



# Meth-od Actor

Pop cult hero John Cameron Mitchell inches into battle against HIV's best bud: crystal meth

October 1, 2004 By Josh Sparber

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In November 2003, three New York activists and Broadway's Harvey Fierstein launched the first of two raucous community forums on crystal meth—linked to unsafe sex and new HIV infections (see "[Can We Talk?](#)," June 2004). In July, another gay icon—John Cameron Mitchell, 41, who wrote, directed and starred in the play and film *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*—replaced Fierstein as forum moderator. Here, he rocks the mic for *POZ*.

## **POZ: What effect did your stardom have on the forums?**

**JCM:** A lot more people knew about the forums [thanks to the heightened publicity]—mostly out gay men who can be easily targeted with educational campaigns.

## **Have you had meth troubles?**

No. A couple of my friends have, but I ran from it. They looked cadaverous and were impossible to talk to.

## **What's your take on the HIV spike due to crystal?**

I came out just as AIDS hit, so I've stayed safe and negative, but I'm shocked to see airhead punks running around like there ain't no tomorrow.

## **What do you propose?**

A campaign combining scare tactics and support. Posters with young HIVers saying, "I have to have a job with health insurance for the rest of my life" and "I thought you could only get HIV from older guys." An older guy could say: "I avoid sex with younger guys now—it's too dangerous."

## **Do such AIDS-is-no-picnic ads offend HIVers?**

The new danger overrides any objections. With crystal and the Internet, we've got bathhouse conditions again. Some gay-sex sites have been turning a blind eye to crystal references and have even been encouraging them.

## **Did you consider moderating the forum as Hedwig, your poorly endowed alter ego?**

No. Hedwig's dead and living in other people.

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