

Leather Scene

Going Online

by Cain Berlinger

The Internet is a powerful tool that is shaping not only the way we react to the world around us but in some cases dictates the way we interact with those who are different from us. This often happens in the form of chat rooms. The particular chat room in question is the BLKGUYZ4WHT-GUYZ room, where the subject is interracial relationships.

What's offensive about this room is the way Black men allow themselves to be treated or approached, and the way white men believe they are being complimentary, even flattering to Black men, by presenting as "hot white p**y boy looking for a big Black c**k"—essentially treating all Black men in the room as nothing more than disembodied sex organs. Unfortunately the men I witnessed responded appropriately by broadcasting their size and prowess.

I believe that being totally 'into' Black or white men is a form of racism in itself, but I do believe there are genuine interracial relationships that go on, but I'm not sure that they are born in these rooms. In the land of Instant messages, I have been approached with such intro lines as "How big is your d**k?" or "I need a big Black dominant stud"—no hello, no other kind of civil greeting. I feel a bit naive in expecting someone to get to know at least a tiny bit about me before total submission is offered.

It seems that almost every white man in the room assumes all Black men are well endowed. What about those men in the room who aren't super studs but seriously are looking to connect with a white man? What does that environment do to his sense of worth? After all the advances made and all the politically correct rhetoric, this room encourages white men to still see us as Mandingos, and



we allow it to happen.

It is not a matter so much as white/Black relations but where is the respect for each other? Even if it's just sex you're after, would that approach work in a bar? Whenever I bring up the topic of simple respect for each other, to open a dialogue, I often get ragged on not by white guys (who usually remain strangely silent) but by Black men who tell me not to take it seriously and shut up. Most of the support I get comes in the form of discrete Instant message by Black and white men alike.

Years ago Richard Pryor took his trip to Africa seriously enough that he dropped the 'N' word from his comedy routines. Meanwhile the general public refused to take his conversion seriously, and as a result we still use the 'N' word amongst each other, and wonder why white men often fail to see the seriousness of the word, since we ourselves don't seem to take it seriously.

Sure it's just a chat room, of men wanting to be with other men, but the respect for each other has to start somewhere. In the new international cyberspace, isn't it time for a new attitude?

E-mail [redacted]

THY CUP RUNNETH OVER

Faith in Ancestors
by Lynnell
Stephanie Long

Anger, for many years, was a familiar, close and costly emotion for me. Whenever people failed to accept me, I got angry. When my mother abandoned me, I got really angry. When I was discriminated against, I was full of rage. In

the past, I found myself reacting to other people and their ignorance, instead of being proactive. For a long time, anger or rage was the only emotion I knew.

Of course I have plenty excuses as to why I reacted in such a way. The truth is, there is no excuse for forgetting a power that is greater than man, woman or separatists. I forgot I have the best friend in the world. I have, Goddess. Don't get me wrong, I am not a saint nor do I pretend to be. But there are times when I must remember there is a power greater than, Lynnell. I have to remember at all times that there is a reason I am who and what I am. Yes, in the past, I have said God or Goddess made a mistake, that I was not supposed to be born this way. The truth is, I was born this way, and I was chosen to deliver a message.

Like some messengers, I too allowed my ego to take over and believed it was my will and my will alone that has removed my compulsive behavior with drugs and alcohol. I once believed that it was my will alone that contributed to me writing for BLACKLINES and performing with the successful troupe, A Real Read. Today, I know different. Today, I know I am a mere messenger.

Often I forget that Goddess has a plan for me. I have allowed too many things outside of myself disturb me. Out of anger and rage I have lashed out at my friends and those I perceived to be my enemy. To everyone I offended with my anger, I apologize. For years, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., fought for what he knew was right, and he did it without violence and anger. Now that I have let go of my mistakes of the past, it is time I open myself to Goddess and do thy will, not mine. I pray, "Thy will, not mine, be done." When I am successful in praying and have not allowed my ego to interfere, I am aware of what thy will is. This morning I forgot to say that prayer, but before I sat down at my computer to write this article, I asked for the message for today to come to me.

As the Millennium approaches, we must become ready. We must put aside our hate, anger, jealousy and envy, and learn to love one another. For too long we have grown wild and without knowledge. Our knowledge once came from our ancestors, for only they



could teach us the way to a pure heart, spirit & soul.

I have forgotten our ancestors. Our ancestors were once Kings, Queens, Medicine Men, and Shamans. When I look in the mirror, all I see is what I am today, not what was handed down to me. Hundreds of years ago, transsexuals—as they are called today—were respected Shamans. We were looked upon with honor and respect. If someone who once lived as male decided to live as female, they were the chosen ones because they possessed the energy of the sun & moon, male & female. It wasn't until transsexualism was publicized here in the USA, that it was looked upon with disgrace.

Recently, I feel I have been on a spiritual journey like no other I have ever experienced. I had a dream I was standing at my altar, but it looked different. Along with my candles and incense were a drum, sage and a rain stick.

The next day, while shopping, I found the drum & rain stick. A week later, while visiting in Madison, I bought sage and a CD with Native American & African drum beating. I wasn't sure what was to come of it, but I kept an open and allowed myself not to interfere with Goddess' plan. I noticed changes in my attitude, the way I handled my anger and the way I accept life, one day at a time. This wasn't always easy, to accept this is the way I was meant to be. It was easier to accept or think Goddess made a mistake when she made me Intersex. If I thought she made a mistake, I couldn't be mad at her, and I could have faith. I still have faith, faith in knowing I am not alone.

I realize, in order for my life and relationships to be healthy, I must be healthy. Mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Nothing in Goddess' world happens by mistake. Nothing!

E-mail [redacted]

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HEALTH FIRST

Frank Oldham is
Chicago's New
'AIDS Czar'

See page 20 for an interview



AIDS WAKE-UP CALL

Chicago's African-American community recently received a wake-up call from a coalition of individuals and agencies urging people to pay attention to the impact of AIDS. According to the Centers for Disease Control, AIDS is the leading cause of death among African-Americans between the ages of 25-44.

Of all HIV cases reported nationally last year, Black Americans accounted for 56% of the cases.

See pages 20-21.