

Kinsey Seven: Of The Sweetest Vibrations

By Lamar V.Mitchell

I have a confession to divulge. I have a mental illness, a disease that in my honest opinion, intrinsically ballooned into another separate head on my shoulders. Yes, I am the dually cephalic, double-brained human being: one being Lamar Mitchell, the other called: Anxiety Disorder. We are typically inseparable, perfect enemies, one more naturally snarly than the other (guess who) and also a lot smarter.

This extra head-entity on my neck just loves to inhibit-prohibit me from doing any and everything remotely beneficial to my well-being and livelihood. He-she's alternately that suave smooth talker that can swindle the pennies out of a homeless man's tin cup just to pay for cheap cigarettes and a migraine headache; and he-she's also that embarrassingly unkempt and disheveled bull in a China shop that can crash a Tea Party without mentioning the phrase, "Barack Obama is an American-born citizen."

By the California court system, I am bestowed the egregious honor of being labeled "mentally ill". That charismatic, talking mutated pimple on the other side of my neck? It's the main reason that god awful label sticks so obstinately well to my ankles as I try, sometimes unsuccessfully to stamp out.

By the by, this confessional preface does have a purpose.

Living with an anxiety disorder is like living with the knowledge that your precious head and skull with it, can either explode or implode at any given minute. And the only savior? That very knowledge alone.

Which wheelbarrows us into the main topic: Oakland's September 10th Pride Parade. How fitting a place to lose one's mind to a telekinetic explosion.

The Saturday before this illustrious event, I was anticipating losing my head once again to anxiety-ridden psychological pseudo-collapse, but natch, the goddesses of mental health decided to smile upon me instead. The whole day, for nine full hours out of ten, the gay pride celebration went on without that double head interfering. I was elated. I was able to enjoy the festivities in full, my very first Pride Parade, my anxiety held in check, minus one hour when the panic and anxiety were at its most febrile.

So there I was at my long-sought and quite anticipated Pride Parade. I manned the POCC SAGA Committee booth, and since I was not obligated to remain tethered to the booth, I was able to wander and patrol the premises. Arriving two

hours early, we set up just 60 yards or so from the main stage, right across from the actual Golden State Warriors vendor and, ironically for me, the Oakland Police Department kiosk.

As my SAGA colleague assembled the tables and the like, I sat down in a collapsible chair and idiotically wondered aloud, “Gee, are more people supposed to show?” Wow on that one. Apparently a LOT of people attend these parades. Really?? Who would've thought?

Brief lapse into youthful senility notwithstanding, the festival bubbled along smoothly, slowly congealing from a primordial ooze of kinetic queer energy, into a full blast, all-senses stimulating, historical soirées celebration!

I was free to waffle into any indulgence possible, going from bopping and dancing along in the street, to mingling with friends, eating a huge elote, and taking pictures with my phone, of the absolutely untrammelled beauty all around me.

On one of these meandering adventures, I sauntered off looking for some rumored free food, and found myself in the Volunteer section, a cordoned off area where to gain entrance required some sort of Masonic-level secret paperwork, which made me feel like a VIP member of the Illuminati, than an innocent casual first-time Pride Parade reveler.

I noticed a lot of people brought their pets along, and there was one instance where one little dog gave another little doggie a stiff-lipped rejection slip, via some nose sniffing, and the immature youngster in me couldn't help wondering if this dog rejection thing was some kind of canine LGBT union gone wrong. In the context, of course, this would make perfect sense.

A small parking lot was converted into a symphonic orchestra of cornflower blue and gray Port-a-Potties, which were unusually clean at 10:30 am, but by 3:30, was a gosh darn spoiled seafood market. In one of the receptacles, the faint smell of Mary Jane was intermixed with antiseptics and the scant traces of rogue outhouse romance.

The eye candy factor was explosively hyperglycemic. Cute absolutely gorgeous people stuffed in every nook and cranny.

In the middle of all this anthropological density, inundated as I was in running spigots of salty sweat, the stereo-boost power speakers pumped sound through the streets, and you could feel an almost religious reverberation, a collective trance, like we were all stuffed inside a boom box's sub woofers, the walls and concrete vibrating spastically.

Concentrated within this coral reef of biodiversity were many myriads of many souls, faces, identities and complex expressions. There were trans-men with

surgical scars on their breasts, evidence of biological & mental revolt; not only physical but psychological tumult. A group of physically disabled youths strolled by, recontextualizing my personal window-idea of what queer looks like. I briefly flirted with the Sisters Of Perpetual Indulgence, as they posed for pictures, and I'd surrender that these unorthodox nuns were probably the biggest personalities in attendance.

Also filling up space: hip hop kids, old white guys with Black Lives Matter tees, Latino folks with big voluminous cowboy hats, punk rockers and Goth squatters, men in skirts in tandem with men in nothing but g-strings, twerkalicious hip hop drag queens in Freaknicc mode, guys kissing guys, girls kissing girls, and yada yada yada! It was an endless "omnihomo" event: a hive mind congregation of voices, bodies, spectrums and personal frequencies.

By night's end, our booth-attenders trudged back to our car carrying all the days equipment. My face was dripping with salinic water, and it felt like every bead of sweat on my body was a rainbow, and a portal called Conquest Of Anxiety was open.

The experience was a unique revelation and it taught me I can have fun and live without worrying about my mental illness or my anxiety attacks.

It was a largely positive peaceful event, and if there was any disruptions or altercations, they occurred in my absence.

Its great that a specific day in the week was taken out, just so that a collective segment of our population could celebrate an aspect of our identities so historically maligned and hated and shamed.

September 10th in downtown Oakland, was a day set aside so that each of us in the "rejected beauty" community could throw their halogen beams on, and just SHINE. And party our queer hearts out. Because we can. Because we did. Because hell yes.

Fin....

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Written by: Lamar V. Mitchell