Letters—April/May 2014

March 25, 2014

We Are Here
In the op-ed "Desert Migration" (January 8, 2014), Daniel F. Cardone shared why he focused on aging with HIV/AIDS in Palm Springs, California, as the topic for his new documentary.

For years I have been discussing this topic and its importance to our community. I am glad to see something actually being documented, and I am working on programs here to address the topic.
Butch Thompson, Wilton Manors, FL

It is typical of the current, smarmy "professionals" that constitute our "A gays" that a perspective on aging and HIV would be thought trenchant when provided by some of the most coddled among us. As if Palm Springs kings in exile could possibly speak to the situation of those of us who are keenly intelligent and also long-term positive, indigent, aging and confronted by pozphobic young men totally immersed in consumerism. Go to Alabama, Mississippi and South Carolina to learn the inequities of HIV care.

Stefan45, Missoula, MT

The preview brought tears to my eyes. Having visited Palm Springs several times and contemplated retiring there, I am especially interested in this piece and feel that I am accurately represented. I salute you Mr. Cardone, and I cannot wait to view the full version!

Todd M., San Diego

Daniel Cardone's piece on Desert Migration struck an immediate chord with me. It took me a few days before I could bring myself to watch the trailer. It hit me like a slap. "This is me," I thought, and though I don't live in Palm Springs, I am living that hell of perpetual uncertainty, and have been for 24 years. I am alone now, merely existing, a kind of modern-day Mrs. Haversham, waiting for the other shoe to drop.

C. Scott, Tucson

I am grateful that Mr. Cardone recognized the need for a larger, wider story. POZ magazine had an

aging article a few months back that almost line for line described my feelings and my thoughts of being a “Dinosaur.” I wish that a larger project would be done including other towns and cities.

Jose A. Pimentel, Provincetown, MA

Police Story

The article “Woman Sues City of Dearborn for HIV Discrimination by Police” (January 27, 2014) told the story of an HIV-positive Detroit woman who made headlines in 2012 after being ticketed for not disclosing her HIV status to a police officer during a traffic stop. The woman has filed a federal civil rights suit against the officer and his employer, the city of Dearborn, Michigan.

Figures it’d be another knuckle-dragging cop trying to abuse his power. I hope she sues the hell out of the police department and this idiot cop.

Jeff

How sad. I have been positive for 25 years, and unfortunately I don’t think the discrimination or the stigma will ever change because no matter how much we educate [about HIV/AIDS] there will always be stupid people and you can’t fix stupid! Sue the pants off him, sister!

Ryah, Denver, CO

This is just plain ignorance. The officer was in absolutely no danger. Unless of course he was planning on physically assaulting these people, which would put him in contact with their blood. It makes me wonder what sort of things he does when no one is looking.

TJ Dithers, Detroit

I cannot believe how ignorant that cop was. This is discrimination and harassment in its worst form. Her rights and privacy were violated, and she had to go through a nightmare. I hope [her case] sets legal precedence to other police/military officers that they need to stay informed about issues of what is contagious and what is not.

Adena, East Texas

Shalandra…we stand beside you and have your back! Don’t let the ignorance keep you inside. We’re so proud of you for taking a stand and inspiring other positive women! Remember that you can make a difference…regardless of the outcome of the lawsuit.

Kari, Denver

Dating is Difficult
In her blog post “And What About the Dating?” (December 9, 2013), Rae Lewis-Thorton discussed the fear and rejection many HIV-positive people often face when dating.

My wife and I had the same conversation [back when we were first dating]. She had herpes, and I was HIV positive. Our relationship was ready for the next level, and we both hated the thought of bringing up our [sexually transmitted infections]. Neither of us knew about the other, but when we shared, it was a huge load off both our shoulders. Today, we enjoy a very active life, both sexually and socially.

Jay

Thank you for bringing up the isolation and the loneliness that come with the virus. I have either been dumped after disclosing or [have found that] the positive guy just wants to have sex. At 52, I want more than sex—I want the intimacy of reading a book cuddled in the arms of someone who believes in me.

Thandeka

I usually disclose as soon as possible, but I’ve learned that may be too much for some people. Learning to deal with rejection has been quite the mountain to climb. For a while, I dated only positive men, but I felt like I was socially quarantining myself from others. Although there is nothing wrong with dating positive men, I don’t want HIV to be the only thing we have in common. Sex is wonderful, but I want more than that.

Nikki

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