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America's #1 Black Gay Lifestyle, News, Entertainment, Fashion, and Travel

WHO'S  
HOT IN 2008?  
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## A Look Into Hollywood's Black Gay Conundrum

“CHRIS STOKES:  
**I Don't Do  
That Anymore**”

Extensive Look Into  
Molestation Allegations by  
B2K's Raz B & Others

+ >>>

## WHITNEY HOUSTON

WILL SHE MAKE THE ULTIMATE  
COMEBACK IN 2008?

CHATTING WITH THE FABULOUS  
B. SCOTT

>>> EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH  
MULTI-FACETED R&B/POP VOCALIST

# ARAB BOLLO

>>>

## DA DOO DIRTY SHOW

THEY'RE TAKING OVER INTERNET  
PODCASTING AND SOON RADIO!

CHARTING THE CARIBBEAN  
SEE WHO MADE THE GRADE

### Also Inside

>>> Def Jam's Stef Jones >>> Queen Latifa  
>>> Sex & The City Movie >>> Mary J Blige  
>>> Chris Brown & The Hot Boys Of R&B  
>>> A Peek Into The Harlem Renaissance

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# CLIK MAGAZINE

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Black Gay America's Most Prominent Magazine

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For The Hip & Trendy Black Gay Man

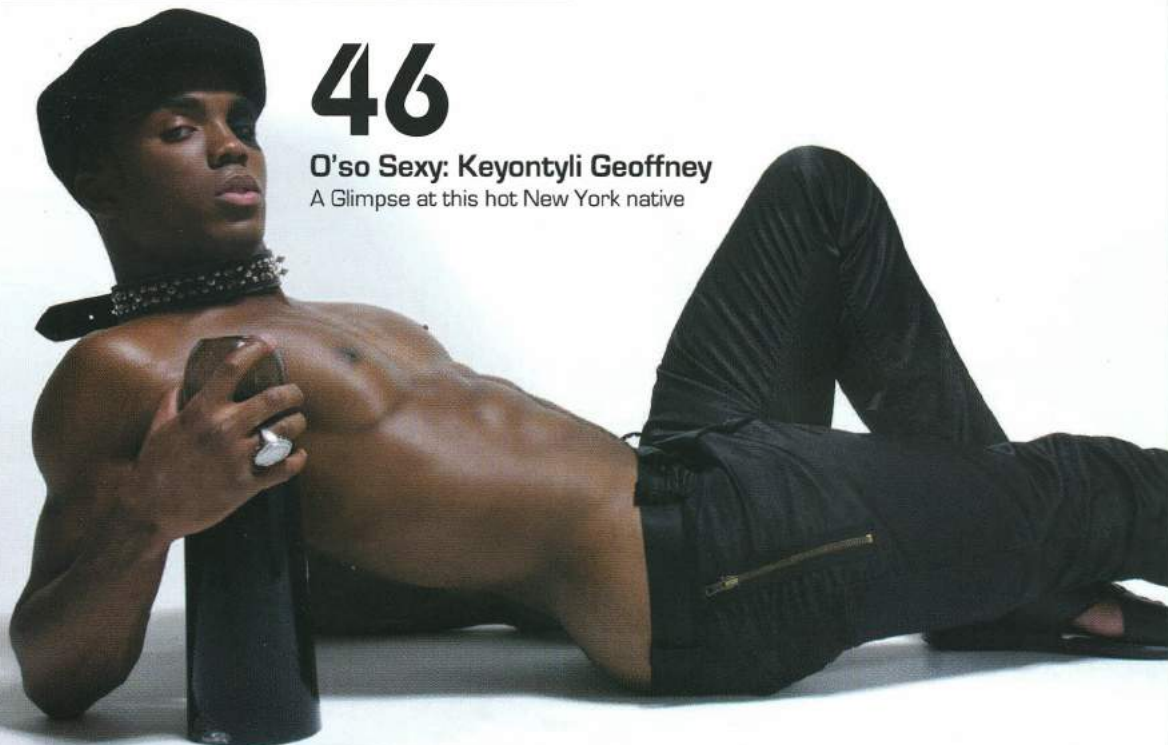
On the Cover:  
**Ari Gold**  
Cover Photo by:  
**Duane Cramer**

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10	11	12	13	14	15	
				39th NAACP Image Awards	Winter Explosion 2008	
		Feb 14 <sup>th</sup> 39th Annual NAACP Image Awards			Feb 15 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> 14th Annual Winter Explosion—Black Gay Ski Trip	
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Feb 2nd, 2008  
**Clik Publisher Dwight Powell & Luis Medrano Birthday**  
Couple share the same birthday, isn't that sweet.

Feb 7th, 2008  
**The National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD)**  
NBHAAD is to build the capacity and increase awareness, participation and support for HIV prevention, care and treatment among African Americans. February 7, 2008 marks the eighth year of this annual event. Visit [www.blackaidsday.org](http://www.blackaidsday.org) for details

Feb 14th  
**39th NAACP Awards**  
The NAACP Image Awards is presented annually by the NAACP to honor outstanding people of color in film, television, music, and literature. Similar to other awards, like the Oscars and the Grammys, the 35 categories of Image Awards are voted on by members of the NAACP. Visit [www.naacpimageawards.net](http://www.naacpimageawards.net) for info.

Feb 15th-18th, 2008  
**14th Annual Winter Explosion**  
Black Gay Ski Trip. Visit [www.winterexplosion.com](http://www.winterexplosion.com) for details.

Feb 24th  
**80th Academy Awards**  
Jon Stewart has been set to host the 80th Academy Awards telecast, producer Gil Cates announced. This will mark Stewart's second stint as Oscar host. Visit [www.oscars.org](http://www.oscars.org) for details.



**Casino Royale**  
A BLACK TIE AFFAIR  
*February 16, 2008*

Feb 16th, 2008  
**Casino Royale**  
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Feb 24th  
**80th Academy Awards**  
Jon Stewart has been set to host the 80th Academy Awards telecast, producer Gil Cates announced. This will mark Stewart's second stint as Oscar host. Visit [www.oscars.org](http://www.oscars.org) for details.

27th February - March 3rd  
**Winter Party (Miami)**  
Launched in 1994 as a one-time charity dance event on the sands of beautiful South Beach, Winter Party Festival<sup>SM</sup> has evolved into a six-day festival benefiting the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community on the national and local levels. Over 10,000 guests from all over the United States and abroad attend at least one of the 20 events - including music, fashion, art, comedy and more - that take place in Miami and Miami Beach. For more details visit [www.winterparty.com](http://www.winterparty.com)



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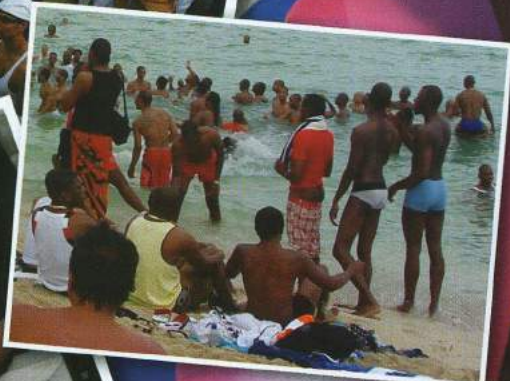
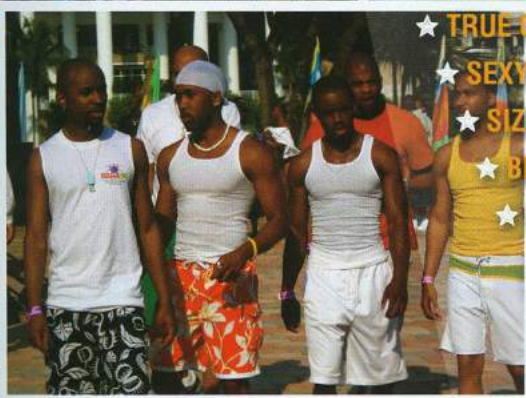
★ TRUE QUEENS OF COMEDY SHOW W/CELEBRITY GUESTS FRI

★ SEXY DAYTIME PARTY BOOZE CRUISE FRI

★ SIZZLING LUAU @ HISTORIC VIRGINIA KEY BEACH SAT

★ BEACH PATROL @ HAULOVER BEACH SUN

★ MEAT MARKET ALL MALE REVUE MON



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Happy 2008 my friends. Believe it or not, but it's been almost 10 years since I began inking this magazine. Yup, May of this year, Clik Magazine (Formally CLIKQUE) will be celebrating 10 years as the voice and face of America's Black gay community. Given the cost and nature of our business, and the ever increasing dominance of the internet, especially the blogs, 10 years of publishing is an astounding achievement. So just how will we celebrate this accomplishment? Well just you wait and see! Plans are in the work for a massive multi-city anniversary celebration, and I trust that you'll be apart of it. Stay tuned.

Now on to this HOT issue. No, I'm not just talking about sexy-ass R&B sensation Ari Gold, but about all of the pages, from cover to cover, they're all on fire. Shot by world renowned photographer Duane Cramer, this cover of Ari sets 2008 off to a sizzling start. We've challenged ourselves to outdo the cover of the prior month all year long – so with a cover like this, we've got our work cut-out for us. But we're forever up for a good challenge.

Also in this issue, we sat down and chat with the fabulous B. Scott. With his high-pitched voice, androgynous appearance, and witty mouth, Clik writer Darian Aaron explains why everyone's taking notice of this kid who's taking Hollywood by storm. Right on his tail tearing-up the pod cast world is DJ Baker and Da Doo Dirty Show. Clik predicts that both of them will be HOT in 2008.

From Raz B, Whitney Houston, Mary J Blige, Queen Latifah, to our communities own soon to be supermodel of your world and February's hotty of the month Keyon, this issue is a sure pleaser. I am confident that there's

something in here that's sure to catch your eye... at least one of them (wink).

With this being Black History Month, we thought it would be fitting to provide a peek into the Harlem Renaissance and the significance of Black gays during that era. Taylor Siluwe masterly captured the essence of those glorious days. Still today, gays continue to be at the forefront of art, music and literature.

Finally, there are three important events happening this month that I would like to make you aware of. For starters, February 7th is National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. The other two, well are a bit self-serving. On February 2nd I will be celebrating my 19th birthday along with my partner Luis. Wow, if I'm 19 that would make him... oh never mind, I digress. Lastly, I will be in Washington DC at Casino Royale which is presented by the folks at InCrowd International. How fitting on the onset of my tenth year as publisher of this magazine, these gracious folks will be honoring me with a Trailblazer Award. Well enough about me, this is a very important event, since funds being raised at this star-studded gala will be donated to assist the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Project Foundation in DC. See our calendar on page 6 these for other important events not mentioned here.

Enjoy the issue. Cheers!!

*Dwight Powell*

Dwight Powell, Editor-In-Chief  
CLiK Magazine



## Wellness Programs

(Designed for Black gay, SGL, and bi-sexual men)

- NIA (Purpose)  
Men of all ages
- MYLIFE MYSTYLE  
Ages 18-29
- The GAAME Plan  
Ages 18-29
- The POWER Project  
Ages 18-29
- Wellness for Life Black Men's Health Conference
- Umoja (Unity)  
Empowerment Retreat

## Community Cultural Celebrations

(Open to All)

- Kwanzaa Celebration
- King Day Celebration

## Community Forums

(Open to All)

- National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
- World AIDS Day

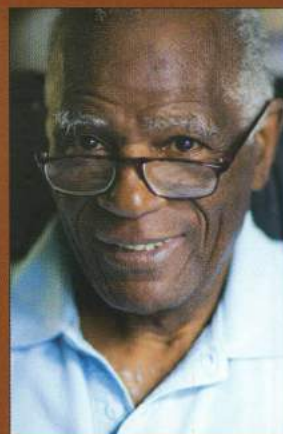
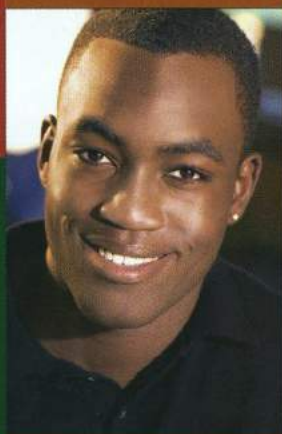
## Taskforces

(Open to All)

- South Los Angeles Crystal Meth Taskforce (SO LA METH)
- Los Angeles African American Gay Men's Taskforce (LAAAGMT)

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## LETTERS



I have to congratulate CLIK on the hottest cover model I've ever seen on your magazine since my subscription began! ...he is the embodiment of African-American, gay and proud, featuring androgynous good looks.

### LAUREN GREEN IS WRONG

CLIK Magazine's vol. 8 issue 8, dated Nov. 27, 2007 has an article, "Is homosexuality a sin." The answer is no. Homosexuality is a state of being. Sin is an act which causes hurt, harm or danger to another person.

More importantly, the article's somewhat incoherent rambling about whether a person's same gender loving twin also should be gay deliberately avoids the question. The Bible passage used most often to justify hatred of homosexuals is 1 Corinthians 6:9. Anti-gay Christians always quote it in English only. In its original Greek language, Apostle Paul says that among those who can't inherit the kingdom of Heaven are ARSENOKOITAI, men who rape males, and MALAKOI, men who have sex with men for money. Rape is not love making, it is an act of violence. Prostitution is not love making, it is a business transaction. In the contemporary world male with male prostitution often is driven by a need for money to feed a drug addiction. Is rape a sin? Yes. Is distributing addictive narcotics a sin? Yes. What about the alleged sin of Sodom?

Ezekiel 16:46-49 says Sodom's sins were inhospitality and failure to strengthen the hands of poor people. Could European-American Baptists in the ante-bellum Confederate States of America say that? No. To correctly interpret the sin of Sodom would have meant freedom to African American slaves. So 150+ years ago Christians, particularly in Dixie, said the sin of Sodom was an attempted rape of men by men. African Americans learned these texts in English only, and have never learned or taught the original Greek in Corinthians or European American motivations for misinterpreting the sin of

Sodom. Christian slave owners contributed to Bible-based homophobia.

Fear to challenge Eurocentric Christianity keeps racism, homophobia and economic exploitation of poor people going. Does the Bible condone riding in jet aircraft? No. Like 21st Century same gender loving relationships, jets were unknown 2000 years ago. To safely pilot a jet today is to show Christian love to passengers onboard. A same gender loving relationship, likewise, is consistent with the basic laws: to love God and to love one's neighbor.

Max Smith  
Chicago, IL

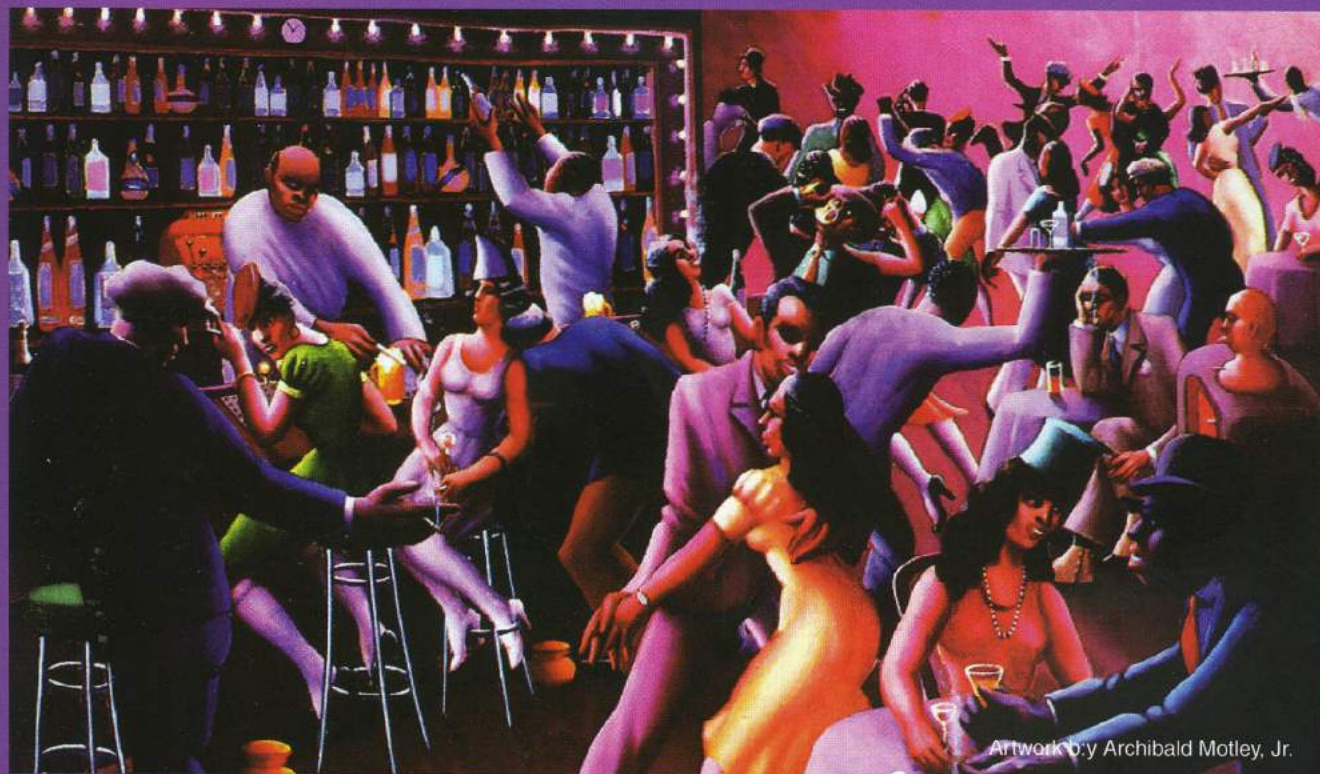
### SEXY COVER MODEL

I have to congratulate CLIK on the hottest cover model I've ever seen on your magazine since my subscription began (on the Holiday Issue - Chris DeLoatch)! I had never seen or heard of this young man before, but he is the embodiment of African-American, gay and proud, featuring androgynous (READ: non-efemaphobic) good looks. I was also very proud to see that CLIK chose a dark-skin model. I love all skin tones of the African diaspora. I have noticed in every issue of CLIK Magazine the unfortunate tendency to use what my parents would have called "high yellow" models and models featuring non-Afrocentric (face/hair) features.

My comments are not meant to express my personal attraction to Mr. DeLoatch, but to show concern over what values and standards of beauty CLIK Magazine is communicating to young black gay, bisexual and transgender males. The Holiday Issue was a job well done.

Nasheed Abdul-Wakil  
Brooklyn, NY





Artwork by Archibald Motley, Jr.

# A PEEK INTO THE HARLEM renaissance

By Taylor Siluwé

Entwined with early 20th century black history is a legacy of art, literature and music that has helped shape our culture into what it is today. Known as the Harlem Renaissance—roughly 1920 to 1935—it was a heyday when black lesbian and gay men socialized in cabarets, rent parties, worshiped in churches and created a language and social structure uniquely their own. These communities attracted white homosexuals as well as black, creating friendships between people of disparate ethnic and economic backgrounds and alliances for progressive social change. However, these invaluable contributions by our gay and lesbian forbearers often go unmentioned, or, when recognized, are shamelessly 'hetero-washed' to please the homophobic masses and claiming our luminaries as their own.

By peeking into this inventive age—and within the confines of this piece, it can only be a peek—one can begin to understand the long row black gays and lesbians have had to hoe in order to arrive in this twenty-first century, head held high, self-esteem miraculously still intact. From the struggle to be considered 100% human, being Black in America has always been a journey fraught with unending hardship. But being Gay in America is a study in similar subjugation by the heterosexual mindset which, to this day, still seeks to keep us in our place. Standing strong beneath the crushing weight of both are today's black lesbians and gay men—some of whom identify as Same Gender Loving (SGL) to better encapsulate the combined angst of being a minority within a minority—whose homosexuality is only a part of their societal woes.

The gaiety of the 1920s was short-lived and the Harlem gay subculture quickly declined following

the Stock Market crash of '29 and the repeal of Prohibition. Nevertheless, the traditions and institutions created by Harlem's Jazz Age lesbians and gays continue to this day.

## RENAISSANCE Nightlife

Picture It. It's March 12, 1926, but everyone's partying like it's 1999.

You're entering a vast elegant lobby beneath an enormous diamond-cut chandelier with other starry-eyed, eager to party revelers, excitement palpable.

As you ascend the marble staircase, the sound of big-band jazz grows louder, trumpet blasts sharper, and your heart beats faster as you glance to check your reflection in the ribbon of mirror that runs along the stairs.

Suddenly you come upon the block-long, burnished maple dance floor: raised bandstands at either end, music blaring, glinting instruments, fashions, furs, and a sea of dancers spinning and exuding energy against the vibrant orange and blue decor. It's the opening night of the Savoy Ballroom—later dubbed 'the Home of Happy Feet', where the best jazz bands of the era (such as Louis Armstrong, Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, et al.) would battle in alternating sets to see which sent the dance floor into the greatest frenzy.





Amidst this crowd of over 4000 - dancing, drinking 5-cent mugs of root-beer, Lindy Hoppin' and high-kickin' on the dance floor - you, me, all of us were surely there, because to miss such a damn good party would almost have been a sin.

Although the Savoy wasn't a gay establishment, it would hold infrequent costume balls. Described by renaissance poet Langston Hughes as "spectacles in color", these Balls gave prizes for men who looked the most like women, and vice versa. But the largest of these Balls was at the Rockland Palace (which accommodated 6000 people, as opposed to the Savoy's coat-check which boasted up to 5000 items) - the highlight of which was the beauty contest, where fashionably dressed drags would vie for the title of Queen of the Ball.

So yes, even our 21st century Ball Scene has roots deep in Harlem's gay subculture. But in an era when blacks were prohibited from patronizing up-town hot spots such as the Cotton Club, the Balls were hardly the only nightlife alternatives for the renaissance homosexual:

## RENT Parties

These house parties, like Blues music, had been brought north in the Great Migration. Few of Harlem's new residents had much money and rent was hard to come by. And the sad reality that inflated rents were \$12 to \$30 a month higher than anywhere else in Manhattan, while salaries were lower for blacks than their white counterparts. To raise funds, they sometimes threw enormous parties, inviting the public and charging admission. There would be dancing and jazz, and bootleg liquor for sale in the kitchen. It is about just such a party that Bessie Smith sang her famous "Gimme a Pig-foot and a Bottle of Beer."

## BUFFET Flats

Like 'rent parties', these were essentially private apartments where rooms could be rented by the night. Buffet flats had sprung up during the late 1800s to provide overnight accommodations to

... they sometimes threw enormous parties, inviting the public and charging admission. There would be dancing and jazz, and bootleg liquor for sale in the kitchen.

Photo courtesy of: Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

black travelers refused service in white-owned hotels, but by the 1920s, buffet flats developed a wilder reputation. Some were raucous establishments where illegal activities such as drinking, gambling, and prostitution were available. Others offered a variety of sexual pleasures cafeteria-style - live sex acts, homo and hetero, were the evening's entertainment, cheered on by the bootleg liquor fueled crowd.

'Privacy' was the key factor which placed both the rent party and the buffet flat high on the list of activities for Harlem's permissive gay subculture. Although, speaking about the period, poet Richard Bruce Nugent (whose life was featured in the Rodney Evans film *Brother to Brother*) said, "Nobody was in the closet. There was no closet."

Privacy was also provided at A'lelia Walker's place. Daughter of Madame C. J. Walker - a former washerwoman turned entrepreneur who made million selling her own hair-straightening product - A'lelia, who adored the company of the gay set, spent her mother's inheritance throwing lavish parties on a beautiful Harlem street known as Sugar Hill.

## PUBLIC Establishments

The best know hang-out was Harry Hansberry's Clam House - a long narrow room on 133rd Street. Headlining there was Gladys Bentley, a 250 proud lesbian dressed in top-hat and white tuxedo, who belted out lewd versions of the popular tunes of the day. Also a talented pianist, Langston Hughes described Gladys Bentley as "an amazing exhibition of musical energy."

All the power lesbians of that day could be seen there: including Bessie Smith, Jackie "Moms" Mabley, Alberta Hunter, Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Josephine Baker and Ethel Waters. The fictitious nightspot The Lobster Pot - based in part on the Clam House - provided a glimpse into the legendary speakeasy in Blair Niles' 1931 gay novel *Strange Brother*.

Ethel Waters remembered loaning her gowns to the transvestites who frequented Edmond's Cellar, a low-life saloon at 132nd Street and Fifth Avenue. Lulu Belle's on Lenox Avenue was another hangout for female impersonators, whereas a more sophisticated crowd of black gay men gathered nightly at the Hot Cha, at 132nd Street and Seventh Avenue. And this is just a sampling of the nightlife alternatives available then.

If it seems that the focus here is on nightlife and bawdy parties, there's a reason for it. Gay life, regardless of ethnicity, by definition, alludes to the devil-may-care frivolity for which 'gays' have become notorious. It's nothing new. Now as then, we find a way to gather, drink and be merry, regardless of societal condemnation.

Through all the raunchiness, the drinking, and the dancing 'happy feet', great artists were made such as Aaron Douglas, who - along with writers Zora





# 9th Annual

## AFRICAN AMERICAN OUTREACH INITIATIVE

**SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 2008**  
**SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 2008**  
 (7:00 AM – 5:00 PM)

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**“Through Leadership, Community & Innovation: We will Conquer HIV/AIDS.”**

**African American Outreach Initiative (AAOI)** is an annual educational forum for African Americans living with HIV/AIDS offered annually since 2000. The mission is to encourage African Americans who are living with HIV/AIDS to access holistic treatment services to increase utilization of health care and promote medical adherence by providing information on available services, programs, and other resources. The AAOI has 25 volunteer staff representing community-based organizations, AIDS service organizations, primary care, government agencies, and people successfully living with HIV/AIDS.

**FOR REGISTRATION/INFORMATION CONTACT:** Linda Felix: [LindaFelix511@hotmail.com](mailto:LindaFelix511@hotmail.com); Charles Shackelford: [CSHACK1964@yahoo.com](mailto:CSHACK1964@yahoo.com); Charles Shackelford 404.284.9878 (ofc)



Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Wallace Thurman and 'Richard Bruce' Nugent - lent his talent to the creation of the very first black gay magazine. Entitled *FIRE!*, it was aptly named and before its time because it folded after its premiere issue-dealing with the plight of prostitutes and homosexuals-caused a firestorm of controversy.

In today's culture such coverage might win a Pulitzer. Thankfully, with the lucidity of hindsight, all those involved in the creation of *FIRE!* are revered as visionaries today, however hetero-washed. But in our information age, all things old can be new again, and there is so much to be learned from where we've already been. Do your research.

This is a small attempt to blow some of the dust off our Black Gay History, off our well-trodden path, because religious fanatics are all around us with subjugation on the brain, and therefore, we've still got a very long row to hoe before our efforts for equality truly bear fruit.

Let us pay homage this Black History month and beyond by never forgetting our past as we proudly move forward, against all odds, into an uncertain future. Remember, without the Harlem Renaissance's lush history, our community wouldn't be the beautiful, diverse, 'spectacle in color' that we enjoy today.

**Taylor Siluwé is an author and Jersey City resident who studied creative writing at New York Univer-**

**sity.** His first ever published short-story, *A Taste for Cherries*, appears in the anthology *Tough Guys* (Black Books). His apocalyptic tale, *When Romeo Wakes*, is featured in the anthology *Law of Desire*, (Alyson). And his latest, *Breeding Season*, appears in *Best Gay Erotica 2008* (Cleis Press).

Taylor is currently seeking publication of his first novel, and divides his time between writing a column for *FlavaLIFE* magazine and his duties as Assist. Editor of *Out IN Jersey* magazine. He can be reached through his website - [TaylorSiluwe.com](http://TaylorSiluwe.com).

... religious fanatics are all around us with subjugation on the brain, and therefore, we've still got a very long row to hoe before our efforts for equality truly bear fruit.



# HOLLYWOOD'S

## BLACK GAY CONUNDRUM

BY JASMYNE A. CANNICK

A new film entitled "Dirty Laundry" recently opened in Los Angeles and New York. The film follows the life of an African-American gay magazine writer with a near perfect life after turning his back on his southern roots by escaping to New York City—until an 11-year-old boy changes everything for him and his partner.

A new comedy with a stellar cast, "Dirty Laundry" stars Rockmond Dunbar, Loretta Devine, Jennifer Lewis, Terri J. Vaughn, Joey Costello, with a cameo appearance from Dr. Bobby Jones.

The film is initially opened in Los Angeles and New York, with more cities to follow on December 28th.

### THE 'MAGIC' THAT HAPPENS BETWEEN BLACK FILMS IN BLACK THEATERS

Now riddle me this? When was the last time a new film where the majority of the cast

was Black and didn't open in your local African-American neighborhood theater, like a Magic Johnson's theater?

For me, it was 1998 and the film was Black director Hype Williams' "Belly," an urban drama starring rappers DMX and Nas as Tommy and Sincere, former partners in crime who become estranged after Sincere decides to go straight and Tommy takes on a major drug deal from a Jamaican drug lord. "Belly" also starred Taral Hicks, rappers Method Man and Vita, dancehall artist Louie Rankin and R&B singer T-Boz from TLC.

Magic Johnson, who in 1994 opened a theater in the heart of Los Angeles' African-American community, refused to show "Belly" in his Magic Johnson Theaters.

His reason was to avoid any potential violence. "I'm in gang territory already," he said. Magic continued by saying that he had concerns for his pa-

EXCLUSIVE





*Dirty Laundry* is a modern-day prodigal son story with a twist. It follows Patrick, a magazine writer, who seems to have the "perfect life," until one day, there is a knock at the door. On the other side stands a secret that brings him face to face with the traditional southern family he hasn't seen in over 10 years.



The focus of Magic Theatres was to build first-rate multiplexes in urban communities, bringing high quality facilities and technology, as well as job development, encouraging local economic growth. While Magic Theatres are patterned after the Loews Cineplex Entertainment model, they retain the Magic name and focus on urban markets. Each complex is around 60,000 square feet with multiple concession areas, 10 to 15 screens with SDDS stereo sound, stadium seating and a capacity of 3,200 to 5,000.

There's no arguing that Blacks, despite all, have continued to excel in filmmaking on both sides of the cameras. Likewise, so has the inclusion of gay characters in films.

trons, but is equally concerned about the media's attitude toward his theaters. "Hollywood told us our idea would not work, but we've been doing this for four years. If violence would have broken out at my theater, the story would have been front page."

Johnson said that his decision was not a contradiction to his campaign of supporting other Blacks and Black businesses.

"If someone else makes a film like that, I'll make the same decision... There are going to be Black films I don't show and white films I don't show."

Well that's a subject for another day because there were a lot of films that opened up at the Magic Johnson Theaters in Los Angeles that in my opinion were more violent than "Belly." Try Quentin Tarrantino's "Kill Bill" for example. However, maybe that was after his theater chain was taken over by AMC Cinema.

But back to the Magic Johnson Theaters.

The focus of Magic Theaters was to build first-rate multiplexes in urban (i.e. Black) communities. Magic wanted to bring high quality facilities and technology, job development, and encourage local economic growth. With six theaters, including one in Los Angeles and in Harlem, Magic has succeeded in providing modern movie theaters in where there previously were none. Kudos.

So here we are nearly ten years since "Belly," with a film that is undeniably "Black," and instead of opening up in Los Angeles' Crenshaw district and Harlem, it's opening up on the Westside of Los Angeles at the BeverlyCenter and in Chelsea. And unlike "Belly," "Dirty Laundry" is a family friendly comedy that doesn't portray African-Americans in any of those stereotypical characters, you know the gangsta, the killer, or the dope dealer. I mean, isn't that what we've been fighting for, more films that feature African-Americans in positive roles? So exactly who decided not to place "Dirty Laundry" in the Magic Johnson Theaters in Los Angeles and Harlem, the distributor's or the theater? Inquiring minds want to know because just about any film with a Black lead or a majority Black cast can almost be counted on to do so? The most recent examples being "The Perfect Holiday" starring Queen "Is She or Is She Not A Lesbian" Latifah, Terrence Howard, Gabrielle Union, Morris Chestnut, Faizon Love, and Katt "I'll Wear a Noose on the Red Carpet of the BET Awards If I Want To" Williams, and "American Gangster" starring Denzel Washington, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Cuba Gooding Jr., Ruby Dee, T.I. Idris Elba, and rappers Common and RZA among others.

This year Black filmmaker Tyler Perry's "Why Did I Get Married" marks the third time Perry has opened a film at number 1. There's a reason why all of Black filmmaker Tyler Perry's films open up at Magic Johnson Theaters around the country. Just like

there's a reason why we show up there to see them. Perry is nobody's fool and he knows where his audience is. Which is not to say that Perry's films aren't in other theaters, but opening up at Magic's and at theaters in urban communities earned him \$21.3 million to lead the box-office race its opening weekend, finishing ahead of George Clooney's "Michael Clayton."

## WHEN BLACKS PLAY GAY CHARACTERS

You might not have caught that from viewing the trailer, which by the way has the same look and feel of a Tyler Perry film, but yes, Rockmond Dunbar's character is an African-American openly gay male.

And yes, this is the same Rockmond Dunbar who is best known for his leading role as Kenny Chadway on the critically-acclaimed television series "Soul Food" and as Benjamin Miles "C-Note" Franklin on the television series "Prison Break." He's also the same Rockmond Dunbar who starred in the independent feature film "Punks," a romantic comedy about four Black gay friends living in L.A., which co-starred Seth Gilliam of the hit HBO series QZ. He also made a guest appearance on the MTV Logo series hit "Noah's Arc."

There's no arguing that Blacks, despite all, have continued to excel in filmmaking on both sides of the cameras. Likewise, so has the inclusion of gay characters in films.



Maurice Jamal is a director/ writer/ producer, whose groundbreaking work can be seen in both film and television. He is the creative mind behind the landmark film *The Ski Trip* (MTV's LOGO Network). His second film, *Dirty Laundry* is an award winning family dramedy that has created an amazing buzz across the country and throughout the industry.

In 2001, with no job, no money and no apartment, he sold his furniture, broke his lease and brought a one-way ticket to New York City to pursue his dreams. A classically trained Shakespearean actor and accomplished slam poet, he made enough money to eat, by winning poetry competitions across NYC.



However, Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender characters on the silver screen are often far and few between much less in a "Black film." And no, closeted Black actors don't count or Tyler Perry as Madea, so please spare me your emails.

But to name a few films with Black openly gay or otherwise implied characters: "Blind Faith," "Brother To Brother," "But I'm a Cheerleader," "Get on the Bus," "Mannequin," "Midnight In the Garden of Good and Evil," "Norman... Is That You?," "Players Ball," "Punks," "Revenge of the Nerds," "Set It Off," "Six Degrees of Separation," "Ski Trip," "Smokin' Aces," "The 40 Year Old Virgin," "The Color Purple," "The Crying Game," "The Fifth Element," and "To Wong Foo." Isaiah Washington, Academy Award-nominees Will Smith and Queen Latifah, Chris Tucker, Academy Award winners Forest Whitaker and Whoopi Goldberg, and others have played these characters. And I think you'll agree by looking at the names listed, none of their careers have suffered from it.

## READING BETWEEN THE LINES

On the popular Internet website IMDB.com, America's Internet Movie Database that allows registered users to contribute to an online database of information about movies, actors, television shows, production crew personnel, and video games, I noticed that under keywords for the film "Dirty Laundry" listed was the following: Prodigal Son, Mother Son Relationship, Son, Partner, Gay, Brother, Family, New York City, Surprise, Southern U.S., Writer, Secret, Magazine, Sister, and Return.

I then looked up the keywords for "This Christ-

mas": African American, Interracial Relationship, Christmas, and Family.

"The Perfect Holiday": African American, Christmas, Divorcee, Mall Santa, and Mother Daughter Relationship.

"American Gangster": New York City, Urban Decay, Vietnam War, Black American, and Organized Crime.

"Belly": Inner City, Teenage Boy, Desert Eagle, Lasersight, and African American.

All I'm saying is that you have to read between the lines and ask why a film with a Black cast about a Black family doesn't include African American or Black in its key words on the world's most used online database for movies.

## HOW BLACK FILMS SUCCEED

In a Chicago Tribune article Brandon Gray, president of Box Office Mojo stated "You will get a picture like 'Why Did I Get Married' or 'Soul Food' or 'The Best Man,' and it will do well, and the industry will act shocked and surprised by it, as if it came out of the blue. But there is this sense that the audience isn't being as consistently served as it could be, because it is a lucrative market. These films tend to be relatively low budget, and they tend to post good grosses. None has been a real

blockbuster, but they don't need to be blockbusters. They have a built-in audience."

In the same article, "This Christmas" producer Will Packer explained, "A studio's traditional thinking was if you want to pull in an urban audience, you need to have a hip-hop element. Over the past 10 or 15 years, hip-hop was a new and emerging form that pulled in that core African-American audience as well as had that crossover potential. It was a business decision more than anything. What is happening now — and it's a great time as far as I'm concerned to be making films about the African-American experience — is Hollywood realizes that there is an audience out there that doesn't regularly see themselves on film."

Incidentally, acclaimed actress Loretta Devine who is also starring in "This Christmas," opened in theaters on November 21st and is playing at Magic's theaters.

Can Black Audiences Deal With Gay Characters?

Enter "Dirty Laundry," a film by all accounts that shares a part of the African-American story that is rarely ever even talked about, including in the campaign of the Black presidential candidate.

On the day of the film's opening, Teri J. Vaughn

A studio's traditional thinking was if you want to pull in an urban audience, you need to have a hip-hop element. —Will Packer



"The Perfect Holiday" tells the story of Nancy (Gabrielle Union), a divorced mother of three who is so busy raising her children that she's forgotten to take care of herself as well. With Christmas fast approaching, she decides to take her kids to the mall to meet Santa Claus, not knowing that her youngest daughter Emily (Khail Bryant) has sensed her mother's sadness and is determined to use her time with Santa to make her mom happy again. Just a few days prior, Emily heard her mom say that all she wanted for Christmas was a compliment from a man, so that's exactly what she tells Santa. Ironically, Santa, as it turns out, is office supply salesman and struggling songwriter Benjamin (Morris Chestnut), who ends up giving Nancy just what she wants for Christmas, and much, much more.



one of the film's co-stars went on Los Angeles radio station KJLH 102.3 FM to plug the film. Not once during Teri's interview about the film did she ever mention the word gay or anything eluding to Rockmond's character being gay.

"Dirty Laundry" is a film that features a Black openly gay character that's not on drugs, a prostitute, on the downlow, a hair dresser, choir director, or sashaying all over the screen. You know, those stereotypical representations of the gay community that seem to envelope most roles that call for a Black gay characters. Which is not to say that I'm hating on those types of brothas, but just like all lesbians aren't Cleo (Queen Latifah in "Set It Off"), all gay men aren't fabulous finger snapping hair dressers.

"Dirty Laundry" is rated PG-13. There's no sex or violence in the film. Let me repeat that. "Dirty Laundry" is a Black film with a gay character that doesn't feature sex or violence. It's truly a film that you can take your mamma and your mamma's mamma too and not have to worry.

During a time when national theatrical releases of "Black films" are far and few between, it seems like sabotage from the start to open a film like "Dirty Laundry" which has all of the right ingredients to do just as well as films like "This Christmas" and "Why Did I Get Married?," in one theater in two major markets. Couple that with the fact that the theater isn't even located in the cities "urban" area, but rather its gay friendly neighborhoods.

Which is weird to me because one look at the trailer and Teri's interview on a Black radio station and it's clear that this film is being marketed not towards gays, but Blacks. But when you read the film's synopsis online, it's the other way around. What gives?

Some have argued that if "Dirty Laundry" opened up at Magic Johnson Theaters that would discourage Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people from attending for fear of being retaliated against or worst yet, being identified as gay. One friend even gave his example of going to see "Higher Learning" in Harlem and remembering the scores of Blacks in the audience booing when two women kissed on screen.

There may be some merit to that argument given the fact that five Black men attending a movie together will take up ten seats, but not much. If we can embrace Tyler Perry's cross dressing to play his signature character Madea and Taraji P. Henson's lesbian assassin character in "Smokin' Aces," then surely we can get through 90 minutes of laughter, love, and storytelling with some of our most beloved Black actors. And to borrow a line from Magic Johnson, we can do it in our community.

## WHERE RACE, CLASS, AND FILM MEET

It's no secret who lives in West Hollywood and who lives in Chelsea. What is a secret is the methodology used to conclude that this is where "Dirty Laundry" should open.

At a time when gay issues and gay people are still seen as being white, and during a presidential campaigning season where sooner or later gays will become an issue, for all of the candidates, a film like "Dirty Laundry" has the potential to speak for and give life to a community people that continue to be ostracized and marginalized by both the African-American community and the gay community. And it wouldn't be the first time that comedy was used to approach a sensitive subject, R.I.P. Richard Pryor.

Black films do well with Black audiences. The proof is in the numbers, including "Waiting to Exhale" which brought in \$67 million while "Soul Food" cleared \$43.7 million, and "The Best Man" made \$34.1 million according to boxofficemojo.com. It's no secret that if "Dirty Laundry" doesn't clear the numbers set out for its opening weekend by the films financiers, you can kiss it goodbye for now and wait for its DVD release.



Made under Screen Gems banner, the 'This Christmas' is said to be 'The Family Stone' meets 'Waiting to Exhale.' Its story will center on the Whitfield family whose members come together for the holidays after living their own lives separately for four years.

"Dirty Laundry" is a Black film and it's a gay film. Why should a Black gay movie be limited to one theater in one neighborhood? The success of "Dirty Laundry" will be in the film's ability to reach multiple audiences, Black, white, gay, straight, female, male, etc. and one theater in a major market is going to do it.

The powers that be are doing the film and its audience a disservice by not making sure that it's easily accessible to all of its communities. It makes no sense to market the film via its trailer as a "Black" family comedy but then place the film in one theater clear on the other side of town to cater to a gay audience whom is probably figured not so willing to travel to Crenshaw and King Boulevards where the Magic Johnson Theater is located to see it.

Truth be told, most Black gays in L.A. do not live in West Hollywood, they live where Blacks have traditionally lived in Los Angeles, try Baldwin Hills, West Adams, Windsor Hills, South L.A., Compton, Inglewood, and Long Beach. But since gay is still synonymous with white and even though the film's central character is Black and gay, the

While we're happy to see a film in theaters that positively portrays African-Americans and includes an openly gay character that is Black, it's important that those race and class issues that often come into play with all things Black and gay don't get the better of "Dirty Laundry" on its opening weekend. This is precisely the type of film that Blacks need to see, I'd argue more so than many of films we champion that tend to glamorize guns, violence, and negative images of Blacks.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

"Dirty Laundry" by virtue of its cast ensemble is a Black film and should be shown in community that it depicts as well as in other theaters, like every other "Black" film before it. Anything less might be viewed as an attempt to set the film up for failure.

Regardless of whether the film is in theaters in urban communities or not, we still have to show up. We have to show up for the cast, the crew, and in hopes of having more independent Black films reach theatrical distribution. More importantly, we have to show the powers that be that there is an audience for a film with a Black gay character as the lead. Plainly put, we have to show up for us.

**About the Author:** At 30, Jasmyne Cannick is a critic and commentator based in Los Angeles who writes about the worlds of pop culture, race, class, and politics as played out in the African-American community.

She can be reached at [www.jasmyneconnick.com](http://www.jasmyneconnick.com) or [www.myspace.com/jasmyneconnick](http://www.myspace.com/jasmyneconnick).



# A PHOTO WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

The Louisville Courier-Journal has been accused by irate readers of "pushing the ol' homosexual agenda" for publishing this photo of two Louisville Cardinals basketball players totally being gay with each other. The paper's ombud says there will be no apology and asks what is so wrong about publishing photos of hot student athlete-on-student athlete action.

Well, apparently this photo crossed a line for some readers, some of whom demanded an apology and/or an explanation.

Some of the comments registered by angry, offended and/or baffled readers: "Awful," "an embarrassment," "horrible decision," "poor judgment," "distasteful," "a mystery" and "shame on you."

Aren't sports the province of the ubiquitous fanny pat? Aren't players in each other's

faces all the time during athletic matches? Yes and yes. So what's a little game-time hug in that universe?

There will be no apology. However, an explanation is in order because it encompasses what's involved in selecting photos to illustrate stories – and what can happen if context is lost on, or not apparent to, the news consumer, which is probably what happened in this instance.

The shot was printed because the picture showed the game's top scorers and it showed them in a moment of celebration, with one congratulating the other. So what were readers thinking? What is it about two athletes sharing a moment of physical and emotional closeness in the middle of a big game, in the middle of a basketball court, that puts some people off so much?

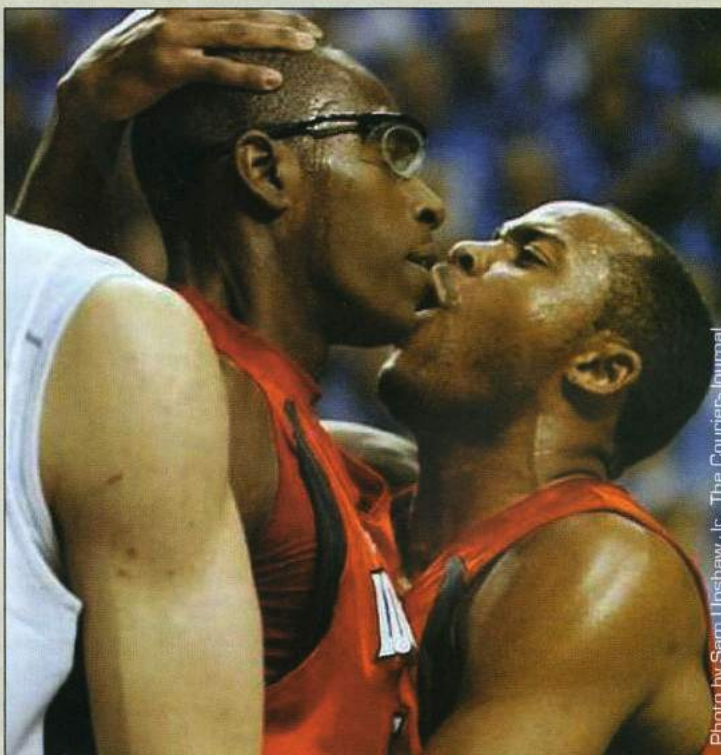


Photo by Sam Irshay, Jr. The Courier-Journal

"...what is so wrong about publishing photos of hot student athlete-on-student athlete action."



## YOU GO GIRL By LT

With today's shifting political correctness and strives for sexual acceptance there still seems to be a very prominent as well as blatant homophobia within the Hip-Hop and R&B music scene. While the industry is riddled with openly gay, as well as closeted same gender loving individuals it's still a proverbial verbal-breeding ground for tons of offensives homophobic rants that most, if not everyone from within the industry tolerates. That is until now.

R&B, and diva extraordinaire, Mary J. Blige is making headlines for her public stance on terminating anyone whom she employees who decide to make homophobic remarks while in her presence. According to popular internet music site, Contactmusic.com MJB is quoted as saying: 'I have heard a couple of guys say foul things, and those guys are not around me anymore. When they say things like that, I'm looking at them like, 'What makes you so scared? You don't know who you are?' I don't dislike them or anything; it just makes me wonder about them period... If you are not sure about that, then you aren't sure about a lot of things.' This is most certainly a step in the right direction for gays everywhere. Here you have a leading female entertainer, whom has a strong Christian background who is against anyone no matter how blatant or subtle who chooses to attack anyone based on their sexual orientation.

Mary J. Blige has had an incredible gay following every since the early 90's when

she stepped on the scene with the classic hit "Real Love". The first female artist on Uptown Records, Blige set the stage for what was unknowing to many of us to be a 15 plus years singing career. Though Mary was on top of her game in the early 90's it didn't come without pain and sacrifice. Her well publicized weight and drug problems seemed to knock MJB off her throne for a few years. Her public and tumultuous six-year affair with Jodeci frontman Cedric "K-Ci" Hailey which ended in 1997, was widely criticized. After a few career mishaps Mary seemingly pulled her together and has successfully used her second chance to send positive messages of love, pain, conviction, and strife through the power of her voice. And through it all her gay following remains in tact as she continues to support a community that has supported her through it all.

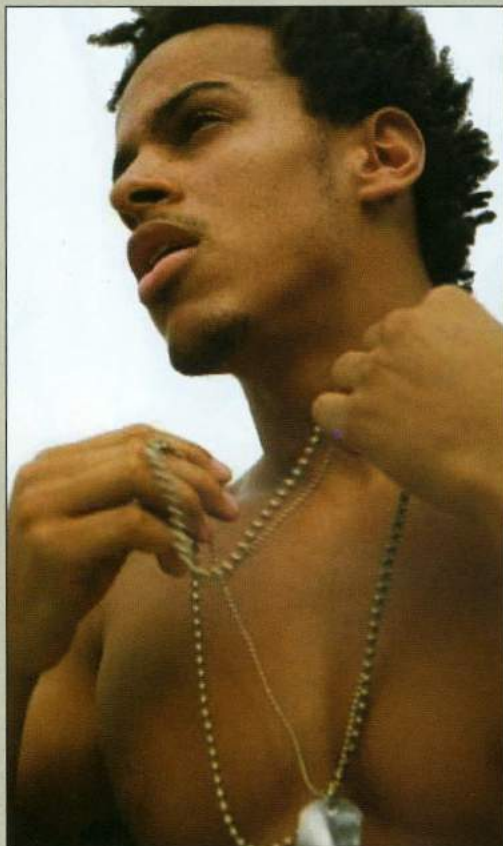
Mary J Blige is a leading example to all who want to be legendary in this business. Keep God and the gays first and everything will go right as rain.

up nothing, until last week when Homeland Security agents caught him on video tape eating at a fast food restaurant known as a local hang-out for Al Quada sleeper cells. The unassuming, mild-mannered tax accountant had just finished eating two monster



## MR. ORDINARY

Def Jam recording artist Steph Jones is currently putting the final touches on his upcoming debut album, "Mr. Ordinary", due in the first half of 2008. In the music world, anything is possible. What may be looked at as a small step could turn into a giant leap overnight. For the young boy, Steph Jones, life is only a crazy place and the craziest turn into stars. The self-proclaim M.O. City Alien represents Texas to the fullest and went from being a highly coveted model to being one of the acts signed to Ludacris's DTP recording label. With an appearance on the Grammy award winning artist's third compilation series Strength In Numbers - Steph Jones is already thinking towards the future. His solo debut album, Mr. Ordinary and single of the same name are getting ready to take off in record stores near you.



## LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX

By Jeremy Wheeler



If you've been missing nights on the couch eating chocolate, waiting for the latest update in Carrie's love life, Samantha's most recent sexual exploits and all the lurid details over Sunday brunch, have we got dish for you. The gals from 'Sex and the City' are making the move to the big screen - finally.

The hit cable series Sex and the City catwalks its way to the big screen in this feature-film continuation that fans

all over have been clamoring for. Sarah Jessica Parker returns once again as Carrie Bradshaw, the style maven journalist whose romantic exploits were the key focus of the show. Also reprising their roles are Kim Cattrall, Kristin Davis, and Cynthia Nixon, with the series' executive producer Michael Patrick King taking on writing and directing duties. Dreamgirls' Jennifer Hudson co-stars as Parker's assistant.



## QUEEN COMES OUT?

Queen Latifah is reportedly engaged to her personal trainer, who is a woman. Latifah, whose real name is Dana Owens, has reportedly said that she was tired of hiding her sexuality.

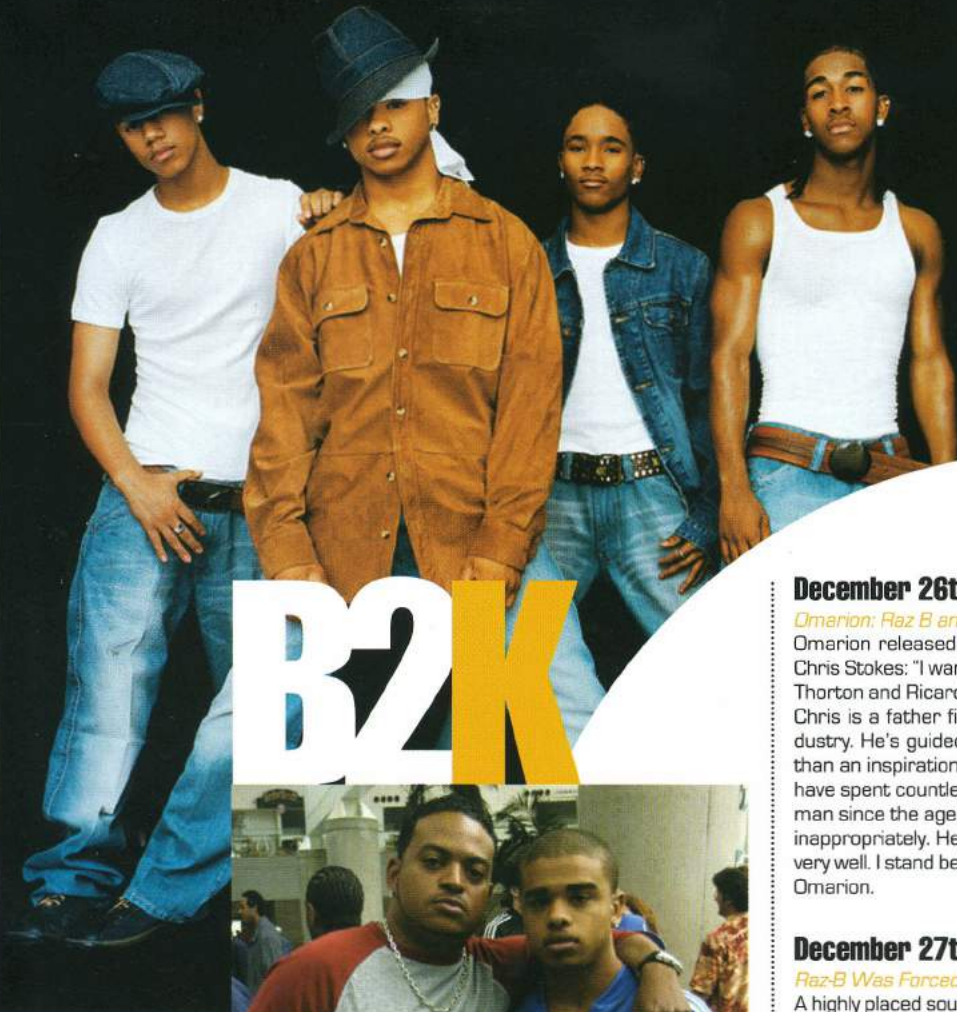
Latifah has been with her girlfriend, Jeannette Jenkins, for over 4 years. According to MediaTakeOut.com, the couple will publicly announce their engagement after Queen Latifah is finished promoting her latest film The Perfect Holiday.

up nothing, until last week when up nothing, until last week when Homeland Security agents caught him on video tape eating at a fast food restaurant known as a local hang-out for Al Qaeda sleeper cells. The unassuming, mild-mannered tax accountant had just finished eating two monster



# B2K SCANDAL

The Madness: Lies, Secrets... What are we to believe? Former boy group in the midst of sexual abuse allegations



# B2K



## December 24th, 2007

*"I didn't like it, my ass hurt"*

Chris Stokes was accused of molesting his cousins and was caught on video saying the following: "That was years ago, I'm not like that anymore, I don't do that...I just don't do that in my life anymore". Raz B on getting molested by Chris Stokes when he was 11 and 12 years-old: "I didn't like it, my ass hurt". Raz-B and his brother discuss the lies, secrets, and dirty deeds that took place during their relationship with the self-proclaimed "King of Black Boy Bands".

## December 25th, 2007

*Chris Fights Back*

Pedo Chris Stokes has issued this statement regarding the video that surfaced: "The accusations that Demario 'Raz B' Thornton and Ricardo Thornton have made are vehemently false and hold no merit. I have recently stopped financially supporting both individuals along with assisting them with their criminal and legal matters which leads me to believe they are resentful and looking to benefit financially from this. My family is my first priority and the reason why I have been so supportive of them. In bringing these false claims, they have not only slandered me, they have also put me in a position to ensure that the truth is known and I will take all legal routes to protect myself, my family and my four children," said Chris Stokes, CEO of The Ultimate Group.

He believes that Raz-B is bitter: "It's also quite ironic that these statements were made only 2 weeks after they were denied admittance by a venue for an event I hosted in Beverly Hills," added Stokes.

...I'm not gay. And I'm married. And I have four kids. I been with my wife for 16 years.  
-Chris Stokes

## December 26th, 2007

*Omarion: Raz B and His Brother Are Lying on Chris Stokes*

Omarion released the following statement today supporting Chris Stokes: "I want to be on the record as saying that 'Raz B' Thornton and Ricardo Thornton are lying regarding Chris Stokes. Chris is a father figure to myself, and many others in the industry. He's guided us, helped raised us and is nothing more than an inspiration and someone I respect to and look up to. I have spent countless hours, days, weeks and months with the man since the age of 5 and have never once seen him behave inappropriately. He's married to my aunt and I know this man very well. I stand behind him with no question whatsoever," said Omarion.

## December 27th, 2007

*Raz-B Was Forced By Compton Bloods to Fall Back*

A highly placed source exclusively snitches that Raz-B's brother just called MTV and told them Raz B was forced by some Compton bloods to read a script provided by Chris Stokes lawyer on video, denying his previous molestation claims.

Chris Stokes paid the bloods to shut Raz-B up but his brother, Ricky Romance, stands by his molestation claims against Stokes. Another source says Raz-B has "been missing for two days".

## December 27th, 2007

*Chris Stokes: I'm Not Gay, I'm Not a Molester*

Chris Stokes released a new statement to MTV News: "I'm happy that DeMario 'Raz-B' Thornton and Ricardo Thornton realized their mistakes and admitted to lying," he said. "I have always supported my family and have always been a stand-up person. I knew that the truth would eventually come to light..."

"I'm not gay. And I'm married. And I have four kids. I been with my wife for 16 years," Stokes told MTV in an exclusive interview. "And I'm not a child molester. So those are all false allegations. I'm gonna sue them. And I owe that to my wife and kids, period. It's ridiculous."







**December 27th, 2007**

*Raz B Reportedly Missing*

Raz B's brother, Ricky Romance, has confirmed that Raz-B is missing. Bossip was the first media outlet to report Raz-B was missing and he was forced into falling back on his molestation claims against Chris Stokes. Later that evening Raz B says he is fine and says anyone interested can get legit information about everything from mediabitz8.blogspot.com. This whole thing is getting too damn crazy now.

**December 27th, 2007**

*Ricardo Thornton speaks with radio station*

In an exclusive interview with a California radio station, Raz B's brother, Ricardo Thornton spoke on the controversy surrounding his brother's recent apology and rumored disappearance.

Ricardo (a.k.a Ricky Romance) says he hasn't seen or heard from his brother in 24 hours and he also claims that Stokes and his people have been calling his phone non stop asking him to do a video apology as well. Here are some snippets I wrote up from the interview..

I just want to let everybody know that I haven't talked to Raz B in 24 hours. He ain't called me, he ain't emailed me back and that's not like my brother...

...I'm pissed off and I'm hurt, Chris [Stokes], they been calling my phone, I got emails, I got video, I got proof that they been calling my phone begging us to do videos to apologize. I ain't apologizing about a DARN thing. Because it's people out there that has been touched, molested, and mislead and there is people out there that's hurting. You not supposed to back down from nothing like this man. Right now I need everybody to take a moment of silence and pray for my brother. He has been manipulated and he don't even know what the hell he just did right now. -Ricardo Thornton

Ricardo also goes on to say that he is going to speak out to all media outlets (i.e. OPRAH, LARRY KING, etc) on this matter and that no one was paid off for anything. Make sure to listen to the full interview above and keep locked to CL for more information on this highly controversial topic.

**December 28th, 2007**

*This Needs to Go to The District Attorney*

Bossip spoke with Raz B's brother, Ricky Romance, tonight and for the first time, he is

starting to talk about the criminal prosecution of Chris Stokes for molesting him and his brother. He also suggests for the first time, "all the artists at Stokes record label, TUG, were touched.

Ricky: But we were both molested by Chris Stokes. And he's sick. And I wish we would have just been family. You know, it hurts my feelings to have to talk to him and to have to go through all of these different situations and conversations just to try to get a resolution. There ain't no resolution. The resolution is the DA needs to pick up this case and it needs to be handled.

**January 03, 2008**

*Ricky Romance on Wendy Williams*

Ricky Romance phoned in to the Wendy Williams Radio Show to discuss the Chris Stokes allegations. In another twist in the problematic story, Romance now says he "shouldn't of put the videos out" and "I apologize to the world, I apologize to Chris." In addition, he talks of a Raz-B book deal and wouldn't even answer if the molestation actually took place saying, "Well, you saw the tape."

Romance, in his own way, is retracting, something he said he wouldn't do on his MySpace page last week. This is deeply disturbing considering Romance continues to rant that he is doing this "all for the kids". How is this for the kids? Spitting out serious allegations then retracting them? This interview is the polar opposite of Romance's scandalous interview with a California radio station on Thursday. What that teaches many who have been molested is that telling your truth is useless if you can't stand behind it. Also, with the right threats or dollar signs, anyone can be silenced. Getting the alleged pedophile locked up would be more "for the kids". No matter how "forced" the two are to retract, this YouTube salaciousness is not a great example of speaking your truth about child molestation. Hell, imagine if Tina Turner retracted that Ike beat her ass!

Wendy went on her usual rants, but sadly she continued to say, "Raz coming out with his homosexual allegations." Raz-B never came out with homosexual allegations; he came out about alleged child molestation, which is not homosexuality. Child molestation would get Chris Stokes in jail, not homosexuality. Every hetero needs to know, the story is not about homosexuality, if it was, every gay rumor in R&B/hip-hop would have this type of high-octane news. This is an excellent example of why I posed the question in my post Is Wendy Williams Homophobic? Toward the end of the interview, the legendary shock jock directly asked the pedophile question, which Romance wouldn't confirm. The conversation between Romance and Williams became increasingly volatile. After Romance hung up she called him "cauliflower booty."

**January 3rd, 2008**

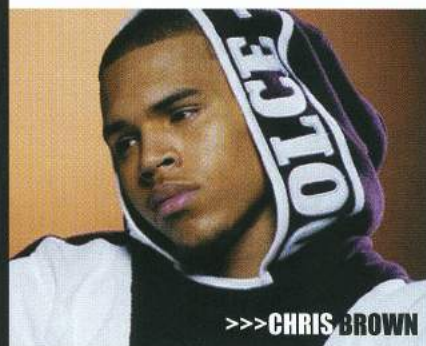
*Raz Breaks Bread With Chris*

Raz B and Ricky were caught dining at Mr. Chow in Los Angeles with their alleged molester Chris Stokes. Raz was heard saying: "We love each other, man!"

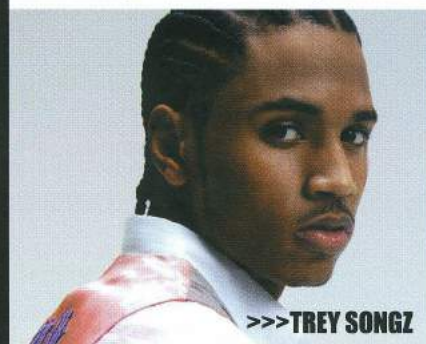
Damn. A hot plate of Chinese Food will make you forget your troubles. Chris should have treated them a long time ago.

## TOP OF THE CHARTS

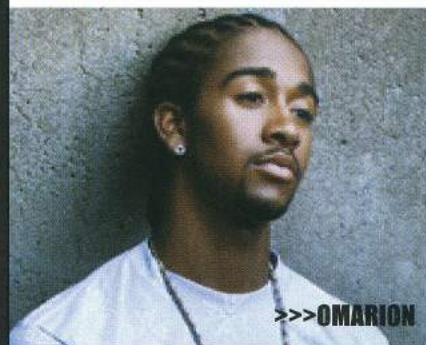
Clik Magazine takes a look at the hottest youngsters running the R&B scene. At only 19 years old, Chris Brown is our number 1 pick



>>>CHRIS BROWN



>>>TREY SONGZ



>>>OMARIION




>>>MARIO



>>>NE-YO



A portrait of B. Scott, a person with dark, curly hair, wearing a dark turtleneck, a patterned scarf, and a dark jacket. The background is a dark, textured wall with horizontal lines.

# B...THE FABULOUS B SCOTT

IF YOU DON'T KNOW HIM  
NOW...YOU WILL

Take me higher Lord! This spirited phrase would seem appropriate during Sunday morning praise and worship service, but when it comes out of the mouth of the fabulous video blogger and celebrity commentator B. Scott it takes on an entirely different meaning.

There's something new and exciting happening in the blogosphere and the man at the forefront of this movement is B.Scott of lovebscott.com. From the self-proclaimed queen of all media Perez Hilton to the hugely popular urban site Concrete Loop, they're all singing his praises and logging onto his website and You Tube channel ([youtube.com/lovebscott](http://youtube.com/lovebscott)) to get their daily dose of fierceness.

At first glance the androgynous features of B. Scott leaves many people wondering if he's male or female, with long curly black hair, perfectly arched eyebrows, flawless skin and a tight frame, he often grabs the attention of both sexes, including some straight men who insist they don't know he's biologically male.

In the present black gay culture where hip-hop has permeated its way into mainstream views and fashion, many gay men have rejected the flamboyant and effeminate images often associated with homosexuality, but not B.Scott, he revels in it.

With over 30,000 subscribers on You Tube, 45,000+ views on a single video and over 50,000 blog readers a day, B. Scott is not only changing minds about what is marketable in Hollywood but is being embraced by people.



...he often grabs the attention of both sexes, including some straight men who insist they don't know he's biologically male.

ple who wouldn't originally invite a flamboyant black gay man into their homes.

His fans are affectionately called "Love Muffins" and they love him just as much as he loves them. Just read any of the comments on his blog or myspace page ([myspace.com/lovebiscott](http://myspace.com/lovebiscott)) and it's evident that B. Scott is not just a personality but also a movement.

Once I was assigned to write this article, I knew I had to opt out of the usual telephone interview and make the trip to Los Angeles to meet B. Scott in person after watching his internet popularity increase to celebrity status, and I'm glad I did.

It was an unusually rainy day in Los Angeles as I arrived at Toast near The Grove to meet B. Scott for a late lunch. As I waited for his arrival I wondered if he would be the person so many of us had grown to love from his videos or if he would be the exact opposite. So often performers turn out to be a big disappointment to their fans after the camera stops rolling and they're required to make a human connection.

When B. Scott walks into a room it's almost impossible for him to go unnoticed, with a pair of fitted jeans, white v-neck tee, cropped military jacket, and his hair pulled back, he greets me with a warm smile and embraces me as if we are old friends.

For the next hour and a half I become immersed in the world of B. Scott and much to my surprise the person from the videos is the exact same person that's sitting across the table from me taking small sips of Tortilla soup, authentic, opinionated, and super confident.

A few years ago B. Scott was miles away from the life he lives today in L.A. and the attention he's receiving across the country. The son of an interracial couple born on a farm in rural North Carolina, B. Scott always knew he was different and his mother knew too. She would always tell him how special he was, an attempt to acknowledge his sexual orientation without discussing it according to B. Scott, but realizing the unique qualities that he possessed she vowed to do everything she could to ensure his dreams became a reality.





At the suggestion of his best friend Tshaka Muchiteni, B. Scott decided to test out his talent as a comedian in the fall of 2007 when he launched his channel on You Tube.

After seeing the success of Chris Crocker and his infamous video rant in defense of Britney Spears that garnered him national attention it seemed to be the perfect platform to introduce himself to the world. But don't be fooled, B. Scott is no Chris Crocker. Behind the high-pitched voice, over the top delivery, and occasional wigs there is substance. He's not afraid to take on the hypocrisy in the black church when it comes to dealing with homosexuality, arguing God made me gay (And what!) or the recent allegations of child molestation by singer Raz B towards ex-manager Chris Stokes. Nor has he allowed the progressive community of West Hollywood where he lives to shield him from the painful experiences faced by many young black gay men all over the country.

He's quick to tell you that he's been there too, he's been rejected and felt alone, but he always knew that God had a plan for his life, plans that were larger than anything that he could have ever imagined. And by B. Scott living his truth in front of thousands

...he's been rejected and felt alone, but he always knew that God had a plan for his life, plans that were larger than anything that he could have ever imagined.

of people who may not come in contact with black gay men he is all at once empowering, a case study, and controversial.

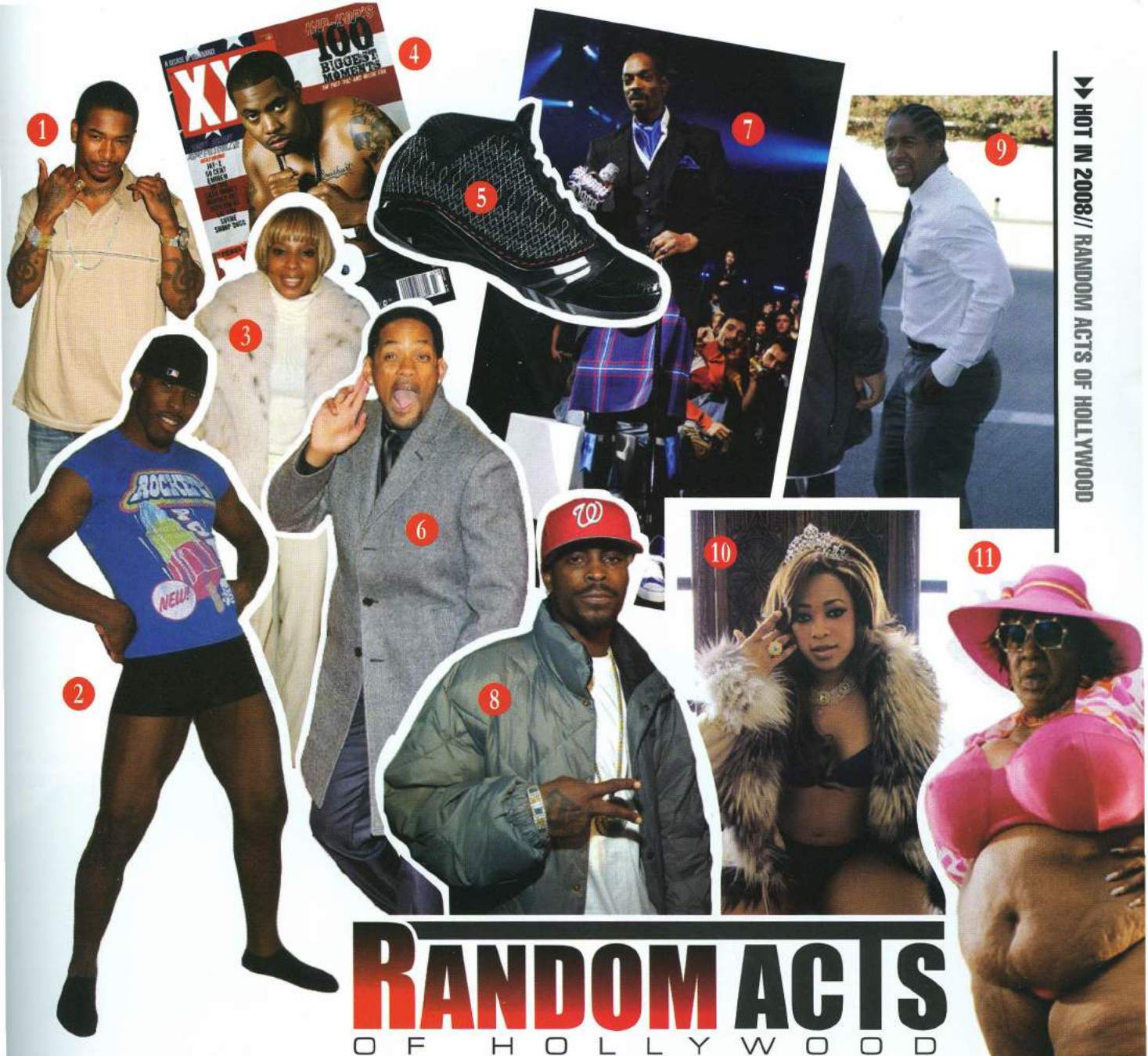
His effeminate nature and unapologetic attitude has upset many people within the black heterosexual and gay communities. Some believe he owns the stereotypical views society shares about gay men, but B. Scott couldn't be bothered. "It's a social construct, people are programmed to believe a man or a woman should only behave a certain way and when you're different and comfortable in your skin it makes people who have their own hang-ups about sexuality

and gender roles uncomfortable."

He frequently receives hate mail and invitations to accept Christ into his life (because a gay man couldn't possibly already have a relationship with God, right?), but the positive feedback always outweighs the negative and there's plenty of positive. Most significantly is B. Scott's much anticipated transition from You Tube to television. A half hour show is in development that will give fans more of what they've come to love about B. Scott but with a bigger budget, and he's assured me that it will be the ultimate B. Scott, witty, entertaining, and gay.

It looks as if B. Scott aimed low when he set out to take over Hollywood because he is certainly on his way to making a name for himself all over the world. I think God was listening when he asked him to take him higher because he's clearly doing just that.





# RANDOM ACTS

OF HOLLYWOOD

**1. CHINGY** wants to clear something up. He wants the world to know that he is NOT gay. He recently spoke with SOHH and mentions that some blogs call him gay for his "Daddy's Angels" tattoo around his neck.

**2. NFL Running Back KENNY IRONS** who plays for the Cincinnati Bengals was photographed showing off an interesting ensemble with the black footies to match.

**3. MARY's** groundbreaking style doesn't impress PETA. She is one of the celebrities in competition for PETA's "Worst Dressed" Award. Of course, Beyonce had the honor of making it on their hit list. Others on the list include Jamie Foxx, Jennifer Lopez, Lil Kim, Kobe Bryant, Naomi Campbell, Vanessa Williams, Whitney Houston.

**4. NAS** is on the March 2008 cover of XXL magazine for their 100th issue with his shirt off. Some nice eye-candy there for the ladies, not too skinny, but not too buff. Even more than a topless Nasir, we interested in what more he has to say on his "Nigger" project.

**5. MICHAEL JORDAN** has decided to do the world a favor and create environmentally friendly Jordans. The limited edition pairs will only be available in 23 stores at a cost of \$230. Afterwards, they will hit the stores at \$185. Sure it's great for the environment, but what about our wallets?

**6.** Would you recruit for a church if you weren't a member? **WILL SMITH** has joined the ranks of Hollywood power players actively recruiting for the Church of Scientology. Smith, who is best buddies with Scientology booster Tom Cruise, has never confirmed that he joined the church. But he told "Access Hollywood" last month: "I was introduced to it by Tom, and I'm a student of world religion. I was raised in a Baptist household. I went to a Catholic school, but the ideas of the Bible are 98% the same ideas of Scientology, 98% the same ideas of Hinduism and Buddhism."

**7. SNOOP's** becoming a brand of his own. The rapper plans to open a pet store and grocery store chain known as "Snoopermarkets" in 2008. This should be interesting. We're sure that the produce section will be stocked with plenty of fresh "herbs".

**8.** Atlanta Falcons quarterback **MICHAEL VICK** could be getting out of federal prison much earlier than anticipated after applying for a prison-monitored drug rehabilitation program and evidently being moved into the program in Leavenworth, Kan. Under the program, Vick could be released after serving only 12 months of the 23-month sentence Vick was given Dec. 10 in Richmond, Va. The program could have Vick out of prison by the end of this year and perhaps back in the NFL by the 2009 season. As it stands, Vick's 23-month prison term could translate to a release in the summer of 2009, putting his attempts at a return to the NFL for that season in jeopardy. But if Vick were to be released in late 2008 or early 2009, his opportunity to return to the league after missing only two seasons would be boosted significantly. Members of Vick's camp continue to hope that NFL commissioner Roger Goodell will decline to tack on a lengthy suspension following Vick's release from prison.

**9. OMARION** is wearing a fetching ensemble that nicely shows off his assets. He's working with more than some of these females out here.

**10.** Diamond Princess **TRINA** is back with her freaky antics: Lick it, stick it, and something about collard greens. Here is her newest single "Look Back At Me" feat. Killer Mike.

**11. NORBIT's** Oscar Buzz. You read that correctly. "Norbit" is in the runnings for an Oscar. The film is being considered for a nomination in Best Makeup. We always knew Eddie would turn heads in drag.



# ARI'S CRUSADE

MULTI-FACETED R&B/POP VOCALIST  
ARI GOLD REWRITES THE GAME

By Anare V. Holmes



"Ari wrote a very personal album and his lyrics attest to the battles that he's been through...  
he writes from the heart." —Clive Davis, founder of Arista and J Records.

**IT'S INCONCEIVABLE. CONVENTIONAL THINKING SAYS IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.**

Yet, Ari Gold is on a mission to prove an openly gay male R&B/Pop vocalist can be palatable to mainstream audiences without compromising the message in his music—lyrics that not only talk about love, but also affirm and delve into gay themes and social mores.

"There are times when I feel it's me against the world," says vocalist Ari Gold of his decision to make music on his own terms. "I'm not trying to be anything other than who I am and what I hope people respond to is the honesty and realness found in my work."

With the release of his third disc *Transport Systems*, which hit the market during 2007's fourth quarter, Gold emerges as a pioneering force in contemporary R&B/pop music.

And he's receiving the acclaim and accolades to show for it.

Gold has acquired favorable reviews in music trades like *Billboard* and *HITS* while securing style features in *VIBE*, *W*, *V* and the more traditional gay press outlets that include *The Advocate*, *OUT*, *Genre* and *Instinct* magazines. But of special note is

that Gold's artistry has peaked the interest of an industry giant.

"Ari wrote a very personal album and his lyrics attest to the battles that he's been through," says veteran record executive Clive Davis, founder of Arista and J Records. "He writes from the heart."

Gold also writes with a clear purpose and has enlisted the support from a diverse group of collaborators for *Transport Systems* that includes jazzman Dave Koz, hip-hop artist Mr. Man, Grammy Award-winning mixer/producer Bob Rosa and rising star Sasha Allen of VH-1's *Born to Diva*.

"What I was striving to do with *Transport* was move forward and beyond my own pain. Then I began to think about how that movement was relevant to the gay community in general," he says. "How we as a gay community can feel free to move past our own struggles to achieve human rights, to be seen in more complex and multifaceted ways.... How *Transport* could be a call to move past our internalized shame."

One of the areas Gold has worked through are issues he once had with his own family.

"I've gone from thinking I would never talk to my parents again to actually having a great relationship with them because we have all grown together," he says citing the challenges of becoming a family breadwinner at a relatively young, coming to terms with his sexuality in the context of an orthodox Jewish culture and the common growing pains many other families experience as adolescent rebellion enters the equation. "Through therapy and maturity, I've been able to sort through a lot of my own insecurities and baggage, but it's a never ending process and that's what *Transport* is all about."

The empowering concept is getting traction and while Gold understands the work of transformation doesn't happen overnight and is a continuous journey, he's enjoying how audiences are connecting to the project.

The disc's lead single "Where the Music Takes You" won top honors in the 2007 USA Songwriting Competition as a follow-up single, "Love Wasn't Build In A Day" featuring Dave Koz, captured the Independent Music Award's Best R&B song.

What is refreshing about Gold is that while he is not the only openly gay singer to stir media buzz—Sylvester, RuPaul and Meshell Ndegeocello came before—his masculine





## ARI GOLD CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

**[1]** 2007 USA Song-writer Competition Overall Grand Prize Winner, "Where the Music Takes You"

**[2]** 2007 Independent Music Award Winner R&B song, "Love Wasn't Built in A Day"

**[3]** 2007 OUT100 Most Influential People in Gay Culture, OUT Magazine

.....

### SO YOU WANT TO BE A STAR!

1. Learn your craft and just do it (write your songs, sing whenever you can)

2. Be an original

3. Attend music conferences and join trade organizations to network among other industry professionals:

ASCAP—American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers;

[www.ascap.com](http://www.ascap.com)

BMI—Broadcast Music, Inc.

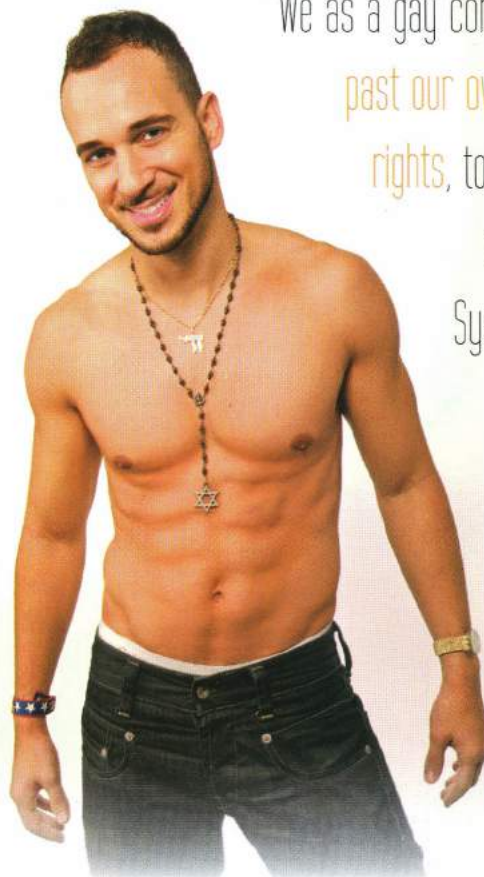
[www.bmi.com](http://www.bmi.com)

NARAS—National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences

[www.grammy.com](http://www.grammy.com)

OutMusic—Outmusic is a network of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered musicians and supporters

[www.outmusic.com](http://www.outmusic.com)



"We as a gay community can feel free to move past our own struggles to achieve human rights, to be seen in more complex and multifaceted ways.... [Transport Systems] could be a call to move past our internalized shame."

good looks and raw sex appeal are all incorporated into an effective marketing strategy that is a bit atypical of gay artists.

Of course Gold has his share of critics who feel he's not the greatest live performer and question just how plausible a crossover to Black radio is for him, yet he takes it all in stride.

"I'm aware not everybody is ready to hear what I may have to say and that's okay," he says as he deflects the venom a few haters and dream-snatchers spew along his way. "I've heard over and over again that I can't write about certain subjects or do this because I'm gay and that I can't do something because I'm too ethnic looking and so on and so forth, but I don't feed into that negativity."

In a time where trite lyrical content and predictable production sounds are more commonplace than originality and substance, what many may not know about Gold is that he's far from an overnight sensation.

He's been tested and tried having earned his stripes as a four star general in a new musical movement where ambition does not trump artistic integrity.

Discovered while singing at his brother's bar mitzvah, the Jewish, Bronx, New York native who traces his ancestry back to Israel, Poland and Russia, began performing professionally at age 6. After landing his first gig as a lead actor and singer in the platinum CBS Children's recording Pot Belly Bear: Song and Stories, Gold built a formidable reputation as a successful child entertainer pitching products in more than 400 jingles, doing cartoon voice-over work and racking up theatrical performances all while juggling studies at Yeshiva High School in Manhattan.

"Why I believe an openly gay artist can crossover and achieve mainstream success is because at a relatively young age I came to understand the world is made up of a combination of other small worlds,"



Ari has a beautiful voice, captivating talent and is a wonderful songwriter. Those qualities are always relevant."

—RuPaul

says the New York University graduate. "Here I was in an orthodox Jewish setting at Yeshiva, which is not in the mainstream, working and making more money than my parents as a child performer in show business—which, again, is a very unique experience—but it gave me an indication of the possibilities that exist in life. There are many experiences that can coexist at the same time."

Reared in a close-knit family where arts and culture were valued in the home, Gold is the youngest of three boys who are also entertainers. Although his parents would hold down full-time

jobs as a public school educator and psychologist: his father, Sid Gold, directed children's theater programs around the city and actually founded a musical comedy society. His mother, Lynn, would teach Israeli folk and belly dancing during summers at a few of the Catskills resorts.

Ari's oldest brother Steven Gold is now a composer and television music producer for Saturday Night Live while brother Elon is an actor and stand up comedian who has scored acting credits alongside Pamela Anderson on the short-lived series *Stacked* and appeared with actress Jean Smart in the *In-Laws*.

"Ari got started in the business first and he's put a lot of blood, sweat and tears into his careers," says Lynn Gold, who is also a graduate of the American Academy of the Dramatic Arts. "He always had this strong inner strength and followed his own path. You know as an artist and even being Jewish, he is a truth-seeker and for Ari this journey is like his crusade. He is expressing what is truly inside of him and that is the definition of a true artist."

Not limited to just singing, Ari Gold continues to keep his acting chops fresh.

For fun, when RuPaul asked him to make a cameo appearance in the campy movie *Starrbooty* in a pair of chaps exposing his derriere for all to see, Gold answered the call.

"He is pure joy," says RuPaul. "As gorgeous as Ari is, he is not conceited in the least bit and he has a really great sense of humor about himself and doesn't take himself too seriously. Today's music industry is different from what it was yesterday and what it will be tomorrow. Ari has a beautiful voice, captivating talent and is a wonderful songwriter. Those qualities are always relevant."



# IN IN 2008

## A. Rolled-up pants

Whether you love or hate Thom Browne and his high-water trousers, the man's influence shows no sign of receding...yet. The good news about the rolled-up pant we saw all over the spring runways? That extra hidden length of fabric may come in handy when the tides of fashion do eventually turn. In other words, here's the perfect way to both show a little ankle and cover your ass.



B.



C.

A.



## B. Broken-in jeans

In the wake of the Great Whisker Epidemic of the late nineties, the pendulum had to swing back to raw, undistressed denim. Well, it's now time to embrace the fact that the A.P.C.s you bought three years ago are showing some signs of wear (and, if you still haven't washed 'em, probably moving around on their own, too). Don't fear the broken-in look—especially if you're the one who did the breaking in.

## C. The button-down-collar polo

Designers are always trying to put a twist on the traditional polo. The last few seasons have seen everything from multicolored stripes to contrast colors to limited-edition artist collaborations. And which of God's creatures hasn't been captured and displayed on the left breast of a piqué shirt? Fortunately, this season's most prevalent detail—the button-down collar—has something those other “improvements” lacked: subtlety.



## E. The traditional briefcase

A grown man's do requires a grown man's bag. News flash: That outdoorsy green canvas number you're currently lugging has yet to persuade anyone that you routinely catch your dinner with a crossbow.

## F. Colored shoes

Colored shoes used to be the province of men who wore equally bright noses and performed in large tents, but with early adopters like man-about-London Dan Macmillan joining the ranks of the vibrantly shod, it may be time to add a pair to your act, too.



## BAG MEN

**PRADA**—Tote around what you need in the simply constructed Prada messenger bag. Black nylon dual pocket messenger bag. **\$655.00**

**GUCCI**—With its unique exterior and signature logo crest, this messenger bag is undeniably Gucci. Black coated twill flap messenger bag.

**COLE HAAN**—With enough room to store your daily necessities, any man would appreciate a sleek Cole Haan leather messenger bag. Black leather flap messenger bag. **\$595.00**

**CHRISTIAN DIOR**—Christian Dior designs accessories for the stylish, urban man always on the go. **\$1,125.00**



CHRISTIAN DIOR



GUCCI



PRADA



COLE HAN



# COMING SOON TO THEATERS

THE HOTTEST MOVIES THIS MONTH



## STEP UP 2 THE STREETS (Touchstone Pictures)

February 14, 2008

A follow-up to the smash hit "Step Up," a rebellious street dancer Andie (Briana Evigan) lands at the elite Maryland School of the Arts, she finds herself fighting to fit in while also trying to hold onto her old life. When she joins forces with the school's hottest dancer Chase (Robert Hoffman) to form a crew of classmate outcasts to compete in Baltimore's underground dance battle The Streets, she ultimately finds a way to live her dream while building a bridge between her two separate worlds.

## WELCOME HOME ROSCOE JENKINS (Universal Pictures)

February 8, 2008



Leading an all-star comedy cast, Martin Lawrence is talk-show sensation RJ Stevens, who left behind his modest Southern upbringing and family name to transform into a self-help guru dispensing his "Team of Me" philosophy to millions of adoring fans. With a reality-TV-star fiancée and money to burn, there's no piece of the Hollywood dream RJ hasn't achieved.

After his parents request that he come home for their 50th wedding anniversary, the TV host packs up his 10-year-old son and diva bride-to-

be and heads back to Georgia. It's a chance to prove to his family that he's no longer the awkward kid they relentlessly picked on. At least, that's the plan.

But when his crazy, lovable family calls him on his big-city attitude and challenges him at every turn, RJ is forced to take a hard look at the man he's become. He may be a superstar in L.A., but he's just one of the guys in Dry Springs as folks say "Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins."



## JUMPER (20th Century Fox)

February 14, 2008

A genetic anomaly allows a young man to teleport himself anywhere. He discovers this gift has existed for centuries and finds himself in a war that has been raging for thousands of years between "Jumpers" and those who have sworn to kill them. Starring: Hayden Christensen, Samuel L. Jackson, Rachel Bilson, Jamie Bell, Max Thieriot, Shawn Roberts, AnnaSophia Robb



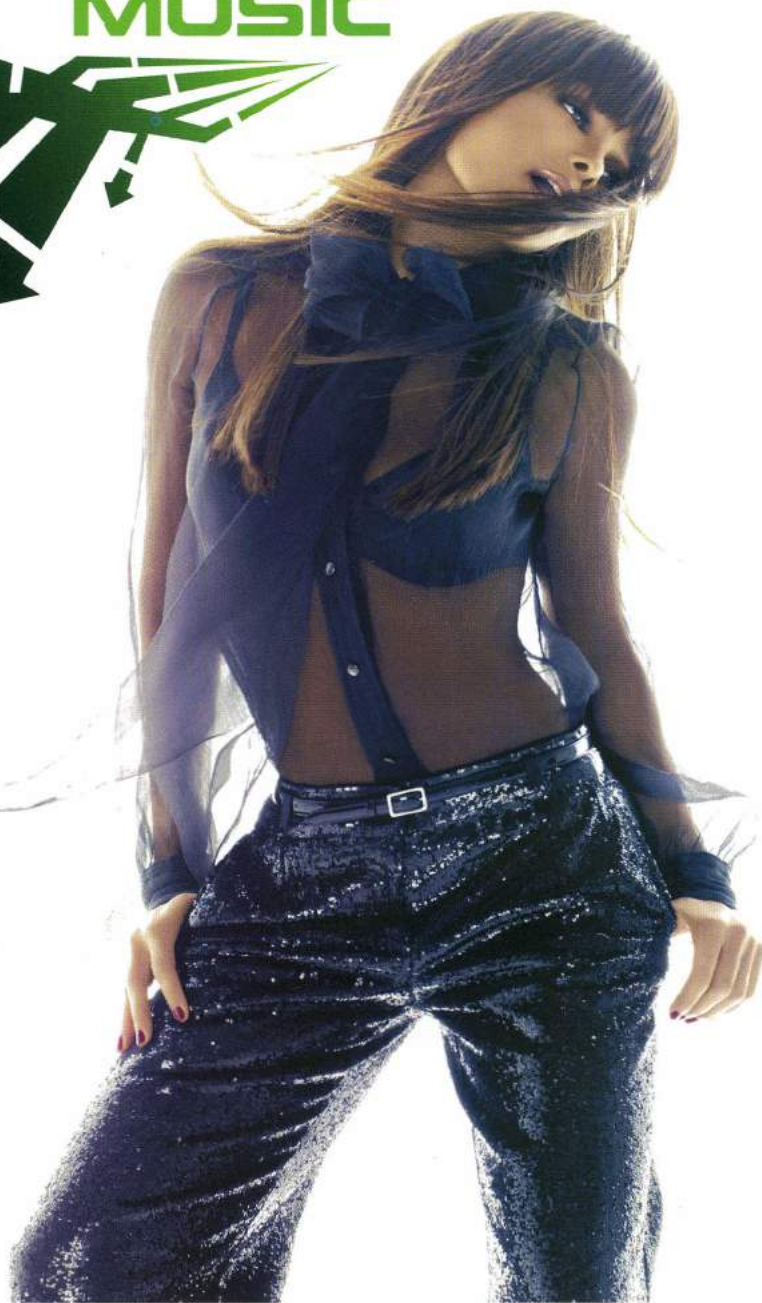
## THE EYE (Lionsgate)

February 1, 2008

Sydney Wells (Jessica Alba) is an accomplished concert violinist who has been blind since a childhood tragedy. She undergoes a double corneal transplant, a surgery she has waited her whole life to have, and her sight is restored. But Sydney's happiness is short-lived as unexplainable shadowy and frightening images start to haunt her. Are they a passing aftermath of her surgery, Sydney's mind adjusting to sight, a product of her imagination, or something horrifyingly real? As Sydney's family and friends begin to doubt her sanity, Sydney is soon convinced that her anonymous eye donor has somehow opened the door to a terrifying world only she can now see.



## DISCIPLINE JANET JACKSON



In yet another attempt at a career revival, Janet Jackson is gearing up to release her new album, 'Discipline,' on February 26. Unfortunately — or fortunately, depending on who you ask — the pop superstar's new single has been leaked onto the internet.

The hot dance track, entitled 'Feedback,' was produced by Rodney "Darkchild" Jerkins. Jer-

maine Dupri, Ne-Yo, Stargate, Tricky Stewart, and 'Umbrella' songwriter The-Dream also lend a hand, production-wise, on the new project.

With lyrics like "heavy like a first day period," Miss Jackson's upcoming project is sure to be ... uh ... down and dirty, to say the least.



● ● ● ● ●  
**Erykah Badu** *Nu AmErykah*  
 [Universal/ Motown]

Erykah Badu, to me, as remained consistent throughout the years. From Baduizm, to Mama's Gun, to Worldwide Underground, there hasn't been an Erykah album that I haven't been able to listen to from top to bottom. The release of "Honey," the newest single, also marks Badu's 10th year in the music industry. To celebrate, the gifted trendsetter prepares the release of her much anticipated new album on her birthday, February 26th.



● ● ● ● ●  
**Lenny Kravitz**  
*It's Time for a Love Revolution*  
 [Virgin]

Despite an 18-year career—one that's rendered four Grammys and platinum certification seven times over—Kravitz is as common as ever. He speaks in a smooth rhythm, his voice miles away, but Kravitz's message permeates the distance. It's a message that he's sent before, and one he's determined to send again. One needn't look further than the title of his forthcoming album to decipher: 'It's Time for a Love Revolution,' set to be released on February 5, 2008.

## BELIEVE THE HYPE

**25th Anniversary Edition Of Michael Jackson's Thriller**

*The World's Biggest Selling Album Of All Time* — Available February 12, 2008

The newly expanded version of Thriller premieres six tracks previously unreleased in any form: "Beat It 2008" with Fergie; a new Kanye West remix of "Billie Jean"; a new 2008 version of "Wanna Be Startin' Somethin'" with Akon; will.i.am remixes of "The Girl Is Mine" and "P.Y.T."; and "For All Time," a rare unreleased cut from the original Thriller recording sessions, newly mixed and mastered by Michael Jackson.





# whitney houston:

## WILL SHE MAKE THE ULTIMATE COMEBACK?

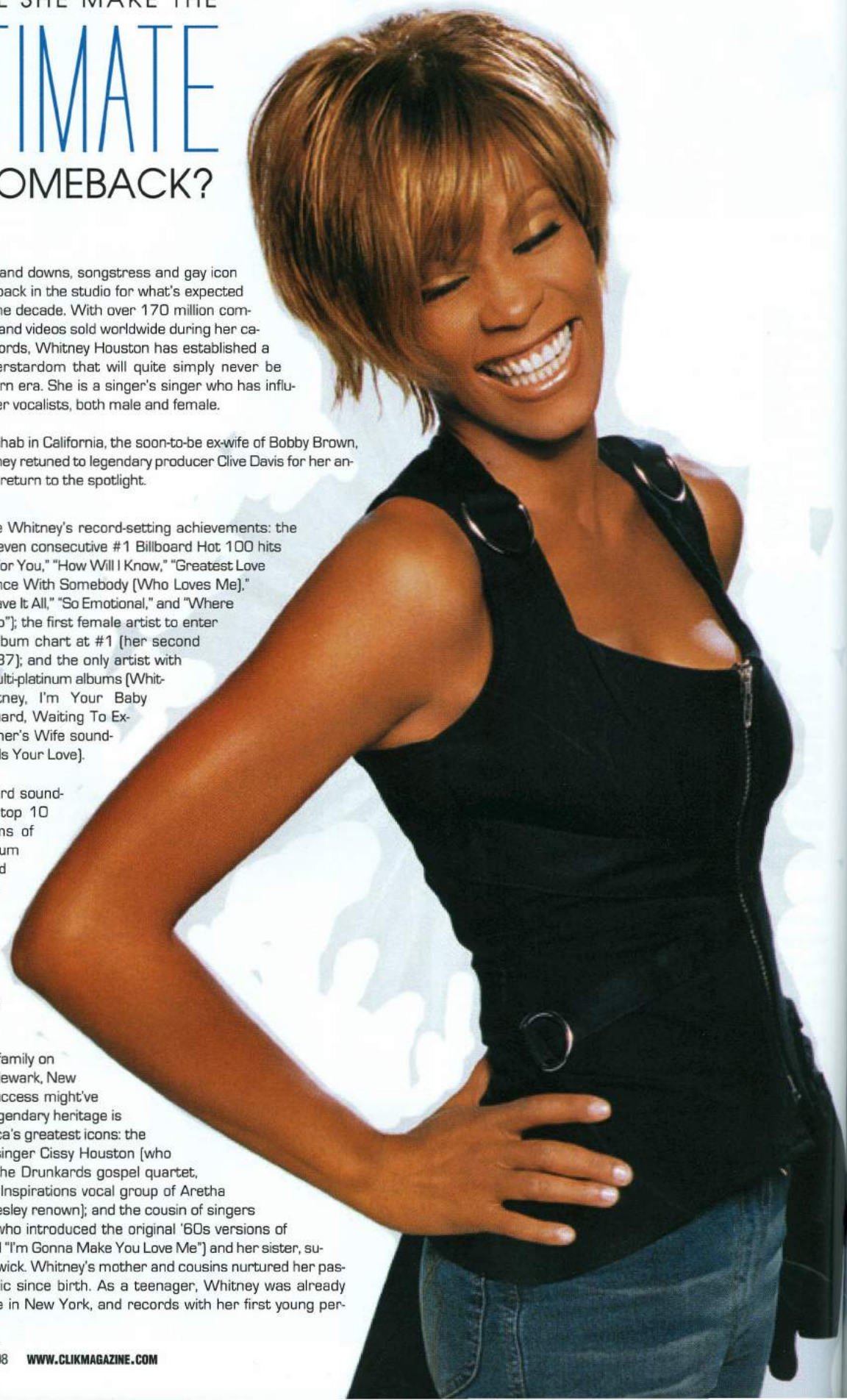
After a world of ups and downs, songstress and gay icon Whitney Houston is back in the studio for what's expected to be the return of the decade. With over 170 million combined album, singles and videos sold worldwide during her career with Arista Records, Whitney Houston has established a benchmark for superstardom that will quite simply never be eclipsed in the modern era. She is a singer's singer who has influenced countless other vocalists, both male and female.

Following a year of rehab in California, the soon-to-be ex-wife of Bobby Brown, the 41 year-old Whitney returned to legendary producer Clive Davis for her anticipated triumphant return to the spotlight.

Music historians cite Whitney's record-setting achievements: the only artist to chart seven consecutive #1 Billboard Hot 100 hits ("Saving All My Love For You," "How Will I Know," "Greatest Love Of All," "I Wanna Dance With Somebody [Who Loves Me]," "Didn't We Almost Have It All," "So Emotional," and "Where Do Broken Hearts Go"); the first female artist to enter the Billboard 200 album chart at #1 (her second album, *Whitney*, 1987); and the only artist with seven consecutive multi-platinum albums (*Whitney Houston*, *Whitney*, *I'm Your Baby Tonight*, *The Bodyguard*, *Waiting To Exhale*, and *The Preacher's Wife* soundtrack, and *My Love Is Your Love*).

In fact, *The Bodyguard* soundtrack is one of the top 10 biggest-selling albums of all-time (at 17x-platinum in the U.S. alone), and Whitney's career-defining version of Dolly Parton's "I Will Always Love You" is the biggest-selling U.S. single of all-time (at 4x-platinum).

Born into a musical family on August 9, 1963, in Newark, New Jersey, Whitney's success might've been foretold. Her legendary heritage is as familiar as America's greatest icons: the daughter of famed singer Cissy Houston (who made her name in the Drunkards gospel quartet, and later the Sweet Inspirations vocal group of Aretha Franklin and Elvis Presley renown); and the cousin of singers Dee Dee Warwick (who introduced the original '60s versions of "You're No Good" and "I'm Gonna Make You Love Me") and her sister, superstar Dionne Warwick. Whitney's mother and cousins nurtured her passion for gospel music since birth. As a teenager, Whitney was already singing on the scene in New York, and records with her first young per-





# FLASHBACK

performances in the '70s and early '80s' album credits with such eclectic acts as Michael Zager, Chaka Khan, Herbie Mann, the Neville Brothers, Bill Laswell's Material, and others' are much sought-after collectors items.

In 1983, near the end of Arista's first mega-successful decade of operation, Clive Davis was taken to a New York nightclub where Whitney was performing' and signed her on the spot. Two years went into the making of her debut album, but the results were worth it. The self-titled Whitney Houston (March 1985) launched Arista's second decade, and yielded a string of hits including "You Give Good Love" and three consecutive #1 singles, the Grammy-winning "Saving All My

tempo dance tracks. With back-to-back #1 hits for the title tune and "All the Man That I Need," followed by "Miracle" and "My Name Is Not Susan," sales records were set once again, as the album became an international multi-platinum best-seller, to the tune of 8 million copies worldwide.

After establishing her screen appeal on her well-received video clips' she dominated MTV's rotations during its first decade on the air, Whitney finally made her movie debut in *The Bodyguard* (November 1992), in which she co-starred with Oscar-winning actor/director Kevin Costner. The film not only broke box office records worldwide but was ultimately responsible for the

featured three new tracks from Whitney: the #1 Pop/#1 R&B "Exhale (Shoop Shoop)"; the top 10 Pop and R&B follow-up "Count On Me" (a duet with CeCe Winans), co-written by Whitney and Babyface; and "Why Does It Hurt So Bad." The album spent five weeks at #1, was certified 7x-platinum in the U.S., and has sold nearly twice that worldwide to date.

Whitney's third motion picture, *The Preacher's Wife* (Buena Vista, December 1996), also starring Denzel Washington and Courtney B. Vance, and directed by Penny Marshall, was based on the 1947 classic, *The Bishop's Wife* (with Cary Grant and Loretta Young). The gospel-soaked Arista soundtrack, Whitney's lifelong dream, became the biggest-selling gospel album in Billboard chart history, 3x-platinum in the U.S. alone. Collaborations with an extraordinary roster of artists and producers (among them Grammy and Dove Award winner Mervyn Warren of *Sister Act I* and *Sister Act II* fame) resulted in a unique album. Whitney sang lead vocals on 14 of the album's 15 tracks, including the beautiful first single "I Believe In You And Me," "Step By Step" (written by Annie Lennox), and two songs produced by Grammy award winner Babyface. Cissy turned the familiar 23rd Psalm into a spiritually touching song, "The Lord Is My Shepherd"; while other luminaries on the album included Shirley Caesar and the Georgia Mass Choir.

Whitney added the medium of made-for-television movies to her list of accomplishments when "The Wonderful World of Disney" aired the musical Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* in November 1997. The special starred Whitney as the Fairy Godmother, Brandy as Cinderella, Bernadette Peters as the wicked stepmother, Whoopi Goldberg as the queen, and an all-star multicultural cast. The program drew a U.S. audience of more than 60 million viewers, and gave the ABC network its highest Sunday night rating in over a decade. Whitney and her company, BrownHouse Productions, served as executive producers on the project, which garnered seven Emmy nominations including Outstanding Variety, Musical or Comedy. The home video version shattered previous records to become the best-selling video ever of a made-for-television movie.

Following a year of rehab in California, 41 year-old Whitney retuned to legendary producer Clive Davis for her anticipated triumphant return to the spotlight.

Love For You," "How Will I Know," and "The Greatest Love of All," which has become a veritable anthem. Not only did the album establish her as an important new recording artist, but it went on to sell over 12 million copies in the U.S., plus many millions more abroad. This LP set the record as the biggest selling debut album by a solo artist.

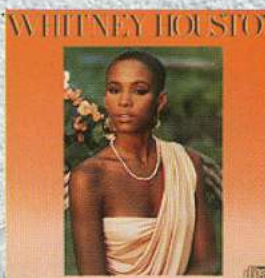
With the highly anticipated release of her second album *Whitney* (June 1987), she made history as the first female artist to enter the Billboard album charts at #1. The new album soared past 9x-platinum on the strength of four #1 chart-toppers, the Grammy-winning "I Wanna Dance With Somebody (Who Loves Me)," "Didn't We Almost Have It All," "So Emotional," and "Where Do Broken Hearts Go." This established Whitney as the only artist ever to have seven consecutive #1 hits, surpassing a record previously set by the Beatles and the Bee Gees.

Whitney's third best-selling album *I'm Your Baby Tonight* (November 1990), displayed her versatility on a new batch of tough rhythmic grooves, soulful ballads and up-

biggest selling motion picture soundtrack album of all time, voted the Grammy-winning Album Of The Year.

"I Will Always Love You," the first single release, became the biggest selling commercial single in history, and reaped Grammys for Record Of The Year and Best Female Pop Vocal. Three other singles from the album, "I'm Every Woman," "I Have Nothing," and "Run To You," were also major international hits for Whitney. *The Bodyguard* soundtrack album, featuring six Whitney Houston songs in all, has sold more than 42 million copies worldwide. At 17-times platinum in the U.S., it is the biggest selling motion picture soundtrack album in history, ahead of *Saturday Night Fever*, *Forrest Gump*, *Titanic*, and so on.

Film work continued with *Waiting To Exhale* (which opened December 1995, proceeded by the soundtrack album in November). The critically acclaimed film, starring Whitney with Angela Bassett, Loretta Devine and Lela Rochon, and directed by Forrest Whitaker, went on to gross over \$70 million (in '90s dollars). The soundtrack for *Waiting To Exhale*



## WHITNEY HOUSTON

The legend of Whitney Houston began with this self-titled album. It marked her shift away from the experimental songs she did with the group Material and a move into heavily produced, very slick urban contemporary and adult pop. (1985)



## WHITNEY

Houston became an international star with this album. It sold more than ten million copies around the world, yielded a string of number one hit singles across the board like "I Wanna Dance With Somebody" and "Love Will Save the Day," and established Houston as the era's top female star. (1987)



## I'M YOUR BABY TONIGHT

This was somewhat of a disappointing release, with very few memorable songs. While she attempts to make a larger foray into dance music, she fails to make the crossover impact of artists such as Mariah Carey and Taylor Dayne. The two high points she does reach on this album come in the form of ballads. (1990)





### THE BODYGUARD

This album won the 1994 Grammy Award for "Record Of The Year." "I Will Always Love You" won 1994 Grammys for "Record Of The Year" and "Best Pop Vocal Performance, Female." "I'm Every Woman" was nominated for a 1994 Grammy Award for "Best R&B Vocal Performance, Female." (1992)



### WAITING TO EXHALE

This collection allows the ladies to state their case to the world. It also gives hip-hop / soul princesses (SWV, Faith Evans, Brandy) a chance to rub shoulders with soul music's reigning queens (Aretha Franklin, Patti LaBelle, Toni Braxton), and represents the passing of the torch from the old school to the new school artists. (1995)



### THE PREACHER'S WIFE

*The Preacher's Wife* was nominated for a 1998 Grammy Award for Best R&B Album. "I Believe In You And Me" was nominated for a 1998 Grammy Award for Best Female R&B Vocal Performance. (1996)

The next year, fans ecstatically received Whitney's first non-soundtrack related studio album in eight years, *My Love Is Your Love* (November 1998), which she produced with Clive Davis. Whitney proved her ability to stay absolutely contemporary with the first single, the #1 R&B/ #2 Pop "Heartbreak Hotel" featuring Faith Evans and Kelly Price. It was the beginning of a string of gold and platinum chart hit singles from the album spanning nearly a year and a half (into the spring 2000): the Grammy-winning "It's Not Right But It's Okay"; "When You Believe" (a duet with Mariah Carey, from *The Prince Of Egypt*); the title tune "My Love Is Your Love"; and "I Learned From The Best" (written by Diane Warren, produced and arranged by David Foster).

The success of *My Love Is Your Love* kicked off a phenomenal year for Whitney. She stole the show at VH1's second annual "Divas Live'99," with a performance characterized as "invincible" by Jon Pareles in the *New York Times*. Sharing the stage with a lineup that included Cher, Tina Turner, Mary J Blige and others, Whitney emerged as the star. VH1 announced that the show was the highest-rated telecast in its history.

At the same time, gold, platinum and multi-platinum album sales were certified in every corner of the globe: Austria, Belgium, Canada, England, France, Germany, Spain, Holland, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa, Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore and more. In late-June, as "It's Not Right But It's Okay" became the 17th Top 5 pop hit of her career, Whitney commenced a successful world tour playing 16 cities in North America. The tour concluded in Europe in November.

At the 42nd annual Grammy Awards in February 2000, 15 months after the album release, Whitney received her sixth career Grammy, as "It's Not Right But It's Okay" was voted Best Female R&B Vocal. Winning her first R&B Grammy award in a category that included Mary J. Blige, Brandy, Faith Evans, and Macy Gray was extremely gratifying for Whitney Houston, especially after three previous Grammy awards for Best Female Pop Vocal: in 1985 ("Saving All My Love For You"), 1987 ("I Wanna Dance With Somebody [Who Loves Me]"), and 1993 ("I Will Always Love You").

A month later in March 2000, Whitney was named Female Artist Of The Decade at the "Soul Train" Music Awards annual ceremonies virtually 15 years to the day since her debut single, "You Give Good Love" entered the Billboard Hot Black Singles chart on March 9, 1985.

In the midst of her 15th anniversary year as an Arista recording artist, the double-album Whitney' The Greatest Hits (May 2000) celebrated the past, present and future. In addition to newly-recorded tracks with Enrique Iglesias, Deborah Cox, George Michael, and Q-Tip, there were rare vintage tracks unavailable for a decade, impossible-to-find club mixes, and bonus tracks. The collection encompassed Whitney's success as a mainstay on the pop and R&B singles front (on the double-CD/cassette), as a screen presence since her career began at the label (on DVD and VHS home-video), and in the clubs as a remixer's delight (on a limited edition four-record vinyl box-set).

Individually, the 36-track double-CD/cassette comprised one volume of single hits (Cool Down) and another

volume of memorable club mixes (Throw Down), each spanning Whitney's entire career to date, 1985 to 2000. She recorded new duets for the occasion with Enrique Iglesias (the Diane Warren composition, "Could I Have This Kiss Forever"), and then-Arista label-mate Deborah Cox ("Same Script, Different Cast"), plus a new version of "If I Told You That" (from *My Love Is Your Love*), remade as a duet with George Michael.

Hard-to-find rarities included "One Moment In Time," the 1988 Summer Olympics theme; 1991's Super Bowl XXV version of "The Star Spangled Banner"; and a 1986 duet with Jermaine Jackson ("If You Say My Eyes Are Beautiful") released only on his second Arista album, *Precious Moments*, never as a single.

The two CDs (and cassettes) were programmed so that each volume displayed the full range of Whitney's career. Disc 1 (Cool Down), for example, built from her first hits of 1985, "You Give Good Love," "Saving All My Love For You," and "Greatest Love Of All," all the way through 2000. Disc 2 (Throw Down) recapped the hits from *My Love Is Your Love* with club remixes of "It's Not Right But It's Okay," "My Love Is Your Love," "Heartbreak Hotel," and "I Learned From The Best" followed by ten more hits remixed by Junior Vasquez, David Morales, Jellybean, Hex Hector, C+C Music Factory's Cliviles and Cole, and others.

Those remixes were showcased on Whitney' The Unreleased Mixes, a special limited-edition four-record vinyl box-set acknowledging her importance in clubs around the world. There were seven songs, eight mixes, one track on each side of four 12-inch vinyl discs: "How Will I Know," "Greatest Love Of All," "I'm Every Woman," "Love Will Save the Day," "I Will Always Love You," "So Emotional," and "I'm Your Baby Tonight."

Whitney' The Greatest Hits was also the title of Whitney's first DVD and VHS home-video collection. The lion's share of her hits were included in its 21 titles, a combination of video clips (with such noted directors as Wayne Isham, Peter Israelson, Julian Temple, Randee St. Nicholas, Brian Grant, and Kevin Bray), and live performance. Links were provided to such rarities as her television premiere (on "The Merv Griffin Show" in 1985), appearances on several awards show, a tune from Rogers & Hammerstein's *Cinderella*, interview segments featuring Whitney and her co-producer, Arista president Clive Davis, and much more.

The week after the release of Whitney' The Greatest Hits, she appeared on the NBC television network special benefit concert "25 Years of #1 Hits: Arista Records' Anniversary Celebration," a tribute to the label as well as its founder and leader, Clive Davis.

In the aftermath of the World Trade Center disaster of September 11, 2001, Whitney's soaring rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner" (from Greatest Hits) was the first benefit single to be issued, coupled with her version of "America the Beautiful." The Whitney Houston Foundation For Children, Inc. and Arista Records agreed to donate royalties and net proceeds from all single sales to the New York Firefighters 9-11 Disaster Relief Fund and the New York fraternal Order of Police. Both groups as well as the families of those affected by the tragic event were to benefit from the sales.

The following year saw the release of Just Whitney (December 2002), her fifth studio album and first for



the new millennium. An A-list of handpicked hitmakers and producers contributed to the album, among them Kenneth Babyface' Edmonds, Missy Elliott, Kevin She'kspere' Briggs, Teddy Bishop and Gordon Chambers. The diverse program of ballads included "Try It On My Own," (written by Babyface and Carole Bayer Sager); "My Love" (a duet with Bobby Brown); and a powerful remake of Debbie Boone's 1977 "You Light Up My Life." Also among the album's gems were such hip grooves as "Love That Man" and the old-school style jam "Things You Say" (written and produced by Missy Elliott).

Every artist's first Christmas collection is a special career landmark, and Whitney's *One Wish - The Holiday Album* (November 2003), her most recent album release, was no exception. Whitney worked with producers and arrangers Troy Taylor, Mervyn Warren, and the team of Gordon Chambers and Barry J. Eastmond on a joyous mix of yuletide favorites from the traditional and contemporary songbooks, along with several new compositions.

The album opened with the classic "The First Noël" and Mel Torm's timeless "The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting On An Open Fire)." Other favorites included Freddie Jackson's "One Wish (For Christmas)," "Cantique

De Noël (O Holy Night)," "I'll Be Home For Christmas," "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas," "O Come O Come Emanuel," and a medley of "Deck The Halls/Silent Night." Two tracks originated on The Preacher's Wife soundtrack, "Who Would Imagine A King" and "Joy To The World." The centerpiece was 10-year old daughter Bobbi Kristina Houston Brown's recording debut on "Little Drummer Boy."

The Guinness Book Of World Records lists Whitney as music's "most awarded female artist of all time," with an amazing tally of 411 awards (as of 2006) a tally that is certainly topped by her two Emmy Awards, six Grammy Awards, 16 Billboard Music Awards, and 23 American Music Awards, as well as MTV VMAs in the U.S. and Europe, NAACP Image Awards, BET Awards, "Soul Train" Music Awards, and so on. She received the Nickelodeon "Kids Choice" award (she was inducted into the "Kids Choice" Hall Of Fame in 1996), the Dove (Gospel Music Association) Award, and Blockbuster Entertainment Award. Whitney was inducted into the BET (Black Entertainment Television) Walk Of Fame in 1996; and received "Soul Train"'s prestigious Quincy Jones Career Achieve-

ment Award in 1998.

True to her church upbringing, the Whitney Houston Foundation For Children Inc. was established in 1989 as a non-profit organization that cares for such problems as homelessness, children with cancer and AIDS, and other issues of self-empowerment. In June 1995, the Foundation was awarded a VH1 Honor for its charitable work. Funds have been raised for numerous causes involving children around the world, from South Africa to Newark, and generated over \$300,000 for the Children's Defense Fund as a result of a 1997 HBO concert.

Whitney's tireless efforts have earned recognition from such organizations as St. Jude Children's Hospital, the United Negro College Fund, and the Children's Diabetes Foundation, all of whom have benefited from the heart and soul of a great artist and humanitarian. Singing to audiences on every continent, Whitney has won her worldwide following the old-fashioned way, digging deep down into her soul and finding common threads with her millions of fans.

Whitney's tireless efforts have earned recognition from such organizations as St. Jude Children's Hospital, the United Negro College Fund, and the Children's Diabetes Foundation...



### MY LOVE IS YOUR LOVE

*My Love Is Your Love* was nominated for the 2000 Grammy Award for Best R&B Album. "It's Not Right But It's Okay" won the 2000 Grammy Award for Best Female R&B Vocal Performance. "It's Not Right But It's Okay" was nominated for the 2000 Grammy Award for Best R&B Song. (1998)



### WHITNEY THE GREATEST HITS

For a woman who counts Dionne Warwick as a cousin, Aretha Franklin as a family friend, and whose mother was a legendary session and gospel singer it is no surprise that it took 17 years after first signing with Arista for Whitney Houston to produce her first greatest hits album. (2000)



### JUST WHITNEY

As usual, the best writers and producers in the business clamored to work with Whitney: Babyface, Kevin Briggs, Missy Elliot—there's even a P.Diddy remix on the disc. Plus, Bobby Brown, who shares album production credits with Whitney, introduced his wife to some up-and-coming track-mesiters who also help take the album to the next level. It's warm and real and cool and catchy, modern, irresistible and was bound for the top of the charts. (2002)



# HOW TO GET A GUY IN 10 DAYS *period*

By: Michael Rochelle

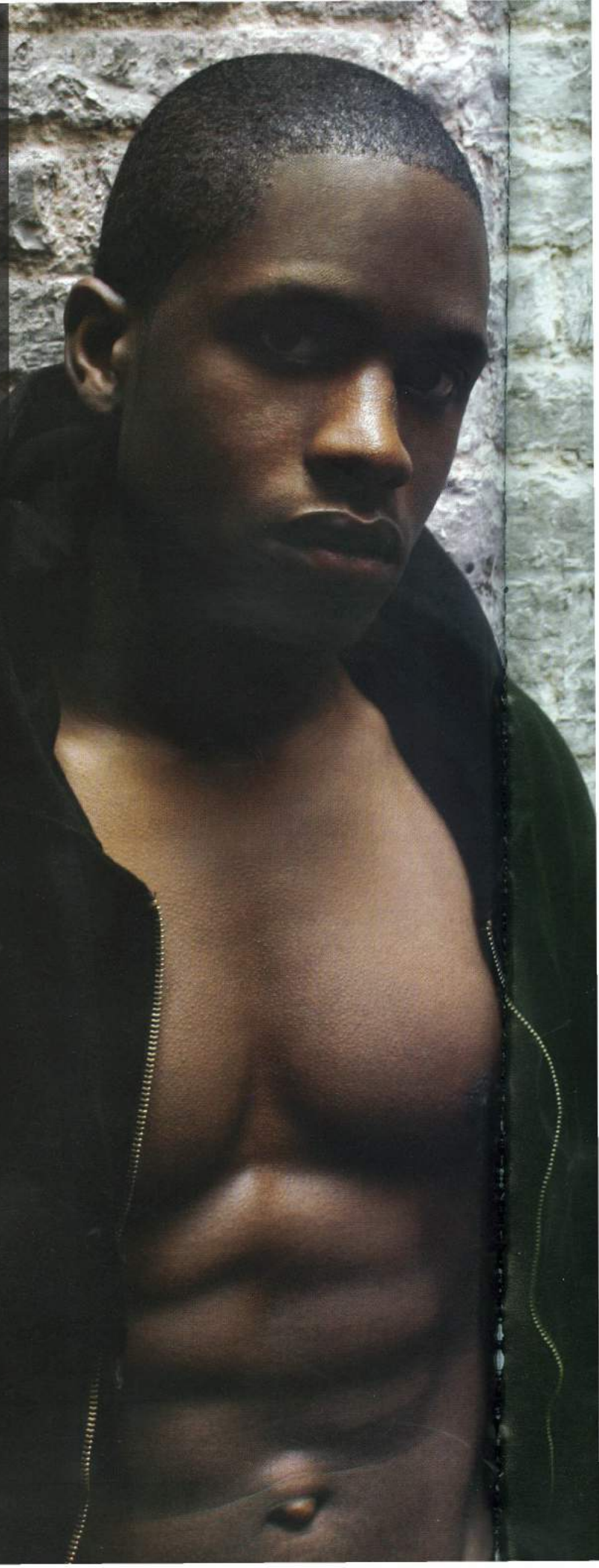
Contrary to popular belief, the world is only divided into two groups of people—those in relationships and those that aren't. If you are single and searching for a soul mate, it may seem like you can't turn around without bumping into some happy couple flaunting their relationship status as they hold hands and kiss while walking their twin poodles off into the sunset. Yes, it can be just that disturbing. While some of us bask in the wondrous glory of being single, others want nothing more than to meet that special person and settle down. How do we singles get off the bench and get into the dating game?

Fortunately, we live in an age where almost everyone is easily accessible so it's not hard to meet that guy at the grocery store, the sexy but grimy auto mechanic, or Chris Brown-ok, maybe not Chris Brown because I've tried, but you get the point. However, it's important to realize that this ease of access does absolutely nothing for those of us who aren't the "coolest" when it comes to striking up conversations, asking someone out on a date, or even showing interest without being a goof-ball or taking a brief detour through stalkerville—by the way Chris Brown and his security team are not too fond of the whole stalker thing, just so you know.

One reason that most people are so accessible is the internet. Utilizing various internet websites, you can find distant relatives, old school friends, and past acquaintances. You can even use some of those same sites to connect with new like-minded individuals for dating purposes. Although online dating sometimes gets a bad rap, it opens up the possibility for meeting people other than those that you come across in your day-to-day travels. Utilizing the internet and other personal ad services via telephone chat lines or newspapers can expand your search from people in your surrounding neighborhood to people a few cities or states away.

Most online dating sites and telephone chat lines give you a chance to set specific criteria for what you're looking for so you can meet the people you want, and avoid the ones you don't—that means no more uncomfortable conversations with the 5'11 guy when you're only into 6'3 and taller. By being able to state what you are looking for and what activities you are into, you increase your chances of meeting people with similar interest. In addition, these services give you an opportunity to screen for negative personality traits or habits that may not fall in line with what you are seeking before you actually meet the person. If you do decide to take this route, be sure to review the profiles carefully and then get the ball rolling by asking a question or commenting on what their profile said. For example, if the profile says that the person likes dogs, strike up a conversation by talking about your dog, Scruffy, and how you couldn't possibly live without him—then run to the nearest pet store and get one ASAP!!!

Another helpful tip for you to try as you attempt to meet new people is to go where the boys are. Have you noticed how many men work and shop at electronic and auto part stores? Those stores are like the mecca for men of all shapes, colors and sizes. In these settings, it's very easy to strike up a conversation by simply asking a question. Ask how something works or what it does—even if you don't need to know or don't care what the answer is. Ask the person's opinion on the item. This is a great conversation opener if you want to feel someone out a little bit to find out if the two of you share certain interests...and I think





you know what I mean. This technique is also effective at other places such as the gym, school, and anywhere else men can be found. However, if for some reason your gaydar is a little off and you set your sights on someone who isn't exactly as "open" as you are, abort and exit the premises immediately.

Joining groups or clubs that reflect your interests is another way to put yourself out there without exactly announcing that you're on the market and searching for victims—I mean candidates. This gives you the opportunity to interact directly with other people that you know you at least have one thing in common with. Most churches, schools and local community centers have tons of listings for groups and activities that meet weekly or monthly that you can fit into your schedule. The activities can range from participating in a choir, playing bingo, to yoga classes. Al-

generic, ask if the person if they know who performs the song playing or what other places are cool hang out spots. These simple questions give you an opportunity to feel the other person out to see if there is mutual interest. If so, go for it. If not, like Beyonce said, "To the left, to the left," and move on to the next candidate.

Sprucing yourself up a bit is very important as well. Although you don't necessarily want to cross over into high maintenance land, you do want to show that you care about your appearance. Although looks aren't everything, they are the first thing that people notice about you before they are exposed to your sparkling personality and sense of humor. That being said, if you are looking to meet new people and spark interest in yourself, dress the part. You don't have to look like you just walked off a magazine cover, but you don't want to look like you just got out of bed or just fin-

...it may seem like you can't turn around without **bumping into some happy couple flaunting their relationship status** as they hold hands and kiss while walking their twin poodles off into the sunset.

though you will probably have more success meeting potential mates by joining same-sex oriented organizations, you may get good results from venturing out and trying others as well. Contrary to popular belief, we all aren't out there waving the gay flag as we sashay down the street as if it were a runway. You may just meet someone of interest who is a tad bit more discreet with his orientation while remaining low-key with your own sexuality.

Another untapped resource for meeting new people is your current friends. Although you may not have an extensive circle of associates, getting to know the people your friends are close to may be helpful in getting you closer to meeting someone special. If you are the social type, host a single's party and encourage your friends to each bring someone. If you aren't exactly ready to take such a big step, you can ask your friends if they know someone that may be interested in hanging out or getting to know you a little better. The good thing about this type of meeting is that it's not exactly a blind date because your friend has already pretty much given his or her stamp of approval by setting you up with the person. On the other hand, these situations require maturity on each individual's part so that if things don't work out between you and the person you are set up with, you don't let that interfere with your relationship with your friend.

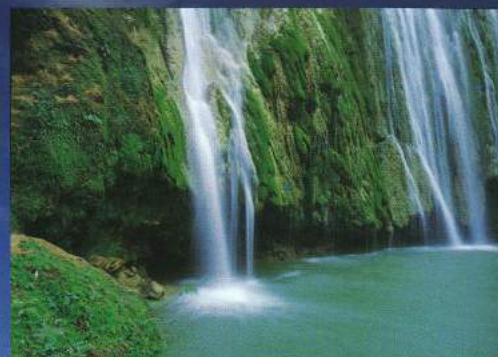
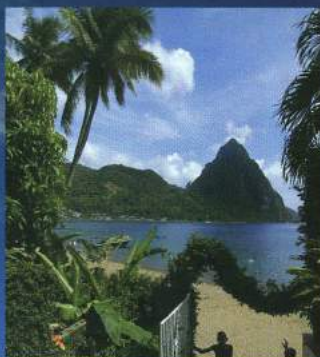
Clubs, bars, and singles parties are great ways to network socially. It also helps that each place typically has liquid courage in the form of alcoholic drinks (in moderation of course) which could help get you off the wall, on the floor, and indulging in some enticing conversation. Although it may seem difficult to initially converse with someone in this setting, simply asking what the person is drinking, what their name is, where their from, or how often they attend are great conversation starters. If those topics seem too

ished mowing the lawn either. Also, having a fresh hair cut or edge-up will only work in your favor. Once you've gotten all of that taken care of, be sure to make eye contact and smile so that people know that you are approachable, friendly and open to conversation.

While improving or maintaining your outward appearance is a step in the right direction, sprucing yourself up mentally is just as important. Have you ever tried to have a conversation with someone who had absolutely nothing to talk about? Not fun, huh? Keeping up with current events, seeing new movies, and just staying abreast with what's going on in the world will aid you in having random topics to get the ball rolling with the initial verbal exchange. Reading new books will also give you something to talk about in addition to placing you in bookstores that may give you another opportunity to play damsel in distress as you ask for suggestions or give suggestions about what to read.

Lastly, don't hide under a rock just because you don't have a crew to hang out with. Despite what some may say, there is nothing wrong with going to the movies, bowling, parties, or going out to eat by yourself. In fact, these are perfect opportunities to seek out other people who are in the same position you are. The key is to be confident with who you are regardless of where you are. In addition, failure is okay. If you aren't able to talk to or make that connection with the first person you set your sights on, dust yourself off and try again. However, if sparks do fly when you approach someone, display a positive attitude and be interesting while showing interest in the other person. With these ideas in mind, you'll be well on your way to improving your dating experiences, or at least making new friends.





# Charting the Caribbean

WHICH ISLANDS ARE GAY-FRIENDLY, WHICH AREN'T?

By Kenneth Kiesnoski

## GRAND CANARY, KEY WEST, IBIZA, OAHU, & PHUKET

While a chain of gay-friendly island destinations encircles the globe, there has traditionally been one missing link — any Caribbean isle.

That is, until now. Despite a well-deserved reputation for entrenched homophobia, frequent discrimination against gay citizens, and even open hostility to gay and lesbian travelers, there are signs that at least a handful of Caribbean destinations — favorite subtropical stomping grounds for spring-breakers, straight couples and “traditional” families — are changing their tunes.

## GAY-FRIENDLY-ISH CARIBBEAN

Whether prompted by economic considerations or internal or external pressures — or, in some cases, all three — island nations such as St. Lucia, the

Netherlands Antilles and the Cayman Islands are, if not openly courting gay travel

ers, at least challenging reputations for rampant homophobia.

Even in terminally bigoted Jamaica — which Amnesty International has described as “suffering from an appalling level of homophobia” — there’s been some movement, if incremental, on the domestic front.

First, Jamaica-based, couples-only resort chain Sandals in October 2004 lifted its longtime ban on same-sex couples. Now, Jamaican deputy education minister Donald Rhodd has raised controversy by calling for a review of Victorian-era laws criminalizing homosexuality, a legislative legacy the island shares with at least seven other neighbors once ruled by Great Britain, including Barbados, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago.

And marginally more tolerant Aruba — as part of the Netherlands Antilles, subject to both Dutch and European Union law — was forced to recognize the recent marriage of two lesbian residents.

## GAY TRAVEL TO THE CARIBBEAN

But what do these developments on the legal front portend for gay travel to the Caribbean?

Actually, not much, because in many such cases, it’s the economic allure of the gay and lesbian traveler — or even his or her

mere stubborn insistence on showing up at local airports — that might be driving change in the first place. In fact, gays and lesbians have always vacationed in the Caribbean, if in small numbers — and if under the radar and in the closet.

Moreover, gay and gay-friendly cruises run by Atlantis Events, RSVP, R Family Vacations and other operators insist on calling in many balmy Caribbean ports, chilly welcomes and cold shoulders notwithstanding.

Caribbean travel veteran Alan Chastanet, owner of St. Lucia’s Coco Resorts and vice president of the island’s hotel and tourist board, said that as far as he and his hospitality colleagues are concerned, homosexuality is a “non-issue.”

“I think we’re all past that [and] we’ve been reaching out to the gay market,” he said, adding that he’s an advocate of removing dusty anti-gay legislation from the island’s books.

“But I don’t want anyone to accuse me of doing this to greedily go after the gay travel dollar,” Chastanet said. “I am merely speaking as a citizen interested in the development of his country.”





For all that, the Caribbean region still offers slim gay-vacation pickings. The closest approximations of gay life are to be found — ironically enough — in American territories such as Puerto Rico or St. Croix, in the U.S. Virgin Islands, or on French or Dutch-speaking islands, such as Curaçao, Sint Maarten/ St. Martin and Guadeloupe. Generally speaking, the gay-friendliness of each Caribbean island is tied to cultural heritage, meaning French or Dutch equals friendly; Spanish less so; and British even less, though of course this is completely different in the United Kingdom itself.

Politics plays a role as well. Islands ruled from abroad, such as U.S. territories or Dutch dependencies, tend toward tolerance. Great Britain has called on Commonwealth islands to be more tolerant. But independence or home rule — as in Jamaica — or totalitarian governments [read: Cuba] can spell oppression for local homosexuals and pose

problems for out gay and lesbian travelers.

Gay travelers looking for a Caribbean stay in an even more welcoming environment might look at mainland resort destinations along Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula coast.

But even in hospitable Caribbean island destinations, gay-specific or gay-exclusive resorts and nightlife tend to be thin on the ground, save perhaps in Puerto Rican metropolis San Juan.

But it's possible to be gay and to vacation both happily and safely in much of the Caribbean — provided visitors are realistic about expectations. They also must reconcile themselves to the cultural, social, and political realities of each island destination. For example, while Cuba has a burgeoning and lively underground gay scene, homosexuality remains both illegal and punishable with prison time.

## GAY FRIENDLY CARIBBEAN

by Ed Salvato and Kenneth Kiesnoski

Using a combination of visits and discussions with gay Caribbean experts, we parsed the most frequently visited Caribbean islands into three categories of gay-friendliness, from friendliest ("Top of the class") to least friendly ("Bad apples") and the rest lumped into the middle category ("Average Joes").

No Caribbean island deserved or received an A grade, since the region, on the whole, is far behind most of the West in terms of receptiveness to gay and lesbian locals and visitors. However, we distributed grades on a curve so that there would be a handful of islands in the top of the class and to avoid handing out exclusively middling or failing grades.

So, while St. Barts offers no strictly gay or lesbian venues, it is very popular with and comfortable for gay travelers and gets an A-. It's French, the residents are largely European in heritage and culture, and gay couples barely raise an eyebrow. This doesn't mean it's the new Amsterdam of the Caribbean; just that, compared with its neighbors, it ain't all that bad.

Other French-heritage islands such as Martinique and Guadeloupe also earn a B, thanks to their *laissez-faire* attitude towards gay men and lesbians rather than any rousing welcome to gay visitors.

Puerto Rico features the highest concentration of gay-specific venues and activities and is thus included in the top of the class.

St. Lucia, in the average-Joe category, earns a C+. However, recent overtures toward gay and lesbian travelers indicate it's improving.

We recently moved Turks & Caicos to the bad-apple category due to derogatory anti-gay comments by one of its ministers.

### TOP OF THE CLASS

St. Barts: A-  
St. Martin: A-  
Puerto Rico: B+  
Curaçao: B+  
St. Croix: B+

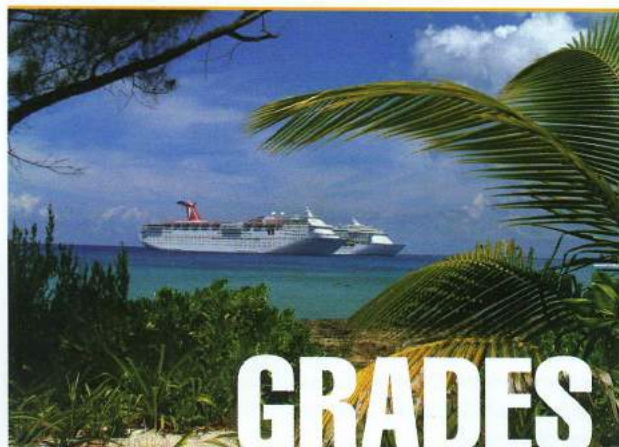
### BAD APPLES

Turks and Caicos: C-  
Barbados: D  
Trinidad & Tobago: D  
Cuba: D-  
Jamaica: F

### AVERAGE JOES

Domin. Republic: B  
Guadeloupe: B  
Martinique: B  
Aruba: B-  
Bahamas: B-  
Bonaire: B-  
St. Kitts/Nevis: B-  
Cayman Islands: C+  
St. Lucia: C+  
Brit. Virgin Islands: C  
Grenada: C  
U.S. Virgin Islands (except St. Croix): C

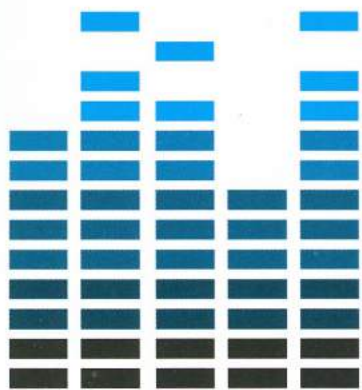
We omitted grades for islands for which we were unable to gather any information.





*DJ AND*

TAKING OVER RADIO & SWITCHING UP  
THE GAME ONLINE By Darian Aaron



# DA DOO-DIRTY SHOW



Internet radio host DJ Baker of the increasingly popular Doo-Dirty Show is not your ordinary radio disc jockey nor is the show that has won him loyal listeners, celebrity guests, and a place among New York City's gay elite.

His no holds barred interview style and willingness to say whatever is on his mind constantly opens the door for comparisons to his female equivalent, shock jock queen Wendy Williams. But there is a key element that definitely sets the two personalities apart. While Wendy Williams' support for the gay community is questionable, DJ has molded his show around being unabashedly black and gay.

Blazing some of today's hottest hip-hop and R&B music 5 days a week as the backdrop for discussions on everything from celebrity scandals, politics, gay rights, relationships, and of course sex (and there's plenty of sex on his show). His life is an open book to his listeners, nothing is too personal or too controversial to discuss. From his strict rules about being "a top only" to sharing his experience living life as an openly HIV positive man for the last fourteen years. Not a day goes by that DJ doesn't give fans what they crave from him... raw and uncensored entertainment.

His listeners are accustomed to his masculine, confident, and hilarious approach on the subjects he chooses to address on the air. But what very few people know is the Doo-Dirty Show is a labor of love and the result of 15 years of pain, self-discovery, and the courage to be a voice for those who have been silenced.





It wasn't long ago in the early nineties that DJ came to terms with his sexuality after experimenting with girls and fathering a child that his then girlfriend would later abort. He jokes that he came out to family, friends, and millions of people after sharing the stage with two men involved in a love triangle on the nineties daytime gabfest The Ricki Lake Show. One of which would play a significant role in his life shortly thereafter.

Fast forward to August 2006, with a microphone, a passion for hip-hop and R&B and the desire to fill the void left by the mainstream media to talk about issues that affect the black gay community, DJ recorded his first show and the rest is history.

He's an avid fan of hip-hop music and the best sounds can be heard weekly on his show in conjunction with his music guru DJ Kimmy. I asked DJ how he was able to reconcile his identity as a black gay man with the often-homophobic lyrics in hip-hop.

"I love hip hop and hip-hop is more than the homophobia presented by DMX and Ja Rule, it's a culture, from the way we walk to the way we talk to even the way we dress. I think those who speak out the loudest against gays usually have something to hide".

The Doo Dirty Show is not only home to artists who have major recording deals but has also given independent gay, lesbian, and transgender artists such as Jesse O, Shorty Roc, Tori Fixx, and Fox Jazelle a platform to expose their music to a wider audience.

With a growing fan base comes the demand for more shows and DJ is constantly on the grind. In the beginning he did it all, but today he has support in the form of researchers, music specialists, and the addition of a sidekick, TyeSexy.

It's almost impossible for him to take a break from recording without hearing from his fans that are as addicted to his show as they are their morning cup of Starbucks.

When DJ needs positive reinforcement the fans give it unselfishly, one in particular came from a fan in Atlanta who said, "I thank God for finding your show...it was meant to happen. You've taught me over the past year to be more open to ideas and to different people". Another says, "In my life I've quickly judged and dismissed people just because I couldn't relate to them. But after listening to your show I am now open to listening to other perspectives unlike before. I've even managed to make smarter decisions in regards to my sexual health after listening to your discussions on HIV/AIDS".

DJ has been able to attain success in the face of what some would consider insurmountable odds. Appearing on Ricki Lake with the man who would later infect him with the HIV virus, DJ has proven himself to be a fighter, turning the very thing that was meant to harm him on it's head and using his show not only to entertain but to educate and empower other same gender loving men and women.

2008 is looking even brighter for DJ and The Doo-Dirty Show as he begins to step up his game and change the look of his Podomatic website, attain major celebrity interviews and continue to expand the reach of his show across the globe.

But fans need not worry because the old DJ isn't going anywhere, but the new DJ promises to be bigger and blacker (no pun intended)!

**Da Doo-Dirty Show Online:**  
ddirtyshow.podomatic.com

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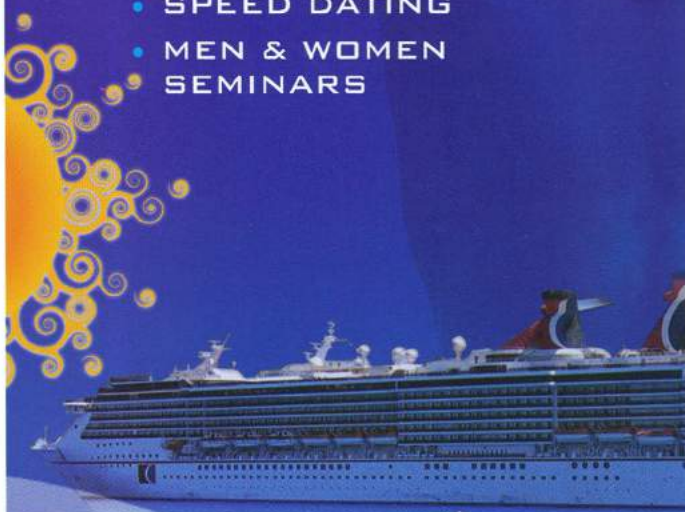
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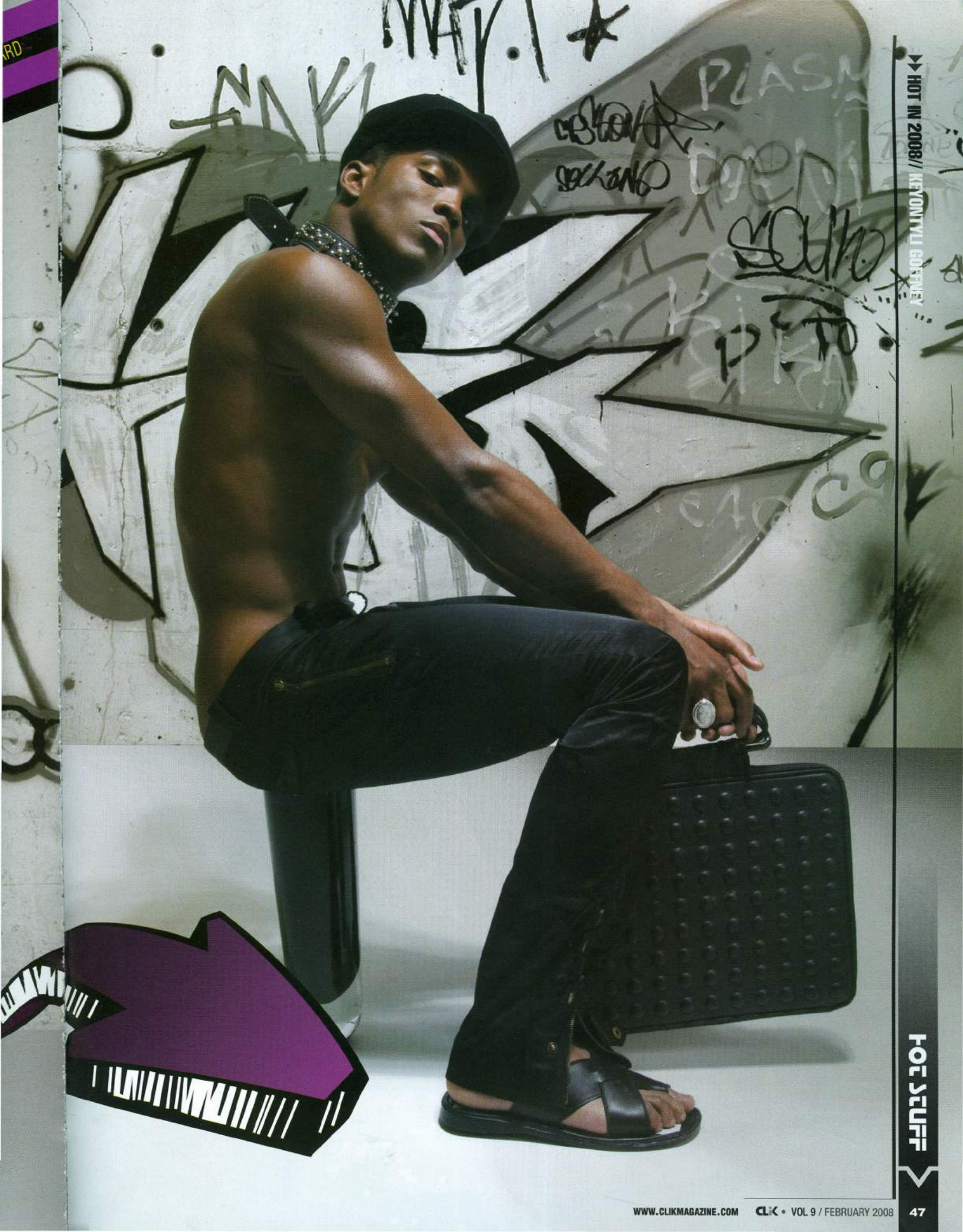


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