



WILLIAM CHRISTOPHER JORDAN  
*AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY*

Chapter One  
Madonna And Chris

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- *William Christopher Jordan*

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## Preface

My father was born on August 08, 1917, in a small town in eastern North Carolina, and my mother was born on February 12, 1923. They both grew up in the same part of the state and eventually met in the 1930's. The two were married on September 11, 1939. Having only completed the six and seventh grades, my parents lived in a time and place when education wasn't important and a man took a job wherever he could find one. After having several children, my parents moved from eastern North Carolina, to a small industrial town located in the central part of the state, known as Burlington. Burlington was known for it's cotton mills and textile plants and was home to Burlington Industries. My father worked for Western Electric, which was known around the country and the world. Their contracts ensured Burlington's placement on the "hit list" during the Cold War due to the manufacturing and testing of emerging defense technologies.



My parents already had three boys and one girl when I came along. I was born on July 22, 1961. By this time my mother was 38 years old, my father was 44, my oldest brother was 20 and my youngest brother was 7. My sister, who raised me until I was 4 years old, took care of me while my mother and father worked. She was 14 years old when I was born and 18 when she married and left home.

Every summer, when I was a child, my parents planted a huge garden in our back yard. I could remember crawling out of bed in my footed pajamas, sneaking out the back door and heading straight for the strawberry patch. Wiping the sleep from my eyes, I would sit in the strawberry patch and eat fresh strawberries right out of the garden.

As I grew older I spent most my summers playing in the creek that ran through my neighborhood. I was constantly collecting frogs, salamanders, tadpoles, chipmunks, flying squirrels, crayfish, field mice, moles, snakes and anything else that I could find. I loved spending time in the woods and being around nature. Nature always seemed to communicate with me in special ways.

All throughout elementary school and middle school, I landed every lead part in all of the school plays. I could act, I could sing and I could dance. But all of this changed as I approached high school. My voice changed, and I became very introverted and very shy. I was hiding something from the world, so I stayed far, far away from the spot light.

Although I was raised Methodist, I attended a nearby Presbyterian Church, where I was saved at a very young age. None of my siblings went to church, nor did my parents. I guess they had had their fill of church and had gotten that out their system by the time I was born.

At night I would thumb through my parents dictionary and world atlas, and imagine traveling to places all around the country. I wrote down a list of places that I wanted to see when I grew up.

When I was a teenager, I would lock myself in my room, put on an Earth, Wind and Fire record, turn my record player up as loud as I could and dance around my room. I loved music and I loved to dance.

My father retired from Western Electric in the early 1970's, and I graduated from high school in 1979. Since my parents didn't graduate from high school, nor did any of my siblings, my high school graduation was a big deal to my family. While most of my classmates went to college after graduation, I was given the choice to either attend a community college or go to work in a factory. I attended a

community college for a couple of years and then took a job in a factory, which my father helped me get through a connection he had with one of his ex-coworkers. I worked as a grinder, grinding down parts for an auto manufacturer.

After several months of "grinding" I decided I needed something more out of life.

And yes, I'm an unapologetic fan of some of Madonna's music, especially her early stuff. I don't know Madonna personally. I've never met her. It's about the music.

# Everybody

*was the eighth track from the album titled Madonna. It was released in 1982 and would be the beginning of a relationship between me and Madonna's music, which would span decades. - "Let the music take control find a groove and let yourself go."*



Hi, my name is Chris and I love to dance. The first time I danced in public was during the middle of the day, in the Cum-Park Plaza parking lot. Cum-Park Plaza was a small shopping center in my small hometown, Burlington, North Carolina. I was on my way to Rose's Department store when I noticed a group of people gathered in the parking lot, dancing to loud disco music. There were about twenty people inside the roped area, getting down to tunes like Funky Town, Knock on Wood, That's The Way (I Like It), The Beat Goes On by the Whispers, and my favorite, Let It Whip, by the Daz Band. I stood around watching everyone dance and then looked around to see if I recognized anyone. When I was sure I didn't know anyone, I walked into the center of the roped off area and joined the party. I remember doing the bump with a girl I had never met. I was sixteen years old. It was 1977.

A few years later I started going out every weekend with two girls from my hometown. The three of us went to a club named Daddy-O's, which was in Greensboro, North Carolina. We



would arrive in our early eighties outfits, step onto the dance floor, and instantly take over the club. Boy we had a blast in those days.

A year later we had grown tired of Daddy-O's, and decided to crash the gay bar on the other side of town. I was a little nervous about walking into a gay bar, but I was open to trying something different. (Secretly, if the truth be told, I had always wanted to go but was too scared to go on my own.) The minute we walked into the place I noticed three muscular guys dancing next to each other. All three of them had their shirts off and they were lined up like a train, grinding each other from behind. I just stood there with my jaw dragging the floor. I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

This club had a completely different energy than Daddy-O's, and I'm not talking about the obvious difference. The thing I liked about this bar was the fact that I could dance by myself and no one looked at me as if I was from another planet. I could do whatever I liked on the dance floor and it didn't phase anyone. This made me feel very comfortable and free.

The next week the two girls returned to Daddy-O's, while I went back to the gay bar. I had found my spot. I never spoke to anyone when I went to the gay bar; I would walk into the club, check my coat and hit the dance floor. If people paid attention to me, I never noticed. I didn't go there to meet people, I went there to dance. After a certain amount of time I had developed the nickname, "The Ice Princess". To be fair, it was a really accurate name for me. I was scared to death to get close to another person, especially a gay man. I spent every Friday and Saturday night in this club, dancing by myself for hours on end. When I danced I could feel my soul leave my body. The music always had the power to take me far, far away. Dancing was most definitely my drug of choice.

# Lucky Star

*was first track from the album titled Madonna. The lyrics described perfectly my relationship with God and my unshakeable faith. "And when I'm lost you'll be my guide I just turn around and you're by my side. You must be my lucky star 'cause you shine on me wherever you are."*



It's said that there is a sliding scale when it comes to a person's sexuality. On one end of the scale, any given person is homosexual, and on the other end of the scale any given person is completely heterosexual. The points in between vary according to one's interests, desires and curiosity. I knew my place on that sliding scale when I was probably four years old. I was completely gay.

I spent most of my childhood and adolescent years hiding the fact that I was attracted to the same sex. I was raised in a very small, southern town where most gay people were called queers and faggots, and made fun of and harassed on a regular basis. Most of my family shared the same feelings towards gay people, so it was no wonder that I kept that part of myself hidden away.

As I became older I realized that I couldn't change who I was. My sexuality had become something very personal and overwhelming. I was also a very religious person. My faith had lead me to believe that being gay would send my soul straight to hell for all of eternity. That

was a very scary reality for me. It was a very difficult hurdle to get over.

After my introduction to the gay bar and other gay people, I slowly began admitting to myself that I was in deed a homosexual. But, I never acted on it. One day, in my early twenty's, as I sat in the

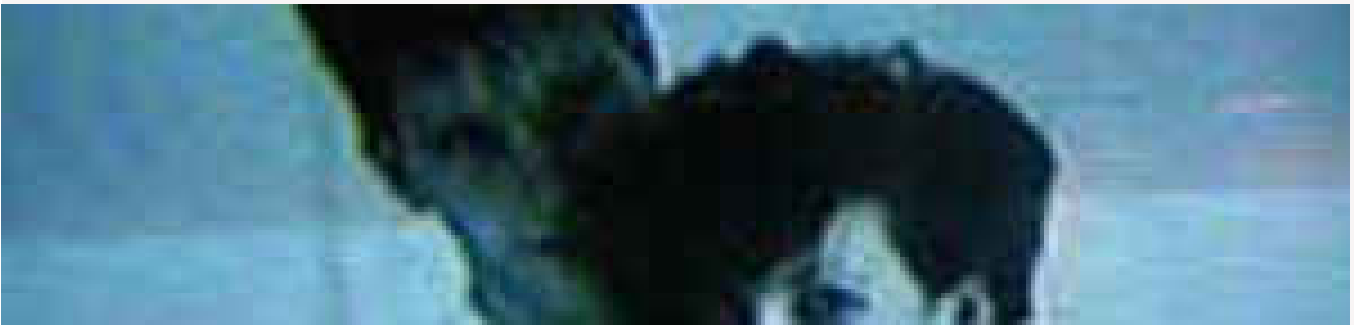
woods not far from my house, I had a serious conversation with my God. I told him or her that I was a homosexual and I knew that very soon I was going to act on it. I extended an invitation to God and asked God to do me a favor. I wanted him or her to take my life before I did anything that would jeopardize my chances of going to heaven. If by accepting my homosexuality and acting upon it, I would be sent to hell, I wanted God to take my life immediately. Just like everyone else who lives a religious life, my main goal was to get to heaven and I didn't want anything to get in the way of that; certainly not my sexuality. It was at this point that I felt the energy of my life begin to change.

Shortly after my conversation with God, things really started to move in a different direction. My sister stopped me in my tracks one morning and asked me if I was gay. She had found out that I was gay through one of my nephew's friends. (That's another story all together.) She promised me that nothing would happen to me if I told the truth, and I knew at that very moment that my life had come to a crossroads. If I told her I wasn't gay, then I would have to live a life of lies and deception. If I told her I was gay, I would have to go through the humiliation of my family knowing. I already knew how they felt about gay people. Right then and there I admitted that I was gay, and have never denied it since. From that point in my life my sexuality foreshadowed every other part of my personality. I told myself that I wasn't going to be ashamed. I didn't want to be ashamed of something I had no control over. I knew

that if anyone ever detected shame, they would use it against me. I trusted the fact that from that moment on, God (my lucky star) would be with me, and guide me in the right direction.

## Physical Attraction

*was the seventh track from the album titled Madonna. - "Maybe we were meant to be together even though we never met before."*



In the spring of 1984 (April 25) we welcomed a new member to our family. My brother Adam and his wife Naomi, had a little girl named Abigail Norah. The fact that I was able to give Abigail her middle name was very special for me. It was the first time in my life that I got to name a family member. I knew that no one in the family would ever name their child after me, since I was gay, so this was the closest I would get to passing on a name. My family was very important to me, so this was a great honor for me.

Six months after Abigail was born, my life took a big turn. I was sitting in a restaurant in Greensboro, North Carolina, and three tables down was the most beautiful man I had ever seen in my life. (At the time I felt really funny about saying that about another man.) This guy had jet-black, curly hair, olive skin, and was wearing a black, short-sleeve, crew neck t-shirt. I could tell instantly that he wasn't from North Carolina. I suspected he was visiting from out of town.

I sat and stared at this man for what must have been an hour, and not once did he look up from his newspaper to notice me. I left disappointed, mainly because I didn't have the nerve to introduce myself, or even get him to look at me. (The Ice Princess was very shy in those days.) But seeing him sparked a fire in me that I had never felt before. It felt much deeper than just a physical attraction.

That evening I drove back to my hometown and told my best friend, Mary, about seeing this beautiful stranger.

## Burning Up

*was the seventh track from the album titled Madonna. - "Maybe we were meant to be together even though we never met before."*



Several weeks later I went out to my favorite gay bar for a night of dancing. After I arrived I headed back to coat check and walked past the same guy that I had seen at the restaurant a few weeks earlier. He was just as handsome as the first time I saw him. As I walked by him he looked at me, smiled and nodded, as if to say hello. I immediately smiled back at him, very happy with the fact that he had finally noticed me.

After checking my coat I headed to the bar for a soda and that's when this stranger came up to

me and asked me to dance. Without any hesitation, I accepted his invitation. We spent the next couple of hours dancing and having a great time together.

Once we finished dancing, the two of us walked out onto the patio and began getting to know one another. It was at this point that he told me that his name was, Thaddeus. During our conversation I discovered that he had just recently moved to Greensboro, from Los Angeles, on a one-year assignment with a religious organization called, "The Way". He admitted up front that his main goal in being a member of The Way was to eventually convert himself from a homosexual, to a heterosexual.

After we talked for about an hour he began looking at his watch and then told me that he had to go. Apparently, he had a curfew and had to be home by a certain time. I asked him if he wanted me to walk him to his car. He accepted. As he was about to get into his car he gave me a hug and it was that very moment that my life completely changed. I knew right then and there that I had found the one that I had been waiting on.

As fate would have it we would spend the next several months getting to know one another.

While Thaddeus was doing his very best to convince me and himself that being gay was wrong, I was doing my very best to convince him otherwise. Even though I had never been with anyone my entire life, I was sure that Thaddeus and I were meant to be together.

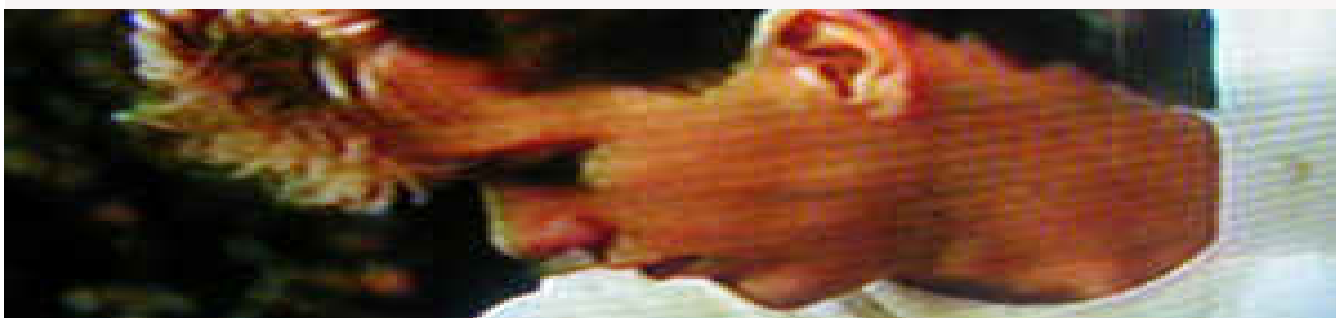
Although my attraction for him was very physical, I also felt something very deeply on a soul level. I knew I was meant to learn something very important from this person.

At various times, while hanging out with Thaddeus, things got very confusing. On one hand I knew that I had waited a very long time to feel this way about another person, so I was very confident in the fact that he was supposed to be my first, but on the other hand, I wished things

weren't so conflicting. I figured everything was just as it was supposed to be; this was my lesson, and his.

## Like A Virgin

*was the first single from the Like A Virgin album. It had just come out a couple of weeks prior to me having sex with Thaddeus for the very first time. - "Oh your love thawed out yeah, your love thawed out what was scared and cold like a virgin touched for the very first time."*



On December 4th, 1984, several months after meeting Thaddeus, I was touched for the very first time. It was the night that changed EVERYTHING and would teach me so many lessons about life, love and my faith in God. The very next day I called my best friends about the news. I was the "Ice Princess" no more.

# Crazy For You

*was released in 1985, and recorded for the soundtrack to the movie Vision Quest. - "I'm crazy for you, Touch me once and you'll know it's true, I never wanted anyone like this, It's all brand new, you'll feel it in my kiss, I'm crazy for you."*



Thaddeus could do no wrong in my eyes. I had waited my entire life for this guy and I wasn't going to let him go. We spent a lot of time together in the evenings and on weekends, when he could get away from his responsibilities. He wasn't allowed to leave the city limits of Greensboro, but we would sneak away and go hiking in the mountains, or take a drive to the coast where we would lie in the sun. We both really enjoyed spending time in nature.

Everything was so new, exciting and fun.

I remember one day Thaddeus and I drove to this really nice park right outside the city limits. It was a cold day in early spring. Somehow Thaddeus had discovered this park and decided that the two of us should go there for a hike. Upon our arrival he retrieved his backpack from the trunk of the car, which was packed with food and drinks, along with a blanket. I had no idea what he had planned. As we got out of the car we noticed people everywhere. We walked through the crowd of people and back into the woods. There was no path in the woods, so we made our own path as we went along. We walked so far back in the woods that we could no



longer hear the people playing in the park. Thaddeus threw down his blanket and laid out the food and beverages, and before I knew it we were completely naked and under the blanket. I remember looking up into sky and thinking this was the best moment of my life. I had fallen completely in love. I felt extremely lucky to experience such a wonderful moment with another human being. It almost felt like a dream.

## Live to Tell

*was the fourth track from the True Blue album. This song caught my attention and it was at this point that I realized the connection between Madonna's music and me. This song moved me on several different levels. It was during the days that I wondered if I had AIDS. I wondered how long I had to live. I wondered if my family would ever understand what I was going through. Every time the song got to the part "How would they hear the beating of my heart", I thought of my family. Everything was so uncertain during the spring of 1986. I didn't think I would live to see my 30th birthday. I thought back to my conversation with God and wondered if this is really what God had in store for me. Where was all of this taking me? - "The light that you could never see it shines inside, you can't take that from me."*



Thaddeus and I spent many incredible times together. He was a great teacher and I learned so much from him. We always loved making out in the wildest places, which always made it exciting. It used to make me angry to see straight people making out in the parks, and we

couldn't even kiss each other without getting arrested or making a scene. It all just felt so unfair, but sometimes the sneaking around made it that much hotter.

In the summer of 1985 things took a drastic change. More and more we kept hearing about AIDS in the news, and more and more I questioned if Thaddeus was infected. At that point they didn't have HIV tests, so no one knew if they were infected. He certainly did not show any symptoms, but I remember having this horrible dream about Thaddeus one night, which made me think that I should be careful. A few days later, as Thaddeus was approaching my apartment, and as I watched him cross the street, my intuition told me that I had to stop seeing him right then and there.

I listened to my intuition and broke it off with him soon afterwards. The next several months were really difficult for me. After all, I had told the man that I had waited for all my life, to go away. For the first time in my life I knew what loneliness felt like and I didn't like it.

Afterwards, Thaddeus and I ran into each other every once in a while and every time I saw him I became very upset. Everyone kept telling me it was because he was my first, but I knew differently. I knew my love for him would last a lifetime.

Thaddeus left NC in the fall of 1985. We got together one last time before his departure. We had lunch and talked. It was very difficult knowing that he was leaving town for good, but I could tell he was ready to get the hell out of North Carolina. A part of me didn't blame him for that.

After lunch he dropped me off at my apartment and then headed out of town. To this day I can still see his car driving down Spring Street, and disappearing over the hill, which was several blocks from my apartment. I ran inside my apartment and cried for several hours.

I had this very strong feeling that I had been exposed to HIV. I just knew it was a matter of time before I would start getting sick. I wanted to run away, but I knew I couldn't go far because I couldn't leave my family.

## La Isla Bonita

*was the seventh track on the True Blue album. I listened to this song the entire time Thaddeus and I were in Cancun, Mexico. - "Beautiful faces, no cares in this world Where a girl loves a boy, and a boy loves a boy."*



Thaddeus and I continued to stay in touch after he left North Carolina. During the fall of 1986 we decided to meet in Cancun, Mexico. When I first laid eyes on Thaddeus in Mexico I knew I was still in love with him. I could tell that he had changed physically; he wasn't as muscular as I had remembered, but it was so good to see him that it really didn't matter.

We checked into our hotel room together. Things were a little awkward at first, but soon we were feeling comfortable with one another and we talked about everything that was going on in our lives.

Thaddeus had left the organization, "The Way" admitting that it was one of the worst experiences of his life. He had gotten a new job with Northwest Airlines, as a flight attendant,

and was flying all over the world. He loved to travel and he really loved his job. He told me that had just recently broken up with his latest boyfriend, and as he shared the details, I suddenly got a sinking feeling in my stomach. At the time I didn't like hearing him speak about his love for someone else.

The next day Thaddeus and I rented a Volkswagen Bug and drove down the coast of Mexico. We explored some Mayan ruins, did some snorkeling, laid in the sun and drank Coronas by the shore. I remember it being a bright, sunny day, and the hot, humid air swirling around the inside of the car as we drove down the highway. The car had no air conditioning, so everything was very humid and sticky. I could remember feeling that the world was okay again, even though Thaddeus and I weren't together any more. I loved being with him. I loved being near him.

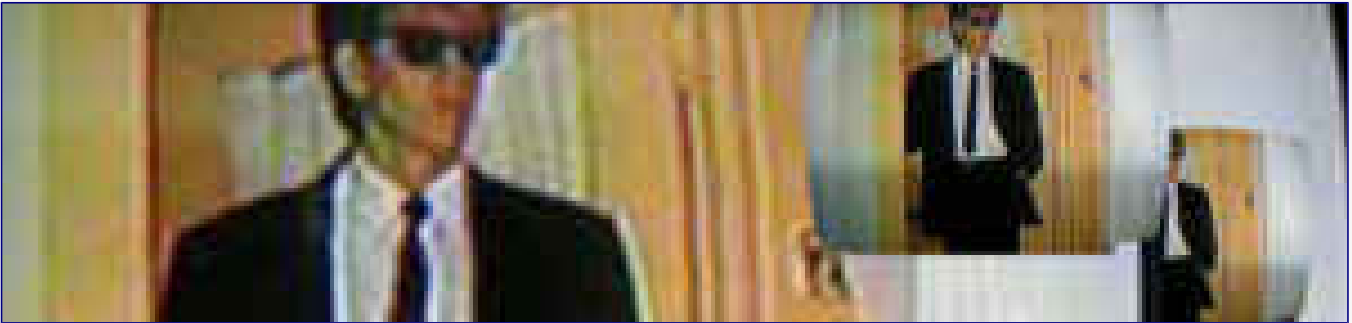
The next day we took a ferry over to Isla Mujeres and spent the day touring that beautiful island. It was a very special time together.

Once our vacation was over Thaddeus returned to his new home in Minneapolis, and I returned to North Carolina. (I would see Thaddeus three more times after this trip.)

At this point in my life I was going out with someone else, a modern dance student from the North Carolina School of the Arts. The two of us had a lot of fun together, he taught me a lot about Modern Dance and introduced me to several really great dancers at his school. Dance continued to be a very big part of my life. The dance floor was my home away from home.

# Where's The Party

*was the fifth track from the True Blue album. "Couldn't wait to get older, Thought I'd have so much fun, Guess I'm one of the grown-ups, Now I have to get the job done. People give me the business, I'm not living in fear, I'm just living in chaos, Gotta get away from here."*



Shortly after returning from Cancun, my mother called to tell me that my father had had a stroke, which left him paralyzed on the right side of his body and blind in his right eye.

Needless to say, I moved back home to help take care of him and my mother. My mother had had Parkinson's disease for several years and was showing signs of serious decline.

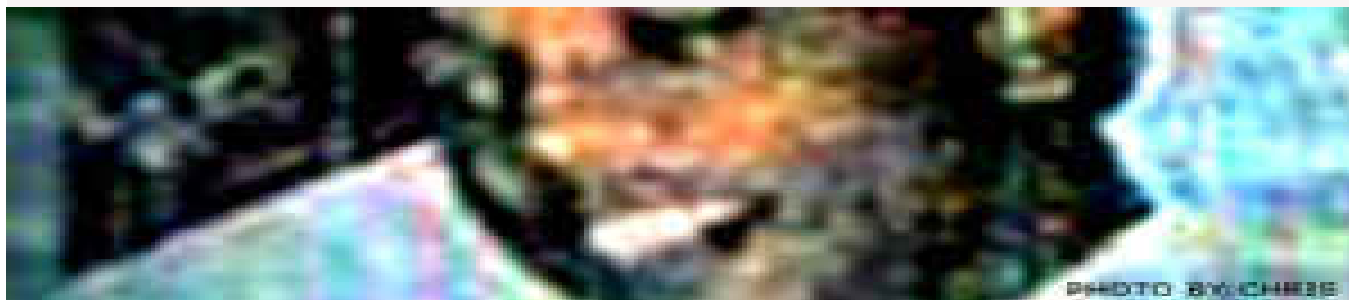
I was working a full-time job, commuting an hour to and from work each day, and helping take care of my parents at night. My sister took care of them during the day, while at the same time trying to maintain her own family life. It was completely exhausting for the two of us and one of the most difficult times of our lives.

On the weekends I would make sure to find some time for myself. Whenever I could break away I would head out to the club and hit the dance floor. It was during those moments on the dance floor that all of my cares went away, and I was free. It was during those moments that I prayed to my guardian angels to watch over me and protect my family.

Madonna's music continued to play a very big part of my life. I always looked to her music for inspiration, courage and strength.

## True Blue

*was the sixth track from the True Blue album. Titus and I were still listening to True Blue, even after the release of Like A Prayer. Titus loved Madonna and we listened to the True Blue tape all of the time. Titus even knew a few "Open Your Heart" dance steps, which always made me laugh. - "I've had other guys I've looked into their eyes But I never knew love before 'Til you walked through my door."*



A few months after moving back in with my parents, I received a letter from Thaddeus telling me that both he and his current lover tested positive for HIV. I was devastated. I sat at the kitchen table with my head in my hands and cried like a baby. The next day I sat down with my mother and told her that I was going to get an HIV test, and explained to her what it meant if it came back positive. I thought to myself, all we need is another sick person in the family. At the time we were told that the incubation period for HIV was up to 4 years, so even if the test came back negative, I just knew it was just a matter of time before I would test positive.

The week it took for the results to come back was the longest week of my life. It was at this point that thoughts of suicide started entering my mind, as it did a lot of gay people back then.

Everyone was walking around scared out of their minds. We were much more ignorant about HIV in those days, and didn't really know how it spread. I remember watching the news one night and hearing the story about two guys who had discovered they had AIDS in New York City. Instead of dying from AIDS, they held hands and jumped from their 10th floor apartment window. It was a horrible time and fear ran rampant. Luckily, my first HIV test came back negative.

A few months later Thaddeus decided to visit North Carolina. It was the first week of January 1987. He specifically made the trip to see his friend, Betty, whom he had met shortly after meeting me for the first time. I didn't see Thaddeus much during this visit. The only time I saw him was when I picked him up at Betty's house, to take him to the airport. It had snowed that day and the drive which would have normally taken only 30-minutes, turned into a two-hour adventure. This gave us time to talk. We didn't discuss his HIV status or any illnesses that he was experiencing. We completely avoided that conversation. Looking back, I can't even remember what we talked about to be completely honest. All I remember was listening to George Winston's CD, "December" on the car stereo while driving through the snow.

Everything felt like it was moving in slow motion that day. I had this sense that everything had been cleansed, or purified in some way.

Once we arrived at the airport I walked Thaddeus to his terminal and watched him board his plane. I waited as the plane pulled away from the gate and headed down the runway. The plane gathered speed, lifted off the runway and disappeared behind the snow clouds. I thought this would be the last time I would see Thaddeus.

The very next week I met someone new. His name was, Titus.

Titus would be my first long term relationship, and the first man that I ever dated that was not white. Initially, one of the things that attracted me to Thaddeus was his olive skin, so finding myself attracted to a man with dark skin wasn't that surprising. However, gay interracial couples were not very common in the 80's, especially in North Carolina.

Now you may think that being gay was taboo with my family, well, dating a person outside of my race was a million times worse. I was taught to be racist, as all of my siblings were. My parents grew up during a time when black people didn't come in the house unless they were "the help" and they most certainly didn't come through the front door. I remember visiting my grandparents house when the black neighbors across the street would come to the back door to ask for something. They were never allowed inside. I'm sure this is where my parents inherited their racism. But I never subscribed to that way of thinking. I could always see that below the surface of skin was another soul just like mine.

There was something very attractive about Titus. So much so that when I first met him I didn't notice his skin color. He had this charm about him that made it very easy to overlook any physical characteristics. Even to this day I don't think I've ever dated anyone as charming as Titus. He had a brilliant mind and knew something about everything. He read constantly. I didn't allow the race issue to get in the way of my wanting to get to know him, in fact, that made me want to explore our connection even further. The white guys in the gay community turned up their noses, which really surprised me. I couldn't understand how any gay person could be prejudice. As far as I was concerned, life was meant to be explored without prejudice. Titus and I played the True Blue cassette all the time. We would look at each other and sing the songs as we were driving down the highway.



# Keep it Together

*was the ninth track on the Like A Prayer album. I played this album over and over and over. I never got sick of it. Everyone else in the world was listening to the Like A Prayer single and talking about the video. I connected with "Keep It Together." This song described my home life perfectly. - "Brothers and sisters they hold the key to your heart and your soul, Don't forget that your family is gold."*



## **My Private Life**

A couple of years passed by and needless to say, Titus and I caused a commotion everywhere we went. People were always talking about us for some reason. As far as gay interracial couples go, we did make a very attractive, interesting couple. I was white, 6'5" tall and thin, Titus was black, 5'4" tall and very stocky and muscular. I learned a lot about myself while dating Titus.

## **My Family Life**

On October 10, 1988, my oldest nephew, Thomas, died from a drug overdose. He was 26 years old. His untimely death devastated my family and sent everyone into a state of shock and depression.

In 1989 my mother and father both were very sick. My father was suffering from his second stroke, while my mother's Parkinson's Disease made her shake uncontrollably. I was still living

at home and trying my very best to deal with the situation, but it was adding a lot of stress to almost everyone in the family. At times we seemed to be at each other throats over every little thing. The great news that year was that my parents celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Along with my brothers and my sister, we threw them an anniversary party and invited all of the extended family to gather in celebration.

I thought about the fact that my mother and father had spent fifty years together. They went through some pretty difficult times, which effected me and all of my siblings very differently. But no matter how bad things got at times, they did a great job providing for their children and sticking through the tough times. I'm sure it wasn't easy being married for that long, but they found a way to stay together and I always admired them for that.

I, on the other hand, had all sorts of relationship challenges. Not long after breaking things off with Titus, I made an attempt to bring someone home to meet my family; a native american. My family had a horrible reaction that left me completely embarrassed, and him left feeling very uncomfortable. I didn't like seeing my family react this way and so I didn't bring any more men around for a while after that experience. Even though I was completely out, I still had to lead two separate lives. I did this for the sake of keeping peace in the family. I understood it, but I didn't really like it.

I continued to love my family a great deal, but in the back of mind I couldn't wait to get out to experience the world and see how other people lived their lives. Sometimes, it was very difficult keeping it together, but I made a sacrifice because I loved my family so much. They made their fair share of sacrifice's, too.

# Like a Prayer

*was the first from Madonna's 4th studio album, Like a Prayer. It was released on February 28, 1989. "I hear your voice, it's like an angel sighing, I have no choice, I hear your voice, Feels like flying, I close my eyes, oh God I think I'm falling, Out of the sky, I close my eyes, Heaven help me."*



After my parents 50th wedding anniversary I received another letter from Thaddeus. This time he extended an invitation for me to visit him in Seattle. He had just bought a new home and he needed help painting a couple of bedrooms. I had never been to Seattle and I really wanted to see Thaddeus, and so we planned a trip for that November. I was very nervous about seeing him, but at the same time I was ready to get out of North Carolina. I needed a break.

As my plane landed I became very nervous. I didn't know what to expect. As I got my luggage out of the overhead bin and walked towards the front of the plane, my stomach gathered in knots. When I walked around the corner and out of the gate, there stood Thaddeus. I almost didn't recognize him. I pretended that his appearance didn't affect me, but inside I was totally devastated. I gave him a tight hug and started talking about my flight and how much flying scared me, especially the cross-country flights.

That weekend Thaddeus and I spent our time together touring Seattle. We painted one of his

bedrooms and watched movies on his new VHS tape player. Several times throughout the day Thaddeus had to lie down. It was mostly due to the new drug he was taking, AZT. At one point during my visit we went to his clinic to get his prescription filled, and I was horrified when I walked in and saw all of the AIDS patients. To me, each one of these people looked like warriors and soldiers, brought in to fight a new war for all of mankind.

During my trip I told Thaddeus about Titus and the fact that I had dated a man outside my race. Thaddeus made a couple of smart comments and even said at one point, "Well, maybe if I was black, you'd still have feelings for me!" I didn't say anything because I knew what he was truly trying to say. Thaddeus was very lonely and scared. It broke my heart to see him this way. I wasn't sure how to comfort him, or even if I could. I just sat and held space and sent healing energy his way.

Thaddeus' family was Catholic and he told me that they never accepted his homosexuality, much less his sickness, so he had a very hard time of it. Thaddeus was very strong spiritually, so I knew he would be okay on that level. I wanted to stay with him a few more days, but I had to return to my parents in North Carolina. I felt as though this would be the last time I would see Thaddeus, however, I would see him one more time.