

ISSUE 25 — VOLUME 51 — FRIDAY, JUNE 23, 2023

**SGN**<sup>TM</sup>

SEATTLE'S LGBTQIA+ NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY SINCE 1974

# FIGHT LIKE HELL

Image by Leonard Fink /  
The LGBT Community Center National History Archive

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BY LINDSEY ANDERSON  
SGN STAFF WRITER

Photo courtesy of Bettmann Archive

Fifty years ago, a targeted arson attack on a Gay bar in New Orleans became the deadliest attack on the LGBTQ+ community in the United States. The Pulse Nightclub shooting surpassed it in 2016. Although the New Orleans tragedy killed 32 people and injuring at least 15 more, few today remember the UpStairs Lounge Fire.

#### A botched response from the city

At 7:56 pm on June 24, 1973, the UpStairs Lounge erupted in flames. Located in the New Orleans French Quarter, the bar was seen as a haven by many members of the LGBTQ+ community, who were targeted by law enforcement and persecuted for their sexuality. Survivors of the fire recalled that first responders failed to work diligently, and their personal biases and homophobia were responsible for many of the deaths that night. One survivor reported to historian Johnny Townsend that he heard a fireman say, "Let the faggots burn."

Patrons discovered the fire after an unidentified person rang the building's buzzer. A bartender answered the door only to find that the staircase leading up to the second-floor bar had become engulfed in flames. The bartender later reported having smelled lighter fluid. The fire lasted for 16 minutes.

The response to the fire was abysmal. Reverend Bill Larson's charred body was left in the open, seared to a windowsill, for all the public to see for four hours before responders finally covered it with a white sheet. Larson had been a pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church, the first Gay-focused denomination in the US; members of its New Orleans church often socialized in the UpStairs Lounge.

The bodies of a pair of lovers, George "Mitch" Mitchell and Louis Broussard, were also discovered in the aftermath,

clutching each other. Survivors recalled that Mitchell initially escaped the blaze but ran back to save his husband. Many in the community felt that the city's response was a gawking excuse to publicly out and shame survivors and the deceased.

#### Victims face shame, even after death

Many of the victims had been revered community members before their posthumous outings. Eleven of the men were veterans, including Ferris LeBlanc, whose body was thrown into an unmarked grave and buried in a pasture. For 50 years, LeBlanc's family has fought for his body to be exhumed and given a proper military burial.

Most victims were denied burial or ceremonies at their local churches after they perished at the Gay bar. Several of their families even refused to claim their bodies. A local reverend, William P. Richardson, held a prayer service three days after the fire to remember the victims. In return for his act of kindness, he received hundreds of hateful letters from irate homophobes.

Even though the UpStairs Lounge was the deadliest fire in New Orleans history, the city refused to declare a day of mourning or lower its flags. It took two weeks before the city released an official statement. National press coverage of the event was minimal. Only two news networks featured segments on the fire — CBS gave it less than three minutes, while NBC delivered a brief, emotionless statement before launching into a lengthy report on the stock market.

To this day, many of the victims remain unidentified. The arsonist was also never identified. Police had a primary suspect in the case, Roger Dale Nunez, a regular at the bar, but they never made any arrests. In 1980 the case went cold.



Photo by Ronnie LeBoeuf / AP





**SGN**

**PRIDE  
2023**



Photo by Jack Thornell / AP



Photo by GE Arnold / AP



Photo by Ronnie LeBoeuf / AP



Photo by GE Arnold / AP

### Triumph after tragedy

Despite New Orleans' atrocious response to the fire, a hero did emerge. Steward Butler survived the fire and turned his trauma into motivation. He became an activist in Louisiana and successfully passed a non-discrimination ordinance in 1991 that outlawed discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. In 1998 he successfully expanded it to include discrimination against gender identity.

On June 22, 2022, the City of New Orleans issued an official apology to the victims and their families. "The City Council deems it not only necessary but past due to formally apologize to the victims, survivors, and families affected by the 1973 UpStairs Lounge fire for the way that those who perished were not adequately and publicly mourned as valuable and irreplaceable members of the community," he wrote.

Furthermore, New Orleans City Council member J.P. Morrell initiated a new search for the unmarked grave that holds LeBlanc and the three unidentified victims.

The UpStairs Lounge fire was one of the worst attacks in LGBTQ+ history and serves as a difficult reminder of just how far we've come in 50 years.





# HEALING THE TRAUMA OF UNBELONGING

BY NICK NORMAN, LICSW  
SPECIAL TO THE SGN

Photo by Tomé Louro / Pexels

It seems no mistake that the rainbow has become the primary symbol for the LGBTQ+ community. Each color represents an individual quality or virtue, together standing for inclusion of people from all backgrounds and identities.

Rainbows, however, come only after rain. Likewise, many in the Queer community carry deeply painful experiences of rejection, ostracism, and degradation. Unsurprisingly, LGBTQ+ individuals are overrepresented in mental healthcare. We are more likely to experience anxiety and depression and are at higher risk for addiction and suicide. All this is a symptom of trauma experienced around one's sense of self.

We often think of trauma as the result of large and horrific experiences, but it also comes from low-grade emotional wounding that occurs over time. Dr. Gabor Maté, a leading expert on addiction and trauma, clarifies that "trauma is not what happens to you, it's what happens inside you as a result of what happened to you."

Two particularly harmful types of trauma experienced by marginalized communities

like the Queer community are unbelonging and dehumanization.

Unbelonging is the experience of being an outcast because of some part of one's identity. The painful message is that we are unacceptable, that something about us makes us unworthy of love and belonging.

Related to this is dehumanization, a deeper and more dangerous kind of unbelonging. It is the belief that certain people are less than human and therefore do not deserve humane treatment. This mindset has been the seed of every kind of violent movement against a specific group of people throughout history.

Despite the progress of recent years, dehumanization of the Queer community is very much alive. We continue to see misrepresentation of and verbal abuse against Trans people and drag queens, for example. Violent attacks in Queer community spaces continue, such as the mass shooting at Club Q in Colorado Springs in November 2022.

These are not events from a less evolved and distant past. This is the stark reality that Queer people face today as we move through the world. The seriousness of these

circumstances means that we need allies who will speak up and step up when they see mistreatment or hear language that dehumanizes others. In the words of the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu, "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."

The antidote to unbelonging, dehumanization, and communal trauma is rehumanization. This requires people to take real action to undo injustice and give marginalized communities a voice. It requires stepping back and listening to the pain of others without trying to brush it off. If people truly care about those who have been pushed to the sidelines of society, then an intentional effort must be made to lift up marginalized people and bring them in.

For those of us who bear the wounds of unbelonging and dehumanization, our task is to engage in our own healing. We need to have the self-compassion to reach out for help, both from friends and mental health professionals. We need to muster the courage to be vulnerable and allow ourselves to be truly seen by those we trust, with all of our insecurities and imperfections. We

must also give to ourselves that which we did not get from others: respect, compassion, and celebration.

Dr. Brené Brown describes this process as developing true belonging: "True belonging is the spiritual practice of believing in and belonging to yourself so deeply that you can share your most authentic self with the world and find sacredness in both being a part of something and standing alone in the wilderness. True belonging doesn't require you to *change* who you are; it requires you to *be* who you are."

The storm is still raging, and the struggle is not yet won. Yet as we work toward a better world, we can lift ourselves and others up. It's above the clouds that the light touches the rain and creates a rainbow, and it is when we witness and honor the collective trauma of others that real healing is possible.

*Nick Norman, LICSW, is the business relationship manager at Mindful Therapy Group, a diverse and collaborative network of licensed, independent mental health clinicians serving Washington and Oregon.*





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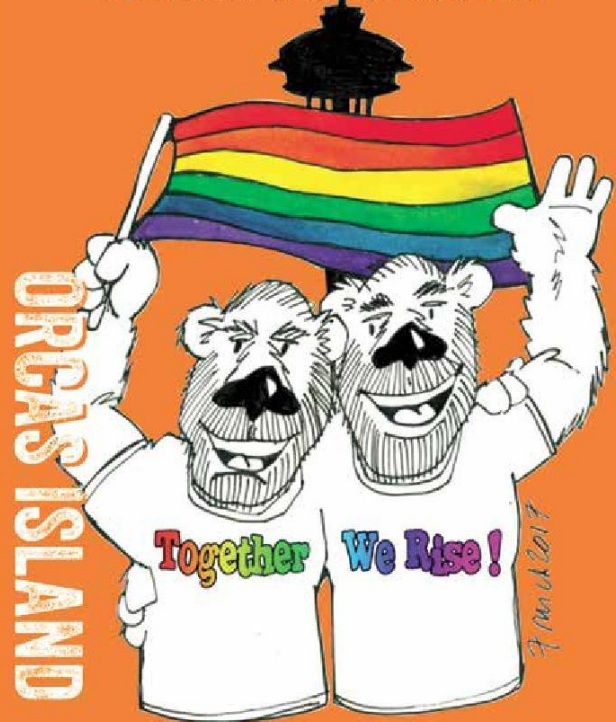
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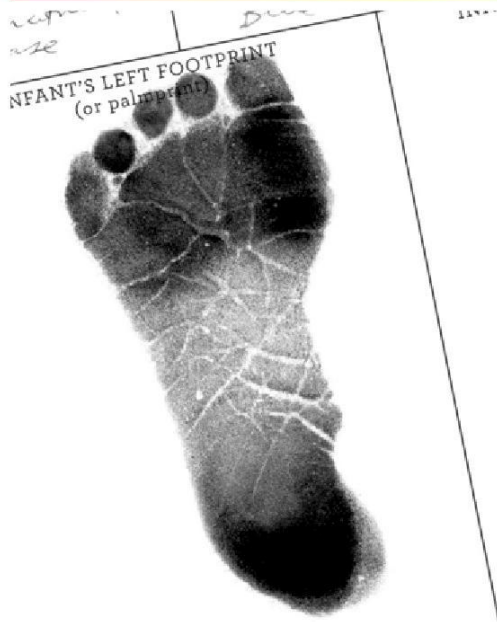
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SGN 7





# A GLANCE AT THE GEORGE JACKSON BRIGADE AND ITS LEGACY OF PRISON ACTIVISM

BY DANIEL LINDSLEY  
SGN STAFF WRITER

Mark Cook, Janine Bertram, and Ed Mead at the Northwest Film Forum in 2018  
— Image courtesy of Revolutionary Audiobooks YouTube

The SGN's younger readers might have missed the George Jackson Brigade. It was one of the infamous "urban guerilla" groups active in the United States in the 1970s, but the Pacific Northwest-based group was unique in that most of its membership was Queer — a mix of communists and anarchists whose ultimate goal was allegedly to replace the United States government with a more collectivist form of rule.

Obviously the brigade never made it that far. One of its members, Bruce Seidel, was killed by police while robbing a bank in Tukwila in 1976. Five more had been arrested, charged, and imprisoned by 1978. Despite many of them being given multiple life sentences, by the turn of the century most had been released without much fanfare, and their public presence since then has been less militant, though some remain active in leftist movements.

Why look back at a group that blew things up, stole money, and had gun fights with police in the streets? Partly because it's a lesser-known piece of the Pacific Northwest's Queer history, and partly because readers who are old enough to remember the 70s may have been offered only a limited narrative. Above all, many of the problems facing

Seattle, the nation, and the Queer community today are the same problems cited in the GJB's fiery communiques to media outlets and police almost half a century ago.

At the time, articles in the *Seattle Daily Times* were quick to point out that the group was radical even among leftists. They rarely touched on the leftist community's actual concerns, however, even while interviewing them about the brigade's attacks.

Even just last year, a story on KIRO News Radio talked past the living members of the GJB, as if they weren't alive today to speak about their experiences (though whether or not they would want to talk with KIRO is another matter). In fact, the KIRO story instead quoted John Arthur Wilson, the author of the aforementioned *Times* pieces.

KIRO did mention the specific reasons for each of the brigade's bombings — solidarity with prisoners and unions, mostly — and noted that in most of the incidents, no one was injured. The radio story did not mention that targeting property and not people was the brigade's stated intent.

"It wasn't a Leninist attempt to seize state power," says Daniel Burton-Rose, author of *Guerilla USA: The George Jackson Brigade and the Anticapitalist*

*Underground of the 1970s*. "It was armed propaganda," though he also notes that the brigade was "pretty callous about hurting other people," particularly police officers, two of whom brigade members seriously injured during shootouts.

That's why "the FBI ordered a news blackout on the brigade," Burton-Rose says — to take away their platform. And not long after the GJB dissolved, news about the AIDS crisis was far more pressing for Queer journalism.

## The brigade marches on

Media coverage of the GJB never entirely stopped, however, and neither did the surviving members. Leaving out the revolutionary lingo of the group's media communiques ("bourgeoisie," "ruling class," and the like), one of the brigade's chief points of contention was the prison system, which many of them had experience with even before they became underground revolutionaries.

Former brigade member Mark Cook was interviewed by the *Seattle Weekly* in 2000, when he was still in prison and on the verge of being granted parole. He was the last of the arrested "brigadiers" to be released,

which apparently didn't surprise him.

"It's something that we all understood — that I would be the last one out, just because I'm Black," he told the *Weekly* from the Airway Heights Correctional Center. He was 62 years old at the time.

In a video prepared for the parole board, Cook said, "I still believe in the philosophy of the working class looking out for the working class, but I don't think that violence is going to get people jobs. Violence is something I would avoid and counsel against. I'll stand on the sidelines."

While in Walla Walla State Prison, Cook organized a chapter of the Black Panthers, launched the PIVOT program to connect former prisoners with employers, and organized CONvention, an annual seminar for prisoners, crime victims, judges, lawyers, and social workers to discuss issues in the justice system.

Along with the late Bruce Seidel, Ed Mead was one of the earliest members of the GJB. He was arrested on the same day Seidel was killed. In Walla Walla, he organized Men Against Sexism, a group of Trans, Queer, and BIPOC people who worked within Washington State's prisons to dismantle the rampant rape culture there.



**"OUR LOSSES ARE HEAVY  
BUT WE ARE STILL HERE  
AND WE INTEND TO KEEP ON FIGHTING!"**

**Captured**



**Therese Coupez**

**Recaptured**



**John Sherman**

**Captured**



**Janine Bertram**

*"The Brigade is composed of women and men working together toward revolution. At least 50% of our members are women; at least half of the women are lesbians; at least half of the leadership and decision-making comes from women; at least 50% of the planning and participation in all actions is done by women. We have no 'Mastermind' and no single leader. Rather, we operate in a collective and democratic manner, using and developing the skills and capabilities of all of us. We share skills and jobs so that all of us are working toward being capable of performing any of the tasks, mental and manual, that our work requires."*

George Jackson Brigade Political Statement  
November, 1977

A pamphlet from supporters of the George Jackson Brigade, from *Creating a Movement with Teeth* – Image courtesy of libcom.org

## Rebels make death threats in class war

SEATTLE (AP) — A revolutionary group calling itself the George Jackson Brigade has claimed responsibility for a January bank robbery attempt and the violent March raid that freed one of the defendants in the case, a Seattle newspaper said Sunday in a copyrighted story.

In a letter to the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, the group also vowed to topple what it called the "ruling class" and kill whenever it felt it necessary, the P-I said.

The organization earlier had claimed responsibility for four bombings in Washington state.

The communique made it clear the attempted holdup of the bank branch in the south Seattle suburb of Tukwila was to finance their activities.

"There can be no revolution without money — for weapons, explosives, survival, organizing, printing, etc."

"The people are poor," the letter added. "We will make the ruling class pay for its own destruction by expropriating our funds from them and their banks."

It continued: "While we don't particularly want to shoot police, we don't particularly care either. We will shoot without hesitation any police officer who endangers us."

The group vowed "to get justice" for what it called the murder of Bruce Seidel in the robbery attempt.

Seidel was shot to death in a duel with police following the bank robbery.

A clipping from *The Oregonian* on the GJB — Image courtesy of *The Oregonian Archives*

In 2021, Mead wrote an article for the *San Francisco Bay View*, a national newspaper oriented around Black Americans, in which he spoke of how the prison system had changed over the decades — which actions had made lasting improvements, and which ones hadn't. He claimed that the Prison Lives Matter movement would be the next to carry the torch of prison reform and abolition.

GJB member Rita "Bo" Brown, an Oregon-born Butch Lesbian who was known as the "Gentleman Bank Robber" for her

## Seattle welcomes back radical queer activists from the 1970s

An Interview with Lesbian activist Bo (Rita D. Brown)

by Scott Winn

On Saturday August 14 at 7:30 pm at Capitol Hill's Central Lutheran Church (1710 11th Ave), Bo (rita d. brown) and Ed Mead will speak about their involvement in the revolutionary struggles of the 1970s in Seattle as part of the George Jackson Brigade. The event will raise money for African American political prisoner Mark Cook, who has served over 23 years for his involvement with the Brigade. It is expected he will be released from the Washington State Penitentiary this fall. The event is sponsored by the Washington Prison Project (more info. call 324-8165).

The George Jackson Brigade was an underground group made up of mostly ex-convicts and working class folks, with a heavy queer influence. They banded together to support the massive movement for social change that had developed over the previous decade around the civil rights

and anti-war movements. The Brigade executed a series of politically motivated bombings on property in solidarity with striking workers and prisoners, farmworkers, the American Indian Movement, and Black construction workers. The Brigade was careful to bomb only when human life was not at risk. They communicated their political motivations through widely distributed communiques. The Brigade robbed banks throughout the Northwest to fund their underground life and political work.

Ed Mead spent 18 years in prison for his political actions associated with the Brigade. While in Washington State's Walla Walla prison he and other prisoners formed Men Against Sexism, an organization of Gay and anti-sexist men which succeeded in putting an end to prisoner on prisoner rape. A complex network of the buying and selling of Gay and/or vulnerable prisoners for sex had developed. The organization

virtually stopped the practice and created an environment where men could have loving relations. While they organized they drew support from men on the outside.

Bo (rita d. brown) was part of early queer organizing in Seattle. She recalls the Gay Activist Alliance doing outreach in the bars the few years following Stonewall. In the early 70s, she co-founded Leftist Lezzies to fight invisibility in the Seattle Liberation Coalition, which consisted of 30 progressive organizations working against the Vietnam War. Brown served eight years in federal prison after being convicted for a politically motivated bank robbery in 1978 as part of the George Jackson Brigade. Brown was known as the "Gentleman Bankrobber" due to her kindness to tellers and her butch stance and costume. She outwitted authorities, who were looking for a man, for several years. Of her time in prison Brown comments, "It strengthened my political perspective. It showed me without a doubt the level of inhumanity that is possible in this country. It made my desire to eliminate the prison system stronger."



BO (RITA D. BROWN) 1999

After being released from prison, Brown co-founded Out of Control: Lesbian Committee to Support Women Political Prisoners in 1987. The Committee educates about and sends support to women imprisoned for radical political work in the 70s and 80s. Local writer Scott Winn, of the Washington Prison Project, interviewed Brown in her home in Oakland, California.

**Why was Out of Control: Lesbian Committee to Support Women Political Prisoners formed?**

We have been in existence for 12 years. Part of the reason we formed was because if we do not say the word Lesbian in the realm of anything we do in the world we will be forgotten. I don't know why but that word Lesbian is really hard to come out of people's mouth.

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The SGN on the return of Ed Mead and Bo Brown — Image courtesy of SGN Archives

polite way of demanding funds from tellers, died in 2021 of complications from dementia — but not before contributing to a biographical documentary in 2017, and to a great number of prisoner advocacy organizations like Critical Resistance.

Brown told Burton-Rose in *Guerilla USA* that the leftist groups in the 60s and 70s were hardly welcoming to Queer people.

"The Seattle Liberation Coalition, an umbrella group of Left-oriented organizations in the city which had come out of the anti-war movement, couldn't say the

word 'lesbian,'" Brown said. "They could not say the word 'lesbian,' in anything that they said, and any position they took. They could barely say 'women.'"

A little under half of the gang got back together at the Northwest Film Forum in 2018. Cook, Mead, and Janine Bertram answered questions from the audience after a screening of *Cozy Cuddly, Armed and Dangerous*, a documentary about the group.

"The question of next steps is an interesting one," Bertram said. "It's not something for me to answer, because I'm 67

years old and don't have much time on the planet left. . . . Conditions are very different now than they were when we were underground."

"One thing that can be done . . . is the demand to end slavery," Mead said. "To modify the 13th Amendment so as slavery will no longer exist inside the nation's prisons."

"We believe in class consciousness," Cook added. "That's a long way to go, to get prisoners to believe this, but that's what we're gonna struggle to do."



**Henry**

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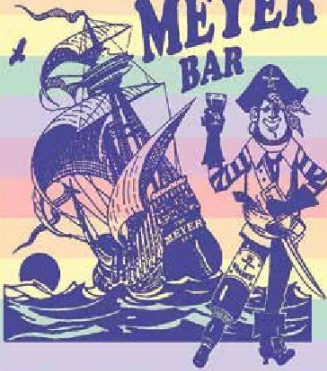
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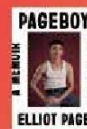


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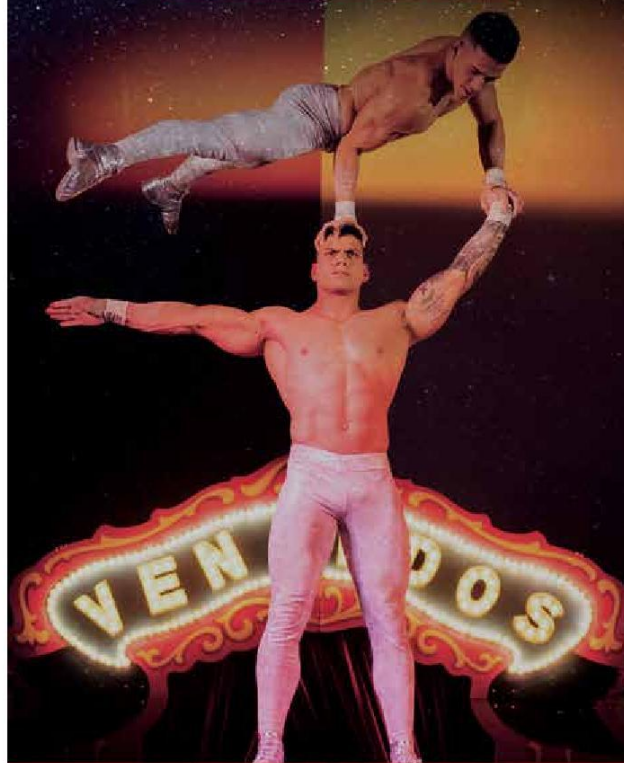


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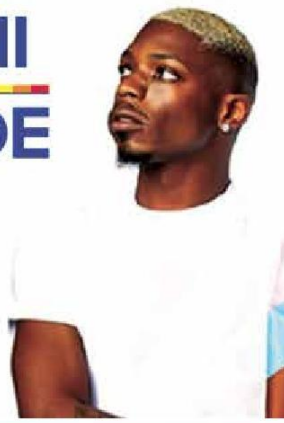


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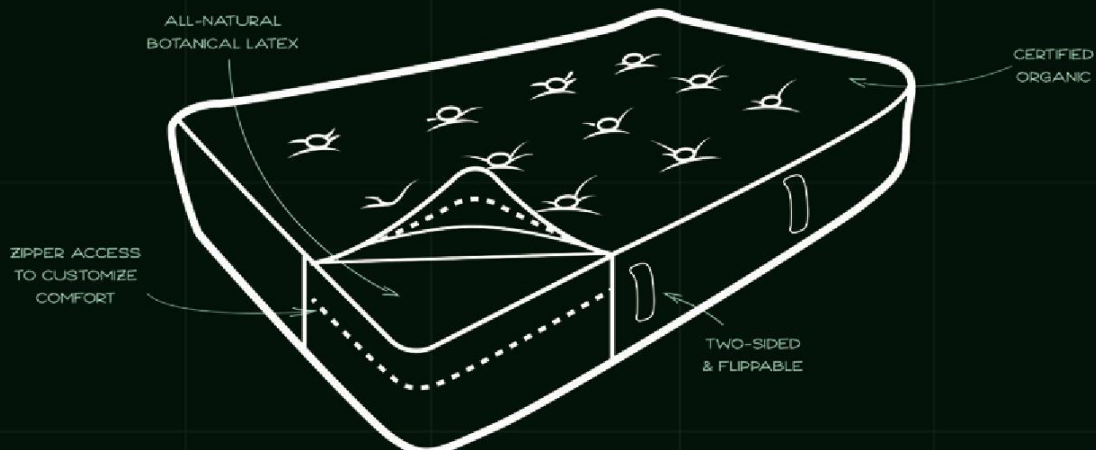
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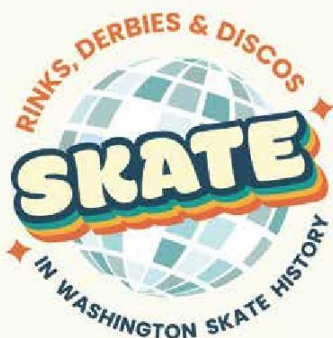


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# BLACK TRANS ACTIVIST ARRESTED ON EVE OF PRIDE MONTH

BY LINDSEY ANDERSON  
SGN STAFF WRITER

Photo courtesy of  
Qween Jean Instagram @qween\_jean /  
@sd\_herzog\_photo

The New York City Police Department kicked off Pride by arresting Qween Jean, a well-known Black Trans activist. Jean helped to organize the May 31 Trans Revolution Rally and March in Washington Square Park. The small gathering of nearly 60 protesters intended to stand against the plethora of anti-Trans laws passed in recent weeks across the United States.

Although the protesters remained nonviolent, an excessive police response awaited them. NYPD deployed its Strategic

Response Group, a unit often sent by the NYPD to deal with "out-of-control" protests. The SRG has been known to quickly resort to violent measures like using tear gas and pepper spray.

## Violation of the first amendment?

The police outnumbered the protesters and threatened to arrest anyone who stepped into the streets. Outraged, Jean commented that threatening protesters with arrest violated their first amendment rights.

"We have a right to assemble. We have a right to gather in these streets," Jean called out to the police with her megaphone. The protesters stayed out of the streets for most of the event as they sang and chanted. The NYPD blared a long-range acoustic device to drown out the activist's chants throughout the day.

New York activist Brenna Lip, who was on the scene during the protests, recalled, "The only people blocking the roadways were the New York Police Department."

Eventually, the NYPD overtook the sidewalk as well. Lip described it as a "wave of terror" that had come to apprehend Jean.

The protesters scattered when police broke onto the sidewalk, and Jean took off running. She made it to a deli, where police eventually apprehended her and forcibly carried her off into a van. They also arrested three other protesters.

## Who is Qween Jean?

Jean has been an active force in New York. She was one of the lead organizers for the Revival of Stonewall Protests, a movement composed of Black and Trans activists who marched in New York City every Thursday following the murder of George Floyd and demanded the defunding of police.

Jean also founded Black Trans Liberation, a mutual aid organization dedicated to eradicating homelessness in the Black Trans community. The organization provides fresh food to those in need and hosts community events such as the Juneteenth Celebration Ball.

The day after her arrest at the Trans Revolution Rally and March, Jean was released from prison. She was charged with using a megaphone without a permit. The New York Civil Liberties Union issued a statement condemning the NYPD: "The arrest of Qween Jean, a well-known organizer and pillar to her community, for using a megaphone to address those who have gathered, reflects a choice by the SRG to escalate tensions with the community."

Many activists involved in the May 31 protest believe the police specifically targeted Jean and intended to send a message of fear with her arrest.

## Qween Jean speaks out

Since her release, Jean has spoken out about the incident. "Fighting for justice is not a crime," she said. "Depleting our resources, targeting innocent people and their families, and upholding white supremacy is an act of treason and must be dismantled immediately!"

Jean is using her arrest to remind the community what Pride Month is about. "We must reclaim and renew the intention of Pride. We will protest until we are ALL free," she declared. "They failed Marsha, Sylvia, Amanda Milan, and the countless sisters and siblings who've been taken by gun and transphobic violence! We fight like never before. Those statues in Sheridan Square are the epitome of whitewashing. We owe it to our ancestors, our youth, and to ourselves to free each other. Black Trans lives still matter."



Photo courtesy of  
Qween Jean Instagram @qween\_jean /  
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# WHAT NOT TO BUY THIS PRIDE

## AND WHAT TO BUY INSTEAD

BY CAMERON MARTINEZ  
SGN INTERN

Ever since major companies discovered Queer people have money, a plethora of Pride merchandise has been released every June. Some items are stylish and cool, but most are a cheap way of making extra cash for the company. In all fairness, major companies have increased their donations and Queer artist partnerships this year, but tacky merch still exists.

In response to articles relating to Pride merch people should buy, SGN has decided to provide a list of items you should not buy this month. Keep in mind this list was created by a 22-year-old Lesbian, so the opinions in this article may differ from yours and that's totally fine.

Anyways, behold four things not to buy this Pride month.

### Any item from the Coca-Cola Pride line

When people outside of the United States think of this country in a non-political context, the first things they usually think of are Coca-Cola and McDonald's. The iconic red Coca-Cola logo has slithered its way into every facet of American life, including Pride month.

The obvious money grab by the soda giant includes a variety of rainbow-colored products with words like "Love" and "Together is Beautiful" written on them. The design makes it seem like Coca-Cola thinks Queer people are bottles of soda, which in a way will make sense if the company sees people as only consumers of its product. The merchandise also gives the impression that the wearer likes soda, not necessarily Queer people. None of the proceeds go to Queer charities, nor is there any claim that Queer artists created the designs.

At least McDonald's decided to focus on a possible Queer icon, Grimace, this Pride month. Daddy Grimace is way more intriguing than anything made by Coca-Cola this year.

If you want to wear soda-themed merch for Pride month, check out the earrings created by Queer artist Nicole Brennan. Their website includes items that parody major brands. For instance, a pair of earrings features the word "Spite" written in the Sprite font. Shop Nicole Brennan's jewelry at <https://www.nicolebrennandraws.com>.



Nicole Brennan

continues on page 21





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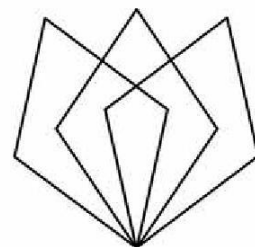
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#### Any item on Amazon from a seller you can't find information about

Everybody who has shopped on Amazon has seen this seller. It usually has a run-on sentence as a shop name and uses way too many tags.

Here's what the tags say on a shirt by LGBT Love Equality Queer Same Love Shirts & Gifts on Amazon, "Awesome Shirt for for Drag Queens or homosexual and trans Rally and Demonstration. Show awareness of same love and support for the glam lgbt rainbow community and dont assume any gender. Perfect for coming out bisexual pansexual and intersex men and women. This Tee a great giftidea for men, women and kids, fathers, mothers, brother, sisters, aunties and uncles who love to support the gay and trans same love community and other sexual orientation. Perfect for Marriage wedding Birthday and Xmas.LGBTQIA. (sic)"

If it's hard to read the description and you can't find any information about the seller,

don't buy the product. There's no way of seeing where your money will go after purchasing the item.

Most Pride merchandise on Amazon's website is from these types of sellers, but there is a way to support Queer-owned businesses or artists through the site. If you search for the item, you want to click on the brand listed above the name of the product and look at the other items they sell. Does the vendor have a link to its website or a description of what the brand stands for? When you look up the brand, can you find any information about who runs it and where it's based? Small businesses using Amazon as a storefront and distributor like to make their brands known to the consumer, so this information should not be hard to find.

If that's too much work for you, check out Pride Basics. It is a 100% Queer-owned business that specializes in affordable Pride merchandise.

#### Any item that Queerbait characters from TV shows and movies

Why do television and movie studios think it's okay to put two random characters on a shirt and imply they're in a Queer relationship? SpongeBob and Patrick are not in a romantic relationship, nor are Tweety and Sylvester. On another note, claiming Tweety and Sylvester "Fight together with Pride" makes it look like the show creators support domestic violence.

Queer characters do appear on television and in films. If you're going to wear Pride merch based on your favorite show or movie, make sure they're on it.

#### Pretty much any Pride merch from sports teams

Every Seattle sports team has a Pride line. The thing is, the lines for the Mariners, Seahawks, and Kraken look pretty much identical to each other. All three teams have a shirt that says Seattle in rainbow colors

followed by the team's logo. The Seattle Sounders don't use the same designs as the other local teams; Sounders Pride merch is identical to that of every other MLS team.

If these Pride lines had distinct differences, corporate-generated sports merch would be forgivable, but it feels like no effort was put into the designs. On top of that, there's no indication that Queer artists produced or influenced the art or that the proceeds benefit Queer charities.

However, one Seattle sports team's Pride collection is original and gives back to the community. All proceeds from sales of the OL Reign's "Protect Trans Kids" shirt go to the Lavender Rights Project.

Well, there you have it: four things a 22-year-old thinks you shouldn't buy. Hope you all enjoy the remainder of Pride month in your new merchandise.





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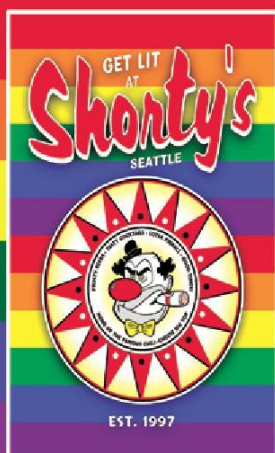
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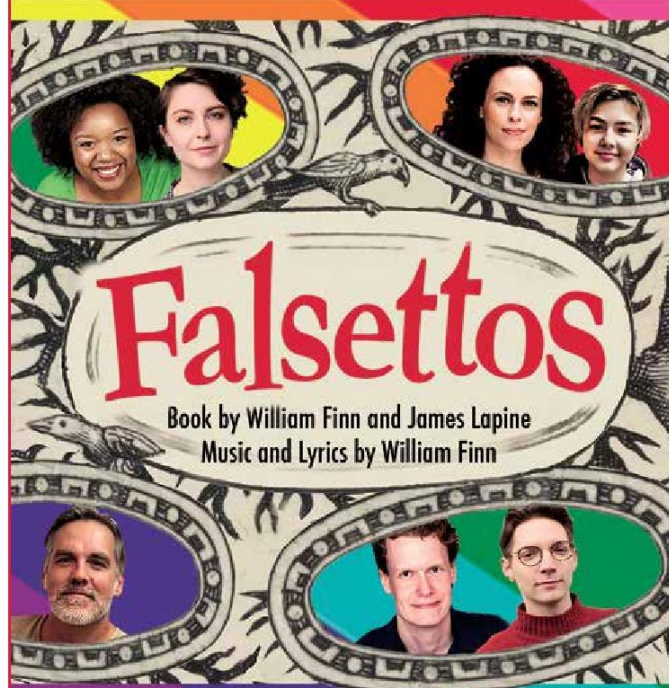
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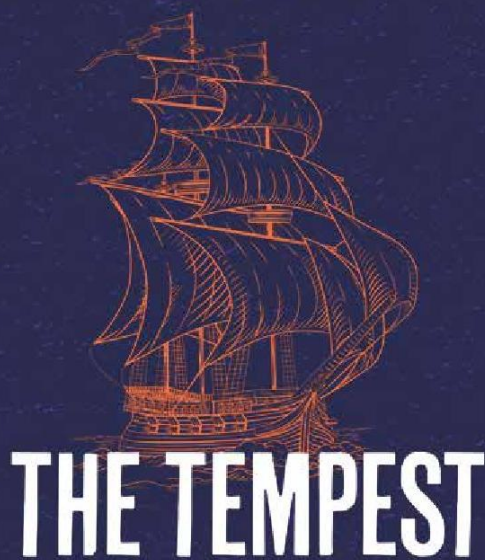




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