

My coming out story is pretty unique – kinda gritty, but also very supportive and loving. I grew up entangled in male toxicity where one of the main expressions was anger, and sarcasm took the place of tenderness. When my father died at 52 from a heart attack, my twin brother and I took to the streets to try to support my mom. As young teens, all we were good at was shoplifting and a little later dealing psychedelics.

We weren't that good since we got caught when we were 21. They gave us a year, I cursed out the judge. In the mid 1990s there were these awful Rockefeller laws for drug sales. They'd often give maximum sentences in an effort to scare kids away from a viable living and coerce them to go into college debt. We didn't quite have the words for it but we knew the system was shit.

Well, we got a year in new york state prison. Anyway it was terrifying and exhilarating all at once. Terrifying because jail sucks. It was scary for a pretty scared 21 year old. On the other hand i had my twin brother and we talked about everything. We were each other's source of joy and hope. And within that context, i came out to him one afternoon while he was cutting my hair. One of things we did to kill time was give each other haircuts- one of the very few liberties allotted us. So i was like, "hey i think I'm bi." I didn't come out like some brave, proud queer. I was kinda, "i think i might be sorta maybe.. bi." My brother was very much a realist, so he shrugged and said, "um so what? Everyone is bi on some level." Now, my brother had a way of just blowing my mind. And that was one occasion – i felt like uhhh, that's an interesting thing to say, make me contemplate it for like the rest of my life.

So we hatched a plan while were in jail: When we got out we'd be go-go dancers. It was my brother's idea (as was mushroom-dealing, by the way) but i loved a good dare, and i loved him. So when we finally got out he found a "club" in Manhattan

called I.C.Guys. He went first and got the job. When he was there, he told the boss about me and i was invited to join him. So there we were, straight out of jail, thrown into a dark strobe-lit room, wearing sexy undies we got in the west village, shaking our tushies for some quick cash – trying to move the hell out from under our mom's roof. But it took time. We had to dance and do other things – like in life, one door opens another – in this case, one touch leads to another.

I got along best with the other dancers. I remember one summer night after work me and one dancer friend just went at each other like two street cats, free and fiesty, delicious and ripe (if you know what i mean). And that was my life, working as an administrative assistant during the day, and at night dancing and diving deep into sensuality and subversion. Because, as you might imagine, the dancing led to sex work.

Then one night, the cops came and raided our beloved ICGuys. I wasn't at work that night but my brother was. He had to outrun the cops, running away against traffic on Broadway – in his sexy undies.

We were sad to have to say goodbye to that sleazy yet scrumptious "job" but as you can imagine, we didn't stop there. In fact, that was only the beginning in a long sometimes raunchy, sometimes bumpy and harsh road toward queer liberation.

It would be years before I'd deconstruct the ways male toxicity, the patriarchy and capitalism all shaped how I hustled in my early 20s. Decades have passed and I still consider it an honor to have come out to my brother, the one person I could trust and love unconditionally, as we were surrounded by the cold steel and traumatizing environment of prison.