

# Author, Former BTL Contributor Brent Dorian Carpenter Dead at 55

## Brent Dorian Carpenter

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BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Author Brent Dorian Carpenter, a former reporter and columnist for *Between The Lines*, died March 23 from complications from heart surgery. He was 55.

A native Detroit, Carpenter graduated from Cass Technical High School in 1981. He was gifted with the pen both as a writer and artist. Carpenter struggled somewhat coming out in the Detroit of the 1980s. This was complicated by the fact that he was diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

Carpenter “learned to use his joy of writing to navigate the treacherous psychological waters of bipolarism, and has learned to use his battles with his obsessive/compulsive nature to hone his literary craft,” said writer Stephen Maglott in a 2014 online profile.

Carpenter began writing for *Between The Lines* in 2001. He covered general news but gained a great deal of attention for the two columns he wrote for the paper, *Brent’s Fagenda* and, later, *Brent Reloaded*. In the racy *Fagenda*, with such column headings as “C’mon, Baby, Let Me Just Stick the Head In,” “In Search of the Perfect Orgy,” “When the Bottom Falls Out



of the Market,” “Girl, He Tore my Guts Out” and “When are You Queens Going to Let Go of Astrology?” Carpenter quickly made a name for himself in Metro Detroit’s LGBT community.

“Brent was mercurial and kind of progressive,” said friend Keronce Sims recalling those early columns. “He was truthful to a fault.”

Carpenter was known not only as a writer but also as an AIDS activist who was open not only about his struggles with HIV but also with mental illness. But for all his challenges, Carpenter rallied. In 2004, he, along with partners Johnny Jenkins, Imani Williams, BTL

publishers Susan Horowitz and Jan Stevenson and Teresa Kelly, the publisher of the *Michigan Citizen*, another paper he wrote for, produced the first ever town hall meeting to address homophobia in Detroit. It was moderated by then-Fox 2 reporter and anchor Charles Pugh and drew a packed crowd.

“There was a moment two weeks before the town hall that I helped organize to address homophobia in Detroit’s black community when I realized it was the most important thing I had done in my entire life,” Carpenter, himself, later reflected for a column in BTL. “No venue of that nature had ever been convened before. My magnificent collaborators ... and I were making history.”

Also, in 2004, Carpenter was presented with the Media Award at the LGBT Community Pride Banquet. He would continue to write off and on for BTL and the *Citizen* for several years. While with BTL, Carpenter began releasing books. He started in 2001 with “Man of the Cloth,” the fantastical science fiction story of a catastrophic plane crash that wipes out the Pope and the upper hierarchy of the Catholic Church, plunging the Holy See into turmoil. In the wake of the crash, a desperate Vatican cardinal named Attanasio Calabrese teams with the unscrupulous geneticist Dr. Wilmut Gunther Jung to conspire to create a clone of the messiah Jesus Christ from the divine blood on the holy relic the Shroud of Turin.

For his second book, “This Time Around,” a

gay African American college student discovers a way to travel through time and goes back to 15th-century Africa to attempt to stop the Atlantic slave trade before it begins.

After relocating back to Atlanta in 2006, Carpenter continued to release material including “Bald Ambition: A Collection of Award-Winning Essays, Bios of Black Gay Historical Figures, Black Pride Diaries, Erotic Short Stories and More,” the novel “The 21st Century Chronicles of Thuggy,” “The Barbarian King,” the graphic novels “T’Shai: The Fall and Resurrection and Enemy Space: The War of Syzgy.” He would also create and write a comic book series called “U.N. Force” and, later, “U.N. Force Files.”

He shopped projects to Hollywood and worked on screenplays while in Georgia. But his main source of income during this time was derived from his work as a personal trainer. He loved animals and often took in strays.

“He was the big brother I never had,” said longtime friend Ebon A. Pinson in a Facebook tribute. “We argued like brothers – doggone Aries – but it was only love. I wouldn’t be as big of a Prince fan if it weren’t for him. He loved Prince. And he loved his mother Carmen like no other. She was his saving grace. He would be the first to tell you that if it weren’t for her, we wouldn’t have had him as long as we did.”

Carpenter is survived by his mother, Carmen Carpenter, and brothers Kevin Carpenter and Spencer Carpenter III