

# **STOP!**

**Imagine paying for an  
education that makes you  
invisible or ignores your  
heritage.**

**How can you be passionate  
about something that does not  
consider you?**



**STOP!**

**Do you think the young men  
would have done the same  
for a male couple?**

**Would they have done the  
same for a straight Latino  
couple?**



**STOP!**

**Are you afraid of the police?  
Have you ever considered why  
or why not?  
Have you been taught to fear  
authority figures because your  
identities place you as a target?**



## *I was studying at Starbucks,...*

...like I usually do, and was sitting minding my own business, when all of a sudden one of my high school friends came through the door. He was accompanied by a girl he was seeing. He stood in line and clearly saw me at the table. We made eye contact but he looked away and did not say hi or give me any kind of greeting. I wonder if it was because he didn't see me, which was not really possible, or if it was because he was very clear on his stance on Prop. 8, while he knew mine. I have known this boy for 7 years and grew up with him in band, which is like an extended family to me. That was my first homophobic response since my coming out.

-Anonymous





*I was at a department store...*



...and my partner was waiting in line to pay. From a distance, I could see my partner sharing a conversation with the cashier and laughing with her. I walked up to my partner and I think it became apparent to the cashier that we were a couple. I looked at her and said hello and she wouldn't raise her eyes or say anything back. My partner then tried to continue the conversation and she again did not raise her eyes or respond. It was obvious to us that she was uncomfortable with our queerness and I have to consider how race plays a role given that she was white and we were latin@.

-Anonymous





*I was with a group of friends...*

...and we were celebrating a birthday. So we decided to go to *Hooters*. When we went to be seated, not only did we have to wait longer than some of the other guests (I felt this was related to us being Queer), but when we were finally seated –unfortunately, it was in the corner away from the main part of the restaurant. The rest of the time, the waitresses would pay more attention to the huge group of men near us and tend to other tables, but hardly paid much attention to our group. I found myself asking why this was happening and wondered if it was because we were all women or if it was because we all looked like family (queer women) ?



This was the first time that one of my identities had been oppressed. Being told that I need to play my role as a woman—to marry a man, keep him happy, have a family— was something that I never saw myself doing, nor was it a life I wanted. Being forced to believe that that was my only option by a machisto, was definitely disappointing, because that machisto was my uncle. Being told that I was living my life the wrong way and that being gay was not right, that loving a womyn was not what I was supposed to love, just made me stronger and helped me realize my identities. I am a queer womyn of color.

-Anonymous

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## *Sometimes I feel bombarded...*

...by male egos, and the weirdest incident of it happened last quarter. I was in the theater district with my girlfriend, hanging out and talking on the giant green chair. I was laying with my head on her lap. A guy we've both had classes with came up and said hi, and then, ignoring all social cues regarding our personal moment, proceeded to talk at us for 30 minutes about every detail of his involvement in theater, and telling us all about theater in general as if we weren't a part of it. His manner and tone were very condescending, as well as him being uninvited.

My girlfriend politely responded to his small talk in a way that would try to conclude the conversation, and advised him to vote no on Prop 8. He then proceeded to talk all about gays, starting with, "I'm not



nomophobic, but... and ending with comments about how he is annoyed by feminine gay men but finds gay people to be economically resourceful due to overpopulation. He seemed totally unaware that we are queer, even though we were being affectionate in a way that was not platonic. I felt condescended as a woman, invalidated as a queer person, and annoyed in general, as this swaggering straight man bombarded us with unnecessary conversation insulting our identities.

Finally he left, and we hid under a hoodie and giggled incredulously, because it was frustrating but really funny to us, and still is. Then he came back! He started yelling our names and half-climbing up the chair to tap us on the shoulder and demand we come out from our hoodie tent and give him more attention. At our emergence, he continued to blather on to us for at least 10 more minutes before he finally left us in peace, the way he would have in the first place if we were a heterosexual couple.

-Cheyenne Stevens

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## *Last weekend, I was at...*

...a bar with a girl I'm seeing. I was waiting to order a drink and the bartender had noticed me standing there with her. After about ten minutes, the bartender approaches my direction and takes a person's order from behind me. I turn around and see that the person's order the bartender had taken was from a white man, who looked relatively non-queer. I couldn't help but wonder if the reason my place in line had been overlooked was because I was a woman, or if it was because I was of color, or because the bartender had seen me kiss my lover's cheek.

-Maureen Garcia

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# *Whenever I try to...*

...apply for scholarships, enroll for classes, or fill out paperwork for school/work, I have to use a name and gender that do not match my identity. I often must fill out this information alone because it will out me. Sometimes I don't apply for scholarships at all because of this. The only way to change this information is through the court, which costs hundreds of dollars and must be printed in a public newspaper.

-Anonymous

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## *I have to deal with ...*

...men harassing me on the street on a regular basis. This happens even more often when my girlfriend and I are out together, whether or not we are doing coupley things like holding hands. One time in Hillcrest, a man driving a truck started driving alongside us as we walked down the street, yelling offensive sexual remarks. I felt extremely enraged and helpless.

-Cheyenne Stevens

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## *Several times this quarter...*

...people have turned to me to school them on racism, sexism, and homophobia. I remember one moment, in particular, when I was singled out in class to tell my "story." At the time, I didn't know which was worse: being put on the spot as the only queer woman of color in the room or realizing that folks really just didn't get it. As a queer woman of color, I've often felt conflicted between wanting to explain to folks what it means to live at the intersections and wanting them to do that kind of work on their own. But I think that's the point: as a queer woman of color, I live inside my head a lot, trying to make sense of the contradictions and ambivalence. And it's exhausting.

-Anonymous

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## *A couple of weeks ago,...*

...I was walking down a street with a female friend I hadn't seen in many weeks. We're both are very affectionate though we are not a couple. We like to hang on one another when we walk if we've been away from one another for a long time. We were heading past a shopping center where we were meeting her boyfriend, who happens to be my best friend, and their son. Our arms were around each other's waists as we talked by ourselves. The town we were in is predominantly Mexican, like me. As we walked, I turned to look across the street because I had heard honking and thought there might have been an accident. I see a man hanging out the passenger side window giving us a questioning glare as his friend honked at us. It made me angry to have these strangers question our proximity. I held on to her and we walked faster to the shop we were meeting them at. On the way back,



we were walking a little farther apart and no one honked. It made me wonder if guys had been with us while we were walking would anyone would have said anything. Or if the fact that we were both dressed more femme than stud called more attention to us?

-Anonymous

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## *About a couple months ago,...*

...I went to visit a friend at her house. It's usually pretty chill when we hang out because we both identify as queer womyn of color. We were chilling in her living room when she gets a call that two of her masculine queer-identified friends are waiting for her to ring them up so they can visit too. I knew one of them, but had never met the other one. I asked her about him. Surprised that I hadn't met him before, she asks me to not disclose my sexuality to him as he has a phobia for queerly identified women. It bugged me to hear that someone who identified the same way as I did had asked me to keep that part of me quiet in a space where all parties involved identified as queer. What bugged me more, however, was hearing them bash about how angry and scary lesbians can be and feeling the need to say something without coming off as these stereotypes. It disturbed me how narrow the space



started to feel. Her comradeship with these men left me feeling alone and isolated as she laughed their remarks off; all the while, I questioned whether I was really all these things they said. It was a comical justification I couldn't make sense of.

-Anonymous

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*I don't know if it was my fault...*

...in deciding to come out to my family. I didn't know if it was the right thing. They have said that they support the LGBT community, and so I figured that they would accept me. I figured they would be open and love me because I would still be the person that I am, and that they would just know another side to my identity. And so I took my chances.

My coming out story to my family is one of the many experiences that has excluded one of my identities to, not all, but one person. My uncle was like a father figure to me because I was raised by a single mother, and he was the only male figure in my life. He called me his daughter, and I respected him.



When I came out to my mom, she took it well and so I decided to come out to my close family. My uncle was not there, but I still felt that he needed to know. One day, I went over their house hoping that my cousin was there because I was bored. No one was home but my uncle. I decided to stick around because I figured nothing bad would happen. He was drunk that night. He started talking. The conversation somehow turned into if I was ever going to have a boyfriend and that was when I told him that I was not interested in boys. He looked at me and his face got serious. There was a dead silence and I felt uncomfortable and quickly rushed to the door because I no longer felt safe around him. But he grabbed me and told me that what I was “choosing” was not right. That I had to be with a man, that I had to be a wife and he was going to show me what I was “missing out” on. He started to unbuckle his belt but before he even touched me I managed to escape him and run out. I ran to my car, drove away and cried.



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## *One day I was walking...*

...out of a grocery store with my partner and we stopped in the parking lot to share a kiss. In the moment, a group of three cars surrounded us, filled with younger white males. They started laughing at us and threw firecrackers at our feet. It was a surreal experience. I couldn't figure out if it had to do with us being queer and my partner being gender variant, us being latin@, or all of the above. It was definitely scary and has impacted how we are affectionate in public.

-Anonymous

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-Alison Cerezo

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## *When I was a kid,...*

...riding in the car with my mom and grandma, I never understood why they would say, "Quiet, the police are behind us, don't turn around." Unknowingly, they instilled this fear of police in me, and as a kid, part of me wanted to befriend them and wave and say hello. I was ignorant of the institutional racism that exists within the police force but obviously my parents weren't. And I thought they weren't conscious.

-Michelle Strange

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# *Whiteness and maleness...*

...are invisible. But not on my syllabi for my theatre classes. Don't be fooled. No matter what the title of the course is, it translates into: white, european male. Modern Drama... white european male. Plays Greek to Modern... white european male. Play analysis... white european male. It makes me sad and discouraged to sit with the fact that my entire education, what I pay for, is not even reflective of me.

-Michelle Strange



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...I went to visit a friend at her house. It's usually pretty chill when we hang out because we both identify as queer womyn of color. We were chilling in her living room when she gets a call that two of her masculine queer-identified friends are waiting for her to ring them up so they can visit too. I knew one of them, but had never met the other one. I asked her about him. Surprised that I hadn't met him before, she asks me to not disclose my sexuality to him as he has a phobia for queerly identified women. It bugged me to hear that someone who identified the same way as I did had asked me to keep that part of me quiet in a space where all parties involved identified as queer. What bugged me more, however, was hearing them bash about how angry and scary lesbians can be and feeling the need to say something without coming off as these stereotypes. It disturbed me how narrow the space



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-Anonymous

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I AM INSPIRED BY THE STORIES OF WOMYN WHO FACE ADVERSITY AND COME BACK STRONGER AND PROUDER. INSPIRED BY THESE WOMYN WHO, EVEN WHEN FACED BY VIOLENCE, STILL HOLD THEIR HEADS HIGH AS QUEER WOMYN OF COLOUR. THROUGH THEIR BRAVERY, I AM PROUD TO SHARE MY COMMUNITY WITH SUCH BEAUTIFUL AND AMAZING WOMYN. EACH STORY I'VE READ SPEAKS TO THE STRENGTH OF EACH WOMYN IN THEM. I AM GRATEFUL THEY HAVE SHARED THEIR EXPERIENCES REPRESENT THE HARDSHIPS OF SO MANY PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY. THEY ARE NOT "THE OTHER" THEY ARE OUR SISTERS. THESE STORIES SHOW NOT ONLY THAT THERE IS WORK TO BE DONE, THAT WE ALL MUST NO MATTER WHAT STAND UP FOR THESE WOMYN AND FOR OURSELVES AND FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE, BUT THAT WE, OUR COMMUNITY, MUST TELL THESE STORIES, SHARE THEM, ASK THESE QUESTIONS TO OTHERS AND OURSELVES - OF RACE - OF GENDER - OF SEXUALITY - OF GENDER IDENTITY - AND REMEMBER HOW STRONG WE ARE. THESE STORIES REMIND ME OF MY OWN EXPERIENCES, SHOW ME NEW EXPERIENCES, INTRODUCE THE DEPTH AND REALITY OF EXPERIENCES. I KNOW MOST OF THE TIME I KEEP THEM TO MYSELF. THAT WAY NO ONE JUDGES ME, BUT THAT WAY NO ONE KNOWS. RESILIENCE IS TAKING BACK THAT POWER THAT FEAR AND OWNING IT. THAT STORY, THAT TELLING AND IT IS BEAUTIFUL. I HAVE PAIN AND OPPRESSION DAILY - AND THOUGH ITS NOT "OKAY" I CAN STAND AGAINST IT AND TELL THAT STORY, ASK THAT QUESTION ONE MORE DAY. I'VE LEARNED THAT EVERYONE HAS THEIR SHIT, EVERYONE HAS TARGET/AGENCY. WE ALL HAVE SO MUCH DEPTH TO EACH ONE OF US THAT NO ONE CAN EXPECT NOR ASSUME. SOMETIMES WHAT HAPPENS IN THE MOVIES HAPPENS TO REAL PEOPLE. SOMETIMES THAT VIOLENCE IS CLOSER THAN I'D EXPECT. NO MATTER HOW DIFFERENT, WE CAN ALL RELATE TO EACH OTHER. WE, I BELIEVE, ARE CLOSER TO EACH OTHER - CONNECTED TO EACH OTHER - THAN I USUALLY GIVE CREDIT FOR. SO MANY STRONG, RESILIENT, INSPIRING, INTERSECTING IDENTITIES.



Don't make this about you by taking up even more space, developing a savior complex by trying

outwardly complaining about how whites take up space

→ You are destructive.

White People...

DON'T

APOLOGIZE

to "help" us. Do not criticize the "oppressors" before

looking in the mirror to know that we are talking about YOU. If you are white and are





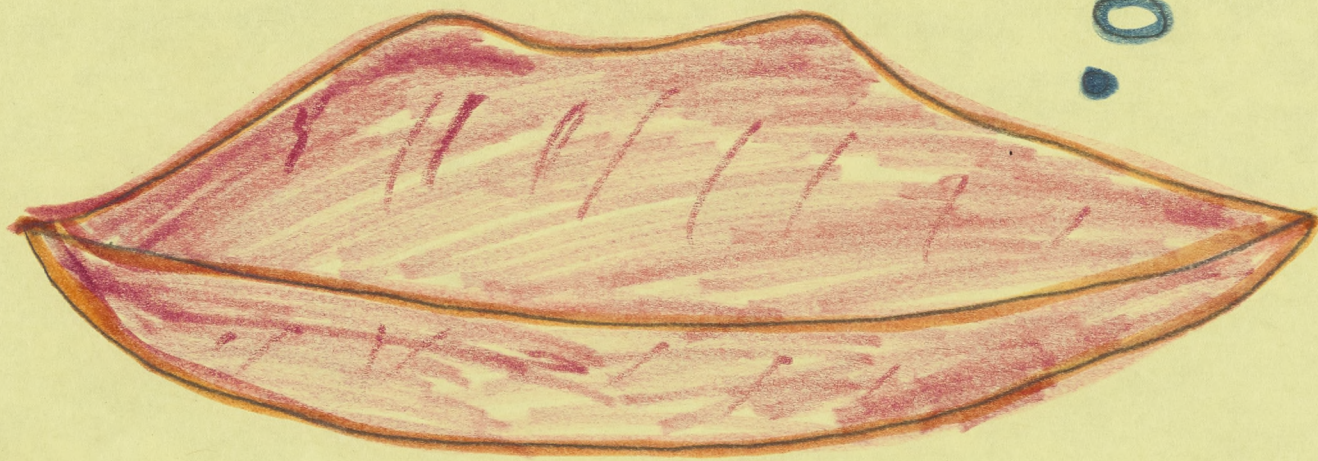


I found myself moved, moving, stopping and starting, feeling myself in each moment of each story tapping into my own experiences, into my own pain fear anger and frustration. I rip, was ripped, will rip myself, my others, my friends those that I care about with my life, my heart my head and it will cause hurt. And I want it to end and I want there to be no more stories of violence, of compliance, of fear making and fear-feeling. I paused and I saw words on paper surrounded by blood and darkness, but with white and whiteness poised to make the ebony words stick out on the pale page. It was a metaphor for the overwhelming whiteness, maleness, straightness in which the stories floated on the paper. Even the stories in large type, or the really long stories, as much as they filled the page with the rage and the pain, the unexamined canvas on which they were applied defined them and made them visible by their existence. So many stories with overlapping themes emotions, experiences all different and all the same. The common humanity that draws all together and separates at the same time. I will never understand because I am a white man, I will and can understand pain, fear anger frustration. Different but the same, same but different. Can I feel the reality? Can my feet fit in those shoes? Do I want them to? Am I brave enough to try? Is it insulting to even think about it? And how is the silence so loud, so deafening on issues of queer women of color? Why must it be split in three identities, can't it be whole and one and full and complete and expressive and open and full? It is such a privilege not to have to live in my head for almost anything but my queerness. To be alone but together and out but in, to be who I am but not who I am to be able to be other, to feel other, to feel myself in the experience of others so I can be present, to move from I to we, from me to us so the separation is not so distant, but comfortable enough to give space and room to be myself and to be herself and to know that there is a chasm that is deep and wide between life, emotion, experience but not so insurmountable that simple being, doing, feeling as transgressive, powerful acts of connection and honesty within the pathological silence of identity and community where my fear silences me into a coma of privileged power, silent but deadly sucking the life from myself, my world my community of massive difference in the sameness of fucking, bleeding, eating, shitting, breathing with tears down both cheeks welling up inside but never coming out to expose the depth of the pain for fear it makes me too much like them, but actually more like me as I struggle to find my place in the struggle where it works and I work and I love to be able to make it different and better but real and red. So it will not be like this in the future of me ever.



~~Silence~~  
~~xxxxxx~~

Ooo.



=(Lips)

