

# ONE STEP BEYOND

by Lynnell S. Long

## Transphobia

*You may shoot me with your words, You may cut me with your eyes, You may kill me with your hatefulness, But still, like air, I'll rise. — Maya Angelou*

Recently in the WINDY CITY TIMES, an article appeared called "Doubts about Transsexuals" by Paul Varnell. Within two to three days, the article was posted on the Internet, and WCT received letters from all over the world from members of the transgendered community. In September, Metro Mookie from NIGHTLINES listed "his" version of the top ten "tranzies," as he called them; failing to acknowledge transsexuals that aren't female impersonators; criticizing those transsexuals who are female impersonators; and criticizing those that he thinks are not "passable" as women.

At first, I thought of responding to this type of bigotry by attacking both of these transphobic gay men. I thought of writing an article called "Doubts about right-wing, straight acting, gay men." Instead, I'm reminded of something my mother once told me after someone teased me in school about wearing androgynous clothing and



looking like a girl. She said, "you have to forgive them, some people are just ignorant and fearful of someone who's different, once they get to know and understand you, hopefully their bigotry or phobia will be gone." It's people like Paul Varnell and Metro Mookie that give the "QUEER" community a bad name. They are not helping by attacking and criticizing the transgendered community. Their bigotry is hurting the entire queer community. With people like M.M. and P.V. judging and criticizing the transgendered community with their naive and ignorant remarks, how can we as a queer community ever expect to move forward? Like Tupac said, "Only god can judge me now"; and in my case, god is a woman who tells me: "you go, girl," every morning.

The article in WCT said, "transsexuals are homophobic homosexual men that want to be women so they would feel comfortable dating men." FACT: Not all transsexuals are heterosexuals. I estimate that more than 45% are post or pre-op transsexuals lesbians. He further states that "female

to male transsexuals are really lesbians that are trying to evade sexual and social role restrictions." He never mentions straight FtM's. FACT: Of the female to male transsexuals that I know, what makes them different from butch lesbians is that most of them have always identified as being men.

Metro Mookie, after going to the Miss Continental Pageant, wrote an article listing "his" version of the top ten tranzies. He listed people that "he thought" were transsexuals. FACT: Every female

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impersonator or drag queen is not a transsexual and every transsexual is not a drag queen or female impersonator. He criticized the girls that were there saying that they looked liked men. Not everybody who is dressed as a girl considers herself a woman or a transsexual. If that is the case, every gay man that dresses in drag on Halloween must really be a closeted transsexual.

There will always be people

like P.V. and M.M.—and, unfortunately, some members of the queer community agree with them. They believe that the gay and lesbian community has a better chance of passing ENDA (the federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act) if the transgendered community weren't included. What they fail to realize is there are no more Kings and Queens—we are all on the same boat. The only way to overthrow the Master is by working together. Just because P.V., M.M., or others claim not to understand transsexuals, that's no excuse to infest the world with their hatred and transphobia of them by writing non-factual articles. At least get the facts "straight."

The year is 1997, and the transgendered community is not going to take it anymore. We have been mocked, bashed, and murdered for too long. The only way things are going to change is if we stand up and demand our respect. There are transgendered direct and political action groups such as Transsexual Menace-Chicago (Voice-Mail 773-409-8815); and It's time Illinois (708-535-1506). We need your support.

Wake up people! The transgendered community has always been the black sheep of the Queer community—things must change.

*If there is not struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation ... want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. ... Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did, and it never will. — Frederick Douglass*

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## Cellist Ed Moore

Chicago Sinfonietta  
Cellist Ed Moore breaks  
down stereotypes about  
Blacks & music. See page  
25 for an interview, and  
details on Sinfonietta's  
tribute to Martin Luther  
King Jr. in January.



## Tiffani St. Cloud

Out in School and Making Her  
Own History. See page 21.



**ALSO INSIDE:** Politics 1997 (page 18); Blacks and Gays in the Military (page 18), County Hospital AIDS Clinic breaks ground (page 10), Family Values and AIDS (page 22), New Town Alano Club's president (page 15), and more.

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