

Speech for Boston June 6, 1996

My friends. After five years of increasing appeasement with little substantial gain, it is time for us to stop and ask one question. What ideals guide our actions?

I believe that the public obsessions that have come to define us: a compromised military policy, a compromised health care policy, the positing of marriage rights as the number one gay issue and conversely, the need to support Clinton as he obstructs those rights- I believe that these icons of our media representation are very far from what we each hold inside as our own vision of freedom. I believe that these magazine headlines are so far from what we really feel that it has created a ^{schizophrenic} state of

^{hypocrisy} of crisis. I believe that the Supreme Court Ruling on Colorado and the President's support of The Defense of Marriage Act coming in the same week is an example of the complete confusion and deep conflicts in this society over homosexuality. For **we** are emotionally at a stage where our right to equal application of the law should be a given. ^{We are beyond that.} It should not be a tense, controversial heralded event. The psychotic ~~and~~ paranoid fantasies of Justice Scalia reveal the deepening alienation of lesbians and gay men from the American mindset. For as our self-esteem and our level of demand on the society increases, heterosexual hegemony has refused to

move. So the gap between what we feel is appropriate for our status in this country, and what the dominant culture is willing to accept is larger than it has ever been. The political reality that we have advanced and they have not/should not keep us from articulating what our ultimate goals are. Let me tell you, from my heart, what some of those goals are for me.

I can envision a country where there is broad cultural agreement that homophobia is wrong. That it is a pathology, that it is anti-social, that it destroys families and that it causes violence. That society's best interest is in mitigating homophobia and that those who actively do so are among society's most valued members. I envision a time when coming-out will be understood as a profound experience of self-knowledge that has no parallel in heterosexual life. I can imagine a time when lesbians and gay men who were abandoned by their own families and institutions, can freely intruded into the public school system as advocates for those gay and lesbian children who society is required to serve. I can see a time when there will be true separation of church and state, religious events like the Saint Patrick's Day Parade will not receive a penny of municipal funds, when marriage will no longer be a business of the state, all couples who wish to-gay or straight- will be able to receive domestic partner status and marriage will be left to the private business of religions. When material and social privileges will not be reserved for couples. When you

extent to find obvious new ways to contain us.
most significant change is
advertising & popular culture only
the way these institutions transfer to countries

Not parents will be proud to have children who are so self-aware
And that will be seen as a public service

won't have to be in couple to get health insurance. When the society helps lesbian couples build stability and security by abolishing the feminization of poverty. When gay men are told in everyday and in every way that the larger society loves you and wants you to live. When safe sex is sold as efficiently as Coke. When our best and most talented don't have to choose between the integrity of being out of the closet ~~their lives~~ ^{with} and the accompanying shattering obscurity or the requirement of semi-closetedness for full participation in the intellectual life of the nation. Especially for women ^{& people & colors} where the closet is a more enforced requirement for power. When lesbian and gay life is considered American life and not a special interest.

Let us assume for one moment that almost all of you share at least one of these dreams with me. Do you think that a national gay press whose primary reason for existing is to niche market Absolut Vodka to ^{white} ~~gay~~ men with discretionary income is going to help us articulate these desires? How can we share our goals if the 95% of us that don't make up the dream consumer are no longer even mentioned in the pages of our own national media? ^{we} ~~It~~ cannot.

My suggestion for the future of the movement is to declare a moratorium on pandering to a world view that lacks decency. Instead of compromising to such a degree that we end up with half-hearted

at best,
~~about~~

platforms about which most gay people are deeply conflicted, why not say what we really believe to be true? That our full participation and our full representation are not only possible but inevitable. And that with it we will bring our contribution to the range of American possibility, a range of ways to live that are deeply meaningful with values nurtured in human value instead of conformity. Why not offer our true selves instead of ~~a~~ mirroring a corrupt heterosexual hegemony that does not make them happy, does not fulfill their needs and most certainly will never fulfill ours.