

Bi-shop-ing

Inside the Portland bisexual men's sex party

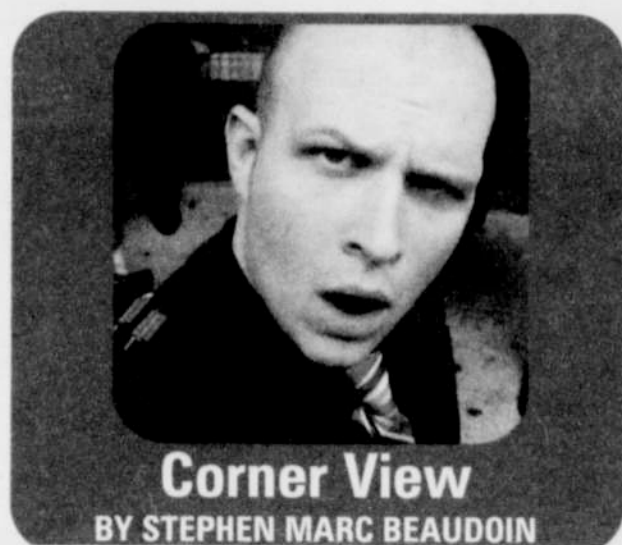
I doubt the flailing kids and lounging parents in the open-air hotel pool had any clue as to what exactly was going on only yards away in Room 914.

But the regular stream of men in and out of the hotel room may have been a clue. They arrived in fits and starts: A few just after 6 p.m., two to three between 6:30 and 6:45, then another cluster of solo guys just before 7. A total crowd of eight in an hour—a fairly innocuous number of visitors. Maybe the poolgoers simply didn't notice.

And what was there to notice, really? Just another private hotel sex party for gay and bisexual guys, some of them closeted, in a Portland hotel. *Nothing to see here, folks!*

The sex party is called, for whatever reason, Bishop. It's part of what looks to be a national series of men-on-men orgies that, if Craigslist is any indication, pops up regularly in U.S. cities coast to coast from Chattanooga to Detroit to, it turns out, right here in Portland.

The "men seeking men" listings on Craigslist seem to be Bishop's sole source of advertising. And what an advertisement it is! Its Portland posting, dated July 22, described Bishop as "an orgy group for men of all races, ages 18 and older, single or partnered, to meet in a safe, discreet set-



Corner View
BY STEPHEN MARC BEAUDOIN

hello." I hand him, per instructions, my 20-spot-stuffed envelope, and he sits down at a desk, laptop glowing in the dark, to log my payment. The room is a well-appointed, spacious suite; the AC is on full blast, and there's an end table stacked with condoms. There are three men, mostly unclothed, getting to know one another on the king-size bed. "Go ahead and make yourself comfortable," the imposing doorman slash party manager advises.

The next 45 minutes aren't so terribly interesting: the usual occurrences you might expect in a situation like this. But the people involved are of interest: eight men, aged mid-20s to late 50s, of variable race and, if clothes are an indicator, varying socioeconomic backgrounds. I spot a youngish

*Say what you will about anonymous sex;
it's a great social equalizer.*

ting," and promised 15 to 20 guys at your choice of weekday parties: a noon "lunchtime" scene, or an "afterwork" party for the suit-and-tie set, at a conveniently located, discreet hotel. After sending an e-mail to the hosts stating your age and party preference, a confirmation e-mail zips right back a few hours later.

That e-mail, though, came with a litany of rules: No cameras, no attitudes, no racial hang-ups, no uninvited guests and no drugs or illegal substances. Poppers, of course, are the exception. Oh, and this warning: "Do not post stories regarding party activities."

The attendance instructions and hotel room directions might make you think you were on the hunt for Carmen Sandiego. After the preliminary confirmation e-mail was sent, a second "party location" message was delivered the night before the party, adding a few reminders about discretion ("Do not share the party location with anyone. Do not pace. Walk straight to room."), cost (20 bucks, stuffed in an envelope adorned with your e-mail address) and duration ("the later you arrive, the chance you take that guys will come and go, literally"). A cell phone number was provided to give the exact building and room number.

I'm an investigative journalist, people. I had to see what this was all about. Which is why I was being ushered quickly inside Room 914 just before 6:30 p.m. on a recent Tuesday.

Shutting the door behind me, a stocky African-American man looks me over and says this: "Well,

guy around my age with smoky eyes and dark hair sidled up to a guy who looks to be in his late 40s, tattooed and smooth with a spiky goatee. These are men who would, in any other social setting, not likely deign to interact with or address one another. I have no idea which of these men were bi or gay or questioning, which had wives or partners. Say what you will about anonymous sex; it's a great social equalizer.

Just before 7, a plainly handsome guy, mid-30s, enters. He is nervous and fidgety—if I had to guess I'd peg him as bi or very closeted—and he quick becomes the center of attention. After stripping down to nothing, several guys crowd around him. His face is the portrait of studied emotional distance, shot through with just the right amount of masculine sneer. He is sensationally handsome. Enjoying the attention from so many men, he lets himself relax; his body melts, and he hangs his torso down over an adjoining man's back.

I watch him stay there, laying across this stranger's back. He lies and breathes deep breaths, this nervous energy slipping off. Then he closes his eyes. The room is still. And there's a muttered word from another partygoer, barely audible: "Beautiful." (j)

Staff Writer STEPHEN MARC BEAUDOIN writes about Portland arts and queer culture at fromeverycorner.blogspot.com. He welcomes feedback at stephen@justout.com.

Peacock Productions, Inc. presents...

Peacock After Dark

To benefit the Audria M. Edwards Scholarship Fund

Saturday, September 13, 2008

Patron Reception 5pm

Show 6pm

The Newmark Theatre

Portland Center for the Performing Arts

1111 SW Broadway

Portland, Oregon

Tickets

General Reserved Seating \$25.00

Patron Tickets \$75.00

PCPA Box Office – 1111 SW Broadway

Ticketmaster outlets or

www.ticketmaster.com

Hosted by:



Maria



Poison Waters

**Tickets
On Sale
Now!**

PeacockAfterDark.com