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EXCLUSIVE

Kevin Aviance

Opens up To Klik

We've Got Bond
RL Bond
Confessions Of An
Ex-Porn Star

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**Sexy Looks
This Winter**

Also Inside:

- ◀◀◀ Dream "Gyrls" Remixed
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- ◀◀◀ Soul Food To Die For

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**JANUARY
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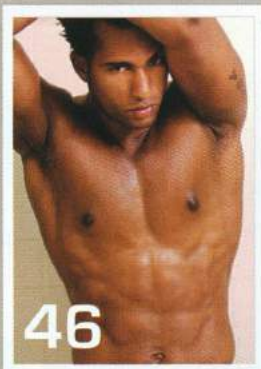
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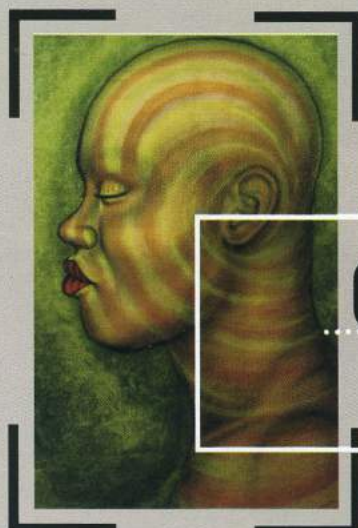
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Kevin Aviance Opens Up to Click

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KEVIN AVIANCE:

THE MAN, THE DIVA

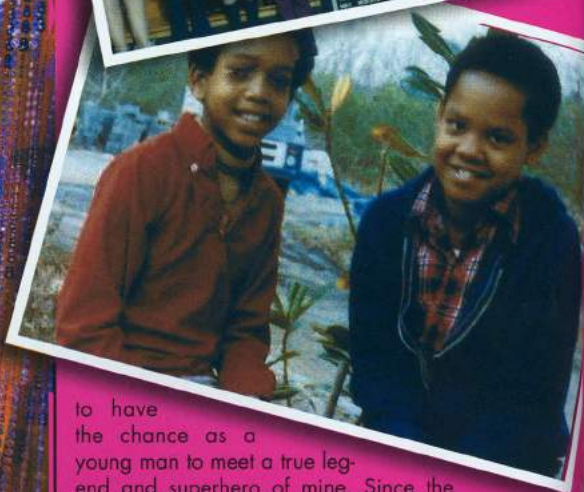
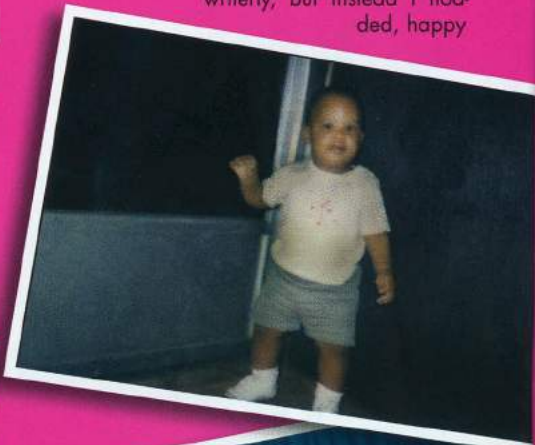
By: Steven Emmanuel Martinez

Leaning against the wind-chilled Starbucks window, waiting for Kevin Aviance, I look down to check my watch, figuring he's fifteen minutes late because traffic is heavy. I look back to the AM newspaper article I'm skimming and within seconds my eyes flick away to get a long look at the tall, handsome gentleman coming my way with a hot leather jacket and a five o'clock shadow that reeked of cool. Mr. tall, slim and sexy was practically ripped from the ads for gay hip-

ster clothing lines, and if I'd already picked up my latte it would've been finding its way to the ground as I lost control of my senses upon seeing this perfect ten of men.

It wasn't until he came closer to the Starbucks entrance that I realized my McSexy was the unadorned version of drag legend and queen icon Kevin Aviance. Add a good deal of make-up and an equally tasteful woman's wardrobe

and this hot number becomes a revolutionary who paved the way for the Drag elite and permanently altered dance scenes with four number one hits. Kevin Aviance is the stuff of fairytales, his name bringing about words like radiance, attitude, perseverance and above all...talent. I called for him and introduced myself as the writer for Clik. I was trying hard not to smile so hard that my cheeks shattered. "You're a little young," he said, and I wish I'd said something witty and writerly, but instead I nodded, happy



to have the chance as a young man to meet a true legend and superhero of mine. Since the coffee shop was swamped, Kevin pulled me to a nearby park, taking advantage of the quiet atmosphere to open up about his coming out to the gay bashing he survived and drew strength from. This is Kevin Aviance as never seen before:

GROWING UP & SEXUALITY

SM: Tell me about your parents.

KA: My mother is deceased. She died two years ago. She was the most incredible person of my life. She was giving, understanding, she had wisdom. She was a man and a woman. She was gracious and strong. Whatever a black woman



was, my mom was the extension. She had no fear.

SM: And your father?

KA: My relationship with my father is very strange because of who I am. We kind of made an agreement to leave each other alone. The last time I saw my father was right after the attack.

SM: How many siblings do you have?

KA: Seven; 3 girls, 4 boys. We're all quite close.

SM: How did you come out?

KA: I never had a big coming out party. I was always out. My mother told me that while she was in labor with me, I was a very hot baby.

SM: So you knew you were gay all your life?

KA: Yes, of course.

SM: Did everyone just assume you were gay?

KA: It was just the way it was. Maybe they thought I was a bit weird, but the older I got everyone knew I was such a queen.

SM: Did the students of your school embrace you being gay?

KA: I had no problems growing up—my mom moved us to a more educated section of Richmond, VA.

SM: Was there ever a period you tried hiding your sexuality?

KA: Only when I was trying to look masculine and butch. I struggled with the whole identity of being masculine. I was loose, my skin was soft, I had no body hair, so I often identified more with Black women. They were the strong people in my life.

SM: What were the first pair of pumps you've ever wore?

KA: They were my mother's pumps. They were red. I started wearing them when I was 5 until I stretched them out, that was when I found out I love high pumps.

SM: Have you ever thought of becoming a woman?

KA: I do believe you can become anything you want and change yourself into whomever you want to be. I thought about being a woman and I was a little more on the fem/man vibe side. I also knew that for me to be a woman I would need to be a lot more feminine than I am.

SM: Who's Kevin in drag?

KA: She is ferocious and fierce. I don't mess with her. As for me it took me a long time to [embrace] being a male. I love men's fashion now, but I didn't like it before because it didn't give me flare or faggotry.

SM: Have you ever had trouble accepting your gender?

KA: Of course I have. That's how Kevin Aviance developed. I couldn't identify as myself as being more masculine or more male because of the strong female role models in my life.

ON LOVE

SM: Are you single?

KA: I am.

SM: Are you dating?

KA: Of course I'm dating. I'm not dead.

SM: Have you ever been in love?

KA: Oh, lots of times. The people that I love have been able to move me to the next level in my life, they help me to reach certain achievements. Love for me is a movement—it's someone who can push me in a different direction.

SM: When did you first fall in love?

KA: In High School. His name was Matt. We ended up as friends at first, he used to invite me to his house. We were together all through High School. We both had girlfriends but we somehow—we were in love. We still talk til' this day.

SM: How did you still date girls knowing you were gay?

KA: I don't know. I just did it. I fell in love with these fierce women. They weren't a piece of trash. They were gorgeous and stunning and had attitude.

SM: Did they know you were gay?

KA: They knew something. When I tell you I was a freak, I was a freak. I was artistic. It wasn't about being gay. If you were gay, you were ousted. I acted like a faggot but I brought it in a different way. You have to understand; you're dealing with someone who doesn't work with the norm my fantasies are my realities.

SM: Would you date a woman now?

KA: That question is loaded. If a woman can make me feel the right way—you know what? I'm 38 years old and this place [New York City] is one depressing ass place sometimes. After what I've been through, my rules have changed. I'm more open to allowing more love in my life, more than I'm used to.

SM: Is that a yes?

KA: I answered the question already. Don't try it. Don't you dare—I will read you. You'll get a letter to the editor. Basically, I'm allowing love to happen. I'm not going to go out and search for it. I do love men—don't get me wrong—but if a woman make me feel cunt, then bring it!

SM: Are you gay?

KA: I am a gay, cross-dressing, high-heel-wearing, runway-walking queen.

SM: Tell me about the women you've been with.

KA: No. [laughs] The only woman I'll tell you about is my mother.

LIFE

SM: Okay, why did you move to NYC?

KA: There was no where else for me to live. New York City is the most fabulous place in the world. There's so much going on.

SM: Who was the first drag queen you've ever met?

KA: I guess it will be Sylvester. He was the first one I ever saw.

SM: What made you do drag?

KA: Because I was told I couldn't do it, that I could never look the part of drag.

SM: When was the first time you did drag?

KA: I was in fourth grade and I was singing 'I will survive'. My mom did my make up and my dad didn't know about it.

SM: You joined the House Of Aviance?

KA: I'm the eldest daughter. I was discovered by the mother in D.C. I had very long hair-weave. The mother of the House saw something in me and asked if I wanted to join the house.

SM: How many trophies have you won?

KA: Two or three trophies. The first ball I ever walked, I was told I looked like a caudal, but I would say I feel like the real trophies are watching people dance to my music at the balls. There's no other trophy bigger than that, there's no other joy. I get chills thinking about it. First time I saw people dancing to one of my songs, I

cried like a baby. It's so emotional for me. When you're with your own people and seeing them take something you've done and make something out of it and you're the soundtrack for it all—that is the

biggest achievement you can get in your life. That's the biggest trophy.

SM: Do you think you've inspired change?

KA: Yes, I think I have. I think I've influenced some people. I know in drag I have.

MUSIC

SM: When did you discover your love for music?

KA: I was born with the love. I've heard the rhythm of music since birth.

SM: What does the song *Cunty* mean to you?

KA: Cunty is my aint no mountain high enough. Without that song I would not have grown to be where I am now. It represents so much. It's timeless. When that beat goes off, I see so many people run to the dance floor.

SM: What was your inspiration for the song *Alive*?

KA: Patti Labelle's song 'Music is my Life'.

SM: Four number one hits, how does that feel?

KA: I feel like I'm not just a flash in the pan. It's a wonderful feeling. It's great to know that you're the Queen of Dance.

SM: Do you think you brought the word *cunty* to market?

KA: I know I heard it from somewhere. I don't think I invented it. I think I gave more of a Webster to it.

SM: Would you ever do any other genre?

KA: My new album will be more Gospel, Jazz, R&B, Dance. It's going to be my masterpiece. I'm rapping on it too. I'm a huge fan of rap music.

SM: What are some of your influences?

KA: Sylvester, Grace Jones, Diana Ross, Boy George, David Bowie.

HOMOPHOBIA

SM: Take me back to the day you were attacked.

KA: I was coming from a photo shoot for the HX gay pride issue. After the photo shoot, I was with the photographer's boyfriend and we went to this place called The Cocktail. Then, we walked over to the Phoenix. Later on, I left him and I was walking home—this is one o'clock in the morning—I was very happy. I had a pair of shorts on, combat boots, my bag filled with my pumps and laptop. The streets weren't really crowded because it was early in the morning. I saw a bunch of young black boys ahead and I, you know, checked myself a little bit, and walked past them.

SM: Checked yourself?

KA: Just made

m y s e l f

CONTINUES ON PAGE 8

Trip Out!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

aware of them. So, I was walking past them and this boy calls out, 'You aint diesel son.' I looked at him like, 'girl, please'. I said nothing, but I did wave at them like, whatever. After doing that, something told me to turn around and I turn around and there is this big trash bag flying at me. I duck that and the guy picks up another trash bag and throws that one at me. I duck that one and he has this spray can in his hand—I think he just finished tagging something—he looked at me and I just said to myself, Kevin, this is not going to be cute. I stood there and he has that can in his hand and he throws it at me and I just duck and it goes on past me. His boys are goofing on him and it's kind of like a peer pressure thing. So he said, 'No, no, no, I'm going to get you faggot.' He's walking towards me and I'm backing up and I said to myself, 'Let me get into the street because the cars are coming down'. I literally thought he wasn't going to go that far, but he calls for his guys, they then disappear. They were nowhere to be found. I kept walking in the street and someone grabbed me from behind, pulled my arms back and someone else hit me in the back—I had my purse they weren't taking my purse.

SM: Initially, did you think it was a homophobic attack?

KA: Yeah, it was because I was gay. What do you think it was for? These boys were out to kill me and that was it. Now, did they go out that night to randomly go beat up any kind of person? I don't know that story. All I know is they had no remorse when they kicked me on the head over 30 times. I know that these 'brothers' of mine felt like they were controlling the situation called 'The World' and at that moment in time they thought they were going to cancel out what they didn't want to see or what they thought was negative. There's nothing random about a gay bashing, you can feel the heat in their bodies, you can see the rage in their faces, you can see them turn into something that's not human.

SM: How many of them were there?

KA: I thought they were 30,000 of them. All of this happened between a minute or three. Now I know there were four of them.

SM: How were they caught?

KA: I think they told on themselves.

SM: There were people around, no one helped?

KA: There were people who identified them. No one tried to help.

SM: Why do you think no one helped out?

KA: Because it's New York—also, it was the first time something like this happened to me—my mouth is big but this was one time in my life that

I kept my mouth shut. If I would have said something they would have killed me. I really do believe that.

SM: Do you think you're the poster boy for the fight against homophobia?

KA: God has a plan for me. I don't try to late on it. What I'm learning from therapy is to accept what has happened, and to not allow it to manifest as my fault. This was an act brought upon me.

SM: What do you think promotes homophobia?

KA: A range of things. Just not knowing or educating yourself. I think the true sheer fact of you asking me this question promotes discrimination. I am so sick and tired of the negative. We need to concentrate on the prize no matter what it is. This picture is so big and we need to love and hug and tolerate each other and follow through with it.

SM: Is there a lack of support from the Black gay community to fight against homophobia?

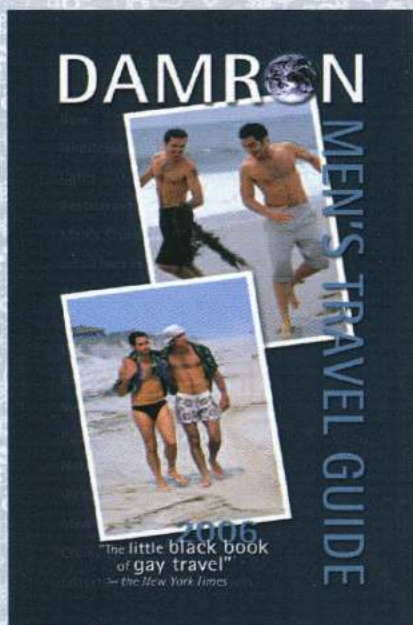
KA: It's not called lack its called doing the right thing. If the Black community would stop it with the categories and just go back to the vacation bible class and love thy neighbor—everything would be all right.

SM: What are you plans for the future?

KA: I'm working on my album, Mister Piece, and there's a line of pumps coming out called Kevin Aviance.

At the end of this interview, it was as though we had connected on a different level. Instead of being a legend, a giant untouchable presence, he was more human and tangible, someone I had connected with and felt closer to. I realized as he left, with as much flair as he arrived, that he was correct with his thoughts, and that anyone who applies his or herself can become as strong an influence as he has. Kevin Aviance's belief in personal greatness is possibly the key to advancing the gay movement to where it needs to be.

Steven Emmanuel Martinez is the founder of www.queerkidofcolor.com and can be reached at: mailto:queerkidofcolor@yahoo.com



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WHY I SPEAK UP (AND OUT)

By Monte J. Wolfe (Brave Soul Collective)

"I don't have anything against gay people, but I'm not gay." If I hear that statement uttered from the lips of a heterosexual, a celebrity, or a celebrity posing as a heterosexual one more time, I'm liable to scream and try to hurt somebody. **THAT IS WHY I SPEAK UP.**

Every time I see or hear someone make statements like that not only does it piss me off, but it makes me want to speak even louder than I'm usually propelled to do. The statement itself insinuates that there is something 'wrong' or disgustingly disturbing about 'gay people. At the same time it always seems as if the person saying the words actually DOES have a problem with gay people. It's as if they're saying, "I'm cool with y'all, as long as you keep that quiet, keep it over there, and don't get any on me." My life, your life, OUR LIVES are just as sacred, meaningful, and valuable as anyone else. **THAT IS**

WHY I SPEAK UP. That's not what most of us have been taught, however.

"Suffer in silence, don't air your dirty laundry in public, what happens in the family stays in the family"....take your pick. All of these are old adages that carry with them an underlying message. I can't speak for anyone but myself, but being afforded the same rights, privileges, and respect as a heterosexual person is of the utmost importance to me. I happen to be one who believes that one of the only ways to ensure that becomes a reality is for me to be visible, open, and up front, about who I am, when I need to. Even within the context of my own lineage, there are people in my family-aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents who still don't know that I am HIV positive. I'm told that they all know I'm same gender loving, as a result of conversations that I've had with some of my

cousins, who've in turn had conversations with their parents, who have in turn have conversations with their siblings, and my grandmother. When I stop and think about how uncomfortable things became recently when I had a discussion with my mother about wanting to inform my family about my HIV status, I feel stifled. The conversation was one that produced tears, honesty, challenges, and numerous uncomfortable silences. **THIS IS WHY I SPEAK UP.** This is why I want to speak up to my own relatives, not only about my HIV status, and Brave Soul Collective, but also about my sexuality. They all may know, but most of them never got that information directly from me, which means that there's a 99.9% chance that they didn't get the whole accurate story.

"I believe one of the only ways to ensure that becomes a reality is for me to be visible, and honest about who I am."

We can speak or be spoken for. **THAT IS WHY I SPEAK UP.** I don't seek to speak for all gay/same gender loving black men. I'd never be so narcissistic as to think that I could accurately do so. However, at the same time what I've witnessed over the last 8 months since BSC's inception has been something miraculous. I've seen the element, the energy of truth that we have carried with us multiply and spread. It's like we speak, and other people, especially a lot of us other same gender loving black men feel like they then have the courage to do the same. **THAT IS WHY I SPEAK UP.**

I know that there are a lot of things to consider when looking at disclosure of sexual preference, and/or HIV status, but I also have seen how powerful and liberating these types of disclosure can also be.

Granted, not everyone wishes to be completely open about things such as sexuality and especially HIV status. I respect, understand and honor that fact. Even as honest and open as I wish to be about some things, there are still things that I will never share with anyone. Not necessarily because they're shameful, but simply because they are PRIVATE. What life has shown me also however is that I also have the blessing of being able to choose if, when and how honest I wish to be. There are times when it's necessary for me to open my mouth, set someone straight (no pun intended) and remind them that just because they don't spot what they think is a gay person, they are indeed in the presence of one who gives and demands just as much respect as they do.

As long as people feel like they have the right to deny someone their experience of existence based on religious beliefs, **I'LL SPEAK UP.** As long as members of our

community like
**Kevin Aviance,
Rashawn
Brazell, Dwan**

Prince, Sakia Gunn and most recently Michael Sandy are subjected to violence as a result of hatred, fear and homophobia, **I'LL SPEAK UP.** Being black, gay/same gender loving, and male (and also HIV positive) is challenging enough without having to feel like you have to BE something to, and for everyone else. If there's one thing that the last two years of my life (with HIV) have taught me, it's that life is sacred, and not to be taken for granted. I've just decided by now that if I'm not livin my life for ME, I ain't livin. Call me defensive, call me opinionated, call me an activist, call me what you want, — I'll be all of that while I'm here if it means that I can be proud of who and what I am (while I'm here).

Turn About

A man...a lifestyle...a journey

A decade ago in 1996, Emanuel Xavier turned his life around from a life of prostitution and drug dealing to become one of the most significant voices to emerge from the spoken word movement. The openly gay Latino poet has since published two poetry collections, *Pier Queen* and *Americano*, edited a critically acclaimed anthology, *Bullets & Butterflies*, queer spoken word poetry and a soon-to-be-reprinted semi-autobiographical cult classic novel, *Christlike*. His work has also been featured everywhere from *Urban Latino* to the *James White Review* to *Genre*.

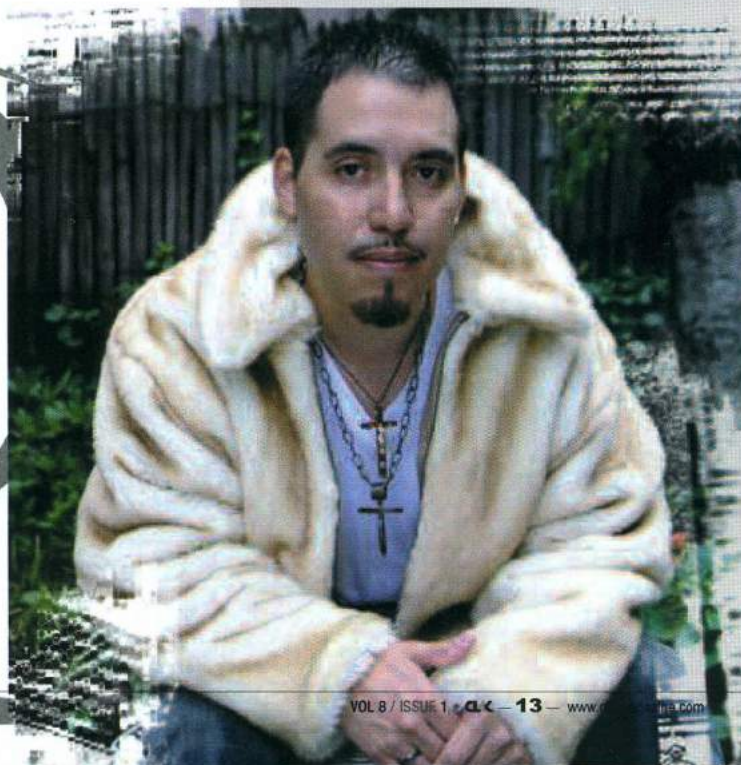
He has appeared on television as a guest host of *In The Life* on PBS, performed several times on *Russell Simmons presents Def Poetry* on HBO, co-starred in the feature film *The Ski Trip*, on *LOGO* and just got acting cred doing background work on *Law & Order* on NBC. He will also be seen in the inde-

pendent film, *Beyond The Walls*, due out next year.

Emanuel Xavier is also the visionary genius behind *The Glam Slam*, the annual NYC event which combines elements of poetry slam competitions with ballroom culture. He founded the *House of Xavier*, a collective of artists, as a tribute to the ball scene which nurtured him during his decadent past with the support of good friends such as *Willi Ninja*.

In the spirit of the beatnik poets, when Emanuel Xavier is not reading a poem at a local protest or voicing his political thoughts, he can be found sharing his unapologetic words everywhere from the *Nuyorican Poets Cafe* to *Riker's Island Prison* to *Columbia University* and around the country. He has worked actively with queer and homeless youth and lent his name to many benefits throughout the years and even put several together himself for organizations such as the *Latino Commission on AIDS*, *Youth Enrichment Services* and the *World Trade Center Disaster Relief Fund* (the latter of which brought out everyone to the stage from *Claire Danes* to *Oscar Hijuelos* to *Lou Reed*). For all of this and so much more, he is recipient of the *Marsha A. Gomez Cultural Heritage Award* and a *NYC Council Citation*.

All of these accomplishments nearly ended a year ago when he was brutally attacked on the streets of Brooklyn by a group of more than a dozen teens in a notorious incident. Fortunately, Emanuel Xavier managed to survive once again and is certain to turn these struggles into beauty and continue sharing his passion with the world.





Letter to a Friend

By Doug Cooper-Spencer

Dear Marcus,

It's one o'clock in the morning, three days since we last spoke and two restless nights that I've wrestled with my thoughts.

I have honored your request that I not call you to further discuss the matter and I have tried so hard not to butt into your business. But the look on your face as you told me of your

decision still haunts me. The look of youthful insouciance I'd often seen on your face had been replaced by shadows. And though the darkness as it appeared on your face was unusual, what the shadows represented were not; they were shadows that told of doubt and self-loathing. It was a face I had seen many times on so many others. You see Marcus, I understand shadows.

That chilly day in the park you told me you had decided to reconsider your sexuality. You asked me not to speak, but to listen. And I respected your wish, instead, looking around the park, the secluded spot you chose and realizing it was the right place for you at that time, a space so secluded as to protect you from harm and yet with the open skies above, a space that might grant you ascension. After you finished your explanation you told me not to expect to see you very often. Then you stood and walked away.

I watched you walk back to your car smaller and less significant than I have ever seen you and as gray as the day that framed you. I wanted to cry not only because a friend was leaving me, but for all the young men and women who have had to suffer through your pain.

And that is why, my friend, I have decided to write this letter.

I can no longer stand by and watch the debasement of another of my brothers or sisters. I want to give you food on your journey, and I hope the bread I offer will grant you strength along the way. It will probably be the only sustenance you will receive. Marcus, here are some thoughts I want you to carry:

It is no doubt you've been told you are an aberration, a smear on the course of humankind. Don't believe it. You are not an aberration. You are a component of nature and its tendency to vary in its makeup.

Your homosexuality is no more exclusive than the difference in height between an NBA player and a jockey; or those who might have a natural tendency towards obesity as compared to some who cannot for the life of them gain weight; it is no different than those who are born to function primarily with their left hand while others who cannot function with hands at all; or those who have near incomparable physical strength and those whose frailty allowed them to live only for a day.

In nature's tendency towards diversity we have been given people whose minds mainly grasp abstractions while others, logic. It is the will of the force of nature that deals in diversity, just look around at the different races that people this planet. If nature can offer such diversity, why then would it not offer homosexuality as a complement to its course? Your homosexuality is no less an aberration than merely difference.

'Ah, but those other differences don't cause pain', they might tell you, but don't fall for that either, because neither does your homosexuality. The pain is caused by bias, not your sexual nature. It's the same pain that once made some cry out that the physically challenged be thrown to the wolves, or that the existence of other races be the agent behind social woes.

Sadly, it's never their own pain they choose to see, the pain brought on by their social or personal maladies, instead they choose to make others the source of their discomfort. Even the fact that you, my friend, are asked to 'reconsider your sexuality' shows the extent to which such people will go in order to form a fragile matrix in which to house their own short comings.

And do not let those who oppose you lump you into the category of rapists and molesters either. They will often try to do that. Rapists and molesters harm. Heterosexual and homosexual rapists and molesters cause harm, not heterosexuality and homosexuality in and of themselves.

There are those who will tell you your sexual orientation is unnatural, but don't buy into that way of thinking. Your homosexual orientation developed as a course of nature, it was not artificially induced. Therefore it is natural.

Quite often, what is really meant by those who might use the terms, 'unnatural', or 'not normal', is that your sexual orientation does not match that person's moral beliefs. In fact, the words 'natural' and 'normal' are terms that deal primarily with matters of biological occurrence and measurement, more than moral ideology.

But the implications of this argument go further than it appears; its basis is the same as the reasoning that your sexual nature (and only yours, mind you, because in their view heterosexuality is not to be dissected) is one of choice. It's the implication that since it is choice and not of nature, it is not of God; therefore it can be (and should be) undone.

You even told me your sister suggested you might not be homosexual, but are simply trying to fit a fad. Only you know the truth. Only you know the depth and the history of your feelings. It is you, and only you, who know whether or not you chose to be homosexual; and I know, given the pain you have gone through most of your life, you probably wouldn't have chosen to be homosexual, though please, love who you are just as you love the skin you're in. It is the gift God gave you. It's called Life. Yours.

Regarding morality. When we think of morality we think of inflexible codes of conduct. But, in fact, our moral precepts are not so inflexible, they can be very pliant. History has shown us that. For instance, the difference between the moral standards that once viewed women as an adjunct to mankind, or ones that supported the belief of the inferiority of black people to whites are vastly different than moral standards of today. So be aware when someone declares you a moral miscreant.

Morality can be used to protect and enlighten in the most divine way, or it can be actualized as an agent of great harm and destruction. To be safe when considering matters of morality, Marcus, accept those things in life that do not harm yourself or others, and ones that nurture and create a positive energy for yourself and your environment.

So unless it can truly be proven that being gay works against this positive force, then by all means embrace it with the warmth it deserves no matter what others might think.

Now, often this is when discussions of God and religion come into play. I'm sure I don't have to remind you of those talks. But what I will tell you is this: God is an abstract concept that humankind has honed to explain phenomena (matters such as being, death, circumstance, etc) that govern life. And there are many views, all of which claim divine providence. To say the concept of God is an abstraction is not to say It doesn't exist. I, for one, believe God does exist. It's just that our ability to fully understand God is greatly lacking. It is very difficult to understand something that cannot be fully realized as fact.

Even to the point that we have come to apply anthropomorphic terms to describe God speaks of our desire to come to terms with It. And you know what Marcus? We can come to terms with It, but we cannot explain It. We cannot explain or understand something so powerful, so infinite as God.

Beyond it all, this is where faith comes into play. Notice, I said 'faith', not 'belief'. So many people profess to have faith when all they really have is belief. Someone once described belief as wishing things to be as you are told they should be, and faith as a letting go of expectation, to be able to throw your arms open and accept what is not known or understood. Our beliefs are shaped by cultural, political and to some degree, personal influence, but very little faith. Marcus, let go of the fear and grab hold of love, and you'll be all right.

Finally, regarding God. I can't leave this discussion without addressing the old catch phrase that God does not condone homosexuality. Challenge them to prove it.

I mean, really, since God is omniscient, then He knew you were going to be gay.

At this point you will probably be challenged with the notion of 'free will' as grace from God. Okay, that's cool, but if He punishes us for our choice then free will was not given out of grace. And anyway, what need is there for something that has all that divine power to allow free will anyway? Is it a divine joke? He has all this power (remember, He is also omnipotent) and yet He sets people up to become what they should not be and then punishes them?? Ideas like this simply make no sense.

We can use the same old beliefs, borne, again, of culture and politic or we can turn to a faith that liberates us from such precepts and simply embrace the idea

that everyone has the right to become self actualized towards a spirit that causes no harm to self or others, a nurturing spirit. Love. Personally, I choose to walk a spiritual path (failing sometimes as humans do), than a religious one. The two are not the same because religion is man-made and is prone to all the influences I stated above, while spirituality is the essence of God. Many seek religion (earthly power), but few seek spirituality.

Another argument used to oppose homosexuality is that it causes the destruction of the family and shuns procreation. First of all, if a family is firmly entrenched in love it will not allow the fact that one of its members is gay destroy it. If it does, then it needs to re-evaluate its shortcomings because matters of diversity as well as adversity will always arise within the family structure.

And regarding the whole procreation thing, this point of view assumes if those of us who are homosexual act on our nature, then *everyone* will become homosexual and procreation would cease. (What???) Marcus, *everyone* would not become homosexual if *someone* who is homosexual chooses to live his or her life. Humans are not that monolithic. Besides, if procreation is the prime reason for the validation of existence, then we are all in step to miss the fullness that makes us human. I believe the positive growth of our individual spirit (one imbued in love) is the prime agent of our lives, not the extension of the physical self. And what about matters of over-population and adoption anyway?

Furthermore, if my understanding of biology serves me correctly, the propagation of life is a powerful force. How do we know that sexual intercourse is really needed to achieve it anyway? All living beings don't engage in sexual intercourse in order to procreate. Who is to say humans, if given the fate of the cessation of intercourse would no longer generate offspring? Maybe it would happen through cellular division as it does in some life species on this planet? It may sound far fetched, but so is the notion of Immaculate Conception.

Anyway, does God really need to implement the notion of copulation to achieve population? Remember He is omnipotent; maybe an infrequent blink of His eye would bring into being a life. Just another mystery never to be solved.

A final word about family: it has long been high time to redefine the concept of 'family'. It's been done before (for example, the Industrial Revolution), so why not again? The strongest glue to hold together a family is love.

Love. The best definition of love I've ever heard is: "*The will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth.*" (M. Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled*). Marcus, love yourself. Seek this kind of love from others. Demand it so you might know it. Only then will you be able to live it. Listen, you have all the right in the world to seek the nurturance of your spirit free from the whims of others. Love yourself. Don't get caught up in the games people play in their attempt to gain dominance over your life; it's been done to many throughout the ages.

When you learn to love yourself, you are able to love others, and you grow beyond the borders of religious doctrine and demagoguery towards a true spiritual journey. You become open to wondrous things about your life, about Life period. You become the person God meant you to be.

In the end, 'The Mystery' we call Life will probably always continue, and will probably never be understood, and that's okay. You see the 'The Mystery' is not as scary as it might sound. It is fear that holds most of us captive to lives of trepidation, hatred and inconsequence, not love.

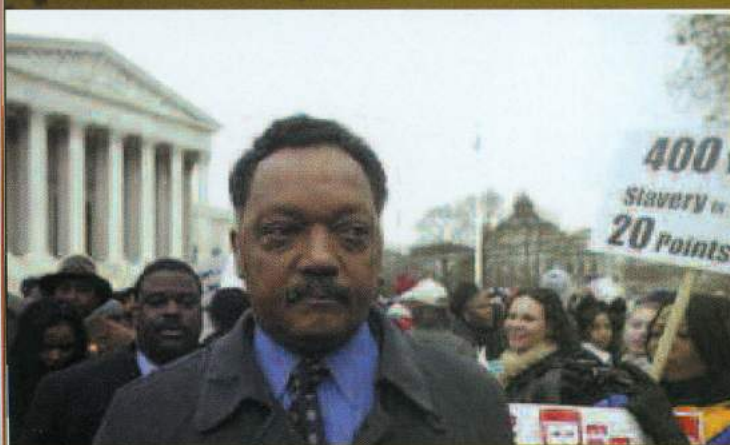
Marcus, I wish you well on your journey. I love you dearly and will always be in that place waiting for you. You know where to find me, because we have both been to that place. Remember Love and Faith.

-Doug

A CLOSER LOOK INTO N-WORD

BLACK LEADERS WANT N-WORD OBLITERATED:

Also, Jesse calls for 'Seinfeld' DVD boycott.



In the wake of Michael Richards' racist rant, Rev. Jesse Jackson and a number of black leaders are calling on the entertainment industry – and rappers in particular – to permanently retire its use of the N-word.

"We want to give our ancestors a present," Jackson said at a news conference in Los Angeles Monday. "Dignity over degradation."

The press conference was arranged in response to the Nov. 17 racial rant from former "Seinfeld" star Michael Richards, who used the N-word several times and made other racist remarks to African American men who allegedly heckled him during his stand-up routine at a Los Angeles comedy club.

Jackson said his group, including the NAACP, will meet with TV networks, film companies and musicians to discuss a ban on the racial slur.

Meanwhile, the group is also calling for folks to boycott the recently-released seventh-season DVD of "Seinfeld," which starred Richards as the character Kramer.

Also attending the press conference was U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters D-Calif., who said the media largely ignores African American issues until such an incident as the Richards situation.

"This is not simply about whether or not the black community forgives or forgets, this is about understanding that this is pervasive, that this happens in all of our institutions, one way or the other," Waters said.

As previously reported, comedian Paul Mooney told reporters at the press conference that he will no longer use the N-word in his standup routines after hearing Richards' rant.

Also, owners of the comedy club where the rant went down are demanding that Richards pay \$1 million to charity for each N-word that came out of his mouth during the tirade.

According to TV news show "The Insider," Laugh Factory co-owner Jamie Masada has now banned the 'N' word from the venue and is reportedly asking Richards to pay \$6 million to

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charity for the six times he used the racial epithet on stage.

Meanwhile on the lighter side of this issue ... if you can imagine that is a classic parody of the Michael Richards incident that the national Lampoon came up with. You got to see it to appreciate it. Go to: <http://www.national-lampoon.com/seinfeld.html>. By the way, it's called "Seinfeld: The Lost Episode."

Pro

JASMYNE CANNICK: Stopping the N Word Starts With Blacks

Black leaders are calling on the entertainment industry to stop using the "N" word, a move in *theory* that I support wholeheartedly.

Do I think that the entertainment industry gives a damn?

Absolutely not, but it makes for great news clips and if one didn't know any better they'd think we were really doing something here. But in actuality, Blacks would be foolish to expect an industry that is only concerned with making money and lots of it to voluntarily comply with the request of a few Black leaders when there's millions of dollars to be made.

The N word is profitable, let's face it.

How do I know?

Because every Tuesday millions of us disperse to our local music stores and support artists, many of whom are Black, that in their lyrics degrade women and use the N word freely. In fact, we expect them to do it, that's what we want and that's why they're rich.

To expect record companies, who are raking in millions each year off the N word to voluntarily give that up is irrational. The only way we're going to make sweeping systemic changes in the way the N word is used is if we force it economically and quite frankly I don't think we really want to do that.

In order for change to be made that would mean that we would have to stop listening to the artists that we love so much. It would mean that we couldn't support films where the N word was used, no matter who's starring in it. It would mean the boycotting of radio stations that play songs from artists who use the N word. No more buying designer clothes from artists who use the N word. No more buying concert

tickets for artists who use the N word and of course watching BET and MTV would be out of the question.

Are Blacks really ready to give up the N word?

Because the only way it's going to happen is if we effect their bottom line but alas, we're too busy making their bottom line.

I'll be the first to admit that I love hip-hop. However, my love for hip-hop does not mean that I turn a deaf ear to its use of the N word and homophobic and misogynistic lyrics like so many of us often do with the disclaimer, "I like the beat not the words." That's a cop out, plain and simple.

And let's be clear, we are the same group of people that liked R. Kelly's beats so much that we turned a blind eye towards the very blatant proof that he was engaging in at best questionable activities with minor girls and put him and his new album on top of the charts.

We should not be in the business of asking other people to do something that we aren't even willing to do ourselves.

I think Black people are just fine with the N word. Sure, we may get riled up when a white person uses it, but can we really when most of us use it everyday in our daily conversations.

Consider this, Black people went from referring to each other as "brothas and sistas" to nigga's and bitch's and sometimes worse.

Until the majority of Blacks are willing to make a conscientious effort which requires a lifestyle change in regards to the N word, it will continue to be used not only by Blacks but by other races as well.

“

I think Black people are just fine with the N word. Sure, we may get riled up when a white person uses it, but can we really when most of us use it everyday in our daily conversations.

”

Con

WHICH NIGGAH ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?: Brief Notes Toward a Politics of Re-appropriation

A response to Jesse Jackson and Jasmine Cannick (among others)
By Frank Leon Roberts

YOUR NIGGER MIGHT NOT BE MY NIGGAH

Well, here we are again, entangled in what is perhaps one of the oldest debates among black cultural critics: the Niggah dispute. As a poststructuralist academic who is also invested in ground-level black politics, I have to admit I've been pretty disappointed with the ridiculous recent calls by black leaders to "stop using Nigger altogether" as the answer to all racial injustice.

What bothers me the most about these "activist" responses to Michael Richard's racist tirade is the tendency to make the term *Nigger* itself the problem, rather than a question of *who* gets to use the word, *why*, and in *what* context.

Thus far I've heard few people mention the obvious: the "N-word" that white folks use (Nigger) is rarely the same "N-word" that black folks use ("Niggah", which I would argue is both grammatically and ideologically different).

To condemn the use of the N-word without any regard to context is to simply make a fetish of the term and erase the specificity of why the term became offensive—or not—to begin with.

I think the real question is this: in what ways might we maintain a critical relationship to the debased history of "Nigger", while still being careful not to shut down alternative uses of the word that have been deployed in the service of progressive reappropriative politics?

QUEERING NIGGAH

In her essay "Critically Queer" feminist philosopher Judith Butler discusses the ways in which the term "queer" went from being an insult to a slogan of resistance. Butler argues that in the early 1990s "queer politics" emerged as an attempt to embrace values which were originally seen as "shameful": being gay, being unmarried, being on the outside of culture, etc.

Similarly, here in 2006 "black queer studies" is the hot new field within academia, championed by progressives as varied as Cathy Cohen, E. Patrick Johnson, Dwight McBride and Jewelle Gomez, to name just a few. For better or worse, queer is all over the place, and rarely is still considered that initial, unspeakable "epitaph" it once was.

The point? Well doesn't this radical reappropriation of "queer" suggest that it

might indeed be possible for certain words to be "returned" to the very groups that they were originally meant to injure; that these same words can be cited *against* their originary purposes; and that ultimately these terms might be used to critically perform a reversal of effects?

By now, I think you've guess where I stand on this: Yes. But enough about queer. The real question is this: since "queer" got "queered" (even by the *black queers*) why cant niggah?

EMBRACING SHAME, OR, REMEMBER HOW "BLACK" BECAME "BEAUTIFUL"?

What amazes me the most about the widespread condemnation of black folks' use of "niggah", is the complete lack of historicity that often undergirds such criticism. How quickly we forget history!

Somehow I think we've forgotten that "nigger" and "black" were initially used as synonyms. While one of those terms (nigger) continues to be demonized, oddly enough the other (black) has become naturalized in racial discourse. But the fact of the matter is this: up until the early half of the twentieth century, calling someone "a black" was often considered just as

offensive as calling them "a nigger". The two terms were understood to be roughly equal in their debasement. Just like "a nigger", being "a black" was also figured as dirty, nasty, ugly.

But then something happened. "Its" name? "Black Power".

People seem to forget that it was the rhetoric of the civil rights and black power movements of the 1960s/70s which first changed the debasing connotation of "being black" into something politically affirmative. The then radical and unprecedented concept that "black was beautiful" marked a major shift in "blackness" as a term of endearment rather than debasement. The call to "say it loud, I'm black and I'm proud" provided a political precursor to feminist mantras such as "the personal is political" and queer politics' "we're here, we're queer, get used to it." The point? Blackness changed.

WILL (YOU) NIGGAH?

I find it to be an ironic mark of history that at the dawn of the twenty-first century we now have black activists who want to shut down any attempt to embrace the shame of Niggah even when the very history "blackness" itself is one of such critical reappropriation.

Just as terms like "butchqueen", "cunt", "homo", and "faggot" can sometimes be used as ambivalent yet critical terms of endearment (depending on who's calling who what and why), it seems as though our very first step at "getting pass Nigger" might indeed be starting with Niggah.

ABOUT FRANK LEÓN ROBERTS

Frank León Roberts is a young cultural critic and scholar from New York City. A graduate of NYU's Gallatin School (B.A., 2004) and Tisch School of the Arts (M.A., 2005), he is currently a Corrigan Predoctoral Fellow (Ph.D.) in NYU's Graduate School of Arts and Science. Outside of academia, he continues to be involved politically with Brooklyn's People of Color in Crisis (Leadership Award Recipient 2004), the Policy Institute of NGLTF (Urvashi Vaid Fellow 2003-2004), The Gay Men's Health Crisis (House of Latex Project Fellow 2004-2005), and the National Black Justice Coalition (Founding Board of Directors). As a commentator on black popular culture he has appeared on venues such as the Ricky Lake Show and MTV, as well as publications such as the San Francisco Chronicle, Pacific News and Yo! He also contributes to SGL publications like CLIK, FlavaLife and Rockstar. A native New Yorker, he lives in Brooklyn, New York., get used to it." The point? Blackness changed.

Books above are published by RedBone Press. RedBone Press publishes work celebrating the cultures of black lesbians and gay men, and work that further promotes understanding between black gays and lesbians and the black mainstream. Purchase online at: <http://www.redbonepress.com/>

Blood Beats: Vol. 1 Demos, Remixes & Extended Versions by Ernest Hardy



Writing from a critical center that is melanin-based/feminist/pro-queer/unabashedly-leftist, LA-based writer Ernest Hardy (a Sundance Fellow and member of the Los Angeles Film Critics Association whose work has appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *Vibe*, the *LA Times*, the *LA Weekly* and more) pens essays, interviews and reviews whose subject matter ranges from underground hip-hop and American indie film to modern French cinema, from revealing interviews with Warren Beatty, Meshell NdegeOcello and Les Nubians to an essay on gay rappers and queer rap audiences that pushes beyond the clichés of the media-stoked "down-low" phenomenon.

ISBN: 0-9656659-8-4
Specs: Softcover, 218 pp.
Price: \$19.95
Pub. Date: May 2006

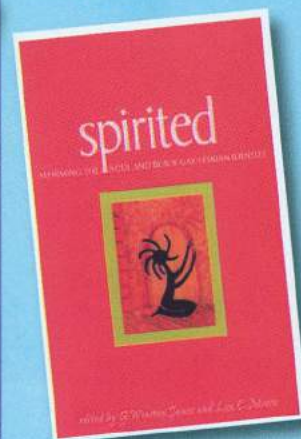
Erzulie's Skirt by Ana-Maurine Lara



Set in the age of urbanization in the Dominican Republic over the course of several lifetimes, *Erzulie's Skirt* is a tale of how women and their families struggle with love, tragedy and destiny. Told from the perspectives of three women, *Erzulie's Skirt* takes us from rural villages and sugar cane plantations to the poor neighborhoods of Santo Domingo, and through the journey by *yola* across the sea between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. It is a compelling love story that unearths our deep ancestral connections to land, ritual and memory.

ISBN: -9786251-0-2
Specs: Softcover
Price: \$15.00
Pub. Date: October 2006

Spirited: Affirming the Soul and Black Gay/Lesbian Identity edited by G. Winston James & Lisa C. Moore



In *Spirited: Affirming the Soul and Black Gay/Lesbian Identity*, more than 40 writers address the question of how we, as same-gender-loving black people, affirm ourselves as sexual and spiritual people. These sacred narratives are a canon for our survival—holy texts proclaiming the divinity of our lives, the righteousness of our love, and the sanctity of our being. *Spirited* is a must-read for those on a journey toward spiritual and self-acceptance.

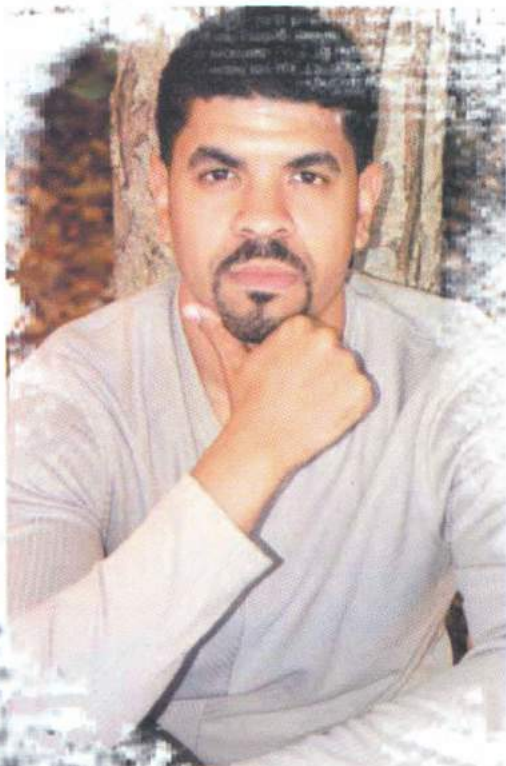
ISBN: 0-9656659-3-3
Specs: Softcover, 391 pp.
Price: \$16.95
Pub. Date: April 2006

What's amazing about Ken Jackson, Jr.'s writing is his perspective. In both his books and films he brings a passion and energy that both compels the readers/viewers and challenges them at the same time.

Jackson's characters are at once accessible and familiar. The stories captivate and the plots are so ripe with messages and imagery that one cannot help anticipating the next thought, scene, or experience.

Jackson states that he "writes so that people can reach the [characters] and feel connected to them." He goes on to reveal that in some cases aspects of his characters are biographical, either parts of himself or parts of people he has known and/or loved. In both the books and films he has found a strong audience with Black women, like the E. Lynn Harris. And at the same time like the beloved James Earle Hardy, he has a unique voice for black gay and bisexual men (or just men who kick it like that!) and resonates resoundingly with these men. At the core of his work is his ability to write about issues without becoming preachy or deciding for the audience how they should or should not feel or react to the circumstances. And while there are no pretty pictures, his imagery allows the reader to create a vast array of images and visual representations much like Michael-Christopher's graphic artistic cartooning.

In his trilogy, *Colorful Matters*, *Reconcilable Sacrifices*, and *As if We Never Met* the reader becomes familiar with Kier McBride. Kier is not your usual brother, nor is he the poster child for the DL Brotha- but he is at once shown with remarkable depth of personality and humanity the intricate challenges and issues facing men; particularly Black men, in a society where they are brought up to believe they are or should be heterosexual, only. For the first time, through Jackson's books we get to understand the dilemma of brothers who have same



Ken Jackson Jr.

ON point

By DARRYL

sex attractions and the struggles and challenges they face in coming to terms with their true sexuality. But, that would be a simple short story— instead Jackson also depicts in his tales a delicately woven fabric of personal choices, secrets, pain, pleasure, and obstacles- much like life itself.

These stories are not one sided. We are treated by Jackson to a full range of characters and expressions creating a full spectrum of people, places, ideas, and choices. This is not a series of stories justifying anything, but instead examining the condition of the human heart and mind; particularly about intimate and psychological affections.

His production company sums up the quality of his work well... On Point!

Jackson states he was "inspired to create films by Faith Trimel (Black Aura On An Angel) when I met her in Atlanta." Trimel has been a source of inspiration for many people and is "doing her thing" and making a difference in the Black gay and lesbian film industry, and indeed the industry as a whole. This prompted Jackson to open his worldview and consider filmmaking as an avenue for expression that he could feel equally passionate about an empowered in.

Jackson states he found his passion for both writing and filmmaking while on a personal pilgrimage. He states that once he started writing it "just flowed. I wrote the first two books in six months."

Jackson's first film experience as documentary on the "DL" was unremarkable but Jackson admits that he did the entire film alone and realized some valuable lessons in the process. He obviously learned those well because his film *Just Between Us* is a wonderful documentary presentation of the evolution of Black Gay, lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender criticism and inspiration from leading filmmakers, writers, and activists in Atlanta, Georgia. He uses his style to tell a story, again, without telling the viewers what they should think but challenging them to explore the history (herstory).

Jackson has not stopped, along with relocating to Detroit to care for his mother, the oldest of five children, he continues to walk on the edge and push the margins for Black folks who have been missing in any appreciable way in both literature and film. Jackson's recent projects include the films *A Cigarette Moment*, and *Keith & Greg*, a stage musical production *Birdsong*, and a new sitcom/serial *Bottoms Up*. Whatever Ken Jackson, Jr., decides to do you can be sure you will not be disappointed. He promises to come straight from the heart and produce images, characters, and stories that represent and expose the greatness that is in us as well as the challenges we face everyday as people trying to make live in this world. His production company sums up the quality of his work well... On Point!

You can learn more about Ken Jackson, Jr., and his upcoming products by visiting www.onpointproductions.com.

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RING the ALARM

"As men we have to **RING THE ALARM** and realize that a relationship can be over before it ever begins." -Juwan

Three years ago, I met this fine ass man at a pride festival in the great city of Chicago. My skin was radiating that day and I could tell by others frozen stares that I possessed a certain magnetic sexual energy. I remember oiling my body that morning thinking, "these niggas are gonna' love dis 8 pack". That day I intentionally left my shirt unbuttoned. It was then that I officially deemed myself the Black Adonis of God's green earth. Anyway, my crew and I hit the streets to embark upon many drive by greetings but only one sexy ass Chi-town native recognized my invitation for him to step to me. Unlike others who'd just gawk and smile; he arrogantly asserted himself and personified an enticing demeanor. We chatted, laughed and exchanged numbers to plan our highly anticipated rendezvous. I can still remember the way he kept licking his lips and repeating my name. I knew he had a handful of thirsty groupies but I insisted that he call me before the weekend was over. As the night passed, my entourage and I continued on throughout the park; exchanging numbers and lustful hugs to only forget about old boy we met earlier. Needless to say, I never heard from him that weekend. In fact, an entire month passed before I ever saw this man. Our late night phone calls and extensive emails led to his first visit of many. Our reunion was hot and we fucked twice before even checking him into a hotel. I'm not sure who said it first but after a year of bi-weekly romantic visits we proclaimed our love for one another.

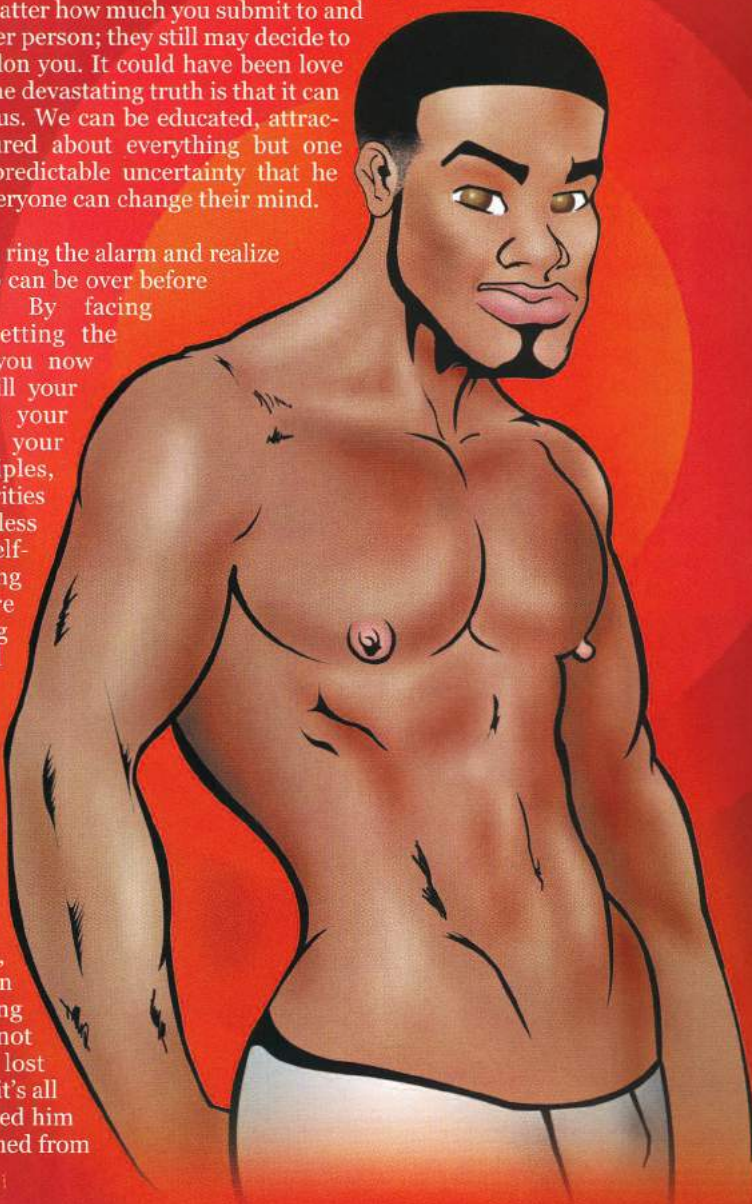
This correspondence seemed perfect and I once believed that we had created a harmonious connection. We could talk about everything and until we surprisingly split; I thought we could handle anything that came our way. Without a warning sign, my long distance love affair turned soar. On a surprise visit, I found my aficionado having dinner with his lover from Atlanta. I didn't fight and argue with him or drop a single tear. I just gathered my things and drove all the way back to Michigan without ever looking back. The disappointment reawakened an ugly truth

that I've ignored and admittedly denied in almost all of my writings. No matter how much you submit to and sacrifice for another person; they still may decide to deceive and abandon you. It could have been love at first sight and the devastating truth is that it can happen to any of us. We can be educated, attractive and self-assured about everything but one inevitable yet unpredictable uncertainty that he may leave you. Everyone can change their mind.

As men we have to ring the alarm and realize that a relationship can be over before it ever begins. By facing this truth and letting the relationship go, you now can begin to fulfill your purpose. This is your time to retain your guiding principles, review your priorities and exalt the endless possibilities of self-love. By leaving him alone you're actually renewing your spiritual consciences as you review the lessons that this experience was ordained to bring unto you. You're not a mess because life is a process and along this journey you have to fall, so that you can celebrate getting back up. It's not about how you lost him or let him go; it's all about how you loved him and what you learned from the experience.

Beyond all of the resentment and anger I can see why a break up is actually a break through. As you mature, the quality of your relationships will improve but only until you make the decision to love yourself. I believe that it is every man's divine right and responsibility to protect, preserve and positively promote him-self, so then he can perform at his optimal best. Remember that you're priceless, blessed beyond measure and too special to depend on any man for your happiness.

-Juwan



Beastie Boyz

PHOTOGRAPHER: EFFI COHEN
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STYLING: SANDRINE FOULHOUX-BOUCHER
FASHION ASSISTANT: JAMAL GORDON
GROOMING: JEWEL WHINFIELD



WENDELL WEARS BLAZER BY JEAN PAUL
GAUTIER, SHIRT BY CHRISTIAN DOIR,
TIE BY DKNY, VELVET PANTS BY ZARA, SNEAK-
ERS BY CONVERSE, HAT BY DOBBS

NELSON WEARS COAT BY **LOUIS VUITTON**,
SHIRT BY **DDC LAB**, T-SHIRT BY **PHILLIPE**
COLUMB, TIE BY **AGNES B**, VINTAGE HAT BY
RESISTOL



WENDELL WAERS BLAZER BY
TED BAKER, FUR VEST BY
GIANFRANCO FERRE,
SHIRT BY H&M, TIE BY RALPH
LAUREN PURPLE LABEL,
TIE PIN BY TIFFANY, HAT BY
BLOCK HEADWEAR



CONFESSIONS

OF A EX-PORN STAR

By Ricc Rollins

**CANDID CONVERSATION
WITH RL BOND: HIS
LIFE AS A PORN STAR
AND WHAT HE'S GOING
TO HELP YOUNG MEN
AVOID SOME OF HIS
PITFALLS.**

Bond, RL Bond! You may not know the name but you probably already know the face and the body. RL Bond is by self declaration an up-and-coming male model who has the right stuff. His look is distinctive, the camera loves him and he loves it back, the proof is in the pictures.

If you visit www.RLBOND.com, the obvious is there, he looks good- better than good actually. If you can tear yourself away from the images long enough to read his story, you'll see that his journey has been less than easy. He's living proof that anything worth having is worth fighting for. You'll walk away know that he is determined to be a force to be reckoned within the modeling industry and he wants it bad, how bad? Very!

It's that hunger for recognition and success, by his own admission has caused him to make some ill-advised choices along the way. It's been said time and time again; that none of us are perfect and that's what life is about, learning the lesson. Those lessons either make or break you. Bond will tell you that he's stronger and wiser,

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but he's still learning them as he goes.

Flashback to the Vanessa L. Williams much touted "fall from grace" when pictures from a shoot she had done as a teen-ager and prior to winning the coveted Miss America crown surfaced and landed between the pages of one very popular men's magazines. In a public statement she acknowledged that she had "made a mistake in her youth..." and resigned her title. Flash-forward while there was is no title to be revoked or public scandal, RL knows that story all too well.

Eager make some money, RL did adult video work thinking that no one would really ever see it, especially his family and friends. They did and needless to say they weren't happy about it.

"I really didn't need the money, just wanted to make *more* money! And I did it, it's just that simple." RL soon learned that nothing is ever that simple, when his video work became public knowledge there were those who said that his career was over,

"I was young and it seemed like a lot of money, in hindsight no amount was worth what initially cost me."

When RL's family found out about it, the emotions ran from disbelief to disappointment. "We're family and they've forgiven me! I'm grateful for that. I worried about that more than my career! That's behind me now and I won't let it keep me from doing my thang! That's what's up!"

"I believe there is a right way and a wrong way to do anything, the porn thing was not a way to get ahead, I know this, but I did it and it's out there."

Earlier this summer RL was contacted by *Playgirl* to do their college issue, so he along with three other models graced the October issue cover and had individual spreads throughout the magazine.

"I chose to do this because I think that the magazine (Playgirl) was artistic and it was an opportunity to artistically showcase my body, unlike the porn video, I have no regrets about this and it's been well received, it's just one more thing I can add to my resume with pride."

By all appearances RL is well on his way to achieving his goals, he's appeared in CLIK, he's featured in the new coffee table book *Phyne Art*, has done countless runway shows and commercial ads. He's been featured on the cover of a novel, been in several calendars and he most recently won the coveted Model Universe title for 2006. Not bad for an up-and coming male model. However, his dreams stretch far beyond the runway.

"I love modeling, I'd like to think that I'm good at it, but I know that nothing lasts forever so I'm always exploring other options that will keep me doing in front of people. So for me acting is the next level I plan to pursue."

RL is quick to tell you that he can act. He is serious about acting, he's taken acting lessons to help him hone his craft and he's ready for his big break.

"I'd play gay, a gangster or the sweet lovable guy, I am



a very flexible actor, I don't think there is a part that I wouldn't or couldn't play as long the script is well written. I love acting; period and good actor doesn't run from a good role." RL's ideal role

would be anything starring rapper-turned-actor, Will Smith.

Bond sees himself as a triple to quadruple threat model, actor, singer and rapper. He wants it all. He says that he's currently looking for an agent that can shop the total package. He's got a demo being shopped with the possibility of opening for a major rap artist at a major venue. (At press time that deal hadn't come through, but we'll keep you posted.)

"I want to do my own calendar, after doing Playgirl people asked for it so hopefully it will happen soon. I've got a great photographer (he says winking) so ain't nothing to it but to do it."

When he's not working on his career RL can be found working on his beloved Mustang or the body that he refers to as his "temple."

"When I'm not in front of a camera or on the runway, usually I'm in the gym. Being a model either fitness or fashion you have to stay in great condition. I am able to pull off both"

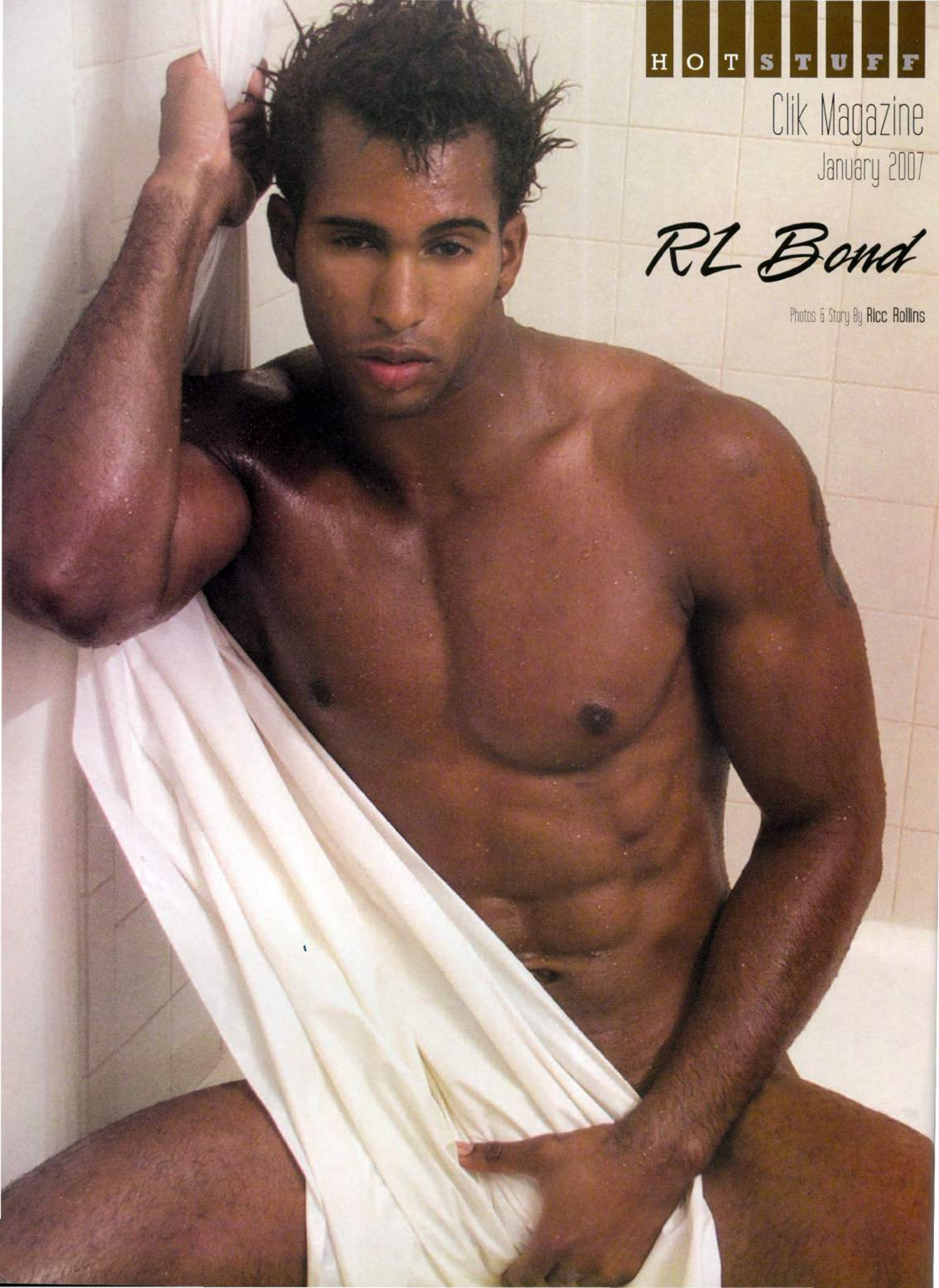
In his rare but spare time, RL can be found somewhere courtside of favorite basketball team- you guessed it, the Miami Heat rooting on his two idols, Shaq and Dwayne Wade. If he's not there, he's curled up on the sofa making it a Blockbuster night or at the movies catching the latest flick.

When asked to describe RL Bond in five words or less, he submitted the following: intellectual, handsome, respectful, loyal and caring; qualities he hopes his fans see him for years to come.

Bond owns up to his mistakes but believes that which doesn't take you out will take you up. He says that having survived his own personal hell has taught him that he can do anything but fail.







H O T S T U F F

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RL Bond

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