

Just out

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Written and graphic materials are welcomed for submission. All written material should be typed and double-spaced. All graphic material should be black ink on white paper. Material will be edited for spelling and grammar, with the exception of letters to the editor.

Deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month.

Out About Town is a courtesy to our readers. Performers, clubs, individuals, or groups wanting to list events in the calendar should mail notices to *Just Out* by the 15th of the month preceding publication. Listings will not be taken over the telephone.

Display Advertising will be accepted up to the 17th of each month.

Classified ads must be received at the office of *Just Out* by the 17th of each month, along with payment. Ads will not be taken over the telephone.

Editorial policies allow the rejection or the editing of an article or advertisement that is offensive, demeaning or may result in legal action. *Just Out* consults the Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual on editorial decisions.

Views expressed in letters to the editor, columns, and features may not be those of the editorial staff of *Just Out*.

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The mailing address and telephone number for *Just Out* are:

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SAFE SEX

HIV, the virus which causes AIDS is transmitted through direct contact with infected body fluids; i.e., blood, semen, urine, feces and possibly vaginal secretions. To insure that sexual activity is safe avoid contact with body fluids.

UNSAFE SEX

- Vaginal or anal intercourse without a latex condom
- Fellatio without a latex condom
- Semen, blood or urine in the mouth
- Blood contact of any kind
- Oral-anal contact
- Fist fucking
- Sharing sex toys

SAFE SEX

- Massage
- Hugging
- Body-to-body rubbing
- Voyeurism, exhibitionism, fantasy
- Masturbation

SHARING NEEDLES IS UNSAFE IN ANY SITUATION

Steppin' Out

Photo by Jay Brown



A short account of my behavior

"You were the Number One student at your high school. Everyone had such dreams for you, and now you want to disappoint them."

BY TERRI L. JEWELL

My mother once asked me if I had a Death Wish. "As if being a female and black isn't trouble enough for you, girl. Now you are talking about dropping out of college? Your father and I have sacrificed a lot to get you into college. I couldn't tell you how long I had to go without a winter coat to put food on the table every day. And you were the Number One student at your high school. Everyone had such dreams for you, and now you want to disappoint them. You're going to end up like the others out there with no job and hope for a good life. What on earth has gotten into you? Well, girl, you might as well forget whatever nonsense you think you're going to do. I'M NOT GOING TO ALLOW THAT."

So, I transferred from a university in Kentucky to a small state college in New Jersey to complete the four-year program in what ended up being six years.

Then, my mother asked me why I bothered to visit home during vacations. "As if wearing those thick glasses and cutting your hair down to a nub isn't asking for tribulation, girl. Now you are getting fatter and fatter. Don't you care about how you look? Don't you have any pride in yourself? Well, let me tell you something, young lady. You just come back home during your next vacation and I guarantee you will lose some of that weight. And you will stay on the diet I put you on. And we will look into getting you some contact lenses. You will look so much better. You have to suffer sometimes to be pretty. You won't regret looking the best you can look. The way you look now, no man will want to be seen with you."

I did not go back home during vacations. I got a job and my own apartment.

Later, my mother responded to a letter I had written to her. "As if being fat, black and a young woman alone isn't dangerous as hell. Now you're not shaving under your arms and you say you're a dyke? My God! Have you gone crazy? Do you hate me that much? I have done nothing but love you, have given you everything you could

possibly want, and look how you repay me. Don't you understand where you are? You're not some little white girl who can get away with this. They can play all they want, but they don't have the struggle you have in life. They will kill you just for being alive. You are just begging for death now. You better listen to me, young woman, and find some professional help."

So, I got a psychiatrist who told me he didn't understand the multiple conflicts I was experiencing with having to speak and act white in my black world. Another psychologist told me she was primarily a child psychologist who felt that homosexuality was a pathological state. She asked me if there was a substance-abuse problem in my family. I told her no, that I was seeing her to work through the guilt I felt over my grandmother's death and that I just happened to have a woman lover who was as supportive as she could be. Finally, I went to a psychotherapist who told me to find a boyfriend, get laid, and stop worrying about my small problems. I was simply too self-centered and too fat.

Yet, my mother thought I had not tried hard enough to solve my dilemma. "As if being a crazy bulldagger is not bad enough for you. I can't have you as my daughter. I am so ashamed of you, I can't mention your name to the women at work who are always talking about their own daughters. And you just had to get a white woman. Going around, hugging and kissing on the enemy. White women get the best of the black men and now they are getting the best of the black women. You are sicker than I care to think about. And you are killing your father, you know that? He doesn't say anything because it hurts him so. You know how hard it is for him to talk his real feelings. He leaves it up to me to tell you what he feels. I'd rather see you lay down with a dog than lose what's left of your dignity to some white, trashy heifer. Get out of my sight. And since you know it all, don't bother to ask me for anything since you think you're so grown now.

C O N T E N T S

Letters	4
What's going on here?	5
Between the Lines	6
Just News	7
The Tribal Drum	13
LCP	14
Profile	15
Lesbian and Gay Pride	17
Out About Town	20
Music	23
Just Entertainment	24
Cinema	26
Eating Out	27
The Amazon Trail	30
The Roseburg Report	31
Counsel	32
Health	33
Comics	34
Classifieds	35



Illustration by E. Ann Hinds

I moved in with my lover and we grew together.

Still, my mother called me and told me shortly afterwards, "You just don't care anymore, do you? Are you trying to kill me? How did I fail you? I did the best I could. I had no lessons on how to be a good parent. You may as well blow your brains out. The effect will be the same as what you are doing with your life nowadays. You will never have a decent career. No one will want to hire a lesbian. Word gets out, you know. You won't have decent friends. Just perverts who have to live in the very dirt they make for themselves, just like you're doing now. And you won't have any children of your own. Your father's bloodline will end in shame. He goes around now talking about the grandson he'll never have that he wants so much. All that time in school for nothing. All our sacrificing for nothing. All my tears for nothing. JUST LOOK AT YOU. DON'T YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY TO ME?"

No, I didn't. But I did take a good look at myself. And what I found was a big, strong, employed, capable, brown-skinned, happy woman in love and in glasses who was living her life exactly as she pleased. •