

OLDER, WISER, from page 4

LGBTQ seniors are estranged from their families. Most are hesitant to be out while living in a retirement community, where the main population grew up in a world where being gay wasn't an option.

A.Z.: *What is the overarching purpose of creating this film? How can it speak to the general public, not just the LGBTQ population?*

P.R.: For me, it's telling the untold story of a very specific group of people and an overall discussion at the idea of aging in the U.S. Everyone gets older, so everyone can relate to the basic options and concerns these men are facing.

A.Z.: *Were there any pieces of the project that you hadn't expected to discover in the process or that took you by surprise?*

P.R.: Well — I am not a senior. So my biggest discovery, or "of course!" moment, was that I had so much in common with them. I loved discovering that a lot of them are still figuring out who they are. The world changes and they have to adapt to it. I love the idea that you live your life to the fullest, always. That that part doesn't stop. It's often thought that when you

reach a certain age, you become stagnant. But this project taught me otherwise. Growth is ageless.

A.Z.: *What did you see as your greatest challenges?*

P.R.: Getting people to open up in front of a camera is a huge challenge for anyone. The senior generation in particular is not so media savvy and not accustomed to being on film — unlike the younger generations that upload videos of themselves on YouTube daily. Being filmed and then seeing themselves on the screen was a bigger deal to them. We were also talking with people who were still closeted, and not fully out. So we wanted to be extra careful with exposing them.

A.Z.: *And since SXSW, what kind of reception have you seen?*

P.R.: It's been great so far. People are really surprised how much they can relate to the characters, and surprised by how moved they are. A lot of people start thinking about their own lives and relationships. The best part is seeing the senior stars of the film take the documentary with them on their own adventures, hosting their own panels and having a platform to talk about their stories.

Harmless Ol' Fool

By Jay Thiemeyer

harmless ol' fool
took my fiver
for cigarettes

if you're dying
die comfortable
if alone
carry your death with you
at all times

I am your friend old man
could be there with you so

where do we go from here?

we go to watch the river
and lose ourselves in it

I'll see you at the Tenner
when you wander in to talk
about the early days
unlike today

when people mattered
and money
was not even in
the picture.

It took a world
away
money. Take it
from me.

outside, the twilight
hangs
like a balloon,
a thought forgotten
an entire life

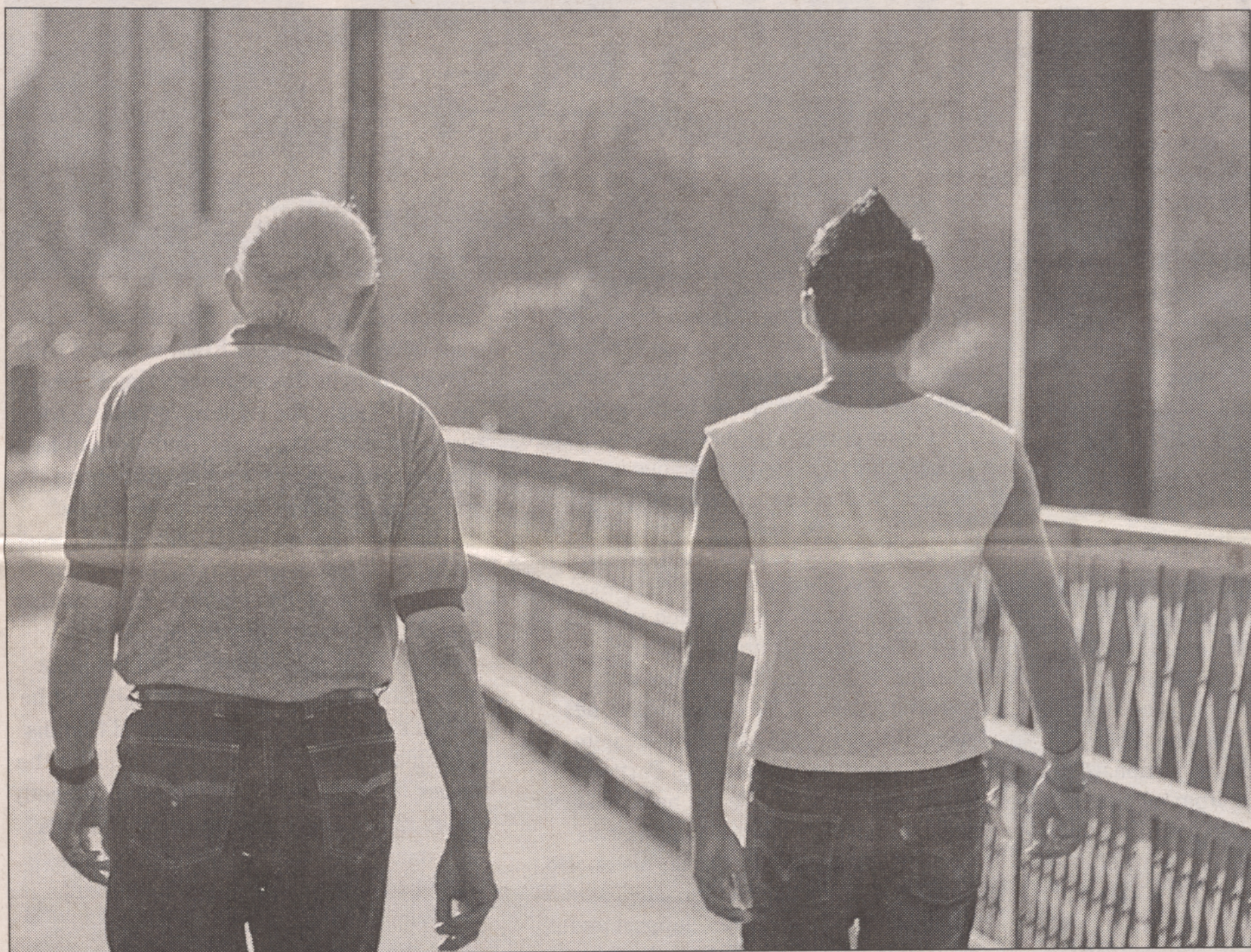


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Creamer and Raval walk along the Hawthorne Bridge during the filming of "Before You Know It about gay seniors."

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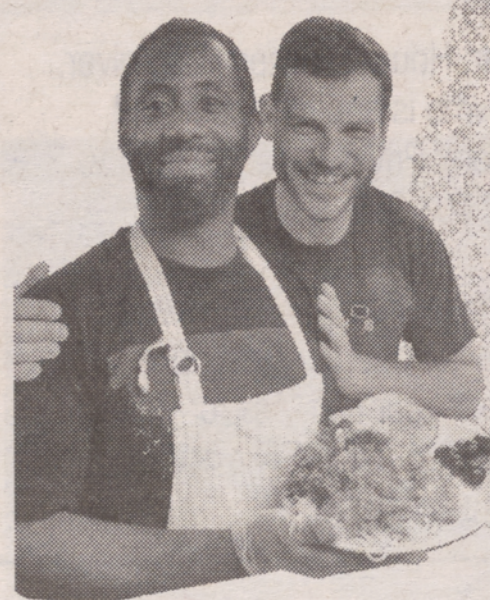
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— Sisters friend and volunteer

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