Caribbean Queen

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In October 2007, a University of Arizona study suggested that HIV entered America via Haiti around 1969. Tracking the early virus, the researchers said, could help develop vaccines to combat it. Haitian AIDS activists, however, said the study stigmatized Haitians and Haitian Americans, who have long faced HIV discrimination. The activists called the findings just the latest attempt to link the virus to a specific group—so it can be branded a disease of "others." HIV-positive Haitian advocate Esther Boucicault told *POZ*, "Determining the origin of this plague is not going to [greatly] advance us. We should think instead of improving [HIV/AIDS] services and facilitating access to antiretroviral medications." On April 17, New York-based advocacy group Housing Works will honor Boucicault with its International AIDS Activist Award—and a $10,000 grant—for raising awareness and fighting stigma in Haiti through the Foundation Esther Boucicault Stanislas (FEBS). We could use her stateside, too.

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