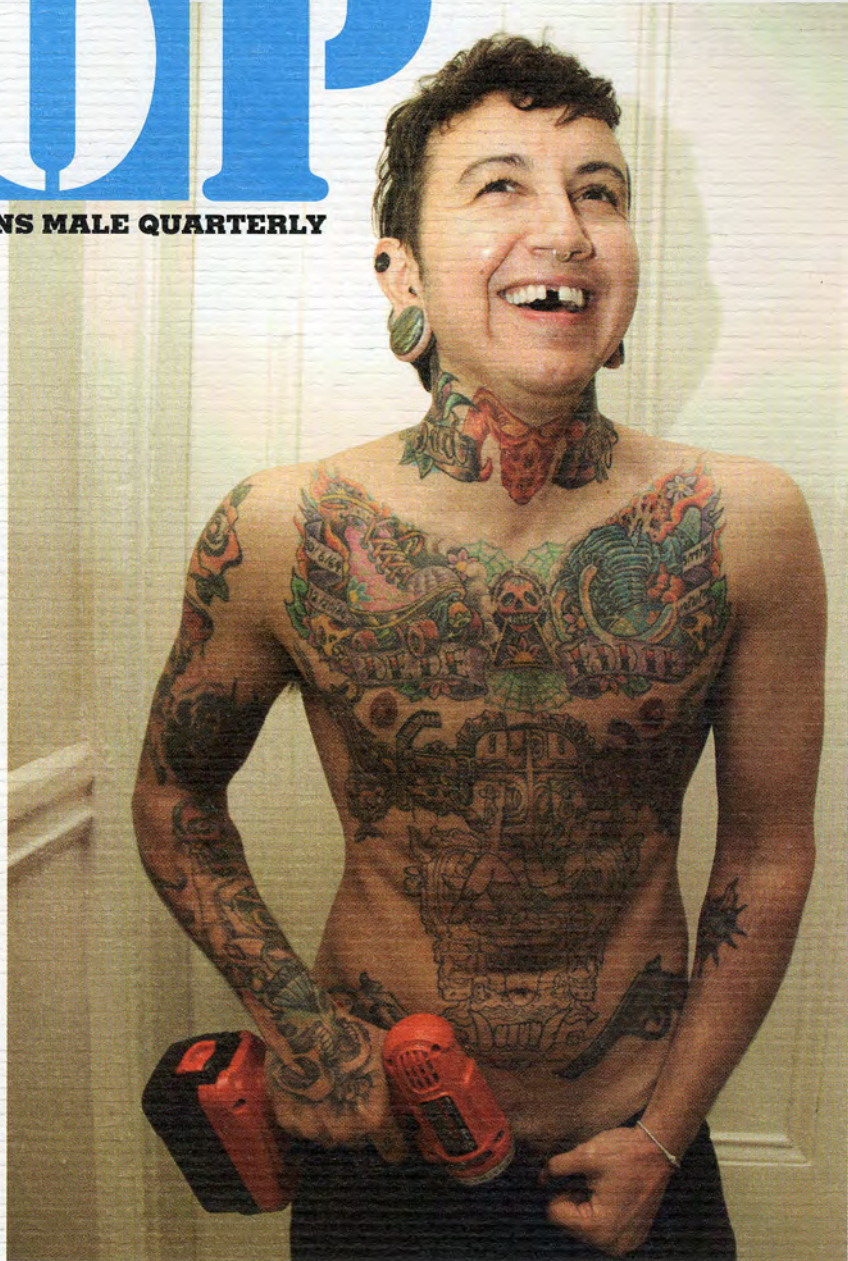


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TRANS MALE QUARTERLY

ISSUE 04 \$8 US



WORKIN' STIFF

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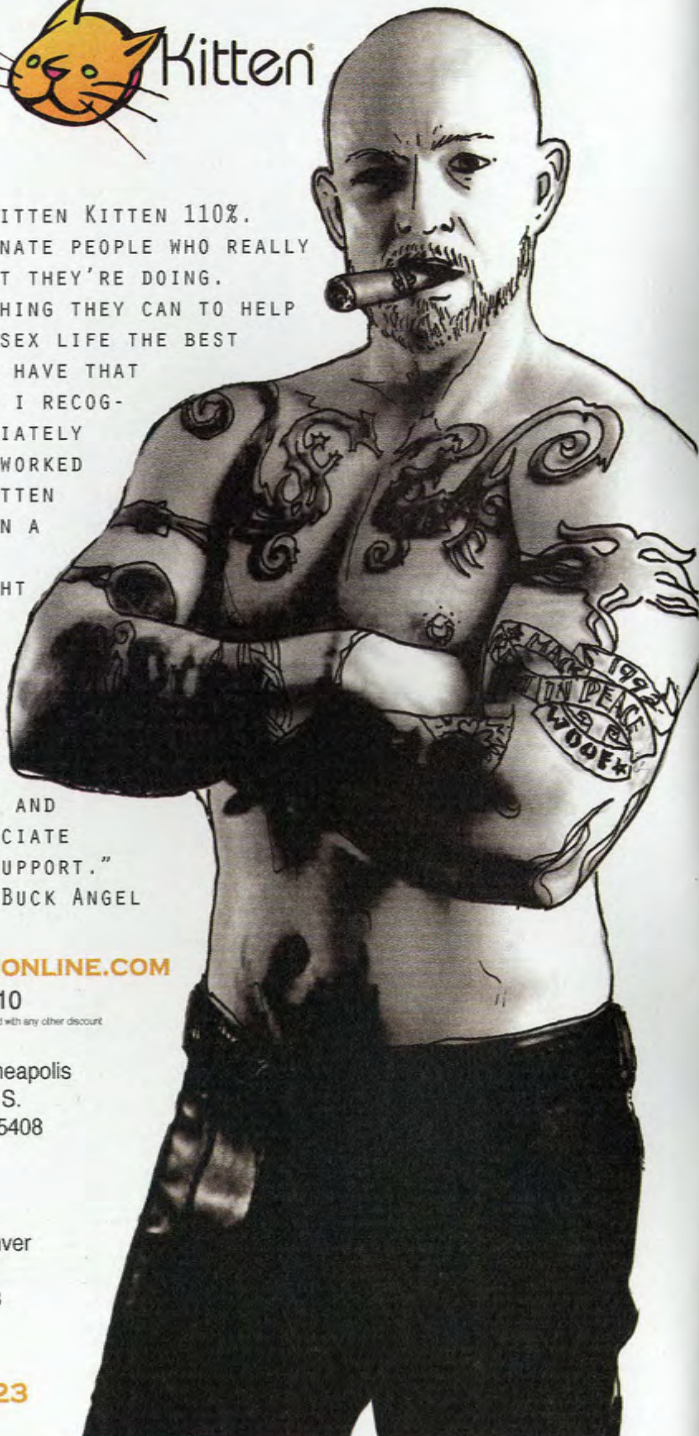
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to WORKIN' STIFF, Original Plumbing's 4th issue!

Being a person of trans experience can sometimes make the process of going for that well-deserved job a bit more daunting than it should be. The anxiety many of us go through when transitioning at the workplace can be overwhelming! It was the hardest time in my life, mentally. In this issue, you'll get interviews with six different trans men with diverse jobs - a baker, a stunt man, a businessman, a drag queen, an activist, and a prolific writer with dozens of entry-level jobs under his belt who is now retired - and they'll share with you how they've made ends meet.

For your enjoyment, I'll cut out early and leave you with a special treat: a combined list, in no particular order, of all the jobs titles that co-editor Rocco and I have held so far in our lives. Can you relate?

House painter, on-air radio DJ, pizza delivery boy, drug store cashier, laundromat attendant, camp counselor, Youth Speaks outreach coordinator, movie theater ticket taker, file clerk, faux finisher and venetian plasterer, baby sitter, dildo factory worker, doggy day care worker, SPCA cat caregiver, bar back, bartender, UPS dude, coat checker, organic vegetable delivery, flower delivery, bar supply delivery, light construction worker, American Apparel stock room clerk, night club guest list checker, web site editor, camera store clerk, club promoter, post-production film editor, LGBT bookstore cashier and customer support for a streaming gay porn website. Not to mention that when combined together we have worked at 2 video stores, 5 telemarketing firms and 11 different coffee shops.

See you next time for the FASHION issue!

xo
Amos

Amos Mac
Editor-in-chief / Photographer / Workaholic



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Summer 2010

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RUBIN

PILLOW TALK WITH ACTIVIST RUBIN RODRIGUEZ, PRESIDENT OF GENDER JUSTICE L.A.

**INTERVIEWED BY
ROCCO KAYIATOS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY
AMOS MAC**

Rocco: When you were a kid what was your dream job?

Rubin: My dream job was to be a famous director/actor that got to travel the world and make films. When I was like 6 years old my impression of what it meant to look like a director was to wear a red french beret and giant dark sunglasses.

What was the first job you ever held?

When I was in high school, my uncle was an editor of a local community paper in LA called The Wave/LA Watts Times. He offered me a job as cub reporter at his paper to cover music concerts and sporting events. I got paid and published at the age of 16 to see

bands and sport games for free. It was fun and exciting but I experienced a lot of ageism and got discouraged when dealing with the politics of journalism at such a young age.

Tell me about Gender Justice LA. How was it started and what is your role in the organization?

Gender Justice LA was formerly known as FTM Alliance of Los Angeles. It started about ten years ago to address the needs and visibility of the trans-masculine community in Los Angeles. It's a community-based organization that provides support through monthly meetings called Guys Chat for [ftm/genderqueer/trans-masculine](#)

identified folks and LOTS chat which is a support group for partners/family of FTM/genderqueer/trans-masculine identified folks. [We] also worked in collaboration with Transgender Law Center on the Community Clinics Campaign (C3) to address the need for affordable, trans-competent primary health care for the trans community in LA. We were also successful in getting a trans clinic started at the LA Gay & Lesbian Center to provide affordable primary health care to trans folks. I joined the board in 2008 shortly after graduating from USC and was nominated President. We agreed as a diverse board to become Gender Justice LA and focus on anti-racist, trans-inclusive organizing work while still providing the support resources & visibility that FTM Alliance of Los Angeles created. I have learned so much and have grown a lot from my work with Gender Justice LA and I am super proud to have the opportunity to work with a lot of amazing people and continued to be inspired by my fellow board members and community. My activist work is truly a labor of love.

Have you ever had a particularly challenging moment at work?

In previous jobs, my most challenging moments have been around homophobic, racist, classist, sexist and transphobic comments made by co-workers. At my last job, I was pretty much that guy that called out everyone on their messed up comments and challenged them to think about what they've said. It's not always easy, and

sometimes you don't get through to people or you have to pick and choose your battles. This one co-worker of mine would always use the word "gay" to refer to things he didn't like, so I just told him to stop using that word to negate things and that it offended me. I told him to use the word "wack" instead so that way he wasn't offending an entire community when expressing his dislike.

I think he felt embarrassed and I was surprised that he actually listened to me and made an effort to use the word "wack" instead. At least in my presence.

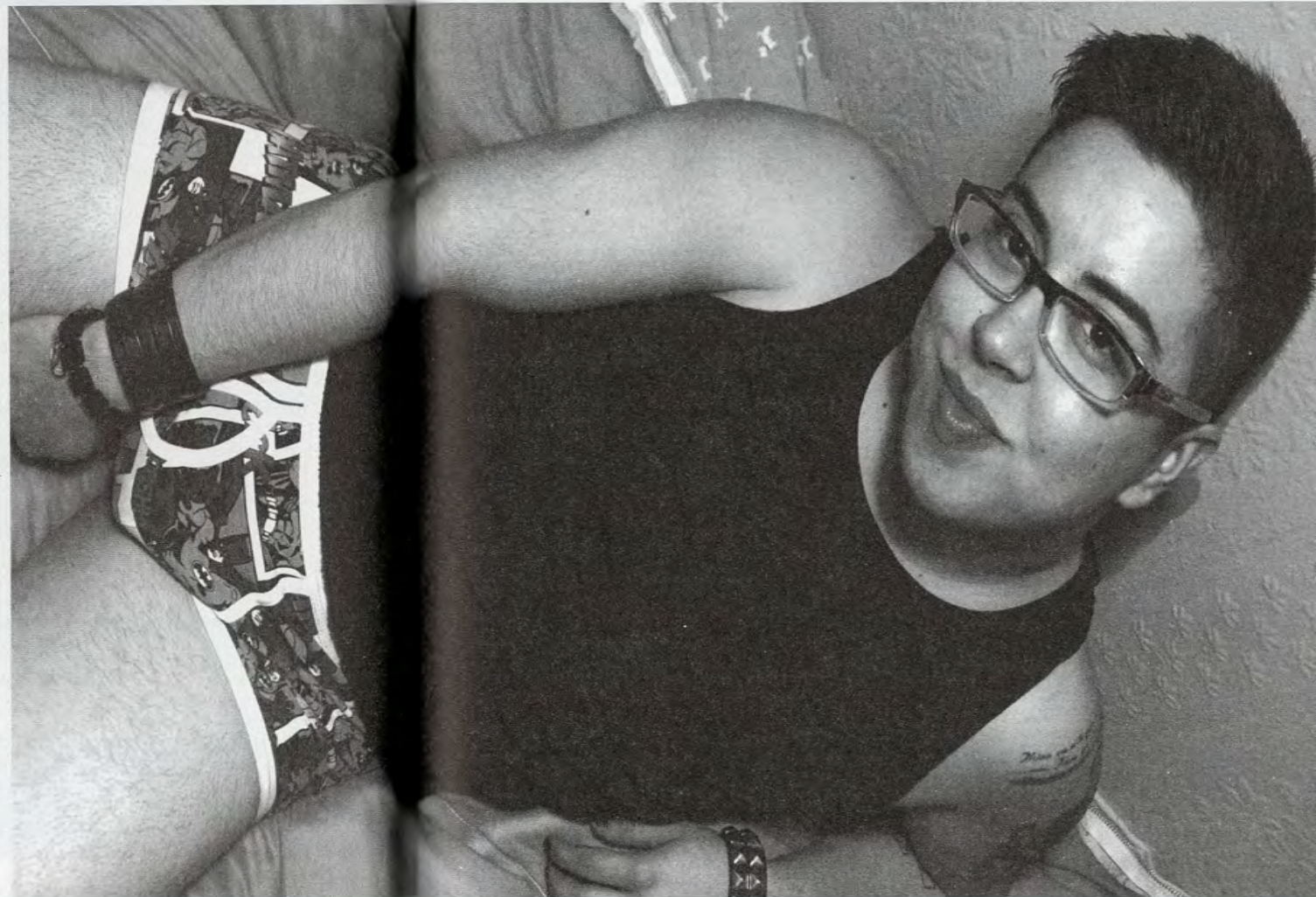
Do you find that between your day job and your activist work that you have enough time for your creative pursuits?

Between my new day job and activist work, I manage to fit in my creative pursuits sparingly. I do my gender-

fuck drag performances occasionally and work on a couple multi-media performance art projects that are in development. I definitely wish I had more time to focus on making films and creative projects.

If you could be paid to do any one thing for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Can someone please pay me to learn and not have to do the homework?



APPARENTLY TRANSITIONS CAN BE SMOOTH

I decided to face my fears head-on and come out as transgender at work, but I had no idea how to diplomatically go about this process. Should I run in one day waving a tranny flag and plant it at my desk? I work in one of the few states in which it is illegal to discriminate based on gender identity -- a big confidence booster, knowing that I couldn't be fired for this decision. But this was still something I was hesitant to jump into.

I had been on testosterone for two weeks and knew that, in a few months, the hormones would lower my voice and changes would become noticeable. I could fake a cold for the next year -- or I could let everyone know what was happening. I pulled a close co-worker aside and divulged my secret and intended plan to him. He was amazing and supportive and basically held my hand while I told other key people at the company.

Since I was the first person to transition at the company, the operations manager wanted to be well-versed in the subject. I handed him research I had done myself -- including pamphlets on changing the employee handbook to protect against discrimination against gender identity.

Finally, the topic of the restroom came up. Would I just magically appear in the men's room overnight?

I felt excitement and extreme nervousness before walking into the office of the CEO. I couldn't even breathe at that point. I'm not sure what words came out of my mouth, but he finally came up to me with open arms, hugged me, and said that the company was fully supportive of my decision and would work with me to ensure that my transition was as smooth as possible. Those were the best words any trans guy could hope to hear!

There was no turning back now—which was something that was both inspiring and vomit inducing. Over the next few weeks we were busy revising the employee handbook to incorporate gender identity inclusions, mapping out a timeline of when and what to tell fellow employees and top clients that I dealt with on a regular basis, and planning how to educate everyone on trans-sensitive terminology. I felt it was extremely important to have an open door policy with my colleagues for any questions or concerns they would have. I approved every step of the plan and made sure I was comfortable before any major decisions

and changes were implemented.

Finally the big day came:

I stood before a crowd of 50 employees and told everyone that I was embarking on a transition to become a man, starting with my new name, Dylan. I explained that I preferred they use male pronouns such as "he" and "him" in reference to me but I understood this would take time. Someone jokingly suggested I wear a name tag, so my co-workers took turns making me "HELLO MY NAME IS DYLAN" tags for a few weeks. I emphasized that my biggest request was that they respect me and try their best. At the end of my speech, the entire company gave me an enthusiastic group hug. I even had offers to get a tour of the men's restroom -- which I gladly accepted (it was quite different than the ladies room)!

The next week, I entered the doors of my company as Dylan. I finally felt like myself, with nothing to hide. My business cards, email address and the greetings from co-workers all matched my gender identity—finally! I began using the men's restroom and then immediately wanted to re-think the entire coming out process (men's rooms are gross let's face it). I couldn't have asked for a better reception—it was awe-inspiring. Along the way, people still continued to ask me questions about my transition, the process, etc. and I welcomed those questions and thought of each situation as an educational experience for all involved. At the end of my first week, I had a welcome party complete with a

cake—topped with footballs, motorcycles and racecars (boy things apparently).

Looking back at those two years, I am happy to report that everything went—well, smoothly. I changed all my paperwork with no trouble and had support around every corner. Eventually, those new to the company really had no idea of my previous gender identity and only thought of me as "that guy Dylan." This made everything worth it.

Recently, I changed jobs and have decided to remain stealth at my new workplace. It's exciting to know that people see me for the man I've always known I am and that I don't have to explain my gender constantly. I'm learning what the job front is like as a male and getting indoctrinated into that culture that both beckons to me and alienates me. Just the other day my male co-workers said how great it was that there was another set of balls in our department (I laughed and cringed at the same time). The road ahead will definitely continue to be one in which I learn more about society's constructions of gender roles in the workplace—and where a transman fits into all that. I'm grateful that I am privileged enough to be a part of this, especially with a successful transition under my belt.

DYLAN MCGINTY

Dylan lives, works and plays in Hollywood. His primary passion, however, is working with and advocating for the trans community (specifically youth) in the Los Angeles area.

PAPER & PLASTIC

The gaze is intense. She's staring, she does not even know what to make of me. And, well, I truly don't care. I chuckle inside, ringing up her chips that temporarily cover my name tag as she glances at my face. She probably thinks I'm a creature from another planet entirely. Me? I like to think of myself as more of a pioneer - defying the binary system of gender that dictates our lives. It's causing her to fret as she most likely catches a glimpse of my chin hair that's all natural - no hormones added. The hair my mother wishes I would bleach, but really? I kind of like it. "Keep people guessing," I say, even if it means they don't pinpoint my exact gender.

I can see the thoughts running through her head that's covered with hair spray and a fancy flower barrette. **What is this ringing up my groceries? What do I call it? He-she? She-he? IT? If I'd known, I would not have come to register** (quick glance upwards) 12.

She's sweating —uncomfortable now that she is seeing something outside of the box she's labeled "female." It's almost like the reaction I got from my grandmother, who did all but curse me up and down when I cut

my hair off into a boyish style. A style I thought fit me more as a person, but obviously not everyone was happy with my decision to cut off my "pretty," shoulder-length hair.

The order goes by painstakingly slow as we make our way to the produce. She ignores me and packs more items onto the belt. When I ask her how she is, I get a curt, "Fine." As I fondle her fruit I get a rush inside me. She offers no question in reply, just movement.

I ring up her avocados, placing them on the scale side by side, typing in the numbers was easy, but after ringing up dog snacks and moving onwards to fruit cups, I glance quickly at the woman to catch her looking at the person behind her. She seems to be looking for some support, as if she does not believe what she is seeing and wants confirmation.

She unloads the last item in her cart, a huge mop, and I try to ring it up. To the horror of the woman, it's halted my one-person assembly line. The words, "I have to ask my manager for a price check" appear to send chills down her spine. I find myself wanting to laugh but crack a smile instead.

I wave my manager over and she rushes to my aid - a few registers need her assistance. As I explain the problem carefully, my manager continues to give me a series of nods. "Okay, dear, I will send Bethany to look it up."

I glance at the woman who seems to be breathing a sigh of relief at the big red flash of **dear**, now scribbled across my forehead. She knows my given gender now. This makes her more comfortable, reassured. More relaxed.

We wait for Bethany to bring me the price of the mop. I'm still smiling at her, but the lady seems more relaxed and maybe my smile isn't needed?

"6.99!" is shouted at me from across the front end. I nod, and enter the price manually. The woman breathes evenly, but I see the sweat on her brow....she wants out of here — and **now**.

"Okay, your total comes to \$45.76."

She nods and swipes her credit card. She looks at the device, confused, and then looks up at me. I lift my arm and place a finger on the top of the device. "It's a touch screen, just use your

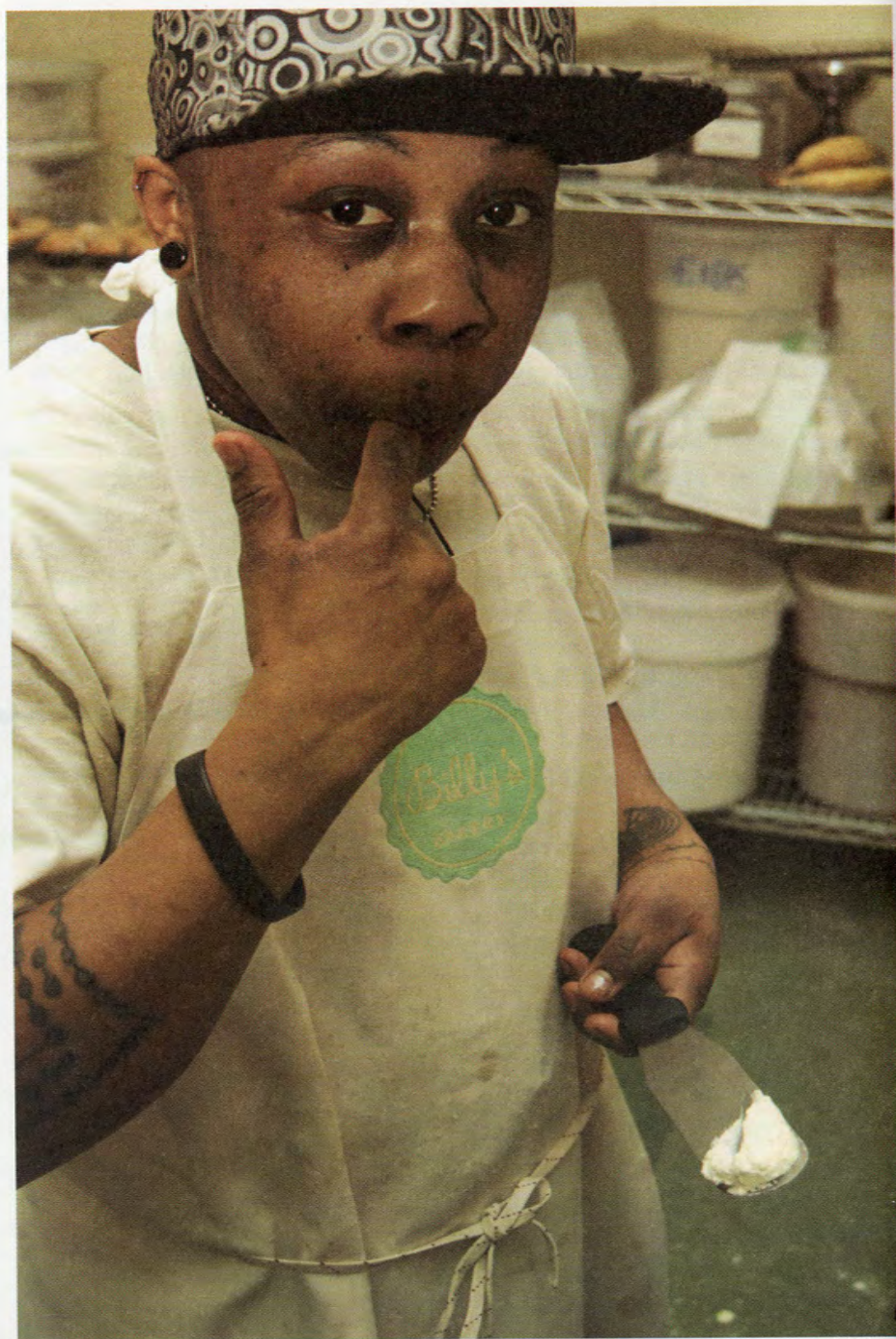
finger lightly," explaining the process like I have at least twenty times.

With a nod and slightly uncomfortable look in my direction, she presses the buttons, and soon her receipt is printing out. Even though I've used the Purell after I touched her leaking chicken, she still acts as though I'm full of germs.

Her total was \$45.76, mine was my pride.

TRISTAN DONOVAN

Tristan is a senior in High School about to graduate and has not started transitioning yet. He plans on going to University for Creative Writing.



Simone

the Baker

Interviewed & Photographed by Amos Mac

Amos: Hi! Please introduce yourself to the world.

Simone: My name is Simone Satchell. I am a queer artist who works at a bakery. I'm from Staten Island, NY but I've been living in Jersey City for the past year and a half.

Can you remember your first job?

My first paying job was selling miscellaneous items door to door. This dude would pick us up and drop us off, two to a block, in these upper-middle-class affluent neighborhoods in Staten Island and Brooklyn. For small items, we were paid a dollar and for bigger ones \$1.50.

Why did you get that first job? Any specific reason?

I wanted to be an equal part early on. I didn't want to be so dependent on my mother. She came home tired everyday. I wanted to do what I could

to contribute. I researched working papers but was bummed when I learned that getting working papers at 12 years old was only an exception for farming communities.

How long have you worked at Billy's Bakery for?

In September it will be 5 years, but I hope to be elsewhere by then.

What is the most difficult part about working in a bakery?

People are a bit cut throat about sugar and butter. I put a lot of energy into my work and it doesn't really ever feel worth it or like it's doing anyone any good except that I can eat and pay rent.

What is the best part?

There's an interesting familial feeling.

I see you've got your iPod on while you bake. What do you usually listen to?

I usually put it on shuffle. Mostly non contemporary, some punk, some soul, some rap.

What do you spend your money on these days?

Music, art things, books, and occasionally kicks.

Do you save money?

Not as regularly as I would like but yeah. For just in case, or for when I really go into my intended nomadic stance.

Nomadic stance?

Oh yeah. Lots of gradual movement. Less over contemplation of making the moves that I feel the need to make. Obtaining consistency and a sense of home not relating to a residence.

Do you have any advice for unemployed transmen who are having a tough time finding a job these days?

When I started working at Billy's I had been unemployed for about 3 years aside from a gig here and there. Not everyone knows or respects my pronouns here, but enough people do that I'm comfortable with staying although I'm not thoroughly thrilled with my job. For some time I was afraid of being financially dependent in a place where I was not comfortable. That's always the dilemma: should one give themselves up to eat, to maintain? I'd say focus, and while you are waiting on call backs do what you love. Try to make time to do things that you didn't have much time for. Think it out, be patient and do your best not to lose

yourself.

For people who are on a shoestring budget, what's a creative date idea you'd like to share?

Shoestring? Free shows, concerts. Make a mixtape and bring it along while you share your zen spot or wherever you go to get some peace.

Do you ever bake for your date?

No, not really. Baking is just my occupation. I did make chocolate covered strawberries once. I'd rather cook.

What's your favorite type of cupcake?

I like German chocolate and cherry chocolate, ironically I'm not a huge chocolate fan though.

Have you ever gone into a complete sugar overload working around so many sweets?

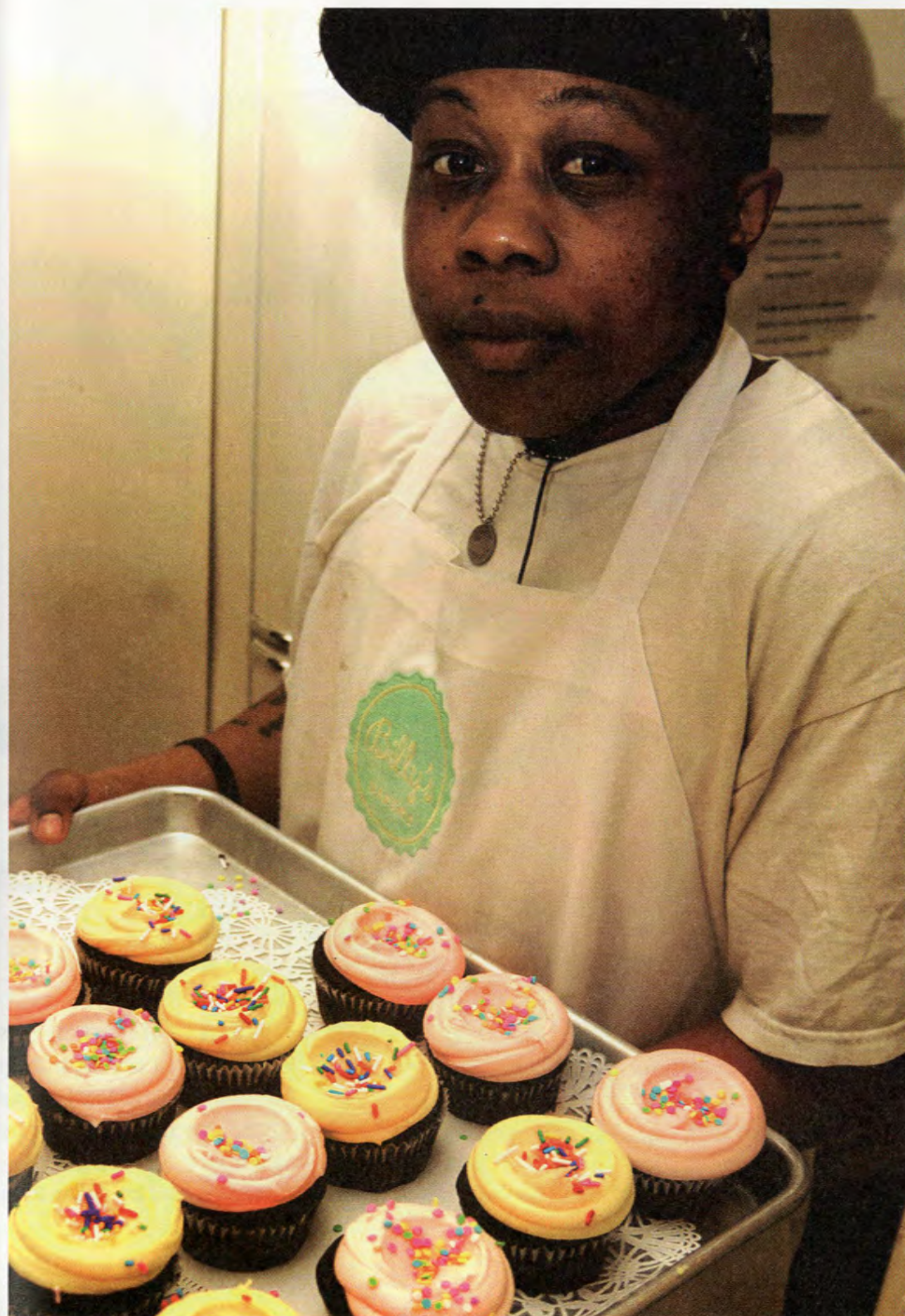
I think the overload most of us have is fatigue. Sugar is in the air. I'm actually a diabetic so I don't do much overloading on the sweets. At times when I've gone into hypoglycemic episodes, the EMS and my co-workers always say "How does one have low blood sugar in a bakery?" but I manage.

If you could get your dream job tomorrow, what would it be?

Something with benefits and paid vacation! No, I'm kidding. A job that combines art and community. A job that teaches me and challenges me that I feel is worth my efforts.

Will you continue to bake at home once retiring from this industry?

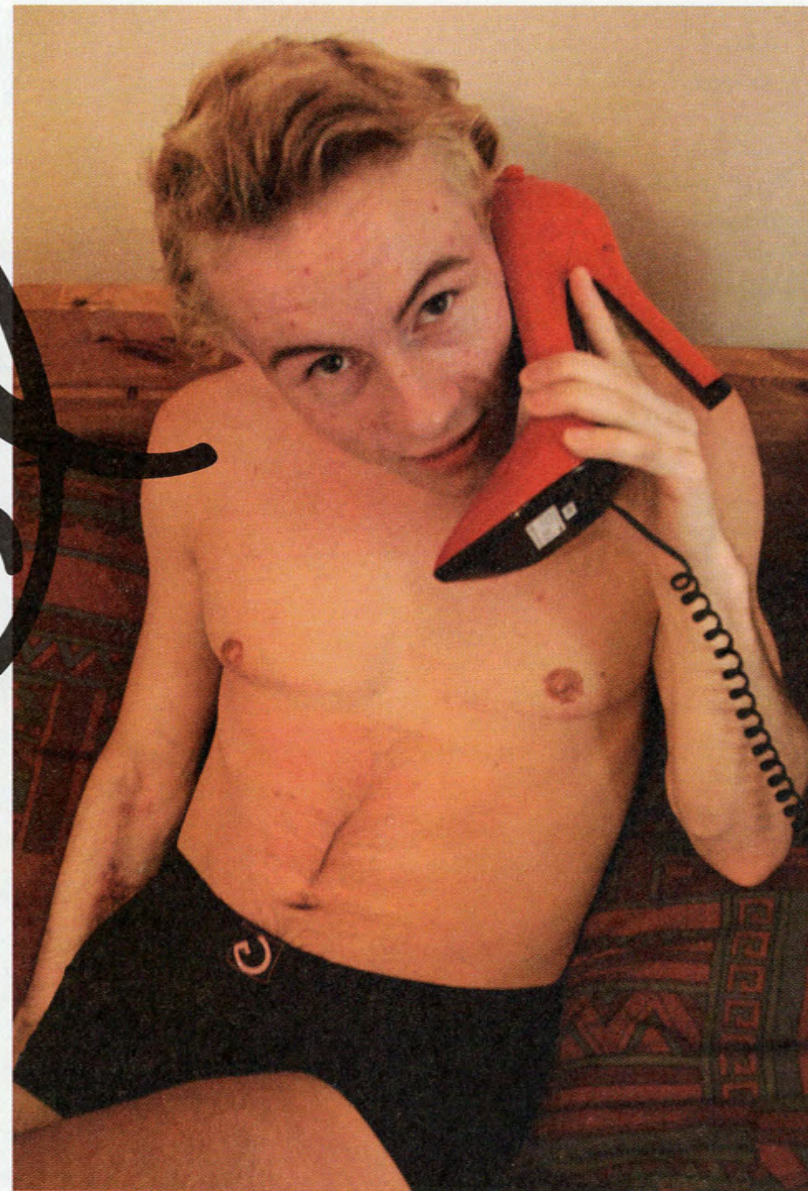
No. Maybe on occasion after quite a bit of time goes by. I am over done.

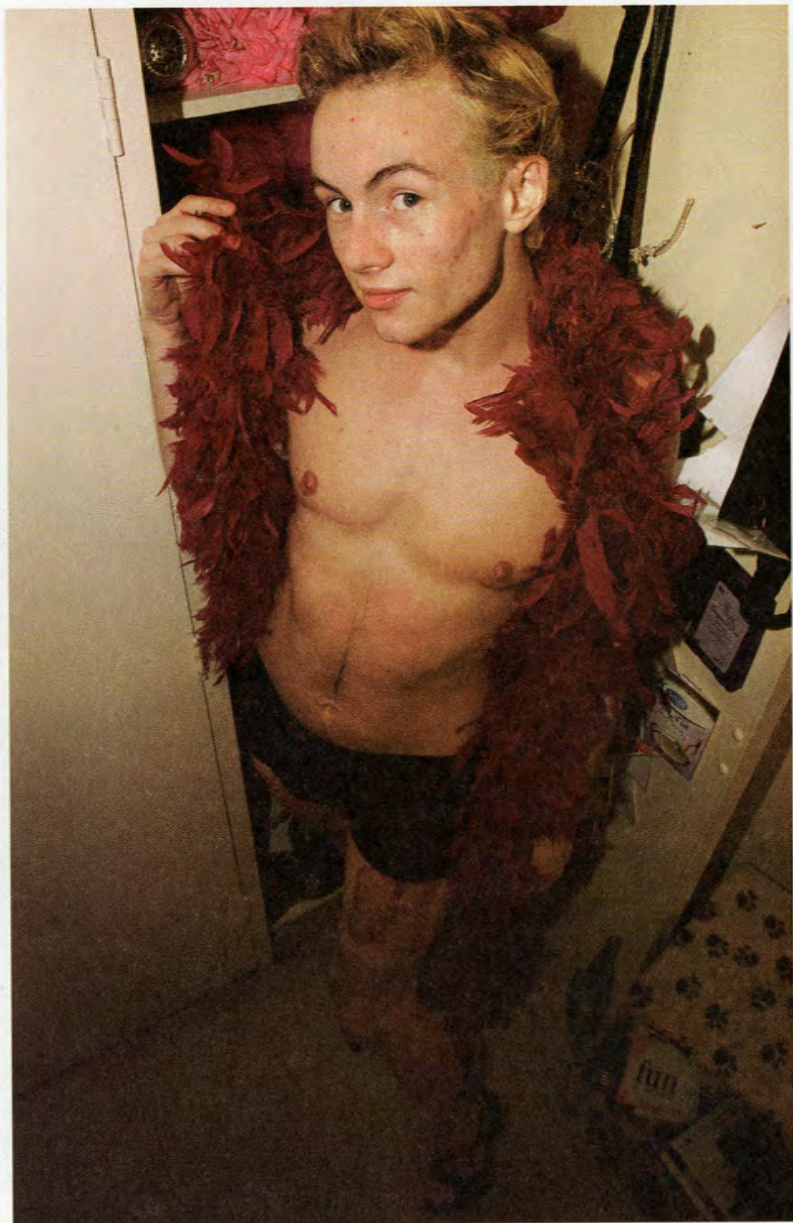


LONDON

Lola

Adrian Dalton is a hard-working drag queen in London where he's always performing as his other half, Lola Lypsinka. While I was in his city for a mere 12 hours, Adrian invited me over to his place for a brief hang-out session where he showed me his pole tricks, talked to me about his pre-transition modeling days and shared how he managed to fund his latest surgery -- with a little help from the National Health Service. **Interviewed & Photographed by Amos Mac.**





Amos: I did some research on you and I see that you got a lot of press in international magazines as well as on talk shows when you transitioned. Why do you think that is?

Adrian: Well, in the past five years or so there have been more trans guys in the media. Prior to that there were only really stories on trans women. I think my story was of interest because I'm so different compared to a lot of trans guys. I didn't know I was in the wrong body when I was young. I never liked anything stereotypically male, I'm really effeminate and I looked like a really feminine woman pre-op. Also there's the fact that I'm gay and perform as drag queen Lola Lypsinka.

What do you spend most of your money on?

Wigs, costumes and props for my act. I'm addicted to eBay.

What was the first job you ever had?

Receptionist and model for a wholesale fashion company. It was an awful, really dodgy company. I was paid £100 for a full weeks work and was sacked for not sleeping with the boss.

Tell me about your current day job.

I free-lance part time for an investment bank, formatting their documents to specific house styles. At the moment I'm taking time off work to begin building up a career solely doing drag as Lola Lypsinka. This could take years though and will probably always have to be subsidized by at least part time work. I also do pole-dancing and bits of acting and drag modeling.

How did you get into modeling pre-transition?

I was asked to do work by a few photographers. I was spotted to do a random shoot for Sterling Cooper. Then I was briefly taken on by a record label (but nothing every came of it) however, they got me into an agency to make some money in the meantime and I did some stuff through them. It was never a full time job, and I didn't get far as I was always too short to do catwalk.

How do you feel when you look back on old modeling photographs of yourself?

Well, I remember when they were taken; I remember looking like that obviously. I don't try and forget about my life pre-transition, in fact I have a picture of me aged 17 up in my flat. In it I've got long blonde hair and am wearing lots of makeup. It's all a part of my life. If anything some of the old photos I've got of myself pre-transition make me feel sad for the person I was then. I was very lost and unhappy mostly, trying to be someone I wasn't.

Is there a trans community in London?

Yeah, I don't go to that many meetings now but there is a group called Trans London that meets monthly for all trans people and there is also FTM London for trans guys that I used to go to a lot in the early stages of transitioning.

Tell me about the Drag community in London?

There are a lot of drag queens on the London cabaret scene and most of us know each other and hang out as well

as work together.

Were you in the drag community before your transition? If so, tell me how your relationship to that specific community has changed.

Pre-transition and when I was much younger I used to hang out at drag bars dressing as much like a drag queen as I could in the hope of passing. I was so femme looking I thought this was the only hope I had of passing as male. There's no way short hair and clothes would have done it. I had the same drag name then, Lola -- no Lypsinka yet! So back then I was part of the drag club scene, but I didn't perform. Now I'm just a drag queen and I've met most of the other drag queens I know through working with them -- so I'm just one of the crowd.

Do you find the drag community to be supportive of you being a trans man, that is, if they even know?

Yeah, I mean I'm out so all the people I work with know -- not that it's the first thing I tell people, but it's not a secret and I'm happy to talk about if people are curious and have questions. No one's had a problem with it that I know of and most people have been really great.

Does Lola Lypsinka ever go out during the day?

If she's got a gig! She only comes out to perform.

If Lola had a day job, what would it be?

Is a showgirl a day job? No? A.P.A. then. **What would she wear on a job inter-**

view to her proposed day job?

A pink bikini made of fake flowers, red lipstick and massive heels.

Would you mind talking about your most recent surgery and how you were able to fund the procedure?

Well in March 2009 I had a radial forearm and thigh phalloplasty operation in Belgium and I'm thrilled with the result. There the main procedure is done in one go, whereas in the UK it involves several operations. The only additional surgery required by the Belgium technique is the insertion of silicone testicles and an erectile device, both of which are inserted a year after the initial surgery. I've not had that yet and have no plans to at this stage. So it is fully functional, looks great and sexual sensation is pretty much the same as before, the only thing I can't do is get a hard-on basically. I was really lucky and had no complications. The scars on my leg and arm are quite visible but I don't mind them at all. I've also had paramedical tattooing on it to give more color, vein detail and shading.

I was very lucky to have the NHS here in the UK fund my phallo operation. I'd started off my transition privately, and paid for my own chest op. However, I got taken up by the NHS after about a year so I was then under the Gender Identity Clinic on the NHS. I applied for funding and got it. I was so happy!

It is almost impossible to get trans-related surgeries covered by US insur-



ance, unless you can find some sort of loop hole. How does it work in the UK?

I think it's pretty much the same with insurance companies. It's a big problem for a lot of guys. If you are willing to go through the NHS process which can sometimes be slow then you can apply for funding but you aren't guaranteed to get it. It depends where you live as each PCT (Primary Care Trust) decides whether they will fund individually.

Do you have any advice you could give



to trans men who are scrimping and saving for their transition-related surgeries?

I know it's a real problem for loads of guys. I don't really have any useful advice but I wish I did! I know that I'm very fortunate to have gotten my operation funded. If this hadn't happened I suppose I would have gotten a loan or had to postpone for years.

STUNT MAN

SAWYER

**GETS SET ON FIRE AND GETS PAID
FOR IT. MAY HE BE SO BOLD?**



INTERVIEWED & PHOTOGRAPHED BY AMOS MAC

Amos: How long have you been working as a stunt man? And how did you get into that line of work?

Sawyer: I've been working at it for about two years. It's all about meeting people and building relationships with them so they trust you. It can be really dangerous, and no one is just gonna trust you right off the bat.

Do you work on big Hollywood pictures, or smaller projects, or both?

I've worked on both so far. I have a friend who has been in the movie business for upwards of thirty years and he is always introducing me to the big stunt coordinators -- the guys who'll give me jobs.

I can imagine it's a rough field to work in because you have to put yourself out there so physically. Are you an active person in general? Ever get hurt on the set, or is it mainly a very safe space to risk yourself physically?

I am an active person! I'm also a welder so I'm constantly lifting heavy material and heavy tools. I'm generally athletic too. Luckily, I've never been hurt on set, but I know people who have. Stunt work is controlled chaos. There are tons of potentially dangerous stuff happening, but when everyone knows their part, you're safe. Oh, and respect your tools! A lot of stunt coordinators will only use men to double male actors and female for female, so that's interesting for me.

I remember seeing some sort of behind the scenes footage of "Honey, I Shrunk The Kids", and all of the teenage boy actors were having their stunts done

by very small women! That was in the 80s though.

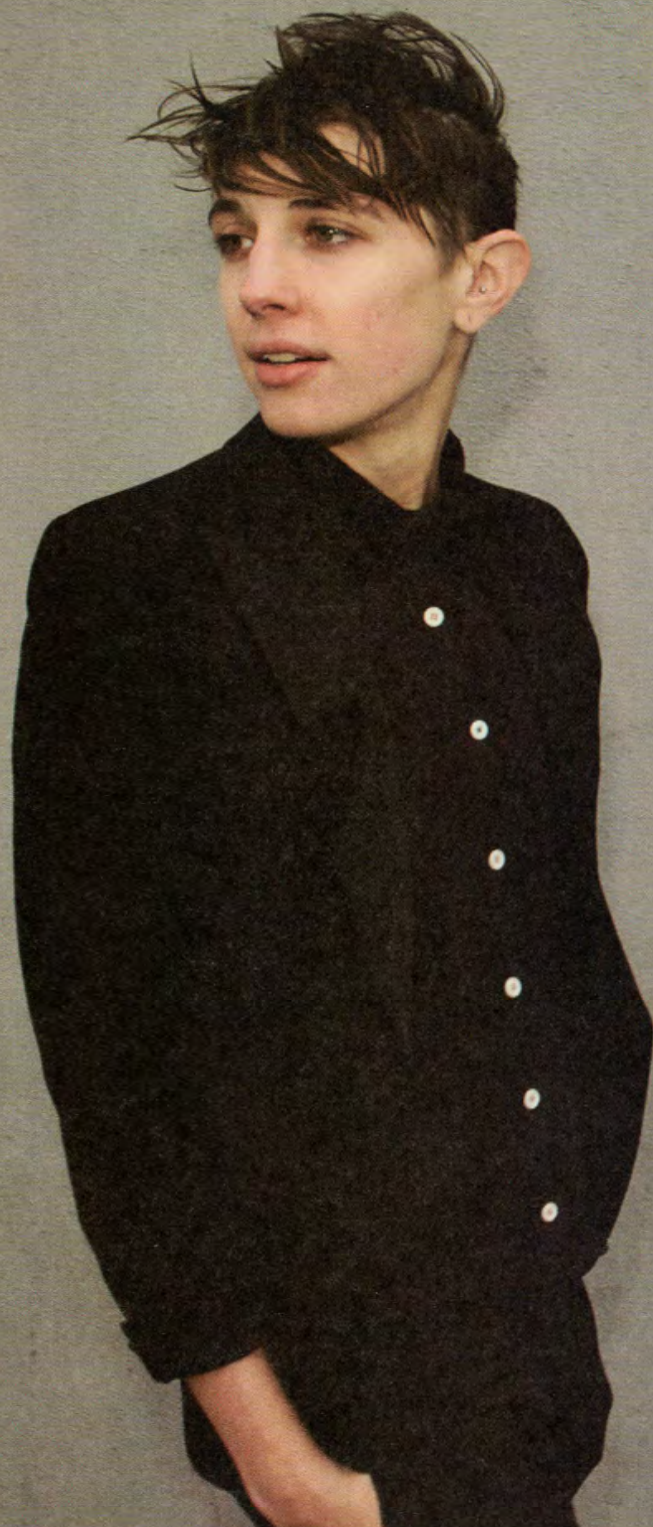
That's crazy! Well, kids are a different story all together. But in general, stunt coordinators will try to find someone of the "appropriate gender" for that actor. I actually doubled for Andie MacDowell, doing some glass breaking and a fire burn. I had to wear a wig, of course. Dress suit, heels, the whole nine, and I'd never worn heels before. I was more nervous about the heels than I was about being set on fire with broken glass everywhere!

Incredible! I was just about to ask you to name drop the famous actors you've doubled for...

A few weeks ago, I was working with Justin Long on "Going the Distance," his new movie with Drew Barrymore, and he started calling me Marty. I guess I looked like Marty McFly in the outfit I was wearing. I was pretty proud of that. Marty Fuckin' McFly.

You mentioned to me once that you identify as a "female-bodied fag" and that you have no interest at this time in your life to take hormones. Do you tend to be attracted to male-presenting people in general? Or do you consider the identity of "fag" to go beyond just who you're attracted too?

Attracted to sexually? Well I use the phrase "female-bodied fag" because I was born in a female body, but my tendencies, some physical attributes and style are definitely in the fag category. As for who I tend to date, I don't have a type at all -- except that they're





Hallelujah
lock and load



all shorter than me, which isn't hard. I'm 5'9". My friend, Gretchen, actually came up with "female-bodied fag." I can't claim it, I just embrace it.

So your day job is metalworking, do you work in a big metal shop?

It's not too big, but it's dirty and nasty. Luckily, the shop is two blocks from where I live. I walk one block to get my coffee from my Ecuadorian coffee boy, Caesar, and then another block and I'm there. I started out as an intern of sorts. I knew a lot about tools, since my dad is a master carpenter. I've been there about two years and I've learned to finish metal and weld.

Are people in both of your work spaces respectful of your trans identity?

Definitely. I am who I am. I wasted enough time lying to people and myself about who I was. There are a few younger guys who are respectful of me, but I've heard them talking to each other about gay workers. They won't be getting a raise for a while.

I heard through the transsexual grapevine that you've recently become engaged?

It's true! So exciting!

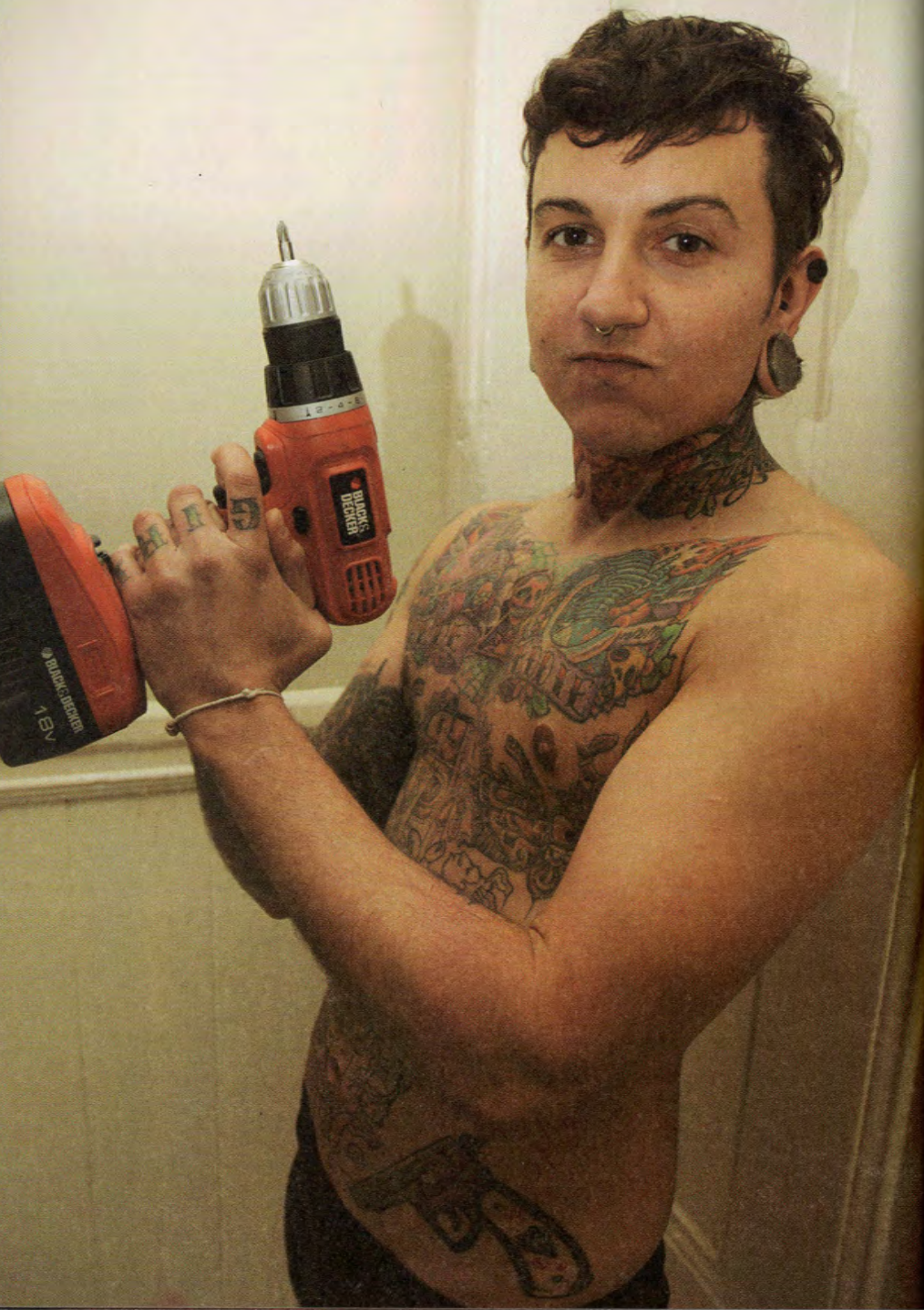
Tell me about your partner.

Well, her name is JB. She's a package designer who mainly works on liquor packaging right now. She's small and has My Little Pony hair. She's also the sweetest Texan I've ever met.

How did you propose?

Since she's a designer and really into typefaces and vintage stuff, I collected vintage marquee letters that spelled out, "WILL YOU MARRY ME". I bought the first one about a year into our relationship and it took me another year or so to get all of them. I booked a room at the Ace Hotel in NYC and brought our bags there. That night, we went on a date and "ended up" there. I set up all the letters in the ballroom downstairs and brought her down. Not to toot my own horn, but it was romantic. Toot, toot.





ULTIMATE CREATIVE OUTLET

When I think back about my life, it's a sweet surprise to realize where I am now. I was born into a Catholic Italian-American family, and was raised in a middle class suburb right outside of Boston. Where I come from, people adhere to a strict set of social rituals. Few question these rituals, leaving little room for people like myself to thrive happily in their odd fashion. And so it went, you were born, baptized, schooled, received communion, and were confirmed. Let's stop right here for a minute and think about this. I am 15 years old and now it is time for the church to confirm me? As if my breathing flesh and blood born of 15 years wasn't evidence enough? Now I have this priest, who probably diddled the alter boy, tell me that I am a confirmed human being in the eyes of the Vatican Church? Point being, I come from a very suffocating and judgemental up-bringing. Once I hit 18 the last thing I wanted to do was perpetuate this insan-

ity. I vowed never to work for someone who would not allow me to express myself in all of my hedonistic glory.

Which brought me to my line of work. I am a body piercer and it's more than just a job for me, it's a way of life. It goes beyond vanity and the latest trends- for me it is my religion. It is my confirmation. My body is my vessel, and what I wish to do with this vessel and this being that inhabits this vessel is completely in my control. In conjunction with those ideals, I feel very blessed to be surrounded by like-minded individuals, each one of us socially unique yet the same. At long last, I've found social comfort.

I transitioned on the job. Literally, I had my first shot at work. It was late October 2007. Half of San Diego County was on fire. Frantic news reports jammed the airwaves and an ominous cloud of thick smoke loomed on

MATTED IS PHOTOGRAPHED BY AMOS MAC

the horizon. The atmosphere was ripe with buzzing energy. We are a mystical bunch. We live for this kind of symbolism.

"Dude, fuck this shit. No one's coming in." I stood there in the doorway at Apogee, starting off, my mind wandered through a thousand 'what ifs'.

"OK. I'll set up." Ronnie and I disappeared into the back piercing room. He laid out a sterile field and went through the ritual of 'setting up'. I pulled down my pants to expose my tight, hairless butt cheek.

"You want it in your ass?"

"That's where all the cool kids do it." I joked. As he prepped my plump posterior I wondered aloud, "Were you nervous when you tattooed your face?" We had never talked about his face, but seeing as I was on the verge of a major physical transition, I found relevance. There was a pause. Ronnie always pauses when he answers me. "No." Pause. "There was this one point when I was halfway through it and for a second I was like 'Fuuuuuck' but I got over it."

Most of the time he gets asked what his mother thinks about his tattooed face.

"My mother is dead." It's true. He has no family that I know of. His friends are his family, and we love his tattooed face.

Any drastic change to one's self can be hard for a family to stomach. My grandmother could not stand my tattoos, and she let me know it. My parents were more forgiving,

but being Italian, there was also a whole web of uncles, aunts, cousins, great aunts in whose judgement was harder to maneuver and not get tangled up. Can you imagine how scary it was to come out to these Santa Clause fearing Red Sox fans?

My chosen family, the family I work with at the shop, they are my strength. My loudest advocate. After all, we are in the business of body modification. To me top surgery was no different than a nose piercing, except one has a direct correlation to your gender and the other doesn't.

My job has taught me a lot about myself. About accepting and honoring myself and my desire to be myself despite harsh social criticism. It's something I didn't grow up with. I always thought there was something counter productive about who I was. My teachers frequently said I never lived up to my potential. Quite a bothersome remark when you take into consideration that I wasn't presented with many options and my idea of "my" potential didn't exist in their world. Body piercing has given me the outlet and the means to be a productive and creatively unique individual. I have found a rewarding, reaffirming place in a society that I once believed had no love for me. It's a very empowering place to be.

MATTEO MONTONE

Matteo can be found at Adapt Studio in San Diego, CA (www.facebook.com/adaptstudio) and would like to add for the record that his birth family has been very open and accepting of his transition.




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HOW DO I MAKE MONEY?

I've always been extremely aware that this world wasn't meant for me. As a result, I never expected to be able to make a living on my own, nor did I anticipate living off social welfare. However, a long time ago, I decided that I didn't want to be a societal victim, and that somehow, society was going to have to make space for me. Of course, society is never ready for change. That being said, I've always thought that I could make a difference.

I've worked all sorts of precarious and underpaid jobs to pull myself through college and get the job I have now. The way I've chosen to make money in this world is not particularly original. My job is a traditional one, known by everyone and hated by most: I am a teacher. Right now, I am an English teacher at a middle school in Grenoble, France. I am not sure whether I've chosen a conventional job out of provocation or because I like challenges, but what I know is that my choice has had daily consequences for me in a very normal and normative world.

However, because of all the paperwork and the amount of medical procedures required in France, I am still technically received as a "woman" at work. I teach 7th and 8th grade.

The kids see me as Ms. Latour, a person who is baffling in their androgyny. When addressing me, they often switch from "Sir" to "Miss" and back. In essence, they have accepted me as their teacher, without questioning my authority or identity.

Since I needed to get my teacher certification this year, I figured there was no way I could have been open about my transition. Some say that I should just come out and live my life the way I feel, and that people will simply have to adapt. The people who say these sorts of things are usually cisgender men or women, gay or straight, who believe that honesty is always the best policy. Obviously, they haven't had to go through much in the realm of gender in this life.

Then again, perhaps they are right. Maybe I am so used to hating myself that I subconsciously choose to give too much power to the institution, opting to live in shame because it's what I'm accustomed to. Maybe this deep-seated self-hatred has been the reason I've developed self-defeating habits and worldviews that I just can't shake. Maybe I could have been braver and clearly voice who it is that I really am.

However, for the most part, I still believe that

I did the right thing by transitioning on the job without being vocal about it. Now, by paying my dues and dealing with the situation as best as I could at the time, I'm happier than I would have been had I lost all that I had worked so hard for my whole life.

I've now lived as a man for about four years. I've been on hormones for over three years, and have had top and bottom surgeries (a mastectomy and a hysterectomy). Five months ago I had my top surgery. Although it wasn't planned as such, it became my Christmas present. I wanted to go back to work with my new flat chest, which I instantly felt had always been my own. My co-workers had always regarded me as a female, so when I returned to work, I still had to 'pass' as such. It was difficult for me to find a way to maintain some sort of illusion of femaleness without entirely betraying my gender. So, to accommodate both worlds, I opted to partake in straight-up gender illusion. I decided to stuff my partner's breast prostheses (she's MTF and lives fully as a woman now) into an old sports bra and sport my new fake tits. For some reason, I thought this would be a good idea.

My incredibly weird and inventive strategy proved to be successful for about four days. Then, one fateful Thursday, as I played a recorded audio document for my students in class to practice oral comprehension, everything changed. As I wrote on the board and then gestured towards what I'd written with my right hand, I felt something slipping onto my stomach. I looked down and there it was: my right "boob," slowly tumbling towards

my feet, in front of thirty twelve-year-olds.

I quickly pulled myself together. Within seconds, I had leaned over with my hand on my stomach and slid smoothly behind my desk. I put both elbows on top of the desk, and let my "boob" slide gently from underneath my shirt into my backpack, which serendipitously happened to be open right beside my feet. I looked at my pupils with the same authoritative expression I always use when I want them to calm down because they are making too much noise. Everybody fell silent. No one had noticed anything. I taught the rest of the class with the remaining boob wedged firmly in place-- at least one of the two was obedient-- and acted as though nothing had happened.

This is how, in spite of all my efforts to blend in, I almost outed myself in the most ridiculously nightmarish fashion. I never wore these prostheses again, and threw them away as soon as I came back home at night. As from today on, I still have one more month of pretending to go...with my male torso.

DAVID LATOUR

I am a 32-year-old transman. I have been in a relationship with a transwoman for the past four years. I am an English teacher in Middle school and High school and I am writing my PhD dissertation on H.D. Thoreau and the ethics of Ecology.

RED

JORDAN ARGBATOV

Interviewed by Rocco Kayiatos
Photographed by Amos Mac



Red became a hero of mine when I was 17 and heard him read a story about being a butch in the 1960s. A trailblazer with an unrivaled work ethic, Red is documenting his own life and experience, leaving a written history behind of a life that might otherwise go unnoticed. He sat down to talk with us about writing, painting and all the ways he's hustled to pay the bills.



Rocco: You are one of the most prolific artists I know, you must have incredible work ethic! Can you tell me what a typical day of work is like for you?

Red: Now that I am old, my work day has decreased. In my 50s I was still doing 16 hour days of solid writing and editing when finishing up a novel, and 5 or 8 hours ordinarily, but since I was still working for a living, I was not painting. These days I get up, write for half an hour or 45 minutes, do pet care then hit the streets in search of free food and socializing somewhere. Upon returning home I paint maybe 2 hours, then jerk off. Then hit the computer and write with parrots sitting on my shoulders for 2 to 3 hours.

Did you inherit this work ethic from your family?

Yes, both parents and maternal grandparents worked diligently, until my mom went insane from stress due to segregation and having been abused as a child. So I learned early about dropping out and continuing to work hard on my own stuff.

How many books have you published and which one are you most proud of?

I am at around 90 books to date. I love all of them. I am proud of different books from different epochs. My first novels were about experiences in queer Greenwich Village in 1962 ("How's Mars"). I kept writing steadily, acquiring a huge volume of 800 poems which I am very proud of ("The Age Of Om," "The Iron Woman"). Later in the early 1990s I wrote my fabulous "Lucy & Mick-

ey," which was totally unrecognized by the lesbian community outside of a few wonderful reviews it received. It was kind of blackballed because of having a tremendous amount of sex and because it had a straight male publisher! He claimed he could get hardly no love from the dyke community of reviewers or any acknowledgement from them at all, which did not help my career! I could continue about my journal years, which started in 2005 or so, which I'm immensely proud of. "Lamentations in the Cool of the Evening" is on Google and can be read for free. Dude, do you know how hard it is to choose one favorite book when you've written 90?

Did you always know what you wanted to do professionally when you grew up?

Yes, I always said I wanted to be a writer, even as a ten year old. I was so lousy in school that it is all I could be, a writer or an artist. I remained on the writing/painting track from childhood, and considered that my job in life, and did not consider any other profession whatsoever. Having some mental problems and becoming an alcoholic and a drug shooter, pursuing any profession requiring a degree was out of the question. What a joke! Barely squeaked out of High School at night school in downtown Chicago, and just did art and worked all these shit jobs for a living for 40 years.

How old were you when you realized you were a transsexual?

I was cross-dressing as a 3 year old, re-

fusing to get dressed in the morning if my mother didn't put out a T-shirt, blue jeans and gym shoes. I went off into the illegal gay community in the 1950s, knowing my male identity, but since I wanted women sexually that seemed like the route to travel. There was no knowledge of us as trans back then. I just lived my life being as manly as possible, as a crazy artist can be! This 'problem' burned inside me constantly until in 1998. Finally I received info that I could begin transition for no money and jumped on that opportunity overnight.

How old were you when you got your first job? And what was it?

I was 12 or so and worked in the library of my school. A harbinger of things to come?

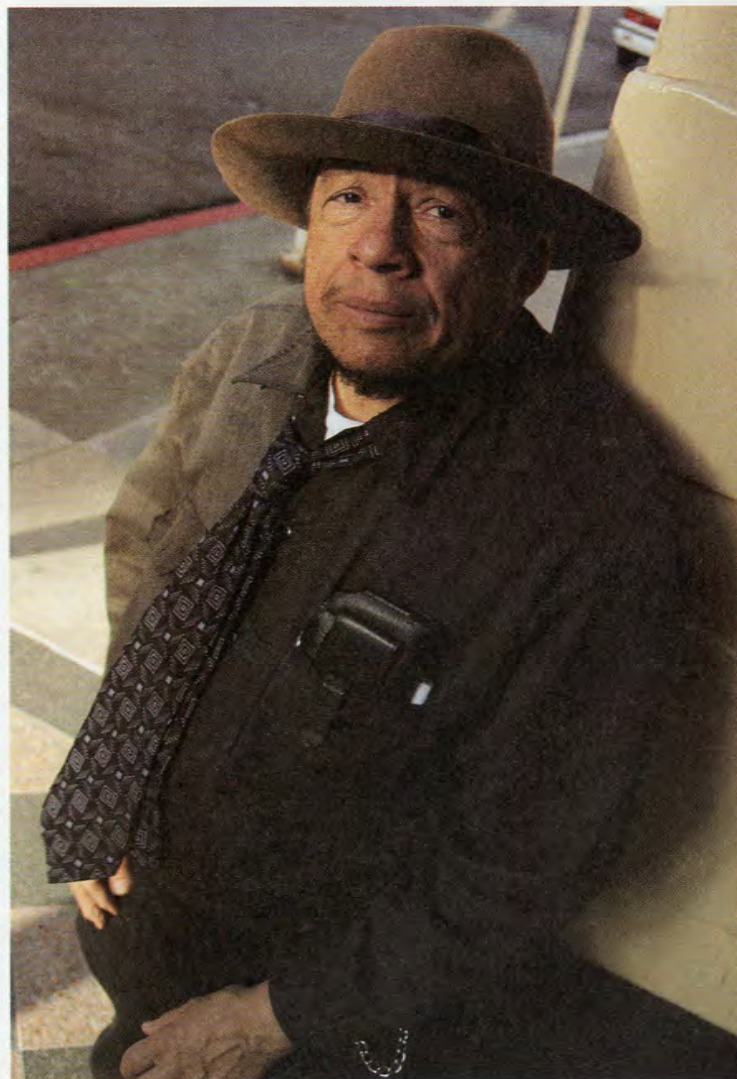
Can you list some of the most interesting or bizarre things you have done to make a living?

Well telemarketing was interesting because of the odd characters who work in phone rooms. I worked the phones 15 years and it was truly a hoot and a howl as well as a grind. Then there was my union job, replacing a worker who was in the hospital. I was exposed to toxic shit and woke up every night coughing and didn't understand why. Then there was the stupid-ass housecleaning service me and my ex-wife Jasmin had for 11 years and the variety of liberal, more well-to-do clients we had. We had sex on one of their water beds and ate up their food whenever possible. We had one client, a MTF tranny who used to praise me for how well I scrubbed her tub. She told me

"I can always tell when you've done the tub and not Jasmin," because I think she was kind of jealous of bio high femme Jasmin, but the funny thing is that me and her had self-assigned duties, Jasmin always did tubs, while I always vacuumed and took out garbage, so it was always her doing the tub! Most of my jobs were boring ass shit. There was my first job in SF when I arrived from Chitown half insane, recently having kicked drugs and alcohol and cigarettes and broken up with my stripper girlfriend and got this job in City Of Paris department store, wrapping packages in the basement -- a good place to hide your queer folks. There was this non-hormonal passing woman, or very hard butch, or transman who did not have access to testosterone then (in 1967) working there with me. All the ladies down there used to say what a wonderful man he was, how polite he was and he never swore. I could go on and on and on about the crazy jobs I have had which now pays this old mans Social Security!

Have you ever had a hard time getting job because of your identity?

Yes, it was horrifying. I was told in the city of Chicago employment office that they could not do anything for me and I should go to the welfare department and get on welfare since I was a hopeless case. A male employee came up to me in the waiting room and informed me I should sit with my legs closed, not open in a manly stance. I got hired as a male several times, and at one place I was mysteriously fired for no reason. I guess



they found out. My last 4 years of work I had transitioned and when I got to San Francisco I was totally stealth on the job, but nobody cared because it was telemarketing.

What do you see as the most significant change for transguys in the past 20 years?

Now there is a visible community of us just like dykes were in the 1950s. A community you can get a hold of, rather than a few isolated stealth guys here and there. Public awareness of us and sympathetic feelings and acceptance in a lot of places. Not to mention free hormones and services.



ENTRANSED

Junior Brainard is a college English professor and a transman. Tina Montgomery is a drag performer and a transwoman. They met at one of Tina's performances. He was instantly smitten. She was more reluctant but encouraged by her friends to try something different. She did, and they have been together ever since.

Junior: When did you first start performing in drag?

Tina: When I was younger, wearing women's clothes was drag. At age 12, I started playing in women's clothes at home in the basement. I did my first show when I was around 17. My next door neighbor wanted to do a talent show at our block party, so I impersonated Diana Ross. From that day on, you could never get me off stage.

After performing for so long, what keeps you from getting bored?

New audiences, new places, new cities, states. Loving what I do. Sometimes it's one lyric in one song that connects with me.

What's one of your favorite performances?

When I can share it with you, either by performing for you, or when you per-

form a song for me on my birthday.

Do you dislike anything about performing?

When the business goes to some people's head. Some people can think that they are a major celebrity and develop a control problem. Also, some bars have regular drag shows and won't even supply a mirror, but want to give us free drinks.

You've dated a few people in your life. How would you describe your sexuality?

I think I'm bisexual now. If a person comes on to me that I'm attracted to, we take it from there.

You've also been going steady with me for awhile now.

Yes, two years and some change.

Is there anything challenging about being with a white transman 15 years younger than you?

I don't want to grow old on you. Sometimes it bothers me, but I also like a young man. And if we had met when I was younger, I would have been too busy.

And I would have been too young...



Yes, I met you at the right time in my life. Sometimes other people say, "You're with him? You've got to be kidding." I don't worry about what other people think. I think people were surprised when I started dating you. They didn't think you had swagger -- and I didn't either. But you did, and you got game, too.

What do you enjoy the most about our relationship?

There's always something different and new happening and I can always count on you -- it's hard to say one thing. I like the fact that you know what you want and you want to be in this relationship with me and what I have to offer. And you are my best friend.

Given your experience, what do you think makes a strong relationship?

Two people really knowing what they want, not guessing. Communication. Not trying to make a person into who you want them to be and loving them for who they are.

What's the best thing about sex with a transman?

Three holes are better than two.

Well, not better than your two!

Junior and Tina, photographed outside of their Philadelphia home by Amos Mac.

TELECOMMUTING & TRANSITIONING

For over 10 years, I've made my living working from home (telecommuting) as a web developer and search marketer. In that time, I've only met a handful of my clients in person. When I decided to transition, I thought my employment situation would prove extremely favorable, given that I wouldn't have to face a lot of the issues that arise from transitioning on the job. However, I soon discovered that there was a whole different set of difficulties awaiting me.

Where I live in Canada, there's hysterectomy funding available for transgender men. One of the requirements for getting that funding is one year of Real Life Experience, or RLE. As defined by our provincial medical plan, RLE includes being completely out as male at your job. What would this mean for me? My gender never comes up at work. Pronouns aren't an issue since I tend to have a single point of contact on any given project. Was I expected to contact all my clients out of the blue and tell them about my transition? This was unappealing to me on a number of levels, especially because I tend to work in a rather conservative segment of the hospitality industry. I communicated my concerns to the office of the surgical assessors and was told that I would need to provide a simple reference letter from a client.

It didn't have to acknowledge my transition in any way; it only had to use the correct pronouns and indicate that they'd known me for at least a year. At this point, I'd told a handful of select clients about my transition so I obtained the letter from a client in Toronto. Unfortunately, I learned that the letter wouldn't suffice because I had never met this person face-to-face. Instead, they required a letter from a local client that I regularly met with, only I didn't have such a client. My doctor non-nchalantly suggested I get an additional part-time job and start RLE again from the beginning. No thanks, I already work 60+ hours a week! Thankfully, I'd done some volunteer work for a local charity and the powers that be accepted their letter as verification, proving yet again that volunteering is rewarding!

I've now been transitioning for over two years and I confidently present as male. Unfortunately, most of my clients still think I'm female. It doesn't matter that my professional website uses male pronouns and has a head shot of me with fairly evident facial hair, because my existing clients have no need to visit my website. The issue becomes evident during conference calls or when a client sends me a referral. Referrals can be really awkward: "Um, sorry, I'm just a little

confused because John told me you were a woman." I just shrug it off and move on, because my gender doesn't have any bearing on my work. Some clients think I perpetually have a cold: "Still have that sore throat, eh? You really should go to the doctor for that." Sigh. I remember someone telling me once that a hard-won identity is not something to just put aside, and I sometimes think about telling my clients that I'm male to avoid these little awkward situations. However, the repercussions of revealing myself could be more than a little awkward - I could get fired.

In fact, I believe I've already been let go by at least one client because of my transition. Everything had been going well for over a year (ignoring the Bible scriptures they sent in business emails.) Then, one day, they switched pronouns with me unexpectedly. Very soon after they sent me an impersonal email informing me that our styles of work were incompatible. I requested more information, but their explanation didn't stack up. I was reminded by a friend that it's really easy to jump to conclusions and assume termination is transition related, but all the pieces fit. It became evident that as an independent contractor who works across national borders, I have pretty much no discrimination protections at work. I'm simply not in a position (nor do I desire) to start suing backwards-thinking clients.

As a result, I've started working more on my own projects, and am slowly weening myself off "freelance crack." It's actually something I've wanted to do for a long time. I've

become a bit of an expert on transition, so why not transition my business too?

Over time, I've told some select clients about my transition and, in each case, I chose my targets wisely. I've received nothing but support, along with interesting (and non-obtrusive) questions that have spawned some remarkable conversations. Most of my clients are people that I would never have the opportunity to interact with if it weren't for business. However, they've turned out to be really interesting and kind people, reminding me that it's never a good idea to make swift judgments.

There have certainly been benefits to being self-employed and telecommuting through transition, and it's really the only situation that could have worked for me. But it's hard to say just how long I'll continue have "gender confused" clients, and that's a constant and uncomfortable reminder that my transition is far from complete (if "completion" is indeed possible.) So, I take each day as they come and choose to live by one of my favorite lyrical quotes, "All good things in all good time."

JOSHUA RIVERDALE

Joshua runs his empire from a small island in British Columbia, Canada where he enjoys growing organic food, taking long hikes to the beach, and singing songs to his dog. Find him online at transguys.com/joshua

ALL BUSINESS

WITH SETH LIST

My name is Seth. I'm 28 years old and I currently live and work in Austin, TX. I'm the Market Development Manager for a growing Austin start-up. "Market Development" is just a fancy name for inside sales, which means that most of my selling is done by phone and email, rather than face-to-face. I've been in sales for a little over 6 years now and feel lucky that I can make great money doing something I really love.

How to prepare yourself for that major job interview :

1. Research the company. There is nothing worse than showing up for an interview and not knowing at least the basics about the company you're interviewing with. I would recommend reading through press releases and find something you're excited about that you can discuss during the interview.

2. Familiarize yourself with your resume. This may seem obvious, but you'd be surprised. Employers will ask you about your previous jobs and likely want to know why you moved from one job to another. Know your story, and practice it with your friends.

3. Prepare yourself for the tough questions. Look at sites like www.glassdoor.com

and poke around on the web to see if you can learn anything about the interview process. I've found that honesty is always the best policy when it comes to questions like "What is your biggest strength and biggest weakness" or "Why do you want to leave your current job?"

4. Print out copies of your resume on nice paper. However many you think you might need, print out 5 more. Don't expect that everyone you'll interview with has already seen your resume. If they like you, you may end up meeting with people you weren't scheduled to meet. NEVER fold your resume or staple the pages.

5. Prepare at least 5 solid questions to ask your interviewer. Nearly all interviewers will wrap up with the standard "Do you have any questions for me?" Put some thought into these. Especially for trans guys, it's important to ask about corporate culture, not just the job itself. If you're interviewing with a start-up, ask about HR resources, because often times they won't have any. You need to know what you're getting yourself into and it's best to know in advance if you may need to leave the company to begin your transition.





Advice for someone who will transition on the job :

1. Be ready to walk away. I know the intention is to keep the job, but there's something to be said for having an attitude of "I come first." If you can convey just how important this step is in your life, and that ultimately your transition will take priority, your employer will be more likely to take the matter seriously. Don't let them bowl you over or convince you how difficult you may make it on yourself or your co-workers by transitioning on the job. And if you break the news and don't feel confident that you'll be safe or comfortable with that employer, then find another. It's just a job. There will be others. I'd just recommend securing something new

before you quit the current job.

2. Find an advocate. You would think HR would be your best bet, but it's not always the case. Find a co-worker, a manager, a friend in another department, just find someone. Having someone you know will have your back is a helpful way to deal with transitioning on the job. For me, I was fortunate to have my advocate be the owner of the company.

Important piece of advice you'd like to give to guys who may have some paranoia about jumping back into the work force after being unemployed:

We're all different, with different skills, different passions and different defini-

tions of success. Do what makes you happy and don't let your parents, peers or society tell you what you need to be. Leverage your network - whether queer identified or otherwise - to get your foot in the door. Don't be afraid to talk to strangers in the trans community and certainly don't be afraid to ask for help. The worst thing that happens is they tell you to take a hike, and you find someone else who may be more willing to give you the advice you need. But I promise you'll learn a lot about yourself and the working world along the way.

Essential pieces of clothing you should have for that pro office job :

1. Slacks. I'm not a fan of pleats but do what you need to do. Pleated slacks are still better than jeans. If you can afford it, get them dry cleaned and pressed.
2. At least 3 long sleeved collared shirts. You don't want to show up for a second interview in the same shirt you wore the first time around. Again, hit the dry cleaners if you can afford to.
3. A nice pair of dress shoes. The shirt and slacks won't do you any good if you're still wearing tennies or skate shoes.
4. Dark dress socks. You'll notice I didn't include tie or jacket on this list. If you're short on cash, you're better served showing up in nice slacks, and a dress shirt with something other than white athletic socks versus a full-on suit with your gleaming white socks peeking out between your pants and shoes.

Previous 2 pages: Seth List, photographed in his fancy business-class hotel room by Amos Mac.

Keiko Lane, MA, MFT
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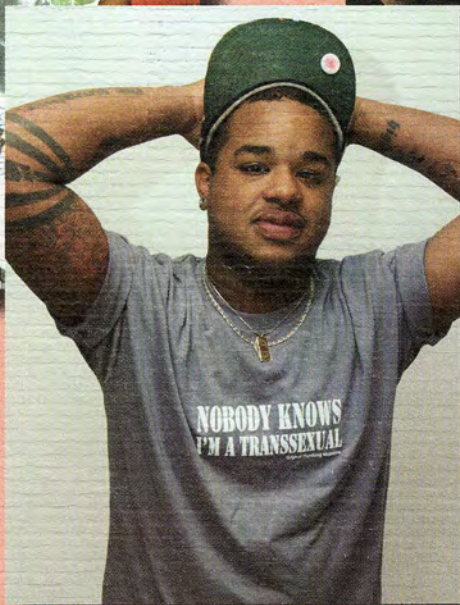


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