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American Society for Reproductive Medicine's New Definition of "Infertility"

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
contributing writer

More Inclusive of LGBTQ and Single People

The American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) on October 14 updated its definition of "infertility" to make it more inclusive of LGBTQ and single people who seek fertility healthcare. This change could motivate policymakers and insurers to be more inclusive as well, said two experts who spoke with me.

People may need fertility healthcare for a number of reasons, including problems with their reproductive systems, not having a partner, or not having one with the opposite gamete (egg or sperm). Many insurers, however, only cover such treatment after a medical diagnosis of infertility. This can mean a requirement to "try naturally" for months before being eligible for treatment (obviously not an option for single people and same-sex couples), or for same-sex couples to pay out of pocket for documented attempts at assisted insemination, while different-sex couples can simply state that they've been trying. Some companies have changed their policies (or, as in a recent case brought by a queer mom against Aetna, been forced to by lawsuit) to cover infertility without such a requirement; many others have not. Only 21 states plus D.C. have laws mandating any kind of fertility

see **MOMBIAN,** *page 4*

A religious bully, two heartbeats away

by Richard J. Rosendall | rrosendall@starpower.net
contributing writer

MAGA Mike's bad religion and bad politics

Don't you hate it when people with more certitude than understanding try to boss everyone else around? That is what happens when religious fundamentalists gain political power.

In an interview with Sean Hannity, new House Speaker Mike Johnson said, regarding questions about his positions on the issues, "Well, go pick up a Bible off your shelf and read it. That's my worldview."

Some of Johnson's defenders claim that his critics are attacking him for expressing his Christian faith. They misrepresent the criticism. It is not his faith but his fanaticism that we are faulting.

MAGA Mike is for individual freedom—but not my freedom to marry whom I choose, and not my nieces' reproductive freedom. He's for limited government—except when he wants to police bedrooms. He's for the rule of law—except when he wants to overturn an election.

Johnson wrote in 2004, "Experts project that homosexual marriage is the dark harbinger of chaos and sexual anarchy that could doom even the strongest republic."

Now he assures Hannity regarding

see **ROSENDALL,** *page 4*

After 30 years of silence, Althea Garrison is claiming her place in LGBTQ+ history

In 1992, the Black transgender representative was outed by the press. She's finally ready to talk.

by Kate Sosin
LGBTQ+ reporter for The 19th, 19thnews.org

This story was originally published by The 19th

Althea Garrison's summation of her life's work won't go down in the history books.

"Well, one thing, I've been living in the neighborhood for more than 50 years," she said.

Garrison has been dodging a phone call like this for more than 30 years. Why she picked up when she did recently is not entirely clear. Garrison is facing another election, likely the last of her life. And what she shared on the call changes LGBTQ+ history.

"I always knew what I was," Gar-

see **GARRISON,** *page 5*

Althea Garrison stands for a portrait at the Boston Public Library in Boston, Massachusetts, on October 7, 2023. Photo by Vanessa Leroy for the 19th.

NEWS FROM...

The History Project

Content, Controversy & Coverage

Wednesday, November 8
Reception: 5:30
Program: 6:00-7:00 pm

Hybrid: Zoom and Massachusetts Historical Society, 1154 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02215-3695

Free RSVP

Throughout its run, Gay Community News' staff, volunteers, and readership all debated how to answer the question, "What is gay news?" This panel will explore the intersections and divergences of opinions about what issues GCN covered, from feminist politics to international affairs.

Panelists include Gayle Rubin, moderated by Amy Hoffman.

Join The History Project, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Historical Society for a hybrid panel exploring this history on Wednesday, November 8th. The in-person reception starts at 5:30 and the program will begin at 6:00.

historyproject.org/event/content-controversy-coverage

"Brad Pitt, I think, in 'Troy'. That's a beautiful man. There's no denying it."

—Jacob Elordi tells Jimmy Fallon his first celebrity crush. If you can't place Jacob, you'll soon see him playing Elvis Presley in Sofia Coppola's "Priscilla".

more in Billy Masters on page 6!

Photo by By Condé Nast, via Wikimedia Commons.

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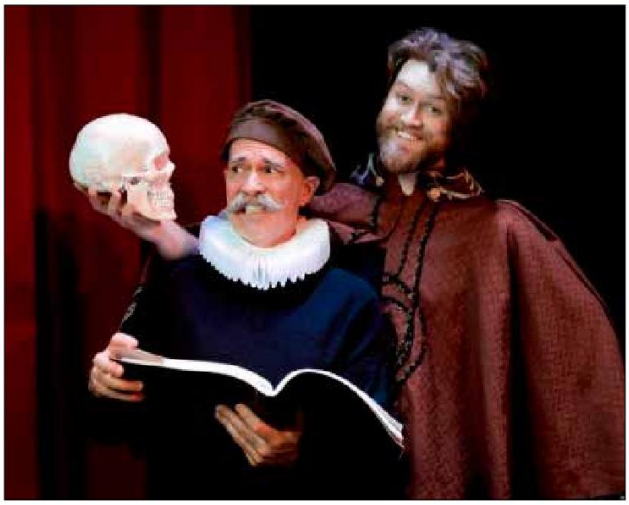
The Book of Will, Hub Theatre Company, Plaza Theatre, Boston Center for the Arts, through November 12. Pay what you can. www.theatreboston.org.



Brendan O'Neill and Cleveland Nicoll in "The Book of Will"(photo-Tim Gurczak)

By Jules Becker
Contributing Writer

For John Heminges and Henry Condell, "To be or not to be" had as much to do with the First Folio as with "Hamlet." It may be no exaggeration to say that this authoritative 1623 edition of 36 plays would never have come into being without the determined and unflagging efforts of these Lions of the Boards.

Accomplished playwright Lauren Gunderson ("Silent Sky") has dramatized their devoted collaboration in "The Book of Will"—a richly detailed play that not only honors Shakespeare and the greatest theatrical achievement in the English language but also evokes his colleagues' professional and personal challenges. Thanks to gifted director Bryn Boice (a recent strong all-female "Julius Caesar"), an inspired Hub Theatre Company edition brings the Heminges-Condell collaboration to vivid life at the Boston Center for the Arts.

"The Book of Will" smartly begins three years after the playwright's death (1616) in a London where 'mice' are attempting to play 'lions' in pathetic performances that make a mockery of Shakespeare. Heminges, Condell and iconic Globe Theatre actor Richard Burbage (who would die in 1619)—concerned about the authenticity of the Bard's canon—know that the true texts could vanish if not published. Preferring a high quality folio to cheap quartos, Heminges and Condell agree to create a collection on fine paper with exacting Ed Crane as its editor.

As Gunderson presents Heminges and Condell, they are a striking study in contrast. Heminges comes across as a reserved financial manager, where Condell—who speaks of being Will's best friend—seems more ready to take risks to realize their objectives. At the same time, the two colleagues display the kind of easy mutual affection common to bros nowadays. Condell will even offer to kiss Crane in appreciation of his considerable efforts.

Eventually the First Folio begins to come together as a variety of factors bear fruit. Rival poet-playwright Ben Jonson agrees to write a preface—in which he calls Will "Soul of the age", and Lady Emilia Lanier—often identified by scholars as the Dark Lady of several Shakespeare sonnets—makes a significant financial contribution. Publisher Isaac Jaggard commits to an "unrivaled collection of unrivaled plays," and Crane right insists on no alterations to the texts of the plays.

Designer Peyton Tavares has brilliantly constructed a surrounding set piece that allows audience members to see characters moving to and fro in the background and enables the collaborating compilers to hang up folio pages—with kudos to designer Ted Kearnan for evoking the sound of the printing.

A first-rate cast captures both the deep feeling and rich ideas of Gunderson's writing. Brendan O'Neill has all of Heminges' uncommon attention to the plays and tenderness with his supportive wife Rebecca—played with conviction and caring by Laura Rocklyn. Cleveland Nicoll combines fiery enthusiasm for the Folio and affecting brotherly love for Heminges as Condell.

Dev Luthra moves with crisp authority through memorable lines from the plays as Burbage, and John Blair has the right combination of ego and boozy individuality as Jonson. Lauren Elias is properly empathetic as Heminges' daughter Alice. Jeremy Beazlie has Isaac's strong will and professional pride, and Josh Telepman captures Crane's unwavering principle. Jessica Golden has Elizabeth Condell's warmth, and Robert Thorpe II amuses as an inept actor.

For Condell, stories are real in their own way. The same can be heartily said of Hub Theatre Company's wonderfully stirring "The Book of Will."

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coverage, with only Maine, Illinois, Colorado, and D.C. using definitions clearly and fully inclusive of LGBTQ and single people.

The ASRM's new definition, announced at the organization's annual meeting, explicitly includes those who need donor gametes for any reason, either as an individual or with a partner, and affirms the need for fertility care regardless of sexual orientation or relationship status.

ASRM CEO Jared Robins, MD, said in a statement, "This revised definition reflects that all persons, regardless of marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity, deserve equal access to reproductive medicine. This inclusive definition helps ensure that anyone seeking to build a family has equitable access to infertility treatment and care."

While the definition in itself carries no legal weight, ASRM guidelines nevertheless have clout. Polly Crozier, director of family advocacy at GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), told me that she thinks the new definition will be "tremendously influential." She explained, "In the realm of fertility healthcare and what insurance companies will cover, [policymakers] very much look to ASRM as the standard setters."

Kate Weldon LeBlanc, executive director of Resolve New England (RNE), an organization dedicated to resources and advocacy for fertility and family building, told me that her organization has been pushing for a more inclusive definition of infertility for years, and said, "I think it will be so helpful in many states to highlight that the clinical experts in fertility nationally are taking this more inclusive, broad approach to what infertility is."

The new ASRM definition will likely not mean an immediate change to fertility coverage, even in the states that mandate it but have not been inclusive of LGBTQ and single people. "It depends on how the statute is drafted," Crozier said.

LeBlanc added, "Until a bill passes that changes the definition of infertility that's in statute, then it's to some degree up to the discretion of the insurance companies and/or to private employers who provide fertility insurance outside of the mandate."

The new definition will, however, be "really helpful" to those currently attempting to expand access to fertility care, Crozier said. "Reproductive justice means the ability to build your family. Many, many, more people than currently have access need access to fertility healthcare. It's not just a disease or condition. In fact, there are many people in our population who need fertility healthcare to build their families because they're single, because they're LGBTQ—and that healthcare has to be accessible to a broader swath of people."

In one example, both GLAD and RNE are part of Fertility Access Connecticut (FACT), a coalition seeking to improve access to fertility care in that state. FACT is pushing for a bill that would require private insurers to cover fertility care for LGBTQ and single people and ensure coverage of fertility care for families insured by HUSKY Health, the state's public health coverage program. Crozier said she hopes the new ASRM definition will help achieve this, noting, "ASRM is the standard setter for providers in this field, and to have an organization of this magnitude change its definition of what infertility is, I think, will have a tremendously positive impact on policy makers."

Last week, the coalition praised a move by Connecticut Comptroller Sean Scanlon to extend state employee healthcare coverage so that LGBTQ and single state employees can access fertility healthcare on the same basis as heterosexual, cisgender couples. "Fortunately he had some ability to do it within his own control; he didn't have to wait for the legislature," LeBlanc said. "I think all of these things, they're pieces of the puzzle, and they can make it easier to get the next stage of progress."

GLAD and RNE are also working on a bill in Vermont, which LeBlanc noted is the only New England state without any fertility insurance law. She said that the new ASRM definition will be helpful because although the bill was already drafted in an inclusive way, the definition "speaks to the fact that that's the way our field is shifting and that it isn't just us as an anomaly trying to be inclusive or progressive."

LeBlanc does feel that the new ASRM definition, while a significant step, could be even better. "I would prefer no gendered language at all," she said. She also wishes it had said "a" female partner instead of "the" female partner, "because it assumes there is a female partner or assumes there's only one." Even though there is room for improvement, however, she affirms, "I was so happy to see this."

Crozier agreed, "It's not perfect, but I think it goes so much further in really making clear that single people and LGBTQ people should have access to fertility healthcare."

In the longer term, the new definition could even help establish fertility coverage under Medicaid, Crozier said, because it frames infertility from the perspective that "many people want to build a family and they should have access to doing that." She explained, "We're really at the beginning of a conversation to say Medicaid programs should cover infertility healthcare. Currently no state in the country has comprehensive fertility healthcare for people who are on Medicaid. I think we need to be considering that it's not just LGBTQ people or single people on private health insurance, it is everybody in our community who has that desire to build their family."

LeBlanc also stressed that in addition to the work of organizations in creating change, there is power in individual actions. "The comptroller in Connecticut was motivated by a state employee who brought this inequity to his attention. I think that really speaks to advocacy," she noted. "It sounds trite, but one person can make a difference."

The ASRM's new definition thus gives both individuals and organizations a powerful new tool. Crozier said she's "thrilled" with the news, and asserted, "That core definition of what infertility is drives so much of the conversation on what healthcare is covered by insurance, so it's really important that definition is right and that it doesn't exclude people."

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a two-time GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory, plus a searchable database of 1400+ LGBTQ family books.

Rosendall

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marriage equality, "This has been settled by the Supreme Court." That is just what several far-right members of the current Court said regarding Roe v. Wade at their confirmation hearings.

Johnson is pushing a nationwide abortion ban. He supports Trump's Muslim ban. He is part of the pro-Russia caucus. He used to work for the notoriously homophobic far-right group Alliance Defending Freedom. He thinks that anyone who does not share his particular religious beliefs is without morals. And he was a leader in trying to help Donald Trump steal the 2020 election.

This extremist is second in line for the presidency.

People like Johnson talk as if the reference to a Creator in the Declaration of Independence brings in their entire theocratic program. Pardon me, but according to that document, the inalienable rights with which the Creator endowed us include the pursuit of happiness. When you insist on dictating other people's happiness, you rob them of it.

Christian nationalists, whose fanaticism dishonors both Christ and our nation, never explain how queer people are a threat. The bullies simply take it for granted that any difference from their own preference is a threat. They are as quick to judge others as they are to gloss over their own failings. Yet recent news stories about sexual abuse of young people have featured ministers and youth pastors, not LGBTQ rights advocates and drag queens.

In Scripture, where some Christians find compassion and humility, religious bullies find cruelty and obscurantism. Happily, God gave us the brains to resist the bullies.

People like Johnson are wrong on both the Constitution and the Gospel. But it is crucial for us to recognize that not all fanatics foam at the mouth. Some are mild-mannered and polite.

The United States is not a Christian nation. The Founders made this clear in the Establishment Clause. Religious bullies simply do not care, any more than they care about Christ's admonition against making a public show of religion (Matthew 6:5-8). They use the Bible as a weapon rather than a source of reflection. Johnson's claim to be divinely anointed is a reminder that he does not care what voters want.

Then there is the Black boy he took in a couple of decades ago when the boy was 14, though Johnson never filed adoption papers. The son, Michael, never appeared in Johnson family photos.

Johnson talks of Michael: "He says to people—he shares his testimony—that were it not for our intervention in his life, he would certainly have joined a gang, gotten on drugs, wound up in prison or dead on the streets somewhere." Shares with whom? Does Johnson think this is the inevitable fate of black boys?

Something smells fishy here. What is Johnson hiding? And shouldn't someone who has been so free with attacks against gay people expect journalists to check out his story?

At a recent hearing, Rep. Maxwell Frost, himself a devout Christian, distinguished between Christianity and Christian nationalism. That distinction is vital. Bullies have no monopoly on religion.

As for patriotism, you would think that public officials sworn to protect the Constitution would not be so quick to support insurrections and fake electors; but these zealots' overweening sense of entitlement makes them think they can rewrite it to suit themselves.

Speaker Johnson has expressed extreme views on a range of topics for years. Let us do him the honor of taking him seriously, and do all we can as voters to make his tenure and the Republican House majority brief.

Richard J. Rosendall is a writer and activist at rrosendall@me.com.

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PO BOX E14,
Boston, MA 02127

Publishers:
Jeff Coakley
Sue O'Connell

Editorial:
Editor-in-Chief
Sue O'Connell
sue.baywindows@gmail.com

Contributing Writers:
Judah Leblang
Billy Masters
Richard J. Rosendall
Dana Rudolph
Rev. Irene Monroe
Scott Kearnan

Letters to the Editor:
letters.baywindows@gmail.com

News tips:
news.baywindows@gmail.com

Calendar listings:
news.baywindows@gmail.com

Announcements:
announcements.baywindows@gmail.com

Advertising:

Display Advertising

Jeff Coakley
jcoakley@baywindows.com

Classified Advertising:
classifiedads@baywindows.com

Editorial Design Manager:
Julie Walker Palmer

Fine Print:

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Garrison

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rison said. "It was just a matter of making the connections and getting the operation and everything, which is what I did."

Garrison, 83, is thought to be the first transgender person to be elected to a state legislature. This fact has largely been known since her election in 1992 but never confirmed until an interview in late September with The 19th, when Garrison confirmed to the media for the first time that she is trans.

On the heels of her election to the Massachusetts House of Representatives, the Boston Herald reported that Garrison had previously lived with a "male" name. The reporting suggested that she had deceived voters by not revealing a gender transition.

From that time onward, Garrison refused to engage with questions about her gender identity.

"A lot of times people are very devious," she told The 19th. "I didn't want to lose my job because I was hired as a woman. I always lived as a woman."

Over the years, people tried to get Garrison to talk about being transgender. Reporters from the Globe called her repeatedly.

"They tried to get me in to talk to them and say that they would help me win reelection or whatever," she said. "But I didn't do it. I just thought I would just continue to live my life and do what I'm supposed to do."

Garrison grew up in small town Hahira, Georgia, and moved to Boston to attend Newbury Junior College. She proudly remarks that she came to Boston for one degree and ended up getting four, including one in management from Harvard University.

For her personally, there was very little question about who she was. She had an uncle who was gay. She started to socially and medically transition in the 1960s.

Garrison risked more than just her job in being out. In 1998, another Black trans woman, Rita Hester, was brutally murdered in Boston. It was part of a spate of anti-trans killings in New England during that time. The lack of police investigation as well misgendering from people even within the LGBTQ+ community spurred protests globally.

But Garrison's silence didn't benefit her either. Over three decades and more than 30 races, Garrison never won another general election. The Boston Globe called her "the perennial candidate." Over her 34-year career, Garrison would run as a Democrat, an independent and a Republican. She continued to win primaries, positioning herself as a force in Boston politics. She pursued the Massachusetts statehouse, then Senate. She ran for mayor. She repeatedly ran for city council. Still, a general election win eluded her.

"Many politicians know what it's like to lose, and some know when it's time to throw in the towel. But not Garrison," reporter Quincy Walters of Boston's NPR station, WBUR, quipped in 2018.

Her stances were not always seen as LGBTQ+ friendly. She opposed marriage equality and courted far-right, anti-gay figures. She supported President Donald Trump. She sparred with progressive champion Michelle Wu, now mayor of Boston.

Her break finally came in 2018 when City Councilor Ayanna Pressley was elected to Congress, vacating her seat. Garrison, who had been the runner-up in the race against Pressley, was awarded the job.

A year earlier, Virginia Delegate Danica Roem made history as the first openly trans person to be elected to a state legislature.

"Imagine being the Althea Garrison, and just when the world knows of your name, it's not because of the bills that you put forward," Roem said. "That's really hard for her."

The LGBTQ+ Victory Institute, which works to get pro-equality queer people elected, reached out to Garrison, who they hoped would come forward during Roem's historic run. But Garrison didn't want to. When Roem won and was celebrated as the first out trans person to win state office, Garrison said she didn't mind her own history being largely lost in the narrative.

"I'm just not a jealous person because I feel as though, you know, if you want something and you want it really bad enough, you get it," she said.

Althea Garrison circa 1993. State Library of Massachusetts.

The Victory Institute recognizes that Garrison holds an important place in LGBTQ+ history.

"While she may not have identified as transgender in newspapers and on the campaign trail, she undoubtedly changed the minds of some of her voters, some of her colleagues in the state legislature," said Elliot Imse, executive director of the Institute. "Certainly that impacted the realities in Massachusetts long term."

Garrison didn't want to be known for being transgender. She's most proud that she's been

see **GARRISON,** *page 7*

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billy masters

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I spent last week in Milan. Correction—I spent last weekEND in Milan. Yes, 48 hours in Italy. What can I say—it was an invitation that I couldn't pass up, although I probably spent more time in the air than in Milan. But some things are worth traveling for. A few days earlier, I was part of a memorable lunch in Fort Lauderdale filled with a number of people I've known for over 25 years—including legendary drag divas **Thirsty Burlington, Varla Jean Merman, Joe Posa, and Joanna James.** We all started out as little club kids and all developed a level of notoriety that...well, defies defining. We don't see each other as often as we used to, but these are people with whom I can pick up a conversation we started decades ago. Looking around that table, I felt terribly nostalgic for the people we were—and awfully proud of the people we've become. Let's do it again....soon!

Sometimes, two completely dissimilar things can happen at the exact same time. Last week, Florida Republican **Rep. Matt Gaetz** had his life threatened by a New Hampshire college student. Don't take my word for it—the student has actually pleaded guilty. And since Gaetz is a federal employee and the threat took place across state lines, it's a federal charge. The student in question is **Allan Poller**, and he goes to Keene State College—and, while neither hither nor yon, he's quite a looker. The threat was articulated on Gaetz's voicemail! "If you keep on coming for the gays, we're gonna strike back and I guarantee you, you do not want to fuck with us. We will kill you if that's what it takes. I will take a bullet to your fucking head if you fuck with my rights anymore. And then if you want to keep going down that path, you know who's next." He ended the message by spelling his name—and leaving his phone number. In turn, Gaetz played the message on his podcast, keeping in the part with Allan's name and phone number. So you can only imagine what Allan's been going through. But, I'm sorry, Poller, I'm siding against you. There's a reason you do these things anonymously, or use a vocal distorter. And you certainly don't give out your phone number. By identifying yourself, you showed great courage...and great stupidity. It will haunt you the rest of your life—while Gaetz will sleep like a baby.

On the exact same day as Allan's message to Gaetz, the city of Orlando purchased the building formerly known as the Pulse nightclub. It took seven years, but the City commissioners and the mayor finally approved the $2 million purchase. The city will put up a memorial on the site that will honor the 49 lives lost. They may want to consider having music playing—just to remind people that the victims were dancing and having a good time when this tragedy occurred. But don't charge a cover—that would be tacky.

We have two other opposing stories that need to be discussed together. First off, my beloved **Charles Busch** has a new film out. "The Sixth Reel" played a number of film festivals last year, and even enjoyed a brief theatrical run in NYC last month. They just signed a deal with Apple TV to air the flick. YAY!

Around the same time, a letter was circulated by Outfest—probably one of the largest LGBT-Whatever film festivals in the world. The letter was addressed to major donors, and the news wasn't good. They're basically on the brink of bankruptcy! "Outfest is in serious financial jeopardy and urgently needs to raise $750,000"—which sounds shockingly similar to **Donald Trump's** call to Atlanta looking for 11,780 votes! Allegedly, Outfest had numerous large undisclosed debts which were hidden from the board—talk about burying the lead! They hope gays with deep pockets will bail them out. Personally, I wouldn't give them eighty-eight cents until someone explains how they got into this position.

There's a few reunions on the horizon. **Kellan Lutz and Cam Gigandet**—two of the only reasons to suffer through "Twilight"—are starring together in "Desert Dawn", which is described as a "crime thriller". When I first read this story, I swore the film they were making was called "Delta Dawn", and I pictured them playing lovers. Another missed opportunity. Meanwhile, **Taylor Lautner** is curiously missing in action. Sure, he can't act—but he is (or was) pretty. And we know that certain predatory and shifty auteurs were willing to take him under their wing (he writes euphemistically). Either Taylor didn't want to play ball, or everyone's already over his balls.

Elsewhere on the reunion circuit, let's talk about "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy". And I don't mean the reboot that everyone loves. I mean the OG from 2003. That was truly groundbreaking television and brought us **Carson Kressley, Jai Rodriguez,** and three others I couldn't name if there was a gun to my head. Collectively, they were the first gays that Middle America latched onto. The original Fab Five (of the gay world) are having a special 20th anniversary reunion. It will take place at the Wind Creek Event Center in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania—which sounds positively Biblical. The show is on December 16th, and tickets range from $50-$100 (plus those pesky fees). You can get more information at WindyCreekEventCenter.com. Please tell me how it goes...and who they are!

People think **Jada and Will** are so special. Well, I have news for them. **Meryl Streep** and her hubby, **Don Gummer**, have also been separated for six years! The news didn't come from Meryl or Don. It came from Streep's spokesperson. "Yes, Don Gummer and Meryl Streep have been separated for more than 6 years, and while they will always care for each other, they have chosen lives apart." Why tell us now? Must be something in the water. I don't believe they live in separate houses on the same compound. Or have a red table.

So, **Britney's** book has come out. Who has read it? Hands? Not even Britney's? Here are some of the choice bits to have leaked from the memoir. She talks about when she flew to Sweden to record her first songs. "I barely registered the difference between there and New Jersey; I was just in another booth." She claims to have turned down a role in the film "Chicago"—it was for one of the merry murderers who take part in "The Cell Block Tango". Her marriage to family friend **Jason Alexander** only happened because she was bored and "just honestly very drunk". Her relationship with **Timberlake** was volatile and ended when he accused her of having an affair with **Wade Robson**—who, of course, was "busy" with **Michael Jackson** at the time. Brit claims that Justin broke up with her via text! Lastly, Spears claims Justin used a "blaccent" during the *NSYNC days—in other words, speaking as if he was black. Since I don't have an Ebonics/English dictionary, I cannot translate for you.

But **Michelle Williams** might be able to translate. Why? Well, the five-time Oscar-nominated actress is the one who read Britney's audiobook. And trust me, you haven't lived until you've heard Michelle Williams speaking as Britney impersonating Justin Timberlake (which you can hear on our website). "His band *NSYNC was what people back then called 'so pimp'. They were white boys, but they loved hip-hop. To me, that's what separated them from 'The Backstreet Boys'—who seemed very consciously to position themselves as a white group. *NSYNC hung out with the black artists. One day, J and I were in New York, going to parts of town I had never been to before. Walking our way was a guy with a huge, blinged-out medallion—he was flanked by two giant security guards. J got all excited and said so loud, 'Oh yea, fo' shiz, fo' shiz, Ginuwine, what's up my homie?"

Could it be that a full-scale mutiny almost took place on that fast-paced show? It was a good idea—a tribute to their fallen leader. Obviously the show's golden boy would take part in what was conceived as a group effort. That wasn't how Goldilocks saw it. He insisted on being in the middle (a position he prefers) with everyone surrounding him. Seeing them as backup was clear when during rehearsal he actually bellowed at someone to "back up". For him, it was strictly a star turn, and nobody dared say otherwise. After all, they all want to keep their jobs.

When I'm dancing as fast as I can, we've definitely come to the end of yet another column. Once again, without fail, a notable celeb dies as we go to press. With my living in the fast lane, the death of **Matthew Perry** stings particularly hard. While he was always lovely, I couldn't shake the feeling that he wasn't long for this world. Like everyone, I'd always root for him. Rest in peace. Alas, the freshest dish can always be found at www.BillyMasters.com—the site that always stays current. If you have a question for me (note I haven't answered an "Ask Billy" question in weeks), send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before we find out for whom the bell tolls. So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

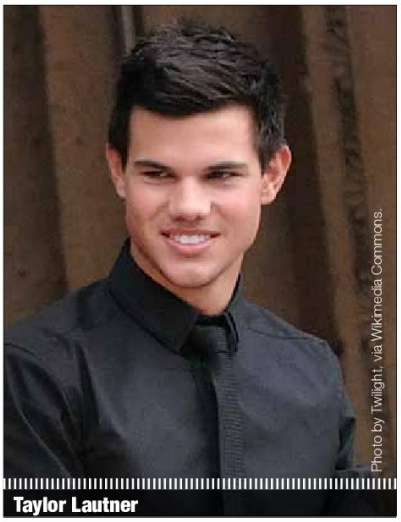


Photo by Twilight, via Wikimedia Commons.

Taylor Lautner

Photo by David Shankbone, via Wikimedia Commons.

Michelle Williams

Photo by Valerie Jarrett, via Wikimedia Commons.

Matthew Perry

Garrison

Continued from page 5

able to have a steady job clerking in the Massachusetts state comptroller's office for more than 30 years, that she still has friends in government.

Like Garrison, Roem also did not want her career to be defined by her transition. But she also embraced her position as a trans role model in ways she felt Garrison did not.

"I get to be the legislator who knocks on doors and ... very rarely at the doors does someone mention me being trans," she said. "I never say I'm trans but. I always say I'm trans and. I don't think Althea ever got the opportunity to have that conversation with her constituents."

LGBTQ+ advocates have longed for Garrison to have that conversation, not just for her constituents but for her community.

Garrison may finally be ready to embrace that community. She's running for Boston City Council in District 7 against incumbent Tania Fernandes Anderson. For the first time, Garrison wants people to know who she is. She wants to tell her full story, in her own words, something she never got to do.

"My objective is to write a book," she said.

The National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), which advocates for Black queer people in the United States, hosts an online biography project called "Been Here." It tells story after story of Black LGBTQ+ changemakers, and Garrison is among them. David Johns, the executive director of NBJC, said that Garrison's decision to talk about her life has significant meaning for her and for Black queer history.

"I am most excited about correcting and expanding the record around how Black, trans queer and gender-expansive people have always occupied incredibly important positions in public life," Johns said.

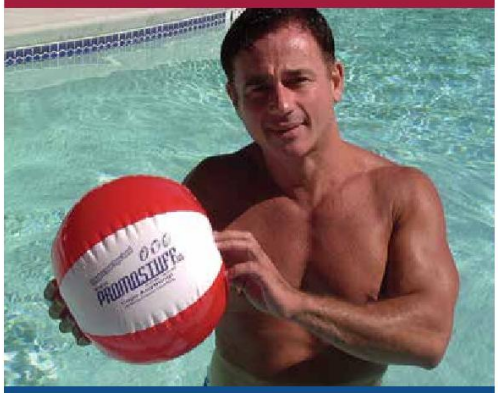
Imse said Garrison's decision to go public allows her to claim her place alongside LGBTQ+ political luminaries like Harvey Milk, the first out candidate elected to public office in California, and Kathy Kozachenko, the first queer person elected to office in the United States.

"Althea's name belongs with them," he said. "She took a different path than many of them, but I'm thrilled she's sharing her experience now and will receive the recognition she deserves."

For Garrison, her reason for sharing is simpler: It's her last race. She wants to win this one. She needs some good press — and yeah, she did make history. She'll grant 35 minutes for the interview.

"I've done my career 34 years," she said. "And so, you know, at the end, it's just getting elected again. Politics."

HOT IDEAS



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