

YOUR LGBTQIA+ GUIDE TO

*Key West*



# Q MAGAZINE

Volume 20 Issue 2  
February 2025



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YOUR LGBTQIA+ GUIDE TO

*Key West*



**Q MAGAZINE**

Volume 20 - Issue 2  
February 2025

## Welcome To Paradise!

February is the time for cupid's arrow to strike. If not, perhaps someone else will shoot their arrow your way.

This is a great time of year with cool nights and warm days. Go to the beach and soak up some vitamin D, then head to a show in the evening.

Enjoy!



### **Contributors:**

Neil Chamberlain  
Brad Loekle  
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A photograph of three shirtless men in a locker room. The man in the center is a Black man with dark, wavy hair, looking slightly to his right. He is being touched on the chest by two other men: a white man on the left and a white man on the right. The background consists of red lockers.

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*Stephanie Wise*

# LEZ GO OUT



Last night the Husbutch and I had one of the most memorable dining experiences that we've had since we moved to the Keys. In the nearly decade that we have lived here we've probably tried just about every restaurant there is available on the island. That being said we had yet to find a place that felt like our Cheers. There are quite a few that we enjoy but none that really hit the spot. A bar or restaurant that we walk into and it feels comfortable, with high-quality food, smiling faces and just felt like home. We recently had that experience and you need to try it, too.

If you've been to the Keys more than once you've likely had someone recommend to you a slew of different restaurants to try. Louie's Backyard is famous for celebrity sightings, Four Marlins at The Reach resort is very popular because it's located on the only natural beach on the whole island, Milagro is another stunner with a modern take on Latin fare that is absolutely outstanding and at some point someone has probably said "have you ever been to the Square Grouper?" If the answer is no this is your sign that it's finally time.

The food at the Square Grouper located on Cudjoe Key is so good that we would occasionally choose to drive up the keys a little over 20 miles just to go to dinner. The atmosphere is playing very heavily on the traditional tongue-in-cheek name for a catch that a sailor might find washed up on the beach. For those of you who have never seen a grouper before allow me to assure you that they are never square in shape. While they are a tremendously tasty fish that is not what this is referring to. To this day if someone is walking along a beach and finds a tightly wrapped square bale washed up on shore, it is likely not a fish at all. In fact, a square grouper is what we call a bale of marijuana that has washed up. It's pretty rare, to be sure, but it does in fact happen. referring to it as a square grouper rather than what it is was a sailor's way of letting other sailors know that they had found something illegal in nature that needed to be turned into the authorities, of course. All done with a play on words harkening back to old island tradition and interesting history. Just good fun, really. There is even an aquarium filled with several, albeit fake, bundles of square grouper at this restaurant of the Keys. Fresh catch is their specialty and that morning's catch of stone crab claws and wonderful fish spread in abundance await you. But this isn't even the best part...

The best part is that now rather than having to drive 20+ miles up the keys to go to dinner, all you have to do is walk down Caroline Street. The Square Grouper opened a second location in Key West in January and us locals are here for it! There was a wonderful restaurant in this spot for many years that deserves to be noted, Off The Hook. It was run by a fantastic couple and definitely catered to the local pallet. When that restaurant closed the Square Grouper owners stepped in. The space has had a complete overhaul from floor to ceiling and the theme is on point!! The light colored wormwood floors and walls soften the large open space of the front room. When I walked in I had to snoop around to see all of the changes and when I entered the back room I found a brand new raw bar nestled in a three person claw-foot bathtub! The space is light, airy, fresh and uncharacteristically sparkling clean for a Keys restaurant. We shared an appetizer that I'm not sure I can ever forget of goat cheese dates and honey with almond slivers on top while we waited for our food. I ordered the seared Ahi tuna with jasmine rice and a sauce that I had never had before call ponzu. Let me just tell you, that was a religious experience. I'll never have soy sauce ever again. It's ponzu for me all the way. If you're like me and have never had ponzu, or ever even heard of it, it is a citrus vinaigrette made with some soy sauce and fresh citrus that you dip the fish into and I probably could've eaten that with a spoon alone. It was out of this world. It was so good I could barely pay attention to what the Husbutch had for dinner. Oh yes, it was fresh diver scallops. They looked fantastic but I was far too into my own meal too pay close attention.

As it turned out a couple of friends made a last-minute decision to go there for dinner as well and we saw them shortly before our meal was delivered to our table. So we took our dessert over to their table and finished up our meal conversing with friends and having the hummingbird cake which was as sweet and delicious as you can possibly imagine.

As the meal came to a close I looked over at my spouse and said that I believed we had found our home away from home finally. The Square Grouper's second location on 920 Caroline Street on Key West opens at 5 PM and is worth jumping in line outside to get into. Trust me, they have the room to seat everyone, it's just that popular that people line up early. So Lez Go Out and enjoy a little square grouper together. See you at the bar!

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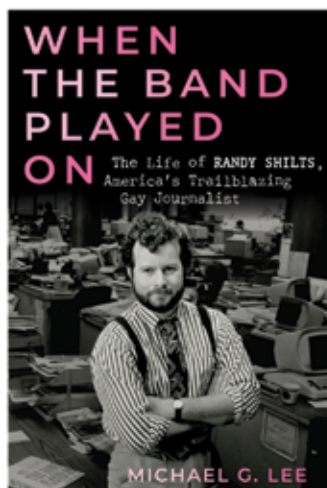
# BEACH READS

LGBT Book Reviews by *Terri Schlichenmeyer*



## “WHEN THE BAND PLAYED ON: THE LIFE OF RANDY SHILTS, AMERICA'S TRAILBLAZING GAY JOURNALIST” BY MICHAEL G. LEE

c.2025, Chicago Review Press | \$30.00 | 282 pages



You spent most of your early career playing second fiddle.

But now you've got the baton, and a story to tell that people aren't going to want to hear, though it's essential that they face the music. They must know what's happening. As in the new book “When the Band Played On” by Michael G. Lee, this time, it's personal.

Born in 1951 in small-town Iowa, Randy Shilts was his alcoholic, abusive mother's third of six sons. Frustrated, drunk, she reportedly beat Shilts almost daily when he was young; she also called him a

when he was young; she also called him a “sissy,” which “seemed to follow Randy everywhere.”

Perhaps because of the abuse, Shilts had to “teach himself social graces,” developing “adultlike impassiveness” and “biting sarcasm,” traits that featured strongly as he matured and became a writer. He was exploring his sexuality then, learning “the subtleties of sexual communication,” while sleeping with women before fully coming out as gay to friends.

Nearing his twenty-first birthday, Shilts moved to Oregon to attend college and to “allow myself love.” There, he became somewhat of an activist before leaving San Francisco to fully pursue journalism, focusing on stories of gay life that were “mostly unknown to anyone outside of gay culture.”



He would bounce between Oregon and California several times, though he never lost sight of his writing career and, through it, his activism. In both states, Shilts reported on gay life, until he was well-known to national readers and gay influencers. After San Francisco supervisor Harvey Milk was assassinated, he was tapped to write Milk's biography.

By 1982, Shilts was in love, had a book under his belt, a radio gig, and a regular byline in a national publication reporting "on the GRID beat," an acronym later changed to AIDS. He was even under contract to write a second book.

But Shilts was careless. Just once, careless.

"In hindsight," says Lee, "... it was likely the night when Randy crossed the line, becoming more a part of the pandemic than just another worried bystander."

Perhaps not surprisingly, there are two distinct audiences for "When the Band Played On." One type of reader will remember the AIDS crisis and the seminal book about it. The other is too young to remember it, but needs to know Randy Shilts' place in its history.

The journey may be different, the result is the same: author Michael G. Lee tells a complicated, still-controversial story of Shilts and the book that made America pay attention, and it's edgy for modern eyes. Lee clearly shows why Shilts had fans and haters, why Shilts was who he was, and Lee keeps some mystery in the tale: Shilts had the knowledge to keep himself safe but he apparently didn't, and readers are left to wonder why. There's uncomfortable tension in that, and a lot of hypothetical thinking to be had.

For scholars of gay history, this is an essential book to read. Also, for anyone too young to remember AIDS as it was, "When the Band Played On" hits the right note.

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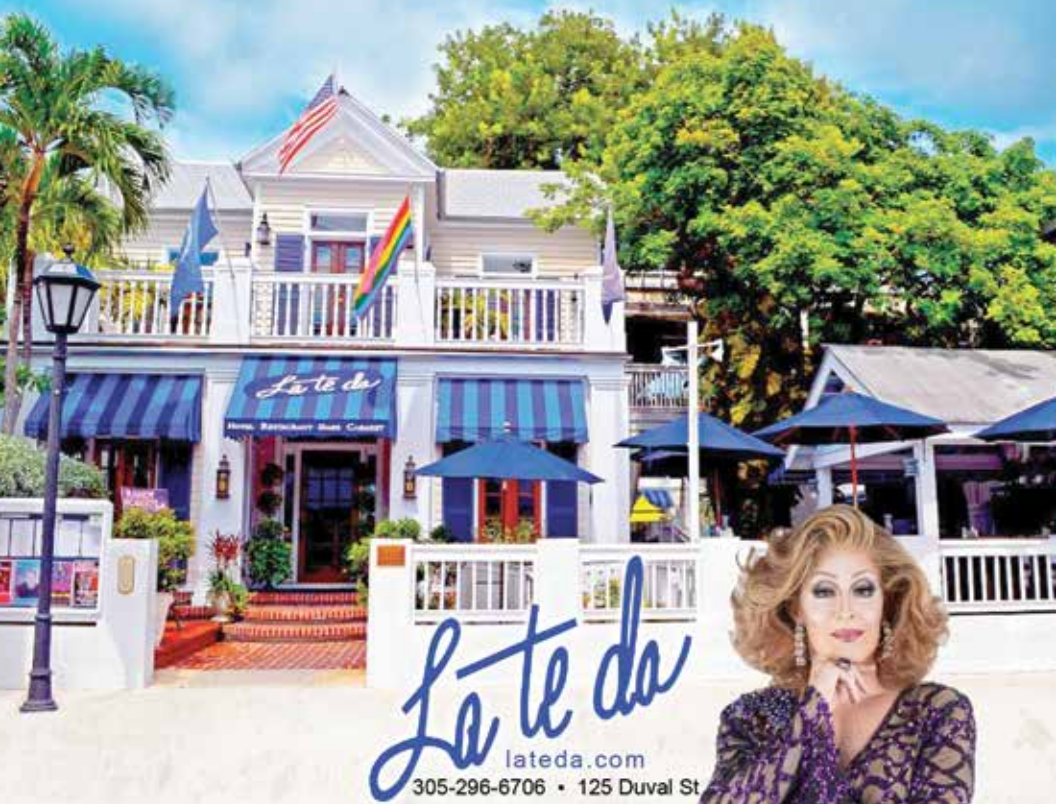
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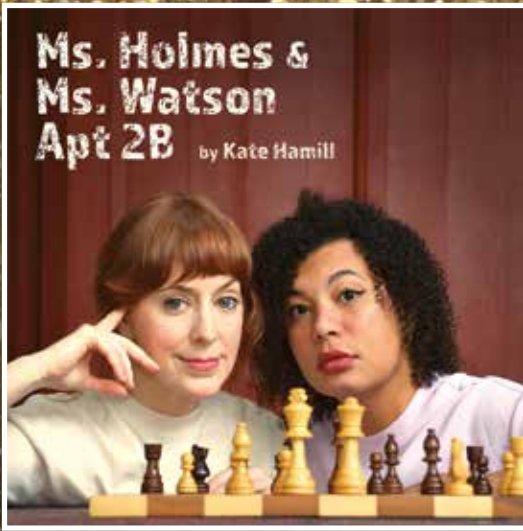
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# MY BIG GAY LIFE

*Brad Loekle*



## TALK TO THE ANIMALS

I read an interesting and disturbing article recently (though almost all things interesting are also disturbing) that explained how scientists are beginning to see if AI has the ability to decode animal languages. That's right, in just a few years you might ask your dog, "who's a good boy?" and your dog might answer back. Most likely to tell you that he is a grown as, 37-year-old man and to stop infantilizing him. But, regardless, we well may be looking at a future that, I think, will be really interesting and really, really fucked up. I don't know why scientists think that being able to talk to animals will be a good thing for us. I have to tell you; a lot of animals have bones to pick with us. And those bones are usually the baby back ribs of their relatives. Can you imagine the first time they have Siri start translating what pigs have to say to us? I assume it will be something like, "What the fuck is wrong with you monsters?! You read your kids Charlotte's Web before bedtime and then serve them up Wilbur for breakfast?!"

So, right off the bat, we know pigs, cows, chicken, and half the fish in the sea will want us dead. Farmers will wake up to the sounds of cocks crowing about poultry genocide. We already know whales hate us. Orcas are basically just Bernie Bros who go around to marinas trying to sink any small to mid-sized yacht they can. What if we find out turtles love cocaine? And all this time we've been cutting back on their

straw supply? Can you imagine how hard it is to do cocaine under water without a straw? I mean, they've clearly already done so much blow that their nostrils fell off.

I also think a lot of animals are gonna be assholes. Dolphins are already super rapey. Google it. I don't mean to ruin any boomers' childhoods but I'm pretty sure Flipper was the Bill Cosby of the sea. I also feel like cats, the big and the small ones, are all somewhat homophobic. You can't tell me that you've never caught a cat staring at you as if to say, "faggot." Well, get ready for Thanksgiving 2030 with your sister's homophobic cat who is also a flat-earther.

The truth is, we humans barely understand each other when we converse. I don't think we've mastered human communication all that well. So maybe we pump the brakes on finding out if your neighbor's parakeet is a Trump supporter.

Though, I can't wait to see the look on actual bears faces when they find out gay bears think the sound a bear makes is "woof."

Brad Loekle's latest comedy special & album, "Brash Boys Club" is available on Amazon, AppleTV, iTunes, and other platforms. He was a semi-finalist on NBC's "Last Comic Standing". He can be seen every week on TruTV's "World's Dumbest", has written for Joan Rivers on E! "Fashion Police" & tours internationally. His book, "My Big Gay Life" is available on Amazon. For all this and more, check out: [www.bradloekle.com](http://www.bradloekle.com)

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### Aqua

*Aqua Idol at 6 PM  
Drag Show at 9 PM*

### Back Bar

*Monday Night Football at 8 PM*

### Birdcage Cabaret

*Pub Style Trivia at 6 PM*

### Bourbon

*Bria singing live at 8 PM  
Dancers on the bar starting at 10 PM*

### La Te Da

*3Sum at 8:30 PM*

## TUESDAY

### 801

*Drag Shows at 9 PM and 11 PM*

### Aqua

*Drag Show at 9 PM*

### Back Bar

*Movie Night at 8 PM*

### Birdcage Cabaret

*Cabaret Show at 8 PM*

### Bourbon

*Bria singing live at 8 PM  
Dancers on the bar starting at 10 PM*

### La Te Da

*Tiger and River playing at 8.30  
Randy Roberts Live at 9 PM*



## WEDNESDAY

### 801

*Drag Shows at 9 PM and 11 PM*

### Aqua

*Drag Shows at 7 PM and 9 PM*

### Back Bar

*Watson Wednesday at 3 PM  
Service Industry Night at 6 PM*

### Birdcage Cabaret

*René Breslin singing live at 5:30 PM  
Western Wednesdays at 9 PM*

### Bourbon

*Bria singing live at 8 PM  
Dancers on the bar starting at 10 PM*

### Island House

*Hot Naked Pool Party starting at 5 PM*

### La Te Da

*Tiger and River playing at 8.30*



**THURSDAY**

**801**

*Drag Shows at 9 PM and 11 PM*

**Aqua**

*Drag Shows at 7 PM and 9 PM*

**Birdcage Cabaret**

*Cabaret Show at 8 PM*

*Throwback Thursdays at 10 PM*

**Bourbon**

*Jeff Moss singing live at 8 PM*

*Dancers on the bar starting at 10 PM*

**La Te Da**

*3Sum at 8:30 PM*

*Randy Roberts Live at 9 PM*

**FRIDAY**

**801**

*Drag Shows at 9 PM and 11 PM*

**Aqua**

*Happy Hour with Bria at 3 PM*

*Drag Shows at 7 PM and 9 PM*

*Karaoke at 11 PM*

**Back Bar**

*RuPaul Viewing Party at 8 PM*

**Birdcage Cabaret**

*Cabaret Show at 8 PM*

*Late Night Dance Party at 11 PM*

**Bourbon**

*Jeff Moss singing live at 8 PM*

*Dancers on the bar starting at 10 PM*

*Boys Night Out starting at 10 PM*

**La Te Da**

*3Sum at 8:30 PM*

*Randy Roberts Live at 9 PM*

**Saloon 1**

*Cock Shock contest at Midnight*

**SATURDAY**

**801**

*Drag Shows at 5, 9, & 11 PM*

**Aqua**

*Live Singer at 1 PM*

*Drag Shows at 7 PM and 9 PM*

*Karaoke at 11 PM*

**Birdcage Cabaret**

*Cabaret Show at 8 PM*

*Dance Party at 10 PM*

**Bourbon**

*Naked Pool Party at Noon*

*Jeff Moss singing live at 8 PM*

*Dancers on the bar starting at 10 PM*

**La Te Da**

*3Sum at 8:30 PM*

*Randy Roberts Live at 9 PM*

**SUNDAY**

**801**

*Karaoke starting at 4 PM*

*Drag Shows at 9 PM and 11 PM*

**Aqua**

*Drag Shows at 7 PM and 9 PM*

**Back Bar**

*Hot Dog Church at 3 PM*

*Sunday Night Football at 8 PM*

**Birdcage Cabaret**

*Kingdom at 7 PM*

*BirdDrop Open Mic Night at 8:30 PM*

**Bourbon**

*After Tea 7 PM - 10 PM*

*Jeff Moss singing live at 8 PM*

*Dancers on the bar starting at 10 PM*

**Island House**

*Hot Naked Pool Party starting at Noon*

**La Te Da**

*Tea Dance at 4 PM*

*3Sum at 8:30 PM*

**LOCATIONS**

**801** - 801 Duval Street

**Aqua** - 711 Duval Street

**Back Bar** - 711 Duval Street

**Birdcage** - 504 Angela St

**Bourbon** - 724 Duval Street

**Island House** - 1129 Fleming St

**La Te Da** - 1125 Duval St

**Saloon 1** - 504 Petronia St



*Valentine's Day is coming...*

# ARRRR YOU PREPARED?



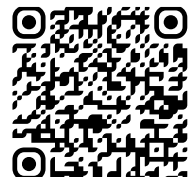
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# ASK NANA

*E-mail your questions to*  
[nana@keywestgayrag.com](mailto:nana@keywestgayrag.com)



*Dear Nana,*

*My boyfriend and I have been hooking up with a third more and more regularly and I think my boyfriend and him are getting ready to pop the question of us being a throuple. I'm not opposed to it but I've never been in a throuple so I don't know what the rules are or if it's a good idea. Thoughts?*

In my day, which was 10 million days ago, we didn't really do throuples. Basically, if you wanted that, you just had a second family in another town and waited for one of the other two people to figure it out and come murder you. But it was always fun while it lasted. I don't know that there are any hard and set rules for how anyone runs their own relationships. If you and your boyfriend have been together a long time, own or rent a place together, etc.; I think it's important to lay out each of your needs before inviting someone else in. But, other than that, just be open and honest between the three of you and see where life takes you. I'd draw the limit at 3 people though After that, it's not a relationship it's an Airbnb.





*Dear Nana,*

*This guy I hook up with on the regular loves to suck on my nipples. Like, to the point where, at times, I feel like it's bordering on breast feeding. He's never told me that's his actual kink, it just feels like it is. I don't mind it and it makes him happy. But I do worry that it's just gonna get weirder from here. Should I talk to him about it? Or just let it go?*

Well, on one hand, I can tell you everyone's got something going on in the bedroom. Meaning no matter who you date you'll find they have some kink or quirk that might not be your thing, but is theirs. Be happy it is something far more extreme. He doesn't have a glass coffee table, does he? Never mind, we'll scat down that road when we have to. All of his turn ons don't have to be yours, and vice versa.

Generosity in the bedroom is a key component to a healthy relationship. I do hope you're naturally smooth chested, though. Otherwise, he's going to be flossing while he's suckling. But, again, who am I to judge?! I'm sure his dentist will thank you!



**DO YOU HAVE PROBLEMS? OF COURSE YOU DO! WHY NOT LET NANA HELP YOU?!**

*Send your questions to:* [nana@keywestgayrag.com](mailto:nana@keywestgayrag.com)



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# WHORE--SCOPES

## **AQUARIUS** JAN 20 - FEB 18

If you were any more fake, you would need a made in China tag.

## **PISCES** FEB 19 - MAR 20

You really make people appreciate the sound of silence.

## **ARIES** MAR 21 - APR 19

I'm not saying you're a slut, but every time you hear a zipper, your mouth opens.

## **TAURUS** APR 20 - MAY 20

I know five fat people and you're four of them.

## **GEMINI** MAY 21 - JUN 20

You put your picture into AI to make you look better and it keeps turning you into a chimp.

## **CANCER** JUN 21 - JUL 22

You seized the wrong day.

## **LEO** JUL 23 - AUG 22

Cut back on the weed. You are much like London, always in a fog.

## **VIRGO** AUG 23 - SEP 22

After a night with you, your trick begs for amnesia.

## **LIBRA** SEP 23 - OCT 22

No one thinks you're fat, we all know you're fat.

## **SCORPIO** OCT 23 - NOV 21

If you gain any more weight, you're going to need group insurance.

## **SAGITTARIUS** NOV 22 - DEC 21

You really need to quit drinking, or at least give up the whine.

## **CAPRICORN** DEC 22 - JAN 19

You don't need any beauty sleep, you need a beauty hibernation.



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HOT NAKED  
**WEDNESDAYS**

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HOT NAKED  
**SUNDAYS**

**12 - 4PM**



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