

Postscript: Post SCOTUS Blues....

On July 26<sup>th</sup>, only hours after the stunning exhilaration and euphoria resulting from seeing SAME-SEX MARRIAGE LEGAL NATIONWIDE emblazoned across my tv screen, after sitting teary-eyed with my wife, mesmerized by the talking heads and ebullient crowds famously “on the plaza” at the Supreme Court, and after, unable to sit, concentrate on anything other than the great news, walking on air ... curiously, amid the crowd of revelers at Rumor’s bar on Wilton Drive, I felt a pall, a nagging angst pulling at my psyche. For sure, the gay talking heads had warned that the fight is far from over. But, weren’t we the victors? Hadn’t the Supreme Court, “SCOTUS”, ruled that we gay men and lesbians, like everyone else, had the right to enter into marriage, and thereby attain the dignity and transcendent state conferred by civil matrimony? Of course, it had. Then, why, when the merriment faded into the night, was I feeling blue?

Facebook. If you aren’t on it, then, bear with me. Facebook is a living breathing entity in my house. Or entities, if you count all of the ... how many are they? My Facebook “friends” - who regularly appear on my “page” with comments and re-posts of political satires, abandoned dogs, recipes, observations from clever to banal - were weighing in on the subject sharing posts about their happiness, disbelief, relief, joy and general giddy-ness over our nationwide right, conferred by the highest court in the land, to marry. “Free again at last”, one friend commented. Hmm. Okay, I get the meaning behind the mis-quote. But, are we?

Facebook provided me a window through which I saw that a few of my gay\* fb friends were also suffering angst in the wake of “the great news”. A trickle of sorrow and fear and pain leaking through the great dam of joy, the dam holding back the flood of our collective discontent. A discontent born of how many years of our human suffering not just a lack of dignity, stigma, and exclusion, but for many indescribable emotional and physical abuse, just for being our gay selves. One young friend posted “how come my mother can’t just love me even though I’m gay?” Another, “... how come none of my straight friends have “liked” or commented on my posts about how wonderful the Supreme Court decisions is? Have they just tolerated me all along - do they feel about me as other conservatives do?”

Sadly, the morning after “the great news” nothing much has changed in the 37 states that had already allowed same-sex marriage. In Florida, like most of the nation, gay couples getting married and returning to work can be promptly fired for being gay. Only 22 states and the District of Columbia have laws against discrimination in employment, places of public accommodation and housing based on sexual orientation - leaving millions of gays and lesbians without the right to rent an apartment, eat at a restaurant or keep their jobs. While we can take solace in the poll numbers showing that the clear majority of our fellow Americans believe we should have the right to marry, we cannot relax our vigilance and succumb to what Michelangelo Signorile calls “victory blindness” - losing our focus on the deep seated bigotry that still pervades the U.S. and becoming apathetic. Those wielding the majority of legislative power in the U.S. are Republicans and across the board, oppose our marriages, as well as our ability to be free of discrimination. Our recent wins in the area of gay marriage may well be our last wins for some time to come. The Republican controlled Congress and legislatures throughout the country won’t be enacting any anti-discrimination laws in the foreseeable future. And if a Republican

takes the White House in 2016, say good-bye to the Supreme Court bailing us out in the future. We are one Ruth Bader-Ginsberg away from losing a majority vote on the Court.

As a community, we must continue doing what has led us to the amazing reality we are now living in: SAME-SEX MARRIAGE LEGAL NATIONWIDE. Your every personal moment of confrontation with homophobia is a political force - your acts of courage are, as President Obama said on Friday, "like pebbles being thrown into a still lake, ripples of hope cascade outward and change the world". We must come out, brazen the moment when you can be invisible - be visible - be your own gay self! Vote, contribute, volunteer: show up. This is your life and you deserve to live it fully and equally.

\* I use the term "gay" to handily reference LGBT persons.

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