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EXCLUSIVE!

MIKA

On The Record, Out Of The Closet
& Proudly Opening Up

> Come out, come out, wherever you are.

THERE are all sorts of ways to do it these days. Some choose to do it subtly, speaking with just a few friends at a time or relying on a single confidante to test the waters and to help them pave the way for future conversations. There are those who do it with lots of fanfare and publicity (think: celebrities) or those that throw themselves a party (think: queens who live for a kiki—I just had to use that word). Still others in this cyber age take to Twitter or a simple Facebook update to tell the world their truth: “I’m gay.”

No matter how it’s done, what matters is that it is done.

I’ve written quite a bit in these editor’s letters about why I personally think it’s so important for each one of us to come out of the closet and tell our family, our friends, our neighbors and co-workers. And, well, anybody who will listen actually. Because it’s not about “throwing” anything in anyone’s faces, it’s about humanity and dignity and equality.

It begins with each one of us. As individuals we have the power to change minds. And collectively, our impact to make people examine their previously held opinions and question their beliefs—religious or otherwise—to form a more well-rounded world view, is vast and astounding.

We’re proud that Mika chose



Instinct to set the record, er, straight about being gay. And he tells us why he chose to wait until now to do so (pg. 26). And, no, cynics, it’s not just because he has an album coming out next month. Is he a reluctant role model? Perhaps. But he knows that others will look to him—bullied kids, closeted teens, straight fans who never gave much thought to gay people before—and see someone sure of who he is, and proud. And maybe, just maybe, Mika’s voice in the fight for equality, his face to the cause, can

change just a few more minds. And eventually we’ll get there.

While it’s still important that every person decides for himself when his time is right, the important thing is knowing that the truth will set you free. It really will. Last month’s cover guy, Paul Talbot, came out to his wife and kids at a time many might consider late in life, but it wasn’t too late. It was his time. And although he may have not had the ideal situation, in the end, he did the right thing. You wrote us countless e-mails (many more than we’ve seen for younger cover guys of late) about how Paul’s story touched you, or how his story was your story.

We’re glad we get to be a part of that every month by telling your stories, our stories, with our openly gay cover guys—whether it’s a pop culture celebrity like Mika or a man who came to his truth a little later in life.

We all have a story to tell. Some are more exciting than others, but none less remarkable. Whether it’s instantaneous and easy or it takes you some time, the road to yourself—the real you—as scary or tumultuous as it may be, is ultimately enlightening and empowering. And the best journey you’ll ever take.

Be bold, be strong, be you.

Mike Wood

MIKE WOOD, Editor in Chief

CONTRIBUTORS



> Mikey Rox DL Buster

MIKEY Rox is an award-winning journalist and blogger whose work has been published in more than 100 print and digital publications. He’s also apparently a sly detective, this month helping you figure out whether or not your overly macho “straight” friend is secretly playing on our team (pg. 32). You can check out some of Mikey’s past work on [cnn.com](#), or in publications

including *Frontiers in L.A.*, *Dallas Voice* and *reFRESH* magazine, among many others. Reach Mikey via Twitter @mikeyrox



> Deborah Cox Dance-Floor Diva

FOR AS many years as the gorgeous and talented Deborah Cox has been topping the music charts, it’s a wonder it’s taken this long for her to conquer our Soapbox. Thankfully that’s all coming to an end this month (pg. 64) as Deborah fills us

in on headlining two huge, international gay events this year, planning for her Broadway return and the demanding queens (that’s you!) who keep her pushing for bigger and better high notes. Follow her on Twitter @Deborah_Cox

Five Ways To Catch A "Straight" Guy Being Gay

When my mother confronted me back in the late '90s about a website featuring locker-room jocks—the URL of which consistently appeared in the browser history of our home computer—I played dumb. "What're you talking about?" "I have no idea what that is!" "Never seen it before!" "Gross!" (I threw that last one in there for good measure.) Thankfully, my mom didn't know enough about the Internet back then (and neither did I; this incident was a crash course in covering my tracks online) to determine whether I was telling the truth. And once I planted the doubt, I was off the hook. Time and again, I've heard similar stories from guys my age (very early 30s, thankyouverymuch). In fact, my own husband recalls being confronted by his mom regarding scandalous photo downloads at odd hours of the morning, all of which suspiciously featured naked guys. Like the rest of us, he went into denial mode and the situation was brushed under the rug.

Boy, did we have it easy. Today's "straight" guys wish it were as simple as "clearing recent history" to keep their secret safe.

But it's not.

Mobile technology has made it easier than ever for "straight" guys to chat, meet up and hook up with one another—and get caught with their proverbial pants down. Want to know if your macho-man BFF likes to kick it with nude dudes undercover? Here are five ways to find out.

1 SOCIAL NETWORKING

EVERYBODY and their uncle is on Facebook—almost literally. Chances are, if your "straight" pal is busy bangin' his "bros," you'll be able to sniff it out amateur sleuth-style by stalking his page. Keep an eye out for that one "friend" who seems to comment more than any of the others; he's most likely to be the guy with whom the relationship goes deeper than

"gym buddies." An uncommon amount of photos featuring the duo in poses that overcompensate for the setting they're in (nobody takes the Gun Show to the zoo) is also a telltale sign that there's more than meets the eye. Take note of any sly activity planning as well. If these "straight" guys are making dates to go test-drive sports cars together—or something equally as ridiculous that straight people do—they're fucking each other. And if they're married, they're fucking each other a lot.

2 TEXTING

WHO MAKES phone calls anymore? Not me. I communicate almost exclusively by text. And so does your buddy. The great thing about texts, he thinks, is that they're private; no one else can see the dirt-nasty conversation he's having with his softball teammate, as long as he keeps his phone locked. Except that's not exactly true. iPhones, for instance, show the contents of texts (and sexts) as soon as they arrive unless the owner changes the default settings to prevent the texts or photos from popping up unexpectedly. I've been in a situation more than a few times when a text has come through that the male recipient scrambles to hide. But then I'm all like, "Relax, I've seen a dick pic."

3 PHOTO SHARING

WHAT'S better than a naughty text message? That's right: photos of naked body parts. But here's where "straight" guys really start playing with fire. It's one thing to send sexts—I've done it—but it's a whole different ball game when you start sending images that include identifiers... like your face. Countless idiots have sent racy photos of themselves in compromising (and sometimes baffling) positions, thinking that the pics will stay between sender and recipient. Never. Happens. If your face is in the photo, expect it to show up someplace you don't want it to. Then, of course, there's

the separate issue of the photos he's storing of other people on his phone. Here's a tip, "straight" guy: If you don't want anyone to find out you're gay, don't save snapshots of that dude's ass—no matter how hot it is.

4 APPS

WHAT would we do without Grindr? For starters, I'd still think some of my "straight" friends were straight. They don't know I know they're on the down low, however, because I didn't let on when I saw Grindr's ubiquitous orange-and-black icon buried among their categorized apps. Even at an eighth of its original size, the app sticks out like a drag queen at the Republican National Convention. The worst part about it for him, though, is that it's difficult to hide—unless he can put it beneath six other categorized apps or relegate it to another screen so it's out of sight. Alas, he's probably so naïve that he doesn't think anyone will spot it. Then along came you with your hawk eye.

5 POCKET PORN

CONSIDERING all the features smartphones have to offer, one of the most incredible has to be their ability to play pornography. We're not just talking hard-to-view Internet videos, either. The iPhone, in particular, will accept full-length videos from a computer, convert them to the proper format and play the raunchfests in spectacular HD. Pocket porn is great when you need some inspiration on the fly, but it's also a valuable tool if you're trying to find out if your "straight" friend furtively bats for your team. Want to get to the bottom of that mystery quickly? When your phone is dead, ask to borrow his to look up something on the Web. As soon as he hands it over—silly "straight" guys—head directly to the videos app. You won't have to watch any of them to be sure. The blush-worthy titles that include names like Gage and Caleb will be proof enough.

Uh-huh. The jig is up.