

# EDGE



MIDCENTURY  
MODERN  
RETURNS



CAN  
KING COBRA  
BITE?

# Javier Munoz



BROADWAY'S NEW HAMILTON  
TAKES AIM AT HIV STIGMA



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edge

ARE WE  
THERE YET?THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION  
AND ONE AWKWARD THANKSGIVING

"I want this election to be over so badly, you'd think it was a friend's play," wrote EDGE columnist Stephen Mosher on Facebook last month. That's really saying something for somebody with so many actor friends, he's likely sat through as many questionable evenings in the theater.

In my decades (I won't admit to the number) of voting, I can't remember a race as dramatic, contentious and long as the one we're in the tail end of enduring. There have been numerous political casualties along the way. Former Texas Governor Rick Perry, recently eliminated from *Dancing with the Stars*, will most likely not be seen in national politics again. Recent developments in the "Bridgagate" scandal have all but ensured that New Jersey Governor Chris Christie will be untouchable for a while. And we may have seen the last of the Bush dynasty in the near future.

But casualties aren't limited to the major players. The death count of relationships on which this election has taken its toll is immeasurable. Posts saying, "I just unfriended ..." are



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# COVER STORY



MEET JAVIER MUÑOZ. HE'S LATIN, SEXY, HIV POSITIVE AND BROADWAY'S NEW *HAMILTON*.



# ARTS



THE GAY PORN MURDER OF 2007 HITS THE BIG SCREEN IN *KING COBRA*.



# TUNAGE



THE RETROFUTURISTIC ALLURE OF SYNTHWAVE.



# HOME



THE MIDCENTURY MODERN REBOOT — AND WHERE TO FIND IT.



# CLICKED



PARTY PICS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY



# FEATURE



THE GRAPHIC NOVEL TAKES ON GAY HISTORY.

# ADVICE



# NATION



ARE TRANSGENDER POLITICAL INSIDERS BREAKING THE FINAL GLASS CEILING?

# EVENTS



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FIVE PITFALLS TO AVOID WITH YOUR WORKOUT REGIMEN.



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# edge masthead

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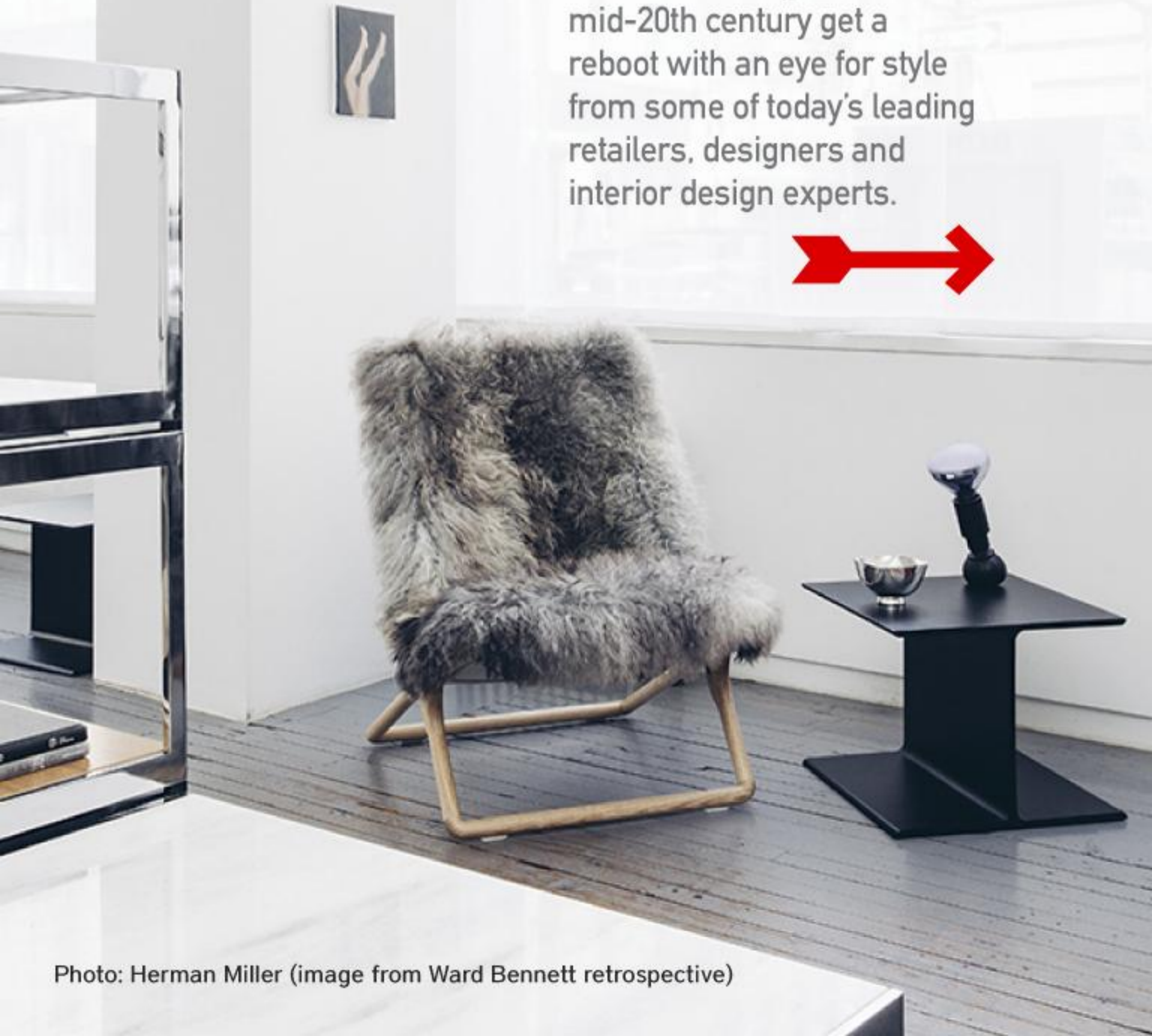
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ANDY SMITH

# Midcentury/ Postmodern

Iconic furnishings of the mid-20th century get a reboot with an eye for style from some of today's leading retailers, designers and interior design experts.





Photos: West Elm



Since the early 1980s, the craze for the clean lines of furniture created by George Nelson, Vladimir Kagan, Eero Saarinen, the husband-and-wife team of Charles and Ray Eames and other Atomic-era designers has spread from gay couples shopping at thrift stores to the mainstream aesthetic.

Organic shapes and bright colors dominated the original midcentury look. But through the years, many of the fun, funkier aspects have been watered down ... until now.

Original pieces like the Nelson Bench and various models of Eames chairs are back in production (from manufacturers Knoll and Herman Miller), but often in neutral colors, while mass marketers like Design Within Reach, CB2, and West Elm are producing attractive pieces inspired by this era. Generally upholstered or varnished in blacks, browns and grays, those looking for a pop of color can opt for a custom fabric or accessorize with vivid throws and accent pillows.

For ideas on how to take the chill off the midcentury look and reteam fun with functional, EDGE reached out to a team of experts, including Manhattan-based vintage midcentury retailers Dominic Albanese and Paul Donzella, interior designer Michala Monroe and author and journalist Cara Greenberg.



# Mid-Century Modern

## Modern

FURNITURE OF THE 1950S • BY CARA GREENBERG



### PERMISSION TO ACCESSORIZE

"There's no need to be afraid of adding accessories and color to a room with midcentury modern furnishings. Charles and Ray Eames did, in their own Case Study House in Pasadena, California. Their own furniture designs were hung with throws and woven pieces, and there were knickknacks with a sort of folk-art/ethnic bent on the windowsills," says Greenberg.

A piece Greenberg wrote on 1950s furniture for *Metropolitan Home* in 1983 served as the genesis for her popular book, *Mid-Century Modern: Furniture of the 1950s*. "I coined the term 'midcentury modern' for the title of the book. And guess what? It stuck."

Her personal aesthetic is more eclectic though always based on strong design criteria. "I'm not all about mid-century – I like to decorate with pieces from all periods."

Paul Donzella, owner of Donzella (17 White Street, New York City), embraces opening up the Eames-era (a favorite term of eBay merchants) aesthetic to pieces from other periods. "When I first got into the midcentury furniture business 20 years ago, there was a mentality that was more old school. People were creating 'period rooms,' but I haven't seen that happening for a long time now," he says.

"People will mix an Italian club chair from the 1950s with a '70s coffee table. Mixing things up is how people have been doing it for a long time now. It's OK, you can put chenille fabric on a hard-edged chair," he adds.



Photos: Herman Miller (images from Ward Bennett retrospective)

"There's no need to be afraid of adding accessories and color to a room with midcentury modern furnishings."



Photo: Michala Munroe

### ALEXANDER THE GREAT

For adding color and texture, both Greenberg and Donzella recommend studying the aesthetic and collecting proclivities of Alexander Girard, who designed furniture, textiles and restaurant interiors, including the interior of L'Etoile (1966) in the Sherry-Netherlands Hotel.

"Girard was inspired by playful, tribal craft things. His aesthetic was strikingly modern but playful at the same time. Great juxtapositions," says Donzella.

"He was famous for his collection of Mexican folk art, especially Day of the Dead stuff, and he was about nothing if not color. His color combos are truly vivid. And, yes, they were used to upholster Herman Miller pieces throughout the 1950s, '60s and '70s," Greenberg adds.

### THROW A THROW ON IT

As owner of Metropolis Modern (200 Lexington Avenue, New York City), Albanese works with designers looking to add balance and warmth to midcentury interiors.

"There are several ways to warm up midcentury decor, including adding sophisticated 'country' and 'beach' decor elements, like throws, blankets, pillows, lighting, artwork and decorative accessories. In the Hamptons

you can see a classic farmhouse table paired with very modern Knoll chairs or other midcentury designers," he says.

"Rugs are the ultimate in 'softening touches' – best with MCM [midcentury modern] furniture, I think, are simple geometrics, perhaps a geometric flat-weave or Scandinavian rya rug or Moroccan berber. These can add a whole lot of color and warmth to an MCM environment," says Greenberg.

### DON'T BE A ONE-STOP SHOPPER

Describing her style as "modern with midcentury influences," Brooklyn-based Monroe has a number of clients who like a mix of Italian modern midcentury pieces.

Authentic midcentury pieces often incorporate warmer wood tones and funky or friendlier upholstery, while the more neutral pieces influenced by midcentury design are fine as a starting point but need spicing up, she says.

"It can start to look a little cookie-cutter and sterile. If everything is brand-new, you're losing some of that character. If you buy a gray sofa, add textured and patterned pillows for accent."

Greenberg agrees – go back to the source for inspiration and color.

"Not just upholstery, but even Eames fiberglass chairs of the 1950s were produced in a rainbow of colors, including turquoise and coral. What we see today in the DWR catalogue and the like is early-21st-century taste trying to appeal to the largest audience by playing it safe with neutrals.

I'd say introduce some pillows with textiles by Alexander Girard or Marimekko (or frame them for wall art), bring in strong-colored rugs, some chunky colorful pottery and large-scale plants. And good lighting – table lamps rather than overheads for softness and warmth."



Photos: Herman Miller  
(images from Alexander Girard exhibit in Tokyo)



## IT'S NO FREE-FOR-ALL

While most of our experts agree that, in many ways, mid-century is the Type O blood group of design, it doesn't automatically coordinate with *everything*.

"Too much shiny doesn't work. I had a client show me a bright white credenza with chrome legs. It was too 'Italian modern,'" says Monroe. "It's also hard to make a country sofa or anything from the '80s mix with midcentury."

Monroe cautions clients that frequently the first wave of modern design – which includes American designers like Eames and wood-based Scandinavian pieces – doesn't mesh with the more outlandish "space age" pieces from the '60s and '70s.

For floors, Greenberg cautions, "I think a more detailed Oriental rug would be too fussy, and a sisal or solid neutral perhaps too safe, if a bit of pizzazz is what you're after."

## SAY 'YES' TO LESS

Ultimately, the midcentury movement not only brought good design to the masses, but also helped usher out the

last vestiges of Victorian clutter. To honor that worthy mission, Greenberg recommends sticking to the essential minimalism of the midcentury modern aesthetic.

"In general, I think a modern interior works best with fewer, bolder accessories, because the pieces themselves have such strong lines. It makes no visual sense to clutter them up with small objects. A large ceramic bowl or vase on a Nelson bench or midcentury credenza certainly works." **0**

*Andy Smith is a freelance copywriter and feature writer. More of his writing can be found at [andysmith.com](http://andysmith.com).*

# Resource Guide



Donzella

Metropolis Modern

M Monroe Design

CB2

Herman Miller

West Elm



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# 5

# Big Don'ts



STEPHEN MOSHER



HERE ARE FIVE THINGS THAT CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE IF YOU JUST LEARN TO SAY NO.

In life, it's often best to focus on the positive, the dos rather than the don'ts. But in health and fitness, sometimes you just need to tell yourself: STOP! Certain patterns of behavior and misconceptions are counterproductive to a healthy lifestyle, and the only way to kick the habit is to go cold turkey.



## **DON'T STARVE YOURSELF.**

Some people think that skipping meals is a good way to cut calories and drop some weight. Skipping meals deprives your body of nutrients, causing it to gather energy from your existing body mass and slowing your metabolism. It also makes you too cranky and lightheaded to make rational judgments. And the weight you drop could come back with a vengeance. Instead, eat reasonable meals in responsible portions throughout the day to keep yourself fueled and happy – and your metabolism at its best.

## **DON'T SKIP THE BEFORE AND AFTER.**

To minimize time in the gym, some people skip warming up before and stretching after. However, doing so doesn't take long, and the benefits are bountiful. Take a few minutes to warm up to increase blood flow throughout your body, deliver more oxygen to your muscles, and increase your performance. Warming up also increases muscle temperature and lubricates your joints, preventing injuries that could take you out of the gym for a long time. The stretch after is your reward, giving your muscles a chance to cool down slowly and easing any soreness you'll feel tomorrow, decreasing the chance of injury or cramping.



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# THE 'T'

## IN POLITICS

EDGE SPEAKS WITH ACTIVIST SARAH MCBRIDE, THE FIRST TRANSGENDER FEMALE TO SPEAK AT A DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION, AND ACTIVIST SHARRON COOKS, THE ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN TRANSGENDER FEMALE DNC DELEGATE.

Sarah McBride

**THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT 2016** will go down as a watershed year for transgender rights. The fallout from North Carolina's anti-transgender bathroom bill has put equal opportunity for transgender Americans front and center, and brought in some unexpected allies in professional sports and corporate America. The Obama administration's directive to public schools to provide appropriate access to restrooms and changing facilities was welcome news for transgender children and their parents, as was the Department of Defense's lifting of the ban on transgender servicemembers.

Though it's not as if religious conservatives have stopped using fear and demonization of trans Americans as part of their agenda. Case in point: attacking Target from enacting trans-friendly policies (fortunately, the retail giant has shown little signs of caving to their demands).

But while the trans community has had its fair share of visible celebrities (Caitlyn Jenner, Chaz Bono, Laverne Cox and Janet Mock, to name a few), almost all high-profile transgender activists have been in media and entertainment. This is great for getting the message out, but none of them work where laws are made.

Until 2016, the national political stage had been closed to transgender Americans. That changed in July at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, when a pair of transgender women broke through that glass ceiling.



## Sarah McBride

Sarah McBride has been involved in the political arena most of her adult life. In 2012, she became the first transgender person to serve as an intern at the White House. In 2014, she was largely credited with the passage of Delaware's nondiscrimination law that included gender identity. And in July 2016, she made history at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, becoming the first transgender person to address a major party convention.



**EDGE:** What was going through your mind when you found out you'd be making history on the floor of the convention?

**SM:** I was excited and honored to have the opportunity. I wanted make sure I used my time – three minutes – to educate the country about the unfinished work for the LGBT community, and to show a little bit more about what it means to be transgender, as well as make my community proud.

**EDGE:** What did it mean for to you to make that speech?

**SM:** I was moved that there was a chance for someone on a stage at a national convention to say that they are a transgender person. And my hope is that for anyone who was watching, that they can find some comfort, support and some hope in the fact that a transgender person would be standing on that stage saying those words. I want the youth of today to see that being transgender is not something to be ashamed of, but to be embraced.

**EDGE:** You asked in your speech, "Will we be

a nation where there's only one way to love, one way to look, one way to live? Or will we be a nation where everyone has the freedom to live openly and equally – a nation that's stronger together?" The phrase resonated throughout the delegates. What is your hope when you hear that?

**SM:** My hope is that this continues to resonate with the delegates as they go back to their states and keep talking about it. I hope that it spreads and people become more aware of LGBT rights and exclusions that are occurring. LGBTQ people are targeted by hate that lives in both laws and too many Americans' hearts. Many still struggle just to get by. I believe tomorrow can be different, but we need all of America's help to do so.

**EDGE:** What do people need to understand about what it means to be transgender?

**SM:** People forget about our humanity, that we are people just like they are. Even today, people are still trying to understand what it means and what it's like to be transgender. People in America are trying to still wrap their



“There are people who don’t identify as male or female, so I would say I have no problem being referred to as transgender or a woman, because without one or the other I wouldn’t be the person I am today.”

minds around this concept, and I think we have to continue to educate folks about that. There’s a need for the community to tell our stories – why we are who we are – and about regaining their humanity. There needs to be an open forum about how transitioning helped us, how coming out helped us and how being true to ourselves saved our lives.

**EDGE:** Why do you think people are hearing more about transgender issues in 2016? Do you feel there is enough inclusion, or is the “T” in LGBT still a little too silent?

**SM:** We do have a lot of work ahead of us. We have had the opportunity of some amazing activists before us who paved the way, but this is about transgender people fully and equally participating in public life. While the “T” is still a little too silent, I believe by me doing this speech, we have taken great strides in confronting that.

**EDGE:** Would you rather be known as a transgender person or as a woman?

**SM:** I would say that I am both. Let me explain: The person I have become is from both being a woman and being transgender. There are people who don’t identify as male or female, so I would say I have no problem being referred to as transgender or a woman, because without one or the other I wouldn’t be the person I am today.

**EDGE:** Finally, where do you see yourself in 10 years? Any political aspirations?

**SM:** I definitely want to move back to Delaware. I love the state and want to be there again. As for making plans for the future, life has a way of changing them, so I don’t want to plan that far ahead. But I do see myself still in politics in one way, shape, or form. It’s in my blood.





## Sharron Cooks

The number of black, Latin and indigenous trans people who are unemployed, homeless or uninsured are all nearly double that of white trans people. Trans women of color face high rates of violence and murder, and often receive little to no help from law enforcement. The difficulty trans people of color face is a colossal, layered problem that needs to be addressed, but lawmakers seem reluctant to address it.

This year at the Democratic National Convention, another huge accomplishment was made when Sharron Cook, an out transgender woman of color, was appointed as a Pennsylvania delegate for the Democratic Party. EDGE had time to talk to Sharron about this historic event.

**EDGE:** How did it feel when you saw Sarah walk out on that stage?

**SC:** I had the opportunity to meet Sarah on the day before her DNC speech. I was very excited to hear her speak. I was really excited to see an out transgender woman stand in front of millions of people and speak on behalf of the trans community. I felt she was extremely brave to address the issues and challenges many of trans women of color face. Some people may have shied away from addressing such issues, but Sarah did not, and I really respect her for that, as well as the work she does on behalf of the trans community.

**EDGE:** How did you become a delegate with the DNC?

**SC:** There are two ways to become a delegate for the DNC – by being elected or by being appointed. I was chosen to be a delegate to this year’s DNC. The Demo-

cratic Party strives for diversity and inclusion. The Pennsylvania Democratic LGBT leadership particularly in Philadelphia felt that having an openly African-American transgender female would provide the Democratic Party with insight that would provide a better understanding of the needs of the transgender community in order to establish a political platform that is progressive and inclusive of all LGBTQ people. One Sunday night I received a message from Brian Sims asking if I would be interested in being a delegate for the DNC. When a state representative offers you a once-in-a-lifetime experience to be of service, you accept. Because of my years of academic success, community organizing, advocacy and activism, I was fortunate enough to be presented with such a life-changing opportunity and experience.

**EDGE:** Why are people beginning to hear more about transgender issues in 2016? Why do you think it’s taken this long?

**SC:** I think it’s taken so long because many trans-identified individuals are cautious of being visible because of the negativity and potential violence that



comes with being so open about one's life and experiences. But at the same time, it can inspire others to become more visible and help make a positive impact in people's lives. I think it's also important to note that there are more opportunities for trans people to obtain the skills and experience to get into leadership with the help of trans and LGB allies than there were before. In addition, the work of pioneers such as Monica Roberts, Laverne Cox, Janet Mock, Marissa Richmond (DNC official) and many, many others paved the way for the trans community to be presented with such opportunities as serving at the DNC, through their visibility and activism. The media has helped bring their work and issues that the trans community to the forefront to get a better understanding of what it is to be transgender and the issues we face in society.

We are human beings and should have equal protections under the law. We have started stepping out of just the trans community, and this has led to people understanding who we are and breaking down stigmas and misconceptions about trans-identified individuals. There have been tre-

mendous advances made for the trans community in the last 20 years, and I am so grateful for the progress that has been made, but more needs to be done so that we have the same opportunities as non-trans-identified people.

**EDGE:** What do people need to understand about what it means to be transgender?

**SC:** One of the things people need to understand is that trans-identified people are not gay, and it's not a choice or lifestyle. Who would choose to be discriminated against, be ridiculed and looked down upon? Oftentimes, people think it's a gay man just trying to be a woman, or a lesbian trying to be a man, and that couldn't be further from the truth. I've always identified as female. My journey has been about mind, body and spiritual congruence. We are human beings, and our lives are valuable. We deserve the same dignity and respect as cis-gender people.

**EDGE:** What was your coming out experience?

**SC:** I came out at 17, in high school. I was supported by my peers, but the administration was very discriminatory in dealing with me as a teenage transgender female. I was suspended for using the girl's bathroom, dressing in clothes that weren't

masculine. It was very challenging – so much so, I dropped out of high school in my senior year because of all the discrimination from the administration and staff. I am still friends with many of my peers from high school, and they love and respect me. In the beginning there were challenges with my family, and it was difficult. There wasn't a lot of information, resources or services available to help them understand what I was going through then. But with love, they began to understand and accept me and respect my journey as a transgender female.

**EDGE:** Do you feel there is enough inclusion, or is the "T" in LGBT still a little too silent?

**SC:** I believe that the "T" is getting more visibility, but now we need to educate individuals about the issues and needs of the trans communities. I appreciate all the allies that have come forward to help! We have made some great progress, and it is the responsibility of people in the trans community to help advocate for equal rights and protections. It works both ways: people in the trans community need to step up and support those of us in the community doing what needs to be done, because the whole community benefits from the work trans activist and allies do. Having trans individuals in leadership roles makes the "T" less silent.

**EDGE:** You identify as a woman, and that's who you are. Some people just say male or female. Is that too constrictive, or would you rather be known as a transgender woman of color or as a woman?



**SC:** I identify as a woman. The word *transgender* was first coined in the 1960s, and in the last few years it has encompassed those who cross-dress, some wanting to make a statement against the social construction of gender roles in society, while others identify it with having a medical condition that can be treated, which is called a transsexualism medical condition, which is treatable through hormone replacement therapy and corrective medical treatment. I know there is going to be backlash, and I have the greatest respect for everyone in the community and how they identify. I am a female with a medical condition who receives the necessary medical care to live a normal life. I don't live in a "costume." I never have identified myself that as anything other than female. I've always been and will be a woman.

**EDGE:** Finally, where do you see yourself in 10 years? Any political aspirations?

**SC:** At this moment, I am very happy with the course my life is taking. I enjoy working with grassroots campaigns and legislators. Who knows what the future may bring? I am letting the universe guide me. And who knows, more opportunities to be involved with politics may arise. And I'm totally open to that, but right now I am satisfied where my life is going. I will continue to assist in developing young people into the leaders of the future that have a passion for social justice, community service and academia. **📌**

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Getting to China is no small feat. Flying from either U.S. coast, you can anticipate at least a 13-hour flight, so once you arrive it's best to have a game plan. And that begins before you even step into that interminable TSA line. You may think that you'll only make it to China once in your lifetime, but for the same price (\$160), you can obtain a 10-year visa instead of the typical 90-day. Just be sure to check the appropriate box on the application form and fill out the paperwork *exactly* as indicated, or you'll find yourself back in a line that rivals your worst DMV nightmare.

## 2. YOU'RE NOT IN KANSAS ANYMORE

English (or your two years of high school French or Spanish) won't do you much good on the mainland. With the exception of hotel staff, I found that few locals spoke fluent English. Sure, you'll be able to get by with exasperated hand gestures and a map (of the paper variety – Google is banned, so good luck with that smartphone). But if you want to spend more time seeing the sites than in fits of frustration, hire an expert guide.

Audley Travel has provided customized itineraries to Asia for 20 years and is especially attuned to the needs of an LGBT traveler. "Audley country specialists – with our highly skilled guides, destination experts and handpicked hotels and properties – ensure that guests will receive a warm reception and full experience," said Shane Murphy, Audley Travel China specialist. "We've never had an issue of a lack of acceptance from clients or in our own extensive travels. As a gay man, I also have an appreciation for the finer things in life, and a tailor-made trip allows the ability to truly customize your trip and taste level. It's our priority to ensure each traveler's experience goes beyond expectation."

### 3. SHANGHAI LUXURY

My first stop is Shanghai, a metropolis of 23 million people that makes New York City look quaint. The best place to get a sense of the city's enormity is at the Shanghai Urban Planning Urban Exhibition Center, which houses a scale model. Or you can book a room at the Ritz-Carlton Shanghai, Pudong, which occupies the top 18 floors of the Shanghai IFC South Tower, inspired by the 1930s Shanghai art deco movement. Be sure to request a room with views of the Huangpu River and the Bund (the city's pedestrian-friendly waterfront), but also allow time for a up-close selfie of the newly built Shanghai Tower next door – China's tallest building at a staggering 2,073 feet.

### 4. ROAD WARRIOR

If you're going to take a Shanghai walking tour, be sure to engage the expertise of architect, author and historian Spencer Dodington, an American expat who has lived in Shanghai for more than 20 years. Dodington will highlight many art deco examples, including vertical, horizontal and Chinese. Favorites include a YWCA building designed by Chinese-American architect Poy Gum Lee as well as the entertainment district, Xin Tian Di, which fuses old and new while still preserving elements of Shikumen-style construction that was popular from the late-19th century to the 1920s.

For more horsepower, consider riding in the sidecar of a vintage Chang Jiang 750 motorbike. Insiders Experience will buzz you around with your own private guide, weaving in and out of various vantage points in a vehicle originally produced for the Chinese army in the early 1950s. My guide, Arthur, made a pit stop in Old Town, where we explored by foot an area not often visited by tourists.





## 5. WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN

After a delayed internal flight from Shanghai to Chengdu that resulted in a harrowing few hours at a local hotel and the kindness of strangers, I arrived in the capital of the Sichuan province with two things in mind: pandas and peppercorns. Often compared to Los Angeles, Chengdu is supposedly the more relaxed of China's metropolises, but there's plenty to experience in this city of 7 million urbanites.

Luxurious respite can be found at Temple House, a stunning new hotel that features a 1,600-year-old landmark as its cornerstone. Modern amenities merge with traditional building materials like bamboo, stone and brick. Be sure to grab a green tea and unwind in the on-site library or treat yourself to an immersive spa experience at Mi Xun day spa and teahouse.

## 6. PANDA KEEPER FOR A DAY

One of Chengdu's main draws is its proximity to the China Conservation and Research Centre for the Giant Panda. You can volunteer for the afternoon, as I did, at the Dujiangyan base, but don't expect to be cuddling with newborns. This facility is mostly for adult pandas, which are kept in well-maintained enclosures. You'll be hauling bamboo, shoveling dung and feeding "panda cakes" to the spoiled bears. There are plenty of photo ops, but without explanation, your friends might think you ended up in a Chinese prison.

## 7. A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

Renée Fleming will be nowhere in sight, but you'll certainly get your fill of entertainment at Chengdu's outdoor Shu Feng Ya Yun teahouse. The variety show includes acrobats, puppeteers, musicians and the not-to-be-missed "face changing" act – a long theatrical tradition where performers transform with the use of tightly fitted masks that portray different emotions. The V.I.P ticket is worth the extra renminbi (the national currency), as it includes a mid show ear cleaning, shoulder massage, or post-performance photo in authentic costume.



## 8. SPICE IT UP!

Your local takeout will never taste the same after visiting the Museum of Sichuan Cuisine. The collection holds more than 3,000 pieces, but it's the interactive demonstrations, like hand-grinding tofu and cookery classes, that will put you in the hot seat. My afternoon at the stove included a stab at traditional dishes like kung pao chicken and mapo tofu. I also managed to smuggle home a container of douban jiang, a fermented chile paste aged in sun-soaked clay pots.

## 9. KNOW WHERE TO ENTER

The Learning Channel called the Great Wall of China the No. 1 man-made wonder of the world – a title well earned. Dating back to Emperor Qin Shi Huang, the wall is more than 13,000 miles long. Organized by my Audley country specialist, I opted to enter at Jinshanling, a less-populated point that forgoes throngs of tourists for scenic vistas. An additional guide will likely shadow your journey with the hopes of selling souvenirs at the end of your expedition.

## 10. LIVE LIKE ROYALTY

Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City will be on your trajectory for your time in Beijing, but to get out of the fray, head to the Aman Summer Palace on the outskirts of the city. The 260-year-old, beautifully manicured gardens and walking paths were once a backdrop for reigning emperors and their courts, and now provide luxurious accommodations and experiences for those who want to feel like modern-day royalty. Be sure to take advantage of Aman's private garden access through the exclusive East Gate entrance.

## 11. QUACK, QUACK

Undoubtedly, everyone will have an opinion about where to get Beijing's signature dish, Peking duck, but if you want to eat with the locals, plan on waiting for well over an hour at Siji Minfu, a traditional no-frills restaurant that serves an exceptional roast duck, along with other delicacies such as noodles with fried chile paste and sautéed cabbage with shrimp.



## 12. WHERE ARE THE QUEERS?

You won't find an area equitable to the Castro, Miami Beach or Hell's Kitchen, but there are plenty of queers in China. At the recommendation of a friend, I download the app Jack'd, which seemed to be popular and gave me the chance to chat with some guys in each of the cities I visited. They all seemed to be going about their business without a looming sense of oppression, but digging a bit deeper there's plenty of work to be done on the equality front. On my return, I reached out to Benjamin Law, author of *Gaysia: Adventures in the Queer East* (Cleis Press), who spent nearly a year traveling to seven Asian countries, including mainland China.

"You can't draw clean parallels between the fight for LGBTI rights in China and the fight for LGBTI rights in the West. Homophobia – virulent hatred for gays – doesn't exist in China, like it does in Christian- or Muslim-majority countries. However, not even acknowledging homosexuality exists creates a whole other suite of problems. It's not all doom and gloom – as young Chinese increasingly travel and migrate, they find allies, education themselves about LGBTI issues and find a vocabulary they can adapt for use back home. But progress can be slow, especially when it's difficult to establish or define your identity in the first place." 🚫

*Matthew Wexler is EDGE Media's national style and travel editor. Follow him on social media at @roodeloo.*



# RESOURCES

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# POSITIVE INFLUENCE

HOW BROADWAY'S NEW HAMILTON, JAVIER MUÑOZ, USED HIS NEWFOUND CELEBRITY AS A PLATFORM TO FIGHT HIV STIGMA

It's 6:30 on a warm September night in New York City's East Village, and the crowd inside the lobby of the famed Public Theater is abuzz at the arrival of *Hamilton* star Javier Muñoz. It's a common scene for Muñoz these days: Seven times a week, the 40-year-old native New Yorker is greeted at the stage door of Broadway's Richard Rodgers Theater by throngs of fans fresh from seeing his critically acclaimed performance in the title role of the musical megahit.



But tonight is different. Tonight, he prepares to enter the theater at the Public's cabaret space, Joe's Pub, where he'll sit in the audience as Broadway friends, colleagues and dignitaries from the GMHC honor him at its 2016 Howard Ashman Award & Cabaret. For HIV-positive Muñoz, who was heavily involved in developing and debuting *Hamilton*, which was nurtured at the Public, the evening is a homecoming on many levels.

"GMHC is the very first place I went to seek help when I was diagnosed in 2002," Muñoz told EDGE. "This is really coming full circle for me tonight. It's very special."

Muñoz contracted HIV from a man with whom he was in a long-term monogamous relationship. "It was an adult choice not to be safe with my partner," he told the audience at Joe's Pub. His partner was HIV positive but didn't say anything. Muñoz puts the blame on fear and shame and believes that if there wasn't such a stigma attached to HIV, his partner might have told him about it at the time.

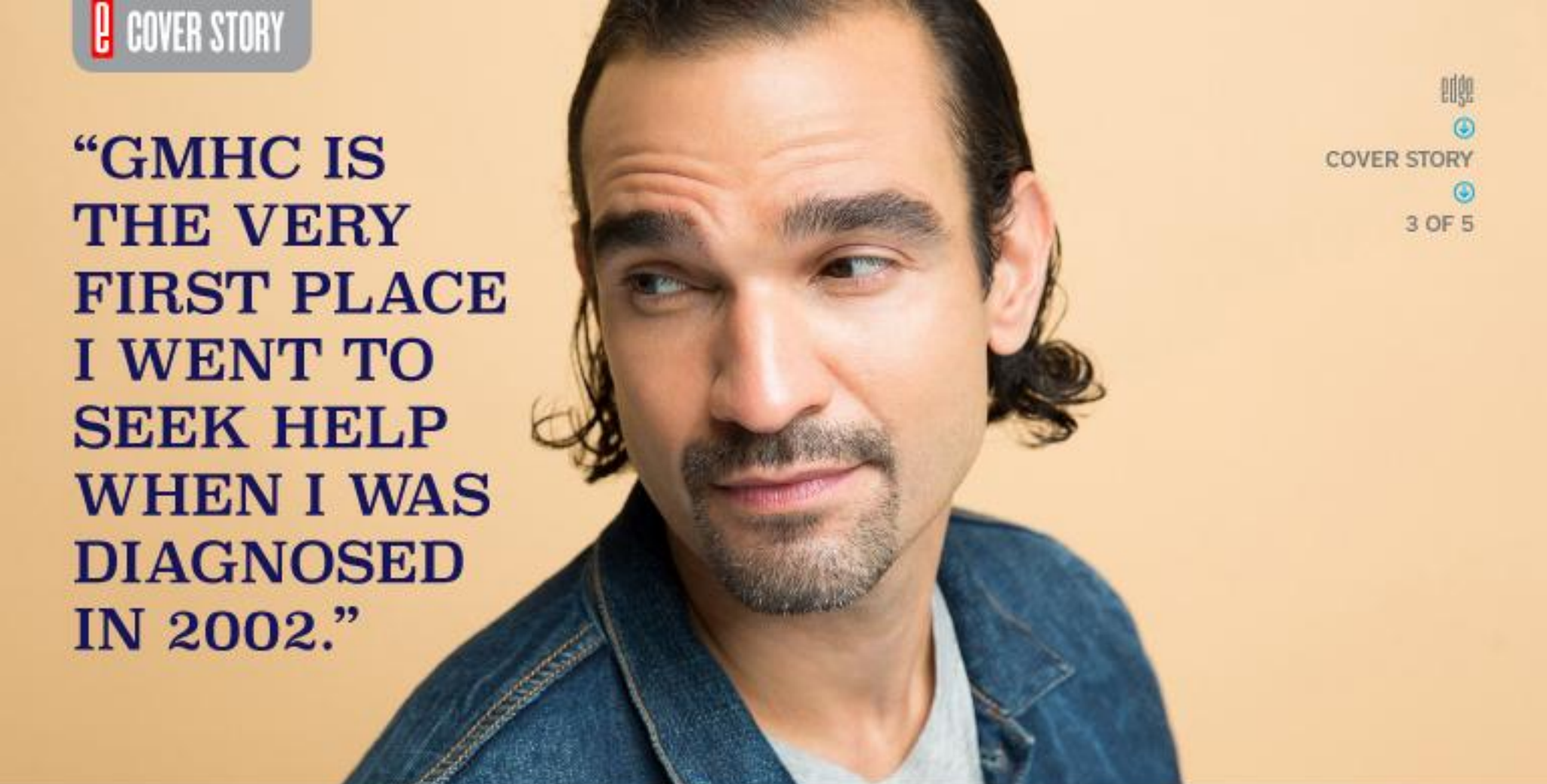
Today, when antiviral medications not only make the disease less deadly but also more difficult to transmit, stigma remains one of the seemingly insurmountable burdens that HIV-positive people face. Many find it difficult to tell their families and live with concerns about how the disease may end up affecting their work, friendships and romantic relationships.

Muñoz would experience this firsthand by being rejected by men when opening up about his HIV status. Yet it was this kind of rejection that got Muñoz past the anger with the former partner who infected him.

"Fear and shame appear to be at the very DNA of the virus," Muñoz said. "I came to realize what my partner must have felt."



“I feel like I want to be a public presence who says, ‘We have to have this conversation, and we can have this conversation, so let’s have this conversation.’”



“GMHC IS THE VERY FIRST PLACE I WENT TO SEEK HELP WHEN I WAS DIAGNOSED IN 2002.”

### SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE CONVERSATION

In an era riddled with stunt casting on Broadway, Muñoz is somewhat of an anomaly. Rather than put a television, movie or music industry star in the titular role, *Hamilton's* producers opted to elevate Muñoz from alternate when creator and star Lin-Manuel Miranda exited the show in July. The move, which expanded Muñoz's performance schedule from one to seven performances per week, also thrust the actor into the media spotlight.

Muñoz, who was called “sexy” Hamilton by *New York Times* critic Ben Brantley and inspired the hashtag #Javilton during his stint as Miranda's alternate, had been the subject of a March 2016 *People* magazine feature that focused on his fight with cancer but made no mention of his HIV status. During the media blitz that followed his taking the role on full time in July, Muñoz took the stigma attached to HIV head-on and opened up about being HIV positive in an interview with *The New York Times*.

“I’m strong and I’m very out about [my status] because of the stigma still attached to it,” Muñoz told *The Times*.

The *Times* piece prompted subsequent interviews in *GQ* and on *Late Night with Stephen Colbert* to

explore the topic with Muñoz. Before he knew it, he was labeled an activist as the new public face of HIV.

When asked by EDGE if he knew going public with his status would garner so much attention, Muñoz replied: “No I didn’t, and that wasn’t the intention. I just hoped to be a public figure who was able to talk about this publicly and out loud for the sake of those who can’t or feel like they can’t.”

Longtime friend and actress Natalie Cortez further backed up Muñoz's assertion.

“He’s not doing this for himself,” Cortez said. “He’s actually a very private person. He’s doing this because of the people who don’t have a Broadway community.”

“It’s a shame, really, that we still do not speak openly about HIV/AIDS,” Muñoz told EDGE. “It’s a shame that one interview sharing my status has this much of an impact. How many men, women, children have suffered in silence and without dignity?”



## NO LABELS, PLEASE

"Javier continues to be a steadfast advocate against AIDS and stigma," wrote GMHC's Chief Executive Officer Kelsey Louie. "The fact that the lead in one of America's greatest musicals is able to talk openly about his status to mainstream publications like *The New York Times* and *GQ* magazine shows us by speaking out, we can reduce the stigma of those living with HIV."

And yet despite the media attention and honor from GMHC, Muñoz says he feels like neither an activist nor a role model.

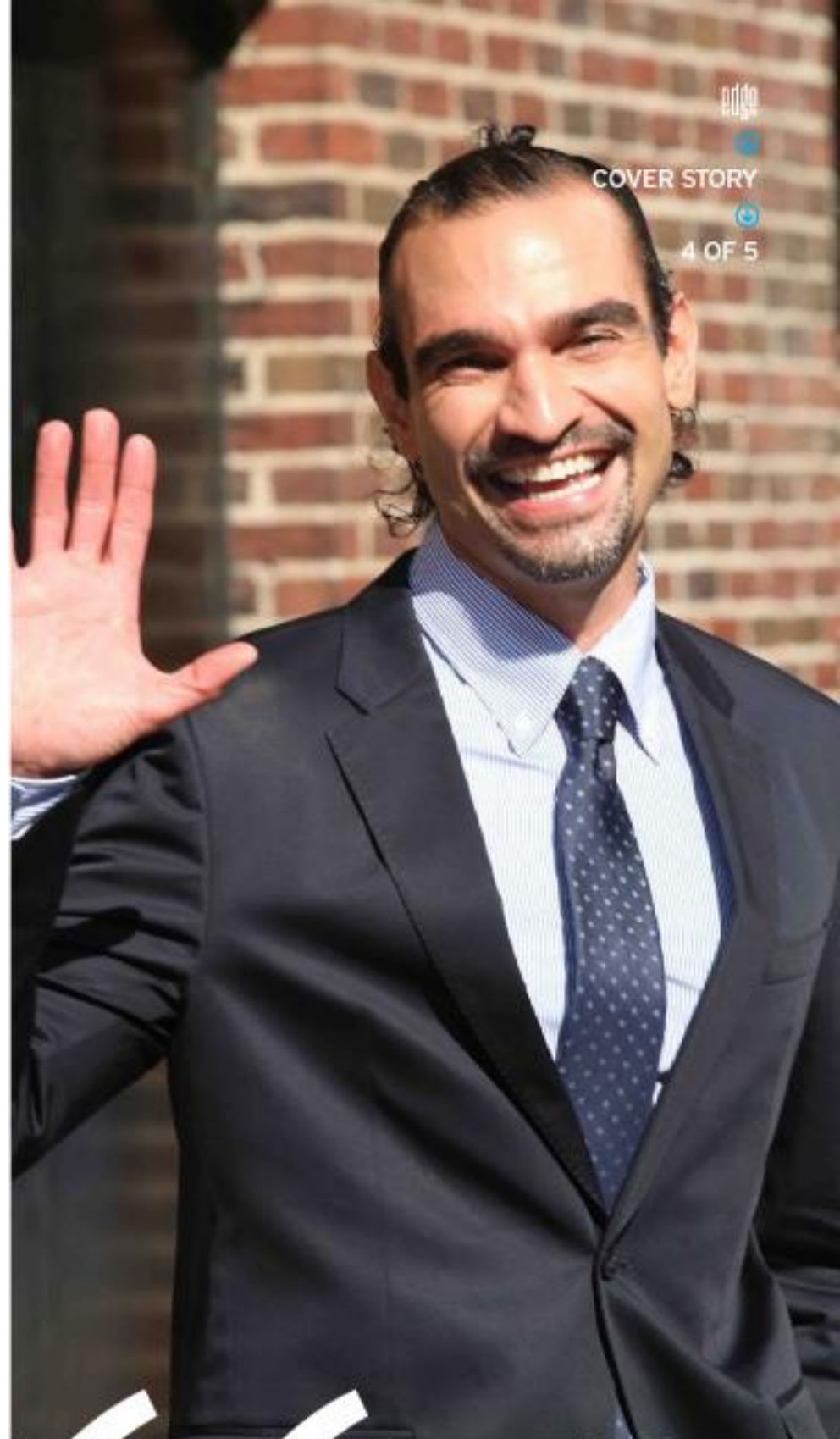
"I don't think either is really comfortable to me," Muñoz told EDGE. "I feel comfortable just having the conversation about it. And if those adjectives get attached to me, I feel a sort of pressure and responsibility for that."

"I'm not always going to have the right words and most recent knowledge. I feel like if you're a role model or an activist, you sort of have to be on point with all of the information. And I'm not always going to know the right thing to say. I'm going to be affected by my emotions or some personal journey of my own with my own health," he concluded.

## THE ASHMAN AWARD LEGACY

Muñoz is one of a handful of recipients of GMHC's Howard Ashman Award, named for the lyricist and creator of *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Beauty and the Beast* who died from AIDS-related complications in 1991. Past recipients have included playwright Terrance McNally and AIDS fundraising kingpin Tom Viola, executive director of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.

"They are part of my inspiration to fight," Muñoz said of McNally and Viola. "They are examples to me of courage. And we need



"I'm strong and I'm very out about [my status] because of the stigma still attached to it."



more of that. So I feel deeply honored by tonight and to be in that company.”

For Viola, the admiration is mutual.

“I am very proud to have been presented with GMHC’s Howard Ashman Award last year at Joe’s Pub, particularly following the award’s inaugural recipient, Terrence McNally,” Viola told EDGE. “When I first read that Javier Muñoz would be this year’s honoree, I was thrilled to be standing between these two wonderful theater artists: one a beloved, esteemed playwright with a remarkable body of work and the other a burgeoning, ex-

citing actor currently starring in theater’s most celebrated production.”

“Javi is such a fine actor because the wild talent he brings to telling a story on stage is equally matched by the courage and commitment he brings to sharing his journey as a man with us off-stage,” Viola continued. “What fills him up creatively spills over the footlights and lifts us up as audience and as a member of communities in which we share a common path. And like Terrence, even more than being some kind of hero, Javi is just a good guy, a comrade and pal with a brilliant smile who walks the walk.”

Yet for Muñoz, it seems equally as important to talk the talk.

“I feel like I want to be a public presence who says, ‘We have to have this conversation, and we can have this conversation, so let’s have this conversation,’ ” Muñoz told EDGE.

“Let’s kick stigma in the fucking teeth!” **0**

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# Falsettos

## MARCHES AGAIN

WILL THIS AIDS-ERA MUSICAL MAINTAIN ITS RELEVANCE IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM?



BRIAN SCOTT LIPTON

**IN 1992**, Broadway audiences (and Tony voters) laughed, cried and cheered their way through William Finn and James Lapine's musical *Falsettos*, based on two parts of the pair's previous Off-Broadway trilogy about Marvin, a long-married Jewish man who announces he's gay and eventually falls in love with a man named Whizzer – whose death from AIDS affects everyone around them, including Marvin's ex-wife, Trina; his teenage son, Jason; Trina's new husband, Mendel; and Marvin's lesbian best friends, Charlotte (a doctor) and Cordelia (a caterer).

Now, nearly a quarter of a century later, the work returns to Broadway's Walter Kerr Theatre, coproduced by Lincoln Center Theater, with a cast led by Christian Borle (Marvin), Andrew Rannells (Whizzer), Stephanie J. Block (Trina), Tracie Thoms (Charlotte) and Betsy Wolfe (Cordelia). EDGE recently spoke with Finn, Block, Thoms and Wolfe about the show and its impact on audiences in 2016.



**EDGE:** Bill, do you have any worries about *Falsettos* being seen as a “period piece”?

**WILLIAM FINN:** Obviously, I had trepidations about bringing it back at this time. But André Bishop [the head of Lincoln Center Theater] went and saw the original production in the Lincoln Center library and assured me that it holds up wonderfully. I trust him totally, and that statement took a large weight off of me. And while it doesn’t feel antiquated to me, we’ll have to see how other people feel. In fact, I’ve never looked forward to previews of a show as much as I am now, because I really want to see the audience reaction. I know this is such a different time than the original.

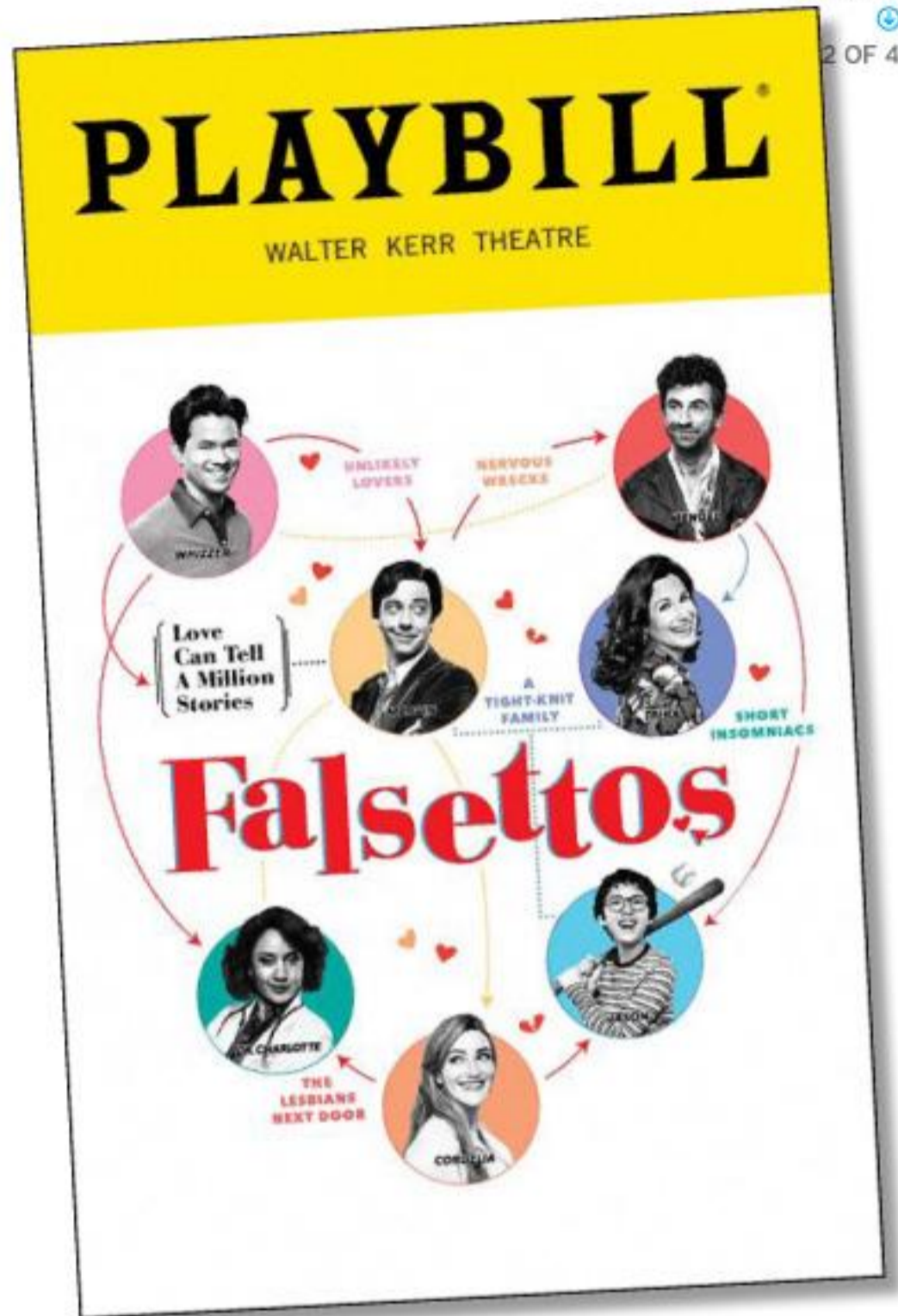
**EDGE:** So did you decide to change anything in the script or score?

**WF:** Nothing has been substantially updated; all I did was change some lyrics – lyrics that have bothered me for 25 years, because I always felt they were “lazy.”

**EDGE:** How do you think younger audiences, many who weren’t born at the time the show takes place, will react to the show?

**WF:** I teach at NYU in the Musical Theatre program, where they should know about this show, and they don’t. They know nothing about this time – and they should! Of course, I know I have the advantage that I wrote this show at the time all of this was happening.

**STEPHANIE J. BLOCK:** Even not being so young, while I “knew” about the AIDS situation in the 1980s, I grew up in Republican Orange County, California. And we were so on the periphery that when they would refer to the “gay cancer,” or whatever they called it – most of the time there



wasn’t even a name – it seemed like something very far away that didn’t affect “the rest of us.” Coming to this piece now, especially as a mom, it touches me so much, but in a different way than I expected. It’s not just an “AIDS musical” – it’s about humanity, it’s about family, it’s about relationships. And, yes, it’s about this terrible disease that affected everyone, whether you knew it or not. So, to me, it’s not a period piece; it feels very present. I don’t feel like we’re in a time capsule of any kind.

**WF:** I think there’s also humor in the show. And it’s important that things be funny, because when you find common ground for humor, things don’t date in the same way. I hope the laughs that were



there are still there. And Stephanie is hilarious – in fact, all the Trinas we’ve cast over the years have been funny.

**BETSY WOLFE:** I think what Bill and Stephanie said is so true. Life is sometimes hysterical, sometimes heartbreaking, and that’s what going to resonate with today’s audiences. This is a fantastic example of a show that truly expresses everything. You will feel all the feels.

**TRACIE THOMS:** While this is definitely a musical, it almost feels like a play to me. It’s very immersive, very complex. The characters are so nuanced, and the words they say are so specific. Each song is so layered; no song is all serious, all funny, or all heartbreaking. That’s one reason I am not afraid of it being viewed as a “period piece.” Honestly, though, that idea doesn’t bother me. In fact, the more we commit to the atmosphere of the 1970s and 1980s, the more the show will resonate now with audiences. Everything is a ripple. I remember when my younger brother’s godfather died of AIDS in the early 1990s, and I didn’t know he had it. I remember how we had to process it, and if it meant he was gay, and how hard that was.

Each song is so layered; no song is all serious, all funny, or all heartbreaking. **That’s one reason I am not afraid of it being viewed as a “period piece.”**

Nothing has been substantially updated; all I did was change some lyrics — lyrics that have bothered me for 25 years, because I always felt they were “lazy.”



**EDGE:** The relationship of Cordelia and Charlotte feels central to the piece, even if they are in some way “supporting characters.” Was that a conscious decision in writing it?

**WF:** They could have just been side characters, but once James and I decided to put them into the quartet “Four Unlikely Lovers,” they really did become central. That song is so important to the core of the show.

**EDGE:** So it’s important that the actresses who play them have great chemistry, right?

**BW:** Exactly. We moved in with each other immediately. We’ve been living together for three or four months [laughs].

**TT:** The funny thing is, I only auditioned with Betsy, and it was great. We were friends before, now we’re lovers. But it’s really the way our characters are written that not only allows us to know exactly how we function within the group, but there’s all this room to

discover our own dynamic as a couple and how we function outside the group.

**EDGE:** Tracie, do you feel that being in this show will bring in an African-American audience?

**TT:** I am part of a group of actors of color who talk about this issue in casting, and I know there was a meeting when *Falsettos* came up; and people were so happy that this musical, which traditionally doesn’t have actors of color, has me in it. Especially because it’s perceived as such a Jewish show. But I think in terms of my casting, it’s been so interesting for me to explore what Charlotte, as the only person of color in this group, is experiencing. I am a fish out of water, and I have to acknowledge it. I want people to pay attention to it. I don’t want to just be black on the skin only.

**SJB:** In fact, we had to change one line, when Jason comes in at one point and says to us all: “You people are so white.”

**TT:** If it had stayed in, I would have had to react to that! **O**





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# Panels

BRILLIANTLY IMAGINED GRAPHIC NOVEL *THE CASE OF ALAN TURING* OFFERS FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON REAL-LIFE GAY HERO AND SUBJECT OF *THE IMITATION GAME*

The work of English mathematician Alan Turing lead directly to the development of the computer, while his genius for breaking seemingly impenetrable Nazi codes saved millions of lives during World War II. Turing's success was rewarded with chemical castration (estrogen injections) after a conviction for "gross indecency" in the early 1950s. In 2012, detailed records of his work cracking the Nazi Enigma codes were released to the public for the first time. Queen Elizabeth II granted him a posthumous pardon in 2013.

The subject of multiple documentaries, a TV miniseries and the Oscar-nominated *The Imitation Game*, Turing's story has now been turned into the graphic novel *The Case of Alan Turing: The Extraordi-*

*nary and Tragic Story of the Legendary Codebreaker.*

Drawing from facts of his life and using imagination to recreate Turing's inner life, the book focuses on the intensity of his work, his largely repressed homosexuality and the inspiration he drew from the most important personal relationship in his life – his love for schoolboy friend Christopher Morcom, who died in his early teens.

An interview with the creators Arnaud Delalande (text) and Eric Liberge (illustrations) follows, with assistance from the staff at Arsenal Pulp Press and Beth Parker from Beth Parker PR, who helped the French-speaking artists with translation.



**Arnaud and Eric, how did you come together to collaborate on this graphic novel? Had you worked together before or known each other's work? What made you want work together?**

**ARNAUD DELALANDE:** Actually, we didn't know [sic] each other, and we had never worked together! It was Laurent Muller, our French publisher at the Arènes," who had the idea to create the team. I had worked with Laurent as a scriptwriter on many graphic novels in France (*Le Dernier cathare*, *Surcouf*, *Codex Sinaiticus*), and Laurent admired Eric's work, especially on *Wotan* or *Mardi-Gras Descendres*. When Laurent told me that he thought of Eric for the art, I rushed to his work, and the next day I called Laurent back and said: "I love this, it would be great!" Eric and I met a bit later, and I think we both knew instantly that this team would work. We had the same references and we were speaking the same language. We agreed very soon on the artistic orientation we wanted for this project.

**ERIC LIBERGE:** This is a project that I typically label "fallen from the skies." In September 2015, Laurent emailed me the script from Arnaud, whose historical comic book work I knew already – but we had not had the opportunity to meet each other yet. So I read Arnaud's script and found it very interesting to transpose into a graphic novel. The thing is, I didn't know anything about Alan Turing at the time, so curiosity about this biopic was also a driving force to accept the project.

Moreover, most of the action in this story takes place during World War II, which is a period I had already been working on for another comic book, *Wotan*, in which I composed the story as well as the art. So I had a fresh and huge documentation on this period (except on the British side of it – Bletchley Park, etc.) I also liked the direc-



Benedict Cumberbatch as Alan Turing in *The Imitation Game*

“I also told Laurent from the start: ‘It would make a great movie!’ And I didn’t know, at this time, that the movie was already in progress!”



The Illustration Game: Alan Turing depicted decoding Nazi messages with the help of his Bletchley Park team CREDIT: MARK THOMAS/CENTRAL ILLUSTRATION AGENCY

tion of Arnaud's biopic very much; that is to say, the more intimate and somewhat oneiric Alan Turing, easier for us to speak of his repressed homosexuality.

**Arnaud: When did you first become interested in Alan Turing – was it when the specifics of his codebreaking work were declassified in 2012, or earlier? Were you more drawn to his tragic personal story or his groundbreaking work?**

To be honest, I didn't know much about Alan Turing until my publisher told me of him! It was a bit after the specifics of his codebreaking work were declassified, and moreover after the Queen's rehabilitation of Turing's memory in 2013. Laurent Muller gave me two different biographies of Turing and told me, "You should have a look." I read both and found immediately the subject fantastic. There was everything in this story: a world war; the personal scientific challenges of a man trying to break an unbreakable code with incredible background issues; an intimate struggle because of his homosexuality in a Puritan society; the trag-

ic destiny of a secret, lonely but national hero. So I was drawn by the intimate story as much as I was by the global implications of Turing's fight against the Enigma machine – and the subsequent discovery of artificial intelligence! It was precisely the beauty and the power of this subject: these two intricate dimensions, the global one and the individual, introspective one.

There obviously was a room for an intense graphic novel. I also told Laurent from the start: "It would make a great movie!" And I didn't know, at this time, that the movie was already in progress!

**Eric: You've created history-based works, including a book on World War II. Was your interest in Alan Turing's work connected to that interest?**

Yes, for sure, I would consider it a continuity of what I explored in *Wotan*, which is violence in a wartime period. I also like to draw the eras of the '30s to '40s. Beautiful men and women's costumes, dramatic atmospheres, etc.

This was when my parents were children, so I feel very much connected to it. Besides, the interest

“The interest to get to know who Alan Turing was, the ‘father of computers’ — this would be strong enough to make me want to do the book.”



to get to know who Alan Turing was, the “father of computers” — this would be strong enough to make me want to do the book.

**Eric and Arnaud:** Were there any aspects of *The Imitation Game* or other Turing bios or documentaries that you wanted to correct or that you thought misrepresented him as a scientist or as a man?

**E:** Well, for every biopic work, the most important thing to me is not to worry too much about what has been made before on the subject, because those films, books and documentaries have been made by other people — and are things we cannot erase, even if it does not fit to the idea we have of the Alan Turing we are trying to develop. And in fact, this is really what happens: we become intimate with the character that we are

trying to bring back to life. So the Alan that I draw is my perception of the public person he was — certainly not the very truth, but a close version of him, I hope, which also enables me to bring in my universe and express myself. This is a perpetual balance between historical accuracy and artistic freedom.

**A:** “To correct” may be a little presumptuous! But yes, our personal opinion was that the literary biographies, as fascinating as they were, didn’t catch the whole potential of this subject from a narrative, epic and dramatic point of view.

We also watched the TV British movie *Breaking the Code* with Derek Jacobi, an adaptation of Hugh Whitemore’s play. Jacobi is great, but he seems very far from the real age of Turing at the time of the facts!

I was halfway through the writing of the script when *The Imitation Game* was released, so we were a bit anxious, of course — and then the movie won an Oscar! But despite this, we were somewhat relieved, because the film was really very different from our treatment.

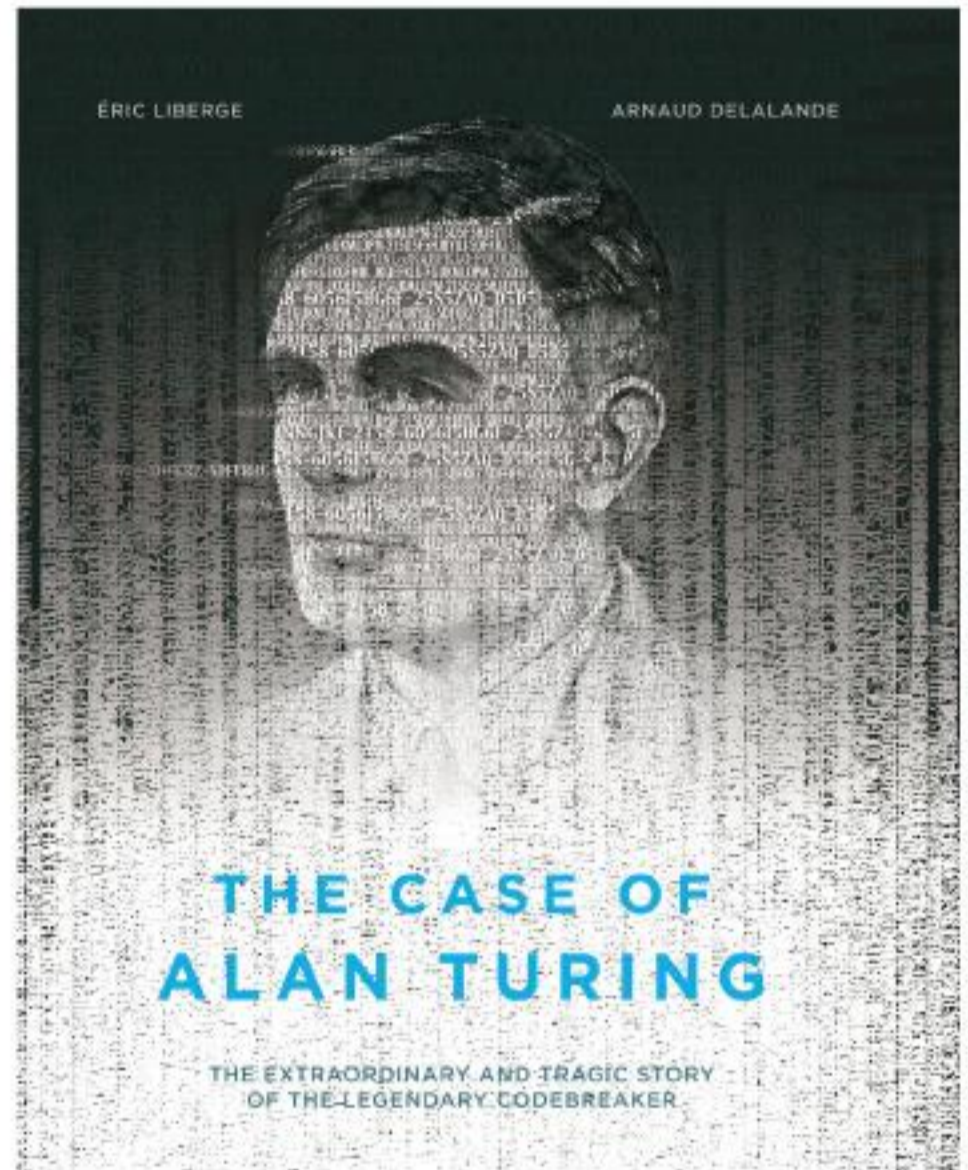
We both liked it, but we found it very “made in Hollywood,” you know. And yes, there were numerous (voluntary) mistakes in the movie: for instance, the relationship with [Turing’s one-time fiancée] Joan Clarke is true, but a bit overestimated and treated in a Hollywood way; she wasn’t recruited, as it is shown in the movie: she already worked in Bletchley Park as an administrative employee. At the opposite, the homosexual dimension is very attenuated; the chronology is often wrong; the machine was never called “Christopher” by Turing; the letter to Churchill is not at the beginning of the story but much further in the process, etc. We were even surprised that many details that we found however extraordinary (like the apple, the details of the presumed suicide, Snow White, etc.), even a bit controversial, would not be treated at all in the movie.

We really had something new to say – as in, we had something to add, something different from the movie: another point of view on the character, with a more introspective approach. At least, that was our intention!

**5. While researching *The Case of Alan Turing*, what were some of the interesting, little-known aspects of his life and character you discovered?**

**E:** I would say, all that concerns his repressed homosexuality and autistic behavior – these parts were the playground, so to say, where Arnaud and I would try to display Turing’s emotional secret life to the reader, and make the people appreciate this very particular man he was.

**A:** There are a few. For example, in the movie Turing almost appears as an autistic person and crazy scientist. Benedict Cum-



berbatch is a great actor, and it is true that Alan had his own world – that he was eccentric, insolent, a rebel to authority, which is not so good when you work with the MI6 – and that he often was lonely. But he also worked with many people in Bletchley Park, he shared information, and had a real sense of humor. He worked as a companion, a teammate. Most of all, he was a great athlete! He really could have run in the Olympics, even in the late '40s, before his chemical treatment! There are many details like this that you will discover in the book.

**Is the book 100 percent fact-based, or did you take creative license in places?**

**A:** We could say that yes, it is 100 percent fact-based, but the creative license appears, as you noticed, in the choice of a nonsequential type of narration, with many flashbacks and flash-forwards to paint the character’s evolution. Or the choice of a certain graphic point of view, emphasizing Alan’s

inner pictures, metaphors or projections, which are sometimes a bit surrealist, sometimes expressionist or, on the contrary, impressionist. We looked for a graphic and poetic way to express his doubts, his scientific researches, his dreams, his fears. We worked a lot on that.

**Was Turing in fact fascinated by *Snow White*? Did he write about this interest in any of his journals?**

**A:** He was not the only one to be fascinated by *Snow White*, but it is true that the film moved him deeply. It came out before World War II, in 1937, and Turing was not yet working for the secret service. As the first color-animated feature-length, *Snow White* was in itself a revolution.

Turing was not very interested in cinema, he never went to the movies, but he went to see *Snow White* with a few friends – and he was profoundly astonished by this artistic and technical performance. Was it a form of precognition, a sense of destiny, of fate?

The moment where the witch gives the lethal apple to Snow White made an unforgettable impression on Alan, and we can't help linking this fact to the circumstances of his death 17 years later with a poisoned

apple. Of course, the apple is also a symbol of transgression, taboo, science and knowledge – and the bitten apple is the logo of a very well-known firm! Even if Apple's founders denied a direct link to these episodes of Turing's life, there is an amazing "cloud of connections" between all this: the fruit, Eve in heaven, Newton's apple, Alan's life and death, *Snow White* and the witch, the gift of science and artificial intelligence, from Enigma to our

**wartime (or am I just reading that into it)?**

That's true! I tried to match my color palette to the old photographs of the WWII period. In fact, for every comic book I make, there is a defined palette of specific colors attached to it, as most of my work is based on atmosphere. This goes together with expressionist references, such as Fritz Lang and his *Metropolis*. Moreover, there are also

**“We had to popularize Alan Turing's work for a most nonscientific audience. I can tell you it wasn't always easy.”**

modern computers. I really tried with Eric to suggest in the book this fascinating and almost poetic continuum.

**Eric: Tell me about the visual images, especially the dreams and background images. (I think I noticed a robot from *Metropolis*.) What was your inspiration? Lots of browns, grays, deep blues – does this reflect England in**

dream sequences of Turing showing saturated, warm colors, which fit to his fantasies and erotic dreams.

**Eric and Arnaud: In this collaborative process, how much input does Arnaud have in Eric's images? Is he largely hands-off or more actively involved in the process? Does Arnaud say, "I really want to include an im-**



**age of an atomic explosion in the courtroom scene” or make similar requests?**

**E:** Arnaud’s script is fairly detailed, so I did not have to figure out too much. I followed his page-to-page scenario, which indicates time, location, number of characters, etc. Now, sometimes I had some suggestions to push a scene further, and we discussed it. In fact, I do not restrain myself to propose anything I feel that would fit in the story.

**A:** That was part of the pleasure. We had a real exchange on the script. I see novels or scriptwriting as a work on our “inner bombs,” you know: a script is here to provide, create images. The more powerful the suggestion is, the best [sic] is the book. With Eric, I didn’t have to push the button very hard! He has a great imagination.

**Arnaud: The nonsequential storytelling works well. Was it your first choice, or did you start with a more straightforward narrative?**

I was confident early on what would be the key to our storyline. The idea was: “Yes, Alan Turing wants to break the Enigma code; but in doing this, he’s trying to break the code of his own ‘intimate’ enigma. He is an enigma to himself, and to other people.” So there is an inner and intimate quest running parallel to a great scientific and historical thriller. Since the beginning, I wanted to break the traditional straightforward narrative – I was really afraid of the “academic biopic” trap – to emphasize an introspective, nonsequential, almost dreamlike storytelling.

We wanted, with all the possible humility, to try to go “inside” the thoughts and feelings of Turing, with a very introspective approach. This led us from the start to a nonsequential approach. Then our treatment was an artistic interpretation of course, as



always – but based on facts, documents, with serious historical research.

**Eric and Arnaud: Did either of you have an interest in cryptography, steganography or the encryption process before working on this project?**

**E:** Well, I am not much of a mathematician myself, so my knowledge of these topics was very poor before Alan Turing. It was for me the opportunity to learn a lot.

**A:** I’ll tell you what: In school, I was very, very bad at mathematics! Today I’m still not great, but I am also fascinated – as a writer – by scientific research. And I was really interested in cryptography, but as an amateur! So like Eric, this was an opportunity to learn. And it also was a sort of asset: we had to popularize Alan Turing’s work for a most nonscientific audience. I can tell you it wasn’t always easy – because of the complexity of the mathematics issues and the tragic circumstances of World War II – but it was definitely part of the challenge! **1**

*David Homel’s English translation of The Case of Alan Turing: The Extraordinary and Tragic Story of the Legendary Codebreaker is available now in bookstores and on Amazon.com.*



I am the future of the  
LGBT community.

**I'm gay.**

I'm 20 years old. I'm out to my parents. I love parties, the beach, and believe it or not, sports. I have a boyfriend, and we like to laugh at dumb online videos.

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# Mainstream Gay Porn?

A NOTORIOUS GAY PORN MURDER MAKES  
IT TO THE BIG SCREEN IN *KING COBRA*



Will *King Cobra* be remembered best as the film where James Franco takes it up the ass?

That happens about midway through, when Franco, who plays an out-of-control porn producer, has sex with his boyfriend (up-and-coming actor Keegan Allen in a breakout performance). As Allen mounts him from behind, Franco repeatedly screams, "Fuck that ass!"

"It is definitely a Franco on-screen first, and I was glad I was able to arrange it," the film's writer and director, Justin Kelly, says with a laugh. Kelly doesn't believe that scene will be what audiences take away when the film opens in theaters on October 21.



“What’s funny is that I haven’t really heard anyone even comment on that scene. Like no one says, ‘It’s so crazy when Franco is bent over a couch and is fucked.’ No one talks about that. At least to me.”

What they are likely talking about is the sensational true crime depicted in the film – that of porn producer Bryan Kocis, who was murdered in 2008 by the men Franco and Allen play, the self-styled porn stars called the Viper Boyz. What linked Kocis with the pair (whose real names are Harlow Cuadra and Joseph Kerekes) was Brent Corrigan, who rocketed to the top of the industry in 2004 for his twink persona. When Kocis wouldn’t release Corrigan (whose real name is Sean Paul Lockhart) from his contract, Joe and Harlow went to Kocis’s Pennsylvania home and brutally murdered him. With the help of Corrigan, authorities apprehended the pair and convicted them of the crime.

The story made the news cycle briefly in 2008 but didn’t come to Kelly’s attention until 2013, when he was making his first feature, *I Am Michael*, another real-life story that stars Franco (as gay activist turned ex-gay Michael Glatze). He thought the Corrigan-Kocis story would make a good film. Subsequently, he came upon the book *Cobra Killer* by Andrew E. Stoner and Peter A. Conway that offers an extensively researched account of the killing and became invaluable in writing the script.

In Kelly’s telling of the story, Kocis (renamed Stephen and played by Christian Slater) is a mild-mannered, suburban photographer who sets up a porn studio in his home, where his mostly twink videos are made and distributed under the Cobra Video moniker. Sales



“What’s funny is that I haven’t really heard anyone even comment on that scene. Like no one says, ‘It’s so crazy when Franco is bent over a couch and is f@cked.’”



of Cobra videos take off when he discovers Lockhart and christens him Brent Corrigan, trademarking the name in the process. In time, though, Corrigan feels exploited and moves back to San Diego; but when Stephen refuses to release him from his contract, Corrigan's porn career hits a dead end. It is at this point that he crosses paths with the Viper Boyz, who seek him out to star in one of their videos.

"The original script had far less of Joe and Harlow in it," Kelly remembers. "It was more about Brent and Stephen, and porn in general. But the more I read about Joe and Harlow and got more information about them, their story was as fascinating and made me want to tell the entire story. Why they would go as far as to murder someone?"

Kelly recalls that the film went from script to production in record time, largely because of the star power of Franco, who came on board early on. Next, he sent the script to Slater, his first choice to play Stephen, assuming he'd reject playing a porn producer who is accused of pedophilia. (Corrigan lied about his age and was 17 when he made his first film.) To Kelly's surprise, he accepted. He then approached Molly Ringwald, who plays Stephen's

sister, and Alicia Silverstone, who plays Corrigan's mother.

For the key roles of Brent Corrigan and Harlow Cuadra, Kelly approached two young Hollywood stars with considerable tween fan bases: ex-Disney heartthrob Garrett Clayton for Brent and Keegan Allen, best known for his ongoing role on *Pretty Little Liars*, for Harlow. Despite the explicitness of the roles, both were taken by the challenges of the edgy, sensational story.

"I thought Clayton had the right look and learned he wanted to try something different," explains Kelly. "We met up in person and discussed the project, and he came on. I also knew that James had worked with Allen on a couple of projects and spoke highly of him. He loved the script and was very dedicated to the role. He found a lot of old Harlow porns that I didn't find when I was doing the research."

Keegan Allen's commitment paid off: He projects a "little lost boy" quality that results in an oddly sympathetic yet dangerous character.

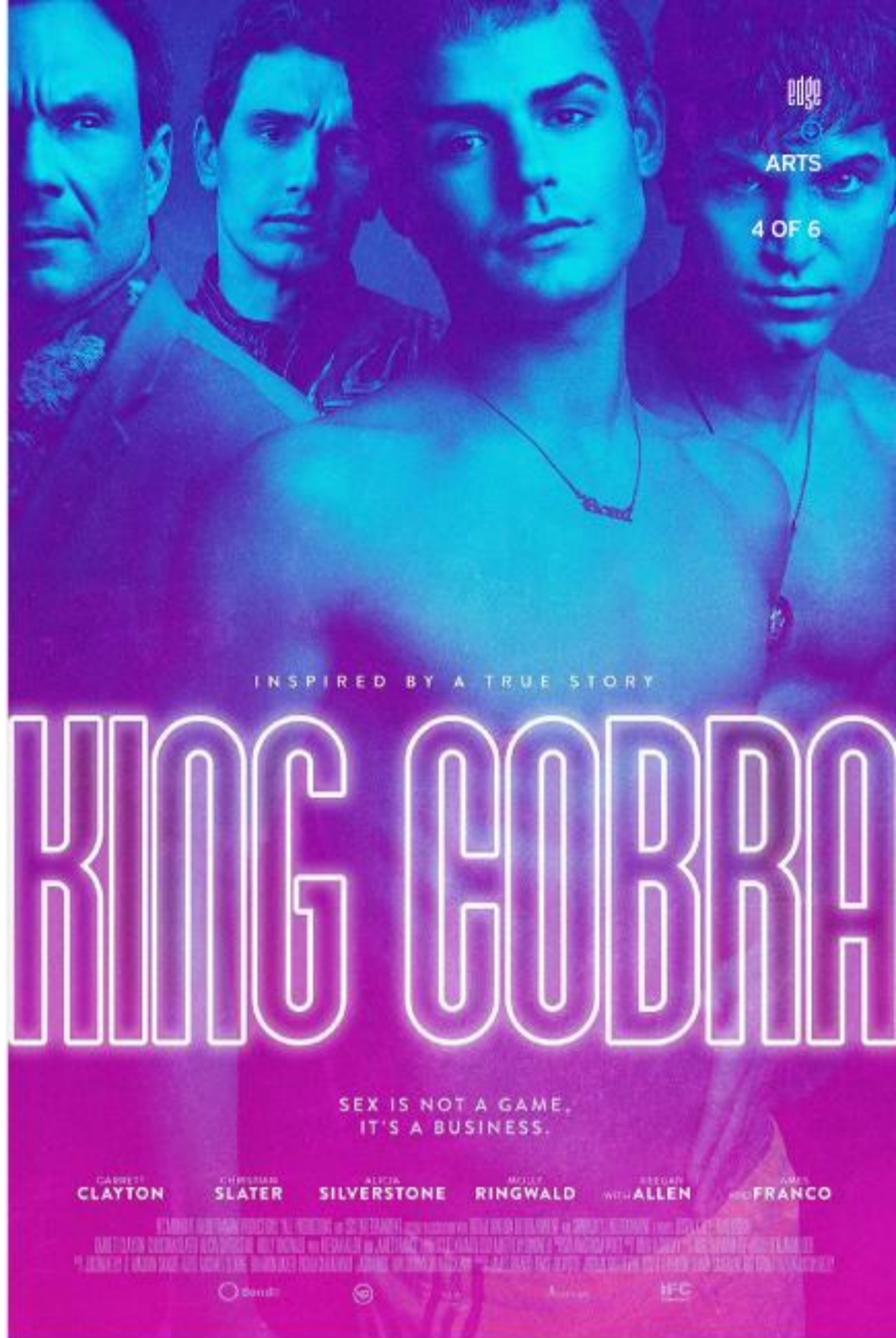
He also has terrific chemistry with Franco, whose volatile performance recalls a similar turn in Harmony Korine's memorable *Spring Breakers*.

"I didn't want to portray this guy in a bad light, because he's still alive and I wanted to be respectful of the reality of what happened to this person," explains Allen. "And once I took the role, I wanted to find out everything about him." This led him to watch every porn video Harlow had made, along with his home videos and interviews with Stoner and Conway after he was incarcerated.

"I wanted to be respectful to whom this person was and the terrible, terrible things that happened to him — like child abuse and being thrown out of his house when his parents learned he was gay. I didn't want to justify what he did, but I wanted to justify to myself why he would commit murder."

He also attributes his chemistry with Franco as coming from their friendship, which developed over two earlier projects, *Palo Alto* and *The Sound and the Fury*, of which Allen was a part.

"Working with James just felt very natural," he says. "James is incredible to work with. He's a very good listener. He really understands from an actor's point of view how it was for me to take on a very challenging and new type of role. And I think that is why I was attracted to this role, because it offered me a chance to branch out and play a character with the dramatic and comedic elements that are radically different than Tobias on *Pretty Little Liars*.



"The chemistry was just there. We just played with what Justin had written, played around with different aspects as to how it would be viewed by an audience. And also be respectful to the fact that this was a very real situation that happened."

Allen recalls having no anxiety when it came time to film the "fuck that ass" scene with Franco, despite the fact that they filmed it with the crew wearing only what are called "cock socks."

"I was never nervous about it, because I was working with James, who is a good friend, and Justin, whom I trusted. And Justin leaves a lot to the imagination in the sex scenes, yet shows enough that it makes it real. This is the kind of film experience I dreamt about: to play some-

**VIDEO:*****King Cobra* - Official Trailer | HD | IFC Midnight**

body totally different than what you expect yourself to be and have the support to bring it to life. And Justin has created a film that's so funny and rich in a dark way."

What's become the elephant in the room when discussing the film is Sean Lockhart, who has been public about his disdain for the project. (After the events portrayed in the film, Lockhart returned to porn as Brent Corrigan, but also branched out with more mainstream roles in indie films.)

"It's made. And it's not about me. It's Hollywood's attempt at bastardizing my early years in porn," he tweeted this past April, when the film premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival. "It doesn't matter what A-list celebrity is involved. The screenplay and content didn't jive. I passed it up," he added. His account of the events portrayed in the film is the subject of his book,

*Incorrigible*, scheduled for release a week after *King Cobra* is released.

Kelly recalls sending Corrigan the script and meeting with him to see if he wanted to take part in the film. "He was OK with us making it, but didn't want to be involved in it personally because he's writing a book that's telling his version of the story," he says.

"I definitely wanted to get some sort of support from him, which we didn't get. I don't want to comment too much on what he says, because I respect the fact that he went through this intensely traumatic experience. It is weird that a film has been made about it, and he wants to tell his version exactly as it happened via his book. That will be his official story – but the official story could have been the film. But that would have meant that we worked well together, and that just didn't happen."

While doing press for the film, Kelly has found himself answering questions about Franco (whom he calls "his daddy") and the actor's ongoing appropriation of gay culture. Members of the LGBTQ community have criticized him for not being up front about his sexuality as he's continued to play gay characters in film after film. This April, in an interview published on *New York* magazine's *Vulture*, Franco said: "There is a bit of over-focusing on my sexuality, both





by the straight press and the gay press, and so the first question is why do they care? Well, because I'm a celebrity, so I guess they care who I'm having sex with. But if your definition of gay and straight is whom I sleep with, then I guess you could say I'm a gay cock tease. It's where my allegiance lies, where my sensibilities lie, how I define myself. Yeah, I'm a little gay, and there's a gay James."

"Some people love that he does this, some people don't," Kelly says. "I don't think the entire gay community criticizes him for it, but it's definitely a conversation I have heard come up a lot. People are entitled to their opinion, but I completely disagree, because he's doing more for the gay community than many others out there – gay or not. I think what he is doing is true progress by pointing the message out there to his millions of fans worldwide that it not only OK to be gay, but as an actor with a reputation, he doesn't care if people think he is."

"It's a bit silly for me to give actors like him shit for playing gay multiple times when that's exactly what we as a gay community have wanted for so long in terms of people not treating us like we

are different. He is accepting roles because the stories are great and the characters are great. It is not just because they're gay. I think it is more progressive than a straight actor playing gay once just to win awards, but not doing it again because people might think he's gay."

Did Franco, known for wearing many hats (actor, writer, director) in his own films, overstep his role when working with Kelly on the film?

"Not at all. This is our second film together, after *I Am Michael*. A lot of people ask and assume that he is such a prolific filmmaker and artist himself that he would be heavily involved, but no. Of course he gave me his ideas, but in very respectful notes that are truly in line with what any actor would say. James has worked with top directors of their generation and of course has great ideas and knows what works and won't work. He was great at giving advice and being supportive, like a 'daddy,' but never got in the way at all. He has always been just super, super helpful." **1**



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WITH THE

# RISE OF SYNTHWAVE

## FILMS MOVE FROM THE SCREEN TO YOUR EARS

FILM AND TV SOUNDTRACKS ARE BECOMING  
RECOGNIZED AS A LEGITIMATE FORM OF MUSIC,  
THANKS THE RISE OF SYNTHWAVE

 JASON ST AMAND

**ONE OF THE MOST TALKED-ABOUT** aspects of the most talked-about summer breakout TV show *Stranger Things* is its 30-second opening theme. A 10-minute loop of the main title sequence was ripped to YouTube in mid-July and, as of this writing, has earned nearly 2.2 million views.

The popularity of the moody music from Netflix's 1980s-inspired thriller is just the latest example of an ongoing and evolving musical subgenre called synthwave. Like *Stranger Things*, synthwave is big on the retro, borrowing heavily from the music that soundtracked a specific part of the decade's pop culture.



Much of the music that's considered synthwave has been inspired by movies, videogames and TV shows of the '80s. German band Tangerine Dream, which crafted more than 60 soundtracks (*Risky Business* and the popular videogame *Grand Theft Auto V*), and horror director John Carpenter, who composed the eerie soundscapes for some of his seminal films (*Halloween*, *Christine*, *Escape from New York* and several more) are key influencers in the genre. The moody analog synths that boomed during tense murder scenes in Carpenter's films 30 years ago are interpolated by today's synthwave artists and transformed into fleshed-out tracks.

Born alongside the subgenres chillwave and vaporwave of the mid-2000s, synthwave came into pop culture's focus with the soundtrack for the 2011 neo-noir thriller *Drive*. It featured ambient works from prolific composer Cliff Martinez (more on him later) and contributions from several musicians associated with synthwave, including songs from French house musician Kavinsky, French electronic musician David Grellier (using the name College on the soundtrack) and U.S. groups Chromatics and Desire. The latter two acts are the brainchild of Johnny Jewel, the musician who runs the indie label Italians Do It Better and creates music for numerous acts, among them Chromatics and Desire.

Since its release, the *Drive* soundtrack has taken on a life of its own, specifically in online/Tumblr culture. Its biggest songs – Chromatics' epic ambient "Tick of the Clock," Desire's lovelorn jam "Under Your Spell" and College/Electric Youth's moody banger "Real Hero" – played a role in shaping the future of synthwave, especially when it comes to soundtracks for horror/thriller films.

After the success of *Drive*, Jewel's Chromatics went on to release a stellar album in 2012. *Kill For Love* feels like the soundtrack to an epic horror film that doesn't exist. Before that, in 2011, the band Symmetry, comprising Jewel and fellow Chromatics' band mate Nat Walker, released the aptly titled LP *Themes for an Imaginary Film*, which at 36 tracks has a runtime of two hours.



“One of the most talked-about aspects of the most talked-about summer breakout TV show **Stranger Things** is its 30-second opening theme.”





TOTAL FILM

edge



TUNAGE



4 OF 5

# IT FOLLOWS

A FILM BY DAVID ROBERT MITCHELL

IT DOESN'T THINK. IT DOESN'T FEEL. IT DOESN'T GIVE UP.

“***It Follows*** riffed on some of the biggest horror tropes from the '80s, and Disasterpeace created a spectacular soundscape full of crystalized electronic music that elevated the film into the otherworldly.”

that is tangentially related to synthwave but still pulls off the genre's main feat. Jewel explains it best with his description of the composition: “Designed to disintegrate with the world around you, your life is the movie.”

Peer to Jewel's work are soundtracks to director Adam Wingard's two horror flicks *You're Next* and *The Guest*. Both had incredible scores that propelled synthwave even further. Spooky analog synths created the soundscape for the bloody *You're Next*, a collaborative effort from Kyle McKinnon, Jasper Justice Lee, Mads Heldtberg and Wingard. *The Guest* featured a soundtrack from a number of synthwave artists that include the Austin band Survive – aka Kyle Dixon and Michael Stein, the duo who created the soundtrack to *Stranger Things*.

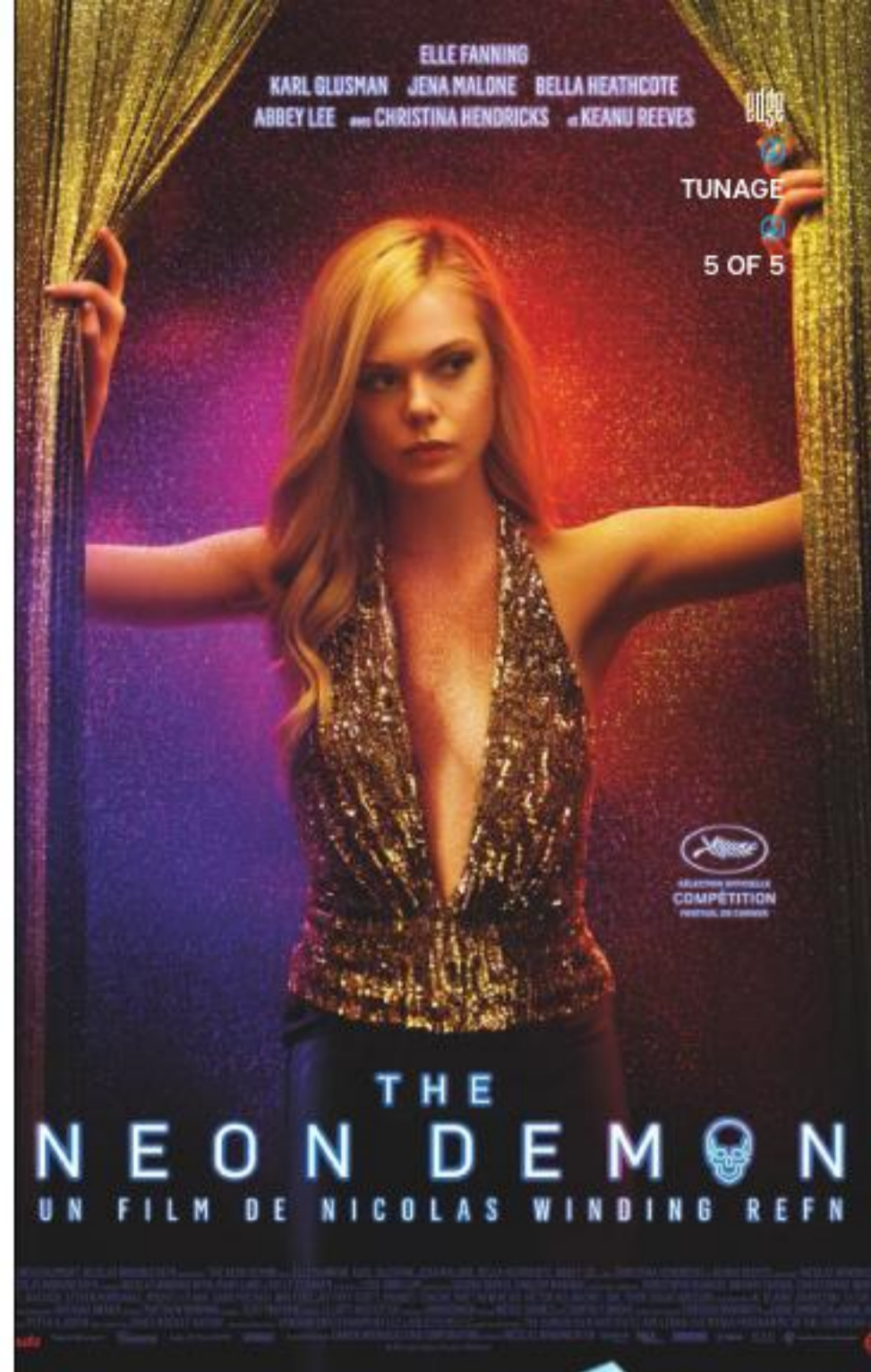
Like many subgenres, visual aesthetics play an important role in synthwave. The title card for *Stranger Things* recalls a similar font to *Christine*, and the font itself (Nelson Cash) has gone on to become a meme, sparking a *Stranger Things* type generator. The Ringer's Chris Ryan calls the phenomenon "VHS core," writing that it's:

"... a term we can use to loosely describe films that mix sci-fi adventure, varying degrees of horror, and coming-of-age innocence, while relying heavily on the cinematic style of Spielberg, Richard Donner, John Carpenter, and Tobe Hooper. It's a reductive generalization of the work of several distinct filmmakers, but just go with me for a second. *The Guest*, *It Follows*, and *Midnight Special* are all recent examples of people who grew up with Spielberg, Carpenter, and James Cameron now making movies of their own. This is their childhood; we're just living in it."

Switch out VHS core for synthwave, and Ryan's definition still holds. The best example of this is 2015's *It Follows*, a hyper-stylized indie horror from director David Robert Mitchell that featured music from Disasterpeace. Like *Stranger Things*, *It Follows* riffed on some of the biggest horror tropes from the '80s, and Disasterpeace created a spectacular soundscape full of crystalized electronic music that elevated the film into the otherworldly. The *It Follows* original soundtrack also works as a self-contained record.

Martinez entered the world of synthwave with *Drive* but took things to a new level more recently with his soundtrack for Steven Soderbergh's TV show *The Knick* and Refn's latest film, *The Neon Demon* – an icy masterpiece that is a clear evolution from his work on *Drive*.

As audiences continue to crave '80s nostalgia, synthwave shows no signs of stopping. While other music trends have come and gone (witch house, seapunk), synthwave is proving to be more than a fad. In mid-September, Tangerine Dream released two spellbinding covers of the *Stranger Things* theme. It doesn't get more retro than that. **B**





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# GRINDHER?

## SAY GOODBYE TO YOUR CURRENT FRUIT FLY AND HELLO TO GALPAL

Attention gay men! The days of settling for whichever drunken bachelorette-party reject glommed onto you at the local gay bar are over. The app GalPal connects gay men and straight women to create lasting friendships based on more than just a shared fondness for Cosmopolitans and men in tight pants.

“We need to celebrate the type of love that transcends sex and traditional romantic relationships,” said Jasmine Sassounian, who founded GalPal in 2015. “Whether it be between a straight woman and a gay man, straight man and a gay woman – or between an individual questioning their sexuality seeking platonic companionship – GalPal seeks to create those meaningful connections by bringing people together who may not have otherwise had the opportunity to meet.”



GalPal is the new friendship app that connects people who seek lasting relationships by matching individuals with specific interests and hobbies. Centered on building real, meaningful, supportive relationships, GalPal is not for hookups or cringe-worthy first dates.

Sassounian, a first-time app creator, said that she was spurred to start GalPal because of her own personal friendships with gay men throughout high school and college. Few friends stuck around after she got married, but those who did remain were her gay male friends.

"To this day, they are a big part of my life," said Sassounian. "I just felt like it was easy to be with them. I could always call them and jump back into it with them. It was different than my friendships with other women."

She also found herself heartbroken when she witnessed her other Middle Eastern gay friends coming out to their parents, who then wanted nothing to do with their children. Watching one "flamboyant" friend come out to his parents, she thought it would be nice if gay men could also easily find supportive friends to connect with during this process.

Unlike dating apps, GalPal connects people based on and shared interests—dancing, eating out, events, nightlife, entertainment, shopping, traveling and more. Like Tinder or Bumble, a user can learn more about a potential friend by swiping right for profiles that spark friendship goals and left if it's just not the right fit. This allows for a better fit than just befriending whomever sidles up at the bar. And it's especially helpful for folks moving to a new place.

"A lot of friends have told me that when they moved to a new city, they didn't know where to go," said Sassounian. "Big cities like Los Angeles and New York can be very intimidating, and gay people weren't always welcoming. I figured it must be a problem for a lot of people to come out, make friends and not have it be about sex. For me, GalPal is a way to bring females and males together in a platonic way."

The app is targeted to gay men and straight women but welcomes anyone who wants to make friends. You share your interests in the "About Me" section, and the app connects you to like-minded people.

"We're here to connect people," said Sassounian. "We're having parties to bring people together in real time, and so far the response has been great. We've started the local launch in LA, and hopefully we will go international."





**VIDEO:**  
Night at the  
Burger Joint with  
GALPAL App



Sassounian said GalPal removes sex from the equation, and vets everyone through Facebook. If someone makes advances, you can report them.

GalPal also offers an Advice & Support matching option, where individuals can connect and talk to someone in a safe and private context. This feature was inspired by the knowledge that young people are often struggling with their sexuality and may not have access to an open-minded friend or community.

Sassounian believes that in order to promote equality and acceptance, we must embrace both the differences and similarities between all communities.

One of Sassounian's friends, Ian Maxion, also a GalPal partner, said, "What drew me to GalPal is the company's objective to bridge the gap between the LGBT and the straight community. It's a safe and fun place for people to connect with the simple basis of being who you truly are."

Marking their official launch this summer, GalPal kicked off a series of LGBTQ fundraising campaigns, beginning with a partnership with Rest in Pride, a video social campaign honoring the 49 lives taken in the Orlando Pulse shooting. Rest in Pride

invites the LGBTQ community and its allies to share their most prideful memories in order to inspire individuals all around the world to confront hate directly and to live proudly and authentically. (Learn more about showing your support at [restinpride.org](http://restinpride.org).)

"We wanted to help them raise money, so we gave them donations and helped post videos through our GalPal influencers," said Sassounian. "My events help people to learn about them, and the funds raised went to the families of the victims. We want to continue this work with other LGBTQ nonprofits."

Sassounian said she will keep these events going in local cities to bring people together. "Don't be shy. You don't have to eat your meals by yourself. You don't have to be lonely," she said. "We want people to feel as though they can log in and connect with anyone. People are very engaged with social media these days, but it's a disservice that it's all via iPads. You just can't replace the actual engagement you get from hanging out with someone. No phone call or text can replace that. And that's what we want to keep going. We don't want anyone to feel left behind." 



Download the GalPal app in the iOS app store today, or visit [galpalapp.com](http://galpalapp.com)



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CREATE JOBS.**

**FIND YOUR LOCAL GOODWILL®**

# CLICKED

WE WERE THERE, WHERE WERE YOU?



GayGlow @ Charlie's Chicago ::  
September 3, 2016  
5th Annual White Party  
Event @ iCandy :: September  
4, 2016 Philly  
Southern Decadence Parade ::  
September 4, 2016 NOLA



EDGE Contributing Photographers:  
Brian Putnam  
David Foucher  
Miko Montgomery  
Gustavo Monroy  
Jesus Echezuria  
JJ Mack  
Jerry Nunn  
Bill Berggren  
Jim James  
Robert Nesti  
Jack Hartwein-Sanchez



OH, BUT WAIT!  
THERE'S **STILL** MORE...





**Pines Fest On Fire Island**  
**WorldOutGames Silver Soiree @ E11even :: September 8, 2016 Miami**  
**Rock Hard @ Voyeur :: September 10, 2016 Philly**  
**Out In The Park @ Six Flags Great America :: September 10, 2016**  
**Leather Walk 2016 :: September 18, 2016 SF**  
**2016 Dallas Pride Festival :: September 18, 2016**  
**4th Annual Pink Flamingo Awards @ Jungle Island :: September 22, 2016**

