

Spring 2015

Minero Magazine, Volume XX, Spring 2015

UTEP Student Publications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.utep.edu/prospector>



Part of the [Journalism Studies Commons](#), and the [Mass Communication Commons](#)

Comments:

This file is rather large, with many images, so it may take a few minutes to download. Please be patient.

Recommended Citation

UTEP Student Publications, "Minero Magazine, Volume XX, Spring 2015" (2015). *The Prospector*. 198.
<https://scholarworks.utep.edu/prospector/198>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections Department at ScholarWorks@UTEP. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Prospector by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UTEP. For more information, please contact lweber@utep.edu.



MINERO

MAGAZINE

VOLUME XX • SPRING 2015



transgender

smoker

AIDS

weed

FTM

juxtaposing

personal accounts

Lives

HIV +

Divergent

homeless

dumpster diving



DON'T JUST
WISH FOR IT

MAKE IT HAPPEN!

Make your New Year's
resolution a reality

Move into your new place now!



Live on
campus
and cut out
the stress of
parking and
being late.

- Make lifelong friendships
- Live amongst students
- Participate in more student activities

Pick living
on campus
as part
of a complete
college
experience.

Apply Now!

Stop by
for a tour!

MINER HEIGHTS
300 W. Schuster Ave.
El Paso, TX 79902
915-747-6112



utep.edu/housing
housing@utep.edu

MINER VILLAGE
2401 N. Oregon St.
El Paso, TX 79902
915-747-5352

FROM THE EDITOR



The alarm buzzes as the rising sun casts the first rays of light across the dormant streets of El Paso. All across town, people begin to rise from their slumber. The sounds of dripping coffee announce the start of a new day. The morning commute congests the roads with perfect timing.

Every day, thousands of El Pasoan's wake up and go about their day. Although each and every one of them live an entirely different life, we all have different perspectives about the world around us. We all value and appreciate different ideals and virtues. We all process life and analyze it with different mind sets. Not one of us lives the same life as the other.

The human experience is esoteric and widely varied. We might look at others' lives as a strange anomaly, but as reporters and journalists, this is what makes our jobs the most exciting.

To construct bridges between the gaps that set us apart from each other and blurring the lines of contrasts that make us different is what the true nature of journalism is all about: making connections between each and every one of us, no matter how vastly diverse the situations may be.

I find it interesting to learn about how people's lives are different from my own. El Paso is a true definition of a melting pot with various cultures and ethnicities intermingling and coexisting. Add the various lifestyles that people practice and conduct, and the city is a unique and multidimensional gem. The UTEP community is a reflection of the local demographic. We stay true to the diversity found throughout the city.

With this issue of Minero Magazine, we hope that we have captured a few of the many different lifestyles that exist amongst our population. We worked hard to stay unbiased and without judgment about any of the stories we shared. The writers, photographers, designers, editors and myself would like to thank everyone who willingly participated in the development of the stories by sharing their personal accounts so openly with us. You truly helped us to put a human touch to our own endeavor-journalism.

Gracias por leer,
Jose Soto

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jose Soto".

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

Jose Soto

ART DIRECTOR

Damian Balderrama

COPY EDITOR

Jasmine Aguilera

WRITERS

Amanda Guillen
Gianfranco Languasco
Jose Soto
Adelmar Ramirez

PHOTOGRAPHY

Justin Rodríguez

DESIGNERS

Damian Balderrama
Fernando Enríquez

**ADVERTISING
DESIGNERS**

Damian Balderrama
Fernando Enríquez
Edgar Hernández

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES

Mariel Mora

ACCOUNT SPECIALIST

Isabel Castillo

ADMINISTRATIVE**SECRETARY**

Marcela R. Luna

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Verónica González

EDITORIAL ADVISOR/**DIRECTOR**

Kathleen Flores

COVER BY

Damian Balderrama

SPECIAL THANKS TO

the models who volunteered
for this issue's photographs.

•Damian Balderrama
•Stormie Gómez
•Juan Carlos Navarrete

Check out additional multimedia content at mineromagazine.com

Minero Magazine is published by UTEP students through the Department of Student Publications. It is published once every fall and spring semester. Periodicals postage is paid at El Paso, Texas. Minero Magazine is not responsible for any claims made by advertisers. Additional policy information may be obtained by calling Students Publications at 915-747-5161.

Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the university.

MINERO MAGAZINE
welcomes your comments.

Please contact us at
minero@utep.edu

MINERO MAGAZINE
Department of Student Publications
The University of Texas at El Paso
105 Union East
500 West University Avenue
El Paso, Texas 79968-0622

6

WISHFUL SMOKING

By: Jose Soto

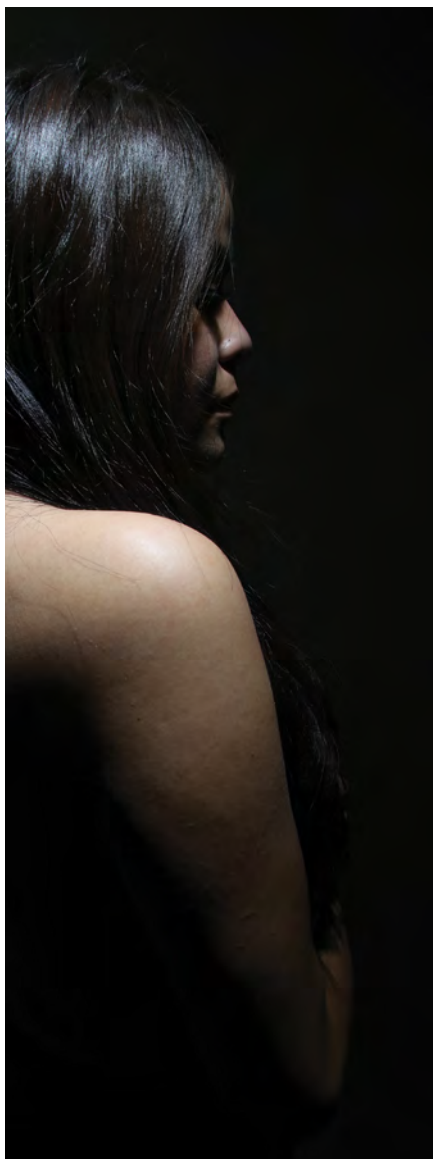


CONTENTS

8

HALTING THE SPREAD OF AIDS ONE GENERATION AT A TIME

By: Amanda Guillen



14

ENTRE SER Y NO SER

Por: Gianfranco Languasco



18

DOMICILIO A LA DERIVA

Por: Adelmar Ramírez




WISHFUL SMOKING

Story: Jose Soto

Design: Fernando Enríquez

Photography: Justin Rodríguez



The descending sun is obscured behind the thickening, rising cloud of smoke coming from the inch-long joint of paper and plant. It sways languidly toward the ceiling, leaving behind its sweet and floral scent. In the distance, the hastening cars from the five o'clock commute give the city a fast-paced rhythm. Perhaps some are headed home. Perhaps others are frantically heading toward their favorite local watering hole. It is not uncommon for Americans to find some way to unwind from the demands and expectations of adulthood. Here, however, the bottle caps aren't being popped off. Instead, a flicker ignites a miniature fire.

Just like many, Danny "Kike" Perez prefers to indulge in a cannabis-inhaling session after a stressful day at work. He is an extremely preoccupied man—in between business meetings; crunching

numbers, attending various gatherings from the numerous social causes he belongs to. He wouldn't necessarily fit the stereotypical profile that some might associate with a marijuana smoker. "That is definitely an unfair fallacy," Perez says. "Everyone thinks that 'stoners' are undereducated people, who still live in their mothers' basements and get high all day."

Perez, in fact, is the opposite of that stereotype. He holds a business degree and runs a high-profile business in town. He also is extremely active with many organizations, including immigration reform, and is highly involved in the community. "Most of the marijuana smokers I know are actually active members of society," Perez says. Perez is also a member of the organization National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, known as NORML, which is striving to make

life as ordinary as possible for individuals who opt to smoke marijuana. He says NORML is trying to advocate for modest and appropriate laws that will decriminalize marijuana smoking. "The laws in place today are simply unfair and unfit for what marijuana smoking actually is," Perez says. "There are many unjust consequences for being caught with marijuana. A college student can see their financial aid and whole college career go down the drain simply for being caught with a joint. Or someone, like a friend of mine who has Crohn's disease, can be absurdly fined for growing the plant when they medicinally need it for health issues. These implications can't hold ground any longer."

Josh Dagda is one of the founders of the NORML chapter in El Paso and he is also their communication director.

He sits on a chair on his porch, and the table in front of him holds an overflowing ashtray. He says that some of his roommates are active marijuana smokers, as well as college students. He says his own use of marijuana is decreasing. "Even then, everyone that I've met that smokes marijuana are all such intelligent individuals with so much depth," Dagda says.

Dagda also says that his experiences with marijuana have never been negative. "That's precisely why we advocate for marijuana legalization and appropriate law changes. It's not right to criminalize individuals for conducting themselves as functional civilians while smoking pot," Dagda says.

Perez says NORML wants to change the mindset of the general public in regards to marijuana smoking. "There are many benefits to smoking marijuana. It's less detrimental than alcohol; it has positive effects on many sick and suffering individuals. It doesn't create violent and harmful environments like many others do," Perez says.

Farshied Farrokhnia, a senior organizational communication major

at UTEP, says he has been actively smoking since the age of 14. Besides being a full-time student, Farshied is also a member of a band, where he plays the drums and is a recreational photographer and film enthusiast. "It really is up to the individual whether they want to be productive after smoking or not," Farrokhnia says. "I categorize marijuana under the same classification as coffee, it influences you and has no harmful effects if moderately taken. It takes a responsible person to not get too high. I feel as if I want to be more productive when I smoke."

He has been in El Paso and enrolled at UTEP since 2009 when he moved here from California. Farrokhnia says, "I'm not condoning any form of drug usage, though, they're all entirely different than marijuana. Still, when it comes to marijuana, the ideology tends to be very old-fashioned and narrow-minded."

Farrokhnia is of Iranian descent. His mother was born in Mexico and met his father when he moved there from Iran in 1979. "In Iran, you can be hanged for smoking marijuana," Farrokhnia says. "Here, you get jail time and so many other implications. They're extremely

different measures, but both are unjust. As a student, it's unfair to think of the penalties you can face, like losing your financial aid and even being suspended from the institution. That's even more unfair is the costs at a greater scale, jail time and ridiculous fines. And over what? A joint?"

Like Farrokhnia, many students, businessmen and women and others who smoke marijuana look forward to the day when the law will rightfully allow them to be recreational users without the severe punishment they currently face in the state of Texas.

"It's very much like coming out of the dark. In the '50s, we saw a black civil rights movement. In the '60s, many social rights were demanded. We've seen a social rise for gay rights in the last couple of years. Right now, there is a marijuana civil rights movement going on," Perez says. "We want to practice what we do openly and freely, without having to be ridiculed and punished, like abiding, civil people. Now is the time for change."

EN BREVE

Las puestas del sol se convierten oscuras detras de un grueso humo viniendo de la pulgada de conglomeración entre papel y planta. No es raro que la gente encuentra maneras de desahogarse de las demandas y expectativas de ser adultos. En algunos casos, no encuentras las botellas destapadas. En vez, un faro inicia una pequeña lumbre.

Como muchos, Danny "Kike" Perez prefiere complacerse con una sesión inhalando cannabis despues de un día de labor estresante. El es una persona extremadamente ocupado-entre juntas de negocios, averiguando estadísticas, atendiendo a varias juntas de las varias organizaciones a cual pertenece. El no necesariamente le queda el molde estereotípico que uno impone a una persona que consume marihuana. "Definitivamente, falsa injusticia", dice Perez. "Todos tienen la idea que los 'grifos' son gente sin educación que aun viven en el sotano de la casa de sus madres, fumando todo el día".

Actualmente, Perez recibio su titulo en negocios y se encarga de uno de los negocios mas conocidos en la ciudad. Es demasiado involucrado con varias luchas, incluyendo una de reformatión imigratoria.

El es miembro de la organización conocida como NORML, que se esfuerza a normalizar las vidas de personas que optan por consumir marihuana. NORML esta defendiendo la descriminalización de la droga y leyes modestas y apropiadas para consumidores.

Josh Dagda, uno de los fundadores del división de NORML en El Paso, dice que "no es corecto que criminalizemos a gente por tener un comportamiento funcional como civiles mientras fumas marihuana".

Perez dice que la organización quiere cambiar la manera de pensar del public sobre el usa de cannabis. "Hay muchos beneficios de fumar marihuana", dice Perez. "Es menos perjudico que el alcohol y tiene efectos positivos entre enfermos y gente que sufre de algunas condiciones".

Farshied Farrokhnia, estudiante de comunicación de organización en UTEP, es integrante de una banda donde toca la bateria, es fotografo y le interesa el cinema. Todo eso aparte de ser estudiante de tiempo completo y fumador de marihuana. "La mentalidad de la ciudad sobre marihuana es bastante antigua y estrecha", él dice.

"En los años '50s, vimos el movimiento de derechos civiles de Africanos-Americanos. En los años '60s, fue la de los derechos sociales. Actualmente, vemos el de los derechos de homosexuales, pero tambien hay un movimiento sobre el derecho de la marihuana", dice Perez. "Queremos ensayar lo que hacemos publicamente con libertad sin tener que ser ridiculizados ni castigados. Somos gentes civiles. Ahora es tiempo para hacer el cambio".



HALTING THE SPREAD
OF

AIDS

ONE GENERATION AT A TIME

By: AMANDA GUILLEN

DESIGN: DAMIAN BALDERRAMA

PHOTOGRAPHY: JUSTIN RODRÍGUEZ

GENTLY TAPPING HIS FOOT ON THE FLOOR, HANDS CROSSED AND EYES FOCUSED, 61-YEAR-OLD OSCAR NAVARRO IS READY TO GIVE HIS TESTIMO- NY ABOUT HIS PERSONAL ADVENTURE WITH AIDS.

Many may not opt to use the word adventure to describe life with AIDS, but Navarro, who has had the disease for five years, is quick to tell anybody willing to lend a listening ear that it took him two minutes after doctors diagnosed him to get over it. "I got over it quickly because I knew there was nothing that I could do about it," Navarro says. "People who are ashamed or sad about having AIDS will go into a depression and I decided that it wasn't going to happen to me."

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is the virus that leads to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) if left untreated. HIV affects the human body's immune system, which is the natural defense system that all humans have. It helps defend the body against infection and disease.

The virus attacks the body's T-Cells and CD4 cells, using them to multiply and, in turn, destroying them. Without T-Cells or CD4 cells, the body is unable to fight off infections or diseases.

According to AIDS.gov, more than 1.1 million people in the United States are living with AIDS and one in six are unaware that they have the virus. In El Paso, the number of persons living with AIDS is 1,933; 1,685 are male and 248 are female, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services in 2013.

Navarro is among the 1,685 men in the community living with AIDS. He is a heterosexual male, who contracted the virus from a female in the sex industry. "I went to Mexico and I fooled around with prostitutes and that's how I contracted it, but back in our day our parents never talked to us about HIV,"

Navarro says. "Well actually we didn't even know about HIV or AIDS so how could we have known. And there were parents that didn't even like to talk about sex, period."

Although Navarro found out he was living with AIDS in 2009, he said that the lack of education from when he was younger is what led to his unsafe habits as an adult. "I have had people tell me, well why didn't you use condoms?" Navarro says. "Well back in the day, they didn't have them out like when you go to Walgreens now and you see them out, they would have them behind the counters of the stores. I would see them, but I didn't know what they were."

This lack of education and neglect of the importance of sex education is what Navarro says he wants to change with future generations. "That is my biggest challenge—is going to speak to kids about it, because I feel like they need to learn," he says. "There are some people out there that don't think that they should know, they feel that it should be hidden, but I don't. I feel that if I have the infection, you need to learn to deal with it."

Although he speaks about his situation without hesitation now, Navarro says that it took him a while to feel comfortable telling his friends.

When Navarro found out he had AIDS, he wasn't the first in his family to know. His sister was the one who noticed he was getting sicker by the day. It was not until Feb. 14, 2009 that Navarro said things took a turn for the worst. "I ended up with pneumonia, then I started getting sicker and sicker, and then my sister for some reason went to check up on me and she saw that I was

getting real sick," Navarro says. "She tried taking me to the hospital, but the farthest we got was to the fire station. We got the paramedics to take me to the hospital. When we got there, the doctor ran some tests and when he saw the tests, he wasn't satisfied, so he did another test and did some blood work, and then it came out that I had full-blown AIDS."

Navarro's sister was notified by the doctor and was briefed on how to tell him, due to his mental condition. His doctor felt that he would react negatively to the news.

"When it came time to tell me, they had to find a way to do it because I am what they call mentally

challenged and they didn't know how to tell me. They tried to get a psychiatrist to do it and the poor guy didn't know how to do it, so I turned to my sister and told her 'I have something, don't I?' and that's when she told me," he says. "I was sad, to be honest, for about two minutes. I got over it, because like I tell my niece, if I can live with epilepsy, then I can live with this and that's what I do."

MOVING FORWARD

Navarro's life with epilepsy and AIDS, he says, is just another opportunity for him to educate and help others. He says that because of his situation, he is able to live a life where he talks to others in hopes of preventing other cases of HIV/AIDS. Navarro now volunteers his time at International Aids Empowerment (IAE) and is an active voice for the nonprofit organization, which was established in 1997.

IAE's mission is to improve the quality of life for people living with HIV/AIDS regionally, nationally and internationally. Through education, outreach and test-

ing, IAE also strives to reduce the number of infections and the spread of HIV/AIDS. "I attend IAE, first of all, because I am a client and second because in my own heart I feel like I like to give a little back because of the appreciation of what they do for me. I help out in the pantry and I am a pre-educator," Navarro says. "We go to different schools and we talk to kids about HIV and protection and I enjoy coming here. I am here Mondays through Fridays,

we are doing our best to change that perspective, and I think that has been a challenge because people are still with that mentality."

Rodriguez says the efforts to assist those living with AIDS have nothing to do with morality.

"This is about helping people who are infected with the disease and learning how to stop it, and so what we are trying to do is explain that a lot of our clients are heterosexuals, a lot more than you think. Many times, ladies

come in here, moms and ladies that are very conservative," Rodriguez says.

Navarro, like Rodriguez,

disagrees with the stigmas and wants people to know that anyone can contract AIDS. "I knew that it is not true, because I went with prostitutes in Juárez," Navarro says. "So how can it just be the gays if I ended up with them and I got it? And there are still people that think that only gay men or lesbians get AIDS, but that is not true—anybody can get it." He says that people need to know that sex isn't the only way AIDS can be passed on—popular trends such as tattoos and piercings may also lead to contracting the virus if an infected needle is used.

HIV/AIDS education and knowledge have come a long way from when it first became known to the American public and started a firestorm of controversy in the 1980s.

With the mindset being that HIV/AIDS is strictly a gay virus, some organizations and projects are helping to erase that misconception little by little through education and activism. The Names Project, M-Factor, International AIDS Empowerment and Outright are some examples of projects and organiza-


UNFORTUNATELY, WE LIVE IN A SOCIETY THAT THINKS HIV IS ONLY A DISEASE THAT GAY PEOPLE HAVE, AND THEY THINK, 'OH IT'S THE GAYS THAT HAVE IT. WHY SHOULD WE BE PAYING FOR THEIR DEVILANT BEHAVIOR OR THEIR IMMORAL BEHAVIOR?' SO WE ARE DOING OUR BEST TO CHANGE THAT PERSPECTIVE, AND I THINK THAT HAS BEEN A CHALLENGE BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE STILL WITH THAT MENTALITY.

-IVAN RODRIGUEZ

many people ask me 'why don't you take a day off?' and I tell them as long as I get Saturday and Sunday, I'm alright. I will take a day during the week if I need it, but other than that I am here every day."

Ivan Rodriguez is the financial director for IAE and he says that the services that this organization provides helps clients get back on their feet and, in cases like Navarro's, helps them live a life where AIDS is not a problem, but rather just "a bump in the road."

Rodriguez says that he believes the major roadblocks that communities, especially communities such as El Paso, face are the continued stigmas that are associated with the disease. "Many people think that these people are deviants and perverts—that is why they get HIV," Rodriguez says. "Unfortunately, we live in a society that thinks HIV is only a disease that gay people have, and they think, 'oh it's the gays that have it. Why should we be paying for their deviant behavior or their immoral behavior?' So



IN EL PASO, THE NUMBER OF PERSONS LIVING WITH AIDS IS
1,933; 1,685 ARE MALE AND 248 ARE FEMALE.

-TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

tions in El Paso that are helping spread awareness in the community about HIV/AIDS.

THE BATTLE CONTINUES

David Peralta-Torres, a graduate student in public health and an HIV education and prevention specialist, is a co-coordinator for the El Paso chapter of M-Factor. Peralta-Torres says that the stigma of HIV/AIDS will not end any time soon.

"We have a long way to go before that happens. One thing that comes to mind when you ask me that is in the early days of HIV/AIDS, there was a lot of stigma coming from outside of the gay community. So HIV was seen as a gay disease, a drug addicts' disease and it was our community trying to fight that stigma coming from outside," Peralta-Torres says. "Now that there is effective treatment and HIV is no longer a plague that it used to be. We are seeing stigma from inside the community. So it is sort of like slut-shaming, whereas you are a gay man and you have HIV, you brought it upon yourself and it's because you were out there, and things like that, but on the same token those that protect themselves and take an active stance are also stigmatized. So if you want to

use condoms and are very active about that and you're always getting tested, then it shows that you care about your health. Then people begin to say, 'oh you think you're too good,' so there is a lot of stigma and we still have a long ways to go."

Like Navarro, Peralta-Torres believes in the power of HIV education in order to help younger generations understand the consequences of unsafe sex practices. "This is a very underground topic, it is very taboo. One of the things that we do is online outreach—so we go on the websites and the apps that are used for hookups, and in many instances when we talk about HIV it is the first time they have ever heard it or the first time they have ever been asked about that," he says. "So it is one of those things that we find, that the community is still kind of oblivious about it, especially the younger generation that didn't grow up in the '80s and '90s. They are just very oblivious and they don't see it as a big deal, and they don't really understand the risks of HIV transmission and they also don't understand the social and mental effects of it."

Nationally and in El Paso, college-aged students are more prone to contracting HIV and AIDS. In El Paso, the 13 to

24-year-old age group saw 27 diagnoses in 2013, the second-highest diagnosed age group. The highest diagnosed group was 25–34, which had 41 cases in 2013. "I wish college students were more active with their health, and I know that at that age it is a time to be free and it is a time where you feel invincible and you can do whatever you want, and for the most part you can, but what you do during this time will affect you for the rest of your life," Peralta-Torres says. "Take a more active role in your health because it will follow you."

With over 25 medications approved by the FDA to treat HIV infection, the fight against AIDS is better equipped. Navarro says that soon, people will be able to live normal lives and maybe even be cured indefinitely from the infection. Until then, he says he will continue on with his fight to inform anyone willing to listen and help out at the non-profit every day.

"I feel inside my heart the need to not to be ashamed because I have HIV and AIDS because it is a sickness that I got and I know how I got it and there is nothing to be ashamed about," Navarro says.



EN BREVE

MUCHA GENTE NO OPTARÍA POR DESCRIBIR TENIENDO SIDA COMO UNA AVENTURA, PERO ASÍ ES COMO LO HACE OSCAR NAVARRO DE 61 AÑOS. EL HA TENIDO LA ENFERMEDAD POR CINCO AÑOS Y SE LO DICE A CUALQUIER QUE PRESTA OÍDO. “YO SUPERE LA NOTICIA DESPUÉS DE DOS MINUTOS PORQUE ESTABA CONSCIENTE QUE YO NO PODRÍA HACER YA NADA”, DICE NAVARRO.

El virus de la inmunodeficiencia humana (VIH) es un virus que puede avanzar a síndrome de inmunodeficiencia adquirida (SIDA) si se deja sin tratar. El VIH ataca al sistema inmune que ayuda a defender al cuerpo contra infecciones y enfermedades.

De acuerdo con el Departamento de Servicios de Salud en Texas, en el 2013, se registraban 1,933 personas viviendo con SIDA en El Paso. 1,685 son hombres y 248 son mujeres.

“Yo viajé a México y tuve relacio-

nes con una prostituta y así es como contrate la enfermedad”, dice Navarro, que es heterosexual. “En mis tiempos, no se hablaba sobre el VIH/SIDA. Los padres no hablaban con sus hijos sobre el sexo”.

La falta de educación y negligencia sobre la importancia de la educación sexual es lo que espera cambiar Navarro junto con su trabajo social con International AIDS Empowerment, que ayuda a mejorar las vidas de gente viviendo con VIH/SIDA. El director de finanzas, Ivan Rodriguez, dice que el más grande contratiempo que se enfrenta la comunidad son las estigmas que se asocian con la enfermedad, entre ellas que es solo contratada por hombres homosexuales.

“Esto se trata de la ayuda que les damos a la gente infectada con la enfermedad y aprendiendo a como darle alto. Igual y también estamos tratando de explicar que muchos de nuestros clientes son heterosexuales, mucho más de lo que la gente piensa”, dice Rodriguez.

Proyectos y organizaciones como The Names Project, M-Factor, International AIDS Empowerment y Outright son algunos ejemplos de estabilizaciones que están expandiendo el entendimiento entre la comunidad sobre el VIH/SIDA.

David Peralta-Torres, estudiante de salud pública y especialista y educador de la enfermedad, es coordinador de M-Factor. Él dice que los estigmas no se terminaron pronto. “Tenemos un largo camino que recorrer antes de que eso pase”, dice Peralta-Torres. “Mucha de la comunidad aun no entienden los riesgos de la transmisión del VIH, especialmente estudiantes de colegio”.

Nacionalmente y en El Paso, estudiantes del colegio se riesgan más a contratar el virus. Entre las edades de 13 a 24 años, se vieron 27 diagnósticos.

Con más de 25 medicamentos aprobados por el FDA para tratar la infección, hoy en día, existen más herramientas para combatir el SIDA.



NEW DONORS EARN \$100 THIS WEEK.

Donate today at: **Talecris Plasma Resources in El Paso**

720 Texas Ave.

(915) 542-0631

8802 Alameda Ave.

(915) 859-6855

3515 Alameda Ave.

(915) 351-0920

4710 Alabama St.

COMING SOON

In addition to meeting the donation criteria, you must provide a valid photo I.D., proof of current address and your Social Security or immigration card to donate.

Must be 18 years of age or older to donate.



Entre Ser y No Ser

POR: GIANFRANCO LANGUASCO

DISEÑO E ILUSTRACIONES: DAMIAN BALDERRAMA

No estar conforme es parte de la naturaleza humana. Sin embargo, esta a veces te pone en situaciones curiosas. Un hombre siente que el mundo la mira como una mujer y que su propio cuerpo lo traiciona. ¿Cuántas cosas debe pasar un transgénero para sentirse agusto consigo mismo?

Él me aprieta la mano. Es firme. Además, me golpea la espalda. Así me da la bienvenida. El cabello bien corto, la camisa holgada y jeans cómodos. Estamos en casa de su madre y hay dos santos de yeso en la pared y uno en el piso.

“Mi familia es muy católica,” me dice y antes de que le pueda decir algo, complementa: “siempre me apoyaron en todo”. Entonces, camina sin pretensión alrededor de la sala. Me ofrece algo de beber. Estira las piernas al sentarse y se rasca la barba. Le pregunto si alguna vez besó a alguien como forma de saludo pero me dice que no, nunca lo hizo y seguramente se sentiría incómodo al hacerlo.

Cuesta pensar que él fue antes ella, que sus padres le compraban vestidos ceñidos de colores llamativos en vez de los grises pantalones y camisas que ahora usa.

-¿Aún tienes fotos tuyas de antes?

-Sí.

-Cuando eras mujer, me refiero...

-Mi mamá debe tener algunos álbums de fotos...

-Pero, personalmente, ¿tú las guardas?

-No.

-¿Te da vergüenza?

-No.

-¿Entonces? -Es un pasado que prefiero dejar ahí.

EL SER

Élla es ahora él. Con todas sus letras, con una confianza que no desea recordar, manifestando en un apretón de manos inicial y respuestas directas. Muchas cosas del pasado pueden perseguir a cualquier persona. Pero él, con 36 años y nacido en El Paso, siente que hay algo que perder.

-Lo último que quisiera es que me identifiquen solo como un

transgénero. Yo soy mucho más que eso.

Por eso, él ha decidido darme esta entrevista en anónimo y, por eso también, a él lo llamaremos “Mario” por hoy.

Muy pocas personas identificadas bajo el grupo denominado LGTB aceptan sobreexponer abiertamente su vida, especialmente con un extraño que les pone una grabadora enfrente. Al menos tres de ellos, entre pre-operados y post-operación, rechazaron colaborar en este artículo. Sin embargo, este problema parece ir más allá de un asunto de privacidad.

De acuerdo con un estudio de la Escuela de Medicina de la Universidad de Michigan, el 61 por ciento de mujeres en este estado identificadas como lesbianas se sienten incapaces de hablar sobre sus orientaciones sexuales frente a los doctores. Eso deja fuera el historial clínico que es importante. La cifra es muy similar en cuestión de transgéneros y bisexuales.

Mario pasó por una situación similar. En la niñez, siendo él aún ella, ya sentía que estaba en el cuerpo incorrecto.

Rechazaba los vestidos que le compraban sus padres hasta el punto de pelearse por vestir como Mario quería. Era un sen-

timiento de

molestia. Hubo días en los que se iba a dormir llorando, deseando que al día siguiente pudiera despertar convertido en hombre. Entonces se vestía de forma masculina, como “tomboy” y se guardó los sentimientos hasta que salió del clóset a los 17 años. Había descubierto que le gustaban las mujeres. Aun así, no se relacionaba como lesbiana. La confusión se le hizo mayor. Si no era homosexual, entonces ¿qué era?

EL NO SER

Para Mario, quien nació y creció en un hogar protector, intentar entender lo que le pasaba era enredarse más en una telaraña. No sentía que su cuerpo andaba





acorde con su mente. Desde su primera menstruación, sintió que su propio organismo le traicionaba. Regresaba de la escuela solo para echarse a llorar a solas en su habitación. Hubo un momento en que tuvo que aceptar esa condición y vivir como lo que era: un hombre nacido mujer. Ya era 1996 y Mario conocería el Internet y, con ello, un espejo donde mirarse.

“Encontré un caso muy parecido al mío y me sentí identificado. Descubrí que hay un tratamiento hormonal que podían hacerme sentir como hombre. Incluso intervenciones quirúrgicas experimentales. Fue todo una revelación”. Me lo cuenta como si todavía estuviera sorprendido de eso, aún cuando ha pasado ya casi 20 años. En ese entonces, se lo contó primero a su hermana gemela. Luego a sus padres y, finalmente, a algunos familiares cercanos. Vuelvo a mirar los santos de yeso y Mario no duda en remarcarmelo: “mis padres siempre me apoyaron en todo”, dice acomodando holgadamente en la silla.

La de Michigan es solo una de casi 70 universidades a nivel nacional en donde se pueden realizar operaciones de cambio de género bajo el seguro médico para estudiantes. Adicionalmente, hay alrededor de veinte universidades que cubren solo tratamientos hormonales para universitarios identificados en el grupo LGTB. Sin embargo, los requerimientos son amplios y necesarios.

Una de las universidades que ofrece estos beneficios es la de Arizona. Entre sus requerimientos para una mastectomía (remoción de las mamas) están cartas de un profesional en salud mental, una documentación minuciosa de su insatisfacción con su género y ser mayor de edad, entre otros. Además, no es requisito indispensable tomar hormonas, lo cual sí es necesario en intervenciones como la histerectomía.

Para una persona que nunca tuvo real interés en salir con otros chicos, Mario no tuvo que pensarlo dos veces. Siempre tuvo clara su orientación sexual y, una vez que supo que era posible, decidió hacerlo. Se mudó a Michigan por una oferta laboral y descubrió los trata-

mientos que ofrecía la Universidad de Michigan a través de su novia en aquel momento. Comenzó en el 2005, tomando testosterona. Su voz se puso grave. Su cuerpo fue cambiando. Sus emociones eran cada vez menos frecuentes. Hoy ya tiene barba y luce ese rasgo de masculinidad a gusto.

Mario se practicó una mastectomía en California con un doctor privado. Me cuenta que gastó cerca de 10 mil dólares. Una cifra altísima si tenemos en cuenta que, de acuerdo a la National Transgender Discrimination Survey, 15 por ciento de personas transgénero reportaron tener ingresos de 10 mil dólares o menos. Y solo hablamos de la intervención más simple. Una histerectomía o una reconstrucción genital podría tener un precio de 40 mil dólares, al menos.

En parte por el dinero, Mario no tiene apuro en remover completamente sus genitales femeninos. Las operaciones aún están en fase experimental y, mientras ahorra dinero, prefiere esperar a que las perfeccionen. Y prefiere esperar a ver hacia dónde va su relación.

—Siempre quise formar una familia.

—¿Quieres casarte?

—No, eso no es imprescindible para mí.

—¿Tener hijos?

—Me gustaría. Me gustaría tener hijos.

Y quizá esa es su principal preocupación ahora. Un transexual no solo se caracteriza por la transición de un género hacia el otro, sino también porque suelen buscar parejas heterosexuales.

La actual novia de Mario es heterosexual y ella espera formar también una familia junto a él. Sin embargo, los cuestionamientos no vienen de parte de ella sino de él mismo, que si podrá sobrellevar la situación y finalmente ser el hombre que él quiere ser.

Al menos, los primeros pasos ya los ha dado.

In Brief

Do you have any photos of you from before?

Yes.

Of when you were a woman, I clarify.

My mom should have some photo albums.

But you, personally, do you save any?

No.

Does it embarrass you?

No.

Then?

That's the past. I prefer to leave it there.

For 36-year-old "Mario," the name chosen to keep his identity anonymous, there is a lot to lose. "The last thing I want is to be identified as transgender. I'm much more than that," he says. It is for that reason that he agrees to speak to Minero Magazine.

Not many people who identify as LGBT enjoy talking to someone with a recorder in front of them. At least three of them, who are between pre and post-operations, refused to participate in this article, but this seems to be a bigger issue than privacy.

The University of Michigan School of Medicine released a study that says 61 percent of women in Texas who identify as lesbians don't feel comfortable talking to doctors about their sexual orientation, which leaves out a lot of their health history. This is similar to what a lot of transgender and bisexual people have to go through.

Mario is one of them. As a little girl, he already felt he was in the wrong body. He hated dresses. He often went to bed crying and wishing he would wake up transformed into a man. He began dressing more masculine and was labeled a tomboy. But at 17 years old, he came out of the closet. He discovered that he was attracted to women, yet he didn't identify as a lesbian. In 1996, he discovered hormonal treatments.

The University of Michigan is one of about 60 universities around the

country that conduct sex change procedures. Additionally, there are around 20 universities that focus solely on hormonal treatments.

Mario began his treatment in Michigan in 2005. His voice, body and emotions changed. Now he has a beard and other masculine traits.

He received a double mastectomy in California through a private doctor, which cost him close to \$10,000. Some procedures cost more. The National Transgender Discrimination Survey reports that 15 percent of transgender people have an income of \$10,000 or less.

Mario and his girlfriend hope to have a family one day. At least for now, he's taken the first steps.



GIORGIO'S TAILOR



Alterations • Custom Made • Repairs

2715 N. Stanton, El Paso, TX 79902

(915) 407-4796

Facebook.com/JVCustom.Tailor

DOWNCOURT





POR: ADELMAR RAMÍREZ DISEÑO: DAMIAN BALDERRAMA FOTOGRAFÍA: JUSTIN RODRÍGUEZ

Vivir en la calle tiene sus ventajas. Para Lars Eighner, por ejemplo, significó volverse famoso. Eighner escribió una historia en 1993 llamada “On Dumpster Diving”, donde narra sus aventuras escarbando basureros y en la que da consejos sobre lo que encuentra. Igual y comparte sus meditaciones: cómo saber si la comida hindú está en mal estado, su re-adaptación a los niveles socioeconómicos, corrección de ensayos universitarios con pésima ortografía, etc.

Para Eighner, escarbar basureros es tanto un deporte como una forma de conciencia social y ambiental. Llevar al extremo la máxima de reusar y reciclar. Así como este escritor, hay varias personas que le encuentran el lado positivo a las adversidades.

LAS DERIVAS

Ahora están cayendo las hojas del otoño. Comienza algo de frío. Alrededor, las casas se visten de tintos amarillos y cafés. De un atardecer temprano y un ocaso opaco.

Sudhakar trae puesto un sombrero de paja que apenas se mueve. En este entorno, bien podría pasar por espartapájaro. Al preguntarle qué lo motivó a vivir en las calles responde: “es mi hobby”. Se sienta en un parque cercano a UTEP—desde en la mañana hasta en la tarde—escuchando música en su MP3. No está ahí para que le regalen dinero. Cuando la gente lo intenta, él se los regresa amablemente diciendo: “dar dinero es un delito”.

A pesar de tener el mundo para recorrer, usa el parque como una especie de oficina: hojea el periódico, saluda a quien va a hacer ejercicio. Si quiere comida, va y la pepena de los basureros. Según él, las cadenas de comida rápida desechan alimentos todas las noches en buen estado, simplemente porque se equivocaron con alguna orden o porque el cliente estaba insatisfecho. Cuando ocurre que le ganan la comida buena de la basura, recurre a los albergues, aunque confiesa tener un poco de alberguefobia.

“¿Has estado en México? ¿Conoces a alguien que críe ganado?” me pregunta. “Si no, imagina como meten a las vacas en un corral. Esos lugares. Por ahí va la cosa, aunque no todo es tan malo”.

Sudhakar carga con libros, extra ropa y objetos que logró empacar de su vieja casa: una estatua de porcelana, un trofeo y fotografías acartonadas por la lluvia. Al preguntarle por esa vida, la que dejó sin empacar, menciona: “Trabaje en 1992 en la General Electric. Recuerdo que Bill Clinton entró de presidente y corrieron a algunos. De todas maneras, me hacía falta un cambio. Leer libros y pensar, simplemente pensar, para eso nunca tuve tiempo. El tiempo nadie te lo regala”.

Un apretón de manos y se despide. No muchos se detienen a sacar plática.

Hay, desde luego, otros tipos de personas con ese estilo de vida. Alfonso Sánchez—alias El Americano—vive en la Calle Tularosa, aunque no precisamente en una casa. Los vecinos le construyeron tapias en el callejón. La obra permanece sin acabar—es decir—sin techo. “Le hacen falta unas maderas, pero por lo pronto ya tengo chamarra,” él detalla, casi animoso. “Vivir es facilito cuando existen

"TRABAJE EN 1992 EN LA GENERAL ELECTRIC. RECUERDO QUE BILL CLINTON ENTRÓ DE PRESIDENTE Y CORRIERON A ALGUNOS. DE TODAS MANERAS, ME HACÍA FALTA UN CAMBIO. LEER LIBROS Y PENSAR, SIMPLEMENTE PENSAR, PARA ESO NUNCA TUVE TIEMPO. EL TIEMPO NADIE TE LO REGALA".
-SUDHAKAR



personas como Corina, que le echan la mano a uno, dándole de comer de vez en cuando”, dice mientras reconoce el apoyo de los vecinos que lo tratan como a una persona más del barrio.

El Americano tiene toda una estrategia de sobrevivencia. Ha notado que en el Big 8 (una tienda de comestibles) entre la Avenida Montana y Calle Copia, hay un espacio designado para la donación de ropa. Algunas personas evitan acercarse demasiado debido a que junto a ese contenedor, se tiran los desperdicios de comida y huele a algo intermedio entre vinagre y llantas quemadas.

De forma que las personas caritativas optan por dejar cajas con sus donaciones afuera del recipiente.

De noche, Alfonso recolecta los excedentes y el fin de semana, hace una especie de venta de cochera, sin cochera por supuesto. Ese dinero lo usa para comprar cervezas y cigarros y generar de ahí un mercado negro entre vagabundos. Como a algunos no los dejan entrar a las tiendas por temor de que se roben algo, Alfonso goza de privilegios por ser honesto, revendiendo el alcohol a precios de agiotista.



Su historia es peculiar. Desde joven trabajó en el Union Pacific para apoyar a su familia, ya que no contaba con una figura paterna. Luego su madre se volvió a casar y su padrastro lo echó de la casa. En la calle, conoció los vicios y aun cuando su madre lo recibió después de algún tiempo de vuelta en el hogar, ya se había acostumbrado a esa vida que se impone cuando las paredes faltan.

Pero el fenómeno no afecta sólo a hombres. Hay mujeres como Natassa, estudiante de la maestría en UTEP, que sufren adversidades, obligándolas a abandonar el hogar, aunque sea temporalmente. Ella desea permanecer anónima. Natassa conoció a un hombre proveniente de Grecia llamado Giorgos, quien la enamoró y la convenció de irse a vivir para aquel país y formar una familia. Al principio todo marchaba bien, hasta que Giorgos empezó a ponerse violento.

En aquella ocasión, jugaba su equipo de fútbol favorito: el olimpiakós contra el panatikanós y perdieron. Tras la derrota, Giorgos arrojó al piso unas figuritas de cerámica que estaban sobre un mueble de la sala. Ese arranque de euforia fue suficiente indicio de la violencia que era capaz de mostrar su esposo. Al menos fue suficiente para que Natassa tomara la decisión de marcharse antes de que fuera demasiado tarde y la próxima vez no fuera cerámica sino ella misma. “Me fui al refugio para que se diera cuenta de que no me dejaba, que podía desplazarme en esa ciudad extraña, a pesar de tener en ese momento un niño de cuatro años y un recién nacido”, ella dice.

Natassa describe que aquel día simplemente metió lo que pudo en la maleta y se dirigió a la asociación en Sytagma Square en Lycabittus, Atenas. “Era una puerta negra con una pequeña ventana en un barrio escondido. No me querían abrir”, dice Natassa. “La mayoría hablaban ruso o griego, y yo no hallaba como explicarles mi situación. Inclusive, Giorgos me llamó amenazándome que me deportaría y que había albaneses que se dedicaban a golpear o matar gente y no dudaría en enviarlos”.





Luego Natassa se vio ante otro problema: el camino de regreso a su antigua casa. Cruzar de Grecia a Italia para después emprender el viaje hacia América, con fondos limitados y con la mala suerte de haber perdido su maleta en el aeropuerto, es demasiado pesado. Aun así, tenía dos bocas que alimentar, además de la suya. Por una temporada se vio obligada a vivir con las monjas, seguir sus hábitos de claustro, hasta que su familia pudo enviarle el dinero de los pasajes de avión.

Tomando en cuenta estos casos, es vital comprender que la indigencia no es genérica. Es decir, no hay un modelo de causas o consecuencias que inciten a las personas a dejar sus hogares. A veces, son las condiciones económicas o familiares, inclusive los amigos pueden ser un factor determinante. Este problema no solo afecta a hombre, también a mujeres y todas las edades están en riesgo de padecer esta situación. Es importante tener en cuenta que el abandono del hogar puede ser una cuestión temporal. Actualmente, en El Paso, existen alrededor de mil indigentes, cada uno con una historia particular. Valdría la pena preguntarles sobre su situación antes de juzgar su apariencia.

IN BRIEF

If one asked Sudhakar why he chose to live in the streets, he'd say "it's my hobby." He sits at a park near UTEP from sunrise to sunset listening to music on his MP3 player. He's not there to beg for money. If someone tries to give him some, he returns it respectfully and says "giving money is a crime."

Whenever he's hungry, Sudhakar will dumpster dive. He says it's easy to find good food quickly, since much of it is thrown out every night simply because an order was wrong or a customer wasn't satisfied.

Sudhakar carries books, extra clothes and objects he couldn't leave behind at home: a porcelain statue, a trophy and photographs with a casing for protection from the rain.


A shake of hands and he says goodbye. A lot don't stay and talk. But there are other types of people who live this homeless lifestyle.

Alfonso Sánchez, who goes by El Americano, lives on Tularosa Street, although he doesn't actually have a house. His neighbors built a shelter for him in the alley. It's not finished yet, he still needs a roof.

"Living is so much easier when people like Corina exist, people who lend a hand and give you something to eat every once in a while," he says as he recalls the support his neighbors have given him.

El Americano has his own survival strategy. He says that the Big 8 supermarket on Montana Avenue and Copia Street have a designated area for clothing donations. Some people leave their clothing outside the supermarket and at night, he'll take the clothes and sell it for beer and cigarettes and form a black market among vagabonds.

As a kid, he worked at Union Pacific to help his family, since he was considered the man of the house. Later, his mother remarried and his stepfather kicked him out. On the streets, he began using drugs and when his mother tried bringing him home after some time, he had already become accustomed to living on the streets.



This lifestyle is not just for men. There are women such as Natassa, an education student at UTEP, who have suffered adversity, forcing them to leave home even if it's temporary. She asked to remain anonymous.

Natassa met and fell in love with a Greek man named Giorgos. He convinced her to move to Greece with him and start a family. At first everything was fine until he became violent.

Once she became aware of her husband's capacity for violence, she decided to leave. Natassa decided to put as much as she could fit in one suitcase and she left for a shelter in Lycabittus, Athens. "There was a black door with a small window in a hidden neighborhood. They didn't want to open it for me," she says. "The majority of them spoke Russian or Greek, and I couldn't

tell them my situation. That's when Giorgos called me and threatened to have me deported, and that he knew some Albanians who loved to beat and kill people and he wouldn't hesitate to get them involved."

That's when Natassa had to face a new problem, returning to her old home. She crossed the border into Italy to begin her trip back to America. But she had limited funds and two mouths to feed, a 4-year-old and a newborn. Temporarily, she ended up living with nuns, until her family was able to send her enough money for plane tickets.

Homelessness isn't generic. It doesn't have a certain model of circumstances or situations that make people leave their homes. In El Paso alone, there is approximately 1,000 individuals living without a home.



EAT FRESH. NATURAL. HEALTHY.

Breakfast / Lunch:

Monday - Friday
OPEN: 7:00 AM
CLOSE: 3:00 PM

Dinner:

Friday Only
OPEN: 5:00 PM
CLOSE: 9:00 PM

Brunch:

Saturday Only
OPEN: 10:00 AM
CLOSE: 2:00 PM



the green ingredient



greeningredienteatery.com

201 East Main Street, Suite 112. El Paso, TX 79901
Entrance at the corner of Mesa and Franklin, next to the Valet Parking



**GET INTO THE
ACTION!**

Get a team together or come solo!

- Basketball
- Mini Golf
- Soccer
- Racquetball
- Softball
- Swimming
- Volleyball and more!



Want adventure?

Sign up for an Outdoor Adventure Program trip or activity.

Ski down the slopes at Ski Apache, hike at Hueco Tanks, go whitewater rafting at Taos, learn to mountain bike or do some indoor climbing!

Rec Sports offers this and many more fitness activities.
Don't wait and check it out!



Student Recreation Center
3450 Sun Bowl Dr, El Paso, TX, 79902
<http://sa.utep.edu/rsd/>
(915) 747-5103
recsports@utep.edu

