Show & Tell

June 1, 1999

WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?

Bill Barnes, board member, Health Initiatives for Youth: Aries. I'm direct, forceful and kind of obnoxious.

Mike DeStefano, writer and *POZ* Columnist: Sagittarius, but I don't know anything about that crap.

Geoffrey Karen Dior, actor and singer: Aquarius. We're the most unique sign in the zodiac, so depending on how you look at it, we're either the most special or the biggest freaks.

Jason Farrell, executive director, Positive Health Project: I'm on the cusp of Sagittarius and Capricorn. That probably speaks to my pansexuality.

Rebecca Guberman, artist: Leo. I'm fiery and my energy is pretty intense. I have a weird mental block with Sagittarians because that's the sign of the guy who infected me.

River Huston, poet and *POZ* columnist: Aries. I'm fun, I love sex, and I want a mate. I love other Aries, and Leos, and Scorpios—cause they love to fuck—and Libras, Capricorns, Taurus...

Sheri Kaplan, founder and executive director, Positive Connections: Capricorns. It's the goat, and we keep trying to slowly plod our way to the top of that mountain. We don't give up.

Andrea Skopp, artist and activist: Leo. It says a lot about strength and creativity, kindness and generosity, and stubbornness—a big factor in my remaining healthy for the past 16 years without Western medicine.

Will Wright, baker: Capricorn. I don't give much credence to astrology though. People can't figure me out.

...AND OTHER PICK-UP LINES

How and when do you disclose your HIV status to potential lovers?

River: I old a gun to their head and say, “You love me, don’t you? HIV doesn’t bother you, does it?” No, as soon as I meet them, I drop hints. they get that confused dog look on their face, and then when I disclose, they’re like, “Duh.”

Sheri: I don’t beat around the bush. I wait for the prime opportune moment to bring up AIDS, usually on the first date. I won’t expose myself if I get a negative reaction because it’s not only a question of whether they’ll accept me—I have to decide if I want them in my life.

Mike: By giving them a copy of my column, right before I come. [laughs] After three of four dates, I see if I like them first, then I take it a step further. I need a level of self-preservation, which means I don’t tell every woman I meet.

Andrea: I tell them I’ve worked in the HIV field and see how they react. If they didn’t react favorably, I’d probably tell them that I’m positive at the same time as I say I never want to see them again.

Will: First I have to consider whether this person is worthy of knowing that I’m positive, and if they can handle it. I sort of set them up for it, so they almost know the next line.

Rebecca: When I want to be physical with the person. Once I was so nervous I had to get drunk first. We’d already had unprotected sex and I was scared he would dump me.

One time…

River: I met this guy in a bar. It was immediate chemistry. He’d just found out he was negative. He asked if I’d been tested. I said yeah. “And it was negative, right?” I said, “No, positive.” As he was talking to me, he was backing up. I went home and ate a box of Oreos.

Sheri: It was 4 a.m. after a night of drinking and getting up my nerve to tell this guy. We closed the bar down and were in the parking lot. I said, “I have to tell you something. I have H.I.V.” And he said, “Is that all? I thought you were going to tell me you were a guy.” I took a deep breath and was ready to cry.

Bill: I was seeing this guy for about a month. Finally I thought I should tell him, and he was like, “I knew that already! You were in POZ!”

Jason: This drunk girl was all over me at a club. We started making out and feeling each other up. She said she worked in health care, and when AIDS came up, she told me she’d never even kiss somebody with HIV. I didn’t tell her because she would’ve totally freaked.

Will: This guy and I were hanging out for a while, but we hadn’t had sex. When I told him I had HIV, he was calm, but then he told everyone we knew. That blew it for me.

Words of Wisdom

Will: Know yourself and be certain you don't feel like a lesser person that the person you're going to date. Love yourself. Then make sure that person can support you on your road to happiness.

River: Drop a lot of hints. Maybe tell them you have a lighter-weight disease, like syphilis or crabs, and see how they react. Bring up your best friend who has AIDS.

Geoffrey: It's easier the earlier you do it. Sometimes I wish I had a sign around my neck, so that if people have a problem with it, they won't even approach me.

Rebecca: Be honest and let them decide whether they want to get involved. It can ultimately bring you closer as a couple because you're forced to love in different ways.

MAGIC ACCESS

Whether it's Gay Day or family days bringing you to Florida's Disney World this summer, point your mouse at **Disney.go.com/DisneyWorld/OtherInfo/Inf91.html**, the Magic Kingdom's website for disability access issues. Or call 407.939.7807, ext. 1, and ask for the disabilities guidebook. Mickey is full of tips, like how to get special hotel accommodations (fridges for meds, strobe-light smoke alarms, roll-in showers) and which attractions don't require transfer from a wheelchair. Remember, tell Goofy *POZ* sent you.

VIRUS WARS

It's not coming soon to a theater near you, but you can check out "Virus Wars" and other campy comics at **http://members.aol.com/hivnme/**. Inked by Atlantan Chris Companik, HIV + Me is a comic-strip guide to living with the virus. Companik, 41, illustrates his use of the meds in his arsenal. "I identify most with Luke—though most gay men would say Princess Leia—because of his initial innocence and how he matured with knowledge."

(graphic unavailable)

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