

MARGARET CHO

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queens. Growing up in Polk Gulch [was like] *Tales of the City*—Armistead Maupin San Francisco. I grew up not only with an acceptance—or not just with an awareness—of the gay community, but a feeling of really being part of it. And being a child of it. Gay issues are very important to me.

Many people perceive you as being a lesbian.

We don't know where that came from. I am being totally honest—I'm straight. The thing that makes me really angry is that I am not the kind of person who—if I was gay, I would come out completely because I am in a position of power. I have so much to offer to the lesbian and gay community. And I still do. I'm a very, very, very strong supporter of that community. And I feel just as much a part of it as the gays and lesbians. I think those rumors started because I was working here [in San Francisco], doing a lot of shows at gay clubs. I did a lot of benefits. For really random things like "Free the Russian Lesbians." I never identified my own sexuality because my pet peeve is when straight people who do these events say, "By the way, I'm straight. Sorry, ladies." Or, "Sorry, guys." That makes me so annoyed because that's still separating yourself unnecessarily. It's making a difference between yourself and this group, which I don't think is right. It made me really annoyed that people did that. So, I never did. I really felt it was not an issue. And so, these rumors started.... It bothers me that people would think that I don't have the actual integ-



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riety to come out and say [it if I were a lesbian].

You're offended by the fact that people think you're in the closet.

Yes. That offends me very deeply. I'm not offended that they think I'm a lesbian. That's flattering. I think that's great. But, it's not true, unfortunately. It's a very serious, important thing. It's not something I would take lightly or try to cover up if I was.

Tell me about the man you call "your partner in life," your gay boyfriend, Scott Silverman.

He's my best friend. He's with me as much as he can be. He also works as a comedian. We actually met at Josie's a few years ago. We are total and complete soul mates, and we are together all the time. If I could marry him, I would. I mean, I may still.

Do you live together in Los Angeles?

Yes.

So, you're domestic partners.

Pretty much, yes. It's a very good relationship. It's very nurturing. It's comforting to me. It's something I definitely need in my life, and I know he needs it too. We have definitely made a lot of commitments to each other. We travel together. He's very supportive, and I'm very supportive of him. It's also a good artistic relationship because we help each other write. It's very productive.

I read he may become part of the All American Girl cast.

We hope so. There's no place to fit him in yet, but he'll be around.

Might he be introduced as an openly gay character?

Definitely. But since the focus of the show is so directed at the family, I don't know what else we can do for a while. Hopefully that will be something we deal with. I know it's something I want to deal with. So, [if an openly gay character is introduced] he would be the one.

How did you begin performing at Josie's years ago?

It was just a place to go.

You never differentiated between queer and non-queer clubs?

I just wanted to work. I performed at so many different types of places, biker bars and music open mikes...everywhere I could get up, I would get up. Laundromats, anything. It was really just to get out there, to get paid, to satisfy the monster that needed to perform. I never turned anything down.

You've also performed on Olivia Cruises.

Idid. Once. It was great. We went to Alaska. That was a few years ago. I went with Marga Gomez and a couple of other performers. It was a lot of fun.

How did you tailor your act to different audiences?

It wasn't that I tailored it. I would just perform and work as I did. I never really changed for any particular audience. With the ex-

ception of doing television, where I would not use four-letter words, which I'm very fond of using.

I've never seen you perform, but I've heard your act was fairly racy, peppered with references to sex toys, for instance.

[Laughs] It was racy sexually, but it wasn't really about using them. Just talking about sex in general, things I knew about, and things that were very subversive and out there—like S/M and leather and bondage and latex. I used to work at a [lingerie and leather] store called Stormy Leather, south of Market [Street]. I wouldn't classify it as being one of those adult bookstores, because it wasn't. It was kind of upscale, somewhat like Good Vibrations or something like that. It was a great experience. I learned about all this stuff, and I would use it in my work.

Now that you have your own TV show, will you continue doing stand-up?

I don't have time now, but I will continue touring once we break for hiatus near the end of the year, because I do want to get back to that. I am planning it slowly right now, just to see what's going to happen with the show, and just to focus on that. But I will be definitely doing some dates, if not going on a full-scale tour.

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