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The Last Gay Man on Earth – Can the mainstreaming of a culture be responsible for its demise?

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The Last Gay Man on Earth

Can the mainstreaming of a culture be responsible for its demise?

by Muri Assunção

My life-changing moment happened at the summer of 2016, at The Pavilion. The brighter-than-usual strobelights probably had something to do with it, I wasn't sure, but at that moment my entire gay life flashed before my eyes: the Madonna concerts, the weekends in South Beach, the passion fruit margaritas on 8th Avenue, the \$950 pair of Dita sunglasses.

I was in the middle of a dance floor full of shirtless muscled torsos, with still hours of friends, fun and fabulousness ahead of me. I also had a boyfriend whom I loved, and who loved me back—when did that ever happen? Besides, I still held on to my 29" waist, 43 years and counting, and I was not letting it go. My life was homo-textbook perfection. But still, something was missing.

After spending the weekend listening to Daniel—the one who loved me back—make fun at the recent baby trend in the gay community that was taking over Fire Island (“by ‘watersports’ now, they mean ‘beach soccer’”), it suddenly hit me: the only thing better than holding a Puncher’s Punch cocktail at the island’s legendary Tea Dance, would be to hold a newborn close to my chest, and to hear the words: “DADA.”

I wanted to have a child.

I almost couldn’t believe how I felt, and how much I’d changed. Life for the gays had changed, too, in a way no one could’ve predicted. Isn’t it amazing when you are able to open up your mind to something you never expected?, I thought to myself.

Today, of the 650,000 same-sex couples who live in the U.S., roughly 19 percent of them have children under the age of 18. Twenty percent of gay, bisexual or transgender men under 50 are raising a child under 18.

That night at the Pavilion—a club with an unmistakable ’70s New York City downtown vibe, located at the harbor at the Pines area of Fire Island, and the gay pièce de résistance of an era when being gay wasn’t accepted, hip, or even legal — I was around 350 of the hottest men from the East Coast. We were dancing, drugging and dishing. Statistically speaking, 70 of them could be called daddies—real ones.

Under the giant disco ball on the packed dance floor of that Fourth of July weekend, I got excited. I’d finally realized that I could be one of those, too! Thanks to Ellen, Will & Grace, and MTV; thanks to the courageous 1992 Banana Republic ad campaign, when Bruce Webber showed LGBT families on glossy magazines and billboards everywhere for the first time; thanks to New York

Magazine's groundbreaking 1993 cover of kd lang asking "Is Everybody Gay?," now my 82-year-old dad doesn't need to resent me for not giving him grandkids. I might even steal my straight-married-with-kids brother's thunder again.

I needed to hear "DADA," and I needed it badly.

Whatever life-changing revelation had happened to me that night, it had hit me hard. I realized that I, too, had a biological clock, and that thing was ticking. Right there on the dance floor.

It'd taken me 42 years of existence, a 47-year-old series of violent protests in the West Village, and a two-year-old Supreme Court decision, but now it'd become clear: I'd finally be able to have somebody saying "thank you, daddy" to me in a literal, non-sexual way; I'd finally be able to buy Stella McCartney baby hoodies in whatever prints I damned well pleased; I'd finally be able to take my very own real fairy to spend a magical time at the magical Walt Disney World's Cinderella Castle in Orlando.

Every year, more and more gay men arrive for their summer shares on Memorial Day weekend in the Pines with their husbands, dogs, Comme des Garçons and legitimate children. Daniel and I can be like that, too. We were already thinking of getting married. Now we could start a real family! I'd even chosen the name of our firstborn: she (or he, or they) will be called Aurora.
I told Daniel.

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Perry Zizzi was born and raised in Manhattan's West Village. Zizzi and I would go out for frozen Cosmopolitans at a bar called "G" in Chelsea every Friday night, where we'd always toast to our shared opinion of feeling like the luckiest people alive. We were two unattached, very attractive twenty-something gay men living in New York City in the mid-to-late '90s. We did not have a care in the world.

After he graduated from Columbia Law School in 1995, he moved to Paris for a year. There he met Lestat; they fell in love, and only came back to the U.S. to find a surrogate mother, a carrier, and move back to Paris.

"You pick the egg donor from a catalog, like a Land's End catalog. You want the sweater with the red turtleneck? We wanted blond and with a reasonable height." The entire process was costly, but relatively easy and rather cross-country. Laws can change month-to-month, so their New Jersey lawyer "who knew the law backward and forward," suggested they picked a donor from Connecticut and went to Massachusetts for the actual birth. At the last minute, Martha Coakley, then-Attorney General of Massachusetts complicated things for the family, and the twins were born in Maine.

The final bill amounted to \$200,000, not including the days, weeks and months

after Horazio's and Lucrezia's birth. And worth every penny. They now live in Bucharest with the twins.

Valerio Rosa is a different breed of a gay dad. The fifty-something estate manager works for a family who owns residences in Manhattan, East Hampton, Miami and Los Angeles. Sometimes he dubs as chef. "Oprah loved the loaf I made," he says with a cool-but-I'm-cooler smile. "She asked me if she could call me Val." His daughter Luisa is now 32 years old, and though not technically a gayby—she comes from his distant heterosexual past, and not from a gay man's quest for parenthood—their story will hopefully help enlighten my decision. I met up with him for brunch at 44&X, a Hell's Kitchen hotspot where "gaiety abounds," according to a Zagat reviewer, which also noted its "well-toned" waiters in "tight, witty" T-shirts. And not a kid in sight.

The abundance of beards, tattoos, and biceps around us made it clear that having a baby would mean giving up boozy brunches around my kind. I already knew that, but I'd come to see Val for confirmation. I wanted to know that trading those carnal pleasures I'd always liked so much for a few years of parent-teacher conferences was worth it.

Rosa was a single dad for most of his daughter's life. Luisa grew up in Florianópolis, an island in the south of Brazil, and her parents divorced when she was two. Eventually he got full custody and raised her by himself. The first question in my mind—and one that troubles me deeply—was about changing diapers. How in the hell does one even? "I loved it," Rosa says without missing a bit before turning to the waiter (well-toned: check; tight witty shirt: check) to order our first of three rounds of Mimosas.

And the all-night crying?

"Well, that just means they want something," he says, stating the obvious. "Sometimes you want to kill them, but you get used to it." When Luisa was 10, they moved to New York and lived in a studio on the Upper East Side. His sex life was non-existent. He moved to a bigger, more expensive 2-bedroom apartment, but sex was still difficult "You can spend the night, but you need to get up at 5am and leave before she wakes up," he'd tell his boyfriends at the time. I bet Val missed his non-father days.

Second round of mimosas: "If you ask me if I'd want to have another kid, the answer would be no," he asks and answers my unspoken question. So, what's so good about it? Again, he answered before I even asked: "The best part is to see your kid grow up and become your friend. You can go out for dinner, have real conversations, go to the theatre (he had just taken Luisa to see Hairspray the night before) and treat her like a real adult friend," he said with a smile.

Was that a tear on the corner of his eye?

“What advice would you give me, if I decided to go ahead with it?”

“Think,” he pauses, laughs and pauses again. “Think well. It’s a responsibility you’ll have for the rest of your life.”

I was. The idea of sharing a medium-rare porterhouse steak at Carmine’s after watching a 42nd Street revival with my daughter brought a tear to the corner of *my eye*.

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On the way back from the Pavillion, Daniel and I passed by the meat rack to pick up a third (or fourth, or a fifth), but the only thing on my mind was Aurora saying “DADA” for the first time. Daniel realized my intentions were real, and he looked at me in horror. He reminded me about the dangers of heteronormativity: fewer parties, less money and less freedom. I had certainly agreed with him at some point in my life. But Daniel didn’t understand that people grew up—and that growing up was okay.

He suggested that the wearing off of the mind-altering effects of all the chemical substances I had fed my brain that night might’ve been the cause for my new-found gayternal instinct, and that by the next morning, I probably wouldn’t even remember it. Or that maybe my sudden urge to grow up had occurred, paradoxically, because of my fear of getting old: the constant realization that all gays nowadays look as they were born in the ’90s— that glorious time when I was already partying like a pro, spending my weekends dance floor-hopping on Manhattan’s West side: Roxy on Saturdays at 11pm, followed by Twilo on Sundays at 5am, followed by Body & Soul on Sundays at 5pm, followed by the Limelight on Sundays at 11pm.

But, for once, I knew that Daniel was wrong. And I knew that the minute he held Aurora, fresh from a sweet orange vanilla-bath, next to his chest, he’d know how right I was. I couldn’t wait to prove him wrong.

Back in the city, the following weekend, my longing for the “DADA” hadn’t subsided, and Daniel still couldn’t understand why. I took him to Rise, the Hell’s Kitchen version of a gay Cheers. I was convinced that a few frozen margaritas would help him understand why a gayby was everything we needed. Rise’s famous Legend Wednesdays, “a night of celebrity drag impersonations hosted by Andora and Aquaria,” got Daniel slightly more confused: the sight of men in high heels—and high on chems—lip-syncing to Papa Don’t Preach (“ooh ooh, I’m gonna keep my baby”) wasn’t exactly helpful. He still felt that babies were for straight couples, and that I was just trying to conform to society.

If I wanted to convince him that we, as a couple, had crossed over to the new

gay era (and how great was it, that we could finally do that?), I'd have to pull a Glenn Greenwald, revisit my old investigative journalism notes, and get us some facts. I needed historical background, to understand how gay life had evolved, and why having a traditional idea of family—baby showers, soccer practices, piano lessons— could work for us, too.

I signed up for a surrogacy seminar and gay parenting expo, offered by a New York-based group called Men Having Babies (MHB) that offers “unbiased surrogacy parenting advice and support for gay men worldwide” and has a mailing list of over 2,000 potential families looking to expand. MHB started out at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center in New York in 2005. Ten years later, it grew to sold-out annual conferences in six cities, besides New York: Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Barcelona, Tel Aviv and Brussels.

See, Daniel? The movement is bigger than what you think.

I also paid a visit to Stephen Vider, at the Museum of the City of New York, for a lesson in gay history.

Vider is one of the curators of *Gay Gotham: Art and Underground Culture in New York*, an exhibition that examined the life of LGBT artists in Manhattan from the beginning of the century until the mid-1990s, and showed how life had changed for the community through the eyes of ten key figures, from Bernstein to Warhol. He's also working on a book entitled “Gay Men, Lesbians, and the American Home After World War II” where he'll examine how American conceptions of the home have shaped gay and lesbian relationships and politics from 1945 to the present.

I arrived at the museum on a cool early-fall morning, and as I crossed 5th Ave., I noticed a line of my fellow museum guests for the day: a crowd of loud nine-year-olds wearing bright-orange shirts who couldn't hide their excitement, holding their teachers' hands, and waiting to get in. I was also surprised by my reaction: an involuntary smile.

Vider met me on the second floor, and by that time my smile had disappeared: it never feels great when a person whose intellect is immensely higher than mine turns out to be insanely younger than myself.

He explained the three major chronological sections the show would cover: in “Visible Subcultures,” we'd see works from the early 1910s to the early 1930s—an era of surprising openness, where Harlem and Greenwich Village had a small but dense queer subculture. “Open Secrets,” covered 1930-1960 and would help us understand why that relative visibility had disappeared during the years following the Market Crash of 1929, when an era of social anxiety created a wave of social conservatism in the entire country. Finally, “Out New York,” the show's final section, covered the years leading up to Stonewall until the mid-1990s, and

it showed the gay going mainstream.

I looked around, looking for my new nine-year-olds friends, but they weren't there. Once I saw classic images by Mapplethorpe in all of his downtown glory, I sighed in relief. And, man, those were hot. I was glad to remember that, in our world, pornography and art go hand in hand. I was not so glad to realize that, if a young Aurora were there with me, we would've had to skip that gallery.

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One of the first American scholars to write about gay men and their habits was a psychologist named Colin A. Scott. In 1869, writing for the "American Journal of Psychology," Scott described this "peculiar societies of inverters" as "coffee-klatches, where the members dress themselves with aprons, to knit, gossip and crochet." He also warned that the "balls where men adopt the ladies' evening dress," well known in Europe at the time, had crossed the Atlantic: "The Fairies of New York are said to be a similar secret organization." They were already, they were already queer, you really had no choice, but to get used to it.

Scott had a point. Perhaps not as secret as he had envisioned, by the end of the 19th century New York fairies were already flying around Manhattan, and most of them flocked to the island's Lower East Side, whenever mating season called. The Bowery—an area known for its overall reputation of sin and vice—became famous for the city's first "fairy resorts." All-male brothels where hustlers as young as 14 years old would often wear women's clothes, serve drinks and entertain the audience. Sometimes, they would also take their hornier clients to the basement or upper-room floors for forbidden-yet-enticing homosexual acts.

Places such as Paresis Hall, Little Bucks, Manilla Hall, and the Sharon Hotel (also known as the Cock Sucker's Hall) brought together men who fancied other "male degenerates" alike. The Slide, the "most infamous of all dives," according to The New York Herald, used to host "orgies beyond description." The New York Evening World, suggested that "London, Paris or Berlin, with all their iniquity, have nothing to parallel this sink of vice and depravity." Still, The Slide maintained a regular crowd of up to 300 degenerates every night. Princess Toto, Madam Fisher, Maggie Vickers, Phoebe Pinafore, and Queen of the Slide were among some of its most famous cross-dressing patrons.

The years of economical and social anxiety that followed the Great Depression put an end to the laissez-faire mentality, and a sense of homophobia grew strong. The gays had no other choice but to hide, from the early 1930s to the mid-1960s.

Daniel Rivers teaches LGBT history and Introduction to Queer Studies at Smith College, an independent women's liberal arts college located in Northampton, Massachusetts. Decades before gay parenting became trendy, Rivers had two

mommies in the 1970s: he grew up in a “lesbian feminist household and community in Berkeley, California.” He received his Ph.D. from Stanford University, and his dissertation, “Radical Relations: A History of Lesbian and Gay Parents and Their Children, 1945–2003,” examined the experiences of lesbian mothers, gay fathers and their children after Second World War.

Rivers wrote that both society and the legal establishment were against gay parenting in the 1950s and 1960s. That started to change in 1967 when a California court established that “a lesbian or gay man could not be declared an ‘unfit’ parent per se, simply as a matter of ‘law.’”

Eventually, that precedent gave gay and lesbian parenting a legal push. People started to come out as gay parents and come out of the shadows for the first time in the U.S.

In June of 1969, a combination of decades of sexual repression and a common anti-police brutality mentality, gay men, high on poppers and mourning the death of Judy Garland led to a communal “enough!” and they fought back. The Stonewall Riots kicked off the gay liberation movement and the fight for LGBTQ rights.

Almost instantly, an extremely sexually frustrated community realized that being gay was not only okay. Gay was fabulous. Gay was everything, every time, everywhere. People went from being ashamed to being proud. The new sexual energy had changed shame into joy.

Joseph Lovett, director of “Gay Sex in the 70s,” a 2005 documentary that showed the glamourized debauchery of gay excesses that occurred between Stonewall and the beginning of AIDS, paints a clear picture: “Some people have talked about it as the most libertine period that the Western world has ever seen since Rome.”

Life was better than pornography.

For sex, men could go to the “trucks” (literally, old trucks parked on the West Side Highway, with no lighting inside, where hundreds of horny men would meet every night to have sex with people they couldn’t even see); to the piers on West Street, (across from the trucks, the action there happened anytime of day or night); to “The Rambles” (an area of Central Park by 79th street); to saunas (“The Continental Baths,” located in the basement of the Ansonia Hotel in the Upper West Side kicked off a young Bette Midler’s career, who performed there regularly); and the streets of the West Village.

Most bars were classified by what people wore (“flannel and denim bars”) or what people did (“stand and stare bars”), and if they wanted to go out at night, clubs like Flamingo, 12 West, Les Mouches and Paradise Garage were always safe

bets.

At The Saint, in the East Village, every week, 2,500 gay men would dance until the early hours of the morning under the effects of alcohol, LSD, poppers, cocaine, angel dust, speed, mescaline and hash. After the party, they would go up north one block on Second Ave, turn left on St. Mark's place for yet another chance to express their sexual freedom. The New St. Marks Bath, never closed, until it was shut down for good in 1985 by the New York City Department of Health. "When the city said 'lock it up,' they had to get a padlock, because from the day it opened, it'd never closed the door," recalled Susan Tomkin, assistant to owner Bruce Mailman at the time.

The hedonistic paradise of gay was alive and feeling fabulous, and nothing was going to stop now. The subculture of the forbidden had to be celebrated.

Author Fran Lebowitz said in 2010 she could not understand why the LGBT rights movement was fighting so hard to legalize same-sex marriages: "Do I think gay marriage is progress? Are you kidding me? This was one of the good things about being gay. I am stunned that the two greatest desires, apparently, of people involved in gay rights movements is gay marriage and gays in the military. These are the two most confining institutions in the planet."

Does Lebowitz have a point?

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The cost to become a parent is no joke. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that a family spends an average of \$300,000 to raise a child born in 2013 to the age of 18. LGBT families start off at a considerable financial disadvantage. The median annual household income of same-sex couples with children under 18 living at home is lower than different-sex couples (\$63,900 vs. \$74,000).

Private adoption, the process in which birth parents place their child directly with the adoptive family, can cost up to \$30,000 – but that figure can vary according to where different state laws. In Colorado, Connecticut, and Delaware, for example, private adoption is not even allowed. If parents want to use an agency, cost can go up to \$50,000. Which is nothing, when compared to the \$100,000+ price tag of surrogacy. Or \$200,000 if, like my pal Perry Zizzi, you want twins.

I wanted to find out more about LGBT mother pioneer Rosie O'Donnell. She came out in 2002 during a comedy routine in New York's Caroline on Broadway because she wanted to bring attention to gay adoption issues. A few days later, she spoke to Diane Sawyer on a much-publicized two-hour interview on ABC's Prime Time Thursday explaining why she'd finally decided to come out: ""Part of the reason for doing this interview, I don't think America knows what a gay parent looks like. I am a gay parent."

During those early pre-*Ellen* days, when celebrities came out of the closet, they still made headlines. O'Donnell's bravery did not go unnoticed. LGBTQ news magazine named her its "2002 Person of the Year." With five kids, three through adoption and two through artificial insemination, O'Donnell became the face of the babies-for-gays movement. The ideal gay parent.

But recent stories about her daughter Chelsea, put that ideal in question. Earlier this month, the nineteen-year-old was hospitalized in Long Island, NY following an apparent drug overdose. In 2015, mother and daughter had a public falling out: O'Donnell reported Chelsea missing, while Chelsea said she'd run away. "Just some things that have happened in the last few months I can't get over or forgive her for," she later said on a TV interview. "Kicking me out of the house, putting it out that I'm mentally unstable."

Rosie reminds me that parenting can be cruel. Do I *really* want that for myself?

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Legendary writer Michael Musto once listed in his now-defunct and painfully-missed weekly *Village Voice* column, "La Dolce Musto," a few reasons explaining why being stereotypically gay was so awful. ("Why I Hate Being Gay! 62 Reasons!")

Musto, arguably the gayest man alive, gets a free pass. His contributions to gayland are too paramount to be ignored: he outed former New York City Mayor Ed Koch after he died; he threw major shade at a pre-world-ruler Madonna when his Motown cover-band shared an East Village stage with her in the early '80s; he even attended Andy Warhol's funeral "dressed like a 14th Street hooker!" Clearly Miss Musto can do no wrong. But he did present a good case. Using his trademark voice—witty, cunty, slathered with irony—Musto dissected the silly superficiality of contemporary gay life in New York City: drugs, clubs, and muscles, oh my! Sure, the need for an underground world of abomination and high heels fostered a healthy growth of the community, and proved vital for its self-preservation.

But now?

In an era when RuPaul became boringly mainstream, and Macy's has offered same-sex option for its wedding registry for almost a decade, it all just seems a tad *déclassé*. And let's face it: in 20 years, we went from Gucci to Gap; from Greenwich Village, New York to Greensboro, South Carolina. And we now respectfully bow down to America's next favorite tawdry abomination: the stage is all yours, transfriends. Go get them!

Last winter, when I swiped-right my way to happiness, which led to my first date with Daniel, I hadn't realized the earthquake of self-doubts my hook-up app was

about to unleash into my life. Instead of going for a quick late-night wham-bam-thank-you-man rendezvous, I'd embarked on a self-discovery journey through bars, clubs, fertilization clinics, adoption agencies, and surrogacy experts. On that first date, between sips of \$12 passion fruit capirinhas at an uncomfortably small Brazilian restaurant in Hell's Kitchen, Daniel and I had established a protocol: we both liked each other, but did not like Gaga; we were both pro-drugs and anti-red-voting; and we stood unapologetically, unabashedly, and undeniably firmly against the even remote suggestion of kids. But soon after that, everything came crashing down.

The journey went full circle. The gay struggle is so 1997. And while Liberace would be appalled at how basic we've gotten, James Baldwin would've never traded Harlem for Paris. Yay. But does that mean I should embrace the straightification of everything with open (and big, muscular) arms?

Last weekend Daniel took me to the New York's Park Avenue Armory to see *Manifesto*, a 2015 13-screen film installation directed by a German filmmaker named Julian Rosefeldt. The installation features the Australian actress Cate Blanchett playing 13 different characters on 13 giant screens. Each screen shows a ten-minute-thirty-second video where she performs and reads from various art manifestos about different movements of art: she reads Claes Oldenburg as a southern house-wife to talk about pop art; she reads Kazimir Malevich as a cold sci-fi scientist to explain suprematism, she reads from a manifesto written by Wassily Kandinsky to explain abstract expressionism, playing a posh CEO at a private party.

Daniel's favorite manifesto was the one where she explained Dadaism: Cate as an angry Italian widow at a funeral reading from Tristan Tzara's 1918 Dada Manifesto: "Dada is shit," said a furious Cate.

"Dada is totally shit," echoed Daniel. He looked at me and laughed victoriously. Once again, he'd gotten it right.



From Gucci to Gap

In just a few decades, gay culture went from underground to mainstream, from the exotic to the common, from Gucci to Gap. Slide over the images below to check out famous gays (out-and-proud and otherwise) and their very hetero lives:

Tony Award-winner and gay-next-door TV superstar Neil Patrick Harris came out as gay to *People* magazine in 2006. He married his boyfriend of ten years, fellow

actor and professional chef David Burtka, at a private ceremony in Italy in 2014. The wedding was officiated by "How I Met Your Mother" director Pamela Fryman, and Sir Elton John performed at the reception. The couple waited until same-sex unions became legal in New York State in 2011 to announce their engagement. They did so via Twitter. In 2010, the couple announced they were expecting twins via a surrogate mother. Their son, Gideon Scott, and daughter, Harper Grace, were born in October. The happy family now lives in a townhouse on Fifth Avenue in Harlem, which the couple purchased in 2013. (Photo credit: Instagram)

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After years of media speculation, Puerto Rican superstar Ricky Martin came out as gay in 2012 on a post on his website: "I am proud to say that I am a fortunate homosexual man. I am very blessed to be who I am." In 2008, The "Livin' La Vida Loca" singer became the father of twin boys, Matteo and Valentino, born by a surrogate mother. In November, he announced his engagement to Jwan Yosef, a London-based Swedish Syrian artist. The couple started dating in April.

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Multicolored feathers, glasses, hats and fabulous outfits make Sir Elton John one of the most flamboyant artists in popular music history. He came out as bisexual in 1976, and as gay in 1988. In 2005, he entered into a civil partnership with David Furnish; in 2014, after same-sex marriage became legal in England and Wales, the couple got legally married. They have two sons, whom they got through surrogacy: Zachary Furnish-John was born in December 2010, and Elijah Joseph Daniel Furnish-John, in January 2013. (Photo credit: Instagram)

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Scientology, the "jumping of the couch" episode and tireless tabloid speculations make the "Mission Impossible" star one of the most high profile is-he-is-he-not artists of a generation. Ex-husband to Mimi Rogers (1987-90), Nicole Kidman (1990-01) and Katie Holmes(2006-12), Cruise became a father in 2006, when daughter Suri was born. In 2005, he objected to an episode of Comedy Central's "South Park" where singer R. Kelly tried to get him to, literally, come out of a closet. "Trapped in the Closet" was pulled from airing in the UK and as a repeat in the U.S. In October 2012, Cruise filed a lawsuit against "In Touch" and "Life & Style" for defamation after the magazines claimed he had "abandoned" his six-year-old daughter, although during deposition, he acknowledged he hadn't seen her for 110 days. (Photo credit: Alan Light via Wikimedia Commons)

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Loud, outspoken and colorful, Perez Hilton is a blogger known for Hollywood gossip and for outing closeted celebrities. Hilton has two children: Mario Armando Lavandeira III, born on February 17, 2013 and Mia Alma Lavandeira, born on May 9, 2015. They were both conceived with a donor egg and carried by

a surrogate mother. In February 2014, Hilton criticized Ariana Grande's hairstyles on PerezHilton.com. Fans of the singer didn't take it well and posted negative comments on his social media, including threats against his young son. (Photo credit: Instagram)

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Singer, television personality and the 2014 Democratic nominee in the North Carolina 2nd congressional district election, Clay Aiken came out of the closet one month after he announced the birth of his son: "The little man is healthy, happy, and as loud as his daddy," Aiken wrote on his blog. "Mama Jaymes is doing quite well also." The mother, Jaymes Foster, is the sister of David Foster, executive producer of his last three albums on the RCA label. "My dear friend, Jaymes, and I are so excited to announce the birth of Parker Foster Aiken." (Photo credit: Instagram)

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Golden-Globe winner actor Matt Bomer publicly came out as gay in 2012, but has been married to celebrity publicist Simon Halls since 2011. They have three sons, whom they got through surrogacy: Kit Halls was born in 2005, and twins Walker and Henry Halls were born in 2008. The couple received an Inspiration Award in 2012 "for their meaningful contributions toward creating a world where every child learns to respect and accept all people," from GLSEN (formerly the Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network). (Photo credit: Instagram)

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John Travolta married actress Kelly Preston in 1991, with whom he has two kids: Ella Bleu, born in 2000, and Benjamin, born in 2010 (the couple's first-born Jett died in January of 2009.) Even though the "Saturday Night Fever" and "Pulp Fiction" star has to constantly fight off gay rumors, he told US magazine in November that he envied "Barbra Streisand's museum, filled with her iconic costumes." Hmm...

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The Process

How the author saw babies before he wrote the piece:
Image: [cutebaby.gif](#)

The author's thought process, as he wrote the piece:
Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/wcC7aTkFxtA>

How the author see babies before, after writing the piece:

Image: crying.gif