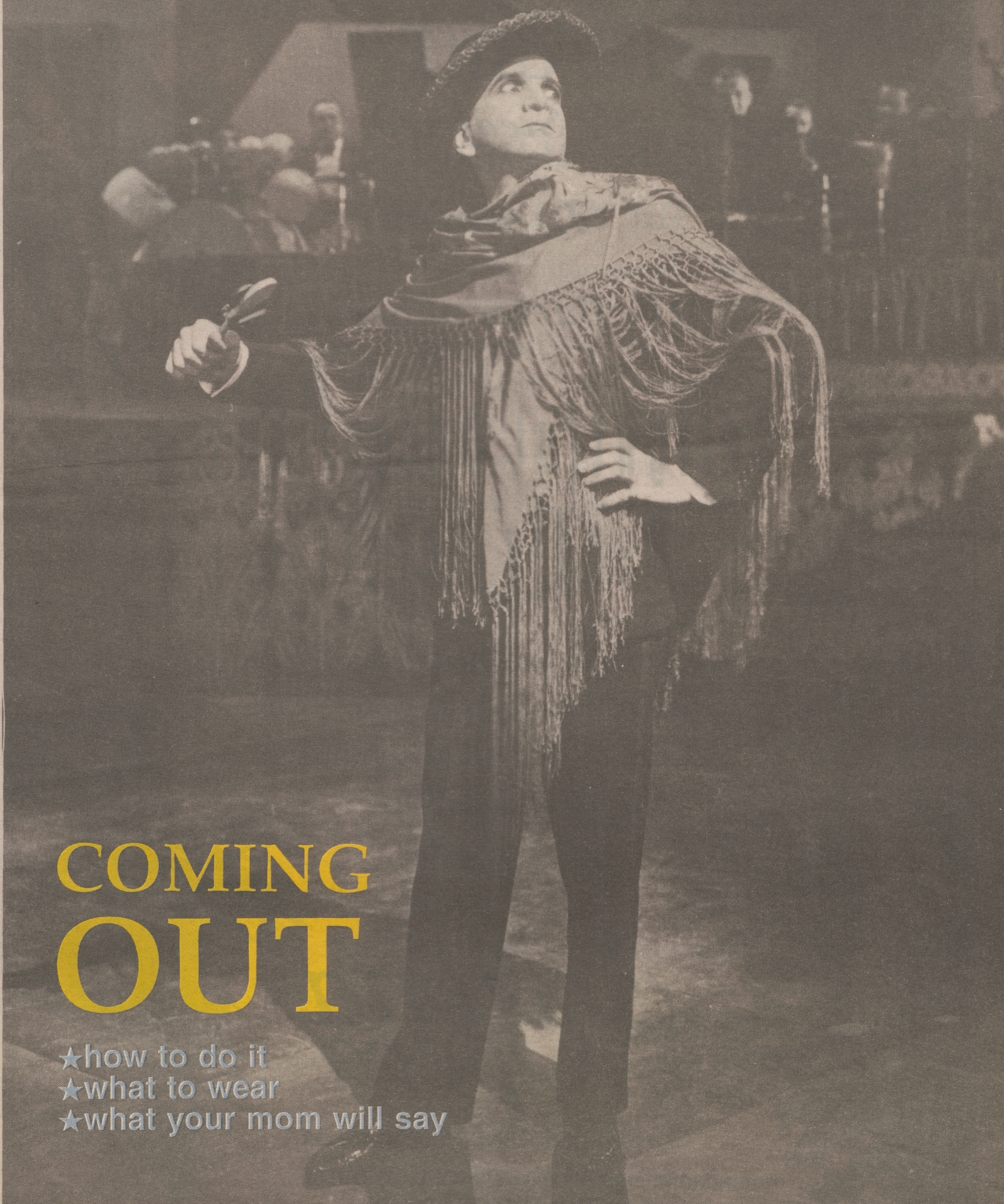


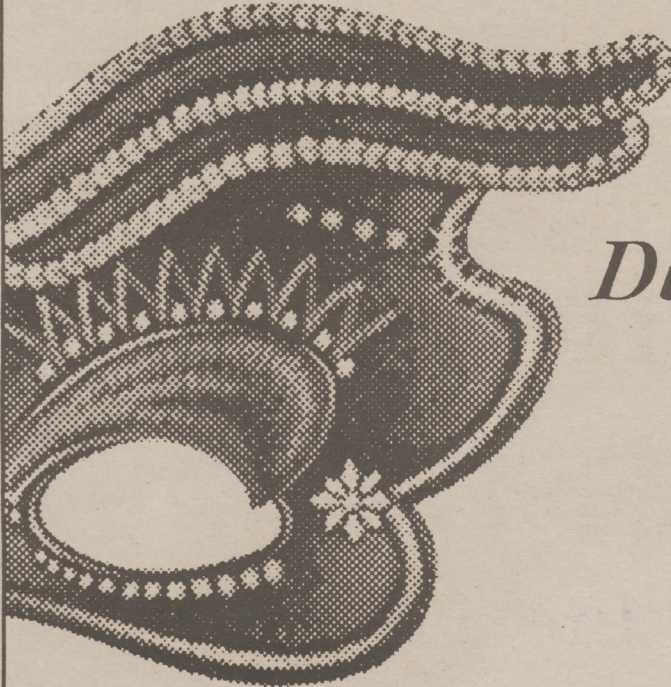
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a rarified 'zine for grown-up homosexuals • volume nine number twenty-one • issue 225 • october 8-21



COMING OUT

- ★how to do it
- ★what to wear
- ★what your mom will say



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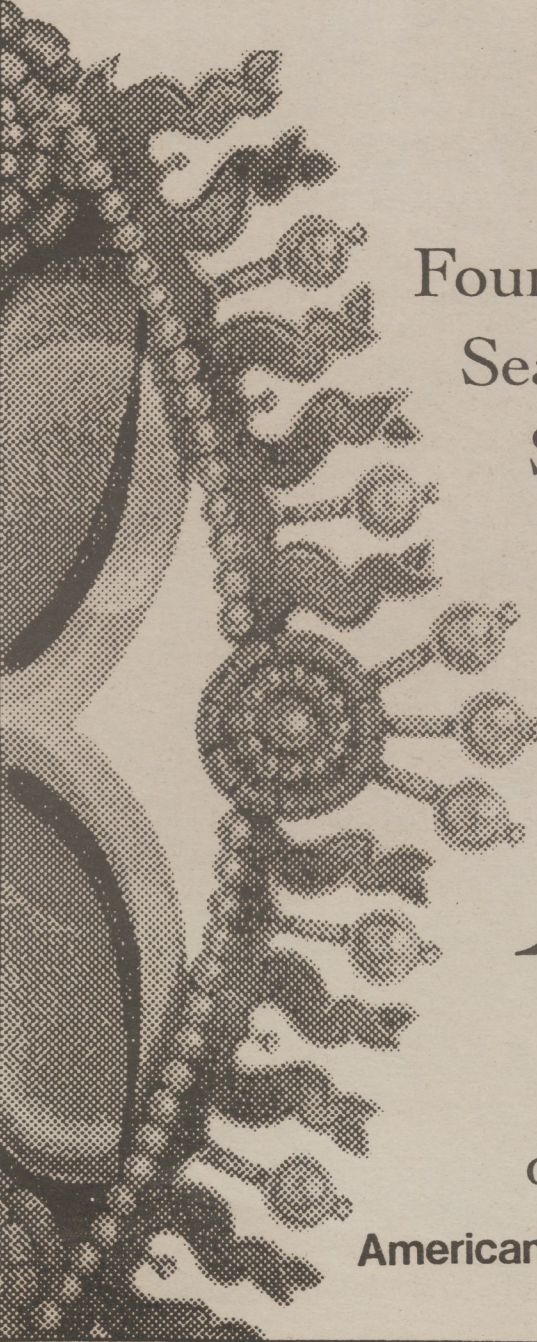
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Into the dark,
regular calm of their
weeknight life Philip had
come, unannounced. "We're watching
The Jewel and the Crown," Rose said. "It's almost over."

"Dad's here?" Philip asked.

"Yes. Be quiet, something important's happening."

He looked at the floor. "Well, I guess there's no getting around it now," he said softly.

Rose was too eager to get back to the television to hear him, or at least to extract the sense from what he said. He sat with them until the program was over. "Another week," she said. "Will I be able to wait another week?"

Philip unceremoniously snapped off the television. There was a pop and a hiss as the picture shrunk to a tiny nugget of light before disappearing. Rose and Owen looked at him oddly, wondering what had compelled him to turn it off. Then the room filled with an almost tangible silence.

"I have something to say to you," Philip said. "It's very important."

Rose looked up at him, surprised at the seriousness of his tone. His face was blanched, his hands curled into tight fists. He still hadn't taken his coat off.

"Philip," she said, taking off her glasses. "What is it?"

continued

Philip didn't say anything, just stood there, huffing; finally he took off his coat.

"Do you want to sit down?" Rose said.

"I'd rather stand."

More silence. "Philip," Rose said again. "Is something wrong? Tell us, honey."

"All right," he said. "Here goes." He looked away from them.

"I've been meaning to tell you for a long time," he said, "and I haven't gotten around to it, because I guess I've been afraid—"

"Well," Rose said, "what?"

He closed his eyes. "I'm gay," he said. Then again, as if they hadn't heard: "I'm gay." He opened his eyes, looked at them, but their faces were blank. "Does this come as a shock to you? Are you shocked?"

His words ran together very fast. "This isn't something new. I've been out at work and to my friends for a long time now. Just not to you. I don't know why. I guess I've been scared of disappointing you. I wanted to wait until I felt my life was good enough so that I could show it to you and not be ashamed. I wanted to wait until I could show you that a homosexual life could be a good thing." He was suddenly crying a little. Rose kept blinking her eyes, as if she had been sitting in a dark room and the light had just gone on. Owen was hunched over, his shoulders tight in his white shirt, his hands kneading together between his knees. Philip went on talking—about political orthodoxy, personal choice, about the children's book writer Derek Moulthrop (but why?)—then suddenly stopped, took a kleenex, and blew his nose.

It all went past Rose. Oh, she was not naive. She knew homosexuals. There were a number of homosexuals in her office. But up until this moment she had thought about their lives as occasionally and as casually as she thought about the lives of the doormen in the building, whom she passed sometimes and wondered, Where do they live? Do they have

The Dos and Don'ts of Telling Your Parents That You're Gay: *Do*: 1. If you tell them in person, set aside a special time to get together. Choose someplace private—someplace where they will not feel compelled to put on a front. While no time is a good time to deliver this news, some times are better than others. Choose a moment when you know your parents will have time to ask questions and to recover from the initial shock.

2. Get to your point quickly. You can preface the critical work or phrase with a sentence or two about love, but don't beat around the bush for too long or you'll force them to guess.

3. Start by telling your parents that the reason that you're talking to them is because you love them. Be sure they understand that if you didn't feel this way, it wouldn't be necessary to share something like this with them; that if you kept something like this to yourself, you would only build walls; that you can't build a good family relationship on secrets; that if you didn't tell them, they would never know who you are.

4. Assume the role of a parent. You need to be educator, hand-holder, reassurer. You may not like playing parent with your own parents, but it's likely that you will have to.

5. Be firm. Your parents may suggest that what you've just told them is a phase, or they may suggest you seek counseling or see a psychiatrist who can "cure" you. Concentrate on convincing your parents that your sexuality is innate, fixed, not a choice or changeable if only you wanted to or tried hard enough. Do not give them false hope that things may change in the future.

6. Explain that you are no different than you were before they knew this about you. You know you are no different, but your parents may need to hear it from you.

7. Emphasize the emotional, full-person nature of attraction—that sex is an element, but not the only component of being gay.

8. Soften your language. If you know your parents can't handle hearing the word "gay" or "homosexual," you can say that you're attracted to men instead of women. They'll get your point. The same holds for other words (such as "lover") or phrases that may be frightening to your parents.

9. Use positive examples. If your parents have welcomed any of your friends into their home who they knew or didn't know were homosexual—someone they liked—use one of those friends as a positive example.

10. Pursue gently and keep the lines of

communication open. If, after you break the news, your parents have made it clear that they've heard enough, the dialogue doesn't have to stop. You can still tell them you love them or show that you love them. Over time, very cautiously let them know some of the things that you do related to your sexuality (e.g., that you run with a gay running club). Your straight friends can serve as particularly good role models for your parents. Some parents are amazed to discover that your straight friends, or the parents of friends, accept you without apparent difficulties. This information can help accelerate their acceptance. Just don't let them drift away.

The same holds true of parents who fail to raise the topic at all after your initial discussion. Give them a few weeks. If they still say nothing, the ball is in your court, and it's up to you to raise the subject, but gently. It isn't enough to tell them once and let it go at that.

Don't: 1. Don't tell them as you're racing out of the house. It simply isn't fair to drop this kind of information if you're on your way back to school or heading halfway around the world next morning. It may be painful, but you have to be prepared to see it through.

2. Don't tell them in anger. It may feel good for a split second to use the fact that you're gay against them, but it's simply common sense not to use your sexuality as ammunition in an argument, whether it's the first time you're discussing it or in later conversations.

3. Don't assume that your parents know anything about homosexuality. Their knowledge will likely be nonexistent or of a stereotyping nature, so be prepared with the most basic information about homosexuality and about AIDS.

4. Don't force material on them. Let them know it's available if they want it. Don't surprise them by sending information anonymously in the mail. Don't just leave a book or pamphlet in their house for them to find without letting them know you are going to leave it.

5. Don't bring up your boyfriend unless they ask. Just dealing with you initially will be difficult enough. But if they ask, tell them. Otherwise, wait for a later discussion. You have time.

From The Male Couple's Guide, copyright ©1988, 1992 by Eric Marcus. Published by HarperPerennial, a division of HarperCollins. All rights reserved.

families? children? Now, suddenly, it was as if she had been thrown head-first into a distant, distasteful world about which she had little curiosity and toward which she felt a casual, unstated aversion. She blinked. Does this mean, she wondered, that from now on, every time I read the word "homosexual" in a book, or hear it on the news, I will be hit in the stomach? I will have to cover my ears? She thought, suddenly, of AIDS and wanted to cover her ears.

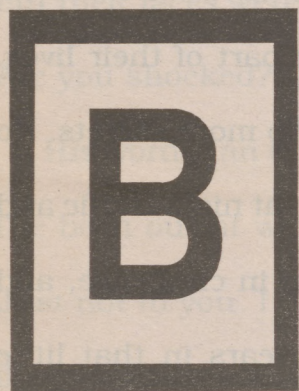
Philip was talking, his eyes frantic, as if he were afraid to stop. "It's not just homosexuality," he was saying. "It's really a question of secrets. I know it must be a shock to you that so much of my life I've had to keep secrets from you. I mean, I know all kids keep secrets from their parents. But usually those secrets don't make up such a huge part of their lives. Well, I decided it wasn't fair to any of us. No more secrets. No more." He was looking out the window now, at night traffic and stars. Suddenly he turned, looked at them in challenge, and said, "You know I kept pornography for years in that little suitcase, the one in my closet. I kept it hidden there. Did you know that?"

"No, I didn't," Rose said, taking up the challenge, and suddenly remembered how once she *had* caught a glimpse of something under his bed—a photograph of naked men, she vividly remembered it—and had thought little of it, had thought, He must have found that in the garbage; one of his friends must have given it to him as a joke. The memory was vague, insubstantial, but it was the thing that shook her out of numbness. Why hadn't she noticed that detail? She of all people noticed the details.

"Well, now you know," Philip said. He seemed to be having difficulty swallowing. He stared at them, waiting for the worst.

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MOTHERS AND OTHER STRANGERS



BOBBY: Once Mummy said to me, "Bobby, I want to talk to you rather seriously. You know, I am a very well-educated woman and I understand most

things in life, having been exposed to almost everything God has created in the world. I can understand or try to understand your homosexuality.

"I realize you are a homosexual and I am not too perturbed by it. To me, it's an unnatural way of life, but I can accept it and understand it, and bear the cross God has given me. I knew, in my debutante days, many young men we called 'fancy gentlemen' because they were slightly effete. However, they were honored and respected. With their educational credentials and fine background, they did something with their lives. They worked and got somewhere in the world.

"But you! I can't understand it for the life of me! If I died today, I would die uncomprehending. Why must you make a Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey circus of your life by wearing those dresses? You do not look like a woman! You look like a clown!"

(From I Was A White Slave In Harlem by Margo Howard-Howard, copyright ©1988 by Robert Hesse. Published by Four Walls Eight Windows. All rights reserved.)

Coming out is fun for everyone, especially your mom.



JEFF: My coming out story isn't so great really, but I have one that happened to a guy I used to work with that I'm never going to forget. I tell this story all the time, it's really great. Todd, this guy I worked with, went and took his whole family out for dinner, because he was planning to tell them he was gay. The way he told it to me, he figured it would be better if he told his brothers and his mom in a public place, so that if they had a cow he could just leave. Nice guy. Anyway, here's the punch line:

The waiter at the restaurant Todd took his family to was Todd's lover, Bryan. So he tells his family he's gay, and then, while his mother is in the bathroom puking, Todd introduces their waiter for the evening as his lover. It gets better! The busboy at their table that night is this guy named Gerald whom Bryan's been having an affair with. Gerald didn't know that Bryan had a lover, so he ends up beating up Bryan that night, and Bryan gets so upset over this whole stupid thing that he breaks up with Todd. Todd is devastated by all this, naturally, and then the next day his mother calls. She tells him, "I'm glad you told us your little secret. Last night was a very special night and I really like your young man."

GERRY: I never told my parents. I didn't have to. My mom asked me one day, when I was seventeen, if I was queer. That's the word she used. I told her yes. I'd been having sex with the school librarian for about six months at this point, so I was pretty aware of some things. So mom had a cow. She just flipped. She was screaming and crying and saying things like "No son of mine..." and I just left. I moved in with my sister a couple of weeks later and didn't see my mother again until my sister got married four years later. Mom looked the same. Last year I moved to Phoenix and she's still in Montana and for all I care she can rot in Hell.

MARK: My brother really blew it. I mean, I didn't know then what I know now about

gays, which isn't a whole lot more, but I knew the cliché kinds of things that people usually know about gays, like mineral water and Joan Crawford and Fire Island. So anyway, my brother Joey invites us all over to my mother's house because he has something he wants to tell us. And we get there and he makes us sit all around him in a circle and he. . . Oh, God, this is still so embarrassing, I mean like it was yesterday or something. He *sang* to us. A Barbra Streisand song. We're all sitting there, staring at him, looking at each other, and he's singing this stupid song. I don't even remember what the song was. And my brother can't sing. He just can't sing a note. So he's singing this awful kind of gay song and then he stops and he has tears in his eyes and he says, "Mom, Dad, Mark, Debbie. . . I'm gay." And we all look at my mother, because we've all known for all our lives that Joey's gay, I mean, he played with my sister's dolls when he was a kid, he was really girly when he was little, and now he's a friggin' *dance instructor*. . . we *knew*, who wouldn't know, you know? So anyway, we're staring at my mom, she's looking at Joey, and then she says in this little voice, "Okay, Joey. Okay. But did you have to *sing*?"

LOUIS: My coming out was pretty easy. I just sort of decided I was gay when I was about twenty and I've never lied about it. I've always been comfortable with it. But I had a lover once for about a year, a guy named David who was, like a lot of gay people, ashamed of his homosexuality. We had been going out for a couple of months when he said that he wished I could meet his mother. I knew he'd had a million boyfriends, that he'd been a serial monogamist all his life, and a real slut before that. And whenever his mom met his current boyfriend, the man was always introduced as David's "friend." So when he mentioned that he wanted me to meet his mom, I said, "Not until you are willing to introduce me as your boyfriend." So of course I never met her, and when she died a few months later, I felt really shitty about my proclamation. But I just wasn't willing to lie to this woman, or to anyone else for that matter, about my being gay. I always thought it was kind of sad that this lady never really knew who her son was, but later one of his friends—this is the kind of friends he had—told me that, considering what a slut David was, it was probably best that his mom didn't know about that part of his life.



OCTOBER 11

MONDAY, OCTOBER 11 IS NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY.

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NEW FICTION BY ALLEN KALCHIK

Breakfast Serial

Episode 9: Not Mike Again

Our Story So Far: *Lauren and Willy have given Carrie the go-ahead on the trip to Mexico. Lauren's even offered the use of her smart new auto for the journey.*

Carrie slammed the receiver into the cradle and shoved the phone across the kitchen table. Beads of sweat broke out on her forehead as her cheeks flushed and prickled with heat. Calling her older sister in Minnesota was generally an unpleasant task, and this particular conversation had ballooned into downright nastiness. Reach out and touch someone, indeed.

It began innocently enough: Carrie asking Bonnie for a little help with Jeffery when he arrived for

his upcoming solo stay at their parents' home in the North; Bonnie saying *sure, no problem, how long's he staying?* Carrie telling Big Sis how hard it is to raise a kid while working two jobs; Bonnie sounding sympathetic. Then Carrie went into detail on some of the trouble she's been having with the tyke lately; the talking back, the acting-up in school, the two-alarm brushfire....

In what seemed like an instant, Bonnie had turned on Carrie and began shouting awful accusations across the wire. Carrie thinks only of herself. She can't handle responsibility, she couldn't keep her man. She doesn't know how to prioritized her life. She was always a dreamer who had never deserved Nate, anyway.

These were old wounds and the scars were easily reopened. In no time, Carrie was screaming right back and the call ended in rage and frustration. Bonnie had a way of getting to Carrie like no one else could—even her mother.

She got up, untangled the phone cord, and started to run hot water in the sink. The dishes hadn't been done in days. As the sink filled, she shook off her sister's harsh words and her mind drifted toward Mexico. She imagined herself going through Frida Kahlo's rooms at the museum, feeling what the great artist felt as she lived and painted there. Carrie was so glad Lauren and Willy were going with her. They were going to become so much closer as a result of this trip; she just knew it. It was as if she was about to pass through some giant door in her life and, by planning this trip to Mexico, she was beginning to turn the handle.

She heard the back door slam in the hall behind her and then the clomping of tiny feet as Jeffery ran into the kitchen. He was covered head to toe in gooey, reddish mud. Leave it to her kid to discover the one puddle in the surrounding desert fields.

Carrie worked up her most authoritative voice. "You march yourself straight into the bathroom and get under the shower," she wailed. "And don't touch anything!"

The boy squashed his face into a silly grin, blew her a kiss in the air complete with a smacking noise, and headed down the hall without a word. Carrie giggled. Jeffery could always tell, somehow, when his mother wasn't really mad, and he always knew exactly what to do to disarm her. Tiny, red footprints were evenly spaced across the linoleum floor in his wake.

He looked so cute sometimes. He really was beginning to take after his father. Not only in his looks, but in his actions, too. The way he said certain things. She wondered if her parents would notice the resemblance when they picked him up at the Minneapolis airport in a few weeks. How could they not? She wondered if it would bother them, the way it sometimes bothered her. This tiny version of the man she had married and loved, in that order, and then worked for years to forget. She didn't even know for sure where Nate was now.

The warm water she was running to rinse the soapy dishes slowed to a trickle as Jeffery turned on the shower

in another part of the small trailer. Carrie turned the water off and dried her hands on a dish rag. She was startled by a sharp rapping on the front door.

Her heart raced as she checked the clock on the stove; she was reminded of the last time they'd had a visitor come knocking in the early evening. That had been over three weeks ago; the nice policewoman who asked her *where was your son on the morning of such and such?* Bottom line was that Jeffery had probably been involved in igniting the brushfire, but there were no eyewitnesses and the kids were too young for the police to question. The copette would leave it up to Carrie to find out what her boy's contribution to the fire had been, and his name would be filed with Child Protective Services.

This time, she decided to get a gander out the window before opening the door. The figure silhouetted on the stoop was a familiar one, feminine and bulky. But no uniform, thank God. Carrie flipped back the locks and flung open the door. It was Lauren.

"Hi, Girlfriend! I'm glad I finally found the right place. I had the space number inverted but I recognized your car out front."

Carrie held the door open while scanning the living room behind her out of the corner of her eye. She wasn't sure how far into complete disarray her living quarters had fallen this week. None of her friends from Phoenix had visited her at home before, and the idea of entertaining Lauren in this tiny, tacky space embarrassed Carrie. Lauren spoke again.

"I thought we could take a drive tonight...I had an idea that maybe we could find that woman who wanted to tell your fortune, the old Mexican lady you told me about." Lauren looked good. She was wearing a creamy, cable-knit sweater over maroon jeans that perfectly matched the color of her new foreign car. Her hair hung loosely around her face in thick, sienna ropes. Carrie was pretty sure the woman had lost some weight.

"A drive...sounds okay, I guess," Carrie stammered. Would she be able to find the elderly fruit seller again? She remembered telling Lauren to come by sometime, and that they could seek out the old lady together. She had forgotten how impulsive her pal could be, and that an offhand remark was often the only invitation Lauren needed. Both women listened for a moment to the sound of Jeffery's shower running in the background. Carrie's hand remained on the doorknob.

"Well, good." Lauren shifted on the steps and smiled. "Aren't you going to invite me in?"

....

Willy reached around behind his back and fluffed the pillows between his head and the cast-iron headboard. He lay on his back with just a thin

sheet covering his body and listened to Mike brushing his teeth in the adjacent bathroom. His head was pounding; the coughing, choking and spitting noises emanating from the sink accelerated his headache and made him cringe.

Mike McAvoy. Who would have thought he'd end up in this bed again with his old flame, Officer Mike? Hell, he wasn't even a flame, really. More like an ember that never had ignited, though it certainly wasn't due to a lack of blowing...

He'd run into Mike at Club Zarape when he and Lauren were showing Carrie the gay side of Phoenix nightlife on a recent Friday. Influenced by the women (who thought Mike was a stud) and the alcohol, he'd agreed to an exchange of phone numbers and to keep open the possibility of a casual dinner date.

The blond motorcycle cop called two days later and set the time and place; Willy consented, even though he knew he wouldn't allow himself to become involved with Mike again. He was a nice enough guy, but somewhat misguided and neurotic. Still, there was no harm in a little dinner and conversation, was there? Catching up on old times. Old, neurotic times.

What Willy had forgotten about Mike was that he was also a hunk, practically Willy's physical ideal. In the year or more since they dated, Mike had continued to work out steadily and his swollen pecs bulged beneath the sleeveless muscle shirt he wore to their dinner at Z-Tejas Grill. The food and wine went right to Willy's head in the darkened room and they found themselves talking well past dessert. It was Willy's suggestion that Mike follow him downtown to see his new place. Even then, he had no intention of asking the humpy officer to stay the night.

And then, when they had sipped more wine on his high-rise balcony and stared in silence at the city lights spread below them, he had turned to show Mike the way out. A quick kiss goodnight in the doorway seemed only reasonable. Appropriate, even. They were, after all, old friends. And there was no harm in a little physical contact.

But the kiss led to a long, passionate exchange, during which Willy's hand slid easily down the back of Mike's jeans and rested on the warm, rock-solid flesh of the body builder's ass. Suddenly the wine did all of Willy's talking for him. Even as he was saying he didn't want to get into anything complicated, he was rolling the tight shirt up and over the cop's head and then bending to kiss the younger man's quivering, washboard stomach.

Now, lying among the rumpled sheets and listening to Mike harrumphing loudly into his bathroom sink, Willy was filled with regret. He had a lot to do today. How could he get Mike out of there quickly? Was it going to be necessary to have a conversation with him? Or was Mike also aware that this was just a one-time thing? Not likely—the guy had actually been *singing* in the fucking shower. They'd never been on the same wavelength in

the past, so why should anything have changed?

Mike reentered the bedroom and crossed to the window. He was nude, with tiny water droplets still glistening on his broad shoulders. He'd looked good naked in the dark the night before, and the ridges of hard muscle beneath his soft skin had impressed Willy at the touch. But in the daylight, walking slowly toward the foot of Willy's handmade canopy bed and then climbing across the covers like a blond panther, he took the artist's breath away.

The cop tugged the sheet lower, uncovering Willy's torso. He pressed a kiss into the sculptor's hairy navel. In an instant, the two men were kissing and writhing on the bed in the bright morning sunlight. Mike slid farther down Willy's body, burying his face in the darker man's groin.

Willy pulled his hands away to rub his throbbing temples and clear his throat. This was going to be one hell of a hangover. How was he going to get this guy out of his condo, and soon? Should he interrupt the officer now? God, he needed a shower himself. He didn't need the complications Mike's continued infatuation would surely bring. He had to tell Mike that as soon as possible; it was the fair thing to do. His mind drifted to his art studio, to the piece he'd been working on the previous day. If he finished welding the top section together by Tuesday, and if the copper order arrived by Wednesday...

Just then, the magic Mike's soft mouth was working on his body hit a nerve that made the hair on Willy's legs stand on end. The back of his neck went tingly and his blood raced. His headache completely dissipated in the dry morning air. Maybe it would be better not to interrupt the guy just now.

Next Episode: Let's Go!

**QUIT COWERING
UNDER FURNITURE.**



**NATIONAL
COMING OUT DAY
IS OCTOBER 11.**

the final word

theater reviews, idle talk and inane mutterings by r.l. pela

Teenagers are so *civilized* these days. I asked my seventeen-year-old niece, Christina, to come with me to a matinee of **The Black Theatre Troupe's** production of *Ghost Stories of the Blacksmith Curse*, and she said sure, as long as we could stop in at the Phoenix Art Museum and look at the new display of bronze sculptures from the Song Dynasty. Christina let me take her to the Willow House for an iced coffee before the show, but she insisted we go in her car, because mine is last year's model and it isn't painted teal. Christina felt bad for the counter help at Willow House because their uniforms didn't match, and she felt even worse when I told her we couldn't leave at intermission if *Ghost Stories* really stunk. We did anyway. *Ghost Stories* is a series of vignettes about dead people who live in fireplaces and invisible dogs with bad tempers; the stories are meant to be scary but mostly they're just stupid. Director **Mike Traylor** positioned most of his actors center stage and left them there; perhaps he hasn't heard about French scenes or stage left. I tried to explain to Christina that the actors all spoke directly to the audience because they were *narrating*, but she wasn't buying it; she said in that case maybe they should all be wearing name tags and leading est seminars instead of appearing on the stage. Christina was worried that **David Hemphill**, who plays many of the parts in *Ghost Stories*, was hyperventilating; I explained that David was *acting*. We snuck out before Act Two so that Christina could go visit her couturier and so that I could do some research about *Ghost Stories* playwright Billy Graham. Unfortunately, the nice woman at the reference library thought I meant the evangelical minister, so I can't tell you anything about the author of *Ghost Stories*, but maybe someday I can write a column about the second coming of Christ. When I returned from the library there was a message from Christina saying that she'd forgive me for making her look at bad theater if I would take her to see **Actors Theatre of Phoenix's** *The Kathy and Mo Show: Parallel Lives* at the Herberger; too bad for her I'd already seen it. *Kathy and Mo* is sketch comedy written by comedienne Kathy Najimi and Mo Gaffney and, aside from a near-miss Shakespeare parody

and a really dreadful closing bit called "Hank and Karen Sue," *Kathy and Mo* is funny stuff. **Lisa Fineberg Malone** more than holds her own alongside co-star **Kathy Fitzgerald**, which is no mean feat. I'm convinced now that Kathy is a goddess; she is certainly the only actress in the state who can get a laugh with a line like, "Really? Wow!" I laughed even harder when I saw **Esther Turner's** costume designs for **ASU Lyric Opera Theatre's** production of *Closer Than Ever*; perhaps somebody in the theater department convinced Esther that the new Zony judges are fond of really ugly evening gowns, or maybe she phoned in her costume designs from a cellular with a really bad connection. It's a tribute to director/choreographer **JoAnn Yeoman's** talents that she was able to overcome yards of unsightly brocades and bugle beads to wring some movement from her non-dancing cast; JoAnn was fortunate to have a company of strong voices and **Jerry Hooker's** wonderful set to play with, too. Maybe you could wear dark glasses when you go see this revue of tunes by Richard Maltby and David Shire, although you'll want to remove your shades for a nice ballet bit featuring **Brian Bennington** and **Bryce Corson**. I heard that JoAnn read an essay by Arthur Miller to her cast before opening night curtain; theater people are so wacky. I took JoAnn's ex-husband, **Gary Naylor**, with me when I went to see **Theater League's** *Man of La Mancha* at Symphony Hall, and Gary told me about how he and JoAnn met when they co-starred in a production of that show about a hundred years ago. Gary dished the costumes and carped about **Emily Yancy's** head voice, but I didn't care because I got to see **Maria Amorocho** and **Gino Conforti** in supporting roles, so I was happy. I was happier still to see *Cats*, although I felt like I was watching reruns with a couple thousand strangers. This bus-and-truck of the Broadway perennial, part of the Valley Broadway Series, still features members of the original cast after all these years of touring, and the special effects, the superb dancing (recreated by **T. Michael Reed**, who did all those road companies of *A Chorus Line*), and the wonderful music that has made David Geffen so very rich are all here. What's not to like? I needed a break from

big, blowzy musicals, so I stopped off at **Unlikely Theatre Company** to look at **Mike Fenlason's** *Athene*, a two-character comedy about sex and psychoanalysis, among other things. After Unlikely's bombastic *Game Show*, which I'm glad you missed, I wasn't expecting much. Surprise: *Athene* is funny and well-written, and deserves a spot on your "must see" list. I love any play that spoofs Catholicism and mentions Wheat Chex, and it's easy to see why *Athene* was showcased by **Arizona Theatre Company's** tony New Play Reading Series a couple of years ago. This kind of sophisticated, witty theater doesn't come along very often. Or maybe it does. I'm only a pretend theater critic, how should I know? I've thought about becoming a *real* theater critic, but according to recent rumors, I'd have to buy a



Director JoAnn Yeoman overcomes nightmare costuming in ASU Lyric Opera Theatre's production of *Closer Than Ever*, a revue of songs by lyricists Richard Maltby and David Shire.

machine gun and a pair of combat boots and devote all my time to destroying the lives of poor, defenseless theater professionals by daring to write reviews that don't praise them to the heavens. On second thought, it kind of sounds like fun, but with all these plays to review, I just don't have the time.

The Black Theater Troupe's production of *Ghost Stories of the Blacksmith Curse* ♣ plays through October 10 at the Helen K. Mason Performing Arts Center (333 E. Portland, 258-8128); *Actors Theatre of Phoenix's* *The Kathy and Mo Show: Parallel Lives* ♣♣♣ is at the Herberger Theatre Center (222 E. Monroe, 253-6701) through October 17; *ASU Lyric Opera Theatre's* *Closer Than Ever* ♣♣ plays October 8, 9 and 10 at the University's Music Building (Mill Ave. and Gammage Parkway in Tempe, 965-6447); *Cats* ♣♣♣, part of the Valley Broadway Series at Grady Gammage Auditorium (University and Mill in Tempe, 965-3434), runs through October 10, and *Mike Fenlason's* *Athene* ♣♣♣♣ is at the Unlikely Theatre Company (414 S. Mill in Tempe, 970-0028) on Sunday, October 10 and Monday, October 11.

Also playing: *Sweeney Todd* through October 10 at Theater Works, 6615 W. Thunderbird, 979-9003; *Life is a Dream* through October 16 at Planet Earth Multi-Cultural Theatre, 909 N. 3rd St., 241-1828; *Arizona Shakespeare Company's* *Merry Wives of Windsor* through October 16 at Mesa Amphitheater, 954-0656; *Lettice and Lovage* through November 6 at 520 S. Mill Ave., 921-7870, and *The Killing of Sister George* at Berlitz Gallery Theatre, 747 W. Camelback, 263-0587.

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Straight looking and acting biWM with an overpowering fantasy to be dominated by a good-looking man. Completely submissive, I need a little time and a few lessons. If this sounds appealing to you, please leave me a message. **Box# 3786**

MWM, 34 yrs old, 5'11", 175 lbs, brwn hair & eyes, moustache, interested in meeting other males, M or S, who'd enjoy being the recipient of my pent-up passion. I'm very bi-curious. Please call. **Box# 8589**

BiWM, 45 yrs old, 6'2", 190 lbs, hairy-chested, clean-shaven, seeks fun times with other guys, 18-40—massage, cuddling, affection.... **Box# 6252**

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MWM, 6'2", black hair, brown eyes, looking for a good time. All takers—nobody turned away. Give me a call. **Box# 7998**

GM, 40 yrs old, looking for any slender M interested in a discreet relationship. I like clothes: Levis, leather, uniforms, I haven't been with a F for a long time, but if you know one who'd like to come along, I'd be interested. **Box# 8466**

I'm looking to meet new friends and someone for dating. I'm masculine, 5'10", 170 lbs, clean cut & well-shaven, with dark hair & eyes. Seeking someone 21-35, who's honest & down-to-earth, w/ a good sense of humor & a great smile. **Box# 2218**

28 yrs old, 5'10", 140 lbs, trim, attractive, and healthy. I'm looking for a good time and to meet people. Be discreet. The name is Leo. **Box# 5529**

Attractive DWM, 39 yrs old, 6'1", 180 lbs, very clean. Interested in a MWM or a C w/ a WM who would like to receive pleasure from me on a regular basis w/o reciprocation. **Box# 7528**

Attractive GWM looking to meet other men, mid-20s to early 30s. Give me a call. **Box# 8593**

Shy GWM looking for a new best friend relationship. I'm 28 yrs old, 5'11", 190 lbs, blond with blue eyes, and hairy-chested with a good build. Seeking a straight-acting, mature, discreet, honest cuddler who enjoys good conversation, 25-35 **Box# 4496**

5'11", 160 lbs, brown hair, green eyes. I'm into movies, going to bars occasionally, evenings at home, and any guys (up to 30 yrs old) with a similar build; race is unimportant. Give me a call. **Box# 5560**

Hello...this is Mike. You know what to do. **Box# 7881**

2 guys in north central Phoenix looking for a 3rd to have a goodtime. **Box# 9179**

HGM, 24 yrs old, very curious and seeking a first-time experience. I'm clean and looking for a good time; so, if you can teach me a thing or two, and you're a BGM, 21-27, please leave a message. **Box# 1738**

Nice-looking BM from Texas in search of WM for fun. I like the outdoors, sports, and movies. If you're interested, give me a call. **Box# 2493**

GWM, 30 yrs old, 5'3", 130 lbs, brown hair & eyes, moustache, seeking men who are into clothes because I am, and I also have a foot fetish. Contact me. **Box# 2758**

6'1", 198 lbs, long blond hair, blue eyes, smooth body, seeking a hairy-chested guy for spending quality times with. Please call me. **Box# 2963**

22 yrs old, 5'11", 150 lbs, seeking other guys. I'd like to get together with someone, and look forward to it. **Box# 3512**

SM, 19 yrs old, seeking a masculine, muscular W or HM who can treat me like a woman. Age is unimportant. I hope we can have some fun together. **Box# 4793**

Muscular body-builder, 22 yrs old, 6'3", 200 lbs, seeking an older, passive man, for good times. **Box# 6917**

BUTCH MALE, early 40's seeks passive bottom who is gay and feminine. **Box# 8605**

GBM, 5'7", 165, 27, good-looking, non-drinker/smoker, like to travel, movies, cooking, walks. ISO professional male who would like to take charge. Romance, relationship, 20-30. Any race. **Box# 8449**

Women seeking Women

I'd like to meet a friend. **Box# 6804**

Michelle, 28, large bif, seek a lesbian or bif any race, I'm metaphysical, quiet, give me a call. **Box# 5744**

Couples

Chuck, 5'10, 165, well-built, attractive. Wife is April, 4'11, 115, very hot. Seeking couples or bi-ladies for weekends. **Box# 4594**

Married W Couple seeks bi-couple or bi-female. First timers welcome, no swingers **Box# 8771**

She: blue-eyed and blond, 34 yrs old, 5'6", 135 lbs. He: brunette, 32 yrs old, 5'11", well-built. Looking for other couples interested in get-

ting together. **Box# 5104**

John, looking for an attractive, adventurous couple. **Box# 6251**

Couple seeks WF for a first time relationship. She is vicarious and shy, needs someone who is patient. **Box# 7950**

Tall, dark and handsome male in very good shape: lifts weights, jogs, scuba dives, skis, country western dances, is a pro airline pilot, flies light planes—and also enjoys life. Let's talk. **Box# 5281**

Couple seeking biF, or biC. We're both into relaxed evenings and friendship, but also interested in exploring new things. **Box# 8704**

Sub MWF seeks bright, non-smoking dom males, females or dom/sub couples for friendship and serious D/S encounters to include dom husband. Possibility of swapping for cross-training in time. **Box# 6866**

Blond, blue-eyed, 5'9", 155 lb WM with great body. 5'5", 140 lb, blond, blue-eyed, big-chested WF. We're looking for biFs, biCouples, or biMs that wants to have some fun. **Box# 4176**

WM, 36 yrs old interested in meeting couples. I'm willing to try just about anything, am very clean, discreet and attractive. If you're interested in a SWM with an open mind and a good attitude, give me a call. **Box# 5778**

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cheerleader, blond, blue-eyed, 36-24-34. My husband is tall, dark, and handsome GQ type. Please call if interested. **Box# 1136**

Tall, athletic, trim, attractive, straight, discreet WM, 45 yrs old, seeks attractive and discreet couple where she is thin, and 25-39, for 3-somes. Discretion & cleanliness are assured and expected. **Box# 4663**

Couple: She's a slender, redhead, who's very submissive to me. We like to play and are looking for others, particularly ladies and other couples, to join us. **Box# 4134**

Interested in anybody and interested in anything. Give me a call; we can talk about it. **Box# 3238**

MWM seeks biCouple, single or married woman for fun and conversation. **Box# 7422**

MC invites WF to join them for intimate evenings. Please leave a message; we look forward to hearing from you. **Box# 2290**

MC, 30s, looking to meet other couples. **Box# 3310**

Very fit and attractive couple would like to meet a busty, biF, 25-35, who's clean, fit, attractive, emotionally stable, and not overweight. **Box# 3942**

Attractive, healthy, WC with biF seeks attractive biF, 20-32, for adult fun. He's: 31 yrs old, 5'9", 160 lbs, long brwn hair, blue eyes. She's: 30 yrs old, 5'5", 110 lbs, very long brwn hair, hazel eyes, likes rock, parties and dancing. **Box# 4674**

Couple, young 20s, both slim and attractive, both bi, seek other biCs who would like to get together to have some fun. **Box# 4728**

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If you're an attractive, discreet WC who'd enjoy a 3-some and possibly a long-term relationship with a tall, slender, straight, attractive WM in early 40s, let's meet and see if we're compatible. **Box# 2331**

You're a couple, both heavyset, seeking a slightly heavy, very sexy, very romantic, very affectionate and sensuous male to join you for fun, excitement, & adventure. Let's share our dreams and fantasies. Call me; surprise me; I'm waiting. **Box# 9771**

35 yr old couple seeks other couples, or biFs for fun and friendship. She's 5'7", 160 lbs. He's 5'9", 190 lbs. Please call. **Box# 1133**

PSWM, 36 yrs old, seeking Cs interested in light B&D, and related activities. If you have experience in these areas, please give me a call. **Box# 5803**

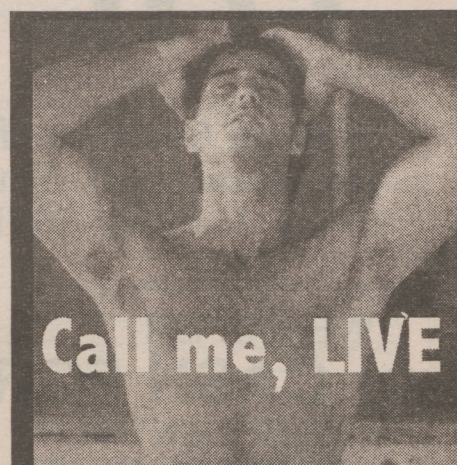
WM, 41 yrs old, 175 lbs, 5'10", It brwn hair, blue eyes, seeks Cs—energetic, attractive, and adventurous. **Box# 7406**

MWC, very very attractive. She: former pro-cheerleader, 5'4", 110 lbs, 26 yrs old. He: tall, dark, GQ looking, 29 yrs old. Seeking a C to have fun with. BiF a plus, but not a must. Must be discreet and clean. **Box# 9636**

MWC seeking Cs with biFs to have fun with. 30s-40s, smokers, clean & discreet. Please call and leave a message. **Box# 1685**

She's 40 yrs old, 5'6", bi & beautiful. He's 6'4", 200 lbs, and very athletic. We both like a lot of fun & games, and would like to meet other Cs who do too. Please leave us a message; we'll return all calls. **Box# 1810**

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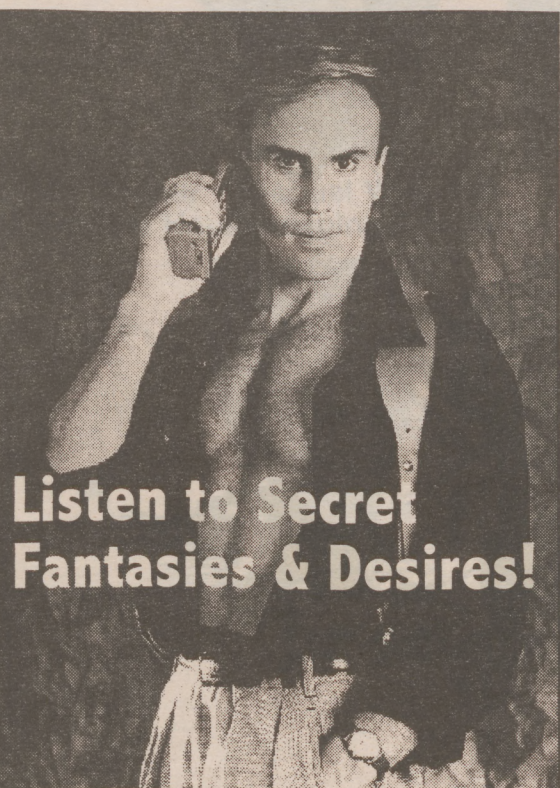
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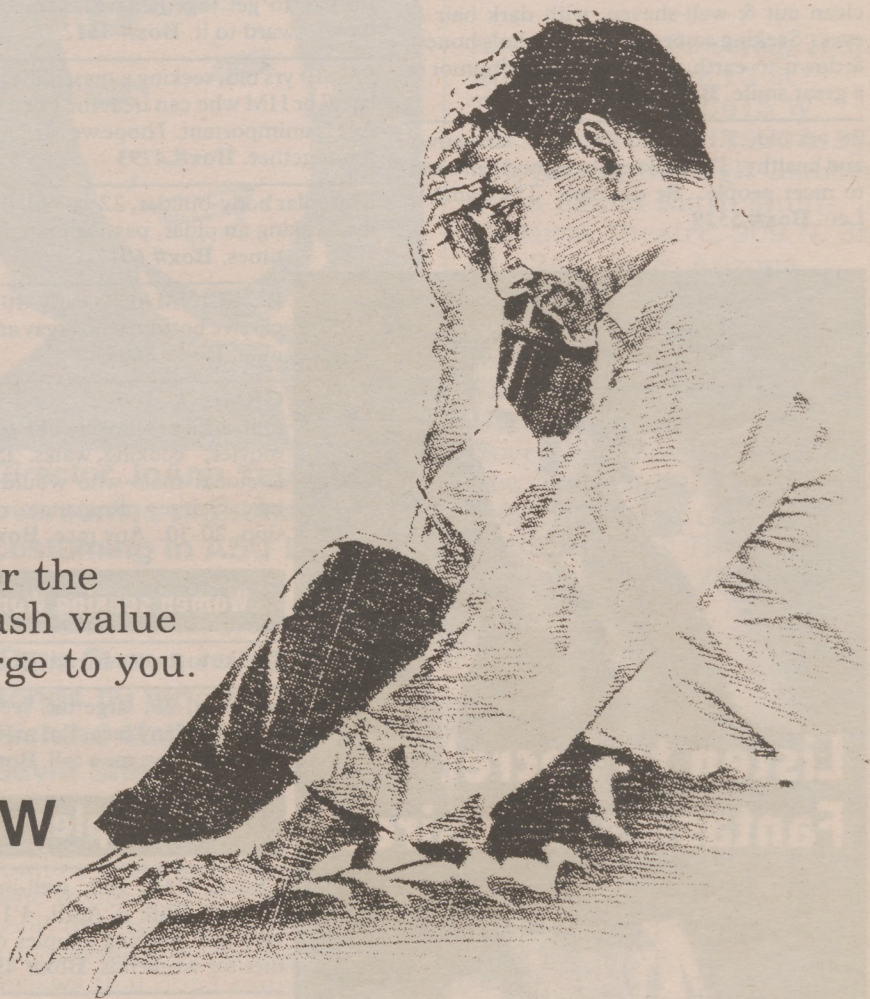
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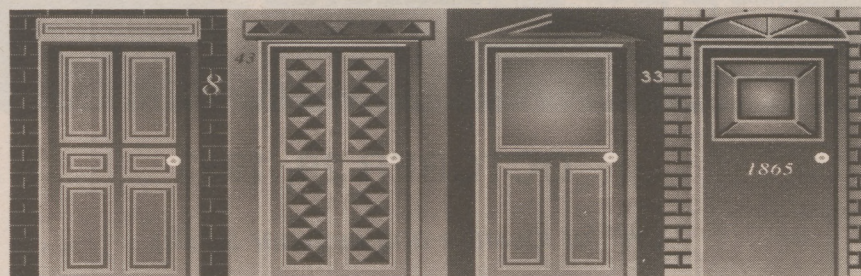
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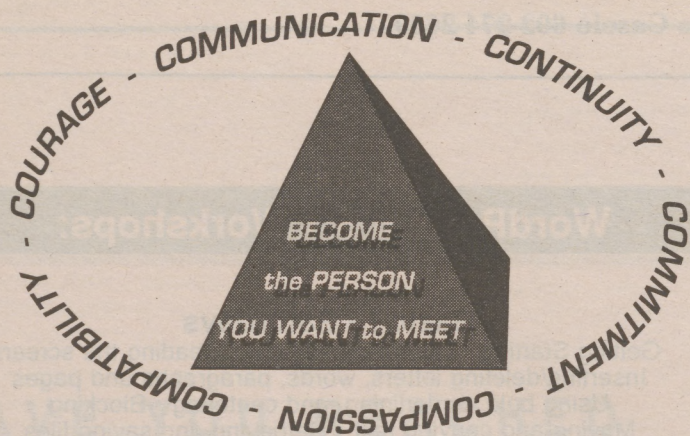
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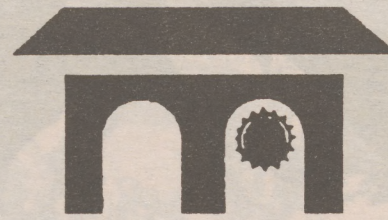
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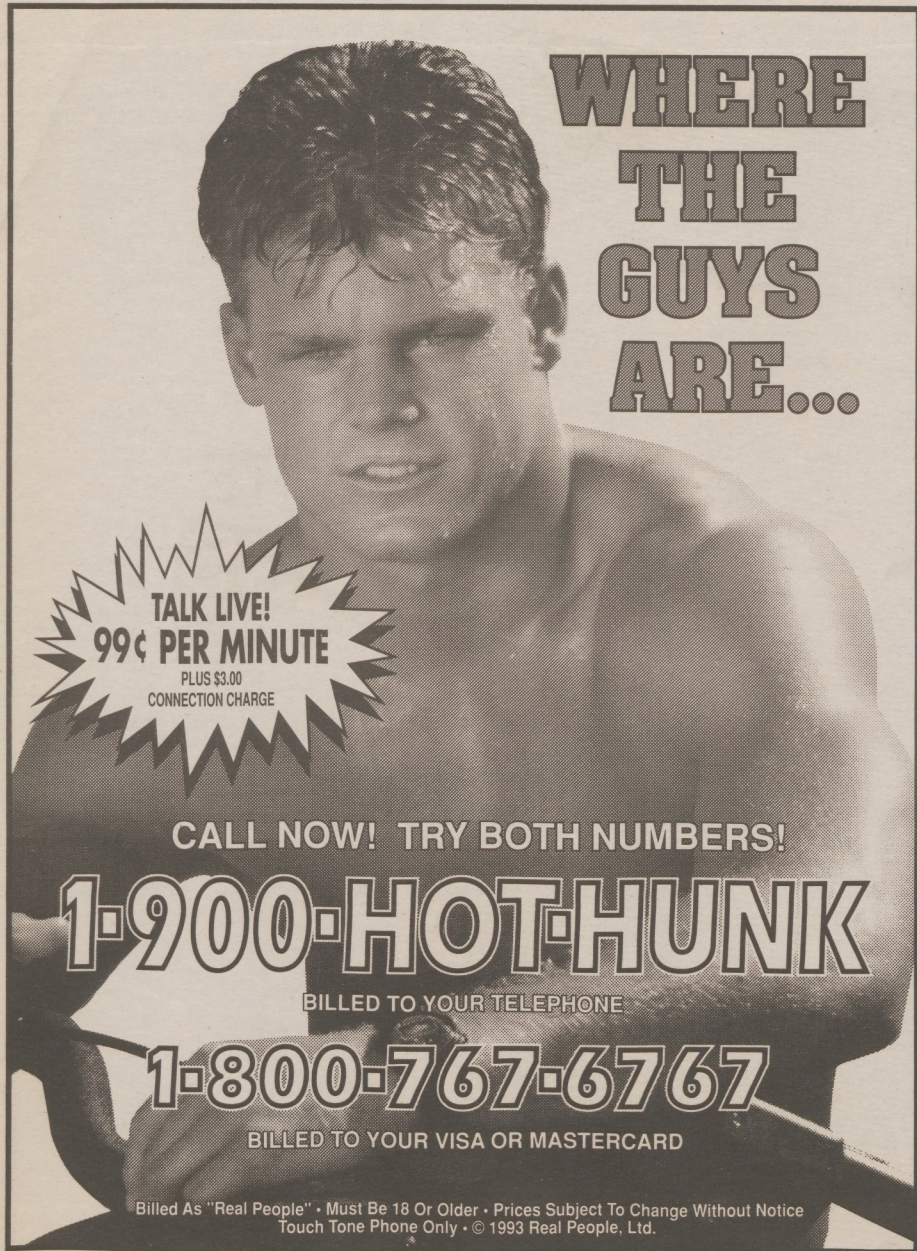
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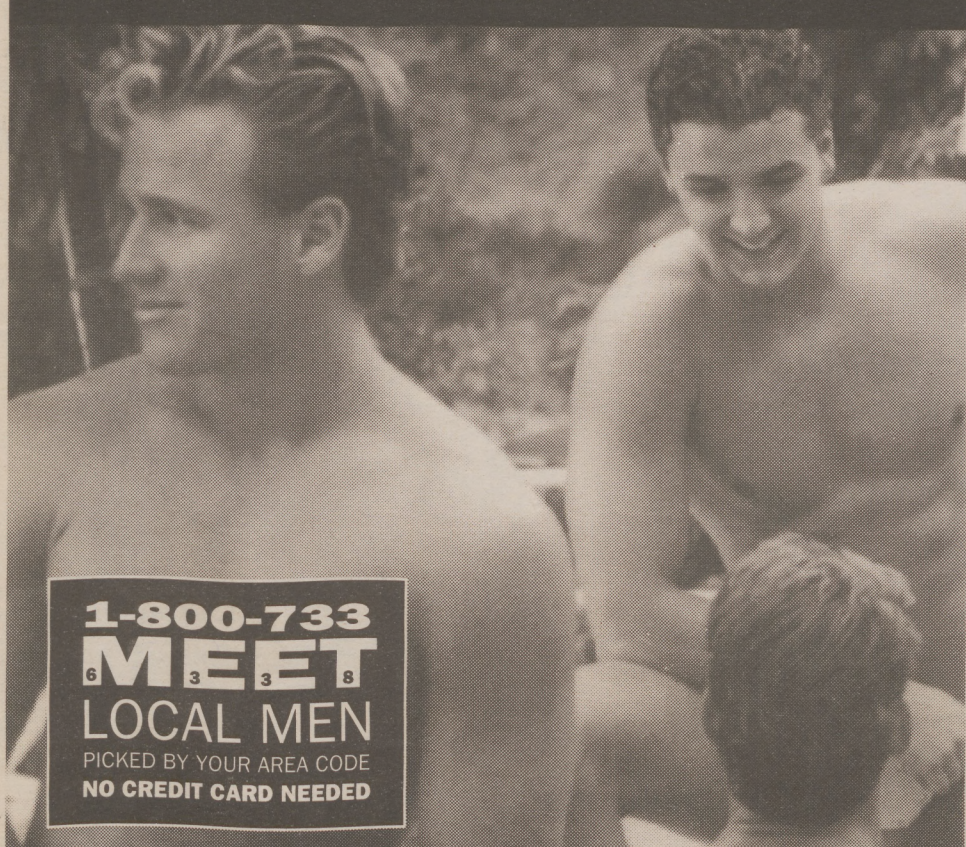
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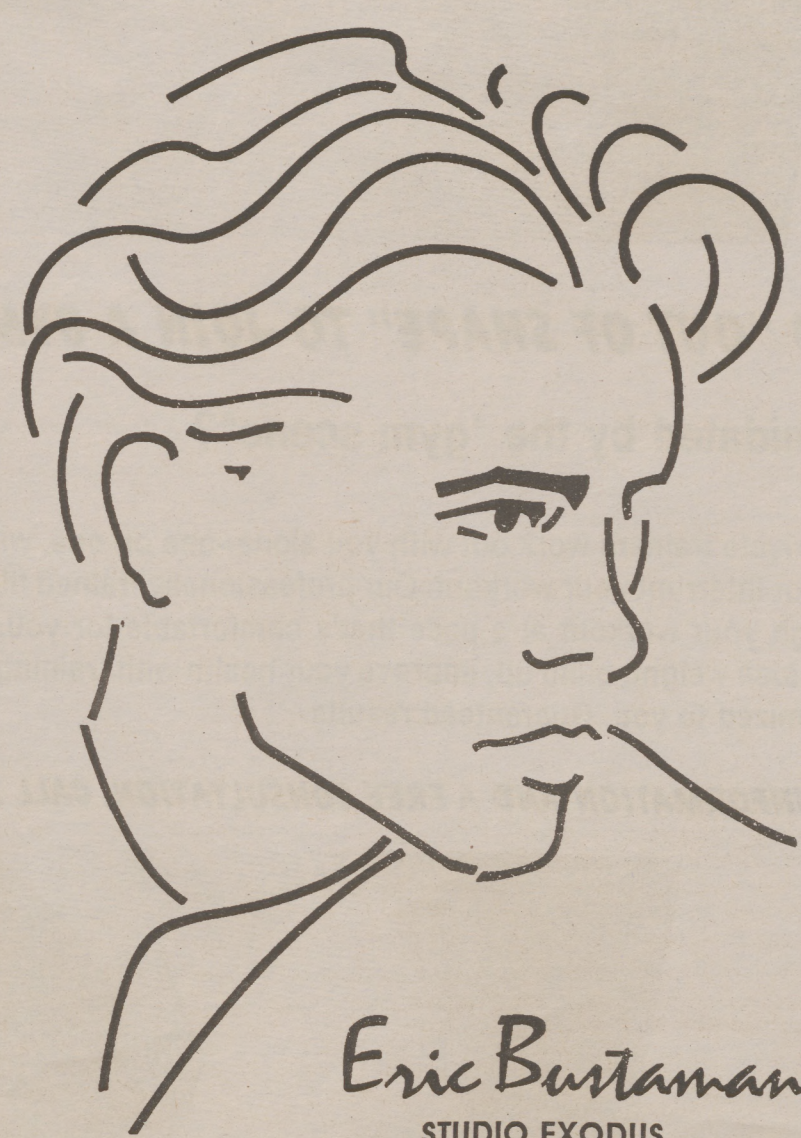
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