

glaad notes

by the Gay & Lesbian Alliance
Against Defamation

Drew dresses for success

On the November 19 episode of ABC's sitcom *The Drew Carey Show*, Drew's brother, Steve, visits after he breaks up with his fiancée and shocks Drew by crossdressing. Unsuspecting Drew hires Steve for the cosmetics section of the department store where he works. Later, Drew finds Steve behind the counter dressed as a woman. Steve explains that he is a crossdresser and couldn't think of any other way of telling. Mr. Wick, the boss, insists that Drew fire Steve. But, in the end, Drew comes to accept his brother and saves Steve's job.

Overall, the episode handles the issues around crossdressing quite well, breaking down a number of myths and stereotypes. However, the episode does make one large mistake. When Drew asks Steve if he is gay, Steve responds that he is not. Drew says that it is unfortunate because lesbians and gay men are protected from job discrimination by federal law. In fact, that legislation (the Employment Non-Discrimination Act) failed to pass Congress last year and is one of the most important legislative protections that the community is still fighting for.

Thank *The Drew Carey Show* for an episode that dealt with transgender issues in a progressive and fair manner and encourage them to continue to feature Steve. Also, stress that the GLBT community is not protected from job discrimination by federal law. Contact: Jamie Tarses, Entertainment President, ABC, 2040 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles, CA 90037; fax (310) 557-7679; e-mail: abcaudr@abc.com; Bruce Helford, Executive Producer, *The Drew Carey Show*, Warner-Brothers, 4000 Warner Blvd., Bldg 19, 1st Floor, Burbank, CA 91522.

Straight to The Source

The December issue of the national hip-hop music and culture magazine *The Source* features an outstanding article on "A B-Boy Adventure Into Hip-Hop's Gay Underground." Writer R.K. Byers (who identifies himself as heterosexual) describes his experience going to Phab, a gay hip-hop night at a New York City nightclub. He acknowledges his discomfort as part of a broader societal discomfort with gay people. "Even extremists from different sides of the racial divide seem to be able to come together in opposition to [gay people]," he says. "In the hip-hop community, homophobia seems to be linked to an even greater fear. Hip-hop, which is quite unfairly seen as the last frontier of real nigga-ness, might suffer as an icon of Black masculinity if one of its more hard-core artists revealed himself to be gay." Byers interviews a host of people at the club, including Tutti Frutti, who says, "Eighty-five percent of the hip-hop industry is gay." Byers also discusses how the recent embracing of hip-hop by gay clubs has been a way for gay fans of hip-hop to, as one interviewee puts it, "trace my roots back to summer night block parties, the whole nine. Back then, MCs were given credit for being an artist first. They didn't have this whole Black manhood issue on their shoulders just because they were rappers."

Commend *The Source* for an excellent article which breaks through stereotypes about

hip-hop and lesbians and gays to contribute to the ongoing dialogue about the ways sexual identity shapes (and is shaped by) culture, race and gender. Contact: Selwyn Seyfu Hinds, Editor, *The Source*, 215 Park Ave. S., 11th Floor, New York, NY 10003-1603; fax: (212) 253-9344, e-mail: jali@sourcemag.com.

Chablis sparkles at Midnight

The Clint Eastwood-directed *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* opened in theaters across the country featuring a number of gay and transgender characters. The story centers around Jim Williams (Kevin Spacey), a gay antiques dealer, who shoots and kills his gigolo boyfriend. The Lady Chablis, a black transgender performer in Savannah, GA, portrays herself and has been credited by a number of reviewers as the film's "scene stealer."

This film treats with sophistication gay and transgender characters who could easily have fallen prey to Hollywood oversimplification and sensationalism.

Thank Clint Eastwood, who had almost total control over the film's production, for translating the gay and transgender characters from this entertaining and engaging best-selling novel to the big screen. Contact: Clint Eastwood, Malpasco Productions, Warner-Brothers Studios, 4000 Warner Blvd., Burbank, CA 91522-001.

Kerrison dizzy over Disney

In his November 25 column, the *New York Post's* Ray Kerrison perverts a *60 Minutes* story on Disney CEO Michael Eisner to peddle his own anti-gay agenda. In "Boycott Begins to Make Dizzy Disney Boss Bend," Kerrison claims Michael Eisner was forced to do the interview because of the pressure exacted by the Southern Baptist Convention's vote to boycott Disney due to what Kerrison calls the company's attempts "to normalize a lifestyle that is abnormal, deviant, unhealthy and dangerous." Eisner states that Disney profits have grown 20 percent in the past year and that "[w]e're not pushing any agenda. We're pushing for tolerance and understanding, expansiveness."

Kerrison's disingenuous attempt to report Eisner's supposed "buckling" under the pressure of boycott, is a desperate attempt at damage control for radical religious groups. His desperation reveals how the busted boycott does nothing but prove how utterly marginal they are to the concerns and lives of normal, fair-minded Americans.

Write the *New York Post* and encourage them to balance their wild-eyed radical columnists with a broader range of opinion. Contact: Mark Kalech, Managing Editor, *New York Post*, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036-8790; fax: (212) 930-8540; e-mail: mkalech@nypost.com.

She cleaned out her closet

The December 1997 issue of *Vanity Fair* includes the magazine's annual "Hall of Fame," which this year includes openly gay actress Ellen DeGeneres. *Vanity Fair* picked the 35 men and women because they were "standouts [who] made the world stop and watch." DeGeneres, who is featured in a sexy two-page photo spread by celebrity fashion photographer Annie Leibovitz, made the magazine's list because "she cleaned out her closet...and not only converted

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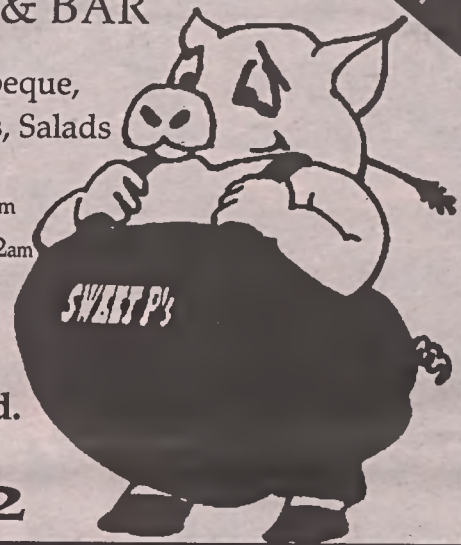
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