (eat pussy) and re-

fuse to *bumflick 'pon ah dick*. Yula tore her eyes from Winsome, looked at the ads for decongestants and hemorrhoid remedies, and tried to make her mind go blank.

The two women avoided further eye contact until the train stopped at Astor Place. Yula raced up to the street. She was standing at the corner contemplating her next move when she felt a gentle tap on her right shoulder. She spun around and came face to face with the woman she'd been trying to dodge.

"Sistren," Winsome asked the stranger in her Jamaican accent, "evah 'ear 'bout Pandora Box?" Yula nodded, dumbfounded. "Could y'u tell I an' I 'ow tuh get there?"

"Why?" Yula asked gruffly. "I an' I jes wah go there," Winsome squeaked. But she was looking for more than directions.

"Why ask me?" "I an' I trust y'u 'cause di sistren is ah Dread."

"Do you know what kind of club this is?" Winsome giggled, girlishly. "You asked the right person," Yula said. That seemed obvious to Winsome.

"You straight up Rasta?" Yula asked her. Winsome nodded yes.

Yula knew that there were gay Jah-fearing Rastas, but she had never met one. Suddenly, there were dozens of questions she wanted to ask—like how a lesbian

could be a member of a sect that can justify the stoning of any member exposed as a homosexual. "Is jes sex," Winsome said abruptly. "I an' I 'ave sex any way I an' I feel like."

YULA KNEW THERE WERE GAY JAH-FEARING RASTAS, BUT SHE HAD NEVER MET ONE. THERE WERE DOZENS OF QUESTIONS SHE WANTED TO ASK.

Winsome told Yula that she wanted to get married and have children but that she'd had sexual feelings for women all of her life. Yula had no such domestic fantasies: she'd always known what she was. "Femme in the streets, butch in the sheets," was her assessment of Winsome.

At Pandora's Box, Winsome's eyes opened wide, soaking in an ambience she could only have imagined back home. Here, she saw women of all shapes and sizes—most of them black—stalking and slinking or dancing on the tiny crowded floor. As Winsome stood against a wall, Yula made her move. "I just came up on her and I kissed her. And after that it was like, 'When am I going to see you again?' We made love the next weekend. She initiated the whole thing. It was her first full-blown homosexual encounter. I asked her, 'Are you sure you're telling me the truth?' She was very passionate. She knew what to do."

But Winsome confined her lust to their private encounters. "She told me that she was living with friends. Nobody should know. 'No, dey can't find out,' she kept saying. 'If dey find out, I an' I will be stoned.'"

"How do you deal with it?" she asked Winsome.

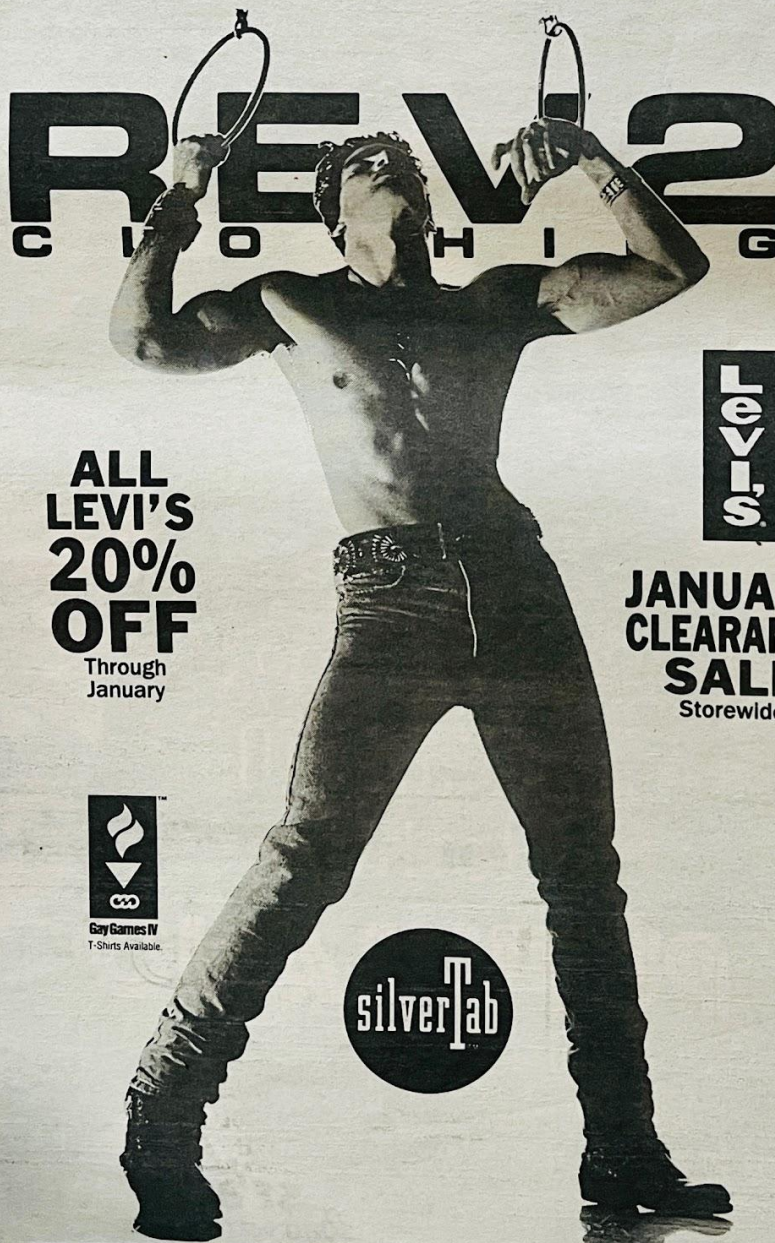
There was terror in her eyes: "Dey can't find out," she begged.

"Well, you have to come to terms with something," Yula insisted. "You exist and I exist. There have to be others like us, just like there are gay Christians and gay Jews. There *must* be gay Rastafarians. Let's make an Order."

In the end, the two women agreed to keep their relationship a secret. But something in their mien made even the smallest gesture of affection seem suspicious. One day, they were accosted by a dope-dealing Trini Rasta, who saw them walking hand in hand, like nuns. "He took one look at the both of us and he went off. He said, 'All yuh is ah disgrace tuh Rastafari. Cut off allyuh locks. Somebody should cut off allyuh locks.' I remember Winsome shouting back in patois, 'Y'u don't know I an' I relationship with Jah an' Selassie!! How can y'u judge I an' I?'"

No one had to judge Ambakaila. She'd condemned herself long ago. Drawn to women for all of her adult life, the *picki-head* tomboy struggled to bury those feelings beneath an even stronger attraction to men. But at the age of 30, Ambakaila met Marabella, her *doo-doo darlin'*, her first love. Their passionate affair knew no bounds, except to their *mauvais langue* neighbors in a close-knit fishing village in Trinidad. The constant finger-pointing and *shooshoin'* (tongue-wagging) destroyed their relationship, but not Ambakaila's feelings toward Marabella.

Ambakaila's *tabanca* (longing) for Marabella made her love-crazy. The only way to rid her heart of this *tololo*, or love-jones, was to get away. She fled to Babylon.



ALL
LEVI'S
20%
OFF
Through
January

JANUARY
CLEARANCE
SALE
Storewide



75 CHRISTOPHER ST NYC 10014 212-242-8245

MURDER, HE WROTE

The real "nightmare of the suffaraks" is not blood-sucking homosexuals. It is the *Gun t'ing* that has claimed so many Jamaican lives in recent years. "Gun t'ing," the toaster Hopeton Lindo cries, "is ah serious somethin'. Di youds dem nowadays not jokin'—especially when dem sniff dat white t'ing. Dey don't care who y'u are or where y'u from; di simplest t'ing is jes blam! Blam! Blam!"

Dancehall Dons such as Buju Banton lionize "gun murdaraks" and covet their notoriety. In "Man Fi De'd"—his warning to all informants who "chat out mi bizness"—Buju and his rudies are "no gun punka." In fact, he suggests that one informant "tell 'im famalee an' frien' fi prepare 'im Nine Night 'cause if mi buck 'im ah day, or if mi buck 'im ah night, mi can bet y'u I'll win—it nah go be ah pretty sight." In other words, "jes mek dem no we nah save no lead; gunshot fi buss-up inna informer 'ead."

Many dancehall enthusiasts, who "labba dem mouth like ah radio station," say Buju is just "woofin'"—or voicing the harsh realities of *jungleness*. But his obsession with the gun culture evokes more than idle threats. It's a synthesis of male posturing, sexual paranoia, and a political tradition that dates back to 1865, when a heavily armed Jamaican preacher, Paul Bogle, led the Morant Bay rebellion. That uprising helped end the tyranny of the British plantocracy.

Young rudies pattern their rebellious ways on Bogle's defiance. In fact, they've named their gun-posturing dance the Bogle after this freedom fighter. But this spirit of resistance became warped during the '80s, when Edward Seaga—a/k/a "CIAga"—came to power with an American-backed right-wing government. Armed posses suppressed dissent, and the tradition of political violence became enmeshed with criminality. Bob Marley's admonition to Jamaican youth, never to forget Paul Bogle and "where you stand in the struggle," was forgotten as cavalier black-on-black violence exploded—in the ghettos and the music.

These "sound bwoys" of fury have put dancehall reggae, a traditional folk form, through virulent changes. "Dancehall is a different kind of phenomenon today," says Gladston Wilson, program director of the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation. "It has drawn on some of the most vulgar elements in society in terms of talk, dress, attitude to each other, and it tends to speak in very violent language. Bob Marley talked about chasing 'those crazy baldheads outta town' because of injustice. People thought Marley was a revolutionary in a Marxist sense. He turned Haile Selassie's speech into a song called 'War.' But he wasn't saying you need to take up guns and shoot people."

Buju—who scoffs, "Mih nah laugh wid people, man. Mih kill people an' drink blood"—is too powerful an entertainer not to be taken seriously.

Last year, the toaster unraveled the moral fabric of a color-conscious Jamaican society with "Love Mih Brownin'," a song extolling the virtues of light-skinned women. Buju calls it "a likkle conflict," but Simon Buckland of *Reggae Report* writes that Buju "came under a lot of criticism [from] a number of recorded responses, the most notorious of which was Nardo Ranks's 'Them a Bleach,' a ditty... that directly lays the blame for black girls trying to bleach out their skin at the feet of Buju Banton."

The criticism forced Buju back into the studio to record "Love Black Woman." But the damage had already been done. "Times dere I was immature," he told Buckland. "Now I'm moving up, 'coming a man, so the vibes and material now is different, y'unnerstan'? If you listen the tracks from then and now, you'll recognize the big difference."

The "big difference" was that Buju Banton now suffered from batty-bwoyon-the-brain, the dread of gays that compelled him—"a young man raised in the Caribbean"—to write "Boom Bye Bye." Last summer, it was not uncommon to hear the lyrics being chanted like a mantra with intense cultural pride in Jamaica, the "small community" for whom he says the song was intended. Soon its notoriety spread to West Indian enclaves in Crown Heights, Flatbush, and Bedford-Stuyvesant. The song could not have emerged at a worse time: a new alliance was being forged between dancehall's gun-boasting rudebwoys and the gangsta strains of hip-hop, which also expresses cultural pride through an almost playful ultraviolence.

"Boom Bye Bye"'s ominous message to gays was almost concealed behind a mask of banality, in which humor and violence intertwined: "Two man hitch up an' ah hug up an' ah lay down inna bed/hug up one another/an' ah feel up leg.../shoot dem now, come mek we shot dem."

By then Buju had left his small community. And by his own account, he "traveled the world" and saw the "positive [emphasis his] impact" that his music had in "diverse cities such as Tokyo, London, and New York." But Buju didn't fully understand the meaning of the words *diversity* and *tolerance* until the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) boldly defined them for him.

On October 21, GLAAD joined forces with Gay Men of African Descent (GMAD) to decode Buju Banton's bullet-riddled patois. The two groups embarked on a media campaign to have "Boom Bye Bye" removed from the playlists of radio stations WBLS and WRKS. Three days later, a front-page headline in the *New York Post* declared Buju's song "HATE MUSIC."

Buju, the rudebwoy with the "crocodile 'eart an' iguana stomach," says he meant no harm. "The antigay sentiment expressed in the lyric was, and continues to be, very much a part of the Caribbean culture," he reiterated. Buju's response has triggered a heated debate over whether homophobia—and even gay bashing—are imbedded in West Indian tradition, and if they are, whether artists like Buju merely reflect the culture when they express contempt for homosexuality. (Buju has refused repeated requests for interviews from North American media; he was unavailable for comment to the *Voice*.)

Despite a ban on antigay dancehall by radio stations, many Jamaicans here and *backyard* insist these dancehall rudies remain true to the culture. Batty-bwoy hunters and gun murdaraks, they claim, are alter egos. They quote Shabba Ranks to shut you up: "I know mi roots an' culture/Murdarah! It is music mi charge fah/Murdarah!"

Dr. Luther Blake, a Jamaican-born political and educational consultant, who lives in Brooklyn, foresees "a change of attitude" toward homosexuals in the next generation of West Indians.

"They will eventually change," Blake asserts, "just as many things in the Caribbean have changed. Whoever thought 30 years ago there would be a black power movement in the Caribbean? That's happened. They may be 10 to 15 years behind this country, but eventually there will be an openly gay movement. You may end up seeing gay bars in certain places like Jamaica, a concept that seems completely radical now. When West Indians begin to see gay people as just people and not some kind of aberration then they'll learn to deal with them."

—P.N. & R.M.

GOTHIC ARTS
GARGOYLES
 Unique Reproductions
 Horror Art & Jewelry
 Send for free catalog:
 Gothic Arts
 (914) 332-7697
 P.O. Box 335
 Tarrytown, N.Y. 10591



UPCOMING SUPPLEMENTS & SPECIAL SECTIONS

the village **VOICE**

EDUCATION

ON SALE
 JANUARY 13TH

VLS

ON SALE
 FEBRUARY 3RD

SPECIAL OFFER

CARPET ANY ROOM

\$99 UP TO 12x9 FT.
 COMPLETELY INSTALLED



100% DUPONT STAIN-RESISTANT NYLON
 COMPLETELY INSTALLED OVER
 SEPARATE SPONGE PADDING
 DAY OR EVENING INSTALLATION WITHIN 24 HOURS
 (OTHER SIZES AVAILABLE AT COMPARABLE PRICES)

FREE SHOP AT HOME SERVICE
 OR VISIT OUR QUEENS WAREHOUSE OPEN 7 DAYS & EVES

212-941-8688

114-09 ATLANTIC AVE.
 RICHMOND HILL, N.Y. 11418

AMERICAN CARPET (718) 805-4300
 (212) 941-8688

PREFERRED FUTON
 447 Broadway
 219-8617
 Hours: Mon-Sat 11-8
 Sun 12-6

BROADWAY FUTON
 873 Broadway (bet. 18th & 19th)
 677-2227
 Hours: Mon-Sat 11-8
 Sun 12-6

These fine Hardwood frames are now available at a great price in Twin, Full, Queen, Black, Natural Walnut.
Don't Be Fooled By Imitations!



Futon Special; Twin \$49, Full \$59, Queen \$69

Declare war on free radicals.

ONDROX™

Multi-Antioxidant Formulation
 Nutritional Supplement

Call 800-541-3492 to learn more

UNIMED, Inc. 2150 East Lake Cook Rd, Suite 585, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089

VILLAGE V F FUTON

784 BROADWAY • 475-2027
 (between 9th and 10th St.)
 11-8 Weekdays
 11-7 Sat • 11-9 Sun.

SWING
 futon, frame & cover
\$295 reg. \$395
 WE SHIP ANYWHERE

BOLLA
 TWIN SIZE
 Mattress & Finished Frame
\$89 reg. \$219

SOFIE
 futon, frame & cover
\$199 reg. \$319

SOHO FUTON SHOP
 491 Broadway • 219-0055

WE DELIVER

"Ah never wanted tuh live in America," Ambakaila recalls. But she decided that a *zami queen* did not deserve to be in Trinidad. She belonged in Babylon, with all the other sinners. "America was my way of punishin' mehself," she explains. "Boy, ah wanted to purge mehself, just bathe mehself in ashes. America was my sackcloth an' ashes."

Three years had passed since Ambakaila's arrival in Brooklyn, three years since her last encounter with Marabella. Ambakaila had begun to believe that God washed her conscience of all guilt. "Ah tell mehself, 'After three years of heterosexual love makin', I eh go have ah problem with dis again.' Ah went back tuh meh Baptist religion an' ah feel dat ah was like totally cured. Boy, it was three years ah jes prayers, praying real hard to God, tuh take dis t'ing away, whatever it was. Ah tell de Lord, 'Okay, ah go admit ah have ah attraction fuh women. Now take dat feelin' away nah because ah know dat it wrong. Please take it away.'"

But the feeling endured and it exploded the day Ambakaila met Sally Jean, a white woman who she insists is the spitting image of her lover Marabella. Sally Jean is openly gay and very active in her church. "She tell me dat she never felt closer tuh God. She say God talk tuh she an' tell she, 'It's all right. I accept you as you are. I am okay with you being a homosexual.'"

Ambakaila and Sally Jean became lovers, and slowly Babylon culture began to work its way with her. "She take meh aroun' tuh ah gay community center, gay bars, DT's Fat Cat: de landmarks. She tell me dat I should get tuh know other gay people an' dat ah was not alone in what ah goin' through."

Sally Jean introduced Ambakaila to Identity House, a gay counseling service. At first, she resisted attending the group sessions. "Ah wanted tuh talk tuh somebody. Meh own people, Trinidadians. But ah couldn't see mehself sharin' dis so-called secret wid dem. Ah jes make up meh mind one Friday evenin' an' ah went to ah group session. I get to find out dat it had plenty other people like me who have identity crisis. Dat is what I goin' through, an identity crisis. Ah lotta people come tuh de sessions an' find out dat all dey really had was ah homosexual experience. Ah lotta dem find out dat dey bi, some find out dat dey gay, an' ah lotta dem find out dat dey straight. Dey find out 'bout dis thing in dem."

Ambakaila has attended three sessions. "De crisis more intense now if yuh ask me. Ah almost certain dat ah not gay, becuz ah does still lie down on meh bed an' fantasize 'bout takin' de biggest *totey* [dick] in town, even with all dis identity crisis ah goin' through. But then ah cyar remember evah havin' so strong ah feelin' fuh ah man as ah

had fuh Marabella an' Sally Jean. So what does dat make meh?"

"I tryin' tuh find answers tuh dis problem by handlin' it in ah vertical way: Me an' meh God. Up an' down. Ah try de horizontal method an' ah come tuh realize dat nobody in de Christian community would evah tell meh dat it's right an' ah could be gay an' godfearin'. An' nobody in de gay community would evah tell meh dat ah can't do both. Everybody would have dey strong arguments. Ah jes feel like ah in de center an' people from both sides pullin' meh, jes tearin' meh apart."

COULD YOU BE LOVED?

I was one Trini to whom Ambakaila could confide. After all, I was her co-pere, she my ma-comere. She was grim-faced and still wrestling with her maddening *tololo* the night she arrived unexpectedly at my Harlem apartment.

"Who dead?" I asked as Ambakaila brushed past me and dove onto the bed. I lay down beside her. "Girl, what happen? Yuh mudda dead? Yuh fadda dead?" She covered her head with pillows and began to bawl.

"Like somebody put *maljoe* on meh," she sputtered. "Everytime ah try to get on wid meh life de devil does come back like ah tick in meh *kakahole*."

Ambakaila was frightening me. "Yuh have AIDS?" I pressed. "Nah," she replied abruptly. "What ah have more woss than AIDS."

"Cancer?" "Stop fuckin' wid meh," she said angrily. "I jes ready fuh de *Labasse* [the city dump]."

I told Ambakaila that she needed a "bush bath or ah dip in de salt" to wash away the *maljoe*. But she'd already tried to cleanse her svelte body with blue soap, Florida water, and lavender.

"John John [my home name], all de *bacchanal* yuh use to hear 'bout me an' Marabella is de truth."

I had no inkling of what Ambakaila was talking about until she said it in plain English: "Marabella and I were lovers."

"And....," I said, anticipating more details.

"... An' ah feelin' shame an' dutty. Ah want tuh bathe."

"Gyul, make de sign of de cross in yuh mouth."

"Yuh think yuh could still love meh like yuh did 10 minutes ago?"

"What kinda stupidness yuh askin' meh? Yuh soun' like ah scratch-up Bob Marley record: 'Could You Be Loved?' Cud yuh be-e-e luv? Ah still yuh *compeh*."

I had never seen Ambakaila cry. I'd never seen tears gush so violently from anybody's eyes. She handed me a ream of letters from Marabella, tearjerkers calculated to induce the most excruciating guilt and jealousy. I felt like tearing them up and siccing a *jumbie* on the author. In Trinidad, I would have made a *cook* and said a *Novena* for my friend. But here in Boo York, we fell asleep weeping in each other's arms.

The next morning, after she'd left, I phoned my brother Michael, who lives in "Crooklyn." I didn't know how to tell the *maco* (gossiper) that his suspicions about Ambakaila had been right all along. I could almost hear him lapsing into one of his *malkadies*, or fits, about my association with *bullers* and *zami queens*—"an' dat fag-got newspaper" I work for.

"Here nah," I said to get his attention. "Ah bringin' Ambakaila tuh yuh party an' ah doh want yuh to play 'Boom Bye Bye.'" "What she have tuh do wid Buju Banton?"

"Ent yuh say yuh ent want no homosexual in yuh house?"

There was a strained silence. For once in his life, the *maco* was witless. "Bring she," he huffed. "She come like famalee tuh me."

But Michael, who had introduced me to Bob Marley's message of "One Love," did not want me to bring any more of my gay friends. He didn't want them around his two impressionable boys.

Michael reminded me that, back in John John, the neighborhood in Port-of-Spain where we grew up, our grandmother had to protect four brothers from being hit on by a well-known homosexual called Mikey Mike. He told me I was the naive one because, while he and the other children would taunt Mikey Mike, I would hold lengthy talks with him.

"Mikey Mike nevah touch me," I told Michael.

"Becuz our grandmother woulda take night and make day for he ass if he bull we."

Michael agreed not to play "Boom Bye Bye" in Ambakaila's presence. "But ah go play it when she gone. Ah go play dah song jes fuh yuh skin."

Oh how I wanted to see the look on Michael's face when Ambakaila appeared. But she stood me up—and so did my daughter's favorite uncle, a fashion designer and Willi Smith devotee. So when Michael put his favorite record on, no one objected. My 11-year-old, Zanelia, who had heard this song on the radio, jumped up and chirped: "Boom bye bye inna batty bwoy 'ead. Rudebwoy nuh promote no nasty man dem haffi de'd."

She couldn't comprehend the meaning of the words, but she understood the look on my face. "This song is about your uncle," I explained. "It's about killing your uncle." There was an awkward silence as the tears streaked down her cheeks. Then she spoke: "Sorry, uncl. Bye bye, Buju."

Micro Innovation Computer Center

...With complete new showroom, 7 work stations, Multimedia and Apple Mac on display, Extensive software selection.

For Corporate Accounts & Networking: In N.Y. Call 212-505-0909, In N.J. Call 201-575-5834, In N.Y. Call 212-460-5181, In N.J. Call 201-575-5834, Hotline 800-229-7178

APPLE® MACINTOSH® POWERBOOK® 160

- Macintosh power with Notebook convenience
- Built-in networking
- 68030/25MHz
- 4MB RAM
- 80MB hard drive

In Stock!

GDT Power Print will allow you to hook up any portable printer to your Apple computer. **Only \$99.00**

APPLE MACINTOSH IIsi

- Flexible monitor support built-in
- Color & sound
- 68030 / 20MHz
- 3MB RAM
- 40MB HD
- 1.44 floppy

\$1199

Monitor and keyboard optional. Also available with 5MB RAM & 80MB HD \$1399

APPLE MACINTOSH CLASSIC® II

- Ideal entry level PC
- Most affordable Mac
- 68030 / 16MHz
- 4MB RAM
- 40MB HD
- 1.44 floppy
- Keyboard

\$999

Easy Way Bundle \$299 | Also available with 80MB HD

Apple Mac Quadra 950 \$5379

Authorized Reseller

COMPAQ Authorized Dealer

PROLINEA 486/33

- 486-33MHz
- 4MB RAM
- 120MB HD
- 3 1/2" 1.44 drive
- DOS 5.0 • Mouse
- Windows 3.1

\$1650 Also available w/240MB HD

NOTEBOOKS

SHARP PC-6785 \$1699
TOSHIBA T-1800 \$1299
ZENITH Z-NOTE 386/25C-120 \$3499
ARC SX-16/40 \$799

HP HEWLETT PACKARD Authorized Dealer

LaserJet 4 Printer

- 8 pages per minute
- Up to 600x600dpi
- Resident scalable & TrueType fonts
- 2MB RAM
- Toner included.

In Stock! Also available LaserJet 4M

HP IIIP Printer...Super price!

DeskJet Portable.....\$379
IIP Scanjet Scanner.....\$829
DeskJet 550C.....\$699

HP FAX 310 \$1149 After Mfr. \$150 Rebate

LTE LITE/25c

- 386SL-25MHz
- 4MB RAM
- 120MB HD
- Active matrix Color display

\$3699

Deskpro 486/33M-120...In Stock!
LTE LITE 25e Model 84.....\$2799

MAXUM 4133

- 486DX-33MHz
- 4MB RAM • 120MB HD
- Super VGA card
- DOS • Windows
- 1-year on-site service

\$1399 Monitor Optional

HP IIIP Printer...Super price!

DeskJet Portable.....\$379
IIP Scanjet Scanner.....\$829
DeskJet 550C.....\$699

HP FAX 310 \$1149 After Mfr. \$150 Rebate

MULTIMEDIA

SONY Complete CD ROM System.....\$699
SONY CD ROM Starter Kit.....\$399
MEDIATION Fusion CD 16.....\$489
MEDIATION Sub-System CDP.....\$949
MICROSOFT Windows Sound System.....\$189
WILLow Laptop TV.....\$749

*FREE box of diskettes w/ purchase of any item in Multimedia

PERIPHERALS

COLORADO Jumbo 250MB.....\$269.95
COLORADO Jumbo 125MB.....\$199.95
BOCA Modem Int. 14.4 S/R fax.....\$240.00
BOCA Modem Ext. 14.4 S/R fax.....\$240.00
INTEL SatisFAXtion 100.....\$189.00
INTEL SatisFAXtion 400.....\$399.00

MAXUM 4150

- 486DX-50MHz
- 4MB RAM • Dual floppy
- 210MB Hard Drive
- Super VGA card
- DOS • Windows

\$1799 Monitor Optional

PRINTERS

CANON BJ-10ex.....\$249
CANON BJ-200.....\$369
PANASONIC KX-P2123.....\$239
PANASONIC KX-P2180.....\$165
PANASONIC KX-P1124i.....\$279
PANASONIC KX-P2624.....\$379

MULTIMEDIA

SONY Complete CD ROM System.....\$699
SONY CD ROM Starter Kit.....\$399
MEDIATION Fusion CD 16.....\$489
MEDIATION Sub-System CDP.....\$949
MICROSOFT Windows Sound System.....\$189
WILLow Laptop TV.....\$749

*FREE box of diskettes w/ purchase of any item in Multimedia

IBM SOFTWARE

MICROSOFT Works for Windows.....\$129.99
MICROSOFT Office for Windows.....\$499.99
MICROSOFT Excel.....\$299.99
MICROSOFT Word for Windows.....\$129.99
WORD PERFECT WordPerfect for Windows.....\$269.99
WORD PERFECT WordPerfect for DOS.....\$249.99

MONITORS

SONY 1604S.....\$1049
SONY 1304S.....\$599
NEC 3FG.....\$639
AOC 14" Non-Interlaced.....\$299
SAMTRON SV-29N.....\$299
KEC SVGA 28 DotPitch.....\$275

MACINTOSH SOFTWARE

ALDUS Freehand.....\$395
ALDUS Persuasion.....\$325
ALDUS PageMaker.....\$495
ALDUS SuperPaint.....\$99
ALDUS Personal Press.....\$99
QUARK QuarkXpress.....\$549

PRINTERS

CANON BJ-10ex.....\$249
CANON BJ-200.....\$369
PANASONIC KX-P2123.....\$239
PANASONIC KX-P2180.....\$165
PANASONIC KX-P1124i.....\$279
PANASONIC KX-P2624.....\$379

really wanted to do was to pull his penis out of those tight Bermudas.

Jimmy Morrison never liked me. I guess he sensed that I was an FIT (Fag In Training), and as such we cancelled each other out. Jimmy was a haughty, grand black queen. Whenever he saw me he would roll his eyes and frown. Either that or he would simply ignore me. Jimmy died in the late 1970s when I was in high school. Before he passed he had a number of operations. My mother would say that Jimmy had to keep getting his anus sewn tight, as it was so slushy and droopy that every time he turned a corner it would take a few minutes for his sphincter to follow. The last time I remember seeing Jimmy, he looked bitter and forlorn like he was on death's doorknob, but he was with a beautiful Latino man who looked like a poker-faced, acne-scarred version of the boxer Oscar De La Hoya. You would think that being with such a knockout would have lifted his spirits.

In the wake of the recent death of the last of the Hollywood Golden Age stars, Elizabeth Taylor, I am reminded that in the late 60s and 70s my sister Gracie worked for Rock Hudson, as his PBX operator. This was in the days before voicemail, when upscale types had a switchboard operator handle all their calls. My sister loved working for "Mr. Hudson," as she called him, and he never forgot her birthday, or the birthdays of my nephews and nieces, and always gave my sister and her entire family fabulous Christmas gifts every year.

Catherine Opie, *Vaginal Davis*, 1994. Chromogenic print, 60 x 30 inches, Edition of 8, 2 AP



Cruising the Archive: Queer Art and Culture in Los Angeles, 1945-1980, essay by Vaginal Davis, 2011. Stonewall National Museum, Archives, & Library. (#174361)

This archival item is paired with the collages of McCall's punk rock band, Strange Beauties, since it profiles Vaginal Davis, a significant Black queer individual in the underground punk rock music scene. According to a 2015 article in *The New Yorker* by Cyrus Grace Dunham, "Davis got her start in L.A.'s predominately white punk scene as the front woman of an art-punk band called the Afro Sisters, where she referenced and drew inspiration from iconic black radicals like Angela Davis, after whom she named herself."

vaginal davis

LATE WINTER, ALMOST SPRING, 5:45 AM: ROTE INSEL, BERLIN, 2011

From 1967 to 1978, my family lived in a small dingbat apartment in Los Angeles at 1239 South Hobart Boulevard near Pico and Western, which at that time was on the border of South Central and the Wilshire Corridor. A few blocks to the south was the historic district of Harvard Heights, populated by beautiful two-story Craftsman-style residences built between 1902 and 1908. This sumptuous architecture resulted from a land covenant that stipulated that houses built within the tract cost more than \$2,500, which, at the turn of the last century, was quite a substantial sum. The homes of legendary black film star Eddie “Rochester”

Anderson and Oscar-winning lesbian actress Hattie McDaniels were in this area, and to the southeast was the compound of Athletic Model Guild photographer Bob Mizer and his mother, in the Pico-Union district. My oldest sister, Gracie Taylor, lived at 1242 South Mariposa at Pico, in what used to be the Greek section of Los Angeles proper, near St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral, which is sandwiched between St. Thomas Catholic Church and the Loyola High School Jesuit Preparatory for young men, which continues to produce some of the most beautiful and voraciously studly young men from L.A.’s top Catholic families.

Gracie was the number one fag hag to her neighbor Jimmy Morrison, a James Baldwin/Sean DeLear lookalike with buggy thyroid eyes and Ubangi liver lips that were always chapped. He drove a

fancy red Karmann Ghia sports car, and had a two-bedroom apartment in my sister’s building that was gaudy and overdecorated with all sorts of kitschy bric-a-brac and photos and statues of nude men. Jimmy’s official occupation was to be some kind of press agent for the Hollywood studios, but according to my family lore, what Jimmy actually did for a living was pimping and procuring boys and young men from the nearby Loyola High School for Bob Mizer and other photographers, as well as for miscellaneous pornographers and peddlers of spectacular male flesh.

During the 1960s and 70s, my sister was a good time sally, and enjoyed circulating within the kinky confines of the homosexual milieu. Gracie would accompany Jimmy Morrison on his forays down the street to Loyola High School’s football and track field to suss out the “high snow” Catholic boys’ charms, or they would go to other high schools, colleges, or junior colleges in the area like Los Angeles High, Belmont, Marshall, USC, Occidental, or LACC. Sometimes they’d stake out The Pike-Midway in Long Beach or the POP Amusement Park on the Santa Monica Pier to pick up any available rough trade, sailors on leave, servicemen, or runaway youth. Some of my earliest memories are of Jimmy Morrison’s various boyfriends and tricks. In the late 60s, Jimmy was around 50 years old, and he wasn’t very attractive, but he was aggressive in his desire for muscular, masculine, swaggering types sporting mustaches, prison tattoos, and the like. He also had a thing for clean-cut high school

or college jocks with boy-next-door appeal. Somehow he knew just what to do, and just what to say, to get his needs met. That ability could come in handy for me now.

What really was unique about Jimmy Morrison, the skinny, black, effeminate man who ate raw ground beef from the butcher, was his ability to score many men of different ethnic and racial backgrounds. Jimmy was quite the equal opportunity hornpig. The majority of men he picked up on his sexual conquests were either black or white, but on occasion I do remember seeing him with some very attractive Latinos and a few Asian men who had the musculature of Bruce Lee and the Japanese writer Yukio Mishima. As a child I was fascinated by these men who frequently ran around shirtless or in varying degrees of dishabille. I would always ignore my mother’s harsh warnings to stay away from, as she put it, “Jimmy’s nasty men, with titties bigger than most women’s I will never forget the moment when one of Jimmy’s young white beefcakes, with golden chest hair and the perkier bullet nipples, rushed to my aid, picking me up in his well-toned arms to give me comfort when I “accidentally” fell off my bicycle. To this day, I can still smell his manly Lucky Strike cigarette breath, and his sweat mixed with musky cologne. Innocently, I grabbed at his stonelike pectorals, reveling in his masculine attention and ardor. I was no older than six or seven at the time. It was a late autumn afternoon, on a chilly day, in the shade. I was wearing a light, hooded jacket, and this virile man wore nothing but sandals and skimpy shorts. What I

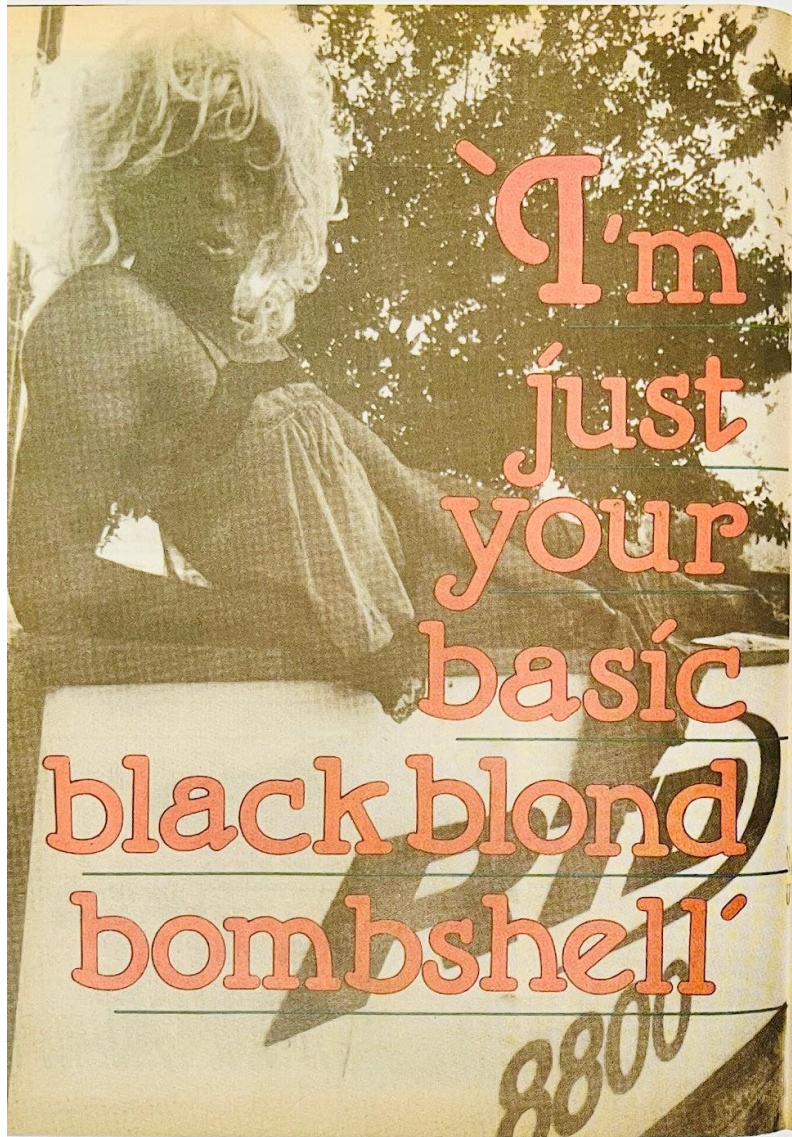
really wanted to do was to pull his penis out of those tight Bermudas.

Jimmy Morrison never liked me. I guess he sensed that I was an FIT (Fag In Training), and as such we cancelled each other out. Jimmy was a haughty, grand black queen. Whenever he saw me he would roll his eyes and frown. Either that or he would simply ignore me. Jimmy died in the late 1970s when I was in high school. Before he passed he had a number of operations. My mother would say that Jimmy had to keep getting his anus sewn tight, as it was so slushy and droopy that every time he turned a corner it would take a few minutes for his sphincter to follow. The last time I remember seeing Jimmy, he looked bitter and forlorn like he was on death's doorknob, but he was with a beautiful Latino man who looked like a poker-faced, acne-scarred version of the boxer Oscar De La Hoya. You would think that being with such a knockout would have lifted his spirits.

In the wake of the recent death of the last of the Hollywood Golden Age stars, Elizabeth Taylor, I am reminded that in the late 60s and 70s my sister Gracie worked for Rock Hudson, as his PBX operator. This was in the days before voicemail, when upscale types had a switchboard operator handle all their calls. My sister loved working for "Mr. Hudson," as she called him, and he never forgot her birthday, or the birthdays of my nephews and nieces, and always gave my sister and her entire family fabulous Christmas gifts every year.

Catherine Opie, *Vaginal Davis*, 1994. Chromogenic print, 60 x 30 inches, Edition of 8, 2 AP





Wiping Out On the New Wave Of Drag

by STUART TIMMONS

Vaginal Davis has talent to burn. And baby, she burns at both ends: as owner of The Hag Gallery, one of Los Angeles's hottest art spots; as publisher of the best and most libelous gossip sheet anywhere, *Fertile La Toyah Jackson Magazine*; and most important, as the inspired "androgynous" behind the Afro Sisters.

The who sisters? They're one of the hottest acts in Hollywood. Their full-throttle satire is in more than name only, but, oh, those sobriquets: Miss Vaginal Creme Davis, with long blond hair atop the body of a Harlem Globetrotter, is backed by sisters Clitoris Turner, Pussi Washington, and the sumptuous Fertile La Toyah Jackson. (Sister Urethra Franklin recently left the group for marriage and merchandising.) They spoof the style of black girl groups, the hypocrisy of current political manners, and composure itself.

The Afro Sisters have devoted fans and a few hecklers. They know how to handle both. For example, Vaginal Creme Davis has been known to wade hip deep into an audience of sexually

confused white college boys, her most ardent admirers, and sing, "Say it loud, I'm black and proud." She then holds out the mike and enjoins them to repeat the phrase into it. If she gets any trouble, her retort is ready: "Put your penis where your mouth is!"

"Vag" (it rhymes with "Madge") welcomes *The ADVOCATE* into her tiny but tasteful apartment next to the Chalet Gourmet on Sunset Boulevard. A poster of Angela Davis hanging on her wall is signed, "To Vag. Peace. Angela Davis." A

dress form holds a black Vampiria dress in progress; at its base are piled voluminous by Dominick Dunne and Oscar Wilde. Vag stretches out, wall to wall, scanty, summery boys' clothes, Vag sweet-faced, friendly, and relaxed. I look through the keyhole, she advises. I might see the "divinely hung boy" in the next apartment." But behind the playful charm is an intelligent mind connected to a tongue as swift as sharp as a machete. She proceeds to show how she hacked herself a place in t

Kayle Hilliard (center), as Vaginal Creme Davis, and the Afro Sisters

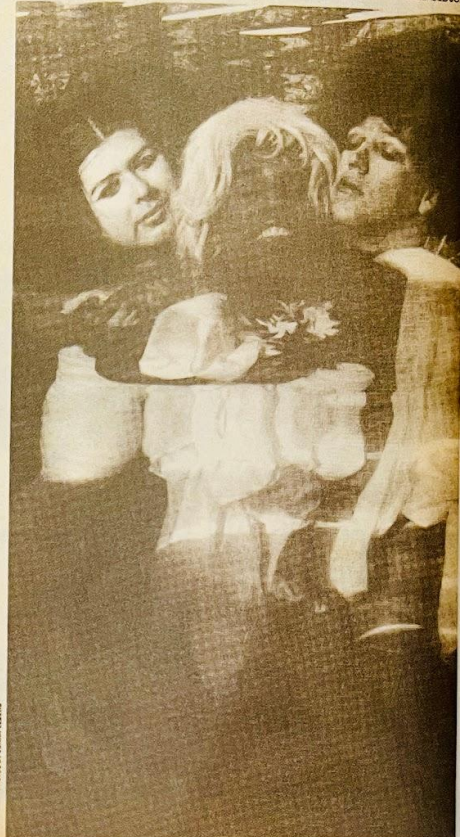


PHOTO BY JONAS ELLER

My sister was also always invited to Mr. Hudson's famous Beauty Parties, which featured some of the handsomest and most well-endowed young men in Los Angeles, all romping about Mr. Hudson's home. The only women at the party would be Mr. Hudson's black housekeeper, his cook, the actress Nancy Walker of *Rhoda*, Doris Day, Elizabeth Taylor, and my sister Gracie. You could get any kind of liquor you wanted, and in one room were platters heaped with mountains of cocaine. By the witching hour, the house would turn into a giant whorly, with sexual calisthenics as the main focus. I remember my sister

breathlessly reporting the goings-on to my mother, saying she had never seen so many white men with such large penises before. She would shamelessly get right up close and personal to the action, and loved seeing how the long, thick appendage of a randy top would effortlessly snake its way into the anal cavity of a fidgety bottom with the help of a stiff whiff of poppers stew.

My sister would relay Elizabeth Taylor's love for the soul food cooked by Rock Hudson's Aunt Jemima-like cook, noting that Miss Taylor had a very healthy appetite for fattening eats despite her

movie star status. Her particular food favorites were hogmaws and collard greens. Miss Taylor also enjoyed watching the gay male live sex floorshow that was always the highlight of the boy Beauty Parties, especially the ones on the solstices and on New Year's Eve. Jimmy Morrison would also attend these parties, as he was one of the many sources for finding the beauty boys in question. In the early 70s, Rock Hudson was the ultimate macho star of films, and also of the dramatic hit TV series, *McMillan & Wife*. He played *McMillan*, and his wife was played by Susan Saint James. The average American

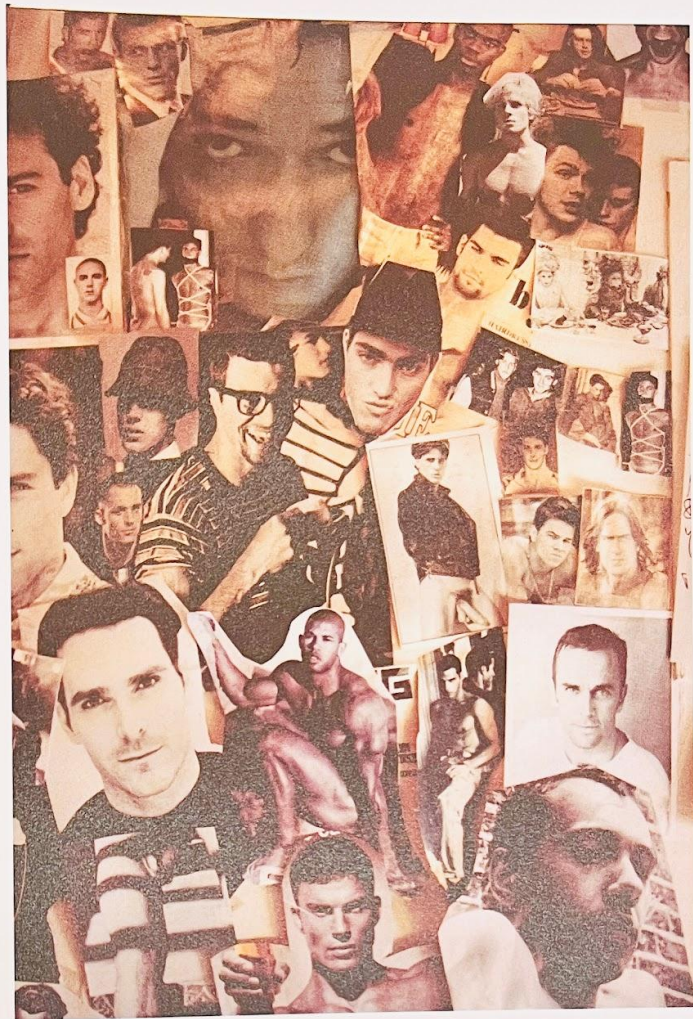


Rock Hudson fan was completely unaware, during this time, that this Hollywood heartthrob was a Ganymede.

I met Elizabeth Taylor only once, through my friend Jose Montano, the production designer for the famed REM "Losing My Religion" video, who also designed the Elizabeth Taylor White Diamonds commercials directed by Herb Ritts. I was Jose's date to a dinner party at Miss Taylor's Bel Air home near UCLA. I couldn't believe I was in the presence of such Hollywood nobility. Just as my sister had described her years before, she was extremely down-to-earth for a star of her

stature. I didn't feel like we had a rapport early in the evening. I even felt that I had committed a gross faux pas by telling her how much I had loved her portrayal of Sissy Goforth in *Boom*. In the stage remake of *Boom*, I played the role that was portrayed by Joanna Shimkus in the film, who was later married to Sidney Poitier.

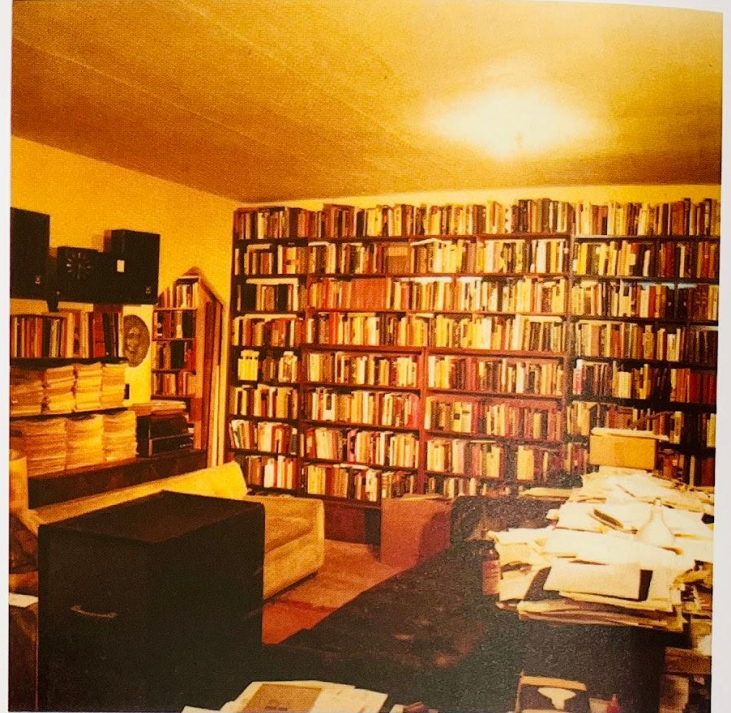
John Waters was also at that particular dinner party, and was quite articulate in his comments about the virtues of *Boom* to the actress, but I felt that she didn't fancy either of us, and even felt hostile towards us, thinking that we were making fun of



her, or treating her like some mindless guilty pleasure cult figurine, not giving her the respect due to a talent of her standing. Then things took a decidedly positive turn, and she threw her head back and laughed loudly, cursing like a salty sailor. At this point I changed the subject, mentioning the Rock Hudson Beauty Parties and the fact that my sister was his switchboard operator, and Miss Taylor even remembered my sister's name. Up to that point, I had been calling her "Miss Taylor," and she looked at me with those sparkling, truly violet-colored eyes and said, "Call me Elizabeth."

Left: Vaginal Davis, *Wall of Gay Shame, Cheese Endique Trifecta*, Los Angeles, 1999. Collage

Right: Vaginal Davis, *Wall of Gay Shame, Aretha & Sham Fanning, Part One*, Los Angeles, 1999. Collage



Throughout his lifetime, Jim Kepner (1923–1997) obsessively collected material related to LGBTQ topics, issues, or individuals. Originally from Galveston, Texas, Kepner moved to San Francisco in 1942, where he purchased the first item in his personal gay archive, Radclyffe Hall's book *The Well of Loneliness*. Kepner moved to Los Angeles in 1943, where he became actively involved in a local science fiction fan group (see p. 36), then to

New York, back to San Francisco, and then again to Los Angeles in 1951, where he lived in a small house on Baxter Street in Echo Park for the next twenty-one years. An active member of countless gay organizations, including ONE Inc., and a contributor to numerous publications throughout his life, Kepner would become the "unofficial" historian of the gay community in Los Angeles, often welcoming researchers into his apartment to peruse his hoard of materials.

In 1972, Kepner moved with the collection to the L.A. suburb of Torrance, then to Hollywood in 1975—during this time the collection continued to expand, for example the library grew from 6,000 to 9,000 volumes.⁴⁰ In 1975, Kepner named his collection (still housed in his rented apartment) the Western Gay Archive, which included numerous books as well as periodicals, correspondences, newspaper clippings, photographs, artworks, audio records, and

organizational records, many related to Kepner's personal involvement in LGBTQ groups.

Desperately in need of a secure space, in 1979 the collection moved to its first public space in a derelict part of Hollywood and was renamed the National Gay Archives. The Archives' library was named in honor of expatriate writer Natalie Barney and socialist activist and writer Edward Carpenter, two little known figures in LGBTQ history. As Kepner bluntly stated, his archive was never perfect: "Well, I did it ass backwards but this is here and it's been open to the public for the last seven years. It's rough around the edges. I can't always find everything. It's a little sloppy in spots."⁴¹ While sometimes unruly, the Archives were open five days a week to researchers and hosted lectures, screenings, and community meetings. To better reflect the scope of the materials, the Archives were renamed the International Gay and Lesbian Archives in 1984.

—DF

Above (both images): The Western Gay Archives in Kepner's apartment, 1977. International Gay and Lesbian Archives Records (unprocessed)

40. Harold Fairbanks, "Our Gay Heritage: The National Gay Archives," *Stallion*, Vol. 2, No. 57 (August 1983): 47.

41. From an interview with Jim Kepner conducted by Robert Prager at the International Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, March 9, 1986.

**Thank you for Exploring
the Archival Materials**