

We're gay... but...we're a winner...

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EL PASO, Tex. — I stood on the street corner tired from the long drive to El Paso. A man backed his white car up to me.

"I'm too tired to trick tonight," I said through the open window on my side of his car, "but could you tell me where the gay bars are?"

I'm in El Paso to run some gay liberation workshops and a homosexual happening at the National Student Association convention.

The gay bars were four blocks from the convention hotels. Dancing is allowed. I dance with my brothers.

I'm at a radical party. I ask no one to dance. Everyone is playing straight. In mixed company straights have always been in command.

The drama of the happening's first act was to get you over your fear of dancing with another boy or another girl, someone else of your own sex, even in mixed company.

The tape of rock n' roll continued into a second act of dancing and making it: "You Turn Me On," "Light My Fire," "Your Love Takes Me Higher and Higher," a Mitch Ryder/James Brown spliced together orgasm ("Sock It to Me" entry; Wow, I Feel Good, I Got You" delivery) and waking up in the morning to recall that "Double Shot of My Baby's Love."

And Act III began with the refrain "Everybody Love a Lover" bopping along with the Shirelles,



Jane O. Robbins
Christian Science Lecturer

Freedom to be yourself

Man's freedom to be himself is a God-given right. But no one can truly be himself as long as he believes he is the product of heredity, age, environment or psychological factors, says an experienced Christian Science practitioner and lecturer. Man's true identity, asserts Jane O. Robbins, C.S., is found through the recognition of himself as the likeness of God. You and your friends are invited to hear "Freedom to be Yourself" by Miss Robbins, a member of The Christian Science Board of Lectureship. Everyone is invited, admission is free.

Christian Science lecture

WED.
OCT. 8th
L. H. "C"
5 P.M.

and then the ensuing guilt and hiding attached to an oppressed homosexual identity. "Meeting in Smoky Places, Hiding in shadowy corners, dancing where no one knows our faces, sharing love stolen in the night in Smoky Places."

Now seeing the lies that put you there:

"The Purpose of a Man is to love a woman

"The Purpose of a Woman is to love a man

"Come on Baby let's play the game of love."

Now realizing that you have always listened to the radio from a narrow heterosexual perspective, now recognizing the parallels between your struggle and other freedom struggles, now moving with the same self-love:

"We're a winner

"And never let anybody say, 'Ah, you can't make it, cause the people's minds are in your way.'"

"No more tears do we cry, and we have finally dried our eyes,

"And we're moving on up."

That's the message that came across in posters that advertised the happening and homosexual freedom workshops were torn off the walls. Gay is Good, Homosexuality is Healthy, Conquer your fear, get on that motorcycle.

That's the message that came across from the free people who came to the workshops.

That's the message that came across in the private conversations I had with homosexual delegates at the convention.

That's the message that came across from the 50 homosexuals from the community and the convention who came to the happening.

"I saw one man with his arm around another's leg and I freaked," said a woman delegate, pretty radical in other areas.

It came across in the homosexual freedom resolution.

The resolution: "The United States National Student Association, opposing racism in any form and supporting the struggles of oppressed people against that racism, affirms its support of the Homosexual Liberation Movement. NSA will not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in their hiring practices, programs, social activities or public statements, and will urge student governments and other organizations to adopt this same policy.

"We recognize this policy is only the beginning of seeing the widespread discrimination against homosexuals on the campuses and in the country. This discrimination goes deep into the minds of homosexuals themselves, moving in fear, suppressing any displays of their sexuality and affection in public or even with their family, closest friends and potential lovers.

"But self-hate is only half the problem. We recognize too the dangerous anti-social manifestations of anti-homosexuality (and lack of self-acceptance) in various forms of projected hate — in the violent policeman swinging his club, in the racist and male chauvinist, in pigs of all kinds."

Freedom for Homosexuals and Homosexual Freedom for Everyone.

But the oppression came across in the general public silence of gay convention delegates.

No one signed. People were concerned about other things; people were afraid to put their names down on a blank sheet of paper supporting homosexuals.

NSA wouldn't pay my expenses for coming down to El Paso, staying and going back. They were very low on money and didn't think homosexual liberation was important enough.

"I feel like a black man asking a white board to say I'm important."

But one officer, in pity, gave me his own meal tickets (he didn't like the food) and said, "I'll get you a bed to sleep in. I don't want you to have to sleep on the floor."

The bed turns out to be his own bed. "I'm gay too," he tells me in his room.

He makes me, and I feel exploited. I deserve my own bed, my own meal tickets, my plane fare and expenses. If gay liberation were



strong as black liberation they would find the money. He tells me it may cast aspersions on him if anyone finds out I'm in his room, so please don't tell anyone.

"You're the first homosexual I've ever met," says a dark-haired girl, a delegate from El Paso.

"I'm the first person you ever met who told you he was a homosexual," I say.

"I want to kiss you," I tell an attractive friend of mine in the Plaza Hotel lobby.

His answer: "I'm concerned that some of things you are doing are for political rather than personal reasons. And I'm concerned about my own effectiveness here. And there's a time and a place for everything."

We went up to his room. He turned out the lights and we went to bed together.

I put my hand on his back. It became very heavy there, like a big weight, getting heavier and heavier, going to push right through him, feeling very uncomfortable and uptight. I was the pervert trying to make a straight, normal man.

Can I do it delicately without freaking him, without turning him off?

Rubbing your shoulders, rubbing your neck, sliding my hand down your arm, tracing your ear and jaw, moving through your hair, sweeping my hand down your back — like rolling down a hill, a smooth and natural place down your smooth back. What I am doing is a loving thing, is loving, is love. There is no pervert in bed with us. He is out there trying to tell us we are.

We had breakfast in the delegate cafeteria. I sat at his table and we talked for the people around us as if we'd never touched.

Another conversation in the cafeteria alone with a delegate

from the East. He hadn't come to the workshops, or the happening.

"I'm content with the arrangement I've worked out being gay and not telling any of my friends." He tells me about a job interview to be an investigator for the government.

"What if you had to reveal someone was a homosexual?" they asked him. "And all the time I was answering I was wondering what would happen if they found out I was a homosexual."

I talk about the now automatic suppression he probably practiced on himself, so automatic that he may be almost ignoring his oppression. "In conversation you'll automatically switch the gender of your boyfriend, you'll suppress any gay thoughts and just bullshit along with what other people want to talk about." And as we talked, a friend of his came up, set down her purse and went to get some tea.

"This is where the conversation ends," he says. "That's the rules of the game."

"That's our oppression," I say.

I have always been uptight about being homosexual around anyone who might be straight, but now I do it, often with angry determination. And I always feel strong afterwards.

Conclusion. Closet homosexuals are keeping themselves in chains. They can't get on their own picket line, sing their own resolution, attend their own freedom workshops. They laugh defensively when their rights are brought up.

Straight people don't care about you. They don't feel your oppression. They can give you only pity and wish you could be cured as they hear you cry from your anonymous knees.

"Too bad these faggots are the way they are."

And you can only say, "Yes, it is too bad," (So bad I can't tell you, can't whisper this darkest truth about myself; I like you. I want to kiss you. I want to have sex with you, make love to you.)

But watch.

"No, it's not too bad. I like being gay."

Watch the liberal's quick slide over rejection: "Yes, but you're not a swishy fag."

"But you're not a motorcycle cop. All heterosexuals except the one I know are motorcycle cops, and even some of the straights I know have tendencies in that direction. Occasionally I notice their strong wrists ready to wield a club, the way their words are sometimes gruff and insensitive, the way they let their paunches stick out and still think they're irresistible, the way they brag about the chicks they made like the heads they beat in. They think they are some sort of master race. I go into the Tenderloin in San Francisco and see drunken heterosexuals falling all over each other, shouting at passing cars, being really flagrant.

"Queens are an exciting aspect of the homosexual scene, and they have been the strongest people in it, the only faggots strong enough to say: 'Fuck you; I don't care what you think,' to the straight and disapproving world.

And to hell with liberal positions like that of Jayne Graves, who ran totalitarian classroom exercises at the convention, who said she didn't mind bisexuality but didn't like homosexuals because they cut themselves off.

You can't very well sleep with another guy without being homosexual at the time. But you tell me you'll tolerate that as long as I hurry up and sleep with a girl soon. You're still telling me: "You've got to sleep with women." I'll do what I want to do. Nothing I have to do is enjoyable till I make it what I want to do.

Ten minutes of trying to hitch



back to California from an El Paso freeway on ramp when a Texas State Trooper pulled up and asked me to get out of the sun into his car.

He asked me questions: where was I going? where was I coming from? what had I been doing in El Paso?

"Running homosexual liberation workshops at NSA."

He wrote down "SDS" not "NSA."

I was cooperative because I thought hitching might be illegal in Texas.

Then, conversationally I asked: "What are you writing this up for?"

"It's for the central crime investigation computer," he said.

Now whenever they ask for a report on me, they'll read I ran homosexual liberation workshops at NSA in August 1969. My computer identity is punched homosexual.

But I'm not worried anymore about their finding out. And I won't be worried much more about your finding out. I'm movin' on up.

"And everybody knows it too
"We just keep on pushin'
"We're a winner."