



**MORE FEATURE STORIES**

**Yo! Mama**  
March 14, 2008

**She's the Man**  
March 13, 2008

**Out @ South by Southwest**  
March 12, 2008

**Meet Heloise & the Savoir Faire**  
March 12, 2008

**2008: The Year of Tilda**

**HOT GUY OF DAY**

**POPNOGRAPHY**

**STYLELIST**

**LOOK OF THE DAY**

**STYLE SLIDE SHOWS**

**FASHION ADVICE**

**REVIEWS ▶**

**POLL**

**WALLPAPERS**

**iMIX**

**OUT UPDATES**

**CURRENT ISSUE**

**PRINT SUBSCRIPTIONS**

**DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTIONS**

**ADVOCATE.COM**



Hunter

**FEATURES**

## The Trans Fags

**They're like any other gay men. Except born female.**

**T Cooper**

On a cold winter night I take my 20-year-old friend Hunter to an East Village gay bar -- his first time in a New York City watering hole where he could wade among other cute gay men like himself. I convince the bartender to let us in by pretending that Hunter is my little brother who just turned 21 and came out but had his wallet and ID stolen on the subway. The barkeep grudgingly lets us stay, and we take a seat in the rear. It's a pretty empty weeknight, but a few guys start throwing looks over shoulders and cruising Hunter, and he whispers that he thinks one of them is cute—the straightest-looking dude in the room.

OUTTRAVELER.COM

GAY.COM

Then, as if called in from any-gay-bar central casting, a lanky dark-haired guy starts unbuttoning his fly and pulling out a soft dick, then lets it flop around outside his jeans as he struts around the bar. Both Hunter and I try not to stare, but we start betting on whether it's real. For 20 minutes we're convinced it is, but then someone pulls the thing, and it stretches to a skinny foot-long before snapping back wildly. Hunter laughs and mouths, "Totally fooled me."

Despite handling the often rugged and unforgiving testing ground of a gritty downtown gay bar with aplomb, Hunter -- like the rest of the men you see on these pages -- is the kind of guy some online gay hookup sites don't want you to meet. But I do. So let me introduce you to Trystan, Cole, Kelly, and Hunter, all *trans fags* -- transgender men who date other men.

It's definitely OK to think these guys are hot. But you know what's not OK? Saying things like "I never would've known" or "But you're so good-looking." And especially: "If I saw you on the street, I'd never think you were really a woman."

That's because these guys aren't really women. They were *born* female, yes, but they now live their lives as men. FTMs (female-to-male transsexuals). Tranny boys. Trans men. But also gay men, just like any gay men -- yet with one small difference (no, not *that* difference -- I'm referring to their second X chromosome in place of the Y that determines an infant's sex at birth to be male). Which is what provokes dating websites like Adam4Adam -- and even people on Craigslist -- to delete or flag these guys' profiles, insisting that their sites provide a service "for men only."

Fed up with having his profile deleted, one of these gay trans men fired back in a letter to Adam4Adam management: "I may have been born female, but I've transitioned to become male. No one on this site has had any problems with me. I'm part of this community. I work in gay bars. I date gay men.... I had no idea that I would be facing this kind of discrimination from within the gay community.... There are all different kinds of gay men: fat men and poor men and disabled men, and men that are into S/M, men who like to bareback, men who do crystal, and men who are black and Asian and mixed. All of these men have prominent profiles on your site. Why not me?"

The final verdict: "The reason is because your profile says 'I was born a girl' and 'with all my original girly parts,' and your photos show depicts [sic] female private parts, so based on that our profile approval team concluded that you're not a man.... Thank you. The Adam4Adam Team."

Nothing quite like being told you're not the man you thought you were.

#### **Hunter: Short Boy**

*I'm a full-time college student. I'm into guys who are fairly active and are doing something in their lives. I'm not looking for commitment...just casual hookups. People who know how to spell and write in full sentences are a plus. I probably won't respond if your profile says something like "suckhotdicknow."*

When not hanging out underage at East Village gay bars with me, Hunter is in his second year at a Portland, Ore.-area university but is currently studying abroad in Amsterdam. Growing up as a girl in the suburbs of Philadelphia, Hunter started to realize he was a boy as a sophomore in high school. He started injecting testosterone and had top surgery (a bilateral mastectomy and chest reconstruction) a year later, and he has lived infinitely more happily and peacefully as a male ever since.

When I first met Hunter a year ago, he showed up at my East Village apartment with an amused and slightly perplexed expression on his handsome baby face. A particularly persistent man had followed him and his equally cute and also skater-styled young friend all the way from the F train, repeatedly asking, "Do you guys like to wrestle?"

Both Hunter and his friend ignored the man, an average, middle-aged, suit-clad guy who kept insisting, "I'm totally straight. I'm married. I just like to watch guys wrestle. You sure you don't want to come over? I'm just around the corner... I have drinks."

Before Hunter came out as gay and started attracting the attention of random

chicken hawks on the street, he identified strongly as a dyke. "But when I started hormones my sex drive got jacked up a crazy amount, and something just switched biochemically or something. There's a quote that goes around in the trans community: Testosterone makes you gay. It's kind of true for me," he says with a laugh.

Hunter's not really in the market for a relationship, but he does like having sex with guys he meets both online and at school. He is open to dating other trans men but is mostly interested in meeting nontrans guys. Despite having no problem finding candidates, Hunter often feels conflicted after hooking up. He still has female genitalia, and while clitorises in most FTMs grow considerably when on testosterone and are an adequate metamorphosis for many, Hunter's "one-inch dicklet" isn't what he ultimately wants for his body. He is actively pursuing a surgical phalloplasty.

"I'm having more anal sex lately, but for the most part, I'll have frontal sex -- that's how I refer to it -- because it's the most convenient. I rationalize it, like, *It's there and it's just another hole, so I might as well use it*," he says. "It feels good at the time, but then afterward the psychological ramifications suck. My reality snaps back, and I'm like, *Yeah, it's just another hole, but it's another hole that's only in women*, so as soon as we're done I run and find my boxers."

Hunter always used to disclose his FTM status in his personal ads, but now he waits until corresponding with guys before broaching the subject. Most seem cool, but others can be quite disrespectful, either accusing Hunter of trying to "trick" them or writing things like "You look like you had your tits cut off" and persisting in referring to him as a woman.

"They're generally good guys," Hunter says of the nontrans men he's progressed to the point of having sex with -- about 95% of whom have never been with a trans man before. "After we have sex a lot of guys are like, 'I really like your setup.' They're trying to be complimentary, but either way they lose. On the one hand, I want them to be OK with my equipment, but on the other hand, I don't want them to be -- because I'm not OK with it."

While he knows that a phalloplasty will not be perfect, Hunter believes that his sex life will be infinitely better postsurgery than it is now. So in the interim he has not been pursuing as many hook-ups this year as he did during his first year of college. "It's just so exhausting having to disclose to guys over and over," he explains, clearly vexed. "I just want to be able to hook up with random guys but not have it be the Trans 101 discussion every time, you know?"

[Next Page >> 1, 2, 3](#)

[Comments \[0\]](#)

[PRINT](#) [EMAIL](#)

---

Ryan Pfluger

[Home](#) | [Contact](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [Media Kit](#) | [Jobs](#)

Subscribe: [Print Edition](#) [Digital Edition](#) | Subscriber Services: [Print Edition](#) [Digital Edition](#)

Visit our Websites

[Advocate.com](#) | [OutTraveler.com](#) | [HIVPlusMag.com](#) | [Alyson.com](#) | [Gay.com](#) | [PlanetOut.com](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Community Guidelines](#) | [Legal Notice](#)

Out.com © 2007 PlanetOut Inc. All Rights Reserved.



MORE FEATURE STORIES

Yo! Mama  
March 14, 2008

She's the Man  
March 13, 2008

Out @ South by  
Southwest  
March 12, 2008

Meet Heloise & the  
Savoir Faire  
March 12, 2008

2008: The Year of Tilda

HOT GUY OF DAY

POPOGRAPHY

STYLELIST

LOOK OF THE DAY

STYLE SLIDE SHOWS

FASHION ADVICE

REVIEWS ▶

POLL

WALLPAPERS

iMIX

OUT UPDATES

CURRENT ISSUE

PRINT SUBSCRIPTIONS

DIGITAL  
SUBSCRIPTIONS



Trystan

### The Trans Fags (continued)

#### Trystan: Hot Rocker Boy...

*Who just happens to have a pussy. Yes, it's mine. Yes, I was born with it. Yes...you can play with it. I'm vocal, an adventurer, and real fucking smart. Political, artistic, radical. Communicative but know when to shut up. And yes, I will teach you. I have an affinity for bears, punks, and good grammar.*

I've known I was a gay man since I was 9 years old and began starring in musical theater shows," says 25-year-old Trystan Angel Reese, who self-describes as "a gay man, a fag, or queer man." He was born in Vancouver, Canada, and raised in Southern California, but now lives in New York City and works as a grassroots political organizer for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

**ADVOCATE.COM****OUTTRAVELER.COM****GAY.COM**

"I've always been attracted to men and masculinity, even hypermasculinity," Trystan says. "I love the way a beard feels against my skin, the way a man smells. It isn't phallic-centered at all, since I've been very happy in relationships with trans men. There just aren't as many trans men out there, so I end up dating mostly nontrans men."

Unlike Hunter, Trystan is completely at ease with his equipment. He has been on testosterone for over three years but hasn't had any surgery and doesn't plan to. As far as sex goes, "I'm into anything that gives or gets pleasure," he explains. "I'm into all parts of my partners' bodies, including their genitalia. I'm into all of my parts, including my genitalia. I don't like receiving anal sex, but that's about all I won't do."

When hooking up with guys online, Trystan always discloses his gender status up front, but he prefers not to use the terms "trans" or "FTM," finding that most mainstream gay men have misconceptions as to what those terms actually mean. So he words it slightly differently -- and quite bluntly -- in his profile, stating straight up that he has a vagina.

Trystan is unfazed by men who aren't attracted to his body, and like Hunter, he's found that there are more than enough interested men to go around. So he rarely wastes time trying to sway anybody if they are tentative. Guys are either into him or not -- and both are fine. "Many gay men think that the female body is gross or disgusting," Trystan says. "So when they meet a man they are attracted to who has a female body, it can cause a bit of an identity crisis."

Twenty-three-year-old Shinen Kwo, a nontransgender gay man who has dated a handful of trans men, agrees: "I think some gay men think that having sex with FTM guys is like having sex with women. And yes, my first time was awkward and strange. I think I had a typical transphobic and also somewhat misogynistic response to his body, but after [a lot of] talking I felt much more comfortable, and he was very, very good about my ignorance, which I appreciated." The San Francisco-based queer youth organizer adds, "I have had the thought that my whole sexuality has become completely gender-fucked because of my sexual exploration with trans men, cracking open the gender binary."

Trystan is quite accepting of the vast range of gay men's responses to FTM bodies. "My [current] boyfriend had a similar freak-out when we first met," he recalls. "I'm willing to do a certain amount of education, as long as the questions come from a place of interest and not judgment. I've been surprised again and again by what people are willing to accept when it comes to...variations in bodies, to be with the person they love."

[Next Page >> 1, 2, 3](#)

[Comments \[0\]](#)

[PRINT](#) [EMAIL](#)

---

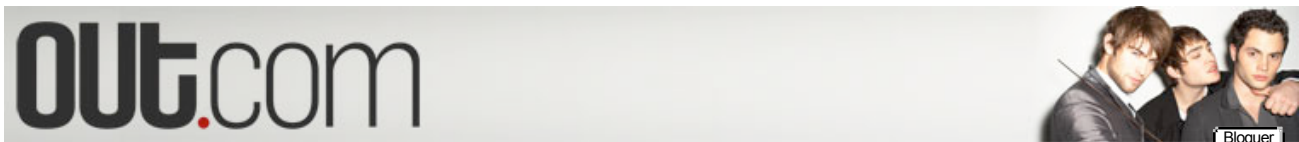
[Home](#) | [Contact](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [Media Kit](#) | [Jobs](#)

Subscribe: [Print Edition](#) | [Digital Edition](#) | Subscriber Services: [Print Edition](#) | [Digital Edition](#)

Visit our Websites

[Advocate.com](#) | [OutTraveler.com](#) | [HIVPlusMag.com](#) | [Alyson.com](#) | [Gay.com](#) | [PlanetOut.com](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Community Guidelines](#) | [Legal Notice](#)



**MORE FEATURE STORIES**

**Yo! Mama**  
March 14, 2008

**She's the Man**  
March 13, 2008

**Out @ South by Southwest**  
March 12, 2008

**Meet Heloise & the Savoir Faire**  
March 12, 2008

**2008: The Year of Tilda**

**HOT GUY OF DAY**

**POPNOGRAPHY**

**STYLELIST**

**LOOK OF THE DAY**

**STYLE SLIDE SHOWS**

**FASHION ADVICE**

**REVIEWS**

**POLL**

**WALLPAPERS**

**iMIX**

**OUT UPDATES**

**CURRENT ISSUE**

**PRINT SUBSCRIPTIONS**

**DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTIONS**

**ADVOCATE.COM**



Cole

**The Trans Fags (continued)**

**Cole: Femme Metro Trans Man**

*Lonely trans guy looking for friends to go out with in the Chapel Hill/Durham/Raleigh area. I'm a quiet kind of guy until you get to know me. I can be a lot of fun, but I'm sick of going out alone. I like dancing and movies and just hanging out. Am also interested in trying some play with a nontrans guy (have been almost exclusively with trans men so far). But sex isn't the most important thing.*

The term *tranny fag* represents exactly who I am," declares Joshua Bastian Cole, 27. "I'm queer, but that's even too general, because I'm pretty specific about who I'm attracted to: other trans guys who are transitioned."

Cole grew up in Rockaway, N.J., and started periodically passing as a guy in ROTC basic training during his college years at James Madison University. He

OUTTRAVELER.COM

GAY.COM

wasn't necessarily trying to pass back then, but it gradually started happening after coming out as a lesbian the year before, when he was with a partner who encouraged him to wear men's clothing.

"I wonder if my lesbian phase was a midway phase between girl and trans man, because it's more acceptable to be masculine in the lesbian community," he offers, eyes bluer than seems natural. His ideal mate these days? "Someone like me. A lot of people might label it arrogant and conceited, but I guess I've just always been looking for myself."

In fact, during all points in his sexual and emotional history, Cole has been drawn to people who mirrored precisely where he was in his own journey: from girls and women to androgynous tomboys and gender-queer "bois" and finally to where he is now: FTMs who have taken testosterone to masculinize their bodies. "When I'm with another trans guy, we're both either using a dick or not," he clarifies. "But with a nontrans guy [a penis] is there all the time, and it can't go away, and I suddenly realize my unreality. I just feel less like a guy when a nontrans guy's naked next to me. No matter how equally they see me, I know I'm not equal, and I don't like that."

Which is where Cole feels he clashes with a lot of other trans men he knows, who cry "transphobia" if somebody -- especially a partner, for instance -- refers to their prosthetic dick (dildo) as anything but real and attached. "I respect those guys who completely view themselves as 100% male, but I just don't happen to see myself that way."

Cole's day jobs find him endlessly refolding clothing at a Chapel Hill, N.C., Banana Republic as well as selling food at the local co-op, but he also recently appeared in *Cubbyholes: Trans Men in Action*, a feature-length porn video featuring both trans and nontrans men having sex together. He agreed to take his clothes off on film in support of trans visibility, "to show what our bodies look like," but he doesn't necessarily have sex like he does in the film. "When I'm really having sex, I'm usually packing, and the underwear stays on," he explains, smiling shyly. "Though I'm still a total femme bottom in both relationships and sex." When asked to elaborate, he adds: "I'm a pillow princess, so if I'm with another femme, look out: It's a race to the pillows."

When Cole comes to the New York City area for a family visit and to see *A Chorus Line* on Broadway, we meet for dinner at a loud and crowded Chelsea restaurant. Against the tableau of male couples there on a Friday night, it seems as though we blend right in, and true to Cole's word, out of nowhere like robotic programming by the butch-femme gods, I find myself opening doors for him, waiting for him to sit before I do, and picking up the check; I want to get the leftovers wrapped up for him to take home. Over coffee he tells me how hard it is to find other trans fags in the Durham-Chapel Hill area, which is why he recently placed a men-for-men profile online.

The Yahoo! Personals ad netted Cole dates with two different nontrans gay men, with whom he had a decent time, but they failed to relate with Cole at the level he needed. "They weren't part of my world," he explains. "They were just plain guys who happened to be gay. They watched football. I wasn't attracted to them."

In general Cole feels very little connection to gay male culture, a statement underscored by two massive tattoos he recently had inked into his forearms. In large, blocky lettering the right arm reads *TRANS*, and on the left in the same location appears the word *HUMAN*. As our gay night on the town repeatedly demonstrated, Cole's aesthetic and manner might cause him to pass seamlessly as a stereotypically stylish gay man, but along with his ink, he protests, "I don't like being invisible as trans. The experience is something I'm proud of, and I talk about it all the time."

Cole has lost relationships because of his refusal to pass as just a guy -- or even as just a gay guy -- when he's been with trans men who wanted to live completely "stealth" (concealing their trans status). "Identity is a huge part of trans culture, so if one thing's not in line with another, my outness can cause problems," he recalls of one particular relationship that tanked because of a rift over visibility. "People are always telling me to move to New York or San Francisco or Seattle, but I can't just up and go." So for now Cole is working on his fledgling acting and writing careers -- not to mention getting ready for his latest close-up in the next installment of trans fag porn from the producers of *Cubbyholes*.

**Kelly: Female-to-Male Tranny**

*FTM looking for (bi)curious guys: seeking guys for friendship, fun, and fucking. I'm into anal, vaginal, cock sucking, toys, and all-around debauchery.*

Kelly Arbor is a 30-year-old trans man who "loves to suck cock." He's always identified as bisexual but asserts that he is "queer with respect to his sexuality, gender, and politics." About three years ago he had top surgery and started hormones, and he is currently in a relationship with a female.

"I prefer to date women and fuck men," Kelly clarifies, which is why his presently monogamous relationship is moving toward an open one where he will continue to date nontrans men, like the "fuck buddy" he had for six months before falling in love with this new person who obviously has some say in whom he has sex with besides her.

"I've had the desire to live as a fag since about the age of 20, when I began to express a feminine maleness, which I call 'fag,'" Kelly recalls. "But after my tits were gone I felt like I could physically see myself more as a fag -- and passed in those communities too -- so it was like desire that could finally be manifested through access."

Like the others, Kelly meets men mostly online, screening especially for bisexual and other queer men, "because I'm a boy with a cunt. That's how I like to get fucked a lot of the time, and it's not something I'm willing to dismiss." Kelly is dark-haired, ruggedly handsome, and solidly built; think a shorter Colin Farrell. And (see a trend emerging here?) Kelly also has no trouble finding guys to hook up with -- guys who appreciate that masculinity and being attracted to it is way more complex than the presence or absence of a penis.

"But I've had a couple run-ins with people face-to-face after meeting online, and they just didn't have the desire they thought they would toward my body. No biggie; life is about experience, and every hookup is educational," Kelly says matter-of-factly. His open attitude is reflected in the work he does as manager of a sex-toy store in Seattle: He "absolutely" feels that educating the men he meets is his responsibility: "It's part of what I love."

"I've fucked a lot of guys who have never been with women," he says. "It's so interesting and special to be the first vagina they fuck."

[Send a letter to the editor about this article.](#)

[1](#), [2](#), [3](#)

[Comments \[0\]](#)

[PRINT](#) [EMAIL](#)

[Home](#) | [Contact](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [Media Kit](#) | [Jobs](#)

Subscribe: [Print Edition](#) | [Digital Edition](#) | Subscriber Services: [Print Edition](#) | [Digital Edition](#)

Visit our Websites

[Advocate.com](#) | [OutTraveler.com](#) | [HIVPlusMag.com](#) | [Alyson.com](#) | [Gay.com](#) | [PlanetOut.com](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Community Guidelines](#) | [Legal Notice](#)

Out.com © 2007 PlanetOut Inc. All Rights Reserved.