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## Through Rainbow-Colored Glasses

By Christine Dinsmore

We are the new Willie Horton. For those who don't remember Horton, or came of age politically after he emerged as the fear factor in electoral politics, here's the skinny: Horton was the black face in Papa Bush's attack ads against Michael Dukakis.

The advertisements showed Horton, a Massachusetts convict who committed rape and armed robbery while on a weekend furlough, whirling through a revolving prison gate. Bush Senior insisted that the ads were about crime, not race. But African-Americans were certain that Horton was a not-so-subliminal Republican message that black men equated to violence, and that a President Dukakis would send dark-skinned people into white neighborhoods.

Today, Republicans are counting on homophobia to distract the public from their failed policies and GOP malfeasance. Don't be surprised to see political ads against gubernatorial candidate and same-sex marriage supporter Eliot Spitzer. The scene: terrified suburban soccer moms bolting their doors, a voice-over booming, "Lesbian brides coming to your neighborhood."

During the last presidential election, I backpedaled on same-sex marriage. I was willing to be the good Democrat, forgoing my self-interest in search of the greater good—defeating George W. I took a similar approach as the 1960 civil-rights advocates, who slowed their push for equality until after the election of John F. Kennedy.

I'm done being the loyal party minion. I'm fighting back against Republicans, and I'm going after Democrats who fail us as well.

Both New York senators have said that they are against same-sex marriage. This is New York—not South Dakota. Still, some of our political allies align themselves with reactionary zealots.

For the record, I'm not voting for any candidate who doesn't support my civil rights. Politicians can no longer pass as gay-friendly while insisting that their failure to endorse same-sex marriage is only about the right of Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, or any other organization that cloaks its bigotry in religiosity not to "bless" our unions. If that's their rationale for discrimination, then marriage can

only be a religious union, not a legal one. Couples—same-sex or not—who don't wed in a church, synagogue, mosque or temple are joined in civil unions, not marriages, with equal rights and responsibilities. Anything less fails my litmus test. If no nominee represents my values, I'm either writing in a vote or sitting the election out.

I was in New York City on St. Patrick's Day, foaming at the mouth because Hillary Clinton marched in the parade of bigots. Her sorry excuse: She doesn't agree with the Ancient Order of Hibernians, but the courts upheld their right to exclude the Irish Lesbian & Gay Organization.

Would she have participated if the Hibernians excluded the Irish-Jewish Association or the African-American/Irish Alliance?

If Stonewall Democrats support Hillary for Senate, they are no different than Log Cabin Republicans who have endorsed candidates working against LGBT interests. Have queer Democrats not noticed Hillary's stance on issues that are dear to us? And, for that matter, have progressives failed to compute that she supports the Iraq war and voted for the Patriot Act?

The good news is that only two Democrats running in New York—Clinton and gubernatorial candidate Tom Suozzi—are against same-sex marriage. As far as I'm concerned, if Hil expects to remain on the Hill, she has a lot of work to do before the September Democratic primary. Our votes shouldn't come cheap. We have a choice and it's not between Republican-lite or nothing. Jonathan Tasini ([www.tasinifornewyork.org](http://www.tasinifornewyork.org)) supports our rights, the immediate withdrawal from Iraq, and universal health insurance, and he's running for the U.S. Senate. He's worth a closer look. And we're worth being courted.