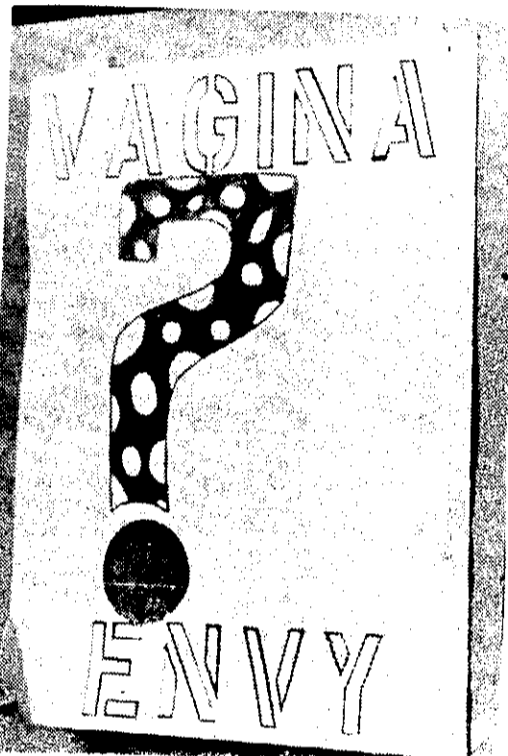




A Lesbian
is a lesbian
is a
Lesbian!



PHOTOS BY ELLEN BEDOZ - FREE BEDOZ!



JESSIE'S COME OUT



REPRINTED FROM RAT

GAY! In the past that miserable, guilt-evoking label that I cringed at for so many years; a slinking underground intrigue; and exciting perversion OR-an attempt at a freer roleless life-style; as groovy vibes and receptiveness between women; as an energetic life-force moving towards a womens revolution.

HOMOSEXUALITY: as an adolescent a subject which arouses great interest-not to mention guilt.. I read about IT in the various psch. books laying around the house-I find out that I am : an abberation; anti-social (with arrested sexuality) (Did you hear about Mary and Sue; they were busted for being arrested) a prevert; invert, upstart. And on the street DYKE: FAGGOT: QUEER' etc,etc.not to mention the general boredom of our oppressive heterosexual culture: "do you haveaboyfriend;" "when do you plan to get married;" Married or Single - check one: a doctor asks what do you use as a birth control device? The other day I was leafing thru "Summerhill" by A'S'Neill - founder of the grooviest school in the world - tells in his book about how his school owing to its extreme progressiveness has never turned out a single homosexual, never, ever...

Anywav, what more or less happened was that I carried my closet around on my back (a gay turtle) for about as long as I knew I had one. All that time tho with a constant conflict of feelings; the terrific

desire to be "normal", accepted, STRAGHT but at the same time the painful knowledge that I am living against myself and everything I really value by catering to such ridiculousness.

When I am 19 something incredibly lucky happens-I bump into recently formed GLF (Gay Liberation Front) - incredible vibes, not duck-assed haircuts, littlebylittle my old stereotypes of lesbians as macho women begin to "drift away.. People with leftist politics and the freak life style that I know.. A lot of difficulty in the beginning tho- everyone was very much into being upfront about being GAY-I gulp. After years of sneaking around, lying and for the most part totally denying an incredibly crucialpart of my experience it was pretty tough to be (as I Was instructed)PROUD'

Fuck this Shit they said, Fuck Freud and figuring out where and why we turned queer. Enough of this shit about domineering mothers and weak fathers. Fuck the straight male anthropologists and their stories about baboons and what is natural and unnatural, etc.

That's all I can think of for now.. love & struggle - Jessie.



COMING OUT AND GETTING BUSTED



COMING OUT AND GETTING BUSTED

REPRINTED FROM CHICAGO GAY ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

I recently recalled the full depth of the experience of my first paddy wagon ride. Although I had flashes of it last year as we anticipated busts of our first dances, I never felt it completely. Now I can't get it out of my system. I was in the process of "coming out" in D.C. in the spring of 1965, shortly after I had started a job with the Census Bureau. I was at an after-the bar party (the bars closed at 12 A.M. on Saturday night). A few weeks before I had had my first experience; it wasn't very successful but I was sure that a part of me really was gay. At the party I was just getting used to being with gay people; dancing with me was really erotic, but it sure looked weird.

Suddenly a couple of men stood up on the stairs and said, "Everyone is under arrest." Uniformed police then appeared at all of the exits from the house.

During the long, silent wait, lots of thoughts went through my mind. "I'm doing a research paper," "I came here by mistake," etc. I moved near one of the women; she could be my cover. (later, I realized that the "woman" was actually a guy in drag. I was naive; I had never seen a transvestite before.)

Next we were herded into paddy wagons. Everyone went peacefully, about six pigs and one hundred nervous gays. I shake now as I think of it, but I was pretty calm at the time. It was as though I had been expecting this. Being gay was illegal, and I was experimenting with something illegal.

It was ironic that as we were riding along we sang, "We Shall Overcome." It was a good tension release, and it even shook up the pigs. The song started off in a campy, sarcastic way but by the end we all felt a little stronger. It's funny that we could use a Civil Rights song but not really apply the idea. We were still into

individual solutions then. Everyone blamed himself for getting caught--"I should have known better." United, we could have resisted easily; but each one accepted the "fact that gay parties were raided, and we should have been more careful.

At the police station, we were told that we were being booked for "disorderly conduct." If we showed identification, produced \$25 in cash, and signed the book pleading "guilty," we could go. If not, we would have to wait and probable spend a night in jail. I still don't understand how they could do this but you better believe that I paid my money and left. Fortunately, I had an Illinois license and didn't have to reveal my government affiliation. I didn't think I would be fired for being arrested--but they did have my name. Maybe someday it would be discovered. I wouldn't be fired for being gay, but I might be fired or asked to resign for lots of other reasons (remember Walter Jenkins).

The actual repercussions were all psychological. I jumped back into my closet for a while. "Maybe I'm gay, but I don't want a life like this." My worst fears had been confirmed.

The arrest also intensified my need for security. I couldn't continue working for the government. I figured I was guilty of perjury, even though I hadn't been aware of it, when I filled out my employment form.) After that, there was no doubt in my mind I had to have a Ph. D. If I got on a faculty at a liberal school, maybe I would be safe. At least I would have the flexibility of running quietly away to another school if I were discovered. (I had to find my own individual solution.)

Well, I'm close to my degree now; if I get it, it will be by momentum. It won't give me any security; my name is all over the place now. I've

realized that this security is false. It really isn't much personal security to have a career during the day and to hide in the bars at night. To be constantly on guard for slips and to fear people finding out is not quite the safest way to live.

I feel now that I have a much deeper sense of security--the security of my sisters and brothers. I know I won't have to go passively into a paddy wagon for being gay.



Gay Shrinks of Chicago have now formed. We gathered as people from the mental health professions who are now doing therapy. Our intent was to offer services to the Gay community, but after the first meeting it was clear we should get our own heads together first. We are now meeting weekly as a consciousness-raising group. The group is not formally defined as a therapy group, but we have discovered new ways of helping each other.

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