

THE OFFICE OF LGBTQA RESOURCES & SUPPORT

# The Coming Out Monologues



Northern Arizona University

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## Introduction

C1

Gays

C2

Lesbians

C3

Bisexuals

And transgender people

C1

There are tons of things we don't know about them

C2

But we DO know some things about GLBT people.

C1

It is important to remember that the so-called "gay community" is not monolithic... it is more of a confederation of individuals with identities as diverse as the general population.

C2

Gay men's buying habits have little to do with gay women's.

C1

Transgender and bisexual people may or may not identify as "gay."

C3

Gay men may live in Atlanta, Memphis and Hollywood or they may be nomadic truckers.

C1

They might own a home in the suburbs with a partner and child; they may be in a retirement home or could be struggling to make ends meet.

C2

Lesbians may own a vegetarian restaurant in Colorado or they may run a major media company.

C3

They might live in a penthouse in the city with their partner, or in a mobile home in California.

C1

Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people are Hispanic, African-American, Asian, American-Indian, White, bi-racial.

C2

Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Mormon, Buddhist, Atheist, Agnostic.

C3

War veterans, retired, teenagers, Republican, Democrat, rural, suburban, and many, many other layers of identities.

C1

Like everyone else, they face issues based on race, class, ethnicity, nationality, age, religion, health and socioeconomic status.

C2

They mirror the general public population.

C3

Then there's the questions that do very often get asked, often the result of the myths and stereotypes associated with being different:

C1

There's the age old question of nature vs nurture

C2

How did you know?

C3

When did you know?

C1

Are you sure?

C2

Do your parents know?

C3

What did they say?

C1

Are you sure?

C2

Since when?

C3

Do you even know how to be gay?

C2

Are you sure?

**ALL**

ARE WE SURE?! YES, we're sure!

C1

One important thing to remember about the LGBTQ community is...We are everywhere!

C2

You may not know it but the person sitting next to you...gay!

C3

LGBTQ people are involved in all kinds of professions and trades

C1

There are quite a few celebrities and famous figures who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.... Just to name a few, there's:

C2

'N Sync Member Lance Bass

Author Truman Capote

Actor Neil Patrick Harris

C3

Comedienne Margaret Cho

Actor James Dean

Mary Cheney-Daughter of former Vice President Dick Cheney

C1

Singer/Songwriter Melissa Etheridge

Actress Alexis Arquette

NASCAR racer Terri O' Connell

Actress Amanda Bearse - Marcy from Married with Children

C2

Musician Ricky Martin

Artist Frida Kahlo

Musician Janis Joplin

Tennis player Billie Jean King

C3

Master Leonardo da Vinci

Football player Dave Kopay

Singer Johnny Mathis

Actor Ian McKellen –Gandalf in Lord of the Rings

C1

Singer/Songwriter Freddie Mercury from QUEEN

Artist Michaelangelo

Actor Robert Reed from The Brady Bunch

Transgender Activist Chaz Bono

C2

Rosie O'Donnell

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt

Actresses Ellen DeGeneres and wife Portia de Rossi

Ancient Greek poet Sappho

C3

REM Singer Michael Stipe

Singer/Songwriter Billy Joe Armstrong from Green Day

Writer Oscar Wilde

C1

The Real World's Pedro Zamora

Singer/Songwriter PINK

Author Gertrude Stein

Singer/Songwriter Lady Gaga

C2

WNBA Star Sheryl Swoops

Musician Elton John

Star Trek Actor George Takei

Singer/Songwriter Adam Lambert

C3

Actress Katharine Hepburn

Filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar

Actress Drew Barrymore

Comedienne Wanda Sykes

C1

Point is gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people are all around you.

C2

They are daughters and sons

C3

Mothers and fathers

C1

Brothers and sisters

C2

Cousins and Grandparents

C3

Uncles, aunts, foster parents, in-laws

C1

Adoptive parents, co-workers, friends, and

**ALL**

LUMBERJACKS!!

## Bisexuality Confusion

By Zachary Haranzo

I knew I liked boys for as long as I can remember. I had a crush on this boy before we started kindergarten; he and I did everything together. Eventually we just lost touch because we moved away from each other. Years later, when I was in about 4th grade, I started getting the assumption that it is wrong to be gay , so I attempted to change the way I walked so that no one would make fun of me . I would hear classmates say, "You're gay" to other guys who weren't into sports. I don't even think I really knew what the word meant. They would even call things gay when they meant it was stupid, which confused me even more. I kept my identity to myself for fear of rejection for a long time. It wasn't until 8th grade that I started coming out as bisexual to only my friends. Some of them were pretty accepting about it, but it wasn't anything anyone ever talked about. Just the fact that I revealed that I liked guys was enough for them to hear. I was never comfortable with calling any guys cute because they would just shrug it off. It was as if it was nonexistent.

My sophomore year of high school I started dating this girl named Syrissa for about 3 months. She was also bi. As our relationship got closer, and more intimate, I started questioning my sexuality. Was I really bi? Or was I just

using the term, bisexual, to make my situation sound better. I was dating this girl, but I knew in my heart that I truly did not like girls. I was in a relationship that would not advance into anything sexual, like all of the other straight relationships I heard about. Maybe I would be more accepted if I also liked girls, that was what kept running through my mind.

It was time for me to come to terms with myself and accept that I only liked boys. I never felt any intimate connections with girls; I could not see myself with one for the rest of my life. I felt like I was leading Syrissa on. I needed to get away from the mask of bisexuality and come out to her before anyone else. We broke up after I told her I couldn't see myself with her anymore because she was a girl. She was devastated for months, but our friendship rekindled itself after she accepted me. The best part of this whole story is that she came out to me as lesbian. She had the same feelings as me. She would say, "When I was younger I never looked at the guys in the movies. My eyes were focused on the girls." I full heartedly agreed with her by saying, "Girls were never what I wanted in the movies, I felt like I wanted to be in the girls place during the romantic situations when they would kiss each other." We talked about how we didn't feel comfortable with calling ourselves gay because all we have ever

known about that word was that it was "an abomination," that it was, "unnatural", and "wrong," to be that way.

While all of this was going on, my family still did not know, for sure, that I was gay. There were always assumptions, but no one ever came up to me and politely asked, which I was okay with because I did not want anyone in my family to know. I'm really close to my family, but I would hear my grandma or stepdad call guys faggots on TV all the time. My face felt hot with embarrassment whenever a gay guy would show up on screen because I always anticipated hearing the word faggot again. I would be watching the same show with them and I felt deep down, they could be calling me the same thing. I would be so heated up that I would get headaches and stomach aches because I didn't want anyone to call me that, especially when it was the people who should love me. They were the ones that conditioned me to believe that gay was not okay and unconsciously hurting my feelings. My family grew up in a very strict Pentecostal Christian background. One in which I was apart of for years by going to church three days out of every week.

One day my aunt Michelle found out from her daughter that I am gay. She is the talker of the family. She told every single one of my family the truth about

me. I was upset about this; until I found out what else she told my family members when she gave them the news.

She said to them: she believes we are born this way. She believes there may be something in our DNA that is different from straight genes. She has always known that I was gay; I was always the different one in my family. She told everyone they better accept me as I am. They should love me for being myself and not subjecting myself to hide behind a straight mask all my life. I am so close to my mom, but when my aunt told her this, she could not accept me. "You better tell your son that it is ok to be gay," my aunt said from the next room over. My mom just looked at me in a nervous smile and shook her head no and quietly said, "I can't do that." "I love you no matter who you like," my mother said, but I know there is no way she could accept me until she comprehends that her acceptance will not change me.

I love myself now. I accept that I cannot change who I am to fit into what everyone sees as the "norm." I am myself, and I am the same person I was before I came out. I still have the same interests; I still have the same disgusts. I am refreshed. I have nothing to be ashamed about. I stand up for my rights and I want you all to know that you are loved. Love yourself and allow yourself to believe in yourself.

## Candy Corn

By Crystal Boson

Let's take a second to talk about candy corn. I hate it, from the depths of my soul I hate it. But every year, I forget and every Halloween I try some. It's always, "sonvuabitch, I hate candycorn." coming to my family is like that. i know how much it sucks, they know how much it sucks, but they somehow tend to forget and we have to do it again to relive the godawful. Often.

The first time was right before college; my mom and i were having a Cosby moment. Popcorn, movie, hair braiding. Sweet. Then she started braiding slower. It was a trap.

Crystal...

FUCK

You're such a pretty girl. I've noticed you've never had a boyfriend.

Yup. That's because I don't like boys mom.

You're.....

Yup. Gay. Yes.

Maybe you haven't found a boy with something you like... all of your guy friends are..... (at this point, it was will and James)

Mom, when they make boys with vaginas, I'll let you know.

No.

No what?

No. So what do you want to major in in college?

The conversation was over. It wasn't a "no" as in no child of mine is gonna eat bush, but a no as in the conversation never happened. Of course she told my dad and they fought over whose fault it was, but according to mom, the talk never happened.

It goes downhill from there.

dad was next. on the drive up to school, he was fishing around my glove bin when he found vanilla flavoured dental dams. Of course, he had questions.

Dad, trust me. I'm just as upset as you are. The shop was out of strawberry and this is all they had.

My response was met with 20 minutes of AWKWARD silence and then an hour of how i need to go to church to find two good men; one Jesus and one to put it in me.

All of this was the tip of the iceberg. There was the thanksgiving where we all had to say what we were thankful for. Grandma was thankful there were no gays in the family. I was thankful for my girlfriend.

There was the time my mom Facebook stalked my pictures from Austin pride. AWKWARD. There was last month when my sister Facebooked me and ask why I was participating in something called "The Coming Out Monologues".

It's not that i don't tell them. It's not that I'm not out. You would think the haircut, girlfriends, or at the very least roller derby would tip them off. But they candy corn it. It's something they don't like and so they forget. They have never yelled, never disowned me, and never kicked me out. But somehow, magically, they forget. So I'm going to keep telling them, and keep loving them, until, unlike candy corn, the fact I'm gay doesn't leave a bad taste in their mouth.

## Inevitability

By Travis Cook

There's nothing dramatic about the story of when I came out to my mom.

There was no screaming, no bawling, no swearing, no threats, no ultimatums, no Christian counselors and no exorcisms. None of that. After I told my mom I was gay, we sat on our townhome's balcony for three hours just talking. For nearly that entire warm July evening, my mom and I sat outside having an honest and revealing conversation about my life. Pretty much the ideal outcome, I guess.

But that's not what I most vividly remember from that day. Instead, I remember everything prior to our time on the balcony. I remember that feeling. Do you know what I'm talking about? It's this raw nervousness so intense you can never forget it. Imagine your stomach is drenched in cold acid and your heart pulses out hot lava, and the two substances swirl and churn in your midsection.

For me, it started in the morning. I knew this would be one of the only days I'd have to spend with my mom. I had decided weeks earlier that this was going to be the day I told. My mom asked if I wanted go with her and my step dad to the mall. Just before we left, I sent her an email. The email said I had to tell her something important and that if she had not yet talked with me, she needed to

find me and force it out of me. The moment I clicked 'Send' was when the feeling hit me hard. The plan was set in motion. There was no turning back. When we got to the mall, I walked steadily about ten feet behind my parents, not because I was nervous to walk with them, but because my body was stuck in this inebriated slow motion preventing me from functioning at a normal speed. I felt heavy even though my feet felt numb and light. I began regretting putting myself in this situation. I didn't want to be following my parents around the mall. I was angry at myself for sending that email. I worked out plans in my head to hack in to her email and erase the message. This didn't have to happen. Why did I agree to go run errands with them? This was not fun. I didn't want to stand in the women's section anymore while my mom looked for the correct pair of nylons. I did not want to be there. I wanted to go home, but did not want to be at home. I had an alien was about to burst from my ribcage. Why couldn't I be left alone? This was inescapable. I did not want to let myself down. If I didn't do this now, I would be so angry at myself. We made it to the checkout line, and my step-dad ran off to go grab one more thing. My mom looked at me and asked if I was alright. I told her I was. "What's wrong? Please tell me what's wrong?" she asked. There was no way I was about to spill my guts around hundreds of other bargain shoppers. I said I

would tell her later. She looked me in the eyes. “Will you tell me today?” she asked. I looked back and promised I would.

She asked me two more times on the way home what was wrong. I said I’d tell her when we got back to the house. After we parked and carried everything inside, my step-dad disappeared into the master bedroom, and my mom took out a cigarette and her lighter and walked to the balcony door. She turned around and motioned for me to follow. I put my hands in my pockets, walked across the living room and out onto the balcony. I felt like I was five years old again, and I was being punished. I stalled for as long as possible.

Then the last part of me finally broke down, and I told.

Did you feel it? Now do you know the feeling I’m talking about. You have to feel it to understand. It’s nausea, anxiety, regret, anxiousness, pain, excitement, depression, and a hundred other emotions all mashed together. For me, the only word that comes remotely close to naming this feeling is “inevitability.” I know that inevitability is not an emotion, but that’s what it feels like to me.

But maybe for a lot of us, it’s not even a choice to come out. Maybe it’s a necessary step towards happiness and fulfillment. Maybe that horrible feeling I mentioned is actually the strength building within us, because I have yet to meet anyone who does not consider themselves stronger after coming out to

the people they care about most. And maybe it's that strength that ties us together.

Or maybe it's our strength that is inevitable. I don't know. I haven't figured it out yet.

## How I Came Out to My Classmates

By Rebekah Daniels

My coming out story is not the ordinary “hey mom and dad, I’m gay.” My coming out story is about finally owning who I am and feeling comfortable in my own skin. In the four years I was in high school, I never dated anyone and I was always around different people. I hung out with people who were gay, straight, the “weird kids”, and the ones who are from planet Mars. I was always told by girls who identified themselves as studs that they were going to “turn me out” and be the first to “show me off to the world.” I always denied it and told them no, that I do not like girls. I would tell them that I was straight, but they never believed me and wouldn’t leave me alone; they had themselves convinced they were going to be the first girl to date me. Some of them took it well and left me alone, but some would try and try and try to persuade me. During high school, I wore a lot of hoodies and jeans, comfort clothes; this is presumably why they thought I was gay. Their comments never really bothered me because I always thought it was flattering, and there came a time when I began to question myself. Not because of their comments or stares, but because I genuinely began to wonder, “Hey, what would it be like to be with a girl?” I kept this to myself because to be quite honest, this idea

terrified me considering what these lesbians looked like. They were bigger than me, aggressive and they scared me.

I went through the rest of my high school years having lesbians hit on me, and as flattering as it was I was tired of having to constantly defend who I was to people, whom to be honest, did not care about who I was as a person and did not believe me when I told them I was not interested. Then on July 31, 2010 I had a life changing experience; I went to an Adam Lambert concert. Everything about who he was on stage changed my life. His confidence, his energy and everything he is as a person impacted me. I went home and researched him to become more familiar with my new favorite singer. I found out that while he was growing up he never fit in, he had issues with his weight, and that he lived his life according to his own standards because that was what made him happy. This struck a chord in me because I realized that he faced some similar issues that I was facing at the time. This awakening also made me realize that I was living my life according to how other people saw me on the outside instead of living life how I felt on the inside. I was following the religious and general beliefs of my family instead of following my own. I was dressing and acting how society said a “proper lady should” instead of being true to who I felt like I was on the inside.

This was the first time in my life I felt empowered to do what I wanted to do and in a way I wanted to do it despite “societal norms.” I went back to school for my senior year with a whole new “swagger.” I was able to say with confidence that Yes, I am “straight” (although I despise labels) and that I am an ally. I was able to own who I was and stand up with self -confidence and come out to the rest of my high school peers that I am straight, and proud to be nothing more or less than who I am. I am also an ally and will support you no matter what orientation you identify with. I love everyone for who they are on the inside because for so long I did not like who I was.

I stand on this stage in front of you today and can finally, after 18 years of not liking who I was say, “My name is Rebekah Daniels, I am straight and an LGBTQ ally.”

## Less

By Michael Koenig

They make me feel less.

I don't feel happy, I don't feel sad, and those tiny little blue pills sure don't solve any problems. I shouldn't be taking them. I shouldn't be putting my body through this. Fucking with brain chemistry is a fucking big deal, but none of that matters because the pills keep me from doing the one thing that I really, really want to do.

I want to put a period at the end of a sentence. That's all I want to do. Seems simple enough, but that's the way these pills make me feel. They make me feel less. They make it so that I have to talk about myself in inane metaphors so that I can make any sense. Everything is by proxy, nothing is direct.

So that "period" at the end of that "sentence"? I'm talking about fucking suicide here. I just wish I could let myself do that. The period is a finality - an end. And the sentence isn't a string of words, it's a death sentence that makes the period at the end completely inevitable. Yet I can't come right out and say that. I can't say: I tried to take my own miserable life and the only part of that that concerns me is the fact that I'm now chemically prohibited from getting up the nerve to do so again.

So my "sentence", right? The one that ends in that poignant period? "I'm gay."  
Period. Simple as that: two easy words that carry almost absolutely no  
meaning by themselves because meaning is always derived from context. My  
context: I'm a suicidally depressed closeted homosexual trying to fit into a  
world that doesn't want me around. Now, of course, I'm not actually suicidal.  
Not any more anyway. Now I'm just a closeted homosexual as two pills a day  
have taken away every ability to feel happy, sad, excited, angry, perturbed,  
aroused, or even hopeful.

So I guess it did work. I wanted to end my life, and here I am without one,  
drifting along from hour to hour and wondering why I can't be compelled to  
give a damn about anyone or anything including myself. Unfortunately to  
prolong that inane metaphor, these pills are a comma, not a period. They don't  
stop anything, they just drag out nothingness - that fucking emptiness of  
existence that comes when you find out that not only does nobody give a  
damn about you or your life, but that they would rather you be removed from  
it. That you're so scum-suckingly low, so virulently immoral, so passionately  
hated by God Himself that your lungs don't deserve the air rapidly pumping  
into them as you cry your stifled sobs.

That's the sentence. That's what it feels like to know, in the grand scheme of  
things, you're just a typo. A typo in a sentence with a period. The grievous

errors in your creation overshadow anything that you could have become or meant and you're condemned to either live life as an abnormal aberration or put a stop to life altogether. Let's hear it for those pills - little milligrams that keep me emotionally comatose and ineffectually existing from day to day - alleviating everything but solving nothing. Doing nothing to fix any part of that that one small fucked up sentence: "I'm gay." Period.

## Chorus #2

C3

This was a big year for the LGBTQ community.

C1

We have faced some challenges as the fight for human rights and equality *for all* continues

C2

In the past couple of years: the District of Columbia, New Hampshire, Iowa, Maine, Vermont, Maryland, California and New York all legalized same-sex marriage.

ALL

Whooooooop!

C2

...then California and Maine changed their minds.

C1

Epic fail.

C3

In 2010-2011 candlelight vigils have been held all over the nation in memory of the LGBTQ youth who took their lives due to bullying and harassment in schools.

C2

In Arizona, the State Senate passed SB 1188 which mandates that the Arizona Department of Economic Security and adoption agencies give *primary* consideration to the placement of a child with a “married man and woman”.

C1

Federally employers *STILL* do not offer domestic partner benefits to their LGBTQ workers...However, Northern Arizona University *DOES*

C3

NAU also protects students, faculty and staff on the basis of gender identity and gender expression since 2010

C1

For the Lumberjacks, queer visibility on campus is definitely on the rise.

C2

Northern Arizona University established the Office of LGBTQA Resources and Support this summer!! Located in Social Behavioral Sciences-west 100H!

C1

And for the first time in history, over 50% of Americans surveyed support same-sex marriage.

C3

As of September 20<sup>th</sup> “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” was fiiiiinally repealed!

C1

Under new federal regulation Patients at hospitals around the country decide who has visitation rights and who can make medical decisions on their behalf -- regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or family makeup –

C2

But we're still waiting...

C3

...waiting for federally recognized same-sex marriage

C2

...waiting for an *inclusive* Employment Non-Discrimination Act to pass

C1

...waiting for a week where Chaz Bono *isn't* in danger of elimination on

“Dancing With The Stars”

**ALL**

**Heeeeeey!**

C3

Still, the “It Gets Better” project has become a global phenomenon

C1

NAU is putting on the first ever Coming Out Week!

C2

And now it's time to put your paws up! Because baby,

**ALL**

**YOU WERE BORN THIS WAY!!**

## Salad, Bread sticks and Chocolate Mints

By Aidan Charles

In a moment of uncertainty, one searches for stability in whatever form it may come. Temporary, fleeting, shallow, the familiar and the predictable are the shining heroines of circumstance when the ground beneath you begins to shake.

Breadsticks and salads are endless at olive garden, this we know with certainty, and the implications are three-fold: First, there will always be something in front of you to look at when eye contact becomes too strenuous. Second, there will always be food to take bites out of (to keep the face muscles busy) when a pained expression must be masked. And third, there will be inevitable interruptions as the server visits to ensure the presence of the bread and the salad.

So here I sit with my nails digging into my palms and my heart up inside my throat. I was so sure before I came. I thought of everything, every scenario, every reaction, if you'd asked me twelve hours ago you wouldn't have been worried, I wasn't. But right now I can't see or speak, the lump in my throat stops the sound before it gets to my mouth and moments are whipping past me like wind, running me quicker and quicker to the point I hope I'll never make. Maybe if I take a drink I'll swallow the lump down and I'll be able to

talk, maybe if I let my shoulders fall it will inspire the rest of my body to stop tensing, maybe if I hum for a few seconds it won't look like I'm so scared, its harder than I thought it would be... its fucking harder than I thought it would be.

I must look as afraid as I feel because mom is looking at me like I have something on my face. I feel someone near us and look over to see the server heading our way. He smiles and moves his hands as he asks what we want to drink and although I don't know for sure, I tell myself he's family and I feel less alone somewhere in the back of my mind. Mom doesn't say anything but looks at me inquisitively and I don't know what to say. I remember implication number one and look down at the table. The silence is awful and I hope someone drops a dish or sings happy birthday or a child becomes slightly unhappy just for a second and cries. Alas, the next sound I hear is mom asking me what I want to talk about. I open my mouth to answer but nothing happens, I feel the tears welling up in my eyes and I remember implication number two and stuff a breadstick in my face. I pretend the bite was too big and take forever to chew it, biding my time, hoping my voice will come back if I give it a few seconds. I swallow and breathe in, and manage somehow to say,

"I really just need to be a boy."

Her expression doesn't change.

"Do you know what that is?"

She nods.

"Do you know what that means?"

She nods.

The server comes back with the drinks and he's happy and fluffy just like before but it isn't welcome anymore and he can tell right away. He looks frightened and slightly upset and takes himself and implication number three away from the table. Mom asks,

"Do you have another name people call you by?"

"Yes."

"Well it feels like I don't even know who you are. I don't even know your name."

There's anger in her voice and I don't know how to take it, I try to explain myself. I give reasons, emotions; bring dusty moments out from long ago hoping they'll explain something I'm not. I look out the corner of my eye and see our waiter about to come back for something, but he's overheard. He stops dead in mid-step. When we make eye contact, he widens his eyes and power walks away, I wish I could follow him. The next hour or so passes by quickly, words fly back and forth between us and the anger fades away.

The waiter finally comes back with the check, he knows everything and I'm embarrassed, but he responds accordingly. He has a new gentle and calm with his words and motions now, he sets the check down with two of those little minty-chocolaty things they give you and turns to walk away. He turns to his right, facing me, and he clearly mouths something I can't quite make out (and will wonder about for the rest of my life) but it looked a lot like "Good for you."

Mom smiles at me and tells me she loves me, and the waiter comes back one more time with a huge fistful of those little minty-chocolaty things they give you, smiles, and sets them down on the table. We leave.

We get back into the car, and mom tells me a story.

She said, "During my last year of nursing school, we were all instructed to do an examination of a newborn; a standard test for the students in my program.

The infant I examined had a slight abnormality in the shape of his abdominal muscles. It isn't dangerous, and it usually straightens itself out as the child grows. But I was nervous, I was nervous about telling the mother that something may be wrong. But then my instructor, who was usually a raging bitch but took a break for a second to tell me this, said: 'this is a mother who doesn't know anything about her child, you have an opportunity to be a part of

changing that, don't you think she wants to know her child? Don't you think she'd want you to say something?'

I'm glad you said something."

## The Complex World of Bi

Rebecca Taylor

Sometimes I had to be prepared to give an explanation. It wasn't as simple as saying "I'm gay" and knowing that they understood what I meant. When you say that you are bisexual, you may find yourself in the role of teacher. I told my best friend from high school that I was bi, and she said, "What the hell does that mean?"

Sometimes it was easier for people to take "bi" than "lesbian." I still had some hope for normalcy, at least in the public eye, right? My father said, "so there's still a 50% chance you'll end up with a man, right?"

Sometimes I found that people were scared to date me. A few lesbians thought that bisexual women were traitors, were in denial, were more likely to cheat on them, were dirty for being physically attracted to men. A few straight men were threatened, fearing that I would leave them for a woman...the ultimate metaphorical castration?

Sometimes I come out passively. I let some old friends just eventually find out through my Facebook page. (I could write a whole separate monologue about coming out on Facebook... "You say you're interested in women AND men? So...do you mean as friends or what? Huh? Huh?") Nowadays, I come out

passively by letting the subtle hints of rainbow imagery around my office speak for themselves in the workplace.

Sometimes I had to stifle laughter at other people's responses. One of my friends became very concerned that I would be attracted to everyone I encountered, as if I had a hyperactive sex drive like the Energizer Bunny simply because I identify as bi. "You're bisexual...um...does that mean that you want me?! How about him? Her? And that girl over there?"

Sometimes it caused a rift between me and the person I was dating. One boyfriend asked if I wanted to have a threesome after he found out, because he assumed I couldn't be satisfied unless I literally was with both sexes at the same time. One girlfriend had to know every detail of every encounter I had ever had with a man, so that she could "know where she stood."

Sometimes I chose not to come out to people. I didn't need to tell my parents I was bisexual when I was happily dating a man or when I was single, right? If I come out to my boyfriend, will he get freaked out and leave me? If I meet a girl at a gay bar, will she walk away when I drop the dreaded "B" word? Every day, I asked myself if I was being a coward by using this excuse. But if I wasn't dating a woman, if I didn't have a technical need to come out, why bring it up and cause all the drama?

Sometimes I was pleasantly surprised. My brother said, "Hey, me too! Who gets to tell mom and dad first?" My mother said, "Well duh, I've been waiting for you to tell me."

Sometimes I was frustrated with people's responses. I sought the counsel of a teacher and mentor, who happily assured me that it was probably just a phase and I would soon figure out how I really felt. To such comments, I have to gently respond that it's not a phase. Repeat...not a phase. While in my head, I'm thinking....IT'S NOT A DAMN PHASE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Sometimes I am hesitant to come out in certain settings or contexts. If I were to tell the students in the organizations I advise that I am a member of the GLBT community, would it change the way they see me as their advisor? Would I lose their respect if they knew I was gay, let alone a bisexual? I already look like I'm 14 years old...do I really need to add being bi to the list of things that might compromise my position of authority?

Sometimes...I wish I weren't bi. It would be so much easier to just say "I'm straight" or "I'm a lesbian." It might even be easier to feel that I were one or the other.

Sometimes I worry that I will be in the "questioning" phase for the rest of my life. In a committed relationship with a woman, today I can find myself thinking and feeling that I must be truly a lesbian. I try to talk myself into a

binary category, all the while recognizing that our society's insistence on dualistic definitions is ridiculous. Wouldn't it be easier on everyone around me if I did fit into one of those binaries, though?

...

And sometimes I am ashamed of worrying so much about how other people will react when they learn that I am bisexual. Maybe talking about it like this, so frankly, so openly, is exactly what all of these people need to hear after all. Maybe coming out as bisexual is exactly what the world needs from me right now.

## My Crazy Ex-Girlfriend

By Toni Hall

I had a “crazy ex-girlfriend” before I actually *had* a crazy ex-girlfriend.

Looking at me, you’re probably thinking- “there’s no way she sleeps with chicks!”

Yeah, you... (points to member of audience)

You and the rest of the world.

Which is precisely why I created “my crazy ex-girlfriend”.

I created “my crazy ex-girlfriend” as a way of “coming out” to other girls ‘cause let’s face it-it’s easier to say:

“Oh yeah, my ex-girlfriend is a crazy bitch, she used to lock **herself** in my car all the time just so I couldn’t go anywhere” than..

“Hey girl, you down with vag? ‘Cause, ha, I’m down with vag.”

The “crazy ex-girlfriend” stories have served me well in the past and landed my quite a few dates, which turns into “friends” ... cuz let’s face it, that’s how lesbians roll.

However, using the pseudo crazy ex-girlfriend actually landed me a crazy ex-girlfriend. And do you wanna know how she came out to me?

“Hey girl, you down with vag? ‘Cause, ha, I’m down with vag.”

Like I said... crazy.

So... consumers beware: Side effects of using “my crazy ex-girlfriend” may result in hair loss, nail biting, broken windshields, keyed-cars and sleepless nights.

Once I had an actual crazy ex-girlfriend, my coming out process became more “legit” in my eyes. The stories I told about the actual crazy ex-girlfriend far surpassed the stories I once told about my made up crazy ex-girlfriend... who woulda thought?

The stories about my real ex-girlfriend were so outrageous that I ended up telling them... a lot! Like the time she took my phone so she could read my text messages and then when I tried to get my phone back, she threw a chocolate milkshake at me in a parking lot.

Or the time she broke into my mail, stole my social security number, went to Best Buy and changed my cell phone plan to the least amount of minutes available. I didn’t find this out of course, until I received an \$800 phone bill the next month.

The most recent time I used ‘my crazy ex-girlfriend’ was when I started grad school and had my eye on this one lesbian... lez-be-honest: From the moment she said “Howdy” I was hooked.

So there we are- at lunch, crowded table, about 15 conversations going on at once. I sat myself very strategically at the table. Almost as if this was a game of Battle Ship- she never saw it coming! I decide to strike up a conversation with a gay male co-worker about none other than SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS. Oh yeah, I knew exactly where that would lead...

There she was, sitting across the table and two people down from me, yeah that wasn't an accident friends. She was "out" in the department, - verbally, physically... O.U.T: out. Now, when you look like this (point up & down at self)- it aint so obvious. So I decided to make my move...

How I began talking about "my crazy ex-girlfriend" wasn't an accident either. The words came out of my mouth at the exact moment that said lesbian took a bite of her Tasty Turkey Sandwich. That's when it happened...

My gay male co-worker brought up bad break-ups and the door was left wide open. I told my favorite "crazy ex-girlfriend" story- "When I broke up with my girlfriend she completely flipped out, called me 97 times in one hour, showed up at my work hysterically crying and screaming at me... I had to file a restraining order..." and I immediately saw out of my periphs- (head motion noise).

Hook. Line. Sink-Her.

My “crazy ex-girlfriend” has succeeded once again. Said lesbian and I are currently in a very happy relationship going on 15 months.

Seriously though, in the past I’ve tried other methods of “coming out”:

Justin Beiber hair-cut. Doesn’t work when you were born before the Beebs was born.

Young mens t-shirt, jeans and vans shoes. This only seemed to catch the attention of raging queens who saw this as an opportunity to critique my style.

So far, wearing a sandwich board that says “Yes! I am actually gay” is the only other tactic that has had any success.

“Passing”- meaning “gay who doesn’t look gay” is frustrating because for me “coming out” is necessary in order for me to date.

Essentially, my “crazy ex-girlfriend” is my “match.com”.

So the next time you see someone wearing an “I’m Gay” sandwich board- tell them about my “crazy ex-girlfriend” and let them know... they can use her too.

## Confessions of an Insane Transman

By Chris T. Duarte

When I came out as a queer person at 21, I thought the experience of coming out was one that I only had to go through once. I experienced the disownment by my parents, the stares from people in public, the refusal of service in restaurants, bars, clothing stores, and every other possible public location. After “Coming out,” I believed that my life would return to being “normal.” I quickly discovered that I was wrong.

After a few years of broken relationships, apartment evictions, job terminations, and several experiences of homophobia, I contemplated returning to the closet. Living in peace seemed better than the judgment I received from people around me. In addition, the rejection I faced from partners became a growing problem. I expected that I would receive more acceptance from lesbian partners because my body was one of a biological female, but because my mind did not fit my physical form, I sifted through many broken relationships. As I negotiated through a community that I was always told “lived a life of sin,” I sought out support that merely was not available to me. It was then that I met a man that changed my life.

In 2006, I was forced to reevaluate my life when I realized that my family didn't accept me due to my queer identity but the queer community rejected

me because of my transgender identity. I knew that I felt as though the body I was born with didn't fit my perception of who I was on the inside, but it was difficult to explain to people around me what or who I was because I had never heard the term transgender. To find others like myself, I drove several hours to meet a stranger who would open my eyes. When I arrived, I met a man that I would describe as a "manly" man. He was about 5'10", 220lbs. He was a hairy man with long beard and a deep voice who attempted to explain that he was transgender. I almost laughed because I thought to myself, "he would make one ugly woman." I asked him, do you shave your beard when you want to appear as a woman? He laughed and asked why would I want to appear as a woman? I am a transgender man and I spent most of my life as a woman. Why would I want to go back? He explained to me that he was born a woman and had transitioned to become a man 8 years previously. I was shocked but inside I cried out with joy. Was it actually possible to become a man?

Over the next few months I imagined what it would be like to look in the mirror and see the person I knew I was on the inside staring back at me. It became a selfish experience to keep it all inside for fear that the relationships I had built with those around me would cease if I took the steps to transition. I feared the potential lack of safety, rejection from my family again, and I feared

being alone. Most of all, I feared that if I transitioned, I wouldn't like the results and it would be too late to change my mind because once you begin to inject hormones in your body, there is no going back. Your voice doesn't return to being soft, the hair on your face doesn't stop growing, and no matter how male I would ever appear, I would never have the genitalia of a biological man. Would this make me a freak? Would I be alone forever because no woman would ever want a man with a vagina? What would happen to me? After several months of arguing with myself, I began taking over the counter testosterone pills without being under the care of a doctor. After 3 months of taking 3 times the normal dosage for a man, my body began shutting down. My liver and kidneys were crashing, I vomited uncontrollably, I ached in every part of my body, and after three months I found myself in the emergency room attempting to explain to emergency doctors that I was taking testosterone tablets because I was transgender. I began to realize that "coming out" again was becoming inevitable. Over the next few years I "came out" multiple times and the actual act of "coming out" consumed my life.

To physically transition, I had to come out to doctors who wrote on my medical forms that I had a mental disorder and some even believed that I was insane. I came out to professors who would forget and call me by my birth name in class. When I came out to friends and family, they couldn't believe

that this was a reality and many believed it was merely a phase or that I needed to seek psychiatric help. Sometimes I “came out” 10-20 times a day. If I had to count the number of times I have had to “come out” up to this point, I would have to say it would be into the thousands.

I began hormone replacement therapy 3.5 years ago after telling a doctor that I would surely die inside if I didn’t match my outside to my insides. With every shot I took, I could see results. Slowly my face began to change, I began to gain weight, my hair, skin, and mood changed. I could no longer wear the clothing that I owned and I began to feel unsafe in public due to my inability to meet the physical binaries of male and female. People stared and I was asked for several forms of identification at bars, stores, and the bank. Each time I faced these awkward experiences, I had to “come out” and explain that I was born a female, I am transgender, now would you please just cash my damn check! “Hey ladies,” I would yell out in the restroom, “I am a woman and I just have to pee...would you like to check?” I have been dragged out of bars, kicked out of stores, and refused service because management in various establishments didn’t understand why I appeared so “different.”

For a long time, I was stuck in the middle of man and woman. I was not straight nor was I a lesbian. Gay didn’t fit my identity either and coming out to women as a transman brought my chances of having a normal relationship

down extremely. Everywhere I went and everyone I spoke to either believed I was insane or would stare at me like I was the white elephant in the room. I couldn't go to the grocery store without having to explain my life story to the cashier. Friends would say, "how is it you know everyone!?" No people, I do not know anyone, they just all know me as the insane person that isn't a man or a woman.

Have you ever tried to explain to the DMV why you need a M instead of and F on your drivers license? I was pulled over one time and the officer said, "you're and woman! No shit! That's fucking wild! Here's your license, have a good day!" No ticket was issued despite the fact I didn't have my registration or insurance in my car, I wasn't wearing a seatbelt and I was speeding. In addition, people don't think about how bathrooms really reduce you to what you have between your legs. Did you know that when you pee, the light tinkle of peeing closer to the water gives you away to the other men in the bathroom?

Transitioning did not make my life easier by any means. Ever thought about what it would be like to go through male puberty and female menopause at the same time? For more than 2 years of my transition, I felt emotionally wrecked. My mind played tricks on me and everything about my life as a woman slowly faded into a distant memory. Even though I began to pass fully

as male in public and my legal identification matched as male, it was still hard explain to the outside world why I was different. A lot of the time, I didn't have to come out at all. It was the people around me, in my classes, at my job, in the store, or any other place you could imagine that "outed" me so that they would have something to talk about.

Aside from being transgender in public, in my private life I had difficulty embracing my male identity. I was never taught how to be a man; I was only taught how to be married to one. The most difficult challenge became the expectations from the outside world about how I should behave, live, love, and experience life. I wasn't male enough to be male but surely I am not female either. I was just an insane transman. People who know me, know me as Chris. They know me as a person who cares, respects his family, loves his partner and child, and gives life everything he has. To those who don't know me, I am just a small percentage of the population who suffers from mental illness that cannot be cured. I am not even a statistic because transgender statistical reporting rarely exists. Medical doctors do not know what will happen to my body after 10 years of hormone replacement therapy because that type of research does not exist. To the outside world, I am a phenomenon that should be poked and studied after my death. To the medical science overall, I am a mental disorder. I have no name...just a diagnosis.

For more than 3 years I have educated others about transgender issues to. I “come out” to rooms and audiences of people who are shocked yet curious about who I am. I love the people who argue that this “lifestyle” is a choice because who would choose to have gone through everything I have gone through. The only choice I made about my transition was the choice to transition and accept myself for who I am. I am loved, I am smart, and I love life. Isn't that all that matters? For me, it matters to create a better world that every human can thrive in. I “come out” as often as I can with the hope that I can be the change I would like to see happen in the world. You see, “coming out” doesn't happen just once in a person's life. It is a daily journey in which we must come out to ourselves in order to face another day. Then we must come out to others and reassure the outside world that we deserve to be here.

## Healing the Barbed Wire Wounds

This monologue was written by a faculty member here at NAU who did not  
feel safe performing it on a number of levels.

Multiple stories

Multiple wounds

Multiple orgasms

Entangle my coming out story.

Intertwine all of us.

Some might say it's self-indulgence to speak about the self.

And in some ways it is.

This—it's healing for me.

I could be fired not hired

But I wouldn't be deported for this outing.

This story, I think, is not just about me though.

These wounds

are also the wounds of Gloria Anzaldúa's barbed wire fences

the blood on our hands

the land and the borders that we build

to keep some in and some out

forcing people into closets of fake social security cards they will never collect  
on

of laws telling neighbors and upholders of the peace to out the people—  
who do the backbreaking cancer causing jobs

that feed us

make our clothes

the jobs that U.S. citizens despise.

Outing people

calling them illegal or even terrorists

a diagnosis different

but not dissimilar from queer, fag, homo, slut

because queers have been removed from children

and children have come out and lost families

because immigrant parents of children get deported torn from their families

all the time

Making many of us potentially homeless...

\*\*\*\*\*

There was a day in my early twenties

when I looked to the sky and saw beyond the dull horizon of the Palouse  
winter white snow  
normalcy// belonging.

Mine is a story of grief, of joy, of loss, of longing

When did I first come out to me?

was it when I read

Emily Dickinson's poetry?

dwelling in possibility

telling all truth but slant

that much madness is divinest sense to the discerning eye///

or was it when I got enraptured by Georgia O Keefe

With her beautiful petals opening, layer upon layer, into desert landscapes?

I knew it when I made out everyday at recess with Teresa Pérez in the 3<sup>rd</sup>

grade

She taught me how to French kiss.

I liked it.

But it took me 24 years to kiss a woman after that

The teacher had yelled at us one day:

no no you must never do that again she shouted.

I remember her waving her finger at me and feeling so ashamed.

I remember asking my mother about the two women who lived together next door ... I was eight.

All I remember after that are the words gross and lesbians—  
and looking down at my bare feet.

So I tried to live the straight life

Did his laundry, bought his beer

Refused to have his kids

Stayed 10 years for a mortgage payment and a dog

Laid there doing what I saw as my wifely duties while he got off

With his sour bud light breath and scratchy beard

This is NOT to say I love women because I had a bad marriage

Or that I'm a lesbian just because I was raped by my grandfather when I was  
14.

They did not cause me to love women.

I mean geeze....I've loved rainbows since I was 8. had my mom paint a huge one on my bedroom wall.

Besides if all women who were mistreated by men "became" lesbians at least 1 out of 4 women would be queer...since one out of 4 women have been raped by men

(and that's just what is acknowledged as rape, recorded and reported)

\*\*\*\*\*

For awhile I thought of myself as bi—

Guys were available when I got bored.

And this past has caused a lot of fear and rejection amongst some lesbians I have met.

Which I could do a whole damn monologue about.

I mean really.

It's that fucking thing called heterosexism and heteronormativity

That says a guy could or would please a woman better than a woman

That a woman would always want a dick.

Which is bullshit cuz like a student of mine once said

There are lots of different kinds of penises.

And even if you wanted to be filled up like that  
you can actually buy one that is exactly the right texture, shape, and length for  
you.

And you don't have to do its dishes. 😊

\*\*\*\*

I prefer to be intimate with women.

never did connect with a man that way.

But please don't think I hate men just because I love women.

During this last year I had the amazing experience  
Of falling in love, and learning what love could be like.

her smell and soft skin healed me.

She tended to my wounds

Taught me safety

Taught me magic. Offered me daisies. Held me when I awoke from the  
nightmares.

She asked me questions. And she listened.

We read Rubyfruit Jungle out loud at the creek in Sedona,  
at the sandy cliffs in La Jolla...

kayaked many miles together

Even over there on lake muddy--with her 80 lb dog in the middle of the boat

I thought I would marry her someday

Move in for real, wear rings and shit.

Be family.

I considered myself aunt to her nephew

A student here

And her 5 year old niece

Who told me I wasn't a girl

And when I asked why

She said cuz you don't ever wear pink—you're always wearing green.

Her niece, who I spoke Spanish with

And who asked me which bed I slept in

But it fell apart so quickly

We wrote eachother's poetry so much we forgot to write our own.

And now I am left

With my poetry

With words, with grief.

I want to be able to tell you a happy ending love story

Cuz queer stories in the movies are usually tragic

We need happy endings damn it.

I tell myself that the loss of one love

Does not mean the loss of love itself.

I tell myself that the loss of this love

Even though it was the strongest, most intimate love I'd ever known and went far beyond what I knew was even possible with love

Doesn't have to mean a loss of self

Because even though I have lost her

I have not lost myself

Even though I have lost her home, her dog, her family, her laughter

I am not without a family.

I have not lost my identity

I still identify most as a lesbian but like the politics of queer better.

Plus lesbian doesn't allow for loving transmen—and lesbian can become another closet.

I still have an exuberance for life and a peace within me that is shining  
beneath this shroud of sadness

I still have the beginnings of community—

I still have you all.

We can still have each other if we can tare down the barbed wire that cuts us

The barbed wire that separates queers from queers

heterosexuals from queers

legals from illegals

parents from children

bis from lesbians

lesbians from eachother

staff from faculty

students from teachers

white from everyone else

transgender from LGBfakeT,

the barbed wire that creates wounds between

one generation and another

north and south

women and men

women and women

men and men.

and on and on and on

Us them us them

When will we make this end?

## Worth It

By Vanessa E. Delgado

I've come out more times than I can count. In more ways than I care to share. I've come out in cars, I feel like that's just a rite of passage, at home, in stores, at work, in a public restroom one time... that was awkward...

I've come out to family (some more than once), friends, co-workers, strangers, you name it. Every time I've come out I've always come out as a lesbian. Yes, I'm a lesbian, but at this point I just feel like that's old news.

I've gotten tons of different reactions, believe it or not I was not *always* this obvious, some people were actually shocked... very few people...but still.

When I first came out of the closet, my mother's instant reaction, a side from asking me not to cut my hair short (point at hair)... sorry mom was her asking me if I'd ever have children, get married, oh mom...

I was 17 years old when I came out and really felt like there was **no way** I was getting married and I was definitely **not** having kids! Not only because I was rebelling against what society deems as acceptable. Not only because society perceives marriage as a heterosexual right. Not only because the world believes children can only be created in the minds and hearts of heterosexual couples. None of that mattered in my 17 year old mind. I found it *disgusting*...the babies part, getting pregnant and then the actual birth, ewww

In women's studies classes we are taught that women are historically oppressed through the institution of marriage. Why would I want a part in that? I am a Hispanic woman, raised in a machismo culture where I learned through the explicit and implicit actions of my female family members what it meant to be "a wife". Marriage? No thanks, I'll take a long term lover and be fine. The baby thing, just plain out freaked me out. I constantly compared pregnancy to being infected by a parasite.

Then I met her. Of course this story has to do with a girl.

She was not my first crush, though I fell harder for her than anyone I've ever known. She was not my first date, though I don't think I've ever been so nervous. She was not my first kiss, but it may as well have been, who knew that line about 'going weak at the knees' was a real concept? Romantic comedies, 1; Vanessa, 0

When we started dating the feeling was indescribable. When she walked into the room I couldn't help but smile from ear to ear. If I knew we were expected to be at the same place, my stomach churned with anticipation, I always tried to play it cool. "Oh, hey you, did you just get here?" aka NO, I haven't been watching the door to see when you would arrive.

She makes me smile, laugh. She makes me feel special. I now understand the desire to build a life with someone. I feel as though I'm lucky to have found

her, the one person who I feel loves me as much as I love her. It took me some time to realize what that really meant for me.

I'm coming out again, this time I came out to myself as a true hopeless romantic. It is because I came out 6 years ago that I was able to find her. I came out of the closet and found love I didn't know was possible. I have recently come out as a lesbian who does not want to assimilate into the heterosexual ideal of marriage and family, but as a lesbian who wants to transcend the gender roles, the bullshit, and just love. I don't want to be denied the right to get married, I've always advocated for marriage equality, but damn it now it's personal. I'm in love and I am not granted the rights to express my emotions like the majority because of the gender of my partner. I never considered what bringing a child into my life would mean, it didn't even occur to me as a reality, until I imagined it with her. I want to have a family with the woman who I feel is a part of me, yes even the babies part (as long as she carries them), but depending on the state I live in when I choose to embark on that journey I may or may not have any legal rights to that child/*her* child/*my* child/*our* child.

This is what the conservative homophobic individuals against equality fail to realize. My coming out has been building up to this. The 17 year old version of me, had no idea that coming out would have this kind of impact on my life, it's

been an amazing ride. I've become an active part of the Gay Rights Movement, I've marched on Washington with a quarter of a million others, I've worked to bring awareness to college campuses.

However this moment right now, what I feel for someone else, the way someone else can make me feel loved is why I know coming out was the right thing for me. Standing here I can say that no matter how painful yet liberating it was to come out, no matter the discrimination both political and social, the negative stereotypes and the religious struggle that fills my heart when I think about my desire to get married in the Catholic church, IT WAS AND IS... ALL WORTH IT!

THE END.