

BRITISH & KLAUS

Two young men, widely known and loved in Atlanta's Gay community, were brutally murdered last week. Daily newspapers suggested motives for this crime might be robbery or LSD madness. Those of us who are Gay know better, or at least we should. The violence that killed British and Klaus is but the ultimate form of that oppression and violence we live under every day of our lives.

How can I write about it? What can I say? British was my first lover. We laughed and danced and played together. We counseled together. For these past two years we shared our most serious thoughts and sorrows together. He taught me the pride and joy of being Gay-identified, and he was the first man I held hands with in public. The gifts of love British gave not only to me but to everyone he met was like an oasis in the desert of our oppression.

Not only was British Gay, he was Black. To be Black in the racist, sexist atmosphere of Gay bars where blond prince charmings are the ideal is to be invisible. Not only was British Gay and Black, he did drag shows. He did not "put on" the image of the stereotyped feminine role caricature as do many drag queens. What he was flowed from within and showed a deep respect for and understanding of women. The songs he chose were personal statements of the joy and pain he experienced in loving men. In 1971, the Atlanta Gay Establishment, partly in an attempt to undercut its racist image, chose British Miss Gay Atlanta. The image was now complete. British, like Marilyn Monroe before him, was a myth figure to project to the world. It was an image that was forced on him and one which increasingly took its toll. Everyone knew the image, but when the shows and the parties were over, who cared to really know or be with the man underneath? It was often anyone or no one. Perhaps this is how it was the night he died.

And Klaus. . . again, what can I write or say? His loyalty and generosity and affection were as boundless as the sea. Only once in two years did I see Klaus angry. It was at the first public GLF meeting in February 1971. He surprised even his friends by suddenly yelling we should storm city hall and put an end to the shit we face for being Gay. But Klaus, like British, never got involved in the collective Gay Liberation struggle and the individual solution never quite succeeded because it never could.

This is not the first incident of violence against Gays in Atlanta. We've been jumped, entrapped and beaten in the parks and in the streets. The Atlanta police have condoned if not participated in our harassment. Their solution is to drive us into hiding. Last year a drag queen was found by the highway, shot in the head. These incidents are always played down by Atlanta's Establishment newspapers. We are encouraged to lament our oppression, not to be angry and organize against it. Now is the time for new realization and action.

-steve abbott



British Sterling, Miss Gay Atlanta of 1971.

SPECIAL SALE
on
heavy Halloween garments

Belta Resurrection
111 Church St. Decatur
378-6423

Wed.-Fri. 11-6p.m. Sat.-Sun. 1-5p.m.

HOMEFINDERS

AND THAT'S WHAT WE DO.

House and Apartment Rental Service

for All Situations

Kids
Pets
Singles

873-5791

Students
Long Hairs
Short Term

581 Peachtree Street, NE, 7 days a week

We are Proud
to Announce
**THE HAMPTON
GREASE BAND**

will perform at

THE CONCERT FOR

BANGLADESH

Sunday, October 29

Lake Spivey

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

REGARDING BOOKINGS

PLEASE CALL US AT 432-0051 or 432-0052

ATLANTA WRITERS CO-OP
Confidential, original work
done on term, class, and thesis
papers by our staff. Call Mick
Watters

875-4098 11-7
223 Ponce deLeon NE, 208
7 days a week.

**ANSLEY MALL
BOOK STORE**

psychology religious education
and best sellers, both hardback and paperback

**A FULL LINE
BOOK STORE**

1544 Piedmont Road
875-2624