

PRIDE JA

MAGAZINE

Issue 8



*CHALLENGING
Femmephobia and
Bottom-phobia*

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EDITOR'S NOTE

ELTON JOHNSON

“Be Bold” is the common refrain that permeates the space at Rainbow House—the euphemism we use for JFLAG’s office. It’s an important reminder for us that as LGBT advocates it’s our duty to be bold in all that we do. Boldness comes with the territory. So, this year, as we sat and thought of what our 8th edition of PRIDEJa Magazine should look like—our comeback edition after a year of silence—boldness was our main ingredient. The cover for this edition is a challenge to both persons outside and within the LGBT community. It’s a challenge for those of us within the LGBT community grappling with internalised homophobia that often makes us scoff at expressions of femininity from men. To those outside of the community, it’s an opportunity for us to see aesthetics of Jamaicanness – symbolised by the bandana – as being compatible with queerness and adding to our growing vault of indiginous queer cultural expressions. The accompanying cover article is a riveting take by Glenroy and Lanvell of #TeamEquality that tackles longstanding issues of femme-phobia and bottom-phobia that plague our community. The boldness of our cover model, Conrad, shines through with a daringness and an attitude that represents so many within our community. It says we’re queer, we’re Jamaican, we’re femme and we’re not afraid to openly claim all three of those identities.

After more than a year of COVID-19, which significantly affected Pride Week in 2020 and our PRIDEJa Magazine, the community needed a physical Pride Week that also keeps the community safe. So, this year, for #PRIDEJa2021 we celebrate under the theme “Staying Apart, Priding Together”. Again, our mantra of boldness rings true, as we help the community to emerge safely from curfews and gathering limits to re-energise community spirit and strengthen community ties.

So, this Pride Week, this year and for the foreseeable future, join #TeamEquality and be bold. Let the mantra of boldness guide us out of COVID-19 and into a new era for Jamaica and LGBT Jamaicans.



A PRIDE MESSAGE FROM

Equality Youth Jamaica



"Staying Apart, Priding Together", there could never be a more fitting theme for this year's PRIDEJa celebration. Congratulations to you, JFLAG, on your 7th pride celebration. Seven years ago, you and your partners created a space for the LGBT community to celebrate their resilience, courage and strength alongside Jamaica's Emancipence period. Seven years ago, we saw the spirit of the community in a new way. Seven years ago, people came together to create and celebrate new and old friendships, and some were fortunate enough to create new families.

PRIDE serves as a reminder to Jamaican LGBT youth that in everything they do, they must persevere, and they must always stay true to themselves. We can't wait to see what PRIDE look like seventy years as we continue to evolve into a society that becomes more diverse and inclusive.

Happy PRIDE!



A PRIDE MESSAGE FROM

TransWave Jamaica



Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us just how valuable time is and how the ability to trust and show love is most quintessential. For some of us, we have almost mastered the art of staying inside and taking the necessary precautions to keep as safe as possible under masks. The pandemic has also shown us how even more heightened the vulnerabilities we as LGBT people living in Jamaica face because of our legislative, cultural, and social norms. Despite all the aforementioned, we have continued to be bold, brave and resilient in the face of all that's happening around us.

TransWave is proud to witness this 7th staging of Pride in Jamaica. Pride has continued to be a staple for us as a community because it allows us to boldly show our trans pride, that we can thrive in our existence and live while loving in a country that shows little regard for our existence. Together, we continue to raise our voices, despite being apart and not seeing each other as much as we used to and this August 1-6, we will pride together.

Happy Pride Jamaica!



PRIDE JA 2021

Morning Rave

FRI AUG. 6 7:00AM

venue: _____
KNUTSFORD COURT HOTEL

TICKET *limited drinks included

\$3,000 JMD

Event will also be streamed live on:



**COVID-19 protocols will be applied.





ART FEATURE

Donnette Zacca:

Jamaica's First Lady of Photography

by Elton Johnson

"A rural Jamaican existence offers nothing less than extreme solitude to minds rearing and fully-charged with artistic tendencies," says Donette Zacca, an artist who hails from the rural western end of Jamaica. **"With no conscious influences, no affirmed ideas, no distinct places or people and only one major event in my life, I became moulded into an appreciative substance of the outdoors."**

Zacca's artworks consist largely of images taken from the observation of her external surroundings, in addition to more experimental collage-type photography and double-exposure portraits. Her photographs typically espouse the theme of feminism with most of her images speaking to the issues and concerns of women.

Her work has been featured in numerous publications (Small Axe Magazine; The Best of Sky Writings; Fifty Years, Fifty Artists), received countless awards (National Gallery of Jamaica Purchase Award; National Heritage Trust Photography Competition Awards) and featured in international and local exhibitions. To date, one of her most famous bodies of work stands as her Issues of Fertility display, which exhibited at Jamaica's Mutual Gallery in 2008.

We interviewed Zacca on her achievements as an artist, and her outlook on photography in Jamaica, given increased funding and support for the creative industries in recent years.

PRiDEJa Magazine: Describe your art.



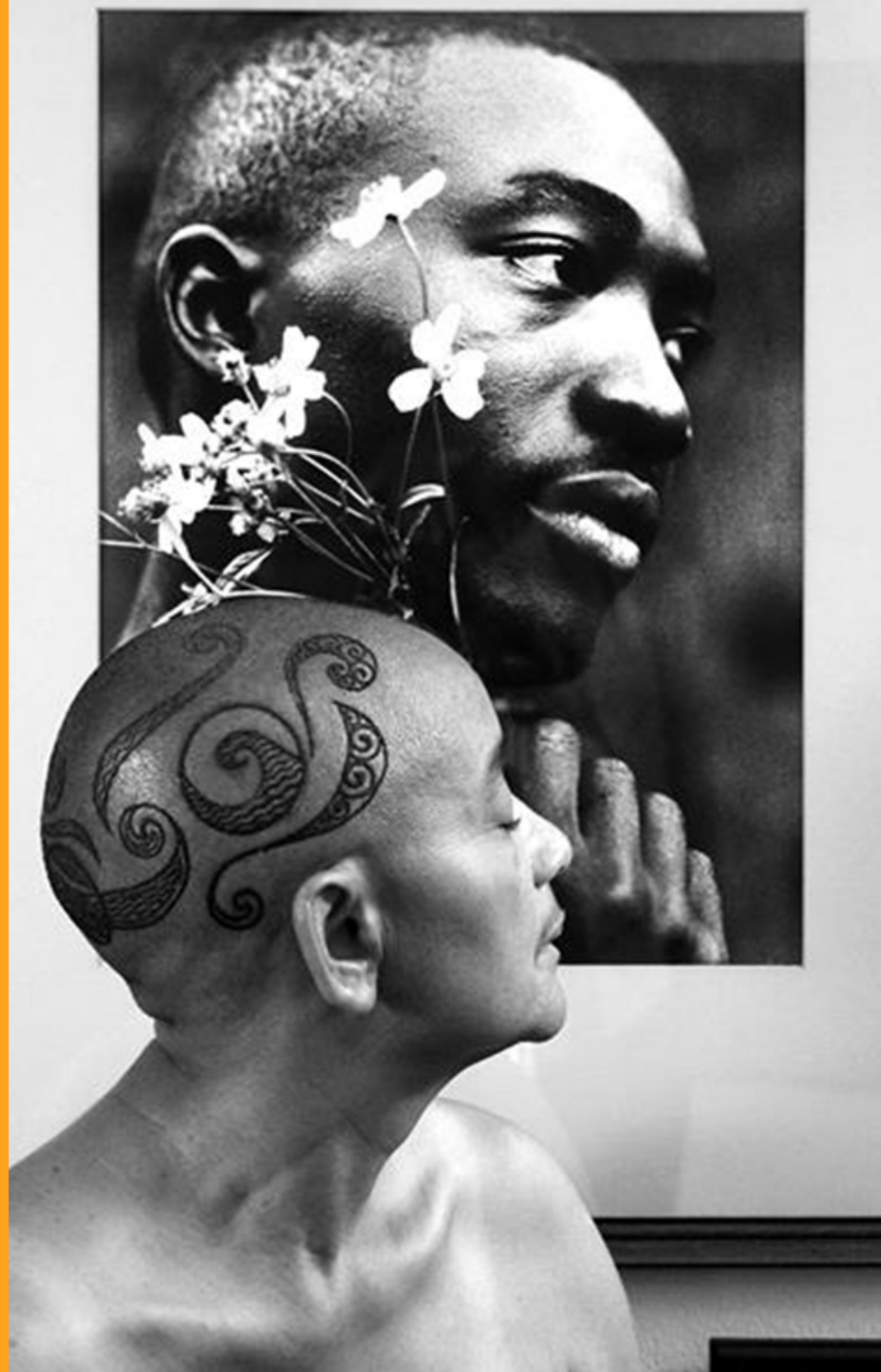
Donnette Zacca: As an artist, I have experimented and explored a number of art forms. My latest indulgence is stone carving. I have done some paintings and drawings, sculpting and assemblages – but most of all I prefer photography in all forms. Out of many years of working in the darkroom, working with analogue cameras and alternative photographic processes, I can confidently say photography is my primary process for expressing all kinds of ideas. My expressions are said to be romantic.

PJM: How did you get started as a photographer?

DZ: Just around Third Form (age 13-14) of my high school years, one of my uncles visited Jamaica from the United States, and brought me a gift of a Kodak Instamatic Camera. At the time the camera was considered state of the art because of its size and flexibility. It was a point and shoot camera that used a small cartridge, and only had a maximum of twenty-four exposures

PJM: Who are your mentors and inspirations in photography?

DZ: I am inspired not so much by people, but what I see and process. During my years as an art student, I was captivated by the works of Ansel Adams, an American photographer. I liked the exquisite details and colours of the photographic images he was able to capture. He was a perfectionist. Adams added life to his photos, he studied and developed all the necessary applications he needed to be exceptional. I always thought 'I'd like to be like Adams when I grow up'. Later on in years I enjoyed Aaron Siskind for his eye for textural details. I also enjoyed Andy Goldsworthy for this gift and exercise of patience. From Goldsworthy I learned that nothing will happen on its own. I have somehow taken from the world just what I need. My exposure to a variety of art has given me great sensibility.



PJM: Have you ever experienced any setbacks or discriminatory treatment in your career, being a woman and/or Jamaican?

DZ: In 1988 I was granted a scholarship to attend the University of Cincinnati, Ohio, USA. I studied Advanced Black and White Processes, Advanced Colour and Alternative Processes in Photography. I welcomed the opportunity and worked really hard to impress my sponsors, the college and my family. Unfortunately, during my duration at the university, I had setbacks with discrimination. Some of these incidents will not allow me to forget. Living away from home was difficult, and living and working with people who never saw you as their equal was even harder. One morning, I returned to my studio after a long night of hard work to see all my works destroyed and stuffed into a bin. It would only have been a few hours before a major critique and grading. One member of the student body admitted to having destroyed my work that morning and was expelled from the class. I was discriminated against because I was black and a no nonsense woman. In 1999, I migrated to the USA. I first settled in Orlando, hoping I would find a place to show my work or get a job. Nothing happened so I went on to Baltimore. In Baltimore, I enquired in the city for a small space where I could exhibit my work. One afternoon, a white gentleman told me I was enquiring in the wrong places, and that I need to find the black galleries.

PJM: How lucrative is photography in Jamaica?

DZ: Far more than we think. Many of my past students have made their names in the industry either as photographers for the advertising industry; as artists; fashion and glamour photographers; journalists and sports photographers. I have personally done well and would do it all again. I have been able to live comfortably, at least for now, as someone who earns enough from the craft. More and more youngsters are investing in high-end cameras in an effort to find better photographic jobs.

Organizations are also employing photographers for in-house operations, which requires the kind of specialist skills necessary for advertising production.

PJM: What is your favourite photograph ever taken? What made it special?

DZ: My favorite image is one done in the mid-nineties in St. Thomas, Jamaica, of the hydroelectric waterfall located in Hillside. Done in black and white, the print bore ideas of an ideal image. It was detailed, having enough light to identify the textures of every last rock. The width of the river bed was captured with a slow-moving waterfall in the background. The area behind the water from the falls appeared black, which gave a contrast to the splendid smooth effects of movement and the rough edges of rocks along the downward streaming of the water. I value the images because it's a constant reminder of what a perfect day feels like. Having to capture anything outdoors is always an embraceable challenge.



After years of lecturing the next generation of Jamaican photographers, Zacca has retired from teaching at Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts. She has since started the Jamaica Photography Society and runs photography workshops for persons interested in improving their understanding of the art form.



FOOD FEATURE

The Vegan World of Planet Veg

Planet Veg is a vegan comfort food restaurant that operates from Kingston, Jamaica. It offers all your classic favorite dishes but reworked with a guilt-free twist. It's true that when many of us Jamaicans hear vegan food the first thing that comes to mind is "it taste bad" and "yuh go hungry quick." However, Renee Mahrn of Planet Veg is letting us know that vegan food is flavourful and filling when done right. PRiDEJa Magazine sat down with the operator of the eatery and here is what she shared about their offerings.

PRiDEJa Magazine:
What inspired you to start Planet Veg?

Planet Veg: I was inspired to start Planet Veg because I couldn't find anything good to eat! Years ago when I began my vegan journey my options would usually be a salad or plain bread, so I knew I had to do something. Just because it's vegan doesn't mean it can't also be filling and delicious.

PJM: Why should someone choose Planet Veg over other vegan eateries?

PV: Someone should choose Planet Veg because of the care that goes into the food. Our chefs really put a lot of love into all the dishes and work really hard to make sure it tastes and looks exceptional. We also made it a point to be extremely affordable so you get a lot of food at a great price.

PJM: What are some of the best offerings at Planet Veg?

PV: Our best offering is the Big Bang Burger. I'm not saying that because I make every patty myself (lol), but it's also our most popular item. Other favorites include our Chickpea Curry Medley and a newly added Jerk Tofu. We also make a Pumpkin Punch that I can't even describe, you'll just have to try it.

Why should Jamaican restaurants offer vegan options?

Jamaican restaurants should offer vegan options because some Jamaicans are vegan! Simple.

PJM: What message do you have for people who are interested in veganism?

PV: A vegan diet does not necessarily mean a healthy diet, it really just means no animal products are in the food that is being consumed. So for persons who are considering that lifestyle I would say, think about what your motivation is, do some research and learn about how to ensure you are giving your body the adequate amount of nutrients and in a way that you can absorb it. I would also say have fun with what you eat; vegan food does not have to be boring or bland.

PJM: Tell us some of the benefits of veganism?

PV: The benefits of a vegan diet are many and varied including reduced blood pressure, lowered risk of type-2 diabetes and heart disease and increased life expectancy. Some other benefits are that you become more aware of what you are consuming which helps to foster a more deliberate relationship to food and that may encourage you to make better choices.

PJM: Why did you choose veganism?

PV: My journey as a vegan started when I began to observe the way the food I was eating was affecting my body, my mood and my energy. I did a bunch of research and started to eliminate certain things from my diet bit by bit and found that I was feeling better in my body and about myself.



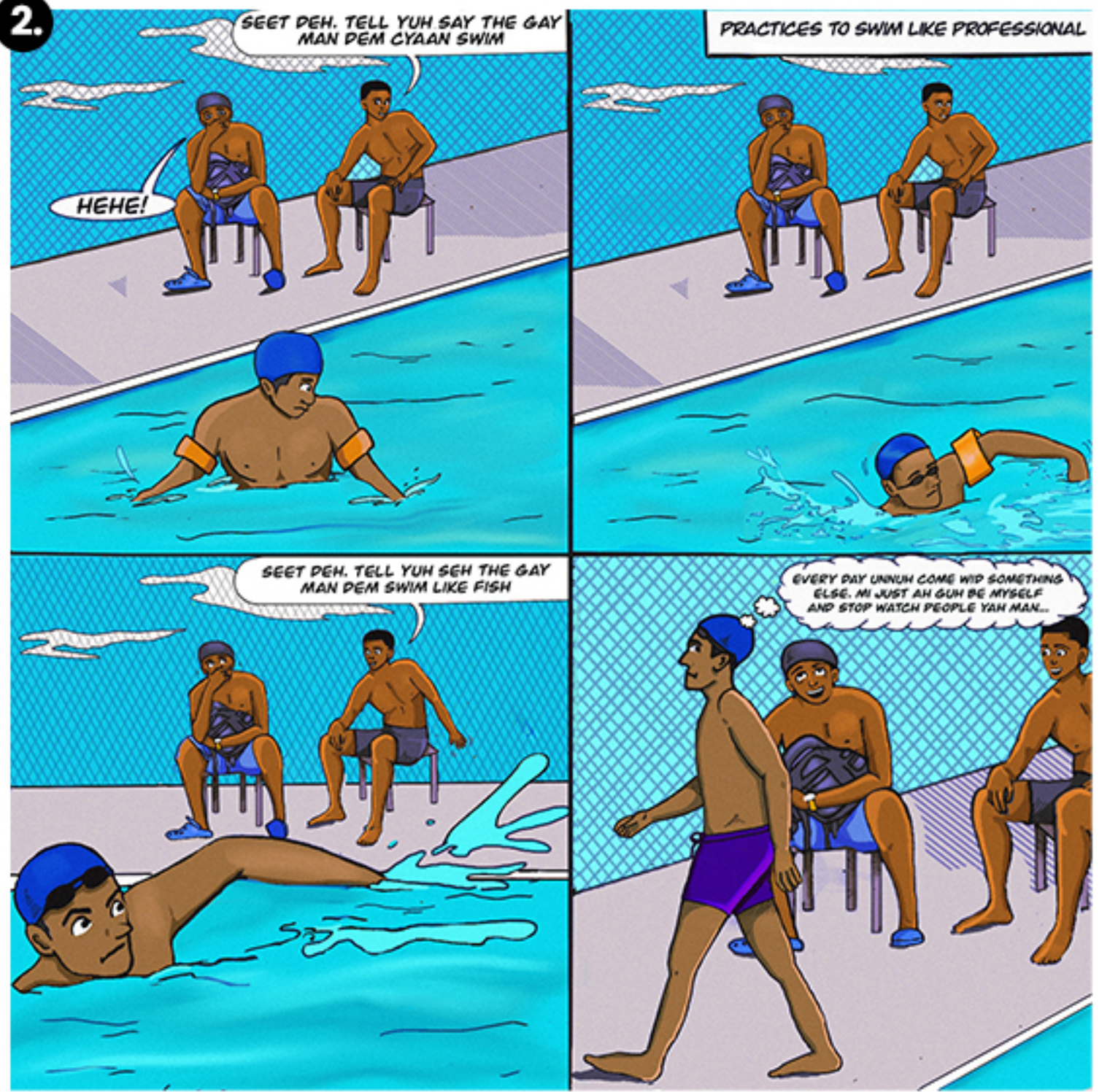
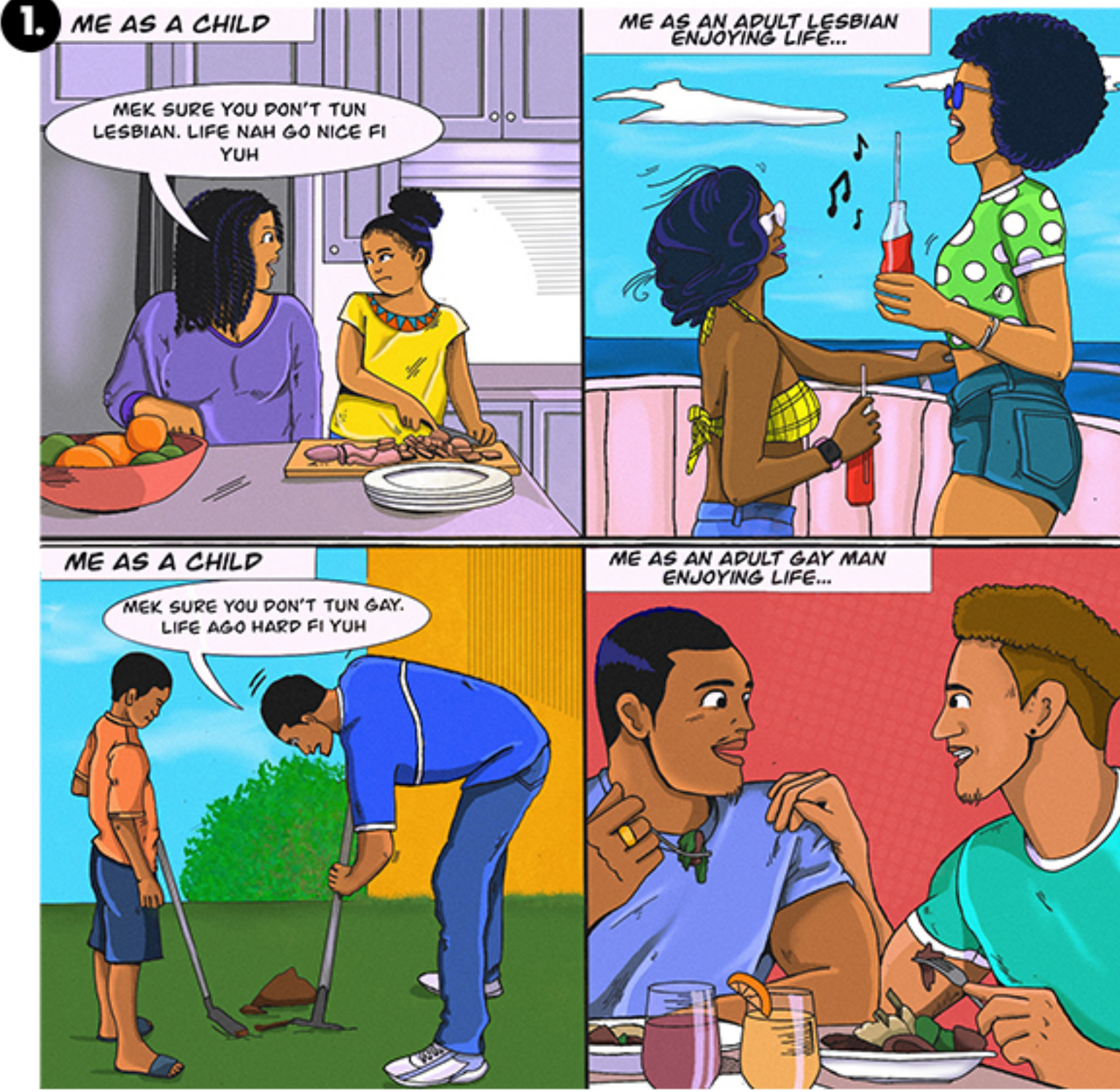
PJM: How has COVID-19 impacted your business?

PV: COVID-19 actually delayed the launch of Planet Veg; I was planning our original opening for May 2020, but with all the uncertainty and restrictions, I made the choice to postpone. However as the year progressed I started to see opportunities instead of obstacles and decided that now is as good a time as any to start. My thinking is that if I can launch a business in hard times and be able to successfully adapt and adjust to the ever present changes and challenges then if/when things normalize, I would have learned enough to be able to continue successfully growing amidst whatever other challenges may continue to present themselves. Since we opened during a time when physical distancing and sanitization are more a part of everyday life, it has not really required a major adjustment because that's just what life is like right now and that's all we know as a business.

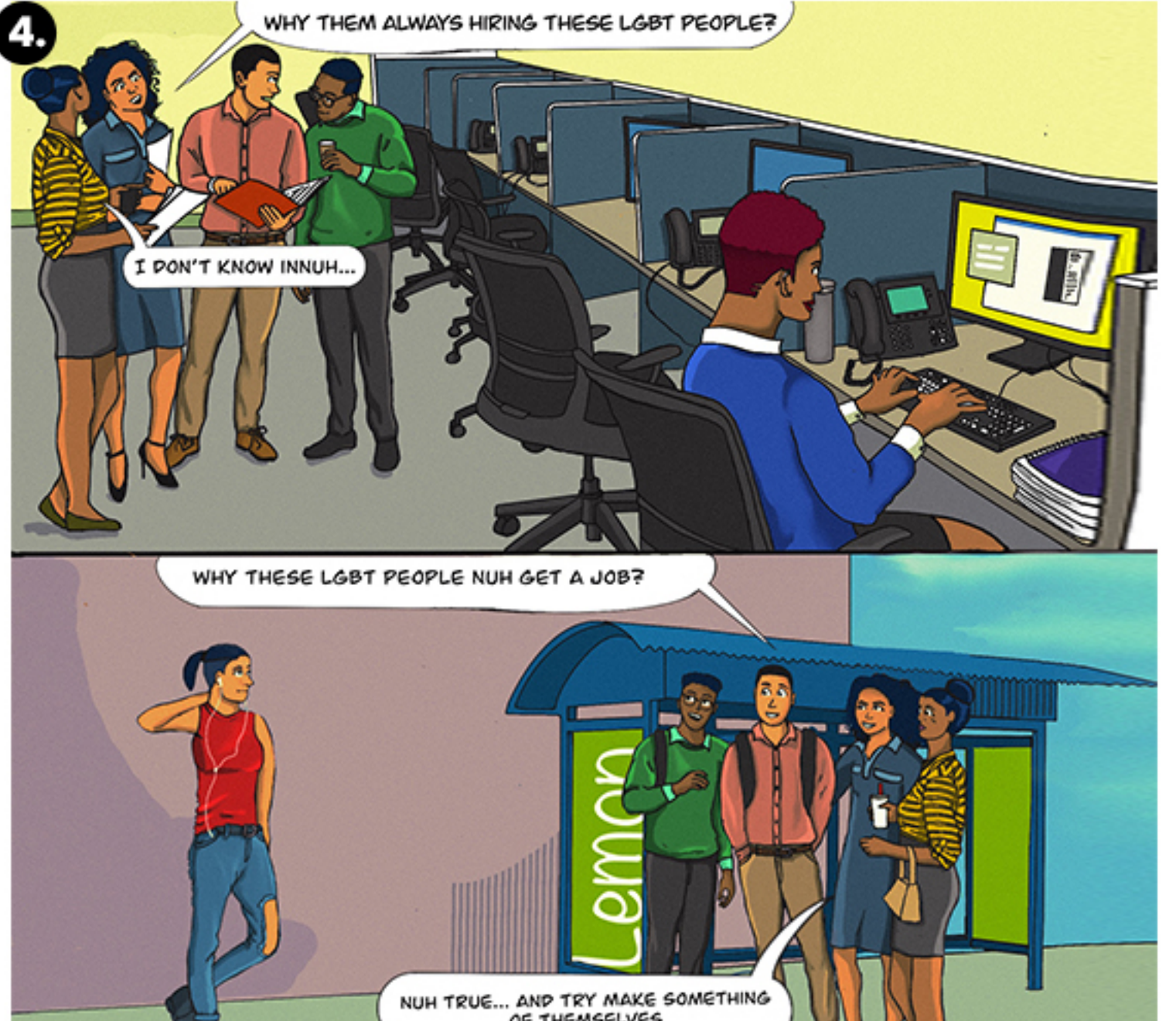
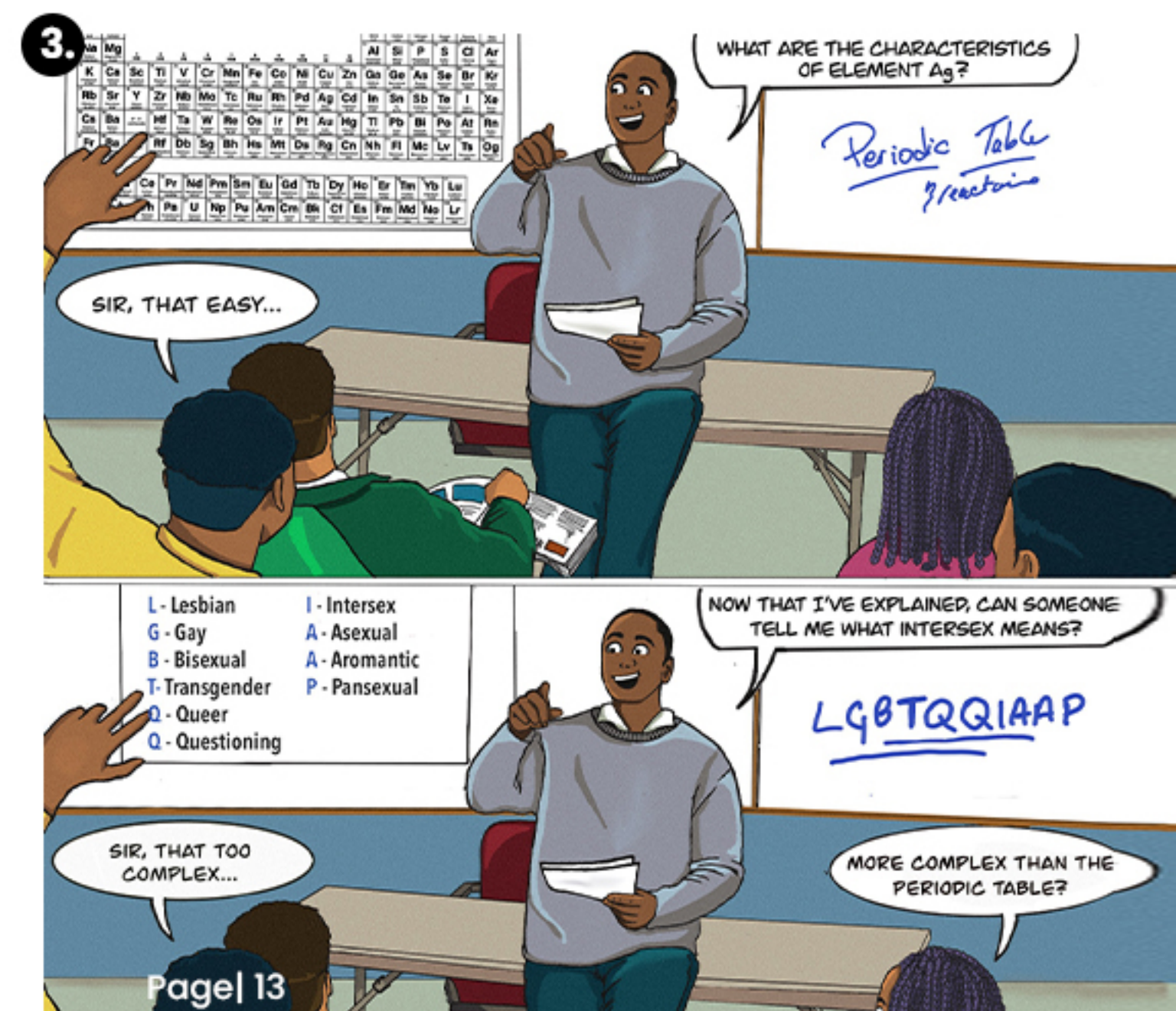
PJM: Where do you see Planet Veg in the next 5-10 years?

PV: In the next 5-10 years I see Planet Veg being a household name and go-to option for vegan comfort food in Jamaica. We will have a flagship location in Kingston that is open early for breakfast and open late for after hours dining and as an entertainment spot as well as 2 other locations in other parishes.

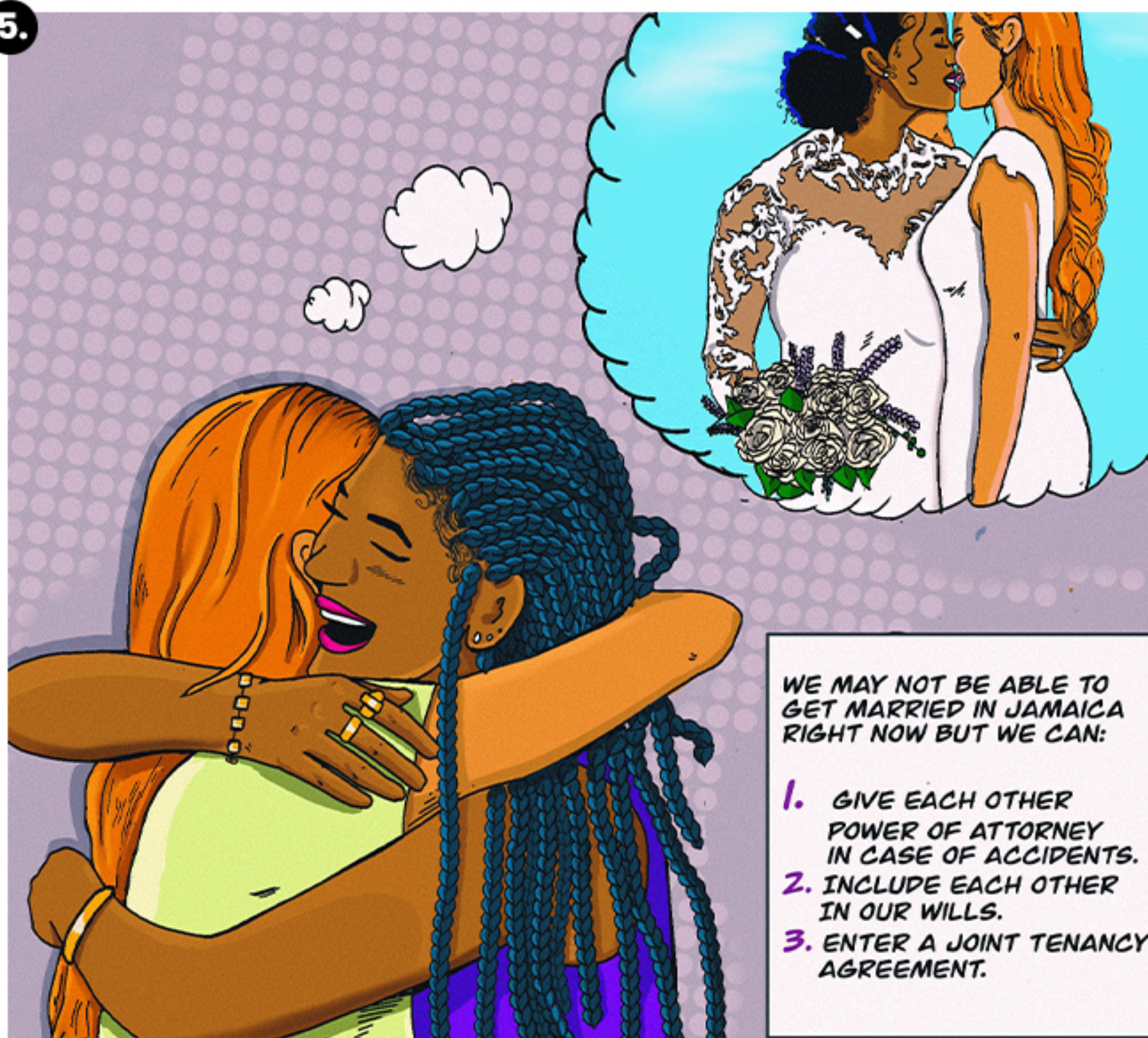




COMIC CORNER



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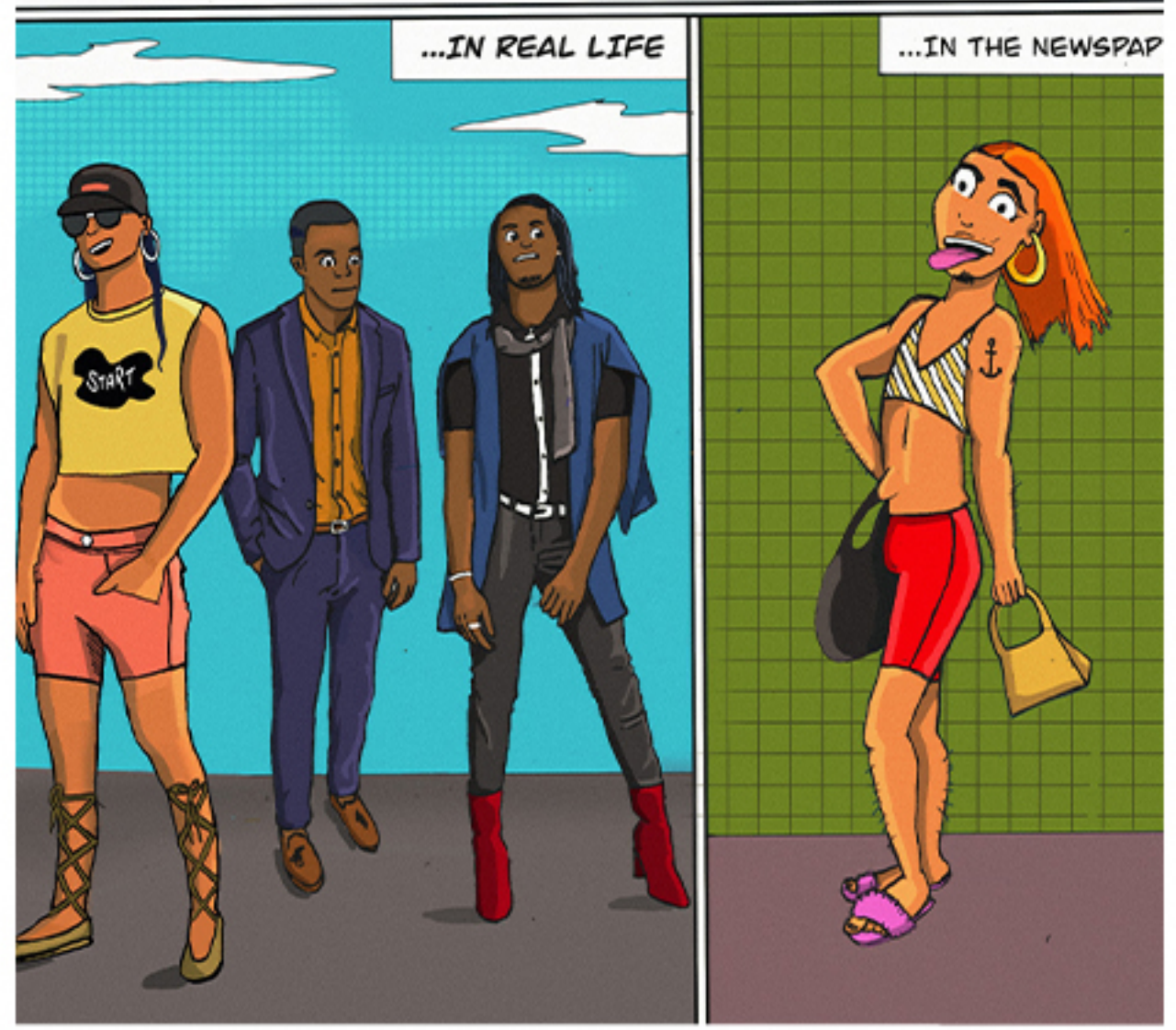
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GAY JAMAICAN MEN

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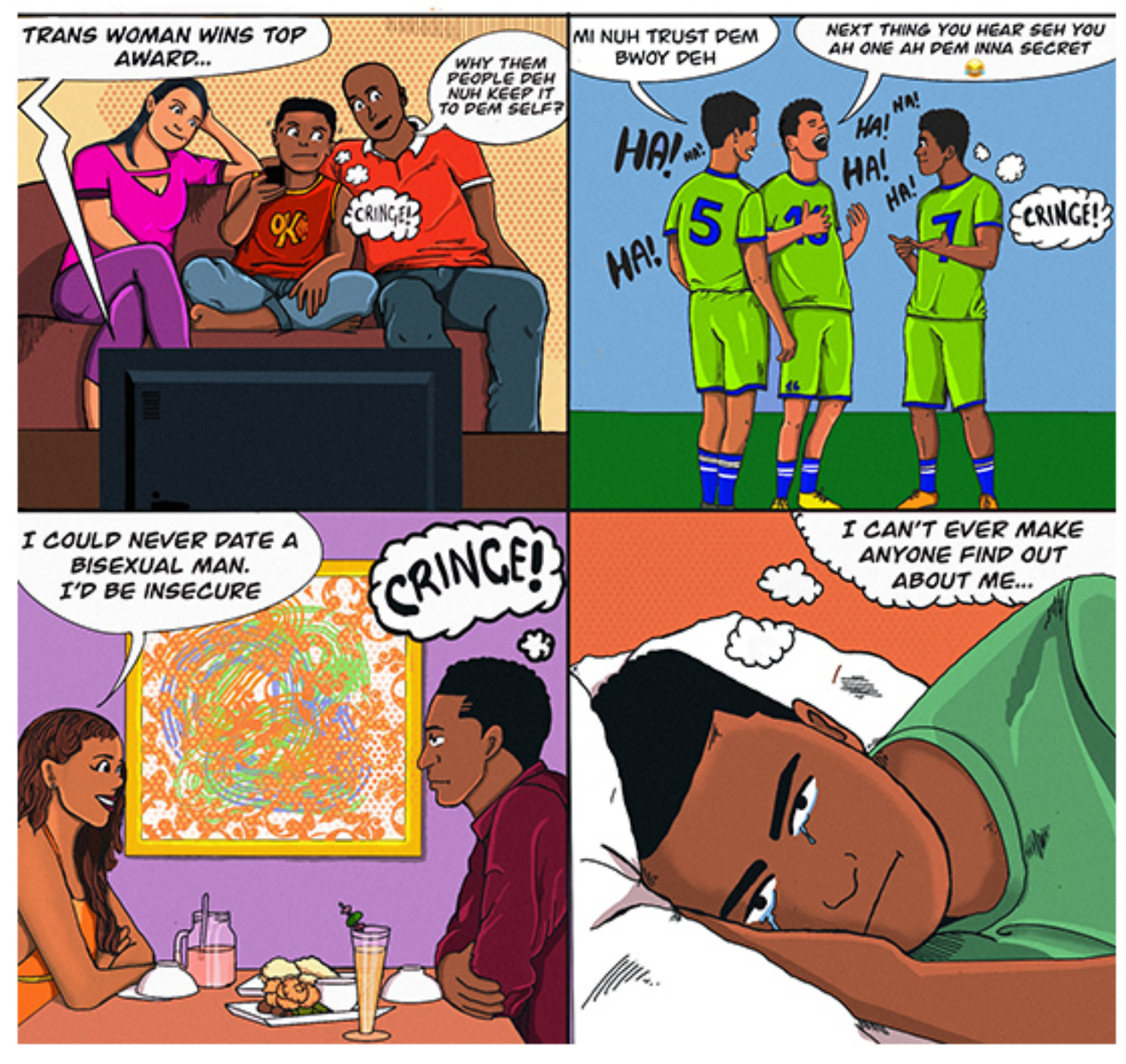
GAY AND JAMAICAN GO TOGETHER ...

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10.

EVER WONDER WHY IT'S HARD TO COME OUT...





PRIDE JA 2021

OUT
FOR

JESUS:

*The Gospel
Concert Edition*

SUN 1
AUG.

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

venue:

KNUTSFORD COURT HOTEL

TICKET *includes refreshment

\$500 JMD

Event will also be streamed live on:



**COVID-19 protocols will be applied.



HOW TO BE A Baddie on a Budget!

by Dahlia Thomas

Today in Fashion, it is the easiest it has ever been to be on trend. Fashion used to be all about exclusivity and clambering to get the 'it-pieces', determined by the glitterati and the 'it-girls' of the time. It was consumed with being donned in the most expensive pieces by the most elusive designers. While this mould will always have a place in the industry, there is an exodus happening. Personal style is taking over from trends and fads, thrifting and vintage shopping have gained so much popularity that vintage references are being seen on the runway, getting crafty and creative with DIYs has taken the scene by storm and accessibility now has a place in fashion's hallowed halls. This shift has made it easier for people from all walks of life to be in style.

Here are my **Top 10 Tips** for how to build your wardrobe, be fashionable and **be a baddie on a budget:**

1. THRIFTING!

Many people don't know this but there are actually countless thrifting opportunities available to you in Jamaica! A simple Instagram search of the word 'thrift' will lead you to dozens of pages of thrift and vintage resellers and thrift events with gems ready to find a new home. On top of that, there are stores sprinkled around half way tree and downtown that either resell items or sell clothing at low costs- which is thrifting as well.

2. Go through the wardrobe of a Baby Boomer.

Vintage-inspired looks have made their way back to the runway and are some of the biggest trends this season: Y2K trends from the early 2000s, bell bottoms and exaggerated lapels from the 70s, Disco sequins and psychedelic prints from the 60s, Shoulder pads from the 80s, you name it! Many of the older persons you know will have very cool pieces in the back of their wardrobes that have come back into style. Going vintage diving into the wardrobe of a baby boomer is always a free and fruitful endeavour.

3. Don't be ashamed to shop in cheaper places.

There can be a lot of shame associated with shopping in low end stores but trust me, many haberdasheries, wholesales and smaller 'pop dung' outlet stores have gems in the rough just waiting to be discovered, bought and styled! There are so many amazing pieces that have made their way to me because of my love for hunting in stores that on the surface, look like dem nah gwaan wid nutn.

4. Reconstruct your pieces!

If you have pieces that you don't like or that you've worn to death, turn it into a new piece! Don't go into it thinking you can't do what the DIY people are doing. They're not superheros an dem nuh more dan yuh. There are some DIY projects that don't even require sewing. For example, if you have a pair of jeans that you've worn into the ground, try taking scissors and cutting off the waistband of the jeans, along with the back and front pockets still attached and using that waistband to layer over a different wash of jeans for an outfit. That look of reconstructed denim is super trendy right now and right there you've gone and done something different and interesting with your outfit.

5. Repurpose your clothes!

My sister said to me once, "Repeat your clothes, you are not a Kardashian." Play around with your pieces and find new ways to wear the things you already have. Don't be afraid to flop or look stupid. So many new trends and innovative minds in fashion were ridiculous until proven fashionable. Before buying a piece, ensure you can think of AT LEAST THREE ways you can wear it. A your clothes an a your money buy dem. Switch things up and make your pieces work for you!

“Repeat your clothes, you are not a Kardashian.”





6. Shop consciously.

If you're just beginning to build out your style, pick a colour scheme and purchase pieces within it. This helps you to mix and match and rewear the pieces that you're able to get flawlessly. Having a cohesive wardrobe is such a great hack for people who can't buy a whole lot of pieces right now. I built my wardrobe on neutrals and earth tones- shades of brown, black, white, and green. To this day picking an outfit for if I need to head out quickly is made simpler by the fact that I have so many pieces that are interrelated.

7. Join Pinterest aka GET INSPIRED!

Pinterest is a great place to seek inspiration, as well as to figure out and hone your personal style. It is an endless resource of trends, outfit inspiration, DIY projects and fashion references from the past. Having a clear understanding of your style and the looks you want to execute helps you to save money because it stops you from buying pieces just for buying them sake or things you just end up hating after a week.

8. Take your time. You won't go from zero to one hundred in a week.

Building a wardrobe--especially if you don't have a lot of resources at your disposal--takes time. Be kind to yourself and give yourself the time to grow.

9. Ensure you have basics.

These 5 basics are an excellent, gender neutral starting point for your wardrobe: A plain coloured round neck tee, a black V-neck tank top, a sturdy pair of jeans, a white button up shirt and a pair of white sneakers. Any combination of these pieces paired with minimal accessories would be a great summer look.

10. Lastly and most importantly never forget that, **nuhbody nuh more dan yuh.**

I mean this in two ways. First of all, NEVER see an outfit or a mode of style and feel like that person can do it but you couldn't pull it off. Pulling off an outfit is about confidence. Forget the predetermined rules about what you can and cannot wear and allow fashion to be a means of creative expression. Secondly, while you're on this journey of building your wardrobe, don't allow anyone to make you feel less important because you don't yet have what they have. They may have more clothes than you do, but that doesn't mean they have more style than you do.





PRIDE JA 2021

Mystery BOX

Celebrate #PRIDEJa2021
with your own party in a box.
It's the #PRIDEJaMysteryBox.

Exclusive offer! Only 100 will be made.
ORDER YOURS NOW





PRIDE JA 2021

Mystery Box

Let's Do Brunch: Challenging Femmephobia & Bottom-Phobia

by Glenroy Murray and Lanvell Blake



Kojo and Yemoja have sat down for their weekly brunch to spill the latest tea about the gay community in Kingston, only to scroll through Instagram as they wait for their eclectic drink orders and see the cover picture for the newest edition of PrideJA Magazine. A stunning modern reimaging of a bandana dress being sported by a gay man, outfitted with stockings, heels and a laced fan – posed in the alleys of Downtown Kingston. After the customary “yaaasss queen” and “come through”, they knowingly look at each other – as feminine presenting queer men – knowing how some members of the gay community respond.





Kojo: As much as we love it, you know what the gworls are going to say!

Yemoja: Naturally. *deepening his voice* "Why does he have to be feminine? In heels, wearing a dress, blah, blah, blah. Why can't he look like a normal man? I am gay and you don't see me in a dress!"

K: Femmephobia at its finest. I am so tired of hearing the lazy refrain: "they make it bad for us." I can never understand what is at the heart of their avoidance and fear of, and discomfort with feminine gay men.

Y: Weh you mean? It has everything to do with patriarchy. Gay, bisexual and other queer men are raised in the same context as the rest of society. We are taught that anything that is "for males" should be celebrated and anything that is "for females" is inferior to that. Think about the whole "top or bottom?" fixation!

K: Oooh chyle... don't get me started! "What's your role?" is the question that lingers on most gay men's tongue when they meet a new guy that they may be interested in. The "top or bottom?" phenomenon not only seems to control the narrative of the sexual experiences of gay men, but also is expected to determine the emotional, financial and physical roles and responsibilities between the two men. "Tops" – who are treated like heterosexual men – must assume traditional masculine sexual and social roles; and "bottoms" being treated like heterosexual women, assume traditional female sexual and social roles.

Y: Sounds like you're about to give a sermon, sis!

K: A you start me up! But for real... how does a relationship between two men end up getting relegated to the patterns of straight relationships, especially, when we consider that both men in a gay relationship can experience pleasure from both their penis and anus? Contrary to what most tops will have you believe, they can experience anal pleasure.

Y: A you did say "every top has a top!"

K: *nods knowingly* This obsession with "masc or fem?" or "top or bottom?" has some very unhealthy implications. Gay men who are bottoms or are feminine are often shamed for being sexually liberated and in control of their sexual lives, bottoms are told that not having a low "body count," dating several men at the same time and formerly having an STI makes them unattractive, undateable and warrants them being mistreated by tops.

Y: It's absolutely ridiculous. Also, sex is an act of passion and pleasure, and should not have any bearing on the behavioural patterns, social roles and expectations of either man outside of the bedroom. Not to mention as well that how you behave should not dictate what happens in the bedroom. If we are completely honest with ourselves, this dichotomy of praise/shame given to the top and bottom reinforces the idea that straight relationships, and anything that looks like them, are normal and appropriate, and anything that doesn't look like them should be shamed. You know what they say when they see two feminine men in a relationship – "lesbians".

K: And don't get me wrong, we understand that persons will have sexual position preferences but we must question ourselves as to whether those preferences are about preferred pleasure or preferred social status.

Y: Right! There are many masculine bottoms and feminine tops. We must also question why some gay men are so put off by seeing feminine representation. At the end of the day, historically, it has been feminine gay men and trans women, through their visibility, who have brought the movement to where it has come. They are the ones who bear the brunt of the ostracising and discrimination for just being their honest selves. We should celebrate and honour them for starting and leading the conversations that have won us the progress that has been made in recent years.



K: Exactly. And as you always say, if we want to see more masculine gay men then let them step forward. Look at how celebrated the movie *Moonlight* has been. There is a space for diverse representation of queer men. All of us don't have to look the same way. Real progress is won when we can be proud of queer men in all their forms, not just the sanitized, traditionally masculine and socially acceptable one. I'm actually quite pleased that PrideJA did not shy away from showcasing an empowered feminine queer man.

Y: And let's be honest, SIS ATE! Hopefully, it will begin to shift conversations in the community and get us to appreciate the inherent value we all bring to the table.

PRIDE JA 2021

LOVE FEST

COUPLES GAME SHOW
& AFTER PARTY

MON. AUG. 2

LIVE GAME SHOW 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
AFTER PARTY 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

venue: _____
KNUTSFORD COURT HOTEL

TICKETS

*includes limited servings of wine

COUPLES

\$1,500 JMD

SINGLES

\$1,000 JMD

Events will also be streamed live on:



**COVID-19 protocols will be applied.



Jovanté Anderson:

Academic, Queer Activist and Instagram Hot Gyal and LGBT Person of the Year 2020


by Andre Cooper



When Jovanté Anderson started to express his true identity and truth while living in Jamaica, the microaggressions he endured catapulted his interest to become a voice for those who shared similar experiences. He participated in a series of creative writing competitions that provided him with a platform to raise awareness around societal issues that impacted the Jamaican LGBT community and communities in the wider Anglophone Caribbean.

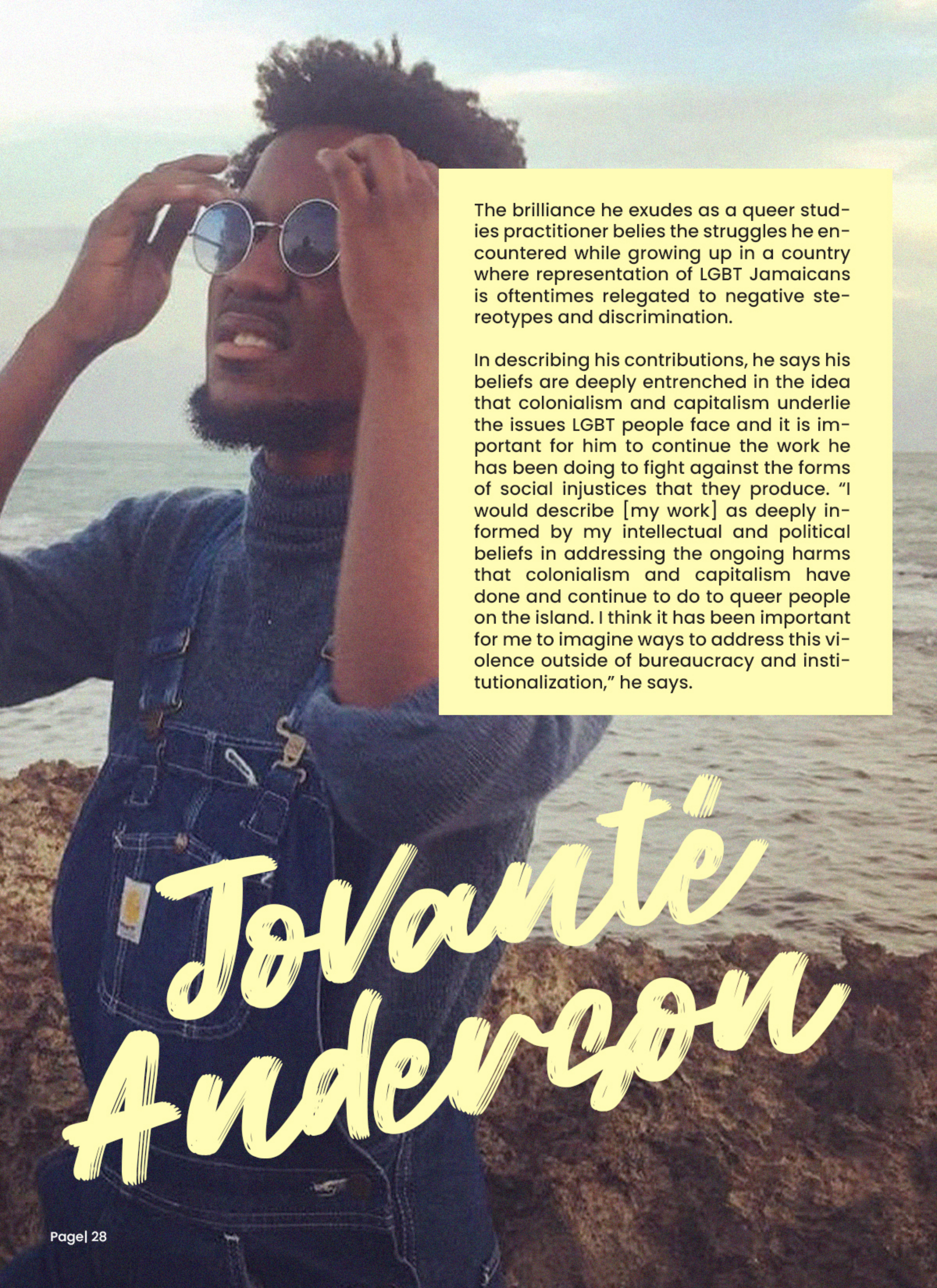
Jovanté's upward trajectory started long before he earned international recognition for his work. Jovanté currently resides in the U.S.A where he is enrolled as a second-year PhD student at the University of Miami. His studies is focused on English with a concentration in Caribbean studies. However, his research focuses on queerness in Jamaica from the late nineteenth century to present. Jovanté is also a tutor in the states who works closely with LGBT activist groups.

In 2020, Jovante was named the LGBT person of the year by JFLAG for his work in mobilising support for queer people. Unlike other forms of queer activism, Jovanté uniquely morphs his personal, social and academic commitment to advance LGBT presence in research and academia.



He uses education as a leverage point to foster change in societies, cultures and economies, Anderson envisions queer studies as an institutional framework that has the propensity to shape perspectives and attitudes, ultimately lending itself as a tool to advance the work of LGBTQ activists. A kind of advocacy resource toolkit, he packages information in a historical context and narrates the stories and histories of LGBT people that have been bequeathed to him.

Jovante
Anderson



The brilliance he exudes as a queer studies practitioner belies the struggles he encountered while growing up in a country where representation of LGBT Jamaicans is oftentimes relegated to negative stereotypes and discrimination.

In describing his contributions, he says his beliefs are deeply entrenched in the idea that colonialism and capitalism underlie the issues LGBT people face and it is important for him to continue the work he has been doing to fight against the forms of social injustices that they produce. "I would describe [my work] as deeply informed by my intellectual and political beliefs in addressing the ongoing harms that colonialism and capitalism have done and continue to do to queer people on the island. I think it has been important for me to imagine ways to address this violence outside of bureaucracy and institutionalization," he says.

Jovanité Anderson



FINANCIAL FEATURE

Using Someone Else's Health Card?

by Petoree Brown



A health card is an identity card required to get public or private health insurance services, which provides you with many medical benefits but is not unique or limited to doctor's office visits, prescription drugs, lab x-ray and diagnostic procedures, surgeries, maternity, in-hospital and out-patient care, as well as dental and optical benefits. An individual may have more than one health card from various service providers. Your health insurance may be applied for on an individual basis or you may be part of a group health plan.

Your health card provides a footprint of your personal health history. Your health card must only be used by the person whose name is stated on the card. To put this in perspective, if you allow others to use your health card, you are committing fraud.

Let us reflect on this scenario. Charles is the only one in his family with a health card. This card is provided to him as part of his benefits package at work. Charles allows his brother who is hypertensive and his cousin who is diabetic to use his card. Charles does this as a way of helping them with the cost for their monthly prescription drugs and regular doctor visits.

Because of the frequent usage of his card and high cost for prescription drugs, the cost for his group plan went up by more than 25% the following year. Unfortunately for Charles, he was injured on the job and was rushed to the hospital upon arrival he was denied life saving drugs that could have helped in speeding up the recovery process because the medical data on his card showed him as being allergic to a certain drug when he was in fact not. That information was reflected as his simply because he had allowed others to use his health card.

Here's a list of reasons you should not allow someone to use your health card:

1. You will be committing fraud.

Fraud is a deliberate act (or failure to act) with the intention of obtaining an unauthorized benefit, either for oneself or for the institution, by using deception or false suggestions or suppression of truth or other unethical means, which are believed and relied upon by others. Depriving another person or the institution of a benefit to which he/she/it is entitled by using any of the means described above also constitutes fraud.

2. You may lose the benefits of your health insurance/card and may be barred from being issued another health card in the future.

When found out by your service provider that you allow someone else, whether a family or close friend to use your health card, the services provided to you will be terminated. If you are part of a group health plan, your group will remove you. Do note, that this action of yours may also cause your group to come under scrutiny.

3. It can harm your health as well as your finances.

Remember that using your health card forms a footprint of your medical history, hence each time you swipe your card you are building up your medical data. When you allow others to use your health card, their medical history forms part of your medical records. Allowing others to use your health card can harm your health as well as your finances, potentially causing treatment delays, incorrect prescriptions, and misdiagnoses. Furthermore, this decision could affect your ability to get medical care and insurance benefits and could even affect decisions made by doctors treating you later. When found out by your service provider not only will you lose all benefits, but you may also be sued.

Having a health insurance plan is a great benefit. Your health card is your identity card that allows access to public and private health insurance services. Usage of your card leaves behind your unique medical footprint. Your health card should only be used by you.



PRIDE JA 2021

SOUND CLASH

& AFTER PARTY

DJ RAVAS VS DJ FENATICK

HOSTED BY:

Keith
"Shebada"
Ramsay

AFTERPARTY MUSIC BY
DJ SHELLY

WED
AUG. 4

venue: _____

KNUTSFORD COURT HOTEL

TICKET

*limited drinks included

\$3,000 JMD

SOUND CLASH

4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

AFTER PARTY

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Event will also be streamed live on:
**COVID-19 protocols will be applied.



Excerpt from

Megaponera Analis

By EJ Kingston

Jonathan

Heat releases rivers of sweat from Jonathan, pouring into already soaked sheets that cling to his half-naked body.

A recurring nightmare plagues his mind. He tosses back and forth. It's the third time this week that he has been attacked by nocturnal replays of his own memories. Mosquitos exacerbate the situation, swarming his ears with persistence and jabbing at him in between his violent body shifts.

"Gimme di shoes," the man in his dream says; the one closest to him. His name is Ryan. Jonathan recalls his face with vivid detail: skin dark and shiny like they bathed him in baby oil, the whites of his eyes contaminated with brown spots and a keloid scar to the side of his face. His companion, Dino, lurks in the background, fidgeting with a rather long knife.

Jonathan looks down at his new shoes, black Reebok Classics with cartoonish doodles on the sides. For the first time in his life, he has a pair of shoes he'd be the first to wear; bought with money he toiled for all summer break.

He weighs the odds; looks back up at the faces of his assailants.

They stare back at him in anticipation.

A split-second decision and he makes a run for it.

A chase ensues through an abandoned dust field behind his old primary school. The more he runs the darker it gets until he's swallowed by an expanse of nothingness. His chasers grow larger with each stride until two giants—three times their normal size—chase him.

Eventually, Ryan uses his oversized limbs to scoop Jonathan up, then pin him to the ground.

Dino holds his arms with one hand and the knife to his neck with the other.

"Hold still," Ryan says. He fights to restrain Jonathan's legs.

Dino pushes the knife harder against his throat. The sharp blade breaks skin.

Jonathan's body relaxes and Ryan pulls his shoes off his feet.

But Ryan doesn't stop there. He pulls off Jonathan's pants and then makes for his boy briefs. "Fucking sissy boy, ah gonna show yuh something today. Straighten you out."

Jonathan's embarrassingly loud screams reverberate through his apartment. Being self-aware in these dreams make them even more frightful. Try as he might, he cannot free himself. He is never able to free himself until the full memory has played out.

In renewed resistance, Jonathan kicks at Ryan, landing one on his chin.

Ryan hits him hard in the abdomen twice. "Yuh hear me seh you mus' keep the bwoy steady," Ryan shouts at Dino in a strong Jamaican accent.

Dino's face has a look of uncertainty. His grip on Jonathan's arms and neck loosen.

Jonathan snatches the knife from him and in one swift move plunges the knife into Ryan's stomach.

Ryan's eyes show more shock than pain. He falls back on the blanket of darkness. Blood erupts from his wound.

At this point, Dino simply disappears from Jonathan's dream and Ryan shrinks to half Jonathan's size.

Jonathan removes the blade from Ryan's stomach and stands towering over him.

"Help." Ryan mouths the word more than he speaks it.

Jonathan's nose flares with anger as he looks down at the pitiful sight. It would be so easy to leave Ryan for dead; simply drop the knife and walk away.

Sirens from an ambulance jolt Jonathan from his sleep, but even a minute later, the imagined sound plays on. Lying awake with his eyes to the ceiling of his apartment, he stays still until his heart rate slows, his breathing calms and his mind can hold a coherent thought.

Don't fall back asleep. Don't fall back asleep. Don't fall back asleep.

The yellowy neon light of the digital clock next to his bed blinks insistently, like a ticking bomb. Jonathan is surprised to see the time. Glimpses of a bright morning escape from behind his dark bedroom curtains. There is also the pitter patter of rain on the outside. The odd combination has him discombobulated until he pulls the curtains. What he sees startles him. It is indeed raining, but the sun shines intensely in the sky.

In the dark, his fingers feel for the remote in the pile of sheets tossed to the side of his bed. They discover the remote and he turns the TV on to find National Geographic playing—his favourite channel.

It's a documentary about ants. The TV show host says, "When Megaponera Analis ants are attacked outside of the nest, they cooperate with one another in an attempt to defend themselves. During battle against termites, some ants get injured. After battle, injured ants 'call' for help with a pheromone in their mandibular gland. This attracts nestmates which then start to investigate the injured nestmate."

Jonathan watches the TV closely as the camera zooms in on a large column of black ants marching on very arid looking earth. The bright lights from the screen dry up his desire for sleep.

The host continues, "This mechanism is a relatively simple two-step process. After an ant is injured, the first step is trying to stand up on its legs again and return to a resting position. Step two then is to call for help and cooperate with the attracted helpers. If step one cannot be achieved step two does not occur. Heavily injured ants are therefore in a constant loop trying to achieve step one, making it a very simple mechanism of only rescuing ants that are still useful for the colony."

His mind wanders away from the flashing images and soothing voice of the TV show host until there is a loud knock. A few seconds pass before he realises that the noise isn't coming from inside his head and that there is someone at the door.

The blinking yellow lights show that over half hour has passed. His mind has been in a restless limbo of free thought somewhere between being asleep and wakefulness.

Being it's a Saturday morning, he doesn't even have to think twice about who is at the door. "Who dat?" he asks anyway.

The person responds with more knocking.

That confirms it. He must be 'fraid of hearing his own voice.

Jonathan turns the doorknob and, without looking who is behind the door, starts walking in the opposite direction towards the bathroom. "David, you must learn fi answer when mi ask who it is innuh," he says.

There is no response.

Jonathan continues walking away and into the bathroom. He re-emerges with face washed, teeth brushed, splashes of water on his chest, and clad only in boxers and male confidence.

"Yuh not answerin' mi?" he asks his guest.

"Who else always comes here on a Saturday morning?" David says rhetorically. His voice is void of the lust in his eyes.

Jonathan smiles inside at how his physique elicits a favourable response in David. No sign escapes his stone cold face. "Don't worry, next time mi gon just leave yuh outside."

"I shouldn't even have to travel here in the mornings," David jests. "By now you should just let me move in with you."

The silly look on David's face as he says that makes Jonathan work hard to conceal a smile. "You can continue joking 'round. When yuh move in here and the church throw the two of us out ah dem charity apartment, then wah mi do? Live pon the street?"

David laughs. "Don't worry, I will keep you in my room if they throw you out."

Jonathan works hard to keep his jaws clenched firm and his face looking serious. "And send mi ah school too?"

David's overgrown jet-black hair and smooth, even dark skin make Jonathan want to walk over to him and seek refuge at his beautiful petite body. Instead, he digs around in his kitchen cupboard for a frying pan.

Thick red curtains prevent sunlight from flooding the apartment. The kitchen, where they stand side by side, is dark with the perfect amount of warmth. Light escapes through holes in the old curtains. "Why is the TV so loud?" David asks.

"Is it your TV?"

David rolls his eyes. "What kinda documentary that you watching?" "Go look for yourself nuh."

David moves around to the bedroom. "Oh, I was watching this one," he shouts around to Jonathan. "It's the one with the ants that can heal each other right?" Then he comes back around and asks, "So, what will happen after you graduate high school? The pastor man will kick you out?"

"Dem coulda kick mi out when mi turn eighteen, but one year later and mi still deh here."

"That's because you're a good behaving church boy." David chuckles. "So when you graduate you're thinking to rent your own place, right?"

"You can ask nuff questions though."

David goes silent.

Jonathan stares down at his frying egg until he drifts away again. David's hands grip his waist from behind. "Turn off the stove," the smooth voice says.

The egg is almost burned to a crisp. He turns off the stove and they linger there.

David seems to take Jonathan's inaction as a good sign and takes whiffs of Jonathan at the tender spot below his neck.

Jonathan feels a hardening in his pants.

David progresses to a beautiful tongue assault all around his neck.

This feels even better to Jonathan, like David's tongue belongs there, its second home. Stop, I don't want to do this right now! I don't want to love you. The warmth of David pressed up against him feels blissful. "Hey, what are you doing?" he says.

"Nothing." David's voice registers as pure innocence in Jonathan's ears, but he continues his offending action.

"Yuh nuh see mi trying to cook?"

"I just want to hold you for a bit." Jonathan elbows David in the stomach and escapes from his grip. He connects harder than he intends—if he even intended at all. He turns around to face David. Hurt eyes look back at him. Guilt overcomes him and he smiles that smile he knows always thaws David out and makes his eyes light up.

It doesn't work.

He then puts his forehead up against David's and playfully presses against him.

David walks away. He goes over to the small dining table, occupies one of the two chairs and buries himself in his phone.

Jonathan follows him with breakfast in hand—burnt eggs, bread and orange juice. Smiling eyes beam at a pouting David who maintains a determination to ignore Jonathan.

"So what you gon do now? Stay over dere and vex wid mi the whole time?"

David doesn't respond.

"Alright. Stay dere and don't talk to mi." Jonathan pinches a piece of bread and throws it at David. It hits him on the nose.

"Fuck off!" David says.

Jonathan can see just the slightest change in David's expression. He continues the onslaught of bread pickings. When that stops getting a rise out of David, he dips his two fingers into his glass and splashes David with juice.

"Take vitamin C, bitch," Jonathan says, with a laugh.

David's face is working hard to conceal a smile; Jonathan smells victory.

Another splash and David says, "Nasty boy, you hear I just tell you to fuck off?"

"Yuh love talk 'bout fuck? Wait till mi finish eat and see what yuh get."

"Better I just go back home." David rises from his chair. He manages a few steps towards the door before Jonathan overtakes him and blocks him from leaving.

Jonathan leads as always. He moves David slowly to the sweat-soaked bed and David follows without resistance. There they melt perfectly into each other. Gone is the resistance and discomfort of previous sexual encounters—replaced by complete synchronicity of movement between them both. They work themselves tired until they retreat into the firm hold of each other's arms.

Jonathan is relieved to feel the stress leave his body under David's protective hold—even if just for the time being.

The sweet smell of their bodies together makes him relax. In no time he is off to sleep. No nightmares of past memories invade his peace.

Later, he wakes to his dark room; the blinking neon clock is his only light source. He feels around in the bed, but David isn't beside him. A sigh escapes.

He grabs his phone from the side of his bed and sends a text:

Jonathan: Thanks.

David: For what?

Jonathan: Just thanks.

He goes back to sleep.

David

The devil an' him wife a fight. The old Jamaican saying comes to mind as David stares out his bedroom window where the rain pours while the sun blazes. This kind of weather occurrence isn't uncommon, but when it happens it makes people uncomfortable.

Everything has its proper place and time. When it rains, it rains. When it is sunny, it is sunny. This occurrence is a slap in the face to that. In their minds, the mixing of the two is something devious David supposed. Devious enough to warrant comparisons with the devil.

David hates this weather too, but for different reasons. It makes him melancholic.

His phone vibrates in his pocket as a text message comes in.

Jonathan: Thanks.

David: For what?

Jonathan: Just thanks.

This boy is an enigma, David thinks. Still, a smile forms on his face and, if only for a second, he forgets the melancholic weather and remembers his embrace with Jonathan.

Whenever it rains like this David thinks of his mother. Barbara was 100% Christian by religion, 100% nurse by profession, 100% wife by marriage and whatever little remained she reserved for mothering. She left their family home when he was still very young—nine years old to be precise.

Since her departure, David has lived with his father, John, and John's revolving door of women. Technically, Barbara and John are still husband and wife. David has never heard either of them speak of divorce. To say his parents were never in love would be unfair, given that they shared a life he knew nothing about before he came into the picture. What he can say is that he'd never seen them in love.

For a long time, all David wanted to do was please his father, or at least grievously injure himself trying.

It was an unwritten rule: 'You must supersede all societal expectations of masculinity at all costs'. Else, your father, brother, uncle, or any male of your acquaintance for that matter, must ensure you do. There isn't much time; it must be done quickly to save the young man in training from irreversible damage. You can hear the time ticking away; tick-tock-tick-tock-tick.

His father did try. John's pungent mist of machismo stifled all David's individuality, but somehow David still came out wrong.

It was almost eight years ago. David and John were in the backyard playing catch with a tennis ball when John had the great idea to play with a real cricket ball—you know the red one with the really hard shell.

"If it wasn't fi mi father who want mi turn police officer like him, I would turn a cricketer. Better than Chanderpaul or Tendulkar," John said. "I gon make a cricketer out ah you boy."

That would be a God-like act on John's part since David hadn't enough hand-eye coordination enough to be anything but an embarrassment on a pitch.

John threw the ball with gargantuan force and it, expectedly, evaded David's grip, but continued on and landed on his forehead, right above his eye.

David woke up in a hospital bed, in a room made of blue curtains and the smell of a too-clean bathroom. The doctor on duty came into the room and sat beside David on the hospital bed. She told him he had been knocked out for over an hour and was suffering from a mild concussion.

Barbara sat in a corner sobbing and John paced around the room. The doctor shone a bright light into David's eyes, then put it away and asked, "How many fingers am I holding up?"

"Two," David said.

"Now, how many?"

"Four."

She turned to his parents, "He seems fine. His x-rays show no noticeable damage. Just a mild concussion. However, watch him carefully over the next few hours—" "Thank God," Barbara interrupted.

"If it's anybody fault, it's your fault," John said, hardly waiting for the doctor to leave the area. "Yuh growin' di bwoy up like ah big gyal." John's Jamaican accent was strongest when he was mad.

David sat in the car the entire ride home as his parents bickered back and forth about him as if he wasn't there.

Later that night, he dreamt he was standing in complete darkness. He could hear what sounded like a steam train coming. In fact, he knew it was; in that weird way you know everything in your dreams. It was coming for him at top speed. For some reason, it felt as if he shouldn't move; like this train somehow was meant to run over him. The rattle and whistle drew closer. The lights got intensely brighter, totally annihilating the darkness and everything else, leaving only a sea of light. As soon as it got close enough, he woke up.

Dalton Harris:

The Musician and Advocate



In 2010, he rose to local fame as the youngest winner of Digicel's Rising Stars. Then he rose to international fame as the winner of UK's X Factor. Now, the musician, writer, filmmaker, performing artiste, advocate, lover, uncle, son and wearer of so many more hats has granted PRiDEJa Magazine access to his life so his fans and admirers in Jamaica's LGBT community can learn more about him.

Who is Dalton Harris?

Outside of his professional pursuits, Dalton Harris is a loving, caring, gentle, strong, empathetic, not easily intimidated, advocate for human equality and respect.

Is there a difference between Dalton Harris, the person and Dalton Harris, the artiste?

Dalton Harris the artiste isn't very different from the person. But the only difference is that the public only knows a part of me as Dalton Harris. And I like to keep public and personal lives separate to protect the people I love. But there is a lot of difference.

What was your major motivation to compete in the X-Factor competition?

I wanted to compete vocally at the highest level and prove to myself that I could do anything I worked hard for. I wanted to experience what a record deal would be like and I wanted a platform to help and connect with people and communicate with people.

Describe the feeling when you snatched the X-Factor title?

I honestly don't remember anything, it's like I blacked out or something. I remember I was in front of 20,000 people and being watched by 5 million people so I was overwhelmed. I should go and watch the video back.



“I have the power back now.”

”

What are your favourite and least favourite parts of being a musician?

Favorite part is helping inspire people and doing what you love for a living. Least favorite part is the popularity that makes people go crazy. Anyone can write something false about you and it will be perceived as true.

Who's your ideal musician to collaborate with and why?

Anyone with vocals and a message and a platform they use to encourage and empower others. I have favorites but quality is quality so anyone that fits that bill.

When did you first realise you could sing?

I realized I loved singing when I was maybe 4, and then started competing at 10, and I would always win but I was just happy for the free food and trips. Then as I got older and kept training myself I realized maybe around 15 or so but I never really believed till maybe a few years ago, when I looked back on all I have accomplished.

Do you have any hobbies or interests outside of music?

Yes! I cycle 30 miles a day at least, I read a whole lot. I religiously watch quantum physics documentaries, read quantum physics books, I like playing Call of Duty with my partner and I like going for long walks with my partner as well. I also love to talk to my fans and spend time with them.

Has life changed since coming out as pansexual?

Yeah it has. I live more freely and happily now. I feel so much more empowered and just full of life. I can experience more healthy relationships as well. But, also, I now receive more death threats and hate than ever but it's how it is, and maybe, one day, in the future, when another Jamaican artist or person is publicly pansexual or anything else in the LGBTQIA community, they won't have to face the same amount of abuse as I do now. I lost people that said they loved me, but I am happier. I was prepared for coming out. I have the power back now.

What has been the most difficult part of being a pansexual musician living in the UK?

I haven't released music since coming out so I don't know yet. In the UK, being gay isn't something that people react to as they do in Jamaica, so I wouldn't feel half as worthless as some Jamaicans go out of their way to make someone feel. I am sure my sexuality won't matter.

What big project is next for Dalton Harris?

I just wrapped shooting a film. It is a musical for Broadway HD called Closer Than Ever which will be out in September. I am working on a few releases but I don't want to put a date on anything. I am watching how COVID progresses before releasing anything as I am a touring artist and don't want to release music when I am not able to tour. I want music to be high quality as well. It will be unexpected for sure.

Where do you see your brand in the next 5 years?

I don't see myself as a brand, but more so an entity. In five years, I hope to be inspiring more people to not only see themselves in me but to be motivated to self love and self care in a way that allows them to live their lives to the fullest and most happiest and especially young black gay men and women in the Caribbean. Whether they are out or not. I know a lot of times the world tries to intimidate and scare you into silence because they have this weird idea of what a gay man is. Being gay doesn't mean I want to be a girl or is weak or isn't a man. People hear the term gay and immediately start to think sexually and that is weird that they do that. LOL. Gender Identity and sexuality are two different things, and gender role is also up to the person to choose. Saying that to say, I hope anyone that is gay and reading this can believe that they are not less than and that they deserve love and to be valued and respected just like anyone else.





BEAUTY & SKINCARE FEATURE

Skincare is Love in a Time of COVID-19

by Tracey-Ann Mullings



We've been inside for over a year.

Many researchers have presented information showing that the rise of the global pandemic has affected us all mentally, physically, and emotionally in some way. With so much going on in our lives daily, many of us might take it for granted that our skin could be under a significant amount of pressure. We're living in a highly stressful time and some of the different emotions and situations we're dealing with can actually manifest as skin and beauty issues. Personally, breakouts and dullness have been the enemy!

The skin is the largest organ we have, it's also the one that's most exposed making it vulnerable to the elements. Our skin does so much more than we give it credit for; it helps to regulate body temperature, keeps bacteria out of our system and communicates the sensations of touch, heat and cold to our brains.

Skincare can be tricky because every inch of skin is different with very different requirements but there are simple actions that you can take in order to improvise your current skincare situation. With masks being worn on our faces and harsh chemicals being on our hands on a daily basis, extra care has to be taken to keep our skin looking, feeling and being healthy.

Skincare can be tricky because every inch of skin is different with very different requirements



Stay hydrated

There is no doubt that this one is a hot girl* summer. I mean that quite literally. The Jamaica Observer reported that the country's hottest day this year (so far) was June 20, 2021 with a maximum temperature of 36.1C. Although the temperature might not have been as high since, we are definitely still battling humidity, dust and stress. Staying hydrated helps to improve your body's cardiovascular health and moisture retention. The human body is mostly made up of water, so slacking on hydration can cause skin dryness, flakiness, tightness, wrinkles and even acne, especially during the summer months when it is hotter than usual.

Wash your face (and hands)

We touch our faces about a million times a day. Okay maybe a million is a stretch but we do it for many different reasons, a lot of the time unconsciously.

From a COVID-19 standpoint, constantly touching our faces puts us at risk but in terms of skincare, half the time, our hands are dirty from simply touching other surfaces. You wouldn't put your face directly on a door handle or steering wheel or railing at a supermarket because your brain tells you that your face could be in danger by doing so but we don't think twice when it comes to touching with our hands. When we don't wash our hands or our faces regularly, we allow bacteria to move from surface to skin which can cause breakouts or skin rashes.



Even if you use sanitiser throughout the day, it's still important to wash your hands with antibacterial soap at intervals to reduce the risk to your skin. It's also important to wash your face with products that are specifically formulated for that part of the skin, as using the wrong products can cause dryness and irritation. When we talk and exhale, we expel carbon dioxide. Under normal circumstances, this goes into the air, but while wearing a mask, the gases you exhale are trapped under it which then goes back into your skin. This can lead to a buildup of dead skin, sweat and oil causing inflammation and acne, especially with the use of makeup. After a long day of wearing a mask, be sure to wash your face when you get home (but wash your hands first), even if you're not showering right away.



Exfoliate, moisturise, and wear sunscreen.

Washing your face is one thing, exfoliation is another. The previously mentioned build-up of dead skin, sweat and oil can clog the pores. Exfoliation is the gentle removal of that layer of dead skin and oil which allows for fresh skin to emerge. You can do this with sugar/salt/coffee scrubs, exfoliating brushes, or a cleansing sponge if your skin is extra sensitive. You shouldn't exfoliate every day because you want to give the skin time to generate new cells, but moisturiser should be applied at least twice daily. For added care, use a moisturiser that has SPF to protect your skin from the sun. There is a common misconception that Black and Brown people don't get sunburned, but we do. It takes longer for us to burn than our non-Black/Brown counterparts but it's still just as harmful to our skin. When shopping for moisturisers and sunscreen, look for ones that work for your skin type and incorporate it into your daily routine.

The combination of these actions should keep your skin in good shape but if you are noticing serious skin issues like rashes that don't go away or severe redness or eczema flares, I highly recommend visiting a dermatologist for more complete care.

Stay beautiful, loved ones.
XO

Follow us on Instagram for more information on skin care and aesthetics:

 **@skinbytrace**

*girl was used as a gender neutral term in this context.



Resilience in COVID-19:

Jamaican Businesses Fighting Back Against the Pandemic

Russianz Clothing

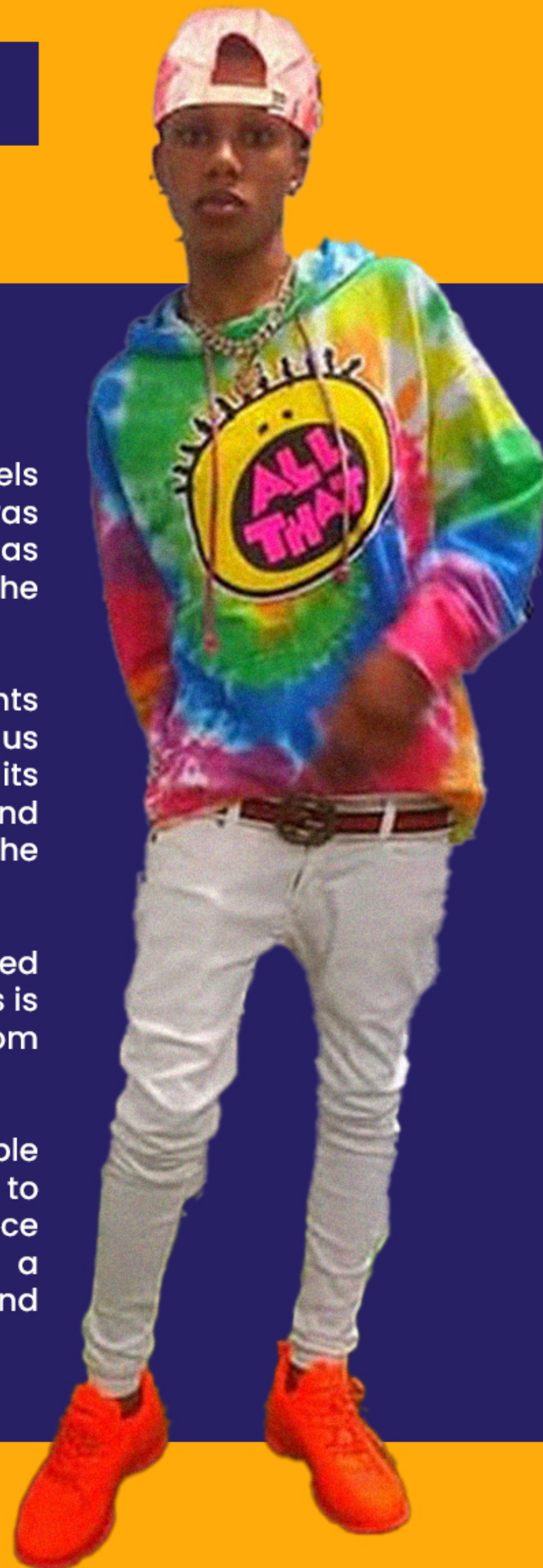
by Russianz Schmurda

Russianz Clothing is an online men's clothing and apparels ecommerce store. I started the online store in late 2018. It was exclusive to women, catering to their needs and desires, but as a result of the slow revenue and turnover, I had restructured the store into an online men's store.

The COVID-19 pandemic took a toll on my business. Shipments were very much delayed; shipping costs were high plus clearance and as a direct result of the pandemic and its impact on the entertainment industry, there was no demand for clothing as events were placed on a hiatus to curb the spread of the virus.

It was very hard but I still as a queer entrepreneur, I persevered with the strength and support of my business partner as this is a co-owned business with another partner that was built from scratch and our own investment.

We are currently in the process of having new stock available as soon as we were out of stock for a while because we had to take our focus into other things and prioritize. As we bounce back from the impacts of the ongoing health crisis, as a community, it is important that we support our brothers and sisters by supporting their small businesses.



Hats JA

by Lee-Ann Phillips

HatsJA, a fully ecommerce store, was conceived in April of this year in the midst of the ongoing pandemic. People were still interested in stashing away our cute headgears to accentuate their daily attire. While the nearly instantaneous economic recession triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic has had immeasurable impacts on small and large business owners, for my small business, Hats JA, the impacts were safe to say far from severe.

As a young queer entrepreneur, pivoting definitely works for online businesses, and I am happy that my business has been able to benefit from the transformational services offered through digital platforms free of cost. Through the use of social media, I was able to identify what kinds of hats would sell. Our hats range from dad-hats, bucket-hats, fedora-hats, tracker-hats, brimless-hats, beanie-hats, beret hats; name it and we'll have it.

While the pandemic is no neophyte to our community, as a hive, we have stung away numerous predators. Together, I believe we are resilient, fierce and undefeatable.

You can visit our Instagram page
@hats_on_ja.



Honey B's Kitchen

by Ramesh Smith

If you're looking for a finger licking authentic Jamaican meal then Honey B's kitchen is just the place for you. I hail from the lush basins of Portland, Jamaica and now reside in the big apple - Brooklyn, New York. The love I have for cooking is unimaginable. Growing up, I was introduced to the fire side very early and I was always fascinated by the way in which food gives us this unique ability to combine different flavors to create palatable and intoxicating dishes. From then, I knew I had this innate thrust to start my own restaurant someday.

It was December of last year (2020) when I decided that I would actually go ahead with the idea. It was Christmas so I prepared a wide variety of treats such as Christmas cakes, fruit cakes, to-to, egg-nog and many others. My products made their way into the homes and hearts of many. 2020-21 has been a year that has showcased the resilience of our community. We have been bold and innovative in response to the challenges presented by COVID-19.

As we celebrate PRiDEJa this year, I want for us as a community, especially LGBT Jamaicans, to raise their voices and start to occupy spaces, to effect change for themselves and the community.

Courmac Enterprise

by Courtney Gaynor

Courmac Enterprise Limited is a two fold business that provides upholstery and janitorial services, was conceived in 2009. The company started out small and has, since then, expanded its wings, providing cleaning services to some of Jamaica's top corporate entities.

The coronavirus pandemic changed everything. As the country went into a lockdown and transitioned to work from home, we shifted in how we offer our services to our clients. My entrepreneurial skill personally allowed Courmac Express to adapt and grow stronger in the face of challenges.

As we celebrate PRiDEJA 2021, I want to encourage community members to stay resilient and hone your craft.



Next PR Solution

by Yemi McGregor

All my life, I've had a deep desire to shoot & direct moving pictures; music videos, campaigns, films, etc. I literally would read & analyze editorials/campaigns from all condé nast magazines, fashion films, watch countless music videos, & study well executed ad campaigns from brands I love globally; which in return fed my inspiration.

From personal research, I observed a shift in the world, and gained further insight from the grapevine of other publicists I knew globally, to be more content driven—and I did just that. My company— Next PR Solutions (NPRS) transitioned from a PR firm into a full service creative agency focusing primarily on "Discovering what's new, and creating what's next." This means that we are always looking out for new wave media opportunities, or new talent and brands that are pushing the bar as well as to elevate the representation of all our brands, talents and leaders on our yearly roster.

The whole pandemic was challenging for me; I really had to muscle up on my mental health. The love I had for PR started to fade and become unsatisfying and Creative Directing started to peak my interest. Essentially, I was forced to start all over again but in a 'good way.'

Community was a very big part of my journey. If I never stuck around like minded creatives and my tribe, I don't know how I would have been able to keep going. COVID kept me hungry, and made me work the hardest I have ever worked in my entire career.

Follow me on my professional journey @yemipr or @nextprsolutions on Instagram.

Before



After



After



Before



PhotoGrid



LGBT-friendly Mental Health Practitioners Guide

Excerpt from *Audit of MHPSS and Needs for LGBTQ+*
by Kai Morgan and Tiffany Palmer

Jamaica's mental health services, especially in the public sector, are over-taxed and under-staffed. This leaves particular populations or communities, like Jamaica's LGBTQ+ community, devoid of accessible mental health services. Additionally, the double-layered impact of stigma surrounding mental illness (UNIATF, UNDP and PAHO, 2019; Gibson et al, 2008). The ways in which LGBTQ+ Jamaicans are stigmatized contributes to significant barriers to seeking and accessing mental health services (J-FLAG, 2019). Recognizing this gap, the Equality for All Foundation Jamaica sought to conduct a rapid assessment of the problem at hand.

From this rapid assessment, we have created this handy guide of LGBT-friendly mental health practitioners to help LGBT Jamaicans improve their mental health outcomes.

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