

THE WORD IS OUT

: A NEWSLETTER OF THE PRISON CORRESPONDENCE PROJECT

Welcome all to our Big Issue #17!!

Our beautiful title art courtesy of SincereOne this time around. A quick reminder to everybody to send in your art and next issue it could be you! Also, big thanks to Justin and Ms Jazzie for their art in this issue.

Lucky issue thirteen marks the addition of a few new items to the newsletter. We're trying our hand at introducing an ADVICE COLUMN there on Page Eight.

Last month marked the passing of Leslie Feinberg, a giant in the world of progressive anti-prison queer and trans organizing. You can read and excerpt from hir obituary on Page 15. Among many other accomplishments, Leslie wrote a column on the history of socialism and LGBT struggle for Workers World newspaper. In hir memory, and in response to some feedback we've gotten around wanting to know about gay queer trans history, we've included one of those columns on Pages 13-15 and if we hear positive things will explore keeping it as a newsletter regular feature.

In struggle and solidarity,

Your friends at the Prisoner Correspondence Project

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Montreal QC H3G 1M8
CANADA**

Table of Contents

Since We've Been Gone
Seeking NuNu
- 2 -

Gay Celebrity Gossip
- 3 -

Homoscopes
- 4 - 5 -

C'est La Guerre
- 6 -

Odds and Ends
- 7 -

Featured Resource: Sero Project
Ask Maria
- 8 -

Resource Library
- 9 - 10 - 11 - 12 -

Lavender and Red
- 13 - 14 - 15 -

The Importance of Queer Friendships
- 16 - 17 - 18 - 19 -

SINCE WE'VE BEEN GONE

This fall, Prisoner Correspondence Project's cast of collective members underwent another rotation. Beloved veterans Bridget (who had been with the project from its very infancy in 2007) and Patrick moved away to Vancouver and Berlin, respectively. But no need to worry—as frequent scribblers to the project might have noticed, a couple of new names have been floating around our correspondences. For now, the collective is Amber, Clayton, E, Josh, Kristin, Sasha and Tracy.

Here in Montreal, daylight is becoming scarcer and our layers more numerous as we prepare for five months of winter just around the corner. This time of the year, before our spirits fully coalesce with the surrounding darkness and ice, seems like a fitting moment to take one final saunter through a few memories from the summer past...

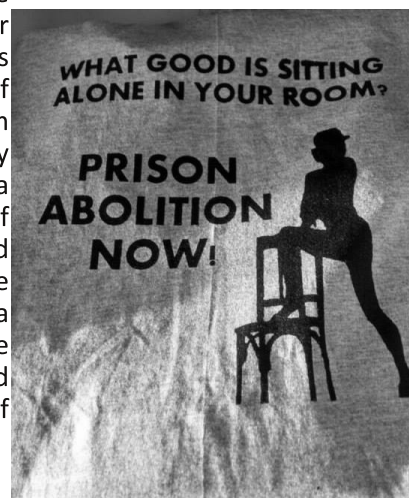
In June, the project took a group field trip to the nation's capital for the 15th International Conference on Penal Abolition in Ottawa, Ontario. On Friday the 13th, we cheated the curse and successfully assembled together a perplexing web of wires, webcams, computers and microphones to host a multi-city discussion called "Queer & Trans Prison Pen-Pal Project Roundtable: Strategy and Mutual Aid". It was inspirational to hang out in person and via video chat with members of the Prisoner Correspondence Project (Toronto), Black



and Pink (national chapter), Black and Pink (Chicago), Black and Pink (New Orleans), LGBT Books to Prisoners (Madison), and Bent Bars (London, UK). An unofficial conference afterparty, consisting mainly of the members of Prisoner Correspondence Project, transpired at a gay bar in Ottawa's famed Byward (or "Bi-Word", as we liked to call it) Market.

Of course we

can't talk about summer without talking about pride. In Montreal, there are the city-sponsored Divers/Cité and Pride as well as an alternative pride called Pervers/Cité. With our mission to straddle as many gay scenes as we can manage, Prisoner Correspondence Project was all over town during pride season. At the official Pride, we handed out promotional fliers next to muscle models in tiny shorts bankrolled by liquor companies and financial institutions. At Pervers/Cité, we hawked our line of Divas for Decarceration T-shirts (featuring Beyoncé, Judy, Céline and Liza, see below) at the Queer Between the Covers Bookfair, got a cut out of the No Pants No Problem underwear dance party fundraiser, and organized a panel about the history of policing, gentrification and gay/lesbian anti-violence activism with Christina Hanhardt, author of *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence* (pg 6).



We ended the summer with Patrick's going away party, Going A-Rave, tending a bar with proceeds toward the project. And that's all for now. See you next issue!

xoxo

SEEKING NuNu!!

Do you go by NuNu? Always or just to that special someone? Were you expecting to receive a letter through us that never arrived? This is slightly embarrassing, but we got our wires crossed, and cannot find any records of who to forward it on to. If you think this might be you, get in touch and tell us who it would be coming from. Our deepest apologies about the mixup!

GAY CELEBRITY GOSSIP

Hey everyone, we've got some WICKED HOT celebrity gossip for all you readers this issue, so read on and enjoy!

DOLLY PARTON REVEALS TANTALIZING SECRET

Dolly Parton! It's pretty near impossible to not adore her, her songs are amazing and she's a total badass babe. Annnnd it just so happens that she loves us queers and has voiced a ton of support for LGBT communities. Plus she's making a dance album for all her LGBT fans, how cute is that?!



photo by Trey F. Stroy / CTK Mgmt

husband."

Here's a question, have you ever noticed how Dolly Parton is always wearing long sleeve shirts and dresses? Well, as it turns out, there's more to her style than just looking stunning and glamorous. Recently, she admitted to having tattoos hiding beneath her incredible outfits, stating, "I have a few, but they're mostly for my

It is rumored that she may have more than just a few, but it doesn't seem like she feels inclined to sharing her body art with the world, at least for now. Either way Dolly, we love you!

BASKETBALL COURT-ING

It turns out that WNBA superstars Brittney Griner and Glory Johnson have been up to a lot more than just competing with one another on the court, as the couple recently announced that they're engaged to be married! Instagram users completely lost it when Griner posted an adorable



picture of her proposing to Johnson, stating in her post, "Last Night was a Night to Remember, I became the happiest person on this earth! ... Me and my baby are in it for Life!"

Now there's a power couple!!

ERIKA ERVIN CAST IN AMERICAN HORROR STORY

Hit FX television American Horror Story has recently cast Erika Ervin as "Amazon Eve", and the fact that they're embracing a trans woman cast member is making the show even more appealing. Apparently, the role was initially envisioned for a man, but Erika had some tricks up



her sleeve, as she recalls, "I slicked my hair back, no makeup, bound my breasts, lowered my voice and walked in [to the audition]—and nailed it."

By the sounds of it, Erika Ervin has had many struggles in her life. She recently explained in a promo interview for the show that she spent years hiding her gender from those around her, had to suffer her mother dying from AIDS, and that she is still being rejected by members of her family—including her father—for being trans. "It's not always easy. There's a lot of criticism and hate toward transgender people," she says. "I can only control what's in [my heart]. I can't control someone else."

Keep staying strong Erika, you're an inspiration to all of us!



HOMOSCOPIES

Aries, beware of those unpreventable communication meltdown moments. I know it always seems to you that if people can't understand what your beautiful mouth is saying, it is not your pickle. But since the retrograde motion of Mercury and Saturn in the coming months are about to swirl your head around like Dolphins dancing to Nikki Minaj, I advise you to communicate urgent matters in a variety of ways, carefully, and with any remaining calm you can muster up. Practice daily this art of smooth talking and you will sail



calmly into the depths of a bejeweled princess tiara of understanding and good fortune that will continue to pay off in months to come.

Gemini, your anger right now is like a Halloween cat hissing, back arched up in a row of furry spikes. Like our feline friend, your rage gets big and beautiful and then shortly returns to a fuzzball of nonchalance and false calm and tiny saucers of warm milk. What would it mean, sweet twins, if you could stay mad beyond the moment and actually channel this fleeting anger into something you can sustain, and therefore control? Would you become a lubricated fist full of fire? A perfectly-iced red velvet birthday cake with a hundred



candles that will never blow out? If you can keep the wax from melting and destroying your dessert/heart, your flaming anger will guide you to successfully confront the central conflicts that are preventing you from slipping into the all spaces you belong, and unleashing that hot raging babe we all know you are.

Leo, it's your turn to take control. Assert a command. Flag on the left. Tell us how you want it and we will be more than eager to wait in line for a chance to deliver, because this is the astrological moment when you can have it all wrapped up to go with a sweet tea and a hot biscuit and cheese grits. But do not forget to reward a job well done and take your time returning the favour, because giving back to those who give to you will feel better now than ever. Just don't forget to lace up those hot leather



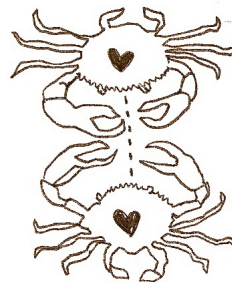
boots, bottom from the top.

Taurus, the cold months ahead might urge you to open up to some quiet yet important signs that you have been missing at your purposeful hurried pace. You will need to be attuned to tiny hints and barely perceptible glances that will carry deep meaning and telltale clues. Open up to what others are secretly sending your way and try to reciprocate with your own small acknowledgements: eye contact held a little too long; a meaningful moment of two arms touching shirt sleeves; a seemingly innocent grazing of mouths or touching face to face. Making just the smallest



amount of contact right now will go a far and long way toward sparking showers of ice cream and chocolate fudge and cherries on top and all of it, so use your powers wisely and carefully to scoop your targets. Delicious.

Cancer, I imagine you spooning with your arms wrapped around your ambitions like a lover, your belly fitting perfectly into the relaxed arch of a soft back, your hands grazing thighs and finding the perfect spot to hang on, flex, and rest. Pull up the covers, Cancer, and lean harder into this possibility that each thing you hold onto in the coming months—each person who gets a moment of your help or advice—will feel comforted by the warmth, the gay, the calm, and the embrace you have to offer. You are a bear cub; we are all urging to cuddle up close to you and fit our hands up against your paws, so please let at least some of us spend the night with you Cancer, if only in our wildest dreams.



Virgo, you have spent the past months immersed in the challenge of truly changing and doing real hard inner work, and so now the stars are offering you a moment of rest. When you take off your sweaty shirt and kick up your feet and take pause, what will make you really feel the most satisfying rewards of all your emotional labor? Is it listening to Beyoncé's Blow on repeat? Will you unwind as you bob for apples in a bathtub of caramel sauce or spend the day bottle-feeding a sea of baby goats? When you finally get to relax, how will you get to the place in your head that is most specifically designed for your comfort and really allow yourself to feel the enormity of the accomplishments you have undergone? Find a way to get there, as it is critical that you now recognize how beautiful and tenacious you have been all along.



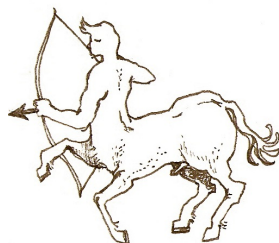
or HEY, WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?

Libra, you are really coming into a new phase of being a knockout. Your quick wit is flashing faster and leaving everyone around you in total awe of your brains and how you use them. You are also giving some really helpful insight to people who thought they had nothing more to learn, making even the cockiest of your friends and lovers eager for another late night pep talk. You may also be noticing how with each interpersonal connection you deepen, your style is improving and your eyes are glimmering, and your smile is starting to make everyone at



least a little wobbly at the knees. Do not consider this turn of events something fleeting, as these assets people are now noticing have been here all along. You are just using this astrological opportunity to externalize some of your inner gems, so please try and forgive us if we can't stop drooling and following you around like a litter of puppies. We will try to play it cool, but we are crushing out hard.

Sagittarius, as you take over the sun this winter, I encourage you to use your power to test out a new approach to caring for the people you love. While the care you have dispensed in the past is certainly appreciated, changing the



way you give affection won't just reaffirm your connections and improve your relationships—it will turn the world into a plush velvet, patent leather, diamond studded, silk-lined, fairy dusted oasis of fun. You know that it remains within your control to love more furiously, so be open and make us

feel like we have just spewed neon rainbows into a time machine disco that propels us into a future of French fries and cheesburgers and spinning pizza rainbow diamonds.

Well, hello **Aquarius**. Can I assist you with something or are you finding yourself rather cut off right now from the offerings of others? Do you feel lonely? Restless? Lifeless? Distracted? Bored? Are you feeling careless? Hungry? Angry? Hangry? Did you run out of patience for old tricks and gossips and rumors and acronyms and kittens and choices and weather and even the tender kisses of a lover you no longer remember to call? If apathy is sneaking up on you or is already present, I urge you to



value the time you can spend alone with yourself until your flare for everything comes creeping back. Once you are feeling more like you again, you will look back on this as a time of needed rest. Until then, hang in. We still love you baby darling.

Scorpio, you are a mystery and since the last plot twist, we are having some difficulties keeping our facts straight or trying to anticipate what will be revealed for us next. Everyone around you is eagerly waiting for the end of the



month to roll around because with the new winter moon, hope is abundant that you may let a wall down, offer a close firm hug, flash us a sincere smile or at least something that will

keep us going as we yearn to figure out how you actually feel. If you let us in for just a moment, you will keep close all the onlookers and admirers who will lubricate your secrets and truly appreciate all that you are keeping under wraps.

Capricorn, you woke up like this. How can I give you advice when you are already Flawless? You do of course know that now is a time for critical decision making, so all I can advise in the present is to proceed with painstaking



caution, rather than assume that you've always already premeditated each outcome, foreseen all obstacles, and planned each detail down to the whipping cream. If you can just take the extra moments to actually feel (yes feel—as in—with your

emotions) your feelings, it will help propel your enthusiasm toward a more satisfying end that leaves all of us yearning for some of your hidden tenderness and your truly unique perspective on all subjects of knowledge.

Pisces, if you combine two cups of flour with butter, eggs, milk, sugar, and some baking soda and whatnot, I would put you in a heart-shaped pan and grease you up and cook you at 350 until you come out golden brown and



then I would check you with a toothpick and you would be moist and succulent and perfect and ready to serve. I know I don't need to deep fry or pecan crust or roll you up in seaweed to remind you that you are a poundcake and a pot roast and a perfect turkey—so please don't

question your confidence right now to satiate and delight us all with your classic appeal. Yum.

C'EST LA GUERRE: Policing Gay Safety, Gentrification, and the Politics of Violence

In August, as part of Montréal's radical alternative pride festival Pervers/Cité, we hosted a keynote panel about gay neighbourhoods, policing, and gentrification. We wanted to talk about how the city of Montréal was using the excuse of protecting LGBT people in the gay village to expand a police surveillance camera network throughout the city, and how (some) LGBTQ activists in town were demanding more police on our streets. Since we know that the police so often are exactly the people who victimize us and our loved ones, we have some problems with that! The panel aimed to bring a more critical perspective to these new developments.

Our star guest was Christina Hanhardt, a professor who grew up in NYC, who wrote a book called *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence* that has been winning an *awful* lot of awards. (We think she deserves every one!) She looks at the history of LGBTQ activist movements in NYC and San Francisco, arguing that many of these groups once fought for housing, against poverty, and against police violence, but more and more started to only focus on the threat of random street violence—demanding more police in our neighbourhoods to stop it. These calls for more police split the LGBTQ community, with richer and whiter LGBTQ people buying more and more expensive condos, while other LGBTQ people were getting first priced out and then forced out of the neighbourhood—often in a paddy wagon.

We also heard Michael Hendricks, a veteran of ACT UP! Montréal and of the group Lesbians and Gays Against Violence, which formed after a police raid on a queer party called Sex Garage in 1990—an event we've come to know as "Montréal's own Stonewall." His comments were complemented by some words from David Kavanaght, an activist who has worked in struggles to stop the arrest sweeps by "community police" of people who live on the street in Montréal. More than one of our collective members was a more than a little star-struck by our stellar invitees.

The event had a fantastic turnout at a community centre in the gay village, and started some conversations among people in town that are hopefully going to continue. We can't let, as has been happening in Montréal, the concern about the safety of our LGBTQ family become cover for pushing people out of our neighbourhood—especially when it so often pushes us into the prison system.

Michael Hendricks, David Kavanaght, Christina Hanhardt, and our own Patrick at the event.



Ban Solitary, says Everybody

The placement of federal inmates in solitary confinement is “cruel and usual punishment” in Canada’s prisons and should be severely curtailed, says a new editorial in the nation’s leading medical journal, the Canadian Medical Association Journal

Noting that there are 850 offenders in isolation on any given day, the editorial follows on the heels of an Ontario coroner’s jury last December who recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada restrict the use of segregation to 15 consecutive days.

The jury said it agreed with a 2011 report by a United Nations torture expert that said indefinite segregation should be abolished.

UN Special Rapporteur Juan E. Mendez also found that there should be an absolute prohibition on the use of solitary confinement in the case of juveniles and people with mental disabilities.

Poppies Made with Prison Labour in 2014

This past Remembrance Day marked the first year that the red poppies from the Canadian Legion’s annual poppy sale will have been assembled using prison labour.

Prisoners across Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba have been inserting the pin into the red plastic flower this year for a rate of “up to \$6.90 a day”

It is estimated that production for the next season will start just a few short weeks after 2014 wraps up.

Pope Francis Condemns the Prison System

Addressing members of the International Association of Criminal Law at the Vatican, Pope Francis criticized prison systems across the world.

The Pope denounced the way prisons have increasingly been used to deal with a wide range of social problems. Not only are these punitive measures ineffective, they are also “cruel, inhuman and degrading”. The Pope called maximum-security prisons to a “form of torture” and expresses concern over the mental and physical suffering they create.

The Pope urged “all Christians and men of good faith” to “fight, not only for the abolition of the death penalty—whether it is legal or illegal and in all its forms—but also to improve the conditions of incarceration to ensure that the human dignity of those deprived of their freedom is respected”. He also condemned life sentences, calling them “a hidden death penalty”.

ODDS AND ENDS

E T T M Z O Y E H S H O O H O L G W X K
O G E U Q O P B E U W R C G B I S O N N
W K U R P M L G M I C A N A L O B G M S
O W G M R O F M O A S I L T O N C V S T
D I D S B E I N J X M K D L K N K C H N
V T N S E N F X M A M R P R O D W X U A
E A T N G S V A L Z S A G O D W G Q P H
U E T B O S F F W Y Y H U T F K I M N P
R F I O P E W W O B N S F X X R I G B E
J R X R C A L S Q U I R R E L H O W W L
D Q U Z X G N E Q N O C J D C L G G S E
T W O I O U X H M Y E K N O M U T U L C
K E O J K L D Z M A Y A E O Y U U A Y Q
Z O G M K L R D H W H C O B T C V O I B
S O R E C O N I H R W C A Q L I C D W K

Bison
Chameleon
Chimp
Dog
Elephant
Ferret

Flamingo
Frog
Hummingbird
Lion
Lobster
Monkey

Orca
Rhinceros
Seagull
Shark
Squirrel
Swallow

Two New Laws Pass in California

Two new laws about the prison system recently passed in California. In September, Governor Jerry Brown signed a bill that will distribute condoms to the state’s 34 adult prisons. On November 4, California voters passed Proposition 47, which will reclassify certain drug and theft crimes from felonies to misdemeanors.

California is the second state after Vermont to introduce condoms to prisoners in state prisons. Right now, only a few jail and prison systems to do this, including the Los Angeles county jail system. The bill was introduced in response to HIV transmission rates inside prisons. Following this act, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation will develop a 5-year plan to expand the availability of condoms in all California prisons.

Proposition 47, the Safe Neighborhood and Schools Act, was passed on November 4. Drug and theft crimes involving less than \$950 are now considered misdemeanors. This reclassification will lead to an estimated 40,000 fewer prison sentences every year. The drop will be especially drastic in drug related charges. The money saved from sending fewer people to prisons will go to programs for drug treatment, schools and victim services.

Although these legal changes are a step in the right direction, we also recognize that new laws that seem to reduce the prison system or improve prisoners’ lives often get implemented in a way that does the opposite. Here at the project, we’re committed to our on the ground work supporting prisoners and fighting against prison system.

Featured Resource: THE SERO PROJECT

The Sero Project is a network of people living with HIV whose mission is to fight stigma and injustice. Their primary target is fighting the increasing levels of HIV criminalization happening everywhere. In many states, this criminalization is happening through HIV-specific statutes. In other places, existing criminal laws are being used to give ridiculous charges to people in cases of not disclosing one's status to sexual partners. In prisons, often this can mean people getting harsher disciplinary measures for something as simple and harmless as spitting just because of their HIV status.

The Sero Project was instrumental in a recent victory that got the HIV-criminalization statute overturned in Iowa. They (like us!) believe that an important first step to any kind of political organizing around HIV is building networks of people affected by the virus to have discussions, and to build a consciousness and a

strategy. To this end, they are in the very early stages of starting a national network of incarcerated people living with HIV.

If you, or someone you know and/or love is facing these charges or disciplinary measures, get in touch with the Sero Project.



You can write to them at:

The Sero Project
P.O. Box 1233
Milford, PA 18337

HOW DO YOU SOLVE A PROBLEM? ASK MARIA!

Listen Mary,

I need some help with etiquette. So I've been having sex with a few of the girls in here and it's the first time I've been with transwomen. Everyone says treat them just like you would other women, but when we're fucking, I don't know if I should offer to give them a reach-around. I want them to feel pleasure too and not just make it all about me, you know? What should I do?

Dear Eager Beaver,

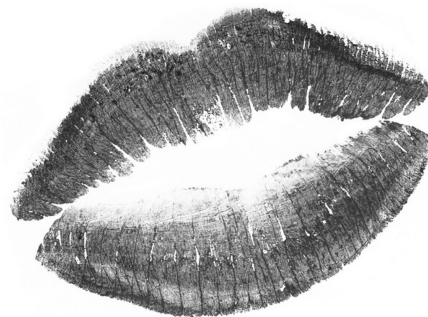
First off boy, ain't no one can tell you what she likes better than she can. If you want to know what she's into - ask her. It's really just that simple.

Secondly, there are a hell of a lot more ways to have sex and avenues to pleasure than just through a penis. The British filmmaker Derek Jarman once famously said "When I meet heterosexual men I know they have experienced only half of love." There is joy in getting fucked if it's being done right. Men and transwomen have prostates that have a lot of nerve endings in them. There is also a lot more to sex than just fucking. Check out *Fucking Trans Women* just added to the Resource Library this issue. It's a sex-guide centered on tranwomen's pleasure. Geared more towards women who have sex with transwomen, it has a lot of use-

- Eager to Please

ful information on anatomy, communication and pleasure. Do note that it has a lot of pictures so might take several tries to get it through mailrooms. Also check out *The Bottom Line*. It's pretty man-specific but has a lot of invaluable information on positioning, etc.

Do you have a question for next issue's column? Send it along! Think you could have answered this question better? Let us know!!



RESOURCE LIBRARY OF THE PRISONER CORRESPONDENCE PROJECT

The following is a list of the resources available through our resource library as of Winter 2015. All resources are provided free-of-charge to prisoners and are yours to keep.

We are constantly in the process of updating the resource library, so please forward any suggestions of things you would like to see available or resources you have access to that you would like to share

Please note that we are only able to send five or six at a time. If you request more than that, they will be sent in batches over several weeks, so please indicate which are the highest priority and we will attempt to send them in that order. Stamp donations are always appreciated, but never required.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Support (sexual abuse & survivorship) - In a time when sexual assault and abuse are an increasing problem and when most women have been sexually abused in one way or another, Cindy Crabb (Doris Zine) brings us a document showing ways to prevent sexual violence and support survivors of sexual abuse.

Taking care of Your Body and Mind - A pamphlet on safer slashing / safer cutting in prison put out by PASAN

Survival in solitary: a manual written by and for people living in control units by California Prison Focus - A collection of writing, poetry, and information about coping with solitary confinement and life sentences

Trying to Understand Self-Injury - A short zine written by Black Ice Press, about disassociation, and the reasons why folks might choose to use self-injury to cope

Freeing the Human Spirit through Meditation and Yoga - a one-page guide to some basic yoga poses that can be done in prison

Prisoner Rape Support Package - put together by the Preventing Prisoner Rape Project in Australia

Hope for Healing: information for survivors of sexual assault in detention - a kit put together by US group Just Detention

SAFER SEX

Beyond Appearances - For prisoners, sex workers and other "high risk" communities, on HIV/AIDS issues, including prevention.

C it's no joke: Hep C - A guide explaining how to transmit Hep C, including tips on safer tattooing, sex, and drug use.

Queersafe - A zine (not specific to prisons) about safer sex for queer men and women, different sexually transmitted diseases, and

taking care of specific body parts put out by Head and Hands in Montreal

Turnover: A collection of HIV prevention comics - Turnover, through comics and illustration, explores issues of youth and HIV transmission, barebacking, and physical and emotional wellness.

Risk in Prison - Two articles written by Matthew Jones (incarcerated) and Liam and Bridget from the Prisoner Correspondence Project (non-incarcerated) talking about the concept of "risk", and "risky sexual behavior" in prison

You Improve to Survive: Addressing sexual 'safety' for Queers Inside and Outside of Prisons - A short compilation put together by the Prisoner Correspondence Project of the first submissions we received for the Fucking without Fear resource series.

What if I'm HIV positive? - A general, non-prison specific resource about what you should know if you test HIV positive

Safer Barebacking (not prison specific)- An article about how to reduce the risk of transmitting HIV/AIDS and other STD's/STI's when fucking without condoms

VIH y el joint" (Spanish only)- A basic resource sheet put together by PASAN about reducing the chance of transmitting HIV in prison

The Botton line (not prison specific) - A gay man's guide to anal health: how the ass works, what it does, how it relates to other parts of the body, and how to get maximum pleasure from sex with minimal pain or damage

Women Lovin - Developed, designed and written by women: solid information on sexual health issues for queer women combined with practical tips and risk-reduction strategies. Only sent to women's prisons.

Brazen - a safer sex guide for trans women by trans women (not prison specific)

Hepatitis C Infosheet - basic information on the virus

Reading this can save your ass - Safer rimming tips

50 things you should know about hiv & safer sex (abstract)

LIVING WITH HIV/HEP C

Living with HIV: starting points - information on HIV and AIDS, how to stay healthy, what does CD4 count and viral load tell you, next steps

Positively healthy (not prison specific) - a gay man's guide to sex and health in Canada

A practical guide to complement therapies - for people living with HIV

A practical guide to herbal therapies - for people living with HIV

A practical guide to HIV drug side effects - for people living with HIV/AIDS

A practical guide to HIV drug treatment - for people living with HIV

A practical guide to Nutrition - for people living with HIV

HIV and Hep C coinfection - answer some basic questions about living with HIV and hepatitis C

HIV Disclosure - a legal guide for gay man in Canada

HIV viral load testing - introduces the viral load test and answers basic questions about how it fits into a treatment plan.

Hepatitis C Peer support group manual (non prison specific) - tips and tricks for starting a support group

Hepatitis C Pamphlet - Newly diagnosed, the basic facts, treatment options

Hepatitis C: Managing Common Symptoms and Treatment Side Effects - for people living with Hep C

Hepatitis C: Get the Facts - all the info in plain language and detailed illustrations

Living with HIV and HepC Co-infection - offers key information on living with both viruses, covering useful topics such as HIV and hepatitis C basics, the effects of co-infection, ways to stay healthy, treatment strategies and preventing transmission.

HIV and Aging - Advice on staying healthy for

those in their 50s, 60s, and 70s.

Clinical Trials: What you need to know - some basic information about clinical trials: how they are conducted, how people can join a trial, and what they can expect if they decide to participate.

WRITING/ LITERATURE/ ART ON HIV + AIDS

What causes/defeats AIDS - AIDS project Los Angeles, Annual report 2006.

If We Have To Take Tomorrow - is a collection of writing about same-sex and same-gender desire, and HIV/AIDS by and for gay black men.

To be left with the body - This collection, put out by AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA) is dedicated to poetry, prose, and photography written by and for HIV positive folks about the marginalization and criminalization of queer and HIV positive communities.

Corpus: Volume 4 - health information, politics, creative work, and essays all on issues related to HIV/AIDS, and where health and AIDS intersects with other other issues faced by gay and queer communities. Issue 4 is about women's relationships to gay men and AIDS;

Corpus: Volume 5 - health information, politics, creative work, and essays all on issues related to HIV/AIDS, and where health and AIDS intersects with other other issues faced by gay and queer communities. Issue 5 is about rural gay identity and AIDS;

Corpus: Volume 6 - health information, politics, creative work, and essays all on issues related to HIV/AIDS, and where health and AIDS intersects with other other issues faced by gay and queer communities. Issue 6 is the International issues, and explores shifting global responses among gay and queer men to AIDS.

The De-gaying of AIDS & Reclaiming Culture / La deshomosexualización del SIDA - Available in both Spanish and English, these short essays speak to how AIDS has been de-gayed, and the effects of this on, among others, prisoners and communities of colour.

Gay boy talk: stopping HIV infections among young gay men (Also available in Spanish) Not prison specific - The purpose of this article is to discuss the importance of influencing discourse about homosexuality at the social and cultural levels in HIV-prevention efforts targeting young gay men. The discussion is based on Sexual Stories, a study which sought to understand the interpersonal, social, and cultural contexts in which behavioral risk for HIV infection occurs among young gay men.

Latino Sexual Rebellions - Art and writing by Latino men on family, sexuality, and HIV.

OUR EVENTS

Imprisoned Pride: how queer and trans prisoners get written out of mainstream pride movements - A zine put together by the Prisoner Correspondence Project that is a transcript and photos from an event we organized in summer of 2008, during Montreal Pride festivities; an anthology of writing by queer and trans prisoners about pride.

You Improvise to Survive: Negotiating Sexual "Safety" for queer and trans folks, inside and out - A short compilation put together by the Prisoner Correspondence Project of the first submissions we received for the Fucking without Fear resource series. These submissions were the focus of several workshops and events we have put on with folks on the outside

Beyond prisons, towards community strategies - the transcription of a panel we held in the fall of 2009 on supporting work within and against prisons

Erased Histories: Community Responses to HIV/AIDS - The transcription of a panel of different (mostly gay and lesbian) community activists about their work around HIV and AIDS in the earlier days of the epidemic, including how AIDS issues interact with courts, cops, and prison issues.

Building abolition futures - the transcription of a panel from spring 2010 about how sex offender panic is linked to homophobia and the recent push for sex offender registries

Hell No, We Won't Go: In Conversation with Laura Whitehorn - The transcription of an interview we conducted with former political prisoner Laura Whitehorn, on anti-prison organizing, HIV mobilizing, and being gay in prison.

RESOURCE LISTS

Back Issues of The Word is Out!: Our very own Prisoner Correspondence Project newsletter. Includes featured resource, prisoner art and writing, callouts for our different projects, and a list of all our services. Issues one through ten are available. Most recent sent unless others are specified.

Cellcount: A general newsletter / list of services and resources offered by PASAN, the Prisoner HIV/AIDS Support Action Network. Also includes tips on safer drug use, etc. We will send you the most recent edition, though you can also request backissues (Canada)

A resource list for the Incarcerated Native American: Includes listings for newspapers for Native American prisoners, book program listings, legal resources, and education programs for prisoners (USA)

Queer and trans zine resource list: a list of addresses and contact information for self-published 'zines

Prisoner resource guide: a collection of organizations and services offered to prisoners(USA)

Prison Book Programs: National prisoner resource list: expanded version of the prisoner resource list (USA)

Resource list for Straight/ non-queer inmates

Locked Out: resource for LGBTQ prisoners (USA)

Canadian publications for prisoners

LEGAL

TGI Justice Project - A brief overview of the programs and services offered by the Transgender, Gendervariant, and Intersex justice project, and how to contact them (USA)

The Sylvia Rivera Law Project - An overview of SRLP, it's mandate and programs, and ways to contact them for more information (USA)

Jailhouse Lawyer's manual - A handbook of legal rights and procedures for use by people in prison. 36 chapters informing prisoners of their legal rights and how to secure these rights through the judicial process. (USA)

Pennsylvania Legal aid - a resource list of legal aid and pro bono organizations in Pennsylvania

Texas Legal Aid - a resource list of legal aid and pro bono organizations in Texas.

Florida Legal Aid - a resource list of legal aid and pro bono organizations in Florida.

TATTOOING

Tattooing and you: the safe-guards within prison walls - A pamphlet / guide on safe tattooing inside prisons, things to consider, and materials to use

Think Before You Ink - prisoners perpetual calendar

DRUG USE

My crack kit - A short guide (pamphlet size) showing how to safely use crack, and reduce the risk to your body and your lungs.

Safer shooting - A postcard with short descriptions about how to shoot up safely with injection drugs.

Be kind to your veins - A guide to caring for your veins while fixing in prison, where to shoot up, etc, put out by PASAN

Keeping fit - A prisoners guide to syringe care, cleaning your needles, and what to do to take better care of your body while shooting up in prison

COMING OUT / LGBTQ IDENTITY

African Americans Coming Out - A basic, non-prison specific guide to coming out for gay and lesbian African Americans

FTM International: the chest issue - The organizational and resource issue of the magazine FTM International, includes resource list for female-to-male trans folks.

Intro to intersex activism: a guide to gay, lesbian and bisexual allies - A short guide for people who are interested in knowing more about intersex identities and intersex activism

Out of the closets and into the libraries: a collection of radical queer moments - A 'zine put together archiving different moments in queer / gay history and snapshots of queer struggle (not prison specific)

Tim Tum, a trans jew zine - Concentrates on the struggle with being a transgender young man, issues of identity, and visibility among both queer and heterosexual groups. Highlights being a boy in Jewish American culture, and the struggle for identity when interfacing with normalizing power that attempts to gender you inappropriately.

Making the lives of transsexual people visible: Addressing the politics of social erasure - An examination of how social institutions and theoretical approaches have led to the erasure of transsexual (people who identify as members of the other gender) and transgendered (a broad term for a range of groups that do not fit into the current two-gender system) experiences and begins to counter this through developing research and a detailed analysis of the forms of marginalization and oppression facing transsexual and transgendered people.

Sex que(e)ry - Que(e)ry is a collaborative zine on queerness, sexuality & gender. It was made at the University of Chicago

Bent bars - from our sister org in the UK, a compilation of stories on coming out in prison.

Getting Together - The ins and outs of dating & relationships for gay and bisexual men.

Bisexuality 101 - A great collection of articles compiled by PFLAG on history and on bisexuality and biphobia along with some answers to frequently asked questions.

How to be an Ally to a Bisexual Person — Bisexual Resource Center - A brochure of tips and conversation starters for bisexual people for talking to people about bisexuality with straight and gay people alike.

I Think I Might Be Bisexual, Fluid, Pansexual or Queer-Identified (So Now What?) — BiNet USA - An article about bisexual, fluid, pansexual, and queer experience, with quotes from bisexual people, safer sex tips, and thoughts on confronting biphobia.

My Gender Booklet - a short booklet

introducing terms, concepts and history around gender and transsexuality,

Preguntas frecuentes sobre las identidades LGBT - información sobre las identidades gay y transgénero en español

LGBTQ PRISON LITERATURE

Building Bridges - A short article written by Lin Elliot in the mid 1990s that provides a brief overview of the realities of being queer in prison.

Prisons and Closets - An article written by Jason Lydon about his experience being in prison as queer, and about negotiating outness.

Ultraviolet: The case of the jersey 4 - A small newspaper about the case of the new jersey 4 - four black lesbians who were convicted for defending themselves against a homophobic assault

A view from Treblinka Dungeon, Pelican Bay - An article written by Lofofora Contreras about her time spent incarcerated at the SHU (Security Housing Unit) at Pelican Bay as a transsexual woman, and about communities of trans prisoners coming together to support one another in the face of torture.

Wiener Society - A gay punk zine put together by Neil, prisoner in the US, includes poetry, music reviews, etc.

Left Back: Issue 3 - Gay punk prisoner zine distributed by Fanorama; includes poetry and writing about prison life

Thoughts of my liberation: Issue 5 - A zine put together by two-spirit Native American prisoner Iron Tipi Warrior about his experience of prison

GLBT? Going to a Federal Prison?

A booklet put together by Catherine Lynn Quick, a longtime member of the project, on what to expect for LGBT people when first going a federal prison.

Enter the Cat House - two short zines by Catherine Lynn Quick, a long time member of the project. Words of wisdom from Mother Cat.

A New Perspective on Being a Transwoman in Prison - a new zine by Catherine Lynn Quick. Notes on respect, being feminine and understanding desire and respect.

Transitions - a zine by Fatima Shayla Pearl featuring some spoken word, erotica, book reviews and truth.

Men Against Sexism - The story of a groups of prisoners in Washington state who successfully organized to fight homophobia and violence in their prison.

The Power and Politics of Pride - a zine containing several articles about queer politics from an unapologetically in-your-face perspective, including criticisms of gay marriage.

HORMONES/ TRANS-SPECIFIC

Hormones without a doctor - A comprehensive guide to street hormone use / hormone use without a doctor. Includes a pill and patch identification guide, what dosage to take pills, and other general tips about safe hormone use. Mostly MTF

Gender Anarky: a translesbigay 2 spirit zine Issues March 2007 or December 2008 - A short zine put together by US transsexual prisoner about trans issues and hormone access in US and California prisons

TranzLezbos - A short zine, including poetry, for transsexual lesbians, put together by trans lesbian prisoner Lofofora, who is on the inside in California.

Hepatitis C and hormone therapy - A pamphlet about how you can transmit hepatitis C while injecting hormones (not specific to prisons)

MTF hormone therapy - Some basic information about taking hormones for people who are thinking of transitioning male-to-female

FTM hormone therapy - Some basic information about taking hormones for people who are thinking of transitioning female-to-male

FAQ on transitioning - A basic guide that answers frequently asked questions about transitioning, hormone use, and gender transition

Tracing this body & new flesh struggles - An article about kink and radical politics written by a trans woman

Still We Rise: A Resource Packet for Transgender People in Prison (From the TGI Justice Project)- A comprehensive guide on access to medical care, information, and referrals.

Trans health information project: TIP Guide to hormones and self-injection

Fucking Transwomen - a zine about sex by Mira Bellweather by and for transwomen on everything from anatomy to communication to touch to orgasms.

SMUT

Meatus: A pornzine for queers outside the box - A collection of erotic writing about gay bio men (just words)

Reversed Seduction - short erotic fiction by longtime correspondent and contributor promethea. A younger female inmate develops a plan to seduce her beautiful friend with a titillating surprise ending (just words)

Read me a story - new pieces by Promethea

(just words)

FagPunk - a collection of sexual experiences of a gay boy that digs boots, bondage and mohawks. (words and non-explicit pictures)

Straight to Hell - one of the longest-running (man-on-man) smut zines out there. (words and explicit pictures with the genitals blacked-out)

The Visible Woman by Rachel K. Zall - 2 trans women find comfort & pleasure in each other's company. (just words)

Payback's a Bitch by S. Bear Bergman - short smut story about giving control (& taking it back) (just words)

Heavenly Bodies by Andrea Miller - a series of short pieces in which a lesbian fucks her way through all 12 zodiac signs.(just words)

A Taste of Sin by Fiona Zedde - 2 black butches are picked up by an eager-to-please femme.(just words)

Big Gifts in Small Boxes by Patrick Califia - a trans man visiting home for Xmas finds a way to keep things interesting.(just words)

Hot Pink - a compilation smut zine put together by Black and Pink (words and non-explicit drawings)

Wanted Issue #1 - a compilation of erotic writing by prisoners, put together by the Tranzmission Prison Project (words and non-explicit drawings)

Wanted Issue #2- a compilation of erotic writing by prisoners, put together by the Tranzmission Prison Project (words and non-explicit drawings)

Wanted Issue #3- a compilation of erotic writing by prisoners, put together by the Tranzmission Prison Project (words and non-explicit drawings)

WOMEN/FEMINISM

Pocket guide for women living with HIV (not prison specific) -A pocket guide for HIV-positive women that provides up-to-date information in plain language about a wide range of issues often faced by women with HIV. Topics include healthy living, nutrition, getting care, treatment basics, relationships and pregnancy. It also addresses street drugs and touches on hepatitis C co-infection. (by Positive Women's Network)

Corpus: volume 4 - Corpus, is an HIV prevention publication that brings together health information, politics, creative work, and essays all on issues related to HIV/AIDS, and where health and AIDS intersects with other other issues faced by gay and queer communities: incarceration, racism, policing. Issue 4 is about women's relationships to gay men and AIDS;

Never Innocent: Feminist trouble with sex

offender registries ans protection in a prison nation (by Erica R. Meiners) Using recent work by anti-prison theorists and community-based activists who are working against the prison industrial complex, this article links prison abolition to feminist frameworks to question escalating sex offender registries and community notification laws that are the state's response to sexual violence against children and women.

Tenacious: art and writings from women in prison

Women Prisoners' Resource Guide - a list of addresses and contact information for incarcerated women

One women's struggle - By Kebby Warner, a short zine about one women's struggle with te DOC, medical neglect, and about being a mother

Women in Prison: How It Is With Us - by Assata Shakur was a member of the Black Panther Party who went underground She was captured in 1973 and held as a political prisoner until 1979 when she was broken out of prison by a unit of the Black Liberation Army.

SEX WORK

Audacious: the reality of being a transsexual or transvestite sex worker- An article written by a member of the Prisoner Correspondence Project about her experiences as a transsexual sex worker dealing with the Montreal policing, court and prison systems.

Hey Girls! Safer sex for sex workers/ He les filles! Le securisexe pour les travailleuses du sexe

SPIRITUALITY

The Holy Male Issue #1- a Queerzine encouraging the exploration of the spiritual, sexual and artistic lives of queer men past and present.

The Holy Male Issue #2- a Queerzine encouraging the exploration of the spiritual, sexual and artistic lives of queer men past and present.

The Holy Male Issue #3- a Queerzine encouraging the exploration of the spiritual, sexual and artistic lives of queer men past and present.

HISTORY

Lavender and Red - a 120-part series on the history of socialism and LGBT organizing by Leslie Feinberg. Request a listing of which parts we have on hand.

NEW THIS ISSUE!

A New Perspective on Being a Transwoman in Prison - a new zine by Catherine Lynn Quick. Notes on respect, being feminine and understanding desire and respect.

Transitions - a zine by Fatima Shayla Pearl featuring some spoken word, erotica, book reviews and truth.

Preguntas frecuentes sobre las identidades LGBT - información sobre las identidades gay y transgénero en español

The Power and Politics of Pride - a zine containing several articles about queer politics from an unapologetically in-your-face perspective, including criticisms of gay marriage.

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Fucking Transwomen - a zine about sex by Mira Bellweather by and for transwomen on everything from anatomy to communication to touch to orgasms.

Write to us at:

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Montreal QC H3G 1M8
CANADA

LAVENDER & RED

GAY YOUTHS, BLACK AND WHITE, LED THE NORTH CAROLINA FIGHT
PART 56

BY LESLIE FEINBERG

Gay youths, Black and white, led breakthrough struggles against racism and Jim Crow apartheid in North Carolina—the Durham and Chapel Hill freedom struggles—during the early 1960s, and won victories that reverberated throughout the Deep South.

Historian James T. Sears, a significant white contributor to Southern struggle history, devotes a whole chapter about three of the main organizers of the North Carolina movement in his book “Lonely Hunters—An Oral History of Lesbian and Gay Southern Life, 1948-1968.”

Quinton Baker, African American and gay, was a key leader. Baker was born on the coastal plain of North Carolina in 1942. He grew up in Greenville, a town of 21,000, making a living by shining shoes. While not transgender in today’s terms, Baker once explained, “when you speak the way I speak in the South, you stand out. For a lot of people my speech pattern was feminine.” But, he added about growing up in his community, “Back then, you could be funny but not ostracized. The attitude was one of quiet acceptance.”

Baker was a senior in an all-Black high school on the day—Feb. 1, 1960—when four African American first-year students at Agricultural and Technical College (A&T) ordered coffee at a downtown Greensboro, N.C., restaurant from a counter that only served whites. They were refused service.

The next morning, 27 Black A&T students arrived together and ordered coffee at that counter. “We are prepared to keep coming for two years if we have to,” one of the youth vowed.

The “sit-ins” electrified the South. One week later, the sit-in movement sparked similar protests in North Carolina cities with historically Black colleges: Durham, Elizabeth City, High Point and Winston-Salem. Another week passed and the sit-ins at lunch counters to protest racist segregation had spread from Nashville, Tenn., to Tallahassee, Fla.

Sears noted, “By the end of March, 68 cities in 13 Southern states reported sit-ins, including a wade-in at the all-white swimming pool in Biloxi, Miss., a read-in at the library in St. Petersburg, Fla., and a host of kneel-ins at all-white churches.”

Hundreds of youth activists were arrested and locked up, where they faced serious charges. City officials in Or-

angeburg, S.C., gave the go-ahead to turn power hoses on student demonstrators and then held them in an open stockade in 40-degree weather. Tallahassee cops teargassed youth activists. Klan mobs met civil rights demonstrators with bats and pipes in Bessemer and Montgomery, Ala.

This struggle marked the qualitative opening of a youth-led civil rights movement, and it was the real beginning of the larger student struggle of the 1960s and 1970s. By the day Baker graduated high school in May 1960, a few businesses had agreed to end white-supremacist segregation of their lunch counters. Within one year, the struggle won desegregation of lunch counters in 126 Southern cities.

Baker was drawn into this vortex of struggle. He said he looked forward to the fall of 1960 when he would enter North Carolina College (NCC) in Durham. Black college students were organizing. Lacey Streeter, another native of Greenville, led the NAACP college chapter at NCC.

Baker later recalled, “By the time I got to college I was so ready and prepared [for struggle] that it became almost more important to me than the academic work. It was the force.”

He added, “My first semester I was in the NAACP and I was demonstrating. I didn’t stop for the four years I was there!”

As Baker organized boycotts, sit-ins, rallies and street demonstrations, his tactical and organizational skills became renowned. He helped other young leaders to develop. He became president of the NAACP state youth organization and an NAACP Commando.

Baker later recalled, “A lot of student leaders and activists were often gay men,” adding that the men weren’t often aware of lesbian activists.

Baker worked closely with two gay, white anti-racist activists.

Anti-racist struggle awakens white activists

Pat Cusick, like other white youth who were shoulder-to-shoulder in the struggle, had grown up under white supremacist indoctrination. These youth had to break with the racist ideology they had been taught in order to put their bodies on the line to end Jim Crow laws.

Cusick worked at a General Electric plant in Rome, Ga., after the Army “honorably” discharged him in 1953. The voice of Lillian Smith, a now-famous Southern anti-racist white writer, reached Cusick after she sent a letter to the editor of the New York Times hailing the 1954 Supreme Court decision that

formally ended racist segregation in schools as “every child’s Magna Carta.”

Smith, while she did not use the word lesbian to describe herself, had a female life partner.

Cusick went to school at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill—a sister city to Durham, but with a much smaller Black population. He worked as a campus custodian in 1962 while he studied mathematics.

When the writer James Baldwin, African American and gay, came to Durham to speak to the students, Cusick traveled from Chapel Hill to hear him.

Baker was there, too. He explains, “We were interested in him because of his racial analysis and his analysis of our condition, more so than his writing having sexual undertones. Of course there were always attempts to read materials that talked about homosexuality. He came down in support of what we were doing.”

Cusick first became an activist in the “ban the bomb” movement for nuclear disarmament. He later said that in his early years as a white Southern activist, “It was much easier for me to be against the war in Vietnam and form the Student Peace Union than to get involved in civil rights—I never even considered gay rights.”

An openly gay white youth, John Dunne, also joined the SPU. Sears wrote, “John’s apartment was the first place where Pat [Cusick] talked at length with other gay men who shared his passion for social justice: ‘We talked about homosexuality and bisexuality mostly on an intellectual level with a bit of sexual tension. At the forefront, though, were discussions about the peace movement and civil rights.’”

As the SPU grew, Cusick said he realized, “How could we be talking about all of this peace stuff when there was no peace between the races.” The white SPU activists began a systematic desegregation effort in Chapel Hill, including organizing boycotts of white-segregationist businesses.

Dunne returned to Chapel Hill on May 20, 1963, from Birmingham, Ala., where he had been arrested on charges of loitering and failure to obey a police officer. It happened while he was working to locate Black youth who had been arrested after Bull Connor police force turned power hoses on 600 schoolchildren. He was awaiting appeal of his sentence: a year behind bars and a \$200 fine.

Martin Luther King Jr. wrote his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” after being arrested for leading the Good Friday march there. The powerful impact of the Birmingham demonstrations was felt throughout the South, including Durham—where young civil rights activists readied themselves to wage “an all-out war against segregation.”

However, one white, gay North Carolina student journalist actively campaigned on the wrong side of civil rights struggle and desegregation. His name, now familiar, is Armistead Maupin Jr.—a William F. Buckley admirer.

(Sears)

Baker helps lead Chapel Hill movement

Baker had become a prominent and seemingly tireless organizer of the widening and deepening Durham protest movement. And he agreed in 1963 to work with the Chapel Hill movement, too. Soon after they met in that struggle, Baker and Dunne became lovers.

“With Baker and the Chapel Hill Black teens involved,” Sears explained, “tactics changed from picketing to sit-ins and marches.” As the summer of 1963 began, activists were organizing three marches a week, while picketing numerous white-owned segregated businesses.

Cusick recalls Baker teaching demonstrators how to fall and protect themselves from the police. “This created the ire from the Chapel Hill liberals,” he said, “since we were using nonviolence as a tactic, not a philosophy.”

When criticized by more liberal elements for using these tactics to break the law, Baker said, “We would reply, ‘If you agree with my cause, then what you need to do is to act on the fact that you believe in the cause—don’t worry about my tactics. Don’t concentrate on what I’m doing. Concentrate on what you’re doing that supports the cause that we both believe in.’”

Cusick described the impact of the arrest of 34 demonstrators on July 19—including himself—in what was to become a turning point in the Chapel Hill freedom movement. “Like most whites, [for me] a policeman was a friendly image. There is nothing like it for you to get your head whipped, your teeth knocked in, and your ribs kicked. You come to a knowledge that is much different.”

In jail, Pat and fellow activist prisoners read and discussed Baldwin’s “Another Country,” which wove themes of societal racism and homophobia.

Cusick said, “There were more gays than people ever realized in the civil rights movement. But you wouldn’t see it from the outside.” He added, “In the midst of a movement that was not directly related to sexual orientation but more involved in day-to-day social justice issues with a common enemy, the movement would bring you closer together. During that period there was not a great deal of conversation about sexual orientation.”

Baker was also imprisoned for his activism in 1963, in Morgantown Prison Camp—one of two desegregated N.C. state prisons. He observed, “The chain gang was one of those experiences you say, ‘I’m glad I had it; I never want to do it again.’ It was there I really learned about the struggle of what it means to be human.”

Baker wrote letters for Black prisoners and at least one white. He said, “I learned a lot about people and their emotions when I had to convey their feelings to someone who they loved or cared about. Having to read, talk to, and see people, and understanding what kinds of lives they have, I began to appreciate what being human is about.

"I began to recognize the superficiality of some of the things we surround ourselves with and how we separate ourselves. It was an incredible beginning for me in my quest to understand about being a human being and how to put into that context my blackness and my sexual orientation."

In August 1963, as the March on Washington was drawing huge numbers, the impact of the gay-baiting and red-baiting political attacks on Bayard Rustin—the march's leading tactician—was also felt by civil rights activists of all nationalities and sexualities in the Deep South, including Baker, who had been released from jail.

'The tactician who brought the connection'

Baker said of some of the white civil rights activists he worked with: "There were really some good solid white people who came into the movement and got to understand where we were at that time. ... Those white people who got beat up with me, went to jail with me, sat down with me, and got peed on, it is very difficult to question their commitment. Whether they had fought through all of their personal racism is a different story—they were struggling with it."

As civil disobedience spread, more activists—Black and

white—went to jail. On Jan. 12, 1964, the Chapel Hill Freedom Committee organized a 13-mile march from Chapel Hill to Durham. There, at least 500 crowded into the First Baptist Church to hear CORE national chairperson, Floyd McKissick, and John Knowles, a gay white author of "A Separate Peace," speak at the indoor rally.

CORE leader James Farmer told the cheering crowd that night, "Unless Chapel Hill is an open city by Feb. 1, it will become the focal point of all our efforts. All our resources, staff funds and training will be centered here."

In April 1964, Baker, Cusick and Dunne were sentenced to 6 months, 1 year and 3 years of hard labor, respectively. By July 2, the struggle had forced President Lyndon Johnson to sign the Civil Rights Act that barred racist segregation of public accommodations

Cusick concluded that in North Carolina, Quinton Baker had been "the tactician who brought the connection to the statewide movement."

Next: *Black and white, gay and straight—civil rights activists built unity in Jackson, Miss., struggle.*

WHO IS LESLIE FEINBERG?

Leslie Feinberg, who identified as an anti-racist white, working-class, secular Jewish, transgender, lesbian, female, revolutionary communist, died on November 15. Feinberg was the first theorist to advance a Marxist concept of "transgender liberation," and her work impacted popular culture, academic research, and political organizing.

Her historical and theoretical writing has been widely anthologized and taught in the U.S. and international academic circles. Her impact on mass culture was primarily through her 1993 first novel, *Stone Butch Blues*, widely considered in and outside the U.S. as a groundbreaking work about the complexities of gender.

Feinberg was born September 1, 1949, in Kansas City, Missouri, and raised in Buffalo, NY, in a working-class Jewish family. She earned her living for most of her life through a series of low-wage temp jobs, including working in a PVC pipe factory and a book bindery, cleaning out ship cargo holds and washing dishes, serving an ASL interpreter, and doing medical data inputting.

In her early twenties Feinberg met Workers World Party at a demonstration for Palestinian land rights and self-determination. She soon joined WWP through its founding Buffalo branch. After moving to New York City, she participated in numerous mass organizing campaigns by the Party over the years, including many anti-war, pro-labor rallies. In 1983-1984 she embarked on a national tour about AIDS as a denied epidemic. She was a key organizer in the December 1974

March Against Racism in Boston and the 1988 mobilization in Atlanta that re-routed the white supremacist Ku Klux Klan as they tried to march down Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave., on MLK Day. When anti-abortion groups descended on Buffalo in 1992 and again in 1998-1999 with the murder there of Dr. Barnard Slepian, Feinberg returned to work with Buffalo United for Choice and its Rainbow Peacekeepers, which organized community self-defense for local LGBTQ+ bars and clubs as well as the women's clinic.

From 2004-2008 Feinberg's writing on the links between socialism and LGBT history, "Lavender & Red," ran as a 120-part series in Workers World newspaper. Part 56 runs above, and the full listing of writings can be found in our Resource Library.

Her last words were: "Remember me as a revolutionary communist."



THE IMPORTANCE OF QUEER FRIENDSHIPS

1. What is the importance of friendship with other queers who are inside prison? What is the importance of friendship with other queers who are out of prison? What can be gained from friendships with queers of a different generation?
2. Tell us about one of your most important queer friendships. How did you meet? How could you tell? What did you learn?
3. In prison, is there an automatic base for friendship with other gay or trans prisoners? Is there an expectation that you should be friends? Do queer friendships always have to negotiate a sexual tension?
4. Last year, Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore, a San Francisco activist and writer, put out a book called "Why Are Faggots so Afraid of Faggots?" What are some of the barriers to friendship? What are they/you/we afraid of?

Michael Pelletier

I have been in prison since 1992. I was sentenced in the State of North Dakota to 20 years for murder. At the time I was in my 34th year of existence. I had known from a very early age that I was gay, but growing up in a catholic family in the 60's and 70's, I was so far deep in the closet that I dared to never venture out into 'my true world.'

Prior to this prison sentence, I had only had a handful of gay experiences (more so of an experimental thing). I had met a guy while serving a provincial sentence in Ontario and that was wonderful, but I returned to the closet as soon as I was released from prison. In North Dakota, I met someone who became my lover. We were very, very careful not to be exposed for our 'crime' of homosexuality. To be caught would have been devastating to both of us. In the closet in prison. In effect, a prison within a prison.

In 1996 I was transferred to the State of Oregon where I learned much about myself and the whole underground prison gay community. I met many gay prisoners. The first one taught me an extremely basic, but difficult lesson. We must be true to ourselves and live as we choose to be. We will be judged by others, hated by many, but if we stay hidden in our own shells happiness and joy and love will always elude us. I had spent all my previous years of existence living as a hypocrite—pretending to be what I wasn't. I was married (to a woman) for 11 years, raised a stepson, and played the game of social acceptance. I was very miserable. That was more of a prison than any sentence handed down by a judge.

Now that I was beginning to accept myself as who I truly am, many doors opened for me. I actively sought out fellow gay prisoners. There is a sense of fellowship that develops with others of the same orientation. There may be various reasons for this: a need to feel accepted, to belong, a sense of security in numbers (not unlike those who join prison gangs),

the need for sexual satisfaction, friendship and understanding of one's position in life and within the prison system. Or there may be another reason, the one which for me has been the driving factor—love. Everyone needs someone to love and to be loved by.

My sentence in the United States ended in the year 2009. I was immediately deported to Canada and am now serving a life sentence on a separate murder charge. I began this sentence in February 2010. In the four years that I've been in the Canadian prison system, I have served time in 4 different prisons. Many believe that the U.S. prison system is worse than Canada's. In many respects it is, but I know as far as being a gay prisoner, Canada is much more difficult to survive in. I have met many gay prisoners since my return to Canada, but the issue of openness and acceptance by the straight population is more intense.

For me I have taken the following stance: if someone asks, I will not lie about being gay. Just ask and I'll tell. But I do not openly flaunt my orientation. I will not stand on the table top and shout out that I am queer. I have been asked by gays if I was, and then we move forward from there. I have been asked by some straight prisoners and I told them I was gay. I always follow that up with the question, "Is that going to be a problem?" One in particular had asked me that question because someone told him to stay away from me because I was gay and "after him." After an open conversation, he accepted me as I am. He is not gay but we have become very close friends. We've been separated for three years now and remain in constant contact.

There is an inherent danger to anyone who is known as gay in the prison system, more so in Canada from my personal observations. But one can exist, survive, and actually 'live' within the system. Some people have instincts that tell them who they can 'hang' with, and who they shouldn't. It doesn't always work—I've been burned and betrayed upon occasion. But if you don't take the risk, seek out those that appeal to you, you will never know. Worse than taking the risk and

reaching out is to remain within the self-imposed prison of fear.

I've found love and sex in prison. It can be so. The journey and the rewards are worth the chances one must take. Be yourself. Reach out. When you find one, use that friendship and support to keep you going. If you're extremely lucky you may even find 'The One.'

Cody Riley

One of the key factors in making any kind of friend is having things in common. Meeting other gay men develops a special bond because you're connected on a higher level than with ordinary friendship. As gay men face persecutions and struggles our heterosexual counterparts are spared from. Overcoming this adversity is what builds that strength. This was apparent with the Women's Rights Movement of the 70's and the Civil Rights Movement of the 50's and 60's. Adversity drew like minded people together.

In prison, we're drawn even closer. Prison is an environment where the gay man is nothing more than a sissy or a punk. Developing queer friendships reminds us that we aren't alone in our battle. It gives us confidants to talk to and people we can confide in. Sometimes it's just nice to be able to admire someone's ass together with someone else. Sadly there is often times the added benefit of safety. I say sadly because it's sad that there are still gay men and women out there being assaulted and abused due to their sexual orientation.

For me, friendships like I had with Selene and that I have with Mallory allow me to feel more comfortable in expressing my thoughts and emotions. Knowing you always got your gurl there to watch your back makes prison life just a little more tolerable. So cheers to all the queers—and their friends too!

Ioey

To come out in prison is a bold and daring move. For many it can be dangerous, risky, ostracizing. I'm proud of those who have; envy; respect them at the same time. In my situation, it's so different, my upbringing, the gang, politics, homeboys, reputation of being a hard and respected individual. Plus I have kids, a wife, lots of females I've known intimately. I'm attracted to women as well as transwomen, especially feminine guys. Being in and out of prison all my life is how I realized how real that interest is. Very salacious thoughts constantly flood my mind. I chose to not be out in prison to avoid all the unwanted drama and negative responses it will bring. We all have our positions and chosen standings in prison, certain things are unacceptable. So I chose to keep it on lock.

On the streets, I've only engaged in 2-3 experiences. None of them broadcast my/our business. To this day the one who meant most and understood me still writes. My only regret is not being able to be in her life 24/7. She's everything I still dream of to this day. Complete fulfillment in every way. I can't wait to get out. Politics is different, for me, it would be personal growth, acceptance and development. I'm worried that I'll disappoint my family, my kids, hurt my wife. When

I'm able to I also write penfriends who are understanding and on my level and who can relate. Race isn't an issue, I'm Mexican and so are those I'm involved with outside.

But in prison yes it is an issue for me. It would cause a lot of issues I'm not sure I'm prepared for. I wish I could say different, but for the most part for me, I'm okay with waiting til I get out. My interested are outside these walls. A lot of in prison relationships are without protection and can entail a lot more than I'm willing to risk. So when I think of my situation, It's not exactly on the same level as others who do come bursting out from confinement and need to have their 'real' side out. In a sense, I am, but in truth I am not. So again I do admire and am very proud of all of you, envy is a sin I'll some day overcome. My love, respects and support to you all.

DeSean

I have been bisexual since I've been old enough to understand the reasons behind my thoughts of women and men. At a young age I was caught giving oral sex to my classmate in the restroom at elementary school. Needless to say my Dad beat me for an hour saying he was not raising no homo's in his house. But what my father didn't know was that his baby boy (me) was the subject of sexual experiments by his two older brothers. It started by me putting my older brother's dick in my mouth while he was asleep and beginning to suck when he woke up. I guess I was pretty good because he never stopped me and this became our 'little secret.' Later on I got bold to my other brother and he played mad. He fucked me in the ass in return for him to keep my secret from our father. Sounds fucked up right? Well that was my childhood until my brothers grew out of their 'needs', but I never stopped needing.

I knew I was gay the first time I watched porn and I was turned on by seeing a women give head and wanting to do or give the same pleasure. But back to the subject... All through middle and high school I had to play straight, and this troubled me a lot. I had built a reputation among my peers but I was only living the half truth. It was not till I got incarcerated in my 10th grade year that I learned the value of Queer Friendships. There was a Queen named "Mercades" that I had a relationship with that opened my eyes to what I had been missing. Upon my release



from jail me and "Mercedes" hooked up and she showed me or introduced me to the queer side of town. I'm from Houston, Texas, so of course I'm talking about "Montrose and Westheimer".

Being around friends who understand me is the best feeling in the world. I don't have to close the door on my bisexual side like I do with certain people, but I can be myself and be accepted for who I am. It takes the pressure off day to day living too, believe it or not. You would be surprised how simple things, like not having to limit your conversation, goes a long way. And when me and my Gay and Bi friends go out, it's the best times I have! So if it's just conversation, or physical bonding, queer friendships are very important. Those who don't take things for granted understand. I'm currently locked up in Texas Prison, and you would be surprised how many inmates are living a lie and not being their true selves. But that's a whole different issue! :)

Justin Wilson

Having friendships with other queers in prison is cool. Being in prison its hard to express your feelings to other straight men. They don't open up as much on certain topic. Its easier to sit down or walk the track and open up to other queers. Its gives you the opportunity to talk about the guys you like, think is hot or ugly. You can talk about what guy you want to do or be done by, lol. It gives you the chance to laugh and cry about whatever you want.

Friendship with queers on the street is just as important as well. Not only can you do all of the above, but the gay bars are even an option. There is more support such as parades, communities and many other activities.

Being in prison I have had a few very important queer friendships. I would say it was a few years ago with two men. Chris (aka Tinkerbelle) a feminine man and Joseph, who was kind of feminine. We met when I was put in an open-boy dorm with them. They would come sit by my bed and talk



about the streets. Chris and I would play cards. Joseph and I would play chess. Of course I would always beat their ass, lol. I would write to them regular letters and dirty letters; telling them all the freaky things I would do for them if we were behind closed doors. I was very romantic with them. I would write them poems, draw them pictures and share what very little canteen I had. Only once I actually had fun with one of them. One day Joseph squat down and gave me oral sex in the shower while another gay dude watched us and looked out for us so nobody would catch us. It was amazing, but I wish we could have done so much more. When it was time for me to leave that institution, Chris and Joseph both cried and didn't want me to leave. I realized how much they really did care about me. Till this day, we still write by 3rd party (two years later).

In prison sometimes there is an automatic base for friendship with other guys and sometimes there isn't. I think it depends on the situation. Queer friends dont always have to negotiate sexual tension. The feminine queers usually never have sexual tension towards each other. They dont base their friendships on that. They just like to get into their title groups and associate and open up to each other. They are very supportive with each other. Usually though when it is a feminine and masculine man there is sexual tension from the beginning.

In conclusion I think queer friendships is great. I enjoy it in prison. And I hope that I meet queers once I am released to the streets, I hope to find and make gay, bisexual, lesbian and transgender friends. I hope to get involved in the community and that I get to go to gay bars in my area. I hope this could have been to some use to people and thank you for your help.

I want to say thanks for letting me share my thoughts and opinion. I love you all!

Rogue

Before there were such places as PCP, Black and Pink, etc., queer inmates did the best we could to maintain correspondence with each other. Today it's a different story where the world is literally opened up to the LGBTQ community in prison. The show of solidarity from the community helps those who have lost support of loved ones due to perpetual systemic ignorance. When I read the question on the importance of Queer Friendships, I immediately thought of my dear dear dearest friend Bex whom I met though penpal, so this subject matter fits just right.

Bex and my friendship is actually hard to define but without question, I value Bex's friendship with all of my heart. At times I find myself asking myself is she real due to the fact she is completely genuine, really funny, and I believe an intellectual juggernaut. Our letters aren't letters but mini discourses ranging from various topics and she has opened me up to the world of transpolitics on a scale I thought wasn't possible. Fact is I wasn't aware that there was one until she enlightened me on the subject and we were just scratching the surface on that subject so...See that's Bex, she'll ask you if you know about 'such and such' and would love for you to read 'such and such' and dialogue that way. I enjoy her friendship immensely. Inspiration comes in many forms and

yes, Bex is inspirational, for her perspective gives me clarification on things I've read, written about, or thought about writing.

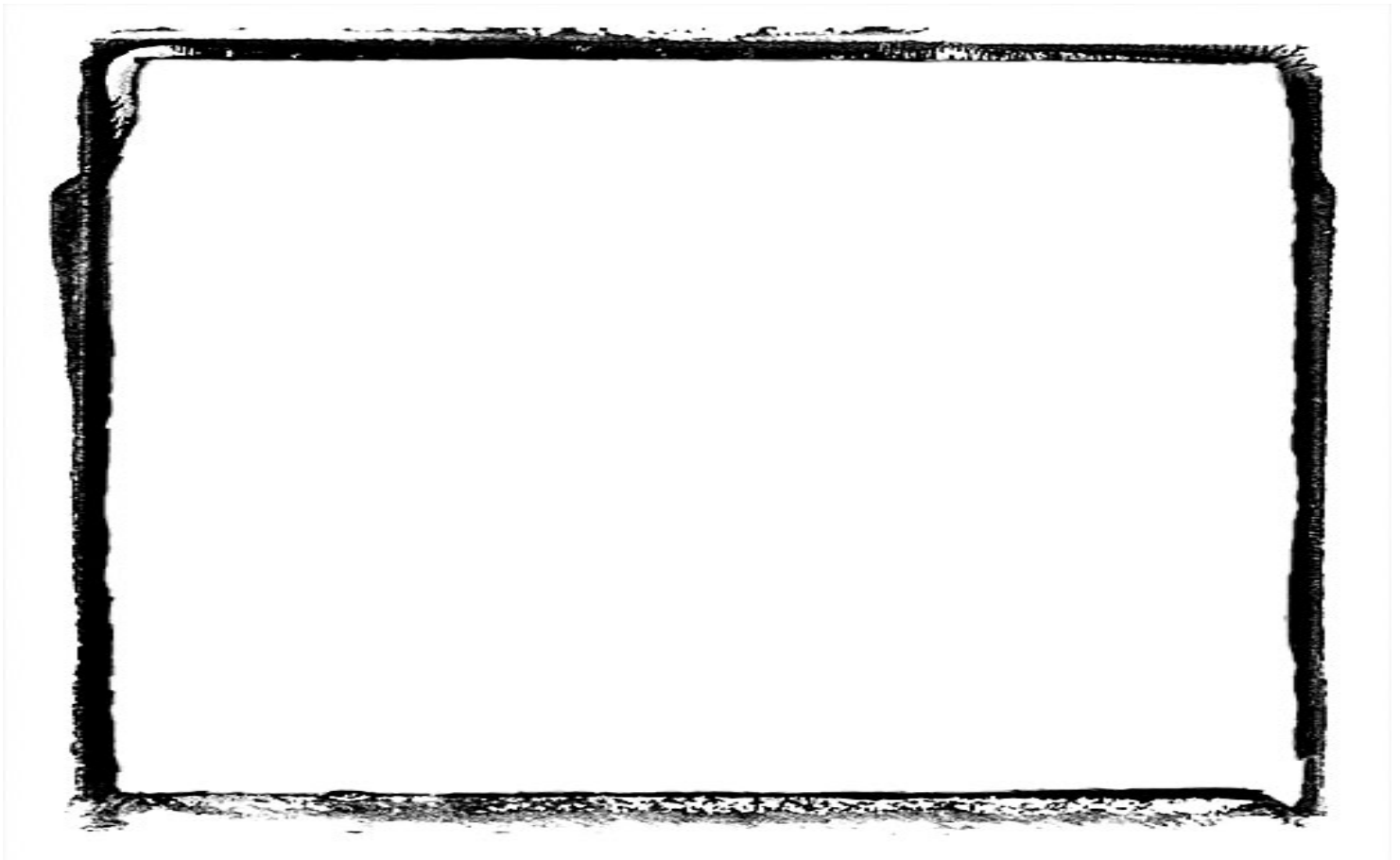
Friendships are great character builders and we rely on friends to be that extra voice to tell it like it is when no one else will and in an environment such as prison, pushing that proverbial rock up that hill wouldn't be possible without that encouragement. Queer penpals I believe (and I stand on 100%) are forged on trust, honesty and truthfulness. Without these three affirmations, friendships would not stand a chance. Yes prisoners' intentions, 3/4 of the time are not sincere. That's fact, and it's these intentions that does the most harm, as we all know, cause people will misrepresent themselves just so they may get a leg up and eventually ruin something solely based on greed and material. I believe it was my second letter where I made my intentions clear with Bex, reminding her of the trick (cons) prisoners say and do just to "win".

Family and friends cannot for whatever reason relate to you

as a queer peer can despite there being a "cultural" (prison) difference. That I believe stems from the solidarity and struggle that all queer women and men under the rainbow banner fight for. Justice, equality, freedom and happiness and knowing someone out there actually cares for you despite of what you're in here for says a lot. I am grateful for Bex's support and friendship more than she even realizes for showing me things which I believe would have went unseen.

The lessons taken away from it all is simple—be thankful, grateful, and most of all sincere with yourself and your queer peers. I look forward to the day to return the favor cause I know the importance of what a letter can do to an individual's spirit. It brings happiness and calm into his/her sphere. I don't know how often it is said, but without question from one queer inmate to you, thank you for all that you're done, the material shared, allowing us to voice our inner most thoughts and having a true family who'll never turn your back on us because of one's sexual orientation.

With Love and Solidarity Always,
Rogue



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with love and solidarity always,

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Submit to the Next Issue : LGBTQ Safety

For the next issue, we're going with a big topic that's been on our minds since our keynote panel event this summer (see Page 6) - QUEER SAFETY AND VISIBILITY. Here are a few questions to start your thinking process:

1. There's the day-to-day question of, how do you stay safe in prison as individual people? Does thinking about your safety affect how you express yourself?
2. On a bigger scale, does being more visible and loud as queer community in prison make us safer? How can we make our community a safer one as a whole without forgetting the individual violence we face?
3. What do you think the biggest threats to our safety are? and what have you done to fight back?
4. In the mainstream media, whenever you hear talk about "public safety", including for gays, it's always about more cops, and more prisons, and locking more people up. But knowing the violence that these institutions do, what else does safety mean?
5. *Peace isn't just the absence of tension, it's the presence of justice.* Do you agree? Is safety just the absence of violence or is it something more? What do you need to be safe?

Please be very explicit about how you would like your name credited with anything you write - if it is to appear under the name we know you by or somethig different. It saves us a lot of guesswork.

We are an in-prison transfemale resistance for out autonomy. We are Anarchists and Nihilists. Ask for our literature and newsletter, and/or contact Sister Amazon.

Gender Anarky
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