

It's just too odd. "Oh, my God, yes," agrees Pam Monette, who a few weeks back suggested that *Just Out* do a story on Lindsey Alexander, a drag queen who worked at the popular Old Town cabaret club Darcelle XV and disappeared 10 years ago.

"It was sort of big for a minute, and then it died down—but that's the kind of thing we need to remember," Monette adds.

"Every time I hear they've found a body, I think it might be her," Darcelle commented in mid-December. "But nothing has ever turned up that I know of."

Then, on Dec. 24, 1999, Portland police found the skeletal remains of Lindsey Alexander, a.k.a. Todd Alexander Asay, buried in the back yard of a Southeast Portland home.

Asay was last seen alive May 26, 1989, in front of Silverado, a gay bar on Southwest Stark Street in downtown Portland.

A reporter called Darcelle with news of the grisly discovery.

"I said, 'Wait a minute while I get myself back together,'" recalls Darcelle during a second interview with *Just Out*. "It was such a shock."

Monette and Darcelle are good friends and often wondered about Lindsey's disappearance.

"It was such a mystery," says Monette. "We have had so many losses anyway, so Lindsey kind of gets included in the list of people that we miss."

Darcelle always felt that Lindsey did not vanish of her own free will.

After all, she was an up-and-coming performer at Darcelle XV. She was in the process of expanding her wardrobe and ordering publicity photos. And she had just received a bottle of her favorite perfume.

"It was quite a loss," notes Darcelle. "I had never known anybody to just disappear off the face of the earth. It was very scary."

While Lindsey's disappearance was frightening, Darcelle doesn't think of 1989 as a particularly troubled time—at least not like the early '80s, when there was a rash of gay bashings in Portland.

"We never felt unsafe," recalls Darcelle. "But

# MURDER MYSTERY

**After a decade of uncertainty, the remains of missing drag queen Lindsey Alexander are discovered in Southeast Portland** by Pat Young

I certainly put the word out to my comrades that if you're going to get into somebody's car, you're in harm's way and you had better watch out."

According to Darcelle, Lindsey was popular and got along well with the other performers. She enjoyed doing her renditions of the top tunes of the day and was known for her trademark red wig and great smile.

as it was for weeks. We didn't move anything, just hoping that maybe one day she would walk in."

But that day never arrived.

"I'm really saddened by the fact that they found her in a horrible grave like that," says Darcelle. "But glad too, that it's closure now for her friends and family."

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## PortlandExtra

### Body is female impersonator who vanished

Todd Alexander Asay, professionally known as Lindsey Alexander, disappeared in May 1989

By MARK LARABEE THE OREGONIAN

Police say the skeletal remains found Friday buried in a Southeast Portland back yard are those of a female impersonator who disappeared mysteriously more than a decade ago.

Todd Alexander Asay, 25, definitely was killed, although police are not revealing how he died. The state medical examiner performed an autopsy Monday and made the identification using dental records.

Portland police found Asay's body buried in the back yard of a



ASAY: Police say he led dangerous life. LINDSEY: Dependable performer, friend

Club on Southwest Stark Street.

Prostitution suspected

At the time, police thought he had been abducted and killed, but they never were able to prove it or make an arrest. Although Asay had a reputation for being extremely dependable as a performer, police said his private life included the dangerous practice of prostitution. They thought he was involved in prostitution when he disappeared.

"He had a track record of car hopping and making (prostitution) dates with strangers," said then-Detective Edward Herbert said in a November 1989 news story about Asay's disappearance. "A straight person... might have picked him up thinking he was a woman, and there could be problems when he found out otherwise."

Herley would not comment on

the prostitution theory, although he did not rule it out. He said police are actively working the case, but he would not say whether they had any suspects. No arrests have been made.

Herley said Asay never lived in the Southeast Tolman Street home where his body was found, and he would not elaborate on whether Asay had connections to the address.

Asay was a regular performer at Darcelle XV nightclub, a cabaret show bar at 208 N.W. Third Ave., where female impersonators entertain a mostly heterosexual, tourist clientele, said owner Walter Cole, also known as Darcelle.

Failed to come to work

He was grateful Monday that the mystery behind Asay's disappearance had been at least partially solved. "It's really a relief to know that they found her and hopefully they'll catch the person who did this."

Cole recalled the last night he saw his friend. Asay had danced at the club on a Wednesday night but failed to return the next night. By Friday, the disappearance was reported to police because it was so out of character.

The 6-foot-2 Asay last was seen wearing a red wig, black tank top, green designer jacket, black mini-skirt and black, high-heeled shoes. Friends and family hung posters of Asay all over downtown that included two photographs, one of him in drag. They offered a \$1,000 reward through the Portland Crime Stoppers program.

He was grateful Monday that the mystery behind Asay's disappearance had been at least partially solved. "It's really a relief to know that they found her and hopefully they'll catch the person who did this."

"We knew that he didn't walk away," Cole said Monday. Police said in 1989 that there was no evidence that Asay had left on his own, such as closed-out bank accounts or packed belongings.

At the time, Cole said Asay was progressing well as a performer and was scrupulous about showing up to work on time and letting people know of his whereabouts.

"Lindsey was a class act as far as stage goes, and a class act as far as becoming a good and maybe even a great entertainer someday," Cole said. "He had all this ability, vibrancy, excitement, and to end up on a missing poster with a reward on the bottom is just awful."

You can reach Mark Larabee at 294-7664 or by e-mail at MarkLarabee@news.oregonian.com.

TODAY'S BEST BET

Replica dwellings exhibit

"Windows on the Past," which features four life-size replicas of dwellings spanning 10,000 years of Northwest settlement, continues today at the World Forestry Center, 4033 S.W. Canyon Road. The exhibit is open during regular museum hours, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$4.50 adults, \$3.50 youths and seniors. For information, call the center at 503-228-1367.

"No one really knows what [Lindsey] was doing that night. But we do know that she was a man dressed as a woman, which says a whole bunch of things," says Monette. "It would have been a surprise. A shock."

She adds: "I think today it might be a little different. The whole world is more aware of transgender, cross-dressing people."

Still, she says, "I believe that the same exact thing could happen today. Maybe for different reasons, but I do believe that the danger is there."

That's because prejudice, discrimination and bigotry remain a pervasive problem.

"I want the young men and women of the gay, lesbian, trans, bi community to know that they can really get hurt," she says. "I just hope that people pay attention."

She is hopeful that the newly formed Citizens Foot Patrol will help create a safer environment.

Originating from the Sexual Minorities Round Table, the foot patrol represents an extension of that partnership between the queer community and the Portland Police Bureau.

The patrol—which covers areas of Old Town and Southwest Stark Street—is designed to deter harassment and violence directed toward the queer community.

"We will be out on the streets so that our brothers and sisters at least know there is a friend out there," says Monette.

A safer environment that perhaps could have helped Lindsey.

"She was a real nice person," adds Darcelle. "Just think, she would be 35 now."

For more information about the CITIZENS FOOT PATROL program, call (503) 295-9785 or contact Pam Monette at (503) 940-5373.

PAT YOUNG is a Portland-based free-lance writer and gay and lesbian historian. She is currently writing a book about Ballot Measure 9.

## REMEMBERING A FRIEND

LINDSEY ALEXANDER, A.K.A. TODD ASAY 1964-1989

After 10 years of not knowing, Lindsey's friends now can say goodbye. Join others at 3 p.m. Jan. 30 at Darcelle XV, 208 N.W. Third Ave. in Portland. To learn more about the gathering, call (503) 222-5338.

If you have photos, please bring them to share at the memorial.



Michael McGrorty  
Oregon Regional Director  
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