

STEPPIN' OUT

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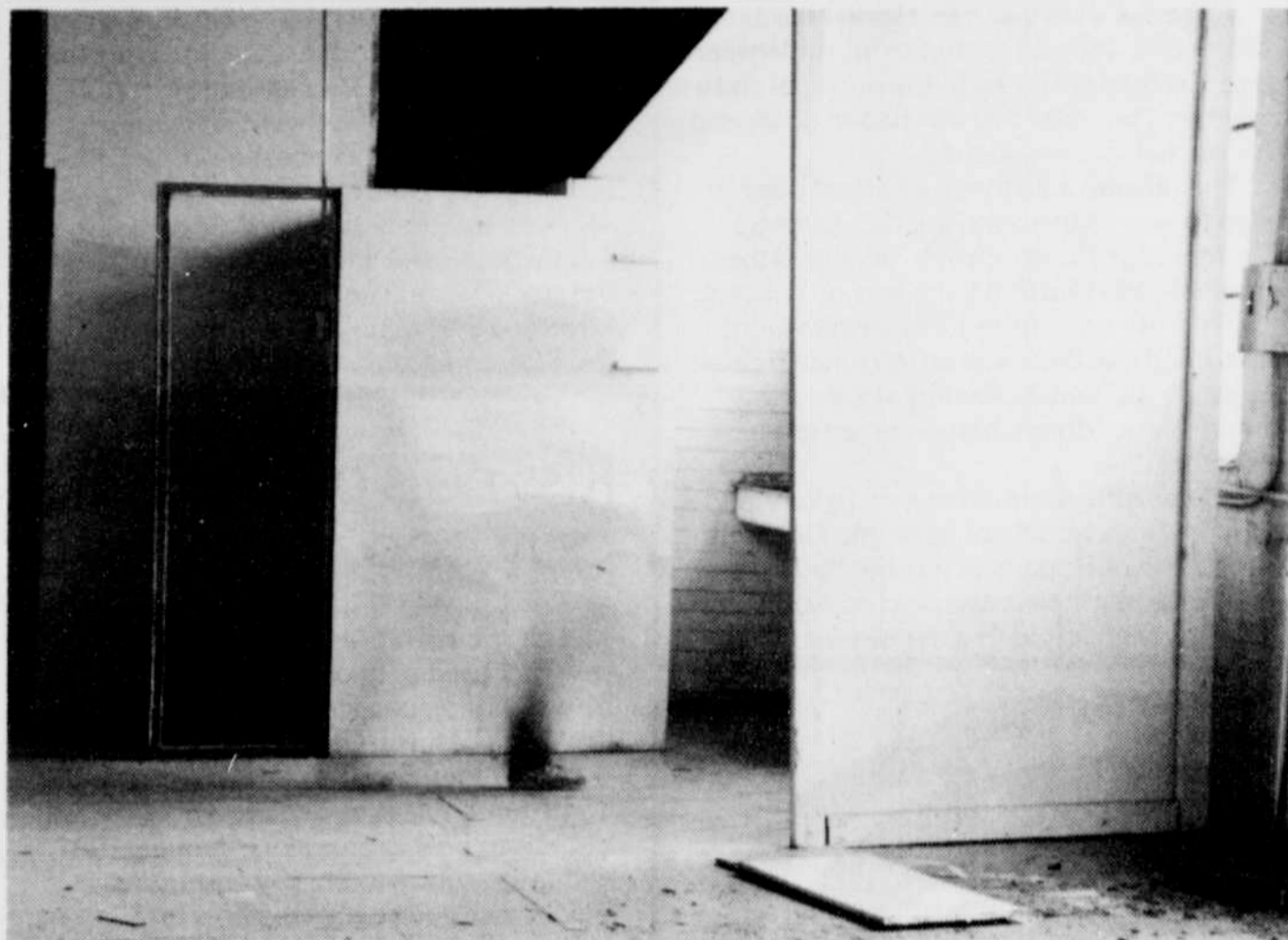


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LETTERS



...So after I told him I was going to the Republican Convention he got up, neatly folded his napkin and barfed all over my arm...

White House again informed of anti-gay action in Republican Party

The following letter appeared in *The Montrose Voice*, Houston's gay newspaper. The letter is a response to a statement by Reagan that he was against "discrimination in any form."

From J. Lawrence Webster-Hord

Dear Mr. President:
I apologize that it has taken me so long in writing you. I want to say, first of all, a few thank yous. Thanks for selecting Mr. Bush (one of Texas' favorite sons); thanks for selecting Jim Baker (another Texas son); and, thanks for getting elected. Although during the primaries, I was supporting George, I have worked closely with him since 1966. I was very active in your campaign. I am sorry to say that this time I will not be able to work for you in the capacity that I had the opportunity to work for you in 1980. I was an elected precinct chairman for many years.

In 1982, the trouble began. I was attending the 1982 Gay Pride Parade here in Houston and was interviewed by a local television reporter. It made the evening and

next morning news. As a result of that, I not only became an outcast of the local Republican Party, even as an elected official, but I also lost my job. I was shunned at what local party functions I attended after the interview and received several calls from other precinct chairmen, some anonymous, inferring that I was unfit to hold such a position as a precinct chairman and was an embarrassment to the Republican Party. Needless to say, with this attitude and hatred mentality, I decided not to seek reelection for the position of precinct chairman. I am sorry now that I made this decision. It will be (the decision to run) different in 1986.

I was so encouraged to see your statement of June 29, 1984, denouncing "bigotry and ugly rhetoric" and "no room for hate or haters within the Republican Party." Although this was in reference to the controversial remarks of Louis Farrakhan, I find that they are still applicable to any situation, especially to the gay individual and/or to the gay community within our society itself. All one has to do to see this bigotry and ugly rhetoric is to review the month of June in Houston as well as in Texas.

We now in Houston have an individual who is suing the local Republican Party because he was denied a delegate position to the district convention because he is gay. Also, one must look at the state convention which was held in Fort Worth, Texas, in

June and review the extreme resolutions that were passed against the gay individual and the gay community. Also, there is a massive petition drive in the City of Houston to force a referendum of putting the question should the gay individual have the protection of job security in a city civil service position as an employee of the City of Houston or face the awesome situation of being fired because of his/her individual preference of sexual freedom in the confines of his/her private domain. This drive, by the way, is headed by the local county chairman.

Mr. President, there are gays who support you in your effort for reelection as was shown in a recent poll in the gay community. You were many percentage points ahead of all the contenders in the Democratic Party. I never thought I would come out so to speak to the President of the United States, but do I have your assurance that there is no room for "bigotry and ugly rhetoric" and "hate or haters" in the Republican Party? I certainly hope that is the case. Don't disappoint us now.

My best wishes to Mrs. Reagan on her recent birthday. I look forward to seeing you again the next time you are in Houston. As the letter explains, I won't have the opportunity to see you at the National Convention in Dallas.

—Montrose Voice