

# CHJ TODAY

*The official newsletter of the Center for Health Justice*



## IN THIS ISSUE

**THE OMINOUS  
OMICRON: WHAT YOU  
SHOULD KNOW**

**COMMUNITY  
RESOURCES FOR  
JANUARY**

**INTERVIEW WITH A  
DRAG QUEEN**

**HARRY KNOWS BEST  
ISSUE NO. 1**

## The Ominous Omicron: What you Should Know

*by Jair Walker*

If you haven't heard of the coronavirus, then boy do I have some news for you. The first case of the virus was found on December 30, 2019 in Wuhan, China. Many of us believed that it would pass quicker than a lustful love interest, but we were wrong. Very wrong. We are now closing in on the 2-year anniversary of this very toxic relationship. In this time the relationship has evolved. Mutated, if you will. On Dec 1, 2021, the first case of the Omicron variant was detected in the United States. It got here via a passenger flying into San Francisco from South Africa. Thanks a lot buddy!

It might sound like rush week for your local sororities, but these variants are nothing to wiggle your spirit fingers about. In fact, they are a cause for

some concern. When a virus reproduces, it makes copies of itself in one's body that can lead to random changes of the genetic code, called mutations. These mutations can differ in number and severity. The previous variant, Delta, originated in India and was 2x more contagious than prior variants. According to the latest data, Omicron is nearly 500 percent more infectious than that. Though the symptoms appear milder it's still scary stuff.

Mo Variants Mo Problems, or whatever Biggie said. As the number of variants increase, our bodies are forced to put up more of a fight. With the holiday season right around the corner, trouble is looming. There will be more

travel, more gathering, and more sickness due the change in weather. So, what do we do? I'm no Fauci, but I do know a few things that can make a difference.

- **Social Distance:** I know this is not always the easiest thing to do. I too enjoy going bar hopping on weekdays. Remember though, moderation is key.
- **Wear a Mask:** They may cause you to deal with your own bad breath, but they do make a difference
- **Get Vaccinated:** If you've already done this, get a booster. New research shows this is the most effective defense. If you need help doing this, ask us!

## Community Resources for January

### Free Covid Test Sites

**LA Union Station:** 800 N. Alameda St., Los Angeles // (818) 521-3807

**LA County Crenshaw Area Office OptumServe:** 3606 West Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles // (888) 634-1123

### Vaccine Sites

**Watts Health Center:** 10300 Compton Ave., Compton // (323) 564-4331

**Western Rx:** 445 W. Broadway, Glendale // (818) 241-5996

### Free Food

**St. Francis Center Los Angeles:** 1835 S. Hope St., Los Angeles // (213) 747-5347 or [info@sfcla.org](mailto:info@sfcla.org)

### Winter Coats

**One Warm Coat:** Checkout [onewarmcoat.org](http://onewarmcoat.org) and find which locations near you are offering free coats for the winter weather // (877) 663-9276



# Interview with a Drag Queen

by *Jair Walker*

**Jair:** Well, um, this is awkward. I actually lost the questions that I had prepared. This is bad. I guess we'll just have to freestyle it.

**Joey:** Don't worry about it. We'll make it work.

**Jair:** Cool, we got this. So why don't you just start out by introducing yourself to myself and whoever's gonna read this newsletter.

**Joey:** So hi, my name is Joey. I use she and they pronouns. I do drag, I work in public health, um yeah.

**Jair:** I kinda wanted to focus on drag today because I personally don't have that much knowledge and information about drag. I do know that some of my coworkers and members of the community either perform or are interested in that realm. So I was just wondering if you could give me a little bit more information on that. Is that okay with you?

**Joey:** Yeah, sure!

**Jair:** I guess we can start from the beginning, like, when did you get into drag?



**Joey:** Um, I remember I was in middle school when I found out what drag was. My family had the Logo Network, which is like an LGBT network that I think was one of the only ones. So I came across RuPaul Drag Race at that point. And from that point on, like, with my gender identity, I related so much to drag that I was like, 13 years old, saying, "Oh, yeah, I'm not like a boy or girl. I'm a drag queen." Like, before I knew what anything else was. That's just what I really identified with. And I started to wear makeup at a young age. And as I got older, my makeup had gotten more and more dramatic. Over time, my



makeup was pretty crazy before I was like performing and stuff. And I had my first performance in a backyard in South Central. It was a queer punk show. And it was really fun. I think back on it, and then like, oh my God, I didn't really do anything. I kind of just sat there and served, but it was a lot of fun. I started drag, like performing that night. And with a lot of other good drag performers too.

**Jair:** I'm sure that first show, like watching it is one thing, but being able to actually perform in that first show? I'm sure that was quite the experience. Could you walk me through what it felt like?

**Joey:** So I was really nervous. Okay, I remember, I was very shaky. Like, I'm already kind of a shaky person. Naturally, my hands kind of have a little shake. But I definitely had stage fright that first time, even though I knew I looked good, or


whatever, since it was my first time actually performing in front of a big crowd of people. I was nervous, but I felt really good after because a lot of my friends were there. And I was just really supported. And I was like, this is fun. And one of my, I consider her my drag sister, because we started dragging around the same time, performing and stuff. But it was her first time performing. And it was around her first time of doing drag, like, I had already been playing with makeup for a few years, but she had just started so she didn't look her best, you know. She kept falling in her heels. She kept falling over. And it was kind of hard to watch. But you know, I was being a good sister, I was supporting, and she still did a good job. But now she's like, great. She can perform twirl, split, everything in these  heels now. So it's just crazy, like, having your first performance and looking back on it. You kind of remember all of the thoughts that happen. And I remember being like, , I could have done this. Oh, I should have done that. But now it's my first time.



**Jair:** And you've now been doing it for how long? Do you still perform?

**Joey:** Yeah I still perform. I've been performing since like 2016. I think so like five years.

**Jair:** Cool. Yeah. Very cool. And you've gone past backyard shows now. You're doing actual performances now, yeah?

**Joey:** Yeah, so that's just where I started you know, there's a whole scene in South Central of like these gay parties where they have they call it the tea parties. They have drag performers. And it's a safe space for gay people in that part of the city to go and party. So I got my first, like running laps there. You know, those girls are kind of mean too so you learn how to get thick skin and try to be good right away. But my first time performing in a bar it was fun. I kind of liked the freedom more than performing in a backyard because you can really do whatever the  you want. Um, but in bars you know you have to be mindful of the floor and not leaving a mess even though I still do sometimes.

**Jair:** So the things that doing drag does for you, do you think that it translates to life outside of drag?

**Joey:** Um, yeah, you know, I love to perform. I love to get up in drag. And I don't know, it's just kind like, for me at least like, wow, it was something I always wanted to do. So being able to do it now and really live it, it's really nice. And it's just crazy. I've gained so many good friendships and relationships from people also doing drag, like people I perform with, or I see at shows. It's the whole community, really. And yeah, I carry these friendships with me everywhere I go now, it's crazy. I'm very much known for it now. You know, it's a big part of my life. So yeah, I've had a lot of positive change since I started performing.

**Jair:** Cool. Yeah, it sounds like something that

gives you a lot of skills that are kind of transferable to everyday life, you know what I mean? Are there any misconceptions about drag that you are able to clear up or is there stuff that you hear a lot that's just like, that's completely bull 🐮? 🤔

**Joey:** I would say that. There's this misconception that drag performers are constantly late. But I would say that we're always late no matter what.

**Jair:** Hey, beauty takes time.

**Joey:** Um, I think another misconception of drag is that a drag is a man dressing up to do female impersonation. When drag is sometimes that but it's not always that. And anyone can do drag. That's a big thing especially, gay men will sometimes look down on people who are assigned female at birth, that do drag. They don't see it as like, actual drag or like valid drag. Or like trans performers, they think that they have an advantage over them. It kind of was like this weird boy's club for a while. But now there's so many people doing drag, and there's so many different kinds of people doing drag. It's really for everyone.

**Jair:** I mean, honestly, I didn't even know that people who were assigned female at birth, I didn't know that they even were allowed to participate in drag. That's informative to me. I didn't know that.

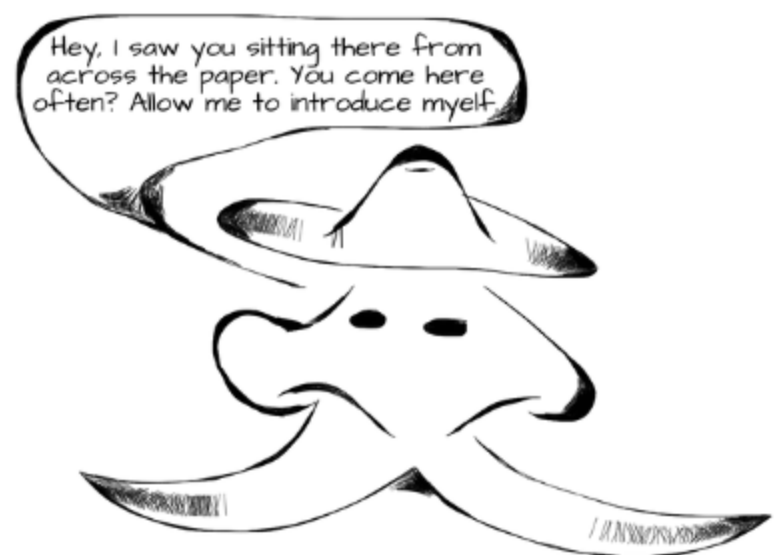
**Joey:** Yeah. I mean, that's a big thing, people don't think that people who are assigned female at birth do drag, want to do drag. Some of the best drag I've seen has been people who were assigned female at birth.

**Jair:** Alright well, I have one more question then I'll let you go. My last question is who is one person that you think would just kill it in drag? Like, some celebrity or somebody that you know that would just slay everything?

**Joey:** Hmm. You know, it's kind of hard to say a celebrity because they're already kind of doing their own kind of drag you know, they're doing celebrity drag. But someone I think that that would be good. I feel like I've thought about this recently, too. I would say Lizzo I think Lizzo would be a bomb drag queen. I think she would, I would love to see her get up in it.

**Jair:** I feel that, she has a pretty big personality. I feel like every environment that she's in she like owns it. I could concur with that. Alright, is there anything else that you would like to leave us with any more insightful information?

**Joey:** I don't know just, you know, drag is fun. It's a great way to express yourself. You can really be someone who you're not every day and I encourage everyone to at least try it once like at least do it once so you can see what it feels like and you'll be really amazed with yourself and what you can look like, what you can do, how you can entertain and make people feel good.



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