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WHO WE ARE

Jax Gay Inc. is a Community Marketing and Events organization incorporating Jax Gay Magazine, Rainbow Events, and Drag Queen Aholic.

Our mission as a 502(c)3 non-profit is to promote North Florida and especially in Jacksonville, as a welcoming LGBTQ+ destination through marketing and events. Jax Gay produces many events a year, including Jax Equality Festival in Jacksonville. Other events include the Rainbow Awards Show, White Party, Big Gay Picnic, Taste of Pride and Red Party. Visit www.JaxGayMag.com for more information.

Jax Gay Inc. also plans to launch our Jax Event Center & LGBTQ+ Art Gallery in Fall of 2023.

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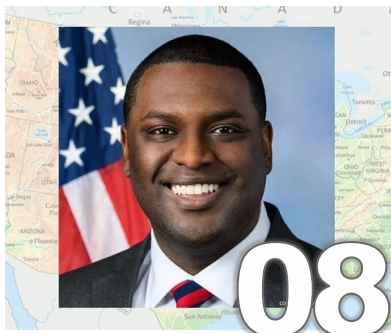
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By David Vandygriff



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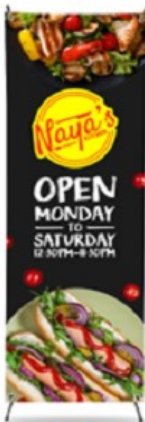
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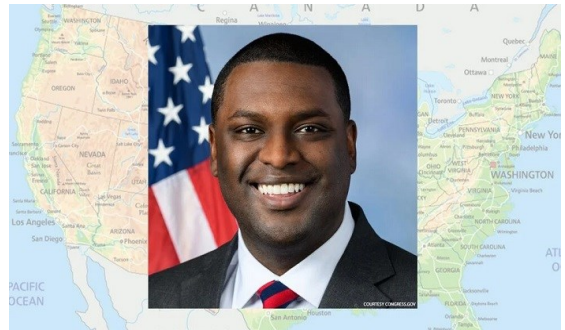
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News & Politics



Mondaire Jones, One Of The First Black Gay Men In Congress, Seeks To Win Back Seat

By Cameron Dowd

Former U.S. Rep. Mondaire Jones, who lost his seat representing a New York congressional district in the Democratic primary last year, is running for Congress again.

Jones announced Wednesday that he's running in the 17th Congressional District, which covers a suburban area in the Hudson Valley, just north of New York City. He represented the 17th District previously, having been elected in 2020 as one of the first two Black gay men in the U.S. House (Ritchie Torres was the other, elected from a New York City district in 2020 and reelected in 2022).

But court-ordered redistricting reconfigured the 17th District so that last year, Jones would have had to run against another gay congressman, Sean Patrick Maloney, in the Democratic primary. So Jones moved to the 10th District in New York City, where he lost the primary to incumbent Dan Goldman. And in the 17th District, Maloney lost the general election to Republican Eric Lawler by only 1,820 votes.

Now Jones is back in the 17th, and the redrawn district is one

of the most heavily Democratic areas currently represented in Congress by a Republican. It includes 73 percent of the residents of the previous 17th District.

In a campaign video, Jones talks about growing up as the son of a single mother in Rockland County, which is within the district, and being fortunate to have people invest in him on a path that led him to Harvard Law School and then to Congress. He then mentions his priorities in Congress.

"People here know me," he says. "I stand up to Republicans trying to overthrow our democracy and take away the freedom to have an abortion even as I push members of our party to fight harder for working people." The video goes on to highlight his push for gun control, against corruption in Congress, and for funding for law enforcement and infrastructure repair in his district.

Two other Democrats, Liz Whitmer Gereghty (sister of Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer) and MaryAnn Carr, have announced they're also running for the seat. And Maloney "has not ruled out

seeking a rematch" with Lawler, The Washington Post reports.

Jones already has 109 endorsements from local elected officials and party chairs as well as an endorsement from the LGBTQ+ Victory Fund, which works to elect out candidates.

"LGBTQ+ Victory Fund is proud to stand with Mondaire once again and support his historic campaign," Victory Fund President and CEO Annise Parker said in a press release. "In Congress, Mondaire worked to increase opportunity for all New Yorkers, including fighting to protect civil rights, expand access to affordable childcare and tackle climate change. As Co-Chair of the Congressional Equality Caucus, he stood up for our nation's LGBTQ+ community by championing pro-LGBTQ policies like the Equality Act. We are confident this track record combined with his grassroots support and positive vision for a more equitable America will resonate with voters. With growing anti-LGBTQ rhetoric and racism across our country, including within the halls of Congress, Mondaire's election is a

powerful symbol of hope for our community.”

“Victory Fund was my first national endorsement when I launched my improbable, history-making campaign for Congress in 2019,” Jones said in the release. “As proud as I am of the transformative work we began last term, now we

are seeing the worst assault on the LGBTQ+ community in years by far-right Republicans in Congress and the Supreme Court. I’m running for Congress to secure freedom and opportunity for all Americans, regardless of who we love.”

The Democratic Party needs to win five House seats currently

held by Republicans to gain back control of the chamber, and party leaders view New York’s 17th as one of their best opportunities, the Post notes. Also, it would take the election of 21 more LGBTQ+ candidates to the House for the community to have equitable representation, according to Victory Fund.

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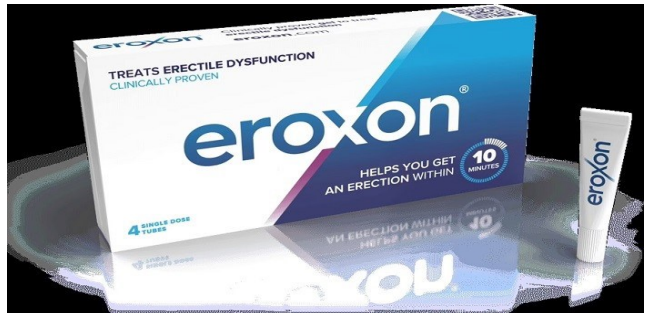
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OUT & HEALTH

Erectile Dysfunction Gel Approved for Over the Counter Use
By Jennifer Davis



The Food and Drug Administration approved the use of Eroxon (Eroxoff would have been cooler) this month for treatment of erectile dysfunction.

Eroxon is a topical gel that may be applied to the head of the penis immediately before sexual intercourse. Studies show that 65% of men who used it achieved an erection within 10 minutes and maintained it long enough to have sex.

Eroxon was approved on 13 June 2023 under the De Novo medical devices classification. It does not require a

prescription from a doctor, making it the first approved OTC treatment for erectile dysfunction (ED) in the United States.

Eroxon is supplied in single-use tubes. The contents of the tube are rubbed onto the head of the penis for 15 seconds immediately before sexual intercourse.

There are two surprising aspects of Eroxon — one is that it's a gel, as opposed to a pill like Viagra, and it will be sold without a prescription. There is no timeline yet on when it will be available at stores, but the FDA approval means it's imminent.

While a pill like Viagra can take a half hour to kick in, Eroxon's maker says the gel leads to erections "within 10 minutes." There are relatively scant details on how the drug works, according to The New York Times, but it apparently "has a cooling and warming effect that stimulates the nerves of the penis," prompting blood to fill the body part.

Eroxon is already available without a prescription throughout Europe, including the U.K. The new gel joins other options for ED, including pills, injections, penile suppositories, and even vacuum devices.

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Monthly Group Schedule

1st
Monday

6 - 7 PM: Anger
Management Support
Group in Rm 1

1st
Tuesday

6 - 8 pm: Resume
Workshop in Library
6 - 7 PM: 50+ Social
Hour in Rm 1

1st
Saturday

10 - 11 AM: Coffee
and Conversation
in Library

2nd
Monday

6 - 8 PM: Book
Workshop in Library

2nd
Tuesday

6:30 - 7:30 PM:
De Colores LGBT Peer
Group in Rm 1
6:30 - 7:30 PM: The Real
"T" M2F Peer Group in
Rm 2

2nd
Saturday

10 - 11 AM: Coffee and
Conversation in
Library
2 - 4 PM: Book Club
in Library (starts 5/13)

3rd
Monday

6 - 7 PM: Sexual
Identity Support
Group in Rm 1

3rd
Saturday

10 - 11 AM:
Coffee and
Conversation in
Library



4th
Monday

6 - 8 PM: Book
Workshop in
Library

4th
Tuesday

6:30 - 7:30 PM: The
Real "T" M2F Peer
Group in Rm 1

4th
Saturday

10 - 11 AM:
Coffee and
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Here's What Stanley Tucci Thinks About Straight Actors Playing Gay

By Benjamin Franks

Stanley Tucci is great at playing gay, and we don't have a problem with it.

The 62-year-old actor has played several gay characters throughout his career, notably in films like *The Devil Wears Prada* and *Supernova*, so it makes sense that he'd be asked about his opinion on the controversial topic of straight actors playing gay roles.

The question was asked of Tucci on BBC Radio 4's *Desert Island Discs* this weekend. Several people, including queer actors and creators like Russell T. Davies have been arguing that queer roles should be played by queer actors for

more authenticity.

"Obviously, I believe that's fine," Tucci said about straight men playing gay.

"I am always very flattered when gay men come up to me and talk about [my role in] *The Devil Wears Prada* or they talk about *Supernova*, and they say that, 'It was just so beautiful,' you know, 'You did it the right way,'" he said. "Because often it's not done the right way."

He said that in his mind, "an actor is an actor is an actor," and that "you are supposed to play different people. You just are. That's the whole point of it."

Now, we of course want gay actors to get as many roles as they can, and we absolutely love the authenticity that they bring to queer performances. We also want to see more prestige films about LGBTQ+ subjects featuring queer actors. Where are Oscar nominations for queer actors in queer roles?

However, we also are fine with straight actors who respect the community and understand the importance of queer representation playing gay, and Tucci is one of those. In fact, Tucci is one of our favorite gay-playing straight actors, and we're not afraid to say it.

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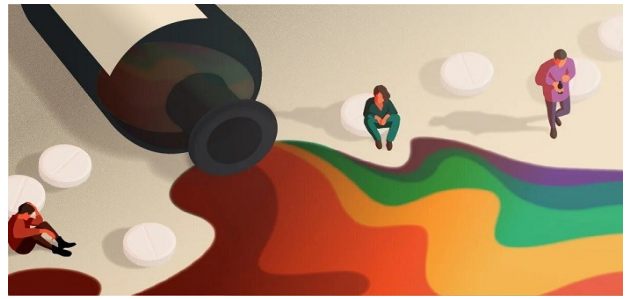
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OUT & HEALTH

The Addiction Epidemic in the LGBTQ+ Community
By LaQuicha Westervelt-House



As LGBTQ+ Pride Month ends, it's also an appropriate time to bring attention to some of the issues affecting this population. One such issue is addiction — an exceedingly complex and chronic brain disease that has become an epidemic and major public health crisis in America.

While it is well-documented that LGBTQ+ individuals have dramatically higher rates of substance misuse and addiction than their heterosexual counterparts, few may understand or have ever stopped to wonder why.

If you examine the social determinants of health, the many inequities surrounding this community and ultimately driving addiction become clear.

The social determinants of health are non-medical factors that shape our health and well-being, based on where we are born, grow, work, live, worship, and more. This extensive list of forces and systems includes things like access to education, safe housing, transportation, clean water, nutritious foods, job opportunities, quality healthcare, and so on.

Some of the main social determinants of health that

impact the LGBTQ+ population are discrimination, violence, social inclusion, and economic stability.

Every human being deserves to live in an environment free from violence and discrimination. And yet, here in 2023, we are still witnessing a shocking amount of violence and discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals and other minorities.

We see it in the news right now with the mass shootings at Club Q last year in Colorado Springs and Pulse nightclub in Orlando in 2016, when 49 people were killed. 49! It is still difficult to believe.

Transgender and gender-nonconforming people are particularly at risk and have increasingly become the targets of transphobic hate crimes. As a result, we're seeing more incidents of homelessness, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and other crimes within this group.

Additionally, because of the stress associated with such violence and discrimination, the trans community has some of the highest suicide rates among any minority community. This is one of the most alarming health

disparities facing this population. Multiple studies show that 40 percent or more of trans individuals have attempted suicide at least once in their lifetime.

Another key determinant is social inclusion. To live happy healthy lives, people need to feel accepted and supported.

Although we as a collective society have made strides over recent years to fight prejudice and promote inclusiveness, we must do better.

This population continues to experience multiple layers of intersecting discrimination. Things like restricting healthcare for trans youth, banning education on LGBTQ+ subjects in schools (e.g., the "don't say gay" law), and most recently, Florida governor Ron DeSantis's much-publicized feud with Disney.

These are just mechanisms for harassment. This community has been "othered" by the outside world, and when you're marginalized or being used as political pawns, that really affects your ability to feel socially included.

Issues like fear of violence or discrimination and lack of social inclusion tie into

economic stability, another essential social determinant of health.

These factors disrupt relationships and employment, which is a primary source of health insurance for many people. This, in turn, impacts access to quality healthcare and vital resources, as well as a person's capacity to pay for safe housing, healthy food and activities, and so much more.

And unfortunately, all this can trigger or worsen drug and alcohol use. Many of these factors that determine our quality of life are also considered environmental risk factors for addiction, including trauma, poverty, and mental health.

Mental illness is very common in people with addiction and is associated with poorer treatment outcomes. Based on data from 2021, an estimated 44 percent of American adults suffer from both a substance use disorder and another mental health condition, such as depression, anxiety, or PTSD. And the vast majority of

these people are not getting the help they need.

Statistically speaking, lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals utilize addiction treatment more than their heterosexual counterparts. But that doesn't tell the full story of all those who remain untreated, those who may be self-medicating with drugs and alcohol and hiding from the shame and stigma they feel.

Shame is probably the worst emotion a human can feel. It damages self-esteem and how people take care of themselves. When people feel shameful about things, that's when they tend to become reclusive and hide. And negative emotions can really fester in hiding.

In the field of addiction medicine, we must do more to foster inclusiveness and break down barriers to treatment. According to one study, only 7 percent of rehab programs offer specialized LGBTQ+ services. So, there is an urgent, research-based need to create more addiction

treatment programs that address this community's unique challenges.

Addiction treatment is not one size fits all. It's important to remember that each person is an individual and deserves to be treated according to their individuality.

One of the measures of a civilized society is its ability to care for the sick and vulnerable. Regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or a person's lifestyle choices, we're all human, and we must take care of each other.

That's where the true beauty and opportunity of Pride Month lies. It's a chance to highlight the many colors that define our society — and also a time to acknowledge where we can do better and do more.

LaQuicha Westervelt-House is a nurse practitioner at Laguna Treatment Hospital, an evidence-based detox and rehab facility in Orange County, Calif.

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Life and Style

LGBTQ+ People Experience Health Disparities, Economic Insecurity

By Leroy Williams



A slight majority of LGBTQ+ adults feel they belong in U.S. society, while transgender people report a low sense of belonging, according to a poll out this week from Data for Progress, a think tank based in Washington, D.C.

A second poll from the organization, conducted among likely voters, "underscores severe disparities around economic insecurity and mental health dissatisfaction between LGBTQ+ voters and those who are cisgender and straight," says a Data for Progress press release. The polls were released in observance of the 54th anniversary of the Stonewall riots.

"It's clear that many LGBTQ+ people, particularly those who are transgender, struggle to feel a sense of belonging and don't feel comfortable expressing themselves in their communities. Coupled with the disproportionate rates of mental health dissatisfaction and economic insecurity, these alarming findings cannot be divorced from the relentless political attacks that anti-LGBTQ+ politicians have leveled at the LGBTQ+ community," Rob Todaro,

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communications director at Data for Progress, said in the release. "Elected officials must work to confront economic and health disparities, defend LGBTQ+ people against right-wing attacks, and implement intersectional policies that foster acceptance and connectedness."

The poll of LGBTQ+ adults found that groups within the LGBTQ+ community have varying senses of belonging in U.S. society and their neighborhoods. A majority of LGBTQ+ adults feel like they somewhat or strongly belong in U.S. society (53 percent) and in their neighborhoods and surrounding community (52 percent). But a majority of transgender adults report a low sense of belonging in U.S. society (59 percent) and in their neighborhood (50 percent). In comparison, a majority of cisgender LGBTQ+ adults report a high sense of belonging in U.S. society (56 percent) and in their neighborhood (53 percent).

It also found that fear of violence or harassment continues to prevent many LGBTQ+ adults, particularly those who are transgender, from being themselves. Fewer than half of

transgender adults feel comfortable dressing and acting the way they want (45 percent) or engaging in public displays of affection (46 percent) in their local community without fear of violence or harassment. This is compared to 67 percent and 59 percent of cisgender LGBTQ+ adults, respectively. Only 43 percent of transgender adults feel comfortable being open and transparent about their sexual orientation or gender identity in their local community compared to 60 percent of cisgender LGBTQ+ adults.

Another finding was that many LGBTQ+ adults rely on online spaces to socialize with others and find affirmation. LGBTQ+ adults socialize daily with other LGBTQ+ people more often in online communities or on social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Reddit, or Discord (41 percent) than in their local community (33 percent). Transgender adults are more likely than cis LGBTQ+ adults to socialize daily with other members of the LGBTQ+ community. Forty-eight percent of transgender adults socialize daily with LGBTQ+ people both in their local community and online, while only 30 percent of

cisgender LGBTQ+ adults socialize with other LGBTQ+ people in their community daily and 40 percent socialize with other LGBTQ+ people online daily.

LGBTQ+ adults, especially young adults, are more open about their sexual orientation or gender identity with their online communities compared to their families and neighborhoods. LGBTQ+ adults aged 18-24 are more open with their online community than their neighborhood by a +37-point margin. Furthermore, they're more open with their online community than with their families by a +30-point margin.

The poll of likely voters found that LGBTQ+ voters feel higher levels of dissatisfaction with their mental health, standard of living, and household income than cisgender, straight voters. Among cisgender voters, 72 percent are satisfied with their mental health, 65 percent are satisfied with their standard of living, and 52 percent are satisfied with their household income. In comparison, 51 percent of LGBTQ+ voters are satisfied with their mental health, 46 percent are satisfied with their standard of living, and only 38 percent are satisfied with their household income.

LGBTQ+ voters are more likely to struggle to pay essential bills. While 53 percent of cisgender and heterosexual voters never have problems paying for food and groceries, only 31 percent of LGBTQ+ voters report the same. Fifty-five percent of cisgender and heterosexual voters never struggle to pay utility, compared to 36 percent of LGBTQ+ voters.

The poll of LGBTQ+ adults was conducted from May 19 to 22 and included 1,036 people. The poll of likely voters was conducted May 25 and 26 among 1,269 people.

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BUSINESS & TRAVEL

Threads Has Launched, Here's What You Need To Know About It

By David Vandygriff

Facebook-parent Meta on Wednesday officially launched its Twitter competitor, Threads, after first confirming its plans for the app just three months ago.

Threads is already off to a strong start: the app received 30 million sign-ups as of Thursday morning, according to the company, including a large number of brands, celebrities, journalists and many other prominent accounts.

The mood on Threads Wednesday night felt a bit like the first day of school, with early adopters rushing to try out the app and write their first posts — and some questioning whether the app could end up being the “Twitter killer.” As of Thursday morning, Threads was the top free app on Apple’s App Store and a top trending topic on Twitter.

Threads could pose a serious threat to Twitter, which has faced backlash since Elon Musk took over the platform in October 2022 and has run it with a fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants approach. But Twitter has become particularly vulnerable in recent days,

angering users over a temporary limit on how much content users can view each day. And for Meta, Threads could further expand its empire of popular apps and provide a new platform on which to sell ads.

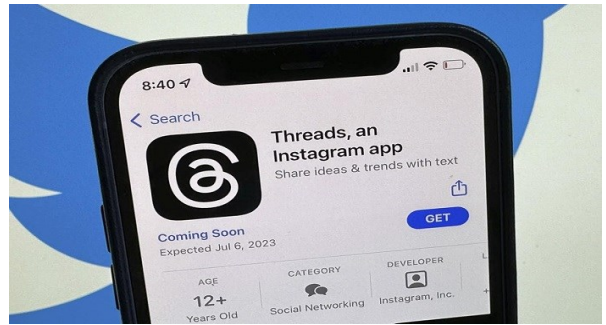
Here is everything we know so far about Meta’s Threads:

What is Threads?

Threads is a new app from the parent company of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. The platform looks a lot like Twitter, with a feed of largely text-based posts — although users can also post photos and videos — where people can have real-time conversations.

Meta said messages posted to Threads will have a 500-character limit. Similar to Twitter, users can reply to, repost and quote others’ Threads posts. But the app also blends Instagram’s existing aesthetic and navigation system, and offers the ability to share posts from Threads directly to Instagram Stories.

Thread accounts can also be listed as public or private. Verified Instagram accounts are automatically verified on Threads.



“The vision for Threads is to create an option and friendly public space for conversation,” Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg said in a Threads post following the launch. “We hope to take what Instagram does best and create a new experience around text, ideas, and discussing what’s on your mind.”

Some users did experience occasional glitches and issues getting content to load in the early hours after Threads launched, but that is to be expected when millions of users are joining and using an app at once.

How do you sign up? (And can you leave?)

Users sign up through their Instagram accounts and keep the same username, password and account name, although they can edit their bio to be unique to Threads. Users can also import the list of accounts they follow directly from Instagram, making it super easy to get up and running on the app. But it’s not quite so easy to leave Threads.

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Ryan Gosling Jokes About People 'Clutching Their Pearls' Over His Shirtless Ken Photo for 'Barbie'

By David Vandygriff

Ryan Gosling is one proud Ken — denim vest, bleached hair and all.

The 41-year-old actor stopped by The Tonight Show Thursday to chat with Jimmy Fallon about his new movie *The Gray Man*, and also opened up a bit about what compelled him to play Ken in Greta Gerwig's upcoming *Barbie* film, due next summer.

"It officially broke the internet," Fallon, 47, told his guest about the first-glimpse, shirtless snapshot of Gosling's Ken that dropped last month.

"Well, you know, the internet's been trying to break me for years. So they gave me no other choice," the actor quipped.

Gosling went on to joke that he was "surprised how some people were kind of clutching their pearls about my Ken, as though they ever thought about Ken for a second before this."

"They never played with Ken! Nobody plays with Ken, man," he joked. "Did you play with Ken? Exactly. ... He's an accessory, and not even one of the cool ones."

In seriousness, Gosling said

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the *Barbie* film's script, by Gerwig and Noah Baumbach, is the "best" he has "ever read," but he still had to consider whether the role was right for him.

And upon contemplation in his backyard, the father of two daughters saw something that he took as a sign: a Ken doll, face down, next to a squished lemon.

"Do you know where I found Ken, Jimmy? Facedown in the mud next to a squished lemon," Gosling recalled. "I texted [the photo] to Greta and I said, 'I shall be your Ken, for his story must be told.'"

At the L.A. premiere of his new Netflix action movie *The Gray Man* last week, Gosling teased his excitement for his upcoming comedy with Margot Robbie, in which he plays a live-action version of the iconic Ken doll.

"We've been having so much

fun making this movie and it felt nice to see everyone else start having as much fun as we are. I can't wait for the film to come out and for that to continue," he told PEOPLE.

The actor also discussed his experience making *The Gray Man* with costars Chris Evans, Ana de Armas and Regé-Jean Page. He said he felt like the "new guy" on set since Evans has history working with directors the Russo brothers (Anthony Russo and Joseph Russo) on Marvel movies.

"Not just Chris and the Russos, but that whole team has been working together for so long that it's just such a well-oiled machine," said Gosling. "I definitely was the new guy, but I was just along for the ride and I couldn't have picked a better team to do it with."

The Gray Man is in theaters and on Netflix now, while *Barbie* premieres on July 21, 2023.

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Ricky Martin & Husband Jwan Yosef Separate After 6 Years Of Marriage

By Glinda Rutherford



Ricky Martin and his husband Jwan Yosef are officially ending their relationship.

In a joint statement released on Martin's Instagram account, the now-former couple, who got married in 2017, said that the two will continue to co-parent their children together and have a "healthy family dynamic and a relationship centered on our genuine friendship."

"For some time, we have considered transforming our relationship, and it is after careful consideration that we have decided to end our marriage with love, respect, and dignity for our children - preserving and honoring what we have experienced as a couple all of these wonderful years," the statement, both in Spanish and English, reads.

"Our greatest desire now is to continue having a healthy family dynamic and a relationship centered on our genuine friendship as we continue the joint upbringing of our children," the statement continues. "As always, we thank you for all the love and support we received throughout

our marriage. We are united in nurturing this new chapter of our lives."

"I met Jwan through Instagram, believe it or not," Martin said in 2021 in his episode of the Behind the Music docuseries, recalling how he and Yosef met. "I saw his art, and I'm like, 'Who's the artist?' and it said 'Jwan Yosef,' and I'm like, 'That's such a cool name, but I wanna see his face.' And then when I saw his face, I said, 'Okay, this is over. What a beautiful man.'"

"We texted for sixth months, and then sixth months later I fly to London, where he used to live, and I say, 'Well, let's meet,'" he continued. "When I got out of the car and I saw him, I said, 'Whoa. Wait a minute, I think this is the man of my life and I think I am going to marry him.'"

Unfortunately, Martin and

Yosef aren't the only longtime celebs husbands who are ending their relationship.

News broke yesterday that Pose and Cinderella actor Billy Porter and his partner Adam Smith, who also got married in 2017, had split.

"I can confirm that Billy Porter and his husband Adam Smith have made the sad decision to end their marriage after six years," Porter's rep Simon Halls told People Magazine in a statement. "The decision was an amicable and mutual one and was made after much consideration. They continue to love and support each other as they embark on this next chapter."

Halls continued:

"There will be no further comment from either parties and it would be appreciated if their privacy be respected."



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Life and Style

Gay People Who Come Out Later In Life Face Unique Obstacles

By Bruce Evers



A lot can be hidden behind a marriage. For Brad and Cyndi Marler, it was that they are both gay.

A few years after their wedding, they told each other their secret. Then, for more than three decades, they told no one else.

“We always said it was us against the world,” Brad said.

After living what they call “the all-American life” in the small Illinois towns of Smithton and Freeburg, the Marlers, now both in their late 50s, decided they need to “live authentically.” They’ve come out to their two adult children — a son and a daughter — and are navigating new lives in Chicago.

While research from the UCLA School of Law Williams Institute for Sexual Orientation Law and Public Policy shows that people in the U.S. are coming out at a younger age than previous generations, Brad and Cyndi are part of a segment of the LGBTQ community that waits until later in life.

“Society is still inhospitable. That’s not to deny so many amazing shifts in public attitudes, in laws, in policies,

but it did not wash away a hundred years of homophobia in society,” said Ilan Meyer, a distinguished senior scholar of public policy with the Williams Institute.

Bob Mueller, 75, who grew up in suburban Chicago and now lives in Iowa, didn’t breathe a word of his sexual orientation to his family until he was 40, when he wanted them to meet his partner. And he still didn’t tell everyone.

“It was common practice to stay in the closet if you wanted to have a job. It wasn’t until 2005 that I officially came out at work,” he said.

Having grown up in religious households in small Illinois communities, coming out wasn’t an option for the Marlers, who marked 32 years of marriage in September.

“Being homosexual, you’re just going to go straight to hell. There’s no two ways to it,” Cyndi said of what she and Brad were taught.

Even as strides were made nationally for gay rights, the Marlers feared being found out. They built homes, raised their kids and never strayed from their marriage. In public, they were sure to maintain traditional gender roles: Cyndi

kept her hair long, and they never mentioned that Brad was the one who decorated their house.

“We wanted the house, the dog, the two kids — and we did all of that,” Cyndi said.

“We made a decision to make it work. This was what we were going to do,” she added.

But there came a limit. It was a house of cards that needed to come down, Brad said.

He had become deeply depressed and began working on his internalized homophobia with the help of weekly therapy.

“For such a long time, I hated that part of me. ... I didn’t understand why what I had with Cyndi wasn’t enough,” he said.

The couple also says they never would have been able to come out if their parents were still alive. Brad noted that the shame he associated with his sexuality was triggered after his mother confronted him when he was 16 about the possibility of being gay. “She just said, ‘If you are, that’s not OK. You’re not going to do this to the family.’ ... We never spoke about it again,” he recalled.

Another big factor was that their daughter came out as a lesbian.

"It was the overwhelming need to protect her," Brad said.

The Marlers lived together until March when, having retired and sold their home, they moved into separate apartments in Chicago to explore life as part of the LGBTQ community for the first time.

Michael Adams, CEO of SAGE, said the nonprofit helps thousands of older Americans in their coming out journey. He says the unique obstacles they face can include higher levels of fear and anxiety, as well as managing others' expectations.

Paulette Thomas-Martin, 70, came out after a 20-year marriage and when most of her children were adults.

"It was very painful. ... I would call them and they would not

call back," she said.

It took several years before her children started speaking to her again, Thomas-Martin says, but in the end it brought her family closer.

"My son texted me recently telling me how proud he is of me. It came out better for my kids. I'm happier. I have more joy and peace," said Thomas-Martin, who lives in New York with her wife.

Adams says coming out later in life may also make socializing and dating more complicated.

Brad describes it as going through a second adolescence.

"Everything is new," he said.

Cyndi is focusing on figuring out herself before pursuing a relationship with a woman.

"It's like taking this filter off and asking myself, 'What am I?'" she said.

Even though the Marlers now live separately, they have no immediate plans to divorce and still see each other almost daily.

"We're still best friends," Cyndi said.

And despite some struggles, they believe things have improved for them.

"Our whole dynamic is better now," Brad said.

Their daughter recently wrote her parents each a letter about the experience.

"She wrote that she was happy to see that I'm happy," Brad said.

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Victoria Scone On Why RuPaul Should Stop Leaving Drag Kings Out

By Brian Sappington

Drag culture is thriving with more drag-centric shows than ever gracing tv screens across the world, but there is still one group that is noticeably absent from this supposedly inclusive art form — drag kings.

In recent years, RuPaul's Drag Race has begun welcoming drag queens who were assigned female at birth (AFAB), but have yet to make drag king's a part of the show

Drag Race UK star Victoria Scone, who was the first AFAB queen to appear on any of the show's franchises, spoke out in a recent Digital Spy interview about the lack of diversity.

"Diversity is just always going to be a plus in every sense," she told the publication. "It brings variety to performance as well as the fact that everyone deserves a seat at the table, regardless of what

gender you happen to be assigned at birth."

Scone, who appeared on Drag Race UK season three, and made the top four on Canada's Drag Race: Canada vs. The World, opened the door for more AFAB queens to be a part of the drag juggernaut and also broke ground by becoming the first queen to perform as a drag king, a decision that won her that week's challenge.

"I did a drag king look on Canada Vs the World so obviously that's something I'm very passionate about – getting drag kings on Drag Race," she said in the interview. "I just don't know why it's taken so long at this point to be honest. I would really love to see it. There's absolutely, in my opinion, no reason why they couldn't be. I think it would give the show a lovely little shake

up and keep it fresh."

Scone says it's also shortsighted to not welcome drag kings onto the show with open arms because it's "blocking out a big chunk of the queer community that watch the show."

Since appearing on Drag Race UK there has only been one other AFAB performer to grace the stage of any of the shows in the franchise — Clover Bish on Drag Race España — and although Scone performed as a drag king in a single episode, a true drag king has still yet to be on any of the Drag Race shows across the globe.

"I was just doing it to prove a point and it did alright, it won that week," she explained. "So, there we go. There's no more reason not to have them on there."

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News & Politics

Gays Against Groomers Takes Hit in Membership in Wake of DeSantis's Homophobia

By Drew Williams



Gays Against Groomers, the anti-transgender hate group led by a lesbian political operative aligned with Florida's homophobic Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, is imploding as it deals with infighting. Called out for its founder's support for DeSantis despite his spreading of an explicitly hateful and homophobic video last week, prominent members of the group are jumping ship.

Long-time Gays Against Groomers supporter and board member David Leatherwood, a gay man based in Florida, announced on Twitter that he was done with the group.

On Wednesday morning, he tweeted news of his departure but claimed to still stand behind the message behind Gays Against Groomers.

"Today, I would like to announce that I am formally resigning from my board position with Gays Against Groomers and withdrawing my involvement from the organization," Leatherwood wrote. "GAG is a great organization and I have nothing bad to say about the group or

its leaders and wish them continued success."

He continued, "My decision to part ways is strictly professional and on good terms with mutual understanding. I greatly admire the organization's passion and effectiveness in the mission for protecting kids and making a positive impact on our culture."

Outspoken Republican Caitlyn Jenner, who is trans and who also supported Gays Against Groomers once, called Leatherwood out and accused him of lying about the reason for his departure.

"Not the draft you sent my team. Some highly relevant omitted info. Hmmm... you can't play it both ways," Jenner wrote in reply to Leatherwood's resignation tweet.

By Wednesday evening, the tone of Leatherwood's resignation had changed, and the former hate group member indicated that his departure stems from a disagreement over founder Jaimee Michell's support for DeSantis.

In a tweet before 5 p.m., Leatherwood wrote, "My departure from GAG is directly related to the founder's

outspoken support for DeSantis, in light of his recent ad that is extremely anti-gay. While I respect everyone's right to their own opinion, the homophobia coming from the DeSantis campaign is not something I want to be affiliated with in any way. Even by proxy thru GAG. That's it. That's the real reason."

In 2022, Leatherwood admitted that his online persona is a grift meant to drive clicks and generate income. Much of what he posts is geared at outraging or offending people to up engagement with his accounts, the Tampa Bay Times reported.

Gays Against Groomers launched a series of tweets on Wednesday, blasting Jenner as "the biggest hypocrite and fraud in this movement."





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BUSINESS & TRAVEL

Here's Your Chance to Rent Barbie's Malibu DreamHouse

By Brandon Caine



Pack your bags Barbie fans, this summer's holiday destination is clear: The Malibu DreamHouse.

The pink pad will be available to rent in California this summer, but the house has been given a twist by Barbie's beau Ken.

The "life-size toy pink mansion" sits above the beach and boasts "panoramic views," according to an AirBnb listing purportedly written by Ken.

"Welcome to my Kendom! While Barbie is away, she has handed over the keys to her Malibu DreamHouse this summer and my room could be yours for the night," reads the listing.

"I've added a few touches to

bring some much-needed Kenergy to the newly renovated and iconic Malibu DreamHouse," it adds.

The house is fitted out with cowboy gear, an outdoor disco dance floor, an infinity pool and a wardrobe full of clothes.

Guests can book from 10 a.m. PT (1 p.m ET) on July 17, with two one-night stays for up to two guests available on July 21 and July 22.

Those selected will also be able to take home Ken-style yellow and pink Impala skates and surfboard, the listing adds.

The DreamHouse is part of promotional efforts for the new Barbie movie from Warner Bros. which is set for release on July 21. Warner Bros.

"In celebration of Barbie hitting theaters on July 21, and to honor girls' empowerment, Airbnb will make a one-time donation to Save the Children," the listing states.

In the Greta Gerwig-directed film, Barbie and Ken, played by Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling respectively, leave Barbie Land to explore the "real world."

Creating the perfect backdrop for the upcoming movie required so much pink paint that it led to a global shortage, according to its production designer.

"The world ran out of pink," said Sarah Greenwood in a recent interview with Architectural Digest.



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