

Mixed Media: Domestic Terrorism

Oh, if only my Midwest-evangelical-protestant friends loved me more! I have a cute apartment, an impressive shoe collection, and I'm in no imminent danger of gettin' hitched any time soon. But alas, they see right past my vapid, glossy exterior to my inner militant. They see in me the potential for massive social upheaval, disruption of the 2.3 kid ratio, and a looming insurgency against heterosexuality.

Three days after Christmas 1999, I was lucky enough to hear Mr. Gary Bauer, running for President of the United States, announce on Vermont Public Radio that the Vermont Supreme Court's decision to recognize same-gender couples was "worse than terrorism." A stunning parallel, you say? Portentous perhaps, inasmuch as this was two years before invoking terrorism came into vogue for politicians of

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comment went largely under the radar, it was easy to detect anxiety about penetrated boundaries in the anti-marriage testimony before the Vermont Legislature in 2000. The State House security chief promised an increased security presence after the terrorist comment, in the midst of the public furor over civil unions. For a while, it seemed hordes of menacing queers were enveloping the Green Mountains.

could further erode legal precedents that allow queer people to live and love as we see fit. Despite this political backlash, I believe we're worthy of support, tax dollars, and truth. Talking about sex could prove challenging if we don't continue energetic dialogue, but what better motivator to queer action than a nationwide sex panic and moral crisis?

I work in HIV prevention at Vermont CARES. How does rejecting a conservative accusation of queer terrorism relate to reducing HIV infections? You can read in a previous *Out in the Mountains* (October 2004) about our agency's decision to decline funding from the federal government, because the reporting, tracking, and surveying requirements would be staggeringly onerous. Those guidelines were developed during the Clinton administration, and we are still grappling with the consequences for positive, affirming HIV prevention programs – especially programs for queer people. We will soon learn about this administration's plans for HIV prevention. No matter what stance the federal government takes on queers, condoms, marriage, and HIV testing in the future, Vermont will continue to enjoy reliable, anonymous HIV prevention for those of us who demand information and options to reduce our risks.

If demanding equality for queer people is akin to force or terrorism against the state in the eyes of a presidential candidate, am I advocating for force? No. I suppose primarily I am renewing the call for queer Vermonters to enhance community esteem, take care of one another, act conscientiously toward our allies, and work hard to maintain the rights and responsibilities we've earned. We have to do this for ourselves, because cute apartments and nice shoes alone won't sway deep-seated dogma, and I'm guessing we'll stay on conservatives' axis of evil a while longer. ▼

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any stripe, who vowed to "hunt them down and kill them." (The same "smoke 'em out" ambition has never been applied to prosecuting hate crime perpetrators – many of these crimes still go uninvestigated.)

Mr. Bauer shared an unfortunate sentiment, as viewed through the present day rainbow-coded terror-epoch mindset, but the former president of the Family Research Council was unapologetic. Thankfully – if ironically – his bid for the White House was rejected, and we were offered another candidate whose religion requires marriage remain between one man and one woman. Though Bauer's "worse than terrorism"

Having abandoned our onslaught of Hawaii, we had infiltrated Montpelier and forwarded our agenda. Vermont lay prostrate at our feet, and citizens could do nothing to voice concern.

In 2004, this paranoia was stirred again, with many states proposing anti-gay legislation. With the country in an on-again, off-again fervor about terrorism, transferring fear to an easy scapegoat (queer Americans) and a helpless victim (the institution of marriage) may have altered the course of presidential, congressional, and local elections. In the last few weeks, we have been promised a constitutional amendment, and a shakeup in the Supreme Court

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