

# Christopher Street

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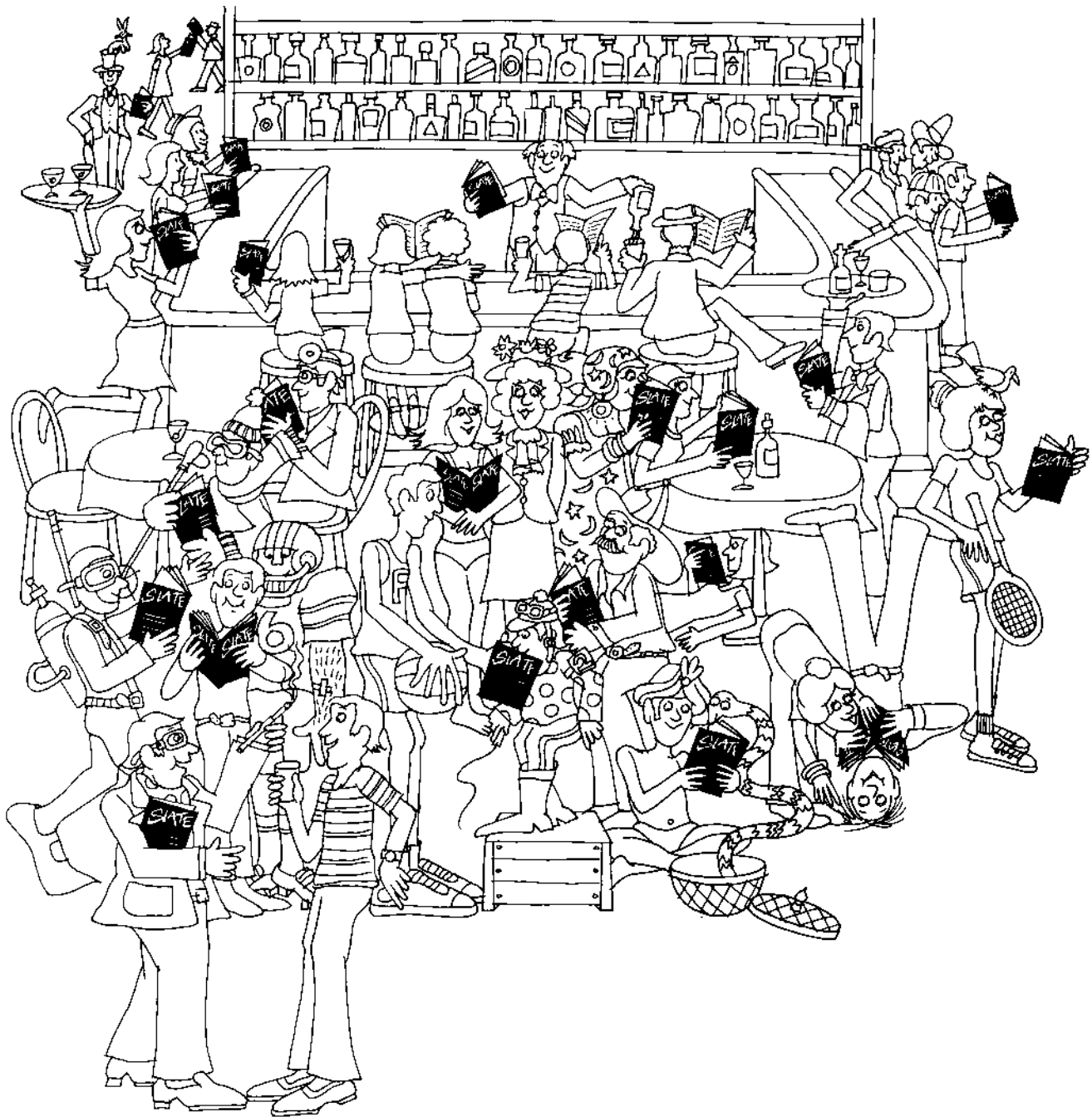
## MAKING LOVE IN CARS

by Andrew Holleran

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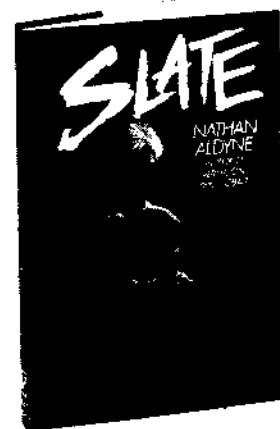
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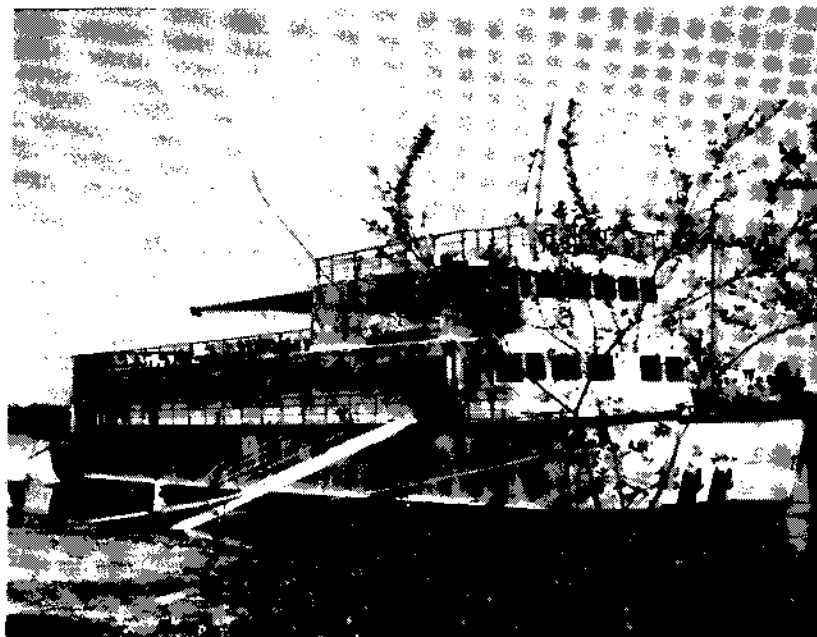
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# Christopher Street

ISSUE 84

VOL. 7, NO. 12

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We must march, my darlings, at the Democratic Convention in San Francisco; love from Naples; a mother's tears in New Jersey; and at least *somebody* loves William Golding.

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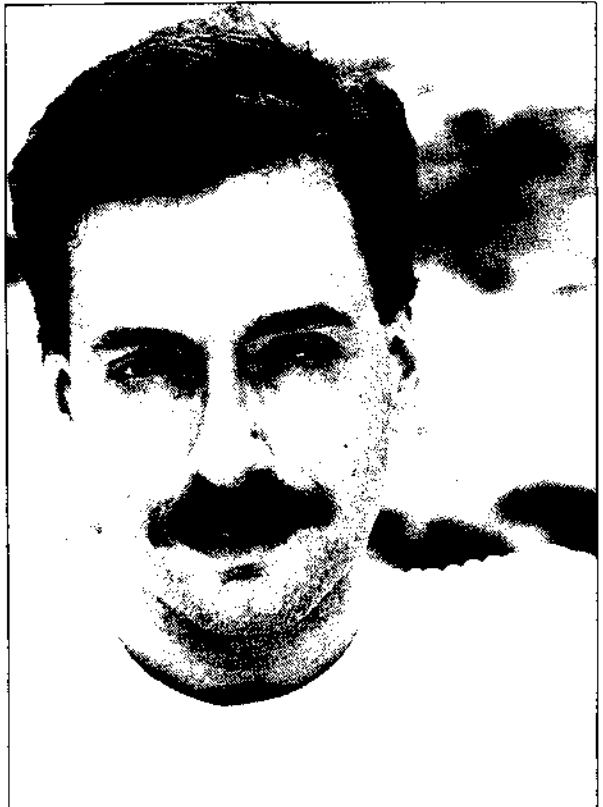
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# CONTRIBUTORS

**Quentin Crisp** is perhaps best known as the author of *The Naked Civil Servant*. For his contributions to *Christopher Street* over the past year, he has been awarded the Wallace Hamilton Award for Outstanding Achievement in Cultural Writing. He is delighted to make his home in Manhattan, where, he says, "even the police understand me."



FRED GORMLEY

**James E. D'Eramo, Ph.D.**, earned his doctorate in Medical Ecology (Infectious Diseases) at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. He is presently the medical editor and science writer of the *New York Native*.

**Fred Gormley** is art director of the *New York Native*. He attended Carnegie-Mellon University, where he studied set design and journalism. He has written for various magazines, and once hosted his own radio show in Pittsburgh. He is impossible to talk to on deadline days.

**Nicole Hollander's** most recent collection of cartoons is *My Weight Is Always Perfect For My Height—Which Varies* (St. Martin's). Her work is syndicated throughout the country, while she lives in Chicago.

**Andrew Holleran** is the celebrated author of *Dancer from the Dance* and *Nights in Aruba*, both published by Morrow. Mostly, he lives in Manhattan.

**Boyd McDonald's** most recent and most notorious book is *Cum*, which consists of further adventures of *Straight to Hell* readers (Gay Sunshine Press). He lives in Manhattan and never misses a Zachary Scott movie on television.

**Richard Mohr** is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

**Ethan Mordden** was educated at Friends Academy and the University of Pennsylvania, and has taught at Yale. His tenth book is *Smarts: The Cultural I.Q. Test*, and this fall brings *Demented!: The World of the Opera Diva* and (Winnie-the-) *Pooh's Workout Book*.

**Frank Perich** used to own Hudson County Antiques in Greenwich Village, which had in its front window a life-size grandmother mannequin and a blackboard with her daily saying scrawled upon it. His *CS Thoughts* are an extension of the sayings of grandmother, whom he considers his alter-ego.

**Felice Picano** is a novelist, poet, essayist, founder/publisher of The Seahorse Press, and co-publisher of the Gay Presses of New York. His novel, *House of Cards*, will be published by Delacorte in May.

KEVIN SMITH

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# LETTERS

## Political Will

As an ex-N.Y., ex-L.A., San Francisco resident, I enjoyed Robert Ferro's remarks on the need to underscore our commonalities in this time of trial.

May I suggest that for those venturing west this summer an even more concrete focus for collective political will than writing to the newspapers would be participation in the demonstration for gay and lesbian rights planned for July 15 on the eve of the Democratic Convention in San Francisco?

Please send a donation to the March Committee at 2301 Market Street, San Francisco, California 94114.

Walt Westman  
San Francisco

## Terrific

Issue 82 of *Christopher Street* is far and away the best you've ever put together—so much so that I think you'd do well to analyze exactly why it's so terrific. (I'm assuming that you're aware how great it is.) Well, let's see: wit, intelligence, and elegance mark all of the pieces, and for good measure, Quentin Crisp (on Burroughs) and Robert Ferro (on the current gay crisis) are pertinent, while Boyd McDonald (on Richard Widmark) and the cover story on Jockey Shorts by James Tamulis were both funny and sexually

titillating. I also liked Brad Gooch's story very much.

Obviously, publishing first-rate writers is half of it, but getting them to write on subjects of real interest is just as important. I read everything in this *Christopher Street*, and I've not done that before. PLEASE keep up the good work, as I have a subscription to your magazine.

Joe LeSueur  
Manhattan

## That's Amore

I enjoyed really very much three consecutive issues of your magazine (78 to 80). Both fictions and essays are meaningful and appealing. Sometimes your pages are so funny I burst out laughing (e.g. "The Preppie" by Ethan Mordden in issue 79) and sometimes I've to choke back my tears (e.g. the three poems by Felice Picano in issue 80).

Thank you for the work you do and . . . *Christopher Street* certainly is something better than a gay *New Yorker*.

Gaily from Naples,

Cesare Colletta  
Naples, Italy

## Moral Criteria

To refute all of Timothy Murphy's gross oversimplifications of William

Golding's work (issue 81) would be too lengthy, I am sure, to be printed in your letters section. I am, however, reasonably certain that any aware undergraduate student could do so. Besides which, any reputable publication would invite response from the author being attacked. Will *Christopher Street* do the same?

The awarding of Nobel prizes sparks controversy. Good. Diversity of opinion is to be encouraged. But suggesting that one use "moral liberation" as a criterion for awarding the prize in literature left me shaking my head in disbelief. Whose moral criteria do we use—yours, mine, Timothy Murphy's, Jerry Falwell's . . . ? And, if we use "moral liberation" as a criterion in literature, why not in other areas as well?

And by the way, Mordden, some of us here in Tucson are as enamored of the theatre as you are.

Jim Bryant  
Tucson, Arizona

## Mother Prudence

As a mother of five children who reads your magazine on a regular basis, I must voice my objections to the *succession* in which two of your recent *Gay-poon* articles appeared. Parents try so hard to give their children values and you come along and *first* present the joys of parenthood and how to go about adopting a child (issue 81—the baby in the pictures was darling!!!). Then, *after that*, the charming June bride piece (issue 83—so helpful and in such good taste!). It's just unfortunate—to my old-fashioned way of thinking—that these articles were presented in the chronological order they were. To quote a fine old saying: "First comes love, then comes marriage, *then* comes parenthood and the baby carriage."

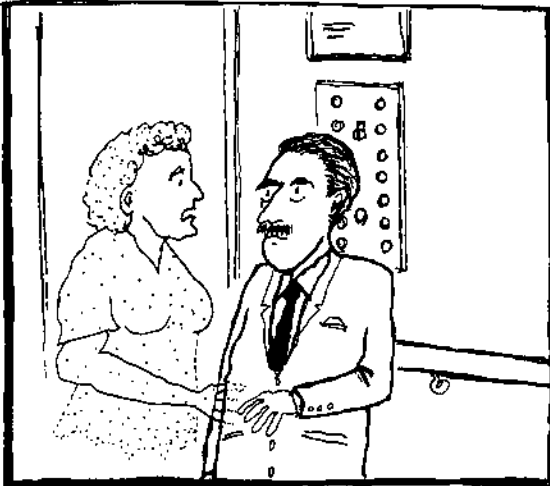
A lovely thought. I rest my case.

Mom of Five  
Maplewood, New Jersey

---

*We'd love to hear from you. Address your letters to Thomas Steele, Christopher Street magazine, 249 West Broadway, New York, New York 10013. Please indicate whether your letter may be considered for publication and, if so, whether your name may be used.*

NEIL OFTEN HEARD THE NAGGING VOICE OF HIS DEAD MOTHER. ONE TIME SHE MATERIALIZED IN AN ELEVATOR.



Margulies

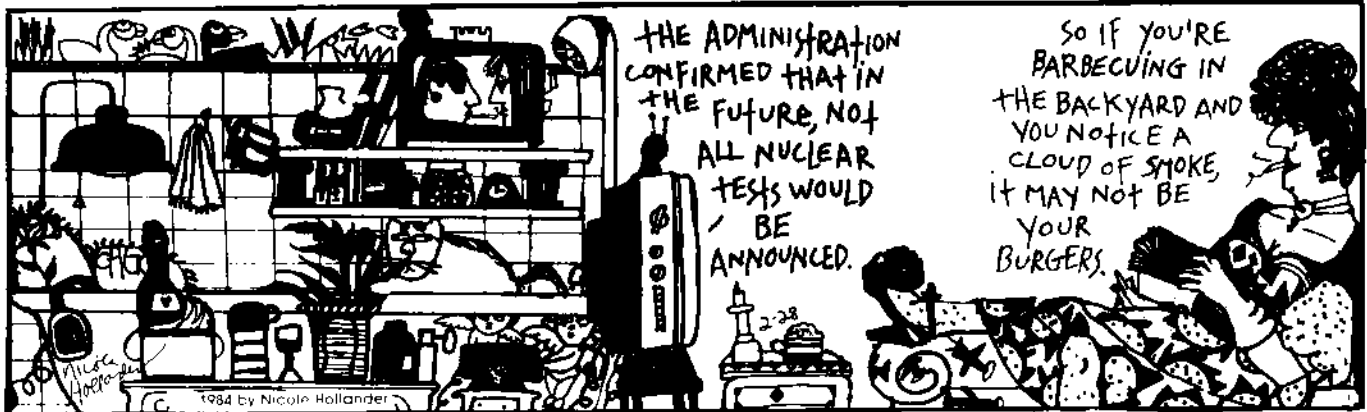


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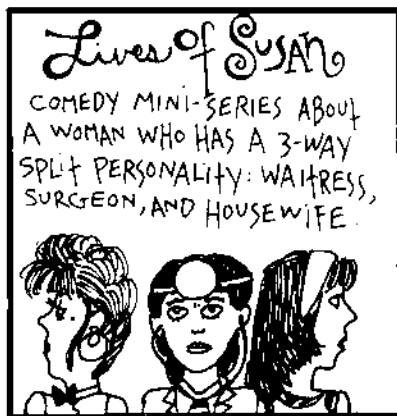
# HOLLANDER x 4



THE ADMINISTRATION  
CONFIRMED THAT IN  
THE FUTURE, NOT  
ALL NUCLEAR  
TESTS WOULD  
BE  
ANNOUNCED.

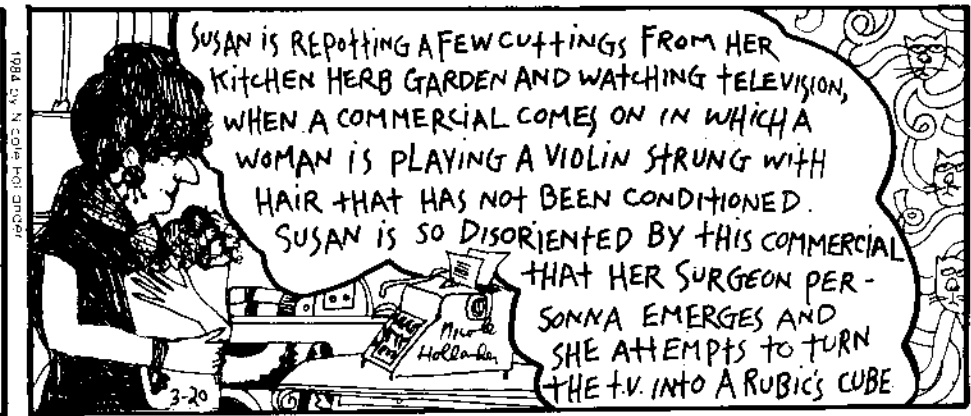
SO IF YOU'RE  
BARBECUING IN  
THE BACKYARD AND  
YOU NOTICE A  
CLOUD OF SMOKE,  
IT MAY NOT BE  
YOUR  
BURGERS.

1984 by Nicole Hollander



## Lives of Susan

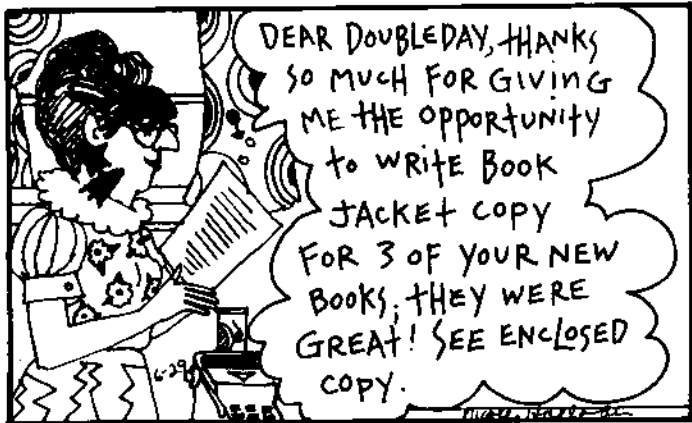
COMEDY MINI-SERIES ABOUT  
A WOMAN WHO HAS A 3-WAY  
SPLIT PERSONALITY: WAITRESS,  
SURGEON, AND HOUSEWIFE.



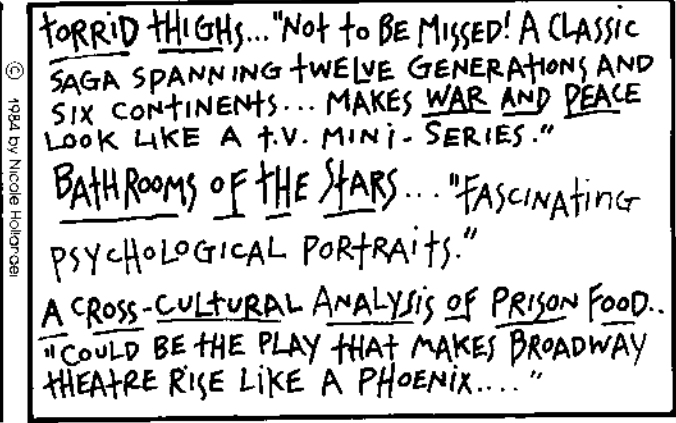
SUSAN IS REPOTTING A FEW CUTTINGS FROM HER  
KITCHEN HERB GARDEN AND WATCHING TELEVISION,  
WHEN A COMMERCIAL COMES ON IN WHICH A  
WOMAN IS PLAYING A VIOLIN STRUNG WITH  
HAIR THAT HAS NOT BEEN CONDITIONED.  
SUSAN IS SO DISORIENTED BY THIS COMMERCIAL  
THAT HER SURGEON PER-  
SONNA EMERGES AND  
SHE ATTEMPTS TO TURN  
THE T.V. INTO A RUBIC'S CUBE

1984 by Nicole Hollander

3-20

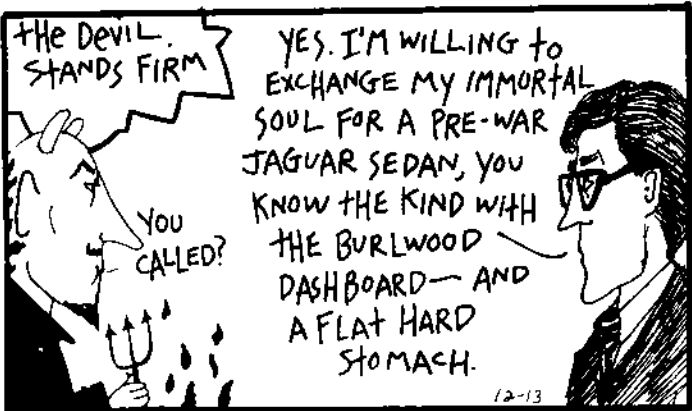


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ME THE OPPORTUNITY  
TO WRITE BOOK  
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FOR 3 OF YOUR NEW  
BOOKS; THEY WERE  
GREAT! SEE ENCLOSED  
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BATHROOMS OF THE STARS... "FASCINATING  
PSYCHOLOGICAL PORTRAITS."  
A CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF PRISON FOOD...  
"COULD BE THE PLAY THAT MAKES BROADWAY  
THEATRE RISE LIKE A PHOENIX..."

1984 by Nicole Hollander



THE DEVIL  
STANDS FIRM

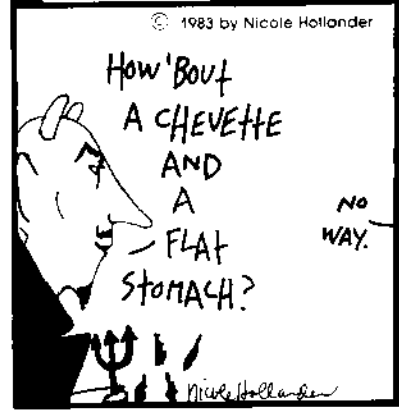
YOU  
CALLED?

YES. I'M WILLING TO  
EXCHANGE MY IMMORTAL  
SOUL FOR A PRE-WAR  
JAGUAR SEDAN, YOU  
KNOW THE KIND WITH  
THE BURLWOOD  
DASHBOARD— AND  
A FLAT HARD  
STOMACH.

12-13



I'M  
TERRIBLY  
SORRY,  
BUT  
YOU  
CAN'T  
HAVE  
BOTH.



HOW 'BOUT  
A CHEVETTE  
AND  
A  
FLAT  
STOMACH?

NO  
WAY.

1983 by Nicole Hollander



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### ARMY NAVY STORES

# NEW YORK NOTEBOOK

by Andrew Holleran

## Car Sex

*Meaningless sex should not require a half-tank of gas.*

I waited till I was twenty-eight before I got a driver's license, and when the girl next door drove me over to the examining station in a small Florida town on Highway 301, I was grateful she did not ask why. I wasn't sure myself, but part of the reason—besides attending school in cities with public transportation—was laziness. If life is divided into drivers and the driven, I thought the latter had the advantage. Why would anyone want to drive, I wondered as I sat all those years looking out the window at scenery the driver couldn't take his eyes off the road to see. What a hassle! When I moved to New York I felt free of the machine forever. Friends who had driven would tell me hilarious stories—of driving into neighbors' living rooms—that only confirmed our alienation from the basis of most American life; but that all belonged to an adolescent past that was behind us now.

In fact living in New York made owning a car not only unnecessary but fairly impossible. And we took a train to the beach. I disliked the cars that did crowd Manhattan so much I used to dream that one day it would resemble Peking East: a sea of bicycles, cars banished. One evening while cycling up Broadway against the traffic, another man on a ten-speed yelled at me: "You're going the wrong way, you asshole!" and while furious, I realized later he was quite right. I came to hate cyclists because they made their own rules, and sometimes hit pedestrians. So when my bicycle was stolen I did not replace it. Everywhere I went after that I took the subway, or, best of all, my own feet. Then one winter I found myself stuck in a town deep south and realized I had no choice in the matter: off to the Highway Patrol I went.

Having a license did not make me love cars—I gave in for the simple reason that everything outside of New York City is a car culture—but in fact I came to see its peculiar advantages. Having a license

made it easier to cash checks. It was our country's version of the identity card. The first time I visited Los Angeles (the supreme car culture) and was driven everywhere by other people, I hated it. The second time I rented my own car and found myself driving in from the airport at three a.m. with Barbra Streisand on the radio as the empty sidewalks floated past me, and I thought: So this is L.A.! That week was fun. But when I returned to New York I didn't miss it. I was very happy to be free of cars again. Life in Manhattan made owning a car so onerous—the parking regulations that got people up at eight to move their auto to the other side of the street; the rental in garages—that it seemed, at best, an unwieldy hunk of metal which only people who lived elsewhere had to suffer. On Fire Island cars were forbidden and one was irritated to see, when you took a long walk down the beach, the vans used by the police or the schools speed by. One of the reasons we preferred Fire Island to the Hamptons, in fact, was merely that in the Hamptons "You have to get in a car to do everything."

This left nevertheless a certain romantic longing for the mystique of pistons and gas tanks and big rubber tires: In one of the baths in New York a truck was constructed as a stage set in which to have sex. And in certain parking lots on the Lower West Side men congregated in the real thing. Friends spoke of meeting men from New Jersey with cars and blowing them in front of Saks Fifth Avenue as they drove up Fifth Avenue to their apartment. Then one night while walking down West Street I noticed a long line of autos parked along the Hudson River near the sex piers. I got into the front seat of a Ford with a schoolteacher from Long Island—but, even though the idea seemed erotic, the encounter was pretty flat.

In California, each time I visited friends there—and often when I got their letters—I noticed that even ex-

New Yorkers paid attention to automobiles in a way I found incomprehensible. They stopped on streets in San Francisco to admire a car and say, "That's just what I want! But in pale blue!" And one afternoon on Castro Street I happened to see a parade of men in business suits coming home from work astride their big yellow Jeeps. One friend in fact described his current boyfriend not only in terms of moustache, career, penis, and the car he drove, but the way he drove it. Romance was driving down the coast in a new BMW with an Italian-American who really knew how to shift gears. Ray had a BMW. Tom had a Jeep. Tony drove a pick-up truck, and Larry had a Porsche. The Porsche was perfect for Larry, he said: all that power and pick-up.

In Los Angeles, I gathered, there was a whole semiology of cars—at the time I was there, the gay car was the Volkswagen convertible. Perhaps it still is. That there could be a gay car startled the New Yorker, but when I got my rented Dodge at the airport I did find myself wondering self-consciously if this expressed my personality. The luxury of the car astonished me—there were so many things on the dashboard I didn't even use—and by the end of the week I was quite attached to it. I also felt free. Just what the ads promised, in fact. But even a week in Los Angeles was not enough to make me feel very confident or comfortable about driving cars. A week back in New York made me regard them suspiciously once more. Down south I didn't like to drive at all, for some reason, and living in a small town in the country, where the bars are thirty miles away, I frequently found myself standing in the dark driveway with keys in hand, bored, lonely, horny, and thinking: Is a penis worth thirty miles in the dark? Most often I said No. Arriving in Jacksonville one night to visit the baths for the first time, I was so intimidated by the grid of nameless



## As he becomes aroused, the seat pops back, lower. . . .

intersections that stretch under acres of streetlights, and so lost, I made a sharp right turn from a left lane to get onto a bridge. The spectral blue light of a police car followed me; since I thought one stopped only for a siren, I pulled over only to ask him directions. He asked me for my license. He didn't have anything to arrest me for, really, but he wrote me a ticket for driving without my glasses; and as he got back into his car, I wanted to say: Oh officer, don't arrest me for driving without my glasses, arrest me for driving seventy miles in the dark to find a penis. How stupid.

**Fear** and loathing of the car culture reached a pitch the following month when I had to drive over to the Highway Patrol station to renew my driver's license: stained now by this ticket which seemed to stand for the irritation of being homosexual outside Manhattan. The policeman administering the examination I remembered from my last visit: a roly-poly, plump, sun-tanned fellow with a crewcut and twinkling eyes, a polite manner, a gentleman who dispatched customers as efficiently as possible. The girl in line in front of me was applying for a restricted driver's license—she was probably fifteen—and when she whispered to her mother, seated on the bench at our side, I saw she was nervous. We were all nervous standing in this air-conditioned house trailer in which licenses are applied for. The license is fraught with life's deepest dreams: the girl wants to be free, the old man does not want to hear his life is at an end or his eyesight no longer good enough, the homosexuals want to get to the bars and the gay beach. The others in line were a varied lot: two middle-aged nondescript men, one teen god in a sleeveless muscle shirt, two friends one could only find down south—rednecks, for want of a better word, but nice. One beefy, blond, with sunburned skin and boils on his face, the other tall, skinny, big-boned, lanky with dirty blond hair and pimples. Then there was a man talking to the officer at the desk who, it turned out, had more tickets than you have had crabs, and a woman who was pregnant. We were all gripped by a certain suspense. We were all embarrassed to be there. I am sure I will flunk the written test: I don't know how many feet the headlights should illuminate, how many months a license is suspended for a misdemeanor.

The ticket comes back to haunt me: the tedious nocturnal drive, the nightmare of freeways and clover-leaves, the finding, when I did reach the baths, six bored men in towels watching the life of Elvis Presley on the lounge TV—as sexually aroused as nurses on a coffee break. The man with the tickets from five counties slinks off. The officer asks the girl ahead of me how tall she is. "Not too tall," she says. He laughs. He asks her to stand against the wall and measures her against pencil marks there. She is four-feet-eleven and pretty, with careful eye make-up, short brown hair, and a little gym bag (the chic bag of her set, no doubt; the one gay men carried ten years ago in the Pines). Her mother, a gray-haired woman with glasses, possibly the wife of a professor, northern, certainly bemused by her daughter's nervous tension at this rite of passage, watches. "Have you ever had epilepsy, fainting spells, fits, or blackouts?" the officer asks as he checks off the boxes on the form. "No," she says. "Are you addicted to drugs?" he asks in the same deadpan tone. "No," she says in a small voice.

"Alcohol?" he says.

"No," she whispers.

"Good-looking men?" he says, without looking up.

The room bursts into laughter and I want to shout: "*Oh honey! You don't know the half of it!*"

But then I get my license and go outside to the parking lot, where cars are baking in the sun, the light blazing off their fenders, with the assurance of four more years of freedom, and I regard my car with the affection Don Quixote felt for Dulcinea. It is the vessel of my dreams, my chariot of fire. I know the New York irritation at having to drive to get anything—food, mail, sex—will fade with passing time and I will do it. After all one has no choice. Driving to the baths and bars, I discover in the ensuing weeks, is exhilarating, hopeful, romantic. Driving back is hell: an hour of unblemished monotony. If you walk home from the Eagle's Nest in Manhattan after a fruitless—so to speak—night of standing around other homosexual men, you may have to walk thirty minutes to get home but there are parks along the way you can float through to see if anyone's leaning against a tree, and in New York someone almost always is. But driving back seventy

miles through pitch dark farmland is dull. You may be lucky: there is a Mozart bassoon concerto on the radio and the spring night is cool, and of course there is a whole set of Car Emotions. One writes whole novels and plays at the wheel of a car during a forty-minute drive; novels and plays that somehow evaporate when you sit down at your desk the next day. These are Car Novels. Car Thoughts. Car Emotions. They are very close to Movie Emotions, engendered by the same juxtaposition, after all, of visual images and music. A friend of mine who grew up in New York but hates the city always spends the night he visits Manhattan on business driving around town in a car with Movie Music on the radio: the only way he can recapture his ideal city, carried in his heart. The great American moment is simply this: you're driving a car, alone, and the right song comes on the radio. What strokes the ego so much as a curve expertly taken? You feel in a car almost—macho. A car is a phallic locomotor symbol: Erik Erikson is right. It's sometimes depressing to stop. You get out in the parking lot and make an embarrassing phone call and are earthbound very quickly. Driving a car is romantic. Driving a car is perilous. The terrible accident, fenders sheared off, lights flashing, that comes out of the dark night as you drive home in a rainstorm, is the underlying note that gives all driving its drama. The car is death and the car is sex: in the South on hot days, the men in pick-up trucks drive without shirts, or congregate at gas stations as you drive by. You find yourself thinking you might someday pick up one of these hitchhikers standing by the highway—as solitary as you—and the impulse worries you. For driving, like life, is lonely.

One learns living in the country and driving these roads to the bars that when you get to one, you may find lesbians holding a Limbo contest, or nine queens doing a line dance to choreography seen on the Solid Gold Dancers. On the other hand, you may meet a Nicaraguan accountant who would stop people in their tracks on the deck of the Botel in the Pines. You may be so shy you simply follow him into the parking lot, and pursue him in your car. He may pull over, stop, and ask what you want. You may learn that he lives with a woman and that you will have to have sex in the car—and you may follow him in the deserted

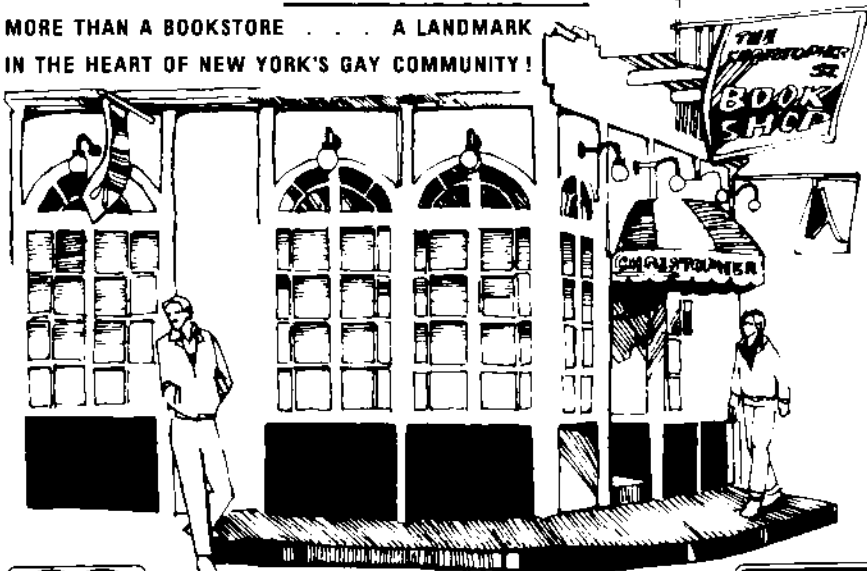
farmland he says is safe. This entails a stop at a 711; watching him search for his carton of orange juice through the windshield of your car, you think of a moment in a John Updike story when the narrator sees the car driven by the woman he is having an adulterous affair with parked outside the supermarket, and his heart lurches. One begins to understand—as one races through Gainesville late Sunday night after the red tail-lights of this handsome young man—how the erotic will finally drench even the car culture with its honey. You finally come to a stop at the edge of a dark field. You ask him to your car because it is larger; he prefers his. You get in. He is in a hurry—he tells you to open your pants. He opens his. You lean over the gearshift. Sex is quick. You are detached. As he becomes aroused, he operates a lever at the side of his seat, and the seat pops back, lower. Each time he gets more excited, he touches the lever and the seat descends. The ascent to orgasm is marked—as in a perverse advertisement—by these little jerks, and you wonder as you adore him, if the seat goes all the way back. He announces his orgasm before this can happen, switching on the ceiling light just before doing so, to make the moment visible. Then—it's over. You get out of the car and he speeds off. Driving back in the night you are no longer a car virgin; you are alone in the darkness, however, and you wish fervently there were someone on the seat next to you. It is late. The wind is warm, and scented with wildflowers. Ella Fitzgerald is singing her new album on the radio. The bar is closed, but you stop in the parking lot anyway and stare at its empty spaces. No cars. A new image of loneliness. You turn home, upset, frustrated, and wondering if it was worth it. Have you turned the car into one more monstrous paraphernalia of addiction? Meaningless sex should not require a half-tank of gas. You think of your friend in San Diego who refuses to have car sex with anyone he meets in a bar. Now you understand. You begin to think not only of the Nicaraguan's stomach, chest, and penis, but of the masterful way he handled his little car driving to the field. What make was it, anyway? And you wonder as the night wind laves your face: Is this Chevrolet really me? Car sex. On the highway as you drive past the farms and pecan groves you are not sure if you have had an ecstatic moment or not. You suspect you have discovered a new way to feel cheap.

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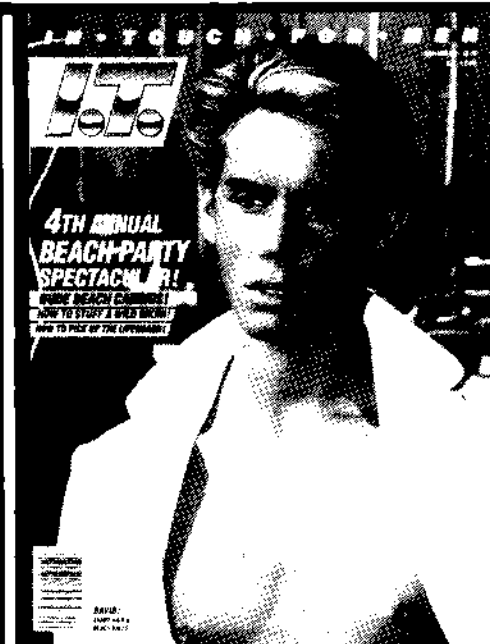
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## IS THERE A BOOK IN THIS?

by Ethan Mordden

# The Shredding of Peter Hawkins

*In love, no matter how much you give, it's never enough.*

**My** fourth best friend fell in love for the first time in his life when he was thirty-four.

"Ridiculous," someone told me. "Peter's too shallow to love."

"Disaster," said another. "No one that layered should do an affair."

"Heaven," a third pronounced it. "When you ask him what he's been doing he smirks like the Mona Lisa. And have you seen the boyfriend?"

"He'll be lacerated," Dennis Savage exulted. "That ersatz Clark Gable in Speedos! He'll writhe and shriek like a rat in a Skinner box! He'll be shredded and I hope I'm there to see it!"

"Has love shredded you and Little Kiwi?" I asked.

"No, because we're flexible. You have to give in all the time. You have to be humiliated and abused and it hurts like wild. Peter Hawkins thinks he can do it scot-free. Love without tears! Oh, just wait." He was whispering now, almost cackling, like the Wicked Witch dunking the poisoned apple. Tasty. Delicious. "Just wait."

"I won't have to wait long, will I?" Because Dennis Savage, Little Kiwi, and I were sharing a house in The Pines with Peter and a fifth individual (contracted on the phone by Little Kiwi), who for unknown reasons never turned up when we were there. Significant others included Little Kiwi's incorrigibly specious dog, Bauhaus, and Peter's boyfriend, the Incredible Jeff McDonald.

Jeff was then living out the last years of his legend; one more little epoch and he would fade into the kind of background Edward Hopper might paint. But even at forty-some-odd years he had everything that had made him notable: a handsomeness that inspired cries of "Egad!" from Morton Street pier to the Thalia; a lazy walk that nearly re-

deemed the era; and thighs of, literally, death: once you glimpsed them, if you could not have them for your own, you died. In the 1970s, during High Middle Eagle and Tenth Floor culture, everyone knew his name, but few knew him, for he wasn't a flirt: he was a lover.

I thought he'd be good for Peter, experienced and patient and maybe a bit worn down. Two beginners don't usually handle an affair well, but veteran Jeff could ease Peter over the Three Fatal Mistakes in Romance: being late, being bored, and being hurt. I wondered, though, who would help Jeff deal with Peter's First Principle of Rational Living: being private.

"Always hold a little something back," he would tell me, "or they'll keep taking and taking. Little secrets build up your personal space. And make your associates make sense. We must admire the clarity of reason."

Peter lived for reason and personal space. Once his phone rang while I was visiting, and, consulting his watch, he told me, "This will be my mother, asking if I got the invitation to Cousin Ruth's wedding and am I going."

It was. Yes, he got it. And no, he wasn't going—because she asked. "I've told you over and over, if you harass me about family things I won't attend them. . . . It's no use whining. . . . Nor will I give in to emotional blackmail. . . . Yes, you are pushing. And it's irritating, boring, and stupid. So give up because you can't win."

He shook his head as he rang off. "Some people simply cannot admire the clarity of reason."

Speaking as one who also suffers from wedding-crazed parents, I could admire the clarity of Peter's reason. But I also wondered how it felt to be his mother.

I wondered, too, how Jeff would take to Peter's mode of living. One Pines

Sunday in June, he and I sat on the deck tasting my favorite childhood treat, potato-chip sandwiches, when Peter ambled up looking breezy and content. Jeff asked, "Where have you been?" and Peter replied, "Nowhere" and Jeff said "Where is nowhere?" and Peter said "What difference does that make?" and I wished that a giant eagle would swoop down and carry me away. Or no, a winged Italian mesomorph with vulnerable eyes; but I'd take an eagle.

"I don't want you walking off on me," said Jeff.

Peter sat down and began to eat the filling out of my sandwich. "What am I, your houseboy?"

"Where were you?"

"If you mean, was I cheating on you, you know I wasn't."

"You're damn straight I know you weren't."

"That's all you have to know."

"I'm late for my bolero lesson," I began.

"Don't go," said Peter. "This is not the first time this has happened. But it'll be the last." He turned to Jeff. "I went away. Now I'm back. It doesn't matter where I was. End of scene."

Howling and barking on the walk warned of the return of Dennis Savage and company. Jeff pulled his chair closer to Peter's. "If it doesn't matter, why keep it a secret?"

"If it doesn't matter, why do you have to know?"

"Where were you? And I mean it."

Peter folded his arms across his chest and sighed.

Little Kiwi ran up. "Bauhaus caught someone's Frisbee just like that dog in the commercial and raced off with it! Now they don't know where it is! I expect he buried it, but he won't tell." He examined Peter: sullen. He saw Jeff: mad. "Oh no," Little Kiwi whispered.



HERMAN COSTA

"The first quarrel."

Dennis Savage plopped the grocery bags on the table with a groan. "How does beef stew grab you? With new potatoes?"

No one spoke. Jeff gently rubbed Peter's neck, but Peter wouldn't look at him. Little Kiwi took the bags inside. Bauhaus fell off the deck into the poison ivy for about the twentieth time that weekend.

"That dog is such an asshole," said Dennis Savage. Then he noticed. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing's wrong," said Peter, trying to smile.

"One more time," said Jeff, slipping his arm around Peter's shoulder. "Where were you?"

"Please don't do this," Peter replied. "I'm loyal, clever, and cute. I'll never let you down. Never, I promise. Isn't that enough?"

"Nothing is enough," Jeff told him. "That is what love is. The more you have the more you need. You aren't halfway there yet."

Peter got up and started for the walk, calling out, "I'll be back for dinner." Brisk. Nonchalant. The Peter I know. At the turning he paused, came back, and looked Jeff in the eye. "Okay," he said. He took a deep breath. "Okay. I went to visit Tod Graham. His father has cancer. He needs visits. The house was full of people. Is that what you want? Is that enough now? Is that love?"

Bauhaus barked.

"Little Kiwi," Dennis Savage called out, "come and get your idiotic dog out of the grunge."

"Yes, that's what I want."

Little Kiwi joined us, eyeing Peter and Jeff nervously. "Bauhaus, come!"

Bauhaus made a pass at the deck, missed, and whimpered.

Jeff went over to Peter. "It's silly to fight over something so small. Let's save the fights for the big issues."

"I don't want to fight at all."

"But we will."

"It hurts me when you fight." Peter was pleading: a strange Peter. "It hurts me, Jeff."

"It hurts me when you aren't honest."

Little Kiwi dragged the dog onto the deck. "Now he's full of cooties. I told you not to fall off, didn't I?"

"I am honest," said Peter. Tears were rolling down his cheeks.

Jeff took him in his arms.

I looked at Dennis Savage. He was somewhat less than thrilled to see the shredding of Peter Hawkins, after all.

"Little Kiwi," he said, "come and help me zip up the salad."

Little Kiwi was watching Peter and Jeff like Emily Dickinson viewing the dismembering of a butterfly.

"Shoo," I told him.

He ran into the house.

**For** the next few days, Jeff and Peter played together like puppies. "It's always like that," Dennis Savage informed me, "after the first fight. But then comes the second, and the third . . ."

"What a horror show," I cried. "We've seen Peter crying—Peter who mutes ghettoasters with a look."

"Yes, that really scared you. Because if our strong, sensible Peter can cry, anyone can, right?"

"Who's anyone, as if I didn't know, you dreary plop who rims scrofulous sheep?"

"The day you fall in love, I will personally phone the item into Liz Smith: *Boy Writer Stricken with Case of Feelings. Condition Critical. Weeping, Moping, and Picking Listlessly at his Zweiback and Milk.*"

"I always knew you secretly hated me."

"First Peter, then you, and that'll be the end of you arrogant sons-of-bitches who think you can take or leave it.

You're going to die, just like the rest of us. I'm going to fix you up with death himself."

A pause ensued.

"You know," I said, "sometimes these jokes get a little out of control."

Yes. He nodded. Yes.

**Peter** and Jeff did start quarreling again; by August it had become a routine of the house, something always going on, like MTV or construction noises. There was a lot of *Why?* and *When?* from Jeff, and rebuffs from Peter. Why aren't you available for Dick's party? When did you get home last night? Peter worked out a way to answer Jeff's queries without saying anything, and their bickering took on an absurdist note, like a play with every third line missing. "Why aren't you?" provoked responses like "But I am—or I shall have had to be, before long," or simply "Because you're Attila the Nun."

Jeff was exasperated and bewildered, unable to battle through these rebuses. But Peter reclaimed some of his old dash. He would not surrender to the fascism of sentiment again.

"I have it," said Little Kiwi one lunch. "Every day each of you has to tell one true thing that you never told anyone before."

"Is that how you and Dennis Savage survive?" asked Jeff.

"We don't have to," said Dennis Savage. "We're—"

"Flexible, we know," I said, thinking that he's about as flexible as the Pope's hernia truss.

"Now, for example," Little Kiwi went on, "Jeff could say who Peter most reminds him of. And Peter could tell about the cutest thing Jeff ever did."

"The cutest thing Jeff ever did," said Peter, "was when he forgot to flush the toilet when his parents were visiting, and his mother came out of the bathroom and said—"

"Shut up!"

"You wanted me to be honest."

"And loyal, how about that?"

"Oh, no." Peter shakes his head.

"Loyalty needs lying."

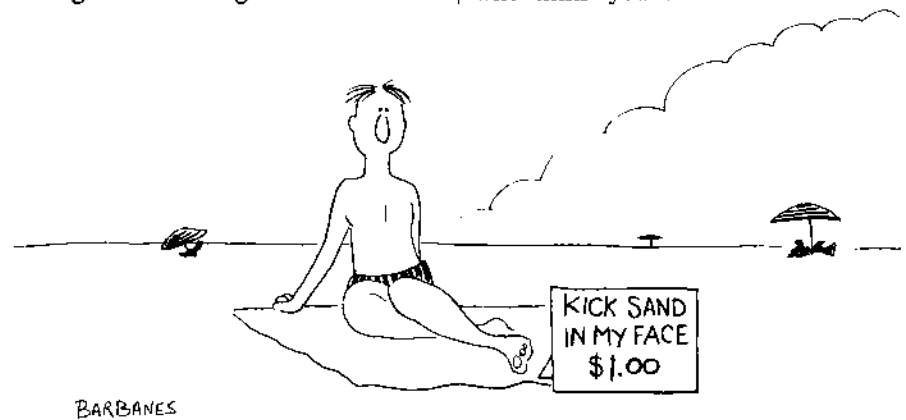
"And what does Peter remind you of?" Little Kiwi pursued, merrily but with an edge.

Jeff grinned at Peter. "He reminds me of—"

"You remind me of the Elephant Man."

"You fucking zit!"

"But we have to be nice to you



because you've got a terminal case of brainturd, that dread disease in which your brain slowly turns into a great, big, brown—"

Jeff leaped out of his chair and went for Peter, who dodged around the table. "Know any other extremely first-class games we can play?" I asked Little Kiwi, as Peter and Jeff lunged about us. "I know Animal Lotto," he answered.

Eventually Jeff heaved into his chair and told Peter to fuck off. Peter did, leaving a sober quartet to assess and make remedy.

"You have to stop fighting," Dennis Savage told Jeff. "You're the top-okay couple of the summer. They were fainting when you and Peter walked into tea yesterday. Fashion and ad people in the six figures are lining up for dinner invitations."

Jeff shrugged.

"Why does he call you the Elephant Man?" Little Kiwi asked.

"Why do you think?"

"Because you like peanuts?"

"Size."

Little Kiwi paused. "Size what?"

"Of his, uh, trunk," I put in.

"Mere trivia," said Dennis Savage.

"The issues are sharing and candor and that's exactly—Little Kiwi, stop gaping—where Peter can't compromise."

"Why does he have to?" I asked.

"Because I insist," Jeff told me. You should have seen his face.

"Don't get mad at me," I went on, "but why not run this romance by Peter's lights? Keep company, but respect your differences. Share what is sharable."

"He's too mixed up for that," said Jeff. "He's been covering his insecurity so long that he can't open up at all."

"Two men can't give up the same thing at the same time," I said. Well that stopped them. "What happens in straight romance? The man gives up his rage for competition and the woman gives up her independence. But when two men couple, they *both* give up competition *and* independence. How can that be done?"

"It's done all the time," said Jeff.

"By some. Maybe not by Peter."

"Bullshit."

"That's the retort of an ignorant lout. I expect something more sensitive from someone in love."


"Look!" Little Kiwi shouted, pointing at Ocean Walk. "An ox!"

"A deer. Specialty of The Pines."

Bauhaus strained at his rope, fuming and groaning.

DENNIS COOPER

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"Hush, Bauhaus."

So Bauhaus promptly barks and the deer runs off.

"It's done all the time," Jeff repeats.

"I do it. Why can't he?"

"Why don't you give him a chance to edge into it?" I asked.

"If it doesn't start right, it's already finished."

"You made him cry," Little Kiwi blurted out. "You're the Elephant Man."

"Walk time," said Dennis Savage.

Little Kiwi eyed the boardwalk. "Do ox bite?"

"Oxen bite," said Dennis Savage, as they left. "Deer don't."

"That kid is very pretty," said Jeff, looking after them. "But real stupid."

"He's bright enough to know how to behave in love."

"And how is that?"

"With ease."

He took a deep breath, tilted his chair back, and watched me. "Let me tell you something," he finally said. "I've gone to and fro in love, and walked up and down in it. I know love. Peter doesn't. Nor do you. So he's going to take my advice, and you're going to keep yours to yourself."

"Think I'll catch up with the guys," I said, rising. "One thing, though: next time you use the Bible for your text, don't quote the devil. Hurts your credibility."

"What Bible?"

"'Going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it.' The Book of Job."

He chuckled. "I knew that was from somewhere."

**Peter** stayed away all that day and night and didn't return till just before dinner the next day. Little Kiwi insisted on making the drinks, which he called Kazootie Koolers: white wine drowning grapes, melon balls, and strawberries.

"I hope no one drops in and sees us drinking these," said Dennis Savage. "I mean, I like them, but they'd be hard to alibi to anyone on the A-list."

"Why don't you do what you want to do without reference to what others think?" I asked.

"Because no man is an island."

"I am an island!"

"So am I," said Peter, strolling in.

"I'm Fire Island." Nice. Assured.

"I'm the embodied truth of The Pines. I am style. I am attitude. I'm the destiny of homoerotic passion." He marched in-

to the house and came out munching a hunk of cheese. "Aren't you going to ask where I was?" he asked Jeff.

Jeff ignored him.

"Hey, what would happen if I took Bauhaus for a run?"

"You best not," said Little Kiwi.

"He's afraid of an ox."

Jeff got up.

"Do you want a Kazootie Kooler?"

Little Kiwi asked Peter, his eyes on Jeff.

"Hell, yes."

Jeff confronted Peter.

"I was with Jim Guest," said Peter, quite casually. "All night. He's hotter than you are. Now you know and how do you like it?"

Jeff fetched Peter a walloping blow to the side of his head and knocked him flat on the deck.

To Bauhaus' crazed barking, Dennis Savage and I jumped up and got between them. Jeff threw us one by one off the deck into the grunge. Bauhaus came, too; it's possible that he prefers it there.

"I knew you'd be understanding about this," said Peter. Jeff pulled him to his feet and smacked him down again. "How do I like it?" he asked. "How do I like it?" Now Little Kiwi got between them. "Go away!" he yelled, harrying Jeff with his chair as one tames a tiger. "Go away now!"

"This is how I like it," said Jeff, pushing past Little Kiwi to get to Peter again. Dennis Savage and I had just gained the deck and Jeff had just got Peter to his feet when someone said, "What the fruit is going on?" and we turned to find the most nondescript man I've ever seen, standing on our deck holding an overnight bag and a briefcase. He was a pair of glasses with no eyes behind them.

"Which of you is Virgil Brown?" he went on.

"I am," said Little Kiwi. He is, too, though not usually.

"I'm Grey Krabb, and I must point out that you never mentioned violence when I inquired about the tenor of the house. Nor did you speak of a dog."

Bauhaus grumbled in the grunge.

The man rummaged into the house. Sniffing. Put out. We just looked at each other; Peter's shirt was torn. Seconds later, the stranger was back, holding a cookie box. "And who ate almost all my Lorna Doones?"

"I didn't know they were yours," said Peter.

"I saved them for tonight! I eat them with milk. It's my Wednesday night

special."

("That sounds like you," Dennis Savage murmured to me. "Your mother wears a dribble bib," I replied.)

"Would you like a Kazootie Kooler?"

"No, Mr. Brown, I would like my Lorna Doones replaced."

"*Mea culpa*," said Peter. "I'll go."

"Let me," I said. "You don't look so good."

"Better get milk, too. I imagine you finished off my milk as well."

"People like you don't give milk," I ventured.

"What a putdown," said Dennis Savage.

"Peter and I will go," said Jeff.

"I'm not going anywhere with you."

"Do you want more of the same?"

Peter held his ground. "I won't cry for you this time."

We all stood and waited, except for Mr. Krabb, who muttered, "Showboaters," and went inside.

"Come on," said Jeff, extending his hand.

"No!"

"I hurt you. I'll hurt you again. And I'll be sorry then as I'm sorry now. But you'll provoke me again, and I'll hurt you even worse." Jeff seemed to circle around Peter, surround him. "I'll make it up to you."

Peter laughed softly. "Oh . . . how could you possibly?"

"Tonight."

Peter paused, shook his head, let Jeff take his hand. "I don't love you anymore," said Peter dully.

"That's when you love me the most," Jeff told him. "When you can feel it hurting." And away they went.

"You know what's funny about extroverts?" I said. "They're just as dogmatic as introverts."

"Did you hear him call me Mr. Brown?" asked Little Kiwi. "From now on—"

"Little Kiwi, get that menace of a dog back among the living."

Little Kiwi helped Bauhaus onto the deck and said, "Now everyone has cooties but me."

"That won't last long," replied Dennis Savage, as I pretended to fan myself like a deb at a more than usually intense prom.

Peter and Jeff are still together, two years later. So when anyone complains that he's getting old and has no romance, I tell him I know someone who didn't fall in love till he was thirty-four. Think of all you can look forward to.


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# McDONALD'S

by Boyd McDonald

## Great Moments in Movies

*David Nelson could, had he wanted, have spent his life being licked.*

### When David Nelson Turns His Butt

The David Nelson story is largely unprintable, not because of anything David has done but because of what men would like to do with him. Fortunately, there is no need to tell the story in words; it is pretty much contained in stills and glossies of David. Stills from *The Big Circus* (1959), in which he wore white trapeze tights, are especially articulate; I don't think I have to list the various parts of that body that men would like to "eat," as I believe they call it.

I always depend upon the art director and editor of this publication to run photographs that supply graphic evidence for my sermonettes; I especially need them now to tell my story in a glossy, for the exact details of the lust David inspires are best left in the bedroom (or if you prefer, as I do, in the bushes, alleys, offices, cars, trucks, theatre balconies, and public terlets). I am not privy to advance knowledge of what glossies run with my articles and I was shocked—but pleasantly—to see in my study of Richard Widmark that the art director and editor had actually added a vital new concept by running a still of Widmark with his thighs spread and his left hand resting on his succulent groin. The photograph revealed an inspiring quality in Widmark's nature that I had not even dared, in my text, to suggest (or in my mind, to hope). A man's hand resting on his bulge is eloquent body language which says that he enjoys his meat and lets others enjoy it too; with that slight but overpoweringly obscene gesture, a man suddenly gives the shocking signal that his meat, up to then merely an impossible dream, is in reality available. (I mean of course men generally, not Widmark specifically.)

Even if he had made no other pictures than *The Big Circus*, David Nelson would still rank as one of

Hollywood's premier suck objects. On or off the trapeze, his body composes a variety of images for which the word "historic" would not be an exaggeration, and when, on rare occasions, he turns his butt to the camera, the white fabric clinging ecstatically to his crack can only draw gasps from men who have an aesthetic sense (for it is the kind of butt they like to wallow in like pigs, the dirty things). At gatherings of serious cineastes, speculation sooner or later turns to David Nelson's asshole—his "vital centre," in Arthur Schlesinger's phrase. (Schlesinger did do some picture reviews, but he used the phrase to describe centrist political goals rather than David's asshole.) In the absence of any published data—David married twice, but if either of his wives had any special interest in or knowledge of his asshole, she has not written of it; the only thing film scholars can do is extrapolate from information visible on his face, mainly his eyebrow hairs and pink lips. Most would conclude, I think, that his hole, and the hairs which formed its ornamental frame, were among the finest in the film capital. By contrast, the heavy black brows of Brooke Shields and Matt Dillon threaten the possibility that these two newer players are, literally, bushy-tailed.

Simply by giving men the right kind of look with his jewel-like eyes—eyes of the sort the lyricist probably had in mind when he wrote:

Jeepers, creepers,  
Where'd you get those peepers?  
Jeepers, creepers,  
Where'd you get those eyes?

David could, had he wanted, have spent his life being licked. But such a routine would soon lead to skin irritations on various parts of his body, and instead of thus satisfying mere thousands of men utterly, he chose to satisfy millions of them partially by appearing

for over a decade on TV with his parents, Ozzie 'n' Harriet, and his brother Eric (commonly known as Ricky, whom I thoroughly discussed in CS, issue 75), and by making at least five pictures, including *Day of the Outlaw*, which sounds especially worthwhile; *The Remarkable Mr. Penypacker*, whose star, Clifton Webb, possibly gave his evaluation of David's thighs in correspondence with Noel Coward or someone similar; 30; and *Peyton Place*, in which, David said in a 1957 interview at Fox while clad in blue jeans, loafers, and an "untucked" shirt, he is "red-blooded and all-American" and "the only normal character in the picture."

He "wondered if girls went out with him only because he was famous." He would have no such worry had he "gone out" with boys, who not only would not want publicity but would actually have wanted to keep it secret since, in all likelihood, their sole interest in "going" with him would be to play with his peter, nuts, and, in some cases, his asshole. I don't have to tell you how nasty boys are. David played football at U.S.C., sired two sons, who are in all probability embarrassingly handsome, and indulged in one of the two main California vulgarities, driving a Porsche, but not, so far as is known, in the other one, cocaine. In 1974 Lamparski's *Whatever Became of . . . ?* quoted David as saying that "life really began" for him and his wife "when we accepted Jesus Christ as our Saviour"; the following year he accepted a new wife, according to a cutting from *Variety* in his file at the Lincoln Center Library.

In white tights in *The Big Circus*, seen at 3 p.m., April 14, 1984, on Channel 5, David's body is more starkly erotic than one that is "stark naked." The dazzling white of his costume erases all human imperfections and distractions, such as body hairs, blemishes, scars, pores, and so on, and purifies and

idealizes his body while still displaying its exact form. A noticeable percentage of the male population, perhaps around 35 percent, would probably like to examine David's body under any circumstances, including nudity. But even the middle class can regard David's groin and butt, when wrapped tightly in pure white, as being in good taste, and he was, moreover, an authentic athlete, having trained and performed with a couple of trapeze artists who had the fascinating names of Del and Babs. So that he was eligible for the admiration of men who normally cannot permit themselves to worship the male body except under the guise of sports lovers, a phrase which is breathtakingly apt. *In toto*, adding up David's honest sexual fans, the middle class (who dare admit him in white tights), and the sports lovers (who can pretend, perhaps even believe, that it is his athletic skill they like), perhaps as much as 80 percent of the male population would be interested in *The Big Circus*. His body thus was potentially one of the most valuable properties in Hollywood, yet it was scarcely used cinematically or, for all I know, sexually. If there were ever an actor ideally suited for such poses as sitting back in his jock strap with one leg over the arm of a chair, it is David Nelson. This is the sort of image men like to crawl and grovel for. But *The Big Circus*, made when he was about 23 years old, is the only picture which displayed his body and even in this picture his body is seen only fleetingly until the climax. Then it is seen in all its glory in a chase sequence as David climbs up the trapeze rigging and walks the tightrope; even his shadow moving against the circus tent is awesome.

Characteristically, the *Times* schedule ignored David's tempting body and did not even include his name in its listing; hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who have no other source of information than the *Times* were thus unaware of the opportunity to see perhaps the greatest exhibition of a perfect male body in action ever recorded on film. The plot-crazy *Times* TV schedule writer complained that *The Big Circus* has "every big-top cliché invented." Any hack writer can construct a plot, but, to paraphrase the renowned hack poet, Joyce Kilmer, only God can make a butt. A reviewer who is blind to such beauty and complains of "cliches" would ask for franks 'n' beans in a Chinese restaurant.



Comprehensive though the images of David's white-clad body may be, they only arouse questions—questions which someone on the crew of *The Big Circus* could answer, and I hope will answer in a Letter to the Editor. Did David have his own private dressing room for this picture? When he changed into circus tights, where did he leave his street clothes? Did he wear Jockey shorts? Where did he toss his shorts when he pulled them off? Were they ever stolen from his dressing room? Did he bring his own trapeze costumes from his act with the adorable Del and Babs, or did the studio supply them? Did the wardrobe department do fittings and alterations on his tights? Did he wear anything under his tights to, as it were, "catch the drip?" Did he wear anything to hold back his dick and nuts, which did not form a satisfying bulge in his costume, or was he simply, like so many men, not well hung? Where

did he toss his tights after a day's shooting? Were they picked up by the studio laundry? Did collectors ever steal, or try to buy, his used tights? If David owned them himself and took them home with him, did he launder them himself? Did he examine them before laundering them? Where did he buy them? Where did he try them on? What did he think of his appearance in the mirror? Did he get a hard-on while dressing or undressing? Did his dick leak or drip when he thought of romance? Did anyone in the crew whistle when he walked onto the set in his tights? How, in such a complex costume, did he go about taking a leak, or taking a shit, during the day's shooting? Did anyone from the Fox wardrobe department ever sell his used tights? Laundered or unlaundered? I assume the wardrobe people were hip enough to know that the tights would be worth a goodly sum unlaundered. □

## CS MOVIES

by Quentin Crisp

# The World According to Carp

During the years when I was only English, I went to the pictures with startling frequency—sometimes twice in one day. As we are speaking of the prehistoric age of the double feature, this meant that, on those happy occasions, I escaped from real life for seven hours in twenty-four. It was during these spells in the “forgetting chamber” that I realized that I was American in my heart.

Some time after the Second World War, the government imposed upon the film industry a “quota system.” Cinema owners were compelled by law to show a certain proportion of British products. As Mr. Korda says in his excellent book about his famous uncle, Alexander, the English went mad with rage and grief “as though they had been deprived of bread.” I was among those starving millions.

Now I have taken up permanent residence in Manhattan. You could say that, for the past three years, I have been living the movies. For this reason, I do not need to see them so desperately. I visit the cinema less often.

Nevertheless, on two beautiful successive evenings in May, I went to a movie. On a Monday, in a screening room in Times Square filled to capacity, I saw *The Fourth Man* and, on the following evening, in the half-empty Waverly Cinema on Sixth Avenue, I witnessed *Splash*. The contrast between these two experiences could hardly have been greater. The first of these two programs was a highbrow debauch of depravity, destruction, sex, and blasphemy; the second was a cozy idyll about true love. The difference was inevitable. *The Fourth Man* came from the Netherlands and the voice of Europe is a cross between a scream of frustration and a yawn of despair. The other picture is American and is therefore, if not an affirmation of perfection, at least a message of hope.

Both these productions, however, have things in common. In each the heroine is apparently a normal, attractive, blonde young woman but is secret-



### *Here Doris Day is reorchestrated for Esther Williams.*

ly something quite different. In *The Fourth Man*, she is a witch, bringing doom to any man who tries to win her love. In *Splash*, she is a mermaid who dares to venture on to the dry land of Manhattan in pursuit of a man she rescued when he was a boy.

There have been several movies about these alluring sea creatures. One was called *Miranda* and featured Miss Johns. She spent most of her screen time in a wheelchair with a rug tucked firmly 'round her tell-tail, but occasionally made indiscreet remarks such as “I haven't had a moment's peace since I set tail in this house.” Being an English movie, it was a cozy domestic comedy rather than an aquatic poem. Another such fantasy starred Miss Blyth whom Mr. Powell kept clandestinely in his bath. All these films have more in com-

mon than a seductive and mysterious heroine. They pander to our fundamental need for an event—even a peril beyond our diurnal routine, however comfortable that may be.

In recent years flights of fancy have usually taken the form of encounters of a nasty kind with science fiction monsters. Such films allay, in a half-scary, half-humorous fashion, the genuine terror of the young generation in the face of the grim future that their elders are so busy preparing for them.

*Splash* is an agreeable diversion from these menacing preoccupations. It is advertised as requiring “parental guidance” before it can be safely seen. I can't think why. It has always been the suffocating influence of our mothers and fathers that has prevented us from hearing the siren's song or in any way extending our imaginative horizons.

The story could hardly be more innocuous. It begins by presenting two young brothers, one of whom represents the flesh and the other the spirit. The former spends much of his time groveling on the deck of a pleasure steamer so

that he can look up the skirts of the female passengers. The latter is a solitary child who hates the world. When his parents leave him on his own for a while, he jumps into the sea. Underwater, he meets a young mermaid but only for a moment before he is rescued.

This brief contact with the life beneath the waves confirms forever his



innate "otherness." In adult life, as soon as he is able to take a holiday from his business in a fruit market, he makes a dash for Cape Cod. There he again meets the mermaid who follows him back to Manhattan, shocking the corrupt world with her naked innocence.

She only wears her tail when she is in the water. On land she wears legs and very pleasant ones they are. This device makes it possible for her to pass as an ordinary mortal—at least for a while. Disaster strikes. A young scientist, who has caught a glimpse of the heroine underwater, becomes frantically intent upon proving his theory that mermaids exist. He tracks down his quarry and, by spraying her with water, converts her back into a part-time fish in the middle of a banquet in honor of the President of the United States. In consequence the poor girl becomes imprisoned in the Museum of Natural History.

Dry your tears.

I am happy to be able to tell you that her lover abducts her and, after many hilarious adventures, she returns to her natural element. □

During the last few minutes of this beautiful film, I must confess with head bowed in shame that I doubted that the authors would rise to the challenge with which the climax faced them. I feared that the lovers would agree to part wetter but wiser and that the hero would remain a mere mortal, but no. Suddenly the movie transcends its Disneyland boundaries and acquires a truly poetic dimension. While a woman in the audience burst into applause, the young man dove into the filthy waters of the Hudson, risking typhoid fever and heaven knows what other dangers for love and I mean Love. As you know, in their quest for procreation, fish behave with considerably more decorum than mere human beings.

How right they are!

If this picture has faults, they are superficial and mercifully few. The sound track is too coarse; the eardrums are often slapped and banged and generally assaulted by cries and curses. Also the color is less winsome than it might have been. Miss Hannah looks gorgeous with her bright red-gold tail. Indeed the film might well have been called *The World According to Carp*, but ought she not to have seemed frailer and should not her hair have been the palest shade of green? Likewise, the hero, played by Mr. Hanks, is a shy American boy. I would have preferred him to be a haunted poet. The member of the cast whose character fits him like a glove bursting at the seams is the older brother, Mr. Candy; he radiates jovial carnality.

Deep down, this is a cautionary tale like so many other stories of visitants from elsewhere. It warns us not to assume that their natures are as gross and hostile as our own. Though the mermaid is not shot down by panicky troops as is customary in such situations, she is subjected to prolonged and pitiless examination.

When we left the cinema, Mr. Steele recommended a nearby Japanese restaurant but there the seafood was not just raw but living. After our evening with Miss Hannah, I felt to touch it might be in bad taste, so we went to a delightful restaurant called The Derby in Macdougall Street, where we ate sole discreetly cooked. During dinner we discussed *Splash* and decided that, if preferred, it is possible to ignore its symbolic values and simply enjoy its sweetness and often riotous humor. The film is really a modern Doris Day affair reorchestrated for Esther Williams. □

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## Letters

Dear *Gaypoon*:

My cell-mate Billy wants to march in next year's Gay Bride Parade (he'll be on parole by then), but he can't afford the kind of wedding gown you showed in your pictures. Is there any place in New York where he can rent one? His measurements are 4'8" and he weighs about 275. We've been married for sixteen years (the prison pastor regularly marries us guys). Will the parade be televised?

*Rad Greenley  
Walpole Penitentiary*

Dear *Gaypoon*:

Your newswriter(s) should check their facts before they leap. I have *not* signed to play Zaza the female impersonator in the Chicago cast of *La Cage Aux Folles*. The role is completely out of my range; for one thing, I can't sing. I have signed to play the Jeremy Irons role in *The Real Thing* in Chicago.

*Liz Smith  
Manhattan*

Dear *Gaypoon*:

I ran into a problem following one of your "Masturbation Techniques." When you wear a cock ring, your hand falls asleep.

*Frustrated in Omaha*

Dear *Frustrated*:

You shouldn't wear the cock ring on your wrist.

Dear *Gaypoon*:

Gay and Blind, Inc., does not meet weekly, nor do we meet on the subway tracks at Forty-second Street. We meet every month at the Museum of Modern Art. Please correct your listing.

*Hal Keller  
Manhattan*

Dear *Gaypoon*:

We here at Our Lady of Perpetual Sorrows really choked on our baked liver when we read your article about how nuns "do it." After she burst her binder, we had to revive Sister Mary Magnesia with the convent bicycle chain. Sister kept saying, "If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my lust to slake." Really, though, you guys have put some laughs in this convent of sorrows.

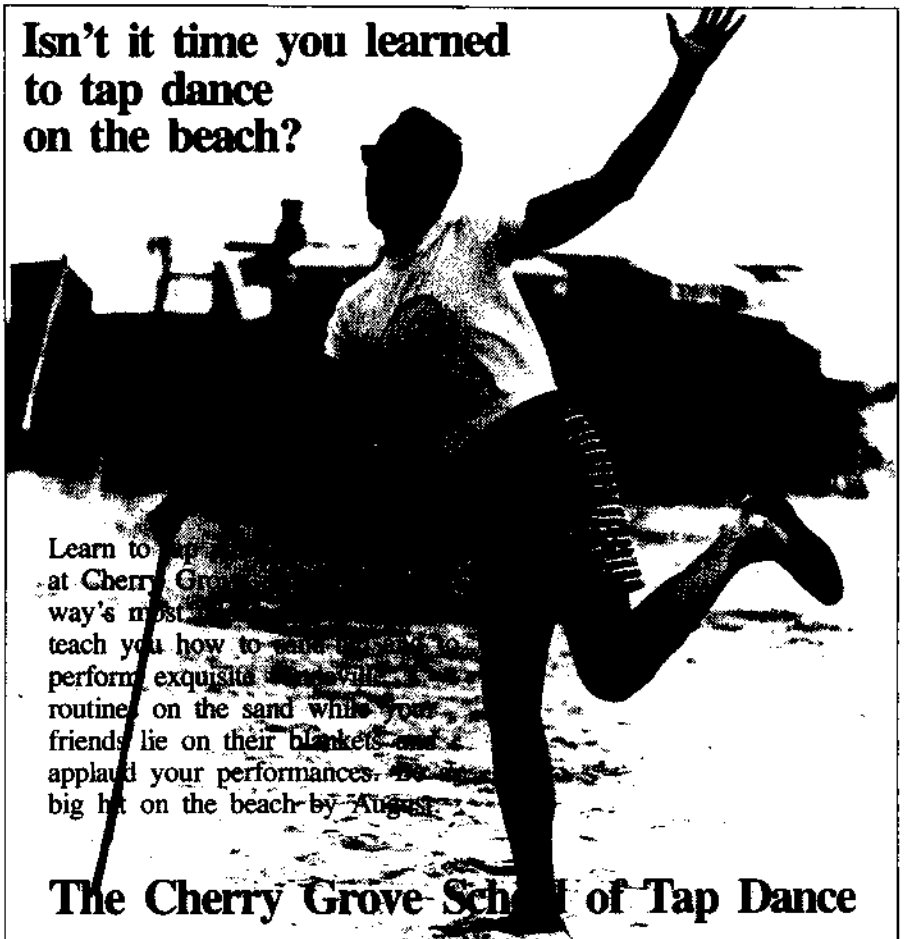
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## News

### Republicans Ask Reagan to Use Less Rouge

Jack Connors, chairman of the Committee to Re-elect Ronald Reagan reportedly has asked the president to use less make-up. "We think the president should definitely look great on camera, but lately, in order to look younger, we think he's going overboard. He especially seems to get carried away with the mascara and the rouge.

"We find this a ticklish issue," Connors continued, "because we intend to have the president criticize the Democrats for their support of gay rights. We don't think this will be convincing if he keeps making himself up like a drag queen."

No one at the White House was available for comment. □

### New Games Added to Gay Olympics

Bowing to pressures that the Gay Olympics held two years ago did not reflect the full range of games that gay people play, the Gay Olympics Committee has agreed to add the following competitions to the list of gay games: Canasta, Cruising, Peggy Lee Imitations, Enemas, Floral Design, Quick Bag Packing, and Window Shopping.

The president of the Gay Olympics, Bruce Lee, told *Gaypoon*, "We wanted the whole gay community to be involved so we added the forms of sport that reflect the diversity of our people. We think we've achieved our goal." □

### New French Virus Discovery: Croissant-III

A new French virus has been discovered in gay Parisian bakeries here and in New York. A research team at the National Institutes of Health has found bits of croissants in nearly every single AIDS patient in a group of 150.

Secretary of Health Margaret Heckler spoke recently at a press conference held on the stage of the *Tonight Show*. "Our scientists have concluded that Croissant-III is without a doubt the cause of the recent outbreak of AIDS."

Some scientists were skeptical because other scientists in California have isolated

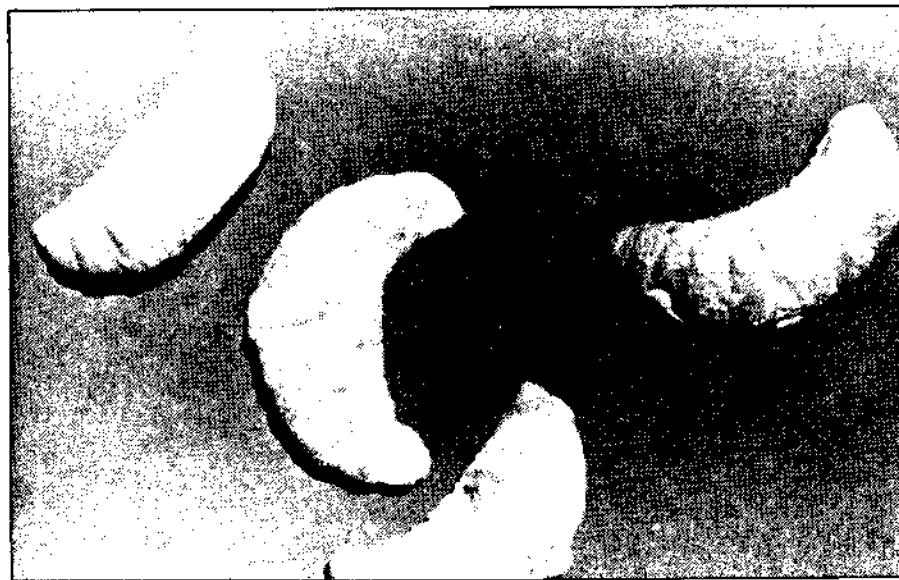


Doctors in San Francisco were able to diagnose Gay Bowel Syndrome just by looking at this man's face.

### S.F. Doctors Find New Way to Diagnose Gay Bowel Syndrome

Top doctors in San Francisco have discovered that the diagnosis of Gay Bowel Syndrome can be made just by looking at the patient's face. Dr. Rococo Chanel of the San Francisco Gay Men's Army-Navy Health Clinic told a gathering of top clap doctors meeting at their annual real estate convention that "We

find that the Gay Bowel Syndrome can be detected just by looking at the face of the patient. There's something very different about the face of a man who has Gay Bowel Syndrome. This could also have a cross-over impact on other disorders like Gay Tennis Elbow, Gay Neuralgia, and Gay Athlete's Foot." □



The New AIDS Virus: Croissant-III

a variation on Croissant-III, a ham-and-cheese croissant, which they have labeled Croissant-IV.

Secretary Heckler said that the Na-

tional Institutes of Health would be able to detect the presence of Croissant-III in American bakeries with 100 percent accuracy. □

GEORGES PIETTE

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FRED GORMLEY

# A Feminist's View Of the New Fag

by **Barbra Erroreich, III**

WHEN I TOLD MY FRIENDS AT *Ms.* that I was writing a piece on "The New Fag," the womyn all said, "Oh, Barbra, another pseudo-leftist piece on the gay male wimps? Just stay away from our boyfriends, puh-lease!" But I told the womyn that I was doing a piece a whole lot more intellectually pretentious than that, and one that would be homophobic as hell so I could get it in the *Sunday Times*.

I remember fags in the 1950s. I remember them running around and being afraid of being called Adlai Stevenson's tricks. Then it all changed. It was the 1960s and I was looking for a husband. Then I started calling them Adlai Stevenson's tricks. Then it was the 1970s and I became a feminist. Then I did a feminist analysis of everything I did and everyone I met—even my granny dress and glasses which I forgot to throw out in the 1960s. Then it was the 1980s and I decided to call up some fags and do a feminist analysis of them. Then it was now.

In my search for quotes to hang on the New Fags, I cornered an obvious homosexual who was fillying some scallops in a friend's kitchen. "Aha!" I said. "Feminized again! I caught you." And then he turned to me and moaned pitifully, "Oh Babba, Babba. Back around the time of Woodstock we men were mercilessly driven into the kitchen and into each other's fey, overdeveloped arms by all that feminist cigar smoke in the living room. We're afraid to come out, so to speak."

Around the kitchen were the Thursday Home Section emblems of the New Fag: caviar of every size and sexual persuasion, seductive prosciutto, decadent melon, and promiscuous balls of gouda cheese darting around the kitchen like atomic spermatazoa. [Editor's note: Barbra demanded and received a bonus from the *Times* for having written the last sentence.]

Of course I was dying to ask this kitchen-bound homosexual a question all feminists are dying to ask the New Fag, but are afraid to. "Would you fuck me if you woke up and

I was sitting on your face?" He took a near-virile deep breath and said, "Oh Babba, Babba, I wouldn't throw you out of bed. Have you seen my bed? I'm a real squirrel. I still have a peanut butter sandwich from three years ago. I don't throw anything out of bed."

And then I looked him in the eye and asked whether he thought the New Fag would ever reach the same state of condescending grace that most feminists now live in, and by way of showing me that the New Fag is not all that different from the Old Fag, he said, "Babba, are those guns in your bra or are you just excited to see me?"

And yet, still, these New Fags are the men who must father our children and pepper our brie. But what ever happened to that old dream of feminists and fags fighting side by side? I think it died with the rise of Chinese take-out restaurants. If only more womyn's restaurants had take-out.

There is no doubt that there's a new something happening in the historical jockey shorts of the New Fag. And didn't we womyn ask for it? We wanted—demanded—that gay men get in touch with the womyn inside them. Well, look who they found inside them: Marlene Dietrich, Perle Mesta, Charo. That's what we get for all our pushy feminism.

Yes, we womyn have only ourselves to blame. We've helped to make fags faggier without successfully turning them into subservient feminists. Boy, did we gals screw up! Today the New Fag is part of a demographic trend that is filling the gay bars and discos on Fire Island, and it's left more and more womyn home reading their gothic novels and meeting in all-womyn's groups in order to plan changes in male behavior. I talked to one 42-year-old feminist who wistfully told me, "You know, it's all really sad. I thought we were going to have all these sensitive men calling us up for dates. I still spend every Saturday night waiting for a date to my prom, which has been over for twenty-four years. But these men will be sorry: I've begun work on a womyn's novel."

**W**hat ever happened to that old dream of feminists and fags fighting side by side? I think it died with the rise of Chinese take-out restaurants. If only more womyn's restaurants had take-out.



GEORGES PIETTE

The New Fag: Isn't he rich? Isn't he queer?

A New *Psychology Someday* Study:

# Animals Talk About Their Homosexuals



by Sethwick Wescott, II

Researchers at Stanford University have conducted a study with a five billion dollar grant from the National Institutes of Health into the behavior patterns of dogs and other animals that keep homosexuals in their homes. They have interviewed over 10,000 dogs, cats, and exotic birds in their attempt to understand the affinity that many animals show for homosexuals.

The director of the project, Dr. Henrietta James, told *Gaypoon*, "Our

work went way beyond our first focus on French poodles. Originally we had intended to try to get at why French poodles over the years—at least in America—have associated exclusively with homosexuals. We've learned that the relationship is one of ecological balance. The presence of homosexuals in the French poodle home tends to lower French poodle aggression. In countries like Russia and Cuba where there are no homosexuals, French poodles are vicious

attack dogs feared by all of society."

Dr. James's group named several key factors attract animals to homosexuals:

- Homosexuals are good listeners.
- Homosexuals are easy to clean up after; basically, they're neat.
- Homosexuals don't require walking. For exercise, they attach their bodies to machines.
- Homosexuals like affection. Many are starved for it.
- Homosexuals are good at spotting trends.

According to Dr. James, animals tend to choose types of homosexuals that match their own personalities. "Akitas of Distinction, for instance, tend to prefer retarded homosexuals with subscriptions to *Reader's Digest*. We think that all the inbreeding has burned out the psyches of the Akitas, and they in turn choose



Dogs say homosexuals are good listeners.

burned-out or drug-damaged homosexuals. As one of our researchers said recently, "If you've ever been an Akita walking down the street with a homosexual, it's hard to keep track of the number of cogs that are missing."

German Shepherds tend to choose a more "butch" type of homosexual. One Washington, D.C., German Shepherd pointed out that "the muscular, ferocious looking homosexual matches my own lifestyle. The one thing I hate,

GEORGES PIETTE



### Heterosexual-Dog Relationships: Are they a thing of the past?

though, is when I have to show a homosexual how to walk. The training period can last weeks.

Many animals find it difficult to keep their homosexuals occupied. In a lengthy interview, a Russian blue cat told researchers, "Most homosexuals have the attention span of a Donna Summer song. I love having them around the house, but I wouldn't trust a single one to conduct a prolonged nuclear war."

The religious views of animals don't always jive with the homosexuals they live with. A Bangor, Maine, atheist Doberman Pinscher complained bitterly about the proliferation of homosexual religious organizations. "I hate it when they look me in the eye and say, 'I hope you realize that you're God spelled backwards.'"

The single drawback that all animals agreed about are the health problems that they have to look out for in their homosexuals. A Chihuahua told the researchers, "I'm exhausted from hauling them off to the clinics for check-ups and hepatitis-B vaccinations."

Even though the Henrietta Jones Report sheds a great deal of new light on animal/homosexual relationships, many

neuropsychological researchers remain puzzled at the new popularity of homosexuals among domestic animals at a time when heterosexuals are throwing more and more homosexuals out of their homes and even their hospital beds. Why are so many dogs and cats taking gay

people in? Perhaps a lonely beagle in San Francisco summed it up best: "I guess it's because we've always liked underdogs." □

*Sethway Wescott II recently completed a monograph on children's pizzaphobias.*

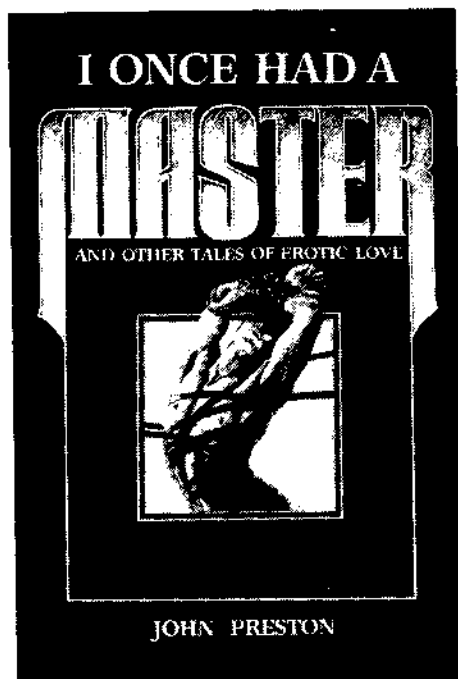


A cat in Iowa says, "I had one homosexual, but he was lonely. So I got him another one for companionship."

Good reading for you

from

A • L • Y • S • O • N  
P U B L I C A T I O N S



**I ONCE HAD A MASTER** and other tales of erotic love, by John Preston, \$8.00. John Preston is one of this country's best-known writers of erotic gay male fiction. Here he tells the story of one man's journey through the S/M world, beginning with another man as his master and ending in that role himself.

**DECENT PASSIONS**, by Michael Denny, \$7.00. What does it mean to be in love? Do the joys outweigh the pains? These issues and many others surface as Michael Denny interviews three couples — one gay male couple, one lesbian couple, and one heterosexual couple — exploring just what it is they are seeking and affirming in their lives.

**DANNY**, by Margaret Sturgis, \$7.00. High school teacher Tom York resolves to fight for his right to bring controversy into the classroom — but when his most talented student, Danny Talbott, falls in love with him, Tom is soon fighting against censorship of feelings as vigorously as he was fighting censorship of books.

**FRANNY: The queen of Provincetown**, by John Preston, \$4.00. Even if you dressed Franny in leather, he would still look like a queen. It's the way he walks, his little mannerisms, and his utter unwillingness to change them or to hide them that give him away. In this unusual, widely-acclaimed novel (a Jane Chambers Playwrighting Award winner), John Preston looks at gay history and gay pride through the eyes of Franny and his friends.

"Franny is a strikingly original testimonial to greatness of character than might remind more than a few of us where we came from." — John W. Rowberry, *Drummer Magazine*

"The best gay male novel of the year." — *The Front Page*



**KINDRED SPIRITS**, edited by Jeffrey Elliot, \$7.00. More and more, writers are using the special opportunities afforded them by science fiction to explore gay and lesbian themes in a context free of present-day constraints. Here, Jeffrey Elliot has collected twelve such stories, giving the reader a chance to see twelve very different visions of what it could mean to be gay or lesbian.

COMING  
OUT  
RIGHT

A handbook for the gay male

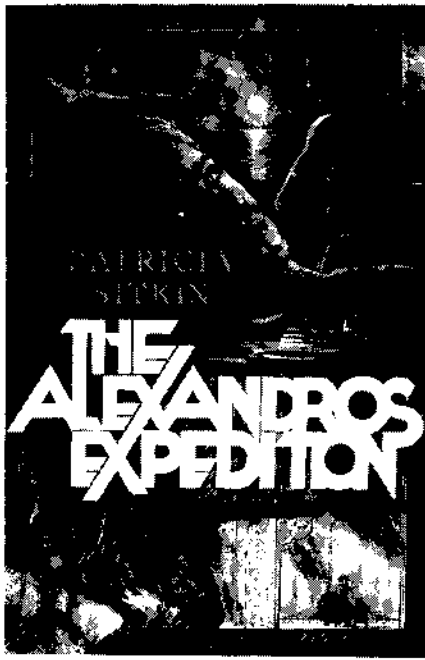


**COMING OUT RIGHT: A handbook for the gay male**, by Wes Muchmore and William Hanson, \$6.00. This book can make entry into the gay world easier, with advice not only for those who are just coming out, but also for men who are still learning about certain aspects of gay life — such as gay bars and baths, cruising, first love, coming out at work, medical and drug problems, and dealing with the law, and the like.

**IRIS**, by Janine Veto, \$7.00. When Dee and Iris meet in Hawaii, they both know that this is the relationship they have each been looking for. All they want is to live together on this island paradise for the rest of their lives. But the world has other ideas, and soon Iris is forced to flee from Hawaii. When Iris and Dee are re-united on a desolate Greek island, they find that their love must now face a formidable foe if it is to survive.

**THE LAW OF RETURN**, by Alice Bloch, \$8.00. After a summer vacation in Israel, American-born Ellen Rogin settles in Jerusalem, adopting her Hebrew name Elisheva, to begin exploring Orthodoxy as well as her own feelings about relationships and sexuality, eventually coming to grips with her own love for women.

**THE BUTTERSCOTCH PRINCE**, by Richard Hall, \$5.00. When Cordell's best friend and ex-lover is murdered, the only clue is one that the police seem to consider too kinky to follow up on. So Cordell decides to track down the killer himself — with results far different from what he had expected.



**THE ALEXANDROS EXPEDITION**, by Patricia Sitkin, \$6.00. When Evan Talbot leaves on a mission to rescue an old schoolmate who has been imprisoned by fanatics in the Middle East, he doesn't realize that the trip will also involve his own coming out and the discovery of who it is that he really loves.

**THE MEN WITH THE PINK TRIANGLE**, by Heinz Heger, \$5.00. As the long-hidden history of gay people slowly comes to light, one of the most terrifying chapters of that history concerns the thousands of homosexuals who were thrown into Nazi concentration camps during World War II. Heger's book provides the most vivid description we have of what those horrible years were like... the only true, first-person account available on the subject. *The Advocate* named it "One of the ten best books of the year".



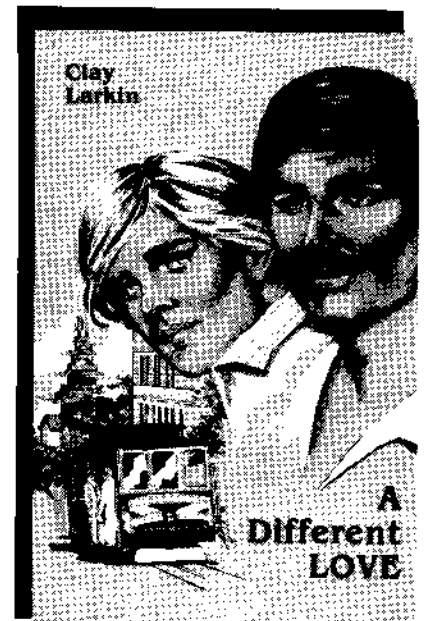
**ALL-AMERICAN BOYS**, by Frank Mosca, \$5.00. "I've known that I was gay since I was thirteen. Does that surprise you? It didn't me..." So begins *All-American Boys*, the story of a teenage love affair that should have been simple — but wasn't.

**\$TUD**, by Phil Andros, with an introduction by John Preston, \$7.00. Phil Andros is a hot and horny hustler with a conscience, pursuing every form of sex — including affection — without apology, yet with a sense of humor and a golden rule philosophy. When Sam Steward wrote these stories back in the 'sixties, they elevated gay fiction to new heights; today they remain as erotic and delightful as ever.



**THE SPARTAN**, by Don Harrison, \$6.00. In the days of the first Olympics, gay relationships were a common and valued part of life. *The Spartan* tells the story of a young athlete and his adventures in love and war, providing a vivid picture of classical Greece, the early Olympics, and an important part of our history.

**ONE TEENAGER IN TEN:** Writings by gay and lesbian youth, edited by Ann Heron, \$4.00. Twenty-eight young people from all over the US and Canada, from fifteen to twenty-four years of age, share their coming-out experiences. In their own words, these extraordinary young people speak out about what it is like to be young and gay in our society today.



**A DIFFERENT LOVE**, By Clay Larkin, \$5.00. When Billy and Hal meet in a small Midwestern town, they feel sure that their love for each other is meant to last. But then they move to San Francisco, and the temptations of city life create complications they haven't had to face before.

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# My Brief Career

**WORLD PREMIERE! HAND IN HAND  
PRESENTS**

**THE MOST LAVISH ALL MALE EPIC**

# CENTURIAN OF ROME

**CALIGULA'S EMPIRE...**

**RULED BY *PASSION!***

**DESTROYED BY *LUST!***

**X-RATED ■ COLOR ■ ALL MALE CAST**

**ALL STAR CAST OF 32**

**SLAVES AND ROMANS**

# in Porn

NO FILMS

CEVER!

NS

7



In hindsight, it always seems that the truly momentous moments in my life happened without the slightest premonition, at least none that I noticed or could interpret. Maybe I don't notice the obvious; I've been told that I don't. Friends always bitch that they screamed hello to me from across the street as I was hurrying somewhere, intent only on my destination, and didn't hear. Supposedly this is a Sagittarian trait. Sagittarians also hate details and have many accidents because they were looking off into the distance to the far shore and sank in the ocean between here and there. This is the story of an ocean I didn't see coming. I learned something about swimming and trying not to drown, and I'm still having a ball in the water.

I fell in during November 1980, when I encountered Tom one Saturday night at The Barbary Coast, my local gay bar. Tom and I had gotten acquainted there earlier in the year. Our mutual history warrants some digression because the circumstances are just as baroque as the rest of the story: I first met Tom in 1968 when I was an apprentice in summer theatre in Pennsylvania. I was a lonely gay teenager dreading the return to my tormentors, the rubes at high school who didn't understand me and my fringed Indian boots. Tom was, in my eyes, a soignee New Yorker, there to play a chorus part in *South Pacific*. I was dying to touch men, and he was paying attention. The problem was Tom's timing: he came onto me on my very last day at the theatre—in fact, while my dad was racing the motor and honking the horn outside the tent. It's possible Tom had made other passes, but then I needed someone to grab me physically and just say, "Let's fuck." Otherwise, I wouldn't have noticed. (It's still like that.) But for the next twelve years, I imagined what it would have been like with him. He traveled to California, I went to college in Pittsburgh, and eventually we met again at the Barbary Coast. We fucked and the sex was okay (twelve years earlier, of course, the same sex would have been stupendous). We stayed friends from then on, me and my barstool Dulcinea, via Kismet.

On that November evening, Tom told

by Fred  
Gormley

me very offhandedly that he was doing set decoration for a gay porn film, the most expensive one ever made. My ears pricked up as did my nether regions. I asked if they were using extras and Tom said he would tell the production manager I was interested. I had recently learned The New York credo, "Count On Nothing," and I proceeded accordingly out of the bar and onto the Village circuit.

The next morning my phone rang—before noon on a Sunday! Now *tout* New York knows this just isn't done, and someone was asking for it. Someone turned out to be Marge, the production manager of the film. She told me that Chris, the director, would like to meet me later that afternoon. I asked if I should call right away. "Where's your sense of decorum?" she cried. "Call at a decent hour. Like after two."

I ran to the gym, put in a pump, and called Chris from there. I raced to his Midtown apartment, chatted briefly, stripped for a Polaroid (just like Date-A-Mate, this would match me with another extra for the sex scenes), and then I fucked the director. After that, I hopped on a bus to Pennsylvania, Thanksgiving, and the folks, forgetting about the movie. Nothing like time with family to put the brain on hold.

I returned to the city to find my answering machine filled with variations on a theme. Tom: "Call Chris." Marge: "Congratulations. Call Chris." Chris: "Call me. Good news." The news, of course, was that I wasn't going to be any \$25 sex extra: I'd copped a lead. With no discernible effort (except some very unremarkable sex), I'd joined the Olympians—George Payne, Eric Ryan, Scorpio. I was to star in *Centurions of Rome* as The Emperor (some say Caligula). I got the *acting* role, the character, and with it, *carte blanche* to chew scenery. When I picked up the script, I found I would also get to chew on George Payne.

*Centurions of Rome* was epic in form, as epic as one could get with a cast of "32 slaves and Romans" and a budget of \$150,000—much of it ill-spent. It concerned two lovers, played by Scorpio and George Payne, who are separated when one is kidnapped by the Imperial Guard and sold into the service of the insane Emperor. The adventure is in the free lover's quest to rescue the other, and in so doing he becomes the love object of the Commander of the Centurions. Because of his passion, the Commander allows his inamorato to

escape, and replaces him as the sexual slave to the Emperor. Not quite *Spartacus*, but there were possibilities.

The lines I would get to say were treasures, the stuff of Biblical epics, or at least Spencer Gift catalogues: "The gods have been generous. I owe them a favor. I know—I'll sacrifice a portrait of myself next Saturnalia. Heaven could use beauty like mine to nourish its eternity."

The more I thought about my character, the more Rosanna Podesta, the wicked queen in all those *Hercules* movies, was brought to mind. I could see her ponytail topknot snapping, stiletto heels clicking across some pastichey, anachronistic set with a total cost of \$1.98 or whatever that was in lire. In the end, this would amount to a fairly accurate assessment of my role in *Centurions*: me—as a second-rate Rosanna Podesta. That's something like a second-rate Mamie van Doren. Legends are *indeed* made of this.

I spent the intervening four days between receiving the script and the onset of shooting (there were no rehearsals) running lines to myself and calling friends with the heady news. Acting the part of a demented person excuses a great deal. I could shift moods anywhere, even raise self-consciousness to a life-style. I had seen various *Caligulas*, so I pinched something from John Hurt, stole something from Malcolm McDowell, and for good measure and the ultimate in dressiness, I tossed in some Norma Desmond.

Getting myself ready physically was a very different matter. I decided to make the Emperor as unattractive on the surface as he was outside. I felt he would rarely see sunlight, would be wan and anemic, so I ate less to make me gaunt, forsook the gym to give me softness, and bought Nair to dissolve my mat of chest hair. Now, the makers of Nair know there are idiots who will dump a bottle on themselves without heeding the side-effects, so they devote considerable packaging surface to loud warnings to test and wait for results. I have this invincibility complex, and I believe that because I don't even catch poison ivy I am impervious to all substances. There is little need to tell that I succeeded in removing the hair, but that I also achieved beautifully speckled tits. They were fascinating, perhaps a fashion trend in the making, but I worried until the rash subsided that I would forever be unable to tell which spots were my nipples.

The most important preparation was to make sure I was sexually primed. I knew from experience that the mere presence of a camera in the room would get me going. I wanted to make sure that all parts were in working order. I forcibly restrained myself from jacking off the next few nights so that my gush would be cinema magic. And I practiced the fine art of receiving a hand up the ass. Here's a tip: try it with friends. They'll be patient, disinterested, and best of all you'll find out who your real friends are. I wanted to make sure there's be no trouble getting over the "hump"—in this instance, the broadest part of my partner's hand. In past encounters, my delicate sphincter and my slim boyish hips combined to cause me pain, but through grim determination I had made the big grunt into pigdom: the reverse of having a baby. But truth be told, fisting is not my all-time favorite. To be sure, I procured from my local pharmaceutical source some relaxation in tablet form in case the going got rough.

When the day arrived, I felt I had achieved the epitome of crazy gay Roman emperors who are good in bed but heavy on the adjectives. Certainly, I would be something the Western World awaited with breath baited. It was no longer a role—it was a calling!

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## The First Day's Shooting

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Because fate twists itself around me (due to my reckless living), I have developed a strong appreciation for irony. My first day's work had plenty. The scene we shot that day, a Roman Baths, was eventually edited to excise *all* dialogue, George Payne, a particularly hammy piece of scenery, and myself.

Hollywood has its sad stories, and those most frequently told involve aspiring actors who gave it their all only to end up on the cutting room floor. But my aborted scene and the day spent doing it had their value. I did spend about twelve intense hours surrounded by hot men in all manners of undress going at each other full steam. Yes, I had been in similar circumstances before, but not with lights, camera, and crew; one of the reasons I like porn is that it's certainly not a desk job. And many people would kill for the opportunity to spend a day like that. On their behalf, I'll spend as many paragraphs as possible rubbing it

in.

We shot this—literally—steamy footage in a heterosexual swing club in the Murray Hill section of Manhattan on a Saturday. I arrived early; location work was running overtime. The other stars and the crew were winding up on Wall Street, where low angles supplied passable Classic architecture and Saturday morning meant no crowds. (One of the best moments in the final film is the shot of the Customs House, which some New Yorkers recognize and therefore laugh. It's great to hear honest laughter in a porn house.)

While I was waiting, I sat wolfing the Danish and coffee provided by the producers and eyeballing the fabulous bodies that were beginning to fill the room. I experienced a very typical emotional conflict of inferiority and superiority. On one hand, I knew I would never look like these beauties, some of whom were right out of Calvin Klein's teasing ads. But I also reminded myself that I was unusual-looking and that that was why I'd gotten a lead. Then I felt guilty for feeling superior. I buried my head in the *Times* in an all-out effort to ignore the obvious.

As the morning wore on, the equipment arrived and the setup began in the pool area. The "baths" were decorated in the best tradition of Italian muscle movies: red velvet, billowing draperies, gold tassels *everywhere*. The most jarring items on the set—and this is going pretty far—was a pair of wrought iron railings that looked inappropriately back-porch Bensonhurst. They swaddled the railings in fabric, but since they were front and center on the set, this only made them more distracting.

When the stars finally strolled in and the set was ready, the call came for costuming and make-up: first slaves, then guards, senators, and principals. I remember being last. It seemed that I was singled out for special abuse; in addition to the physical preparation I had done on my own, I was now being totally made over. I was given no body makeup (everybody else was), making me the whitest person on the set. But Jim, the makeup man, lavished his attention on my face with mascara, shadow, liner, rouge—the works. I glanced in a mirror and—Holy Cow! I do mean *cow!* Now, I can't stand artifice of any kind. This extends to cosmetics. But Baby Jane Hudson would have run away from me in horror. I gathered my wits and chose to think of this not as a glimpse into my personal hell, but as an

ennobling sacrifice for art.

As I headed for the costume rack, I noticed that all those hot men (hotter yet in their too-short togas and legionnaire leathers) were steering clear of me for fear of catching whatever was on my face. And lo—I beheld my wardrobe: a dazzling array of glitz, chintz, and jewels, splendor such as I have never known. I shuddered, not just for myself, but for Santo Loquasto and Theoni V. Aldredge, who never dared hope that their creations would find their way to the silver screen in an extravaganza like this. My organdy and velvet raiment told me that the Emperor wouldn't merely enter a room, he would clank, swoop, slither, or leak into a room.

While waiting in the wings, I was introduced to the producers. Jay Lewis was an attractive, quiet guy with those crossover looks that go anywhere, The Spike or Club A, clone drag or black tie. Under his dark beard and moustache he seemed to me a little drawn, maybe from too many a long evening. He deferred to the other producer, Brian, who had a boy-wonder quality, but the additional weight he carried added a touch of imperiousness, queen-motherliness. He was the type that attracted coteries and he had his collection of sycophants. At first glance, I thought he was Alan Carr.

I was anxious to do my scene and impress with ability if I couldn't win them with my face. The extras were placed in arrangements of twos and threes for sex background. Some footage was shot of this action with the set infused by mist from a mosquito fogger (this gave mood, depth, and emphysema). George was placed on the set and directed to gaze meaningfully at Scorpio (George does "meaningfully" the very best). Then Eric Ryan as the Commander of the guard trooped in heralding the Emperor (how handy this would be at parties). I sashayed on, surveyed the sitchyashun, and signaled everyone to carry on, which indeed they were doing nicely enough without any help from "his fashionableness." I plunked myself down beside George, who gave me a meaningful look while I groped his harnessed crotch and ad-libbed some lines about how his cock looked like an angry snake and could he make it spit. Not an auspicious piece of off-the-cuffery, but I did jazz it up with enough intensity to keep in character. Afterward, I was approached by the director, Brian, and George, who all told me with certain wonderment that I was very good.

Someone actually *good* in a porn film? Though I doubted I was that impressive, I could have told them I wouldn't settle for less. I think they were comparing me to a tradition of what-the-hell-it's-only-smut, and when those are the standards, you're bound to make an impression.

I left the location shortly after my stage exit. I entertained the notion of staying around for the orgy; certainly, what meat I saw caused me a crisis of conscience, size-fancier that I am. Should I offer my services as a "fluffer," even though I'd heard that the makeup man had the corner on that market, or go home and rest for the Challenge of Tomorrow? Sweet reason won (dammit), and I wiped the goop from my face and stepped out onto the street, head held high to this world of unknowing, uncaring bozos.

In the end, those porch railings were so ugly that they and all the action around them were cut from the scene. George and I were removed with the railing, but *Centurions* didn't suffer from the deletion.

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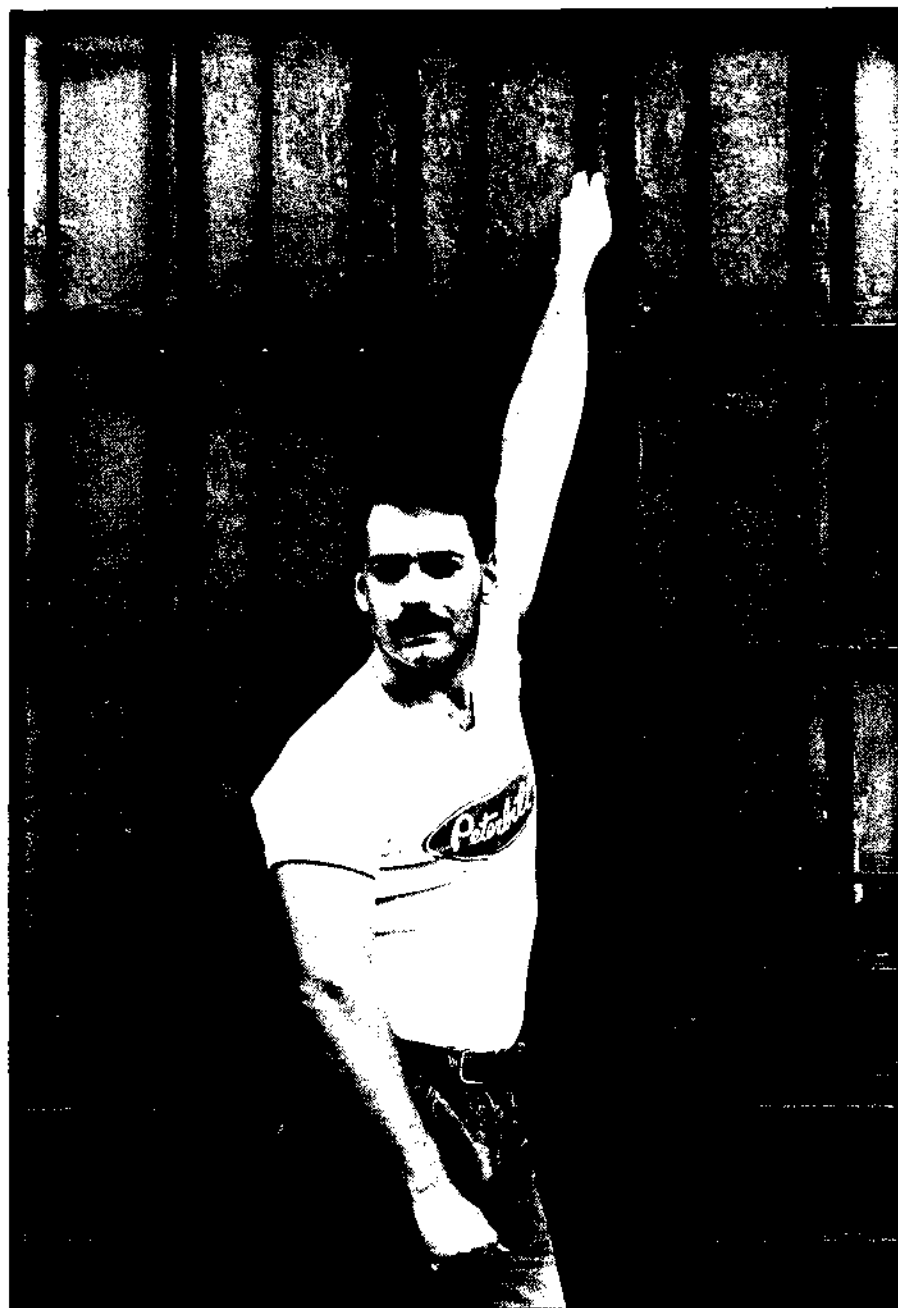
## The Second Day's Shooting

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To preface this day's star turn, I had eaten very little the night before and nothing in the morning to make sure my body would be innocent of all surprises for George when he fist-fucked me. After all, I've never considered excretia particularly photogenic, nor did I feel that scat had become so mainstream without my knowledge that it would be sorely missed if George's hand were to remain clean in its travels. I was an Emperor, after all. Our kind doesn't indulge in bodily function.

The day's location was a loft on Twenty-third Street within walking distance of my home which gave me plenty of time to mutter lines to myself. My dialogue was much more florid than the previous day's drivel. I was beginning to notice a tendency on my part to break the speeches like William Shatner. If my drugs affected me adversely, if I lost control, I could segue into *Star Trek* and never know it.

Once inside the loft (which was a gay sex loft and therefore appropriately equipped), I noticed that Chris was stewing about something. I didn't see the others hovering in the background, some of whom weren't crew or actors.



#### Portrait of the Author as Norma Desmond

I assumed Chris was aggravated by all the visitors, so I steered clear. I concentrated on the first set, which was to be a slave market. For this I was given a brown crepe toga, floor-length, with overhangs of mailing in gold coins (poker chips painted gold). I felt the ensemble was a little flashy for daytime wear, but I was the kind of nut who just might stroll down a Roman street with the contents of his pocketbook pasted to his jacket.

Makeup for the day was to be earth tones. (In all my scenes, my Earl Schieb paint job was coordinated with my outfits.) I was to hide behind the bidders for the slaves and burst forth when someone dared to bid against me for

George Payne. Tom pointed out that the bidding was being done in drachma, while the coin of the Roman realm was sesterce, but such a word, with all those "esses" hissing about that particular set, would have blown the valves or deafened the sound man. "Drachma" was a necessary substitution.

What with all that bothering Chris, shooting was suddenly interrupted by a director's nightmare. The fuses blew. While I would like to massage your fantasies, I cannot tell you that the darkness encouraged an orgy of cast and crew. You know the stuff—"There was more action off the set than on. The gaffer half-nelsoned the cameraman and ripped down his pants . . ." All the

darkness did was delay shooting for an hour and plunge Chris into an even blacker mood. When the lights finally returned, there was a noticeable, sharper edge to everyone's attitude.

In preparation for our next scene, George and I retired to an upstairs room and ran lines. *That's all.* Eric Ryan, however, was obliging enough to let me try dialogue and technique with him. Troupier that he is, Mr. Ryan lets anyone and everyone bone up with him, from the lowliest extra to your star of stars. Truly, Eric Ryan is Democracy in Action.

Right here seems to be an appropriate place to contradict a stereotype about skin stars, at least the gay variety. I found everyone on the set to be decent, good and sleazy in the clench, but likeable, dimensioned human beings. This may not be what some filth fans want to hear; after all, image is everything. But no one's Hotness Quotient was diminished. And to indulge myself further, I'd bet dirty dealings of the financial sort happen more often in "legit" films, when profits are figured and the distributor or studio does some creative bookkeeping to the detriment of the little guy with a point or two as his share. Hollywood is a sore point with me, based on the treatment of gays in film and gay stars, so I'll stop here and not belabor the point.

Back at our own little contretemps, I was outfitted and made up for my grand scene in the Emperor's Bedroom. The boudoir itself was all black, red, and gold, with bowls of fruit, flaming sconces, and fun fur. To match this decor, I was dressed in a red velvet robe, fully split up the sides and held together by a few strands of crystals. My face was highlighted with red eye shadow suggesting a vampire with conjunctivitis. When I stepped onto the set, I noticed little touches intended to make me feel at home. One was a bust of Caesar at the head of the bed (someone to watch over me) and chains attached to the spearposts at the foot. I knew then that this room had been decorated with me in mind, and so reassured, I popped my medicine and set to relaxing.

Mistake! Suddenly the director told me that the lines were being changed. The writers didn't think the ripe lines were ripe enough, so they added stuff fit to rot on the vine—or in my mouth. Added to this, my slither onto the set was to me a rather complicated piece of choreography. The camera would track me while I stayed in the light, regarding

myself in the mirror while making sure I caused no flares or reflected anything offstage into the lens. Somehow we got through it, and the cinematographer (suddenly I felt he was more than a cameraman) congratulated me on my instinct for lighting. I could feel the crew coming over to my side, understanding that I was giving my all to what they must have regarded as just another skin flick. They also knew that I respected them, and trusted them with the next, most difficult scene.

I was brought my slave. The business involved was unhooking George from his chains, handing him a flask of oil, talking and drooling while he annointed himself, removing my robe, falling back on the bed, and rolling over. Whew! This was complex business, but it was handled in a few takes. I was beginning to feel the drugs, so I paid a great deal of attention to the lines, and on film that concentrated look is telling. I was hanging on for dear life.

The twist in this scene was that George was trained by the slave master (Ed Wiley) to be submissive to the Emperor, but once actually in bed with His Maj, he is surprised when the blueblood throws his own legs in the air. I doubt anyone in the audience was stunned, given the royal penchant for Maybelline and evening gowns, but George got another opportunity to look meaningful. He got first-class service: he got sucked (in glorious close-up of my impression of Dracula going for the gusto), he fucked (my pleasure), and then, from out of nowhere, I reached for a silver bowl mounded with Crisco and jammed his hand into it. He gets the hint. The dialogue: "Emperor: Take me with your hands. Take me with your strong, smooth, flexible, sensitive hands."

In the midst of George's S.S.F.S. hand plunging into my Twilight Zone, a last-minute piece of additional business provided him with his own secret stash. He pulled a dagger on me, and I got an opportunity to play crisis counselor and talk him out of it. My stern lecture worked, but I wasn't supposed to realize it until he plunges the knife into the bed beside me. This was a real blade. And on my face was real fear. He missed my shoulder by a few inches. And after this tasteless display, the hostess-with-the-mostest Emperor allowed the ingrate to stay and continue with the hands. What panache!

Now, when actual sex is filmed, it's most often done silently. This enables

the camera to take various positions, getting creative angles on the goodies (it's not sexy unless you see "it" going in). This meant that my well-larded ass had to be cleaned up and recreamied for continuity's sake. When the director felt he had enough coverage, and we had shot this scene for four hours, they were ready to film the cum shots. We were to announce when we were about to shoot and George came first, a good healthy load. When it was my turn either my timing or the camera was off, and my proud gush didn't get on film. After a week of self-denial, my art was not to be immortalized. I harrumphed off the set.

The subsequent scenes were minor but troublesome. I was now thoroughly medicated and I had to chastise Eric Ryan for letting my slave escape. We ran the scene, cameras rolling, and I invariably fluffed it at the last line. After five attempts, Chris couldn't have been angrier with me than I was with myself. Finally, miraculously, we did it, and upon the word "Cut!" I threw my crinolines up and danced a spontaneous jig. The crew whistled, stomped, and clapped, as thankful as I was to be finished with the problem lines. I sped upstairs to remove my Technicolor face. I left and ate a huge supper to reward myself for such a hard day's work.

The next day there were only two short scenes left for me. One was unplanned and was the result of another actor's difficulty in saying "Only three fingers, Commander? You have much to learn." This would be the end of the film and would let the audience know that the Emperor intended to keep the Commander as his sex slave after the real slave had escaped. The other scene was a fifteen-second pan of me directing the guards to whip George, who was chained to my bedposts. One of the guards had trouble faking a whipcrack, giving George some real welts amid the stage blood. Stoic George! We didn't know he was really being hurt until the scene was over.

The filming was wrapped that night with a party at the Underground disco, press in attendance. I was in total ecstasy. Word circulated around the floor that Michael Flent was the best thing in the film, and I was introduced to the magazines and newspapers as "a discovery." I was flying high the rest of the night, dancing by myself across a nearly empty dance floor. I felt like I was dancing like I had never before. Nothing could bring me down; I was

on my way. I'd sit tight a few months, the film would come out, and it would be the big hit and the landmark film of the gay porn industry that it deserved to be. I would be a star, lauded for being an entirely new type, a fuck-film star with personality and intelligence.

I didn't know it then, but the tide was coming in to take me out to sea. I needed water wings, but all I had was confidence.

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## The Aftermath

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What happened after the filming of *Centurions of Rome* and particularly why I was involved so personally is best preceded by some insights into my expectations—and what created them—of my place in gay film, and how I thought *Centurions* would affect it. Bear with me—there are rewards for the persistent.

When I became a gay activist in the early Seventies, my consciousness was altered to such an extent that I began to weigh all media in terms of what it was saying to me as a homosexual. I don't trust Hollywood ever to make fair films about gay people. It's an industry, after all, that still has morals clauses, and careers are still predicated on fears of discovery or any assumption that one might be gay. Why else would an established star like Cary Grant, with nothing to lose, sue Chevy Chase for ten million over a joke about Grant's supposed homosexuality?

Combine my love of film, my saturation with television, a creative bent, and my politics, and you'll understand why I want there to be a gay movie star—and not someone who comes out in later life because he or she is forced to. And since I didn't expect that from Hollywood, I thought if I had the opportunity I would try to do it myself.

Now, many people have told me that porn is hardly the embarkation point for a person who wants to be taken seriously. But I honestly think that's changing. Sylvester Stallone started in porn and he wasn't hurt by it. (Stallone, by the way, also said it that it was all right to play anything but a gay man. That's changing too.) He also seized his opportunity by writing, producing, and directing his starring vehicle. But I don't aim for "legit." I want to make independent gay films from a gay sensibility. Our world does take sex more in stride than does heterosexual convention, and in the films I want to make, I want sex to happen as part of the story

if it's in the story. In other words, I want to be there when the American *Taxi Zum Klo* is made. And I don't apologize for porn. I just think it can be made better without sacrificing the erotica.

So even though this credo wasn't fully formed when I made *Centurions*, it was floating around in my head. But there was other business at hand. I had to grow up. *Centurions* was my rite of passage.

A few weeks after the wrap party, reality hit hard even though I tried to keep the fantasy alive by getting involved in publicity for the film and by designing a poster for it. With tremendous excitement, I imagined the "premiere," and I saw myself stepping out of a '58 Cadillac with two stuffed Afghans on wheels pulled behind me. A parody of the star entrance, get it? I didn't.

I began to make rounds within the industry. I started with my source of most encouragement, *Centurions'* cinematographer. Larry told me that I had everything it took to be a success in the adult film industry except one thing: I was gay. He was the first of many to tell me that if I was willing to cross over into straight film, I could be a big star. But I didn't want to do straight film. The only audition I'd ever done with a woman was an erection-wilting fizzle. Besides, I felt a certain loyalty to other gay people. If I ever became anything approaching a gay star, I wanted to be able to say I'd never made a straight porn film, that I was certifiably queer. Larry did give me names to check on, people to see, and I continued.

In the meantime, Chris was being pestered by his friends in the straight film industry to see the film as soon as possible. Chris directs heterosexual film mostly, and his peers had heard that *Centurions* was something special. This was unprecedented: gay porn bears the same second-class status to straight porn as gay people do to straights. The advance word must have been pretty impressive. Therefore, I assumed that all this loose talk must have included me. After all, I'd been told that I *was* the film. So I was somewhat surprised when I made my rounds that there was reticence to use me in any upcoming work. I talked to Jack Deveau (Hand-in-Hand Films) and he took a Polaroid for his files, but he couldn't figure out what to do with me. Arch Brown gave me the same reaction, as did Francis Ellie. Something was off, and no one

was telling me, so I had to figure it out for myself.

What it was was that I was something completely different. It wasn't that I couldn't act, or that I was professional, or that I was willing to do unattractive characters. I didn't fit a mold—I wasn't boy (Kip Noll) or man (Gordon Grant). My eyes said that I had lived beyond innocence and I couldn't play twinkies. My body wasn't massive enough and I wasn't craggy enough for the heavy-duty stuff. I was contending that my appeal would lie in my personality, but when it came down to it, the message was: You're not *hot*.

I wasn't discouraged. After all, Bette Davis put up with unbearable insults at the beginning of her career. She was called everything from "unsexy" by Carl Laemmle to "someone's personal vendetta against Jack Warner." Now I've got gall, but not enough to claim a talent that matches Bette Davis. But her tenacity carried me through the rejections. I would *make* them like me.

The film itself was experiencing its first post-production problems. The negative was handed over to an editor because Chris was busy. This person made a cut that was so rough pieces were missing and were never found again. The result was that the story on film, when it runs in theatres, wouldn't be the same plot we shot. Chronology and continuity were messed up. Chris did salvage what he could, though one reviewer later noted that it seemed to be trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, which at least proved that gay reviewers cared about story.

While handling the publicity, I tried to keep the hype at bay, and I wasn't too successful. I believed too strongly. I wrote the press release and sent out slide packets to all the gay press. I listed a late-May release date. *Honcho* and *Mandate* were the first to run photos, and therefore the first to carry the information half a year before it actually happened. I didn't anticipate all the troubles that made us all liars. And, as is done in p.r., I said something stupefyingly grand about all the stars and the director. For myself, I held it to one line, but I overcame my modesty and asserted that I was the best thing to come down the pike since flush toilets. This attitude made Chris angry. I once said in his earshot that I was one of the stars of the film and he growled at me, "You're *not* a star." That hurt.

I was still broke, and ignoring all other work by doing the publicity and

the poster. I did \$1500 worth of work on the art and only saw \$100 of it. I was a fool. But Chris invested \$3000 of his own money for opticals, sound, and titles, and Chris is a pro. I truly trusted some people I shouldn't have, but so did he.

I gradually stopped pursuing my dream with the fervor I had been. It was exhausting. But I didn't let go. I stepped up my gym routine and began having pictures taken regularly. I considered the angles. I offered interviews, but no one was taking, not until the film came out. Finally, my poor finances overcame me, and I moved from my beloved apartment in the Village to share in Chelsea. I sold the furniture—everything. I can't say this was a result of the film or my delusions, but my life was changing.

The film survived in my life. I went to a screening in August when the film was finished. I had seen pieces before, in dubbing and mixing, but this was my first preview. When it was over, Chris pumped me for my opinion. I couldn't say. I think I was too close. I did notice that I had no difficulty watching myself slurping on George Payne's cock, or having any of the other sex. I cringed at my acting. I now knew why actors say they can't watch themselves on film. I saw so many things I would have done differently. I also noticed that I got no special billing whatsoever. I expected at least "Introducing Michael Flent." But there I was, stuck in with the lesser players. I felt punished. It didn't make sense to me.

Later that month, Jay Lewis held a meeting at Benihana. Present were Jay and his date, Jay's friend John, Chris, and myself. I also brought a friend, Larry, because I felt he had a business head. This meeting was to divide the profits into quarters among Chris, John, Jay, and myself. Since I needed cash and not shares, I declined and gave my share to Jay. This gathering effectively cut Brian out of the profits. A war had broken out between him and Jay, with sinister accusations on both sides. Jay said he had the goods on Brian (all of us knew Brian was the proprietor of Manhattan's biggest call-boy operation) and Brian said he had the dirt on Jay (we guessed that Brian would tell Jay's father or something that he was squandering the family fortune on fuck films). We knew Jay was secretive, and someone started the laughable rumor that Jay was CIA. We didn't buy that, but there was something.

Fortunately for me, freelance work opportunities increased, and I was busy throughout the fall with my art direction. I was given a breather, time to think about my future, film, and the prospect that *Centurions* might never open. Chris had gone on to other projects, though he kept the master print locked in a vault while beginning to take some action about the \$3000 owed to him by the producers. Jay Lewis disappeared. We had been told that his attorneys were rationing his money because he wasn't managing it well himself.

Though I don't know if anyone else heard from Jay that fall, the world did. He was arrested in a parking lot in California and charged with diverting a Brink's truck in 1980. With the one-and-a-half million dollars (bound for Hawaii and shredding) he commandeered, Jay Lewis, a.k.a. George Bosque, went on a nationwide spree of blond hustlers, drugs, and fully stocked limousines. Not to mention one very expensive gay porn film. We had no idea.

The story has its appeal. He was very generous with the money, giving some to the A.S.P.C.A. in San Francisco and the Policeman's Benevolent Association. He gave the woman he forced to drive him away \$50 for her trouble. He was a lonely young man who wanted a crack at his particular American dream, and the papers seized on this aspect. The twist in the story is that Brink's is insured by Lloyd's of London, and the conservative old firm found itself, therefore, interested in the success of a gay porn film.

I was waiting in line at the Port Authority bus station for the trip home to the folks in Pennsylvania for Christmas when I saw it in the *Village Voice: Centurions of Rome* was finally opening. I literally swooned. That star-dusty obsession was still powerful enough to take my breath. But the film was sneaking into town: no premiere, no Afghans, no limos, no nothing.

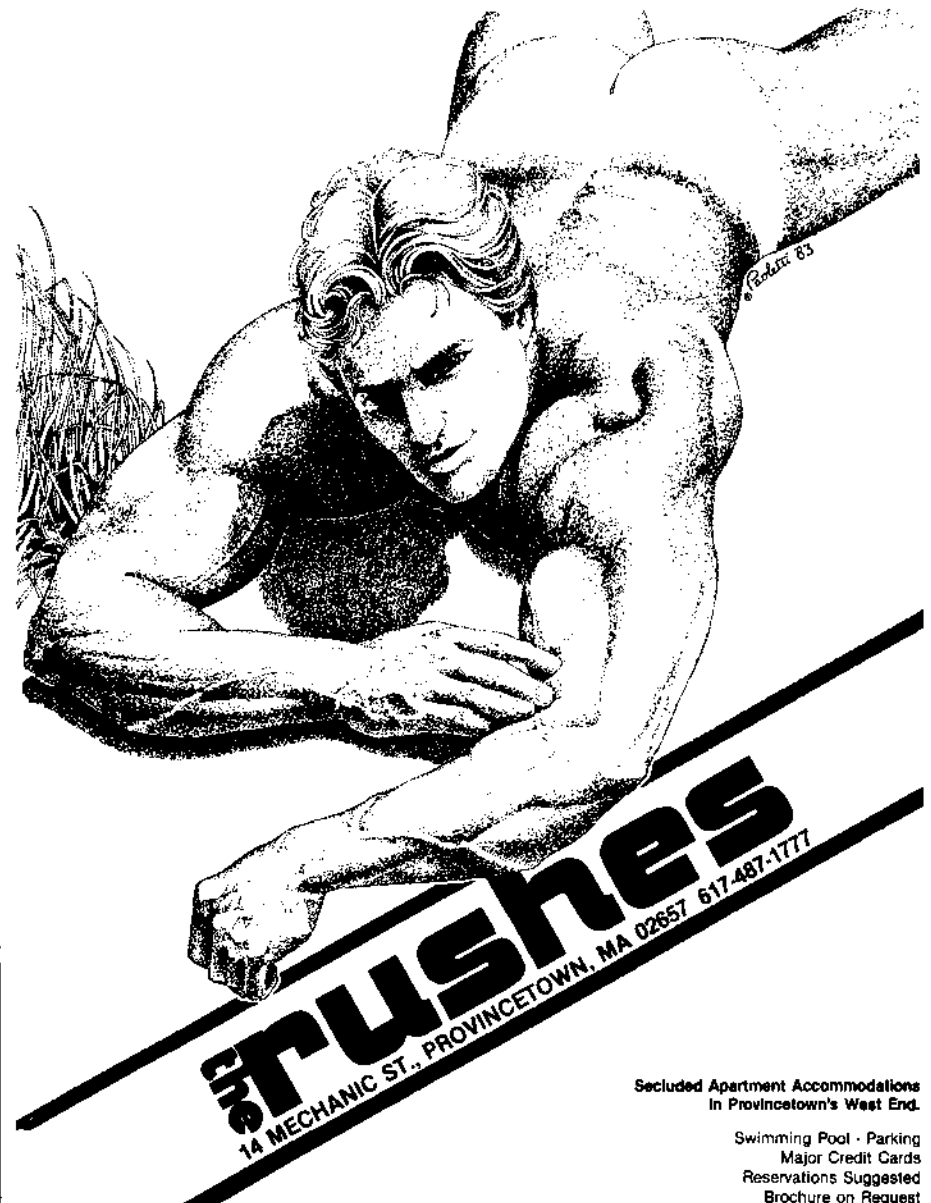
I took five friends to the 55th Street Playhouse and my entrance onscreen was notable on several fronts. People audibly shifted in their seats. I don't think they were ready for my particular vision of unloveliness slithering into sight. I wasn't. I sank down into my seat and some guy behind me screamed "My God! It's Joan Crawford." Another guy sat and meowed. You go figure. I got to like one particular reaction and I went back to the theatre

several times to revel in it. Guys line the walls of the theatre cruising the audience watching the film. When I came on, they'd see me up there, then they'd see me down there, then back to the screen, then to my seat. Consistently triple-takes, like a tennis match. One time I went to the room behind the screen and, while engaged with a gentleman from Florida, heard myself come onscreen. Why didn't I go for it—run in front of the projector and do a live version of "We had faces then?" I don't know. Life is filled with such missed opportunities.

The presentation of the film negated its promise. The sound was horribly distorted through the theatre's poor system, and the nicotine-stained projection booth window lowered the film to

a murky shadow of itself. Chris heard about these shortcomings and complained. They were somewhat corrected, but still affected the production value.

My celebrity simply wasn't. There were moments when I would enter a gay or gayish establishment and I'd get that look of "Don't I know you?" or "Aren't you somebody?" Sometimes I'd hear whispers like "I think it is him." But because I don't normally make up like the Emperor, those who saw me were never sure. No one ever came up to me and asked, "Weren't you in *Centurions of Rome*?" I took this several ways. Either they didn't like the film or me, or they thought it was no great accomplishment, or they thought I was like the Emperor and best to stay



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away, or they never saw the film. I therefore received no negative feedback, but when I was introduced at some parties as a "porno star," I did feel like a piece of meat, or a thing that had certain expectations to meet. Many people did tell me that although they weren't "into" porn, they went to see the film to see what all the fuss was

about. At any rate, *Centurions* did excellent business in New York, if you believe the *Wall Street Journal*, which claimed it made \$160,000. It did set a record at the 55th Street Playhouse, going into a third month. The video company claimed it couldn't manufacture the tape fast enough to meet demand. The court cases didn't hurt (eventual-

ly they didn't help either: the film is now tied up in litigation so it's not showing anywhere). So while George Bosque was featured in *San Francisco Magazine* and the *National Enquirer*, I squeezed one interview out of the film, for a gay newsmagazine in Pittsburgh, *Out!*

Still, none of the big guys in porn were offering, Joe Gage wasn't calling, I wasn't in the Falcon files. I concluded that the image didn't work. Therefore, Bette Davis' example notwithstanding, I returned to the clone look. The curly, Calvin Klein cut went and a moustache came in. The gym became serious stuff. Marketability seemed to be the bottom line, so the acting ability, the willingness to assay unsympathetic roles became subsidiary. And I resolved to produce my own films.

## Today

I am in the very earliest throes of producing my first film, a gay science fiction number, and it's hard work. I'm confronting some personal barriers about selling (in this case, selling my belief in myself). Raising money for this project is the damndest thing I've ever done, but the strongest points are that I sincerely want to make hot films of highest quality and integrity that abuse no one—investors, audience, actors. Even though porn always makes money, and the best way to make money is to knock off one of those \$8000 wonders, I don't want to do that. I can almost hear those giants of gay porn rolling with laughter out there, remembering their own idealism. But I guess that makes me either foolish or exemplary. Right now, I'm eager to proceed, damn the consequences, in front of or behind the camera.

The change is the look worked. I'm very comfortable with it, happy with myself. I think that the two *Centurions* years accelerated my passage into adulthood. While developing my "image" I was really developing my image. I became my image of a man or my image of a man became me. And I don't give up.

I still like to fuck in front of a camera. The acting bug, much as I disdain the acting profession, hasn't left. So I guess no lessons were learned, at least nothing so concrete that I can point to and say, "I'll never do that again." I would do it again.

With less make-up. □

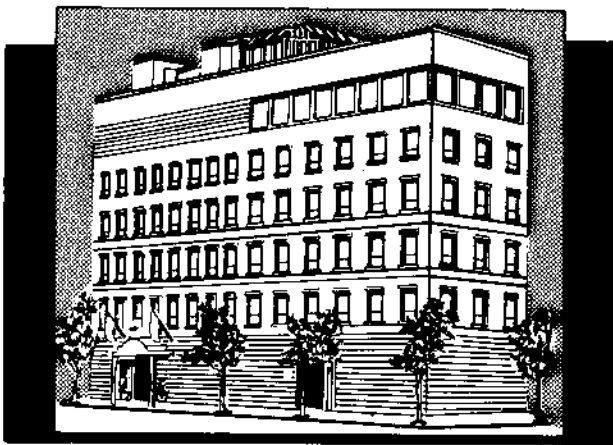


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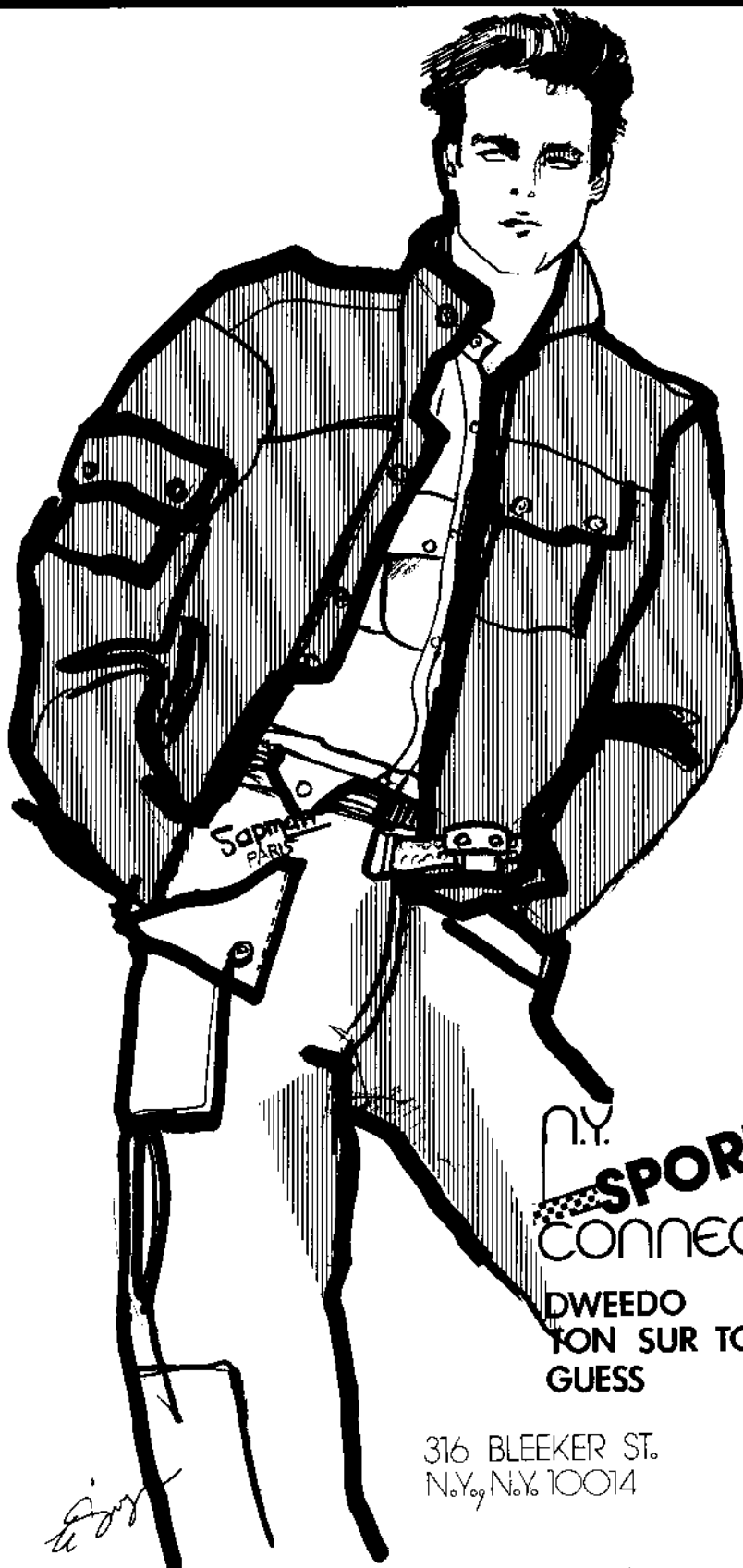
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*Guess*

# How To Argue For Gay Rights

by Richard Mohr

## Bruce doesn't think.

Thinking is hard work and not sexy. But Bruce doesn't want to get fired because he's gay. So Bruce had better start thinking. For if he wants his civil rights, he will have to persuade his legislator to rise above personal and popular prejudice. Arguments and reason can sometimes achieve this; little else can. Luckily for Bruce, the arguments are all on his side. They cluster into three main groups.

First is the recognition that the general arguments for civil rights legislation do indeed apply to gays, sometimes even with special force. Second, the status of gays as an invisible minority has the practical consequence, in the absence of civil rights protection, of effectively denying their access to other rights which are generally accepted as applying equally to all. Third, gays appear to be relevantly similar to other groups already protected by the Civil Rights Act, so that mere considerations of fairness require the extension of its protections to gays.

An unfortunate forgetfulness of the original motives for civil rights legislation has settled over the discussion of

gay issues. And yet the original reasons provide good and powerful engines in justifying civil rights protections in the private sector and they apply as well to gays as to anyone else. There are four such general justifications, some inter-related.

First, civil rights legislation promotes human dignity. Vague as it may sound, the Supreme Court found this argument the most compelling grounds for state action and unanimously upheld the constitutionality of the Civil Rights Act, thus acknowledging that no one can have much self-respect if subject to the arbitrary actions of others. Jobs, entertainment, and housing (after personal relationships and perhaps, for some, religion) are probably the chief means by which we identify ourselves. That these vehicles of personality and identity can be whimsically taken away is an outrage against personal integrity, demanding remedy from the state. To deny employment or to fire someone on the basis of a characteristic that has no bearing on job ability is one of the most sophisticated ways to make someone feel worthless. Given widespread discrimination (actual or threatened) against gays in employment, housing, and other major modes of self-identity, it is not surprising that gays display many of the same self-destructive, self-deluding, self-oppressing patterns of behavior shared by other historically oppressed minorities. (For further discussion, I recommend Barry Adam's *The Survival of Domination: In-*



*feriorization and Everyday Life* and Andrew Hodges and David Hutter's *With Downcast Gays: Aspects of Homosexual Self-Oppression*.)

Second, in a non-socialist, non-communist society like ours, there is a general expectation that each person is primarily responsible for meeting his or her basic needs. And it is chiefly through employment in conjunction with access to certain public accommodations that we meet these needs. Civil rights legislation then helps people discharge their obligation to be self-sufficient, and it does so without placing any comparable burden on those



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who are restricted by the legislation (employers, retailers, and so forth).

Third, civil rights legislation can be justified on utilitarian grounds as promoting the general welfare. Such legislation tends to increase the overall output of goods and services in society, thus contributing to general prosperity. In keeping with new trends in legal thinking toward economic interpretation of the law, this justification is paramount among the arguments given in favor of the federal gay rights bill by its congressional sponsors.

The social benefits of civil rights legislation are twofold: first, by

eliminating extraneous factors in employment decisions, the legislation tends to catalyze an optimal blend of a worker's talents and the occupational requirements. Many gays take dead-end jobs in order to avoid reviews which might reveal their minority status and result in their dismissal. In these circumstances, talents are obviously wasted. Second, human resources are wasted if one's energies are constantly diverted by fear of arbitrary dismissal. This argument has special significance for gay people. The cost of life in the closet is not small. In the absence of gay civil rights legislation, society is losing

resources that are devoured by day-to-day anxieties that accompany a life of systematic disguise.

These general arguments can be pooled to create another. Government has a perceived obligation to enhance those conditions which promote the flourishing of individual styles and choices. For example, the general rationale for compulsory liberal education is that it produces autonomous individuals capable of making reasoned decisions for themselves. Analogously, civil rights legislation, while it is a somewhat coercive force in the marketplace, helps to generate those condi-

tions that enable people to lead their lives guided by their own lights (to a degree compatible with certain minimum requirements of the law). And because the activities protected by such legislation are so central to people's lives, the results are achieved without any comparable loss on the part of those whom it restrains. The frustrated desire (or even right) to behave capriciously toward a disfavored group is obviously outweighed by the frustrated right of the members of a disfavored minority to lead self-determined lives.

Such legislation withdraws the threat of punishment by social banishment, loss of employment, and the like from the arsenal of majoritarian coercion, enabling individuals to conduct their lives unaffected by social convention. Imagine the lives of those gays who systematically forego, say, the opportunity to share the common necessities of life and the emotional dimensions of intimacy—forced to seek possible intimacy in places that are often extremely dangerous—as the price for the means by which they put bread on their table. In the absence of civil rights legislation, gays are in the position of having to make zero-sum trade-offs between the components of a fulfilling life—trade-offs, say, between a reasonable personal life and employment, trade-offs which the majority would not tolerate even for a minute.

The status of gays as an invisible minority creates a second cluster of important but often overlooked arguments for gay civil rights. Gays as an invisible minority require civil rights protections as a necessary background condition in guaranteeing access to judicial rights and to the political rights of the First Amendment. These rights are designed to pertain equally to all.

By civic and judicial rights, I mean rights to the impartial administration of civil and criminal law in defense of property and person. One of the greatest virtues of the American legal system is that its workings are open to scrutiny by public and press. Yet this has the frequent unfortunate side-effect of casting private matters into the public realm. And those for whom the risk of publicity results in unemployment will simply not have access to the full correctives of justice. It is unreasonable to expect anyone to give up that by which he or she lives in order for judicial procedures to be carried out equitably.

Further, in the absence of civil rights legislation, gays as an invisible minori-

ty are in practice denied the potentially effective use of the First Amendment: freedom of speech, press, assembly, petition, and especially the right of association: the right to join and be identified with other persons for common (political) goals.

Put crudely, does a gay man who has to laugh at and manufacture fag jokes at the office coffee machine in order to deflect suspicion in an office that routinely fires gays have freedom to express his views on gay issues? Is it likely that such a person could reasonably risk appearing in public at a gay rights rally? Would such a man be able to sign, let alone circulate, a petition protesting the firing of a gay worker? Would such a man be likely to try to persuade workmates to vote for a pro-gay city councilmember? Would such a man sign a letter to a newspaper protesting abusive reportage of gay issues and events, or advocating the discussion of gay issues in high schools? Of course not. Such a man is usually so transfixed by fear that it is highly unlikely that he could even be persuaded to write out a check to a gay rights organization.

In the absence of civil rights protections, even if gays are *free from* active government interference in their political activities, they are nevertheless denied the *freedom to act* politically. All potentially effective political strategies involve *public* action. And any member of an invisible minority who must remain invisible in order to maintain a livelihood is not free to be open about his or her minority status or to incur suspicion by publicly associating with others who are open about their similar status. Except for having the right to vote, this person is in effect denied all political power, as well as the freedom to publicly express views that relate directly to his or her minority position, and the right to unite with other like-minded individuals in an attempt to compete for votes which would elect persons who support the policies they advocate. Denied are all effective use of legal means to influence public opinion prior to voting and all effective means of lobbying after elections are held.

Without the civil rights protections, that bring gays into democratic procedures, gays have not even been able to begin thinking seriously about how to influence the formation of substantial policy-making issues, like licensing, zoning, tax exemptions, educational and medical policy, laws governing liv-

ing associations and the transfer of property, and "family" law, among others. Because gays are effectively denied access to the public procedures of democracy, they cannot defend their own interests on some very crucial issues.

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## A third class

of arguments for gay rights can be devised if gays are understood to be similar to classes already protected by the Civil Rights Act. Considerations of these similarities have already made up the lion's share of popular and political debates on the issue. Opponents of gay civil rights are here confronted with a dilemma, because on one hand if it turns out that being gay is something over which one has little or no control, then being gay will be viewed as similar to having an ethnic status. Yet on the other hand, if being gay is largely a matter of choice, then it will seem rather like having a religion. And both ethnic and religious classes are protected.

If sexual orientation is—for whatever reason—beyond an individual's control, then discrimination against gays is especially deplorable, like discrimination against racial or gender classes. Debates on this theory of sexual behavior usually revolve around various claims of the biological sciences. Ensuing debates over genetics, early childhood development, and the like, are actually as unnecessary as they are currently inconclusive. All that is needed to answer the question is an investigation of the experiences of gay people in our society; it quickly becomes fairly clear that sexual orientation is not likely a matter of choice. Being homosexual in our culture simply does not represent the same structure that decision-making does. On one hand, the "choice" of the gender of a sexual partner does not seem to express a trivial desire that might be as easily fulfilled by a simple substitution of the desired object. Picking the gender of a sex partner is decidedly dissimilar to such activities as choosing a flavor of ice cream. If an ice cream parlor is out of one flavor, one simply picks another. And if people were persecuted, threatened with jail terms, shattered careers, physical harm, loss of family and housing—all for eating rocky road ice cream—no one would ever eat rocky road ice cream; everyone would pick another available flavor. If sexual orien-

tation were an easy choice, no one, given society's persecution of gays, would ever be gay. If sexual orientation were an easy choice, the Kinsey Institute's statistics on the incidence of homosexuality in America, issued as they were when gay sex was everywhere a felony, would not have been shocking; they would simply have been preposterous, utterly unbelievable, virtually self-refuting.

On the other hand, even if establishing a sexual orientation is not like making a relatively trivial choice, perhaps it is nevertheless similar to making the central and serious life-choices by which individuals try to establish themselves as some type. Again, if we examine the gay experience, this seems not to be the case, for we never see anyone setting out to become a homosexual in the way we see people setting out to become doctors or lawyers or even bricklayers. We do not see gays-to-be planning and acquiring the means to that end. The gay experience is really quite different. Typically, the gay-to-be simply begins having homosexual encounters, while at least initially resisting quite strongly the identification of "homosexual"; often the homosexual encounters themselves are resisted until time, luck, and great personal effort can catalyze self-acceptance, until homosexuality can be viewed as a material condition that comes with its own capacities and limitations. Then he or she can begin to act in accordance with those factors. As a result, the experience of coming out to oneself has for gays the basic structure of a discovery, not the structure of a choice.

Nevertheless, one group of self-identified homosexuals—namely, those lesbians who claim that having same-sex relations is politically motivated—hold that sexual orientation is a matter of choice and, indeed, is better for being so, when the choice is the right one. (For some incisive discussion, see Mary Anne Warren's *The Nature of Woman: An Encyclopedia and Guide to the Literature*, s.v. lesbianism.) Let us, for the sake of argument, suppose that "political lesbians" are right in these matters. If one's sexual orientation is a matter of individual choice, then sexual orientation becomes relevantly similar to religion: a protected category. A personal moral choice is not reasonable grounds for discrimination even when the private belief in and practice of it has very

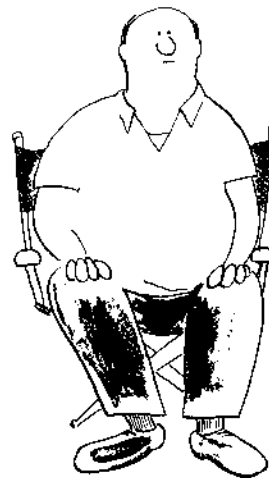
public manifestations, as when a religious person becomes involved in politics with a religious intent. Now a sufficient moral reason for the protection of private morality from discrimination in the public sphere is as follows. In religious and sexual behavior, as well as in other types of behavior like excretory behavior and certain financial matters, there is in our society a presumption of an obligation that they be carried out in private, even when there is virtually universal acceptance of the behavior (for example, non-gay sex in the missionary position for the purpose of procreation). And this obligation in turn generates a right to privacy for these same practices. For society cannot consistently require that these activities be carried out in private (despite public consequences, like population growth) while also insisting that these behaviors be investigated and to that extent be made public behavior. And by giving up the right to investigate such matters, *a fortiori*, society gives up the right to discriminate based on them.

It goes without saying that there is such an obligation to privacy surrounding homosexual acts in our society. It should be noted, though, that drawing attention to one's sexual orientation for social or political reasons does not waive one's right to privacy for homosexual

acts any more than couples who wear wedding rings in public or take their children for walks waive their sexual privacy rights. Claims by some politicians and many religious leaders that the Civil Rights Act should not be extended to protect "behavior" are simply mistaken about the current reach of the law. This oversight is particularly bizarre when it is made by religious leaders. And even if it could be argued that privacy was not the primary interest protected by the state when it includes religion within the ambit of the Civil Rights Act, nevertheless the state is generally regarded as having a substantial interest in protecting the privacy of all; this argument therefore works very well even if it is detached from its analogy to religion.

These various arguments, if severally sound and collectively uncontradictory, are compelling. Gays need to advance them persistently to legislators, who must find the courage to rise above popular prejudice and cultivate a judicial state of mind, which is precisely what makes representational democracy superior to direct democracy, and which is absolutely essential if we are going to maintain the concept of minority rights against social, legal, or governmental coercion as an integral part of our cultural ideals. □

#### ABOUT QUEENS

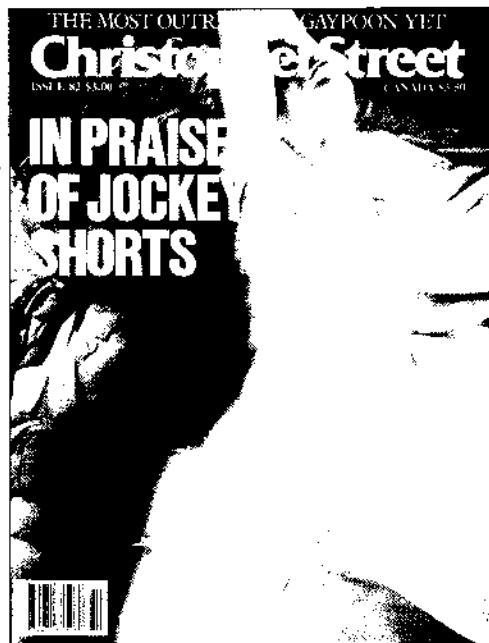


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HE IS PORTRAYED BY JOAN COLLINS ON  
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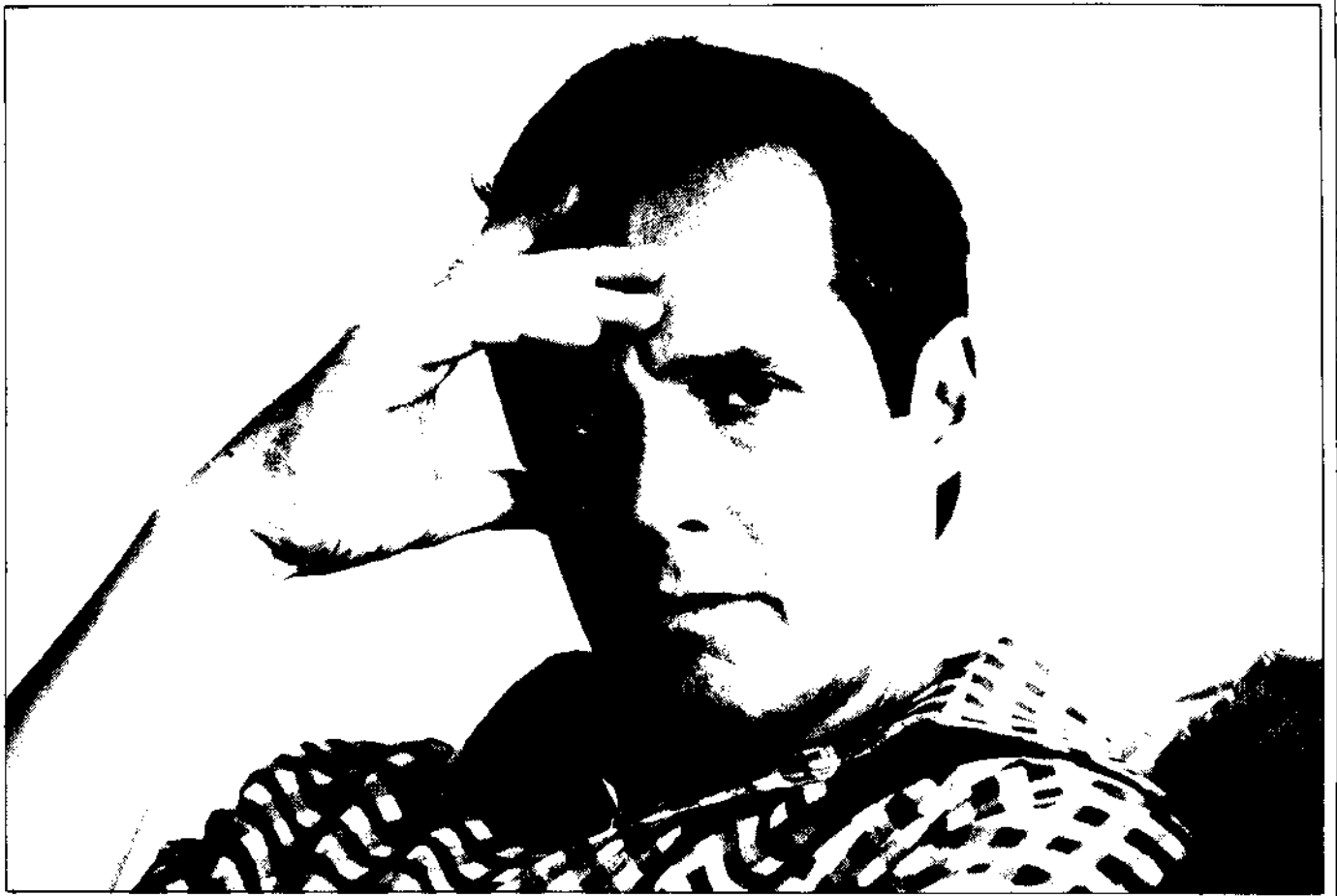
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## CS READINGS

by Felice Picano



# Revelatory Rorem

*He became a fascinated and fascinating witness to the demise of some of the most influential artists, writers, and composers of our century.*

*Setting the Tone*  
by Ned Rorem  
Coward-McCann, \$18.95

*The Paris and New York Diaries*  
by Ned Rorem  
North Point Press, \$15

*The Later Diaries*  
by Ned Rorem  
North Point Press, \$16

In one of his almost four dozen essays, reviews, and journal extracts collected in *Setting the Tone*, Ned Rorem's latest published book, he writes about a university professor who invited him to speak on a panel about "creativity." In a rare moment of gracelessness, Rorem fulminates against the very notion of critiquing or ex-

plicating the process by which a thing of art comes into existence.

To a certain degree he is correct; we ought to be sufficiently content with the finished product and not worry about how it happened. He is on less steady ground when he writes that creative people don't think about—never mind talk about—the process. I've been bored to stupefaction by some extremely reputable poet's, composer's, or artist's barrage of information in response to a polite question regarding a sonnet, sonata, or aquarelle. And in fact, one of the single best entries in his newly reprinted, handsomely packaged *Paris Diary* occurs when the author explains step by step how—from his hearing of a Poulenc song—he went on to write his own, quite different, equally successful song.

We are not surprised that Rorem was asked to discuss creativity. We possess so few artists who are accomplished in more than one field (Arnold Schoenberg's painting and Paul Bowles's com-

posing are the only other contemporary examples that come to mind). And what are these two volumes of diaries if not an explication, possibly even an apologia, for the serious composer, a breed which in the second half of the twentieth century is doomed to near obscurity, while Rod Stewart and Paul McCartney's tunes reach millions.

The "double-man" is not a uniquely American phenomenon in life or literature, yet since Poe's tale, "William Wilson," we do seem to have more regularly appropriated the idea in our arts—both serious and popular—than any other nationality. Is it a basic schizophrenia innate in our way of government? Our social life? Our religion or non-religion? Or is it because none of these work together in our everyday lives? I leave the answer to the pundits. I do know that we remain fascinated by the truth of duality whether it is artistic or criminal, and we are most curious about those who exemplify it.

Thus the overriding concern of these diaries, ranging from 1951 to 1947, is Rorem's unspoken question with its personal and artistic corollaries: How can a man be two men? For that reason alone, the *Diaries*, mostly written during the pre-Stonewall years by a man-loving-man whose sensibility seems very contemporary and even liberated, are important social documents. Intelligent as Rorem certainly is, I wonder

*How fortunate for us that he had the wits to write throughout his personal successes and failures, heartbreaks and hangovers.*

if he isn't too close to this material (his life, his self) to see this as the overriding concern of his non-musical writing, perhaps of his life.

There's a great deal more in these volumes to divert, instruct, and mystify the reader. Rorem arrived in Paris at precisely the right moment—1951—and with exactly the right credentials—talent, beauty, introductions, an attitude—to meet, work with, play with, and occasion love what remained of the European modernist movement in art, music, film, literature, and society. He became witness to that group's demise: the diaries are filled with homages and references to the last works, illnesses, deaths, and funerals of people such as Colette, Cocteau, Milhaud, and Poulenc, and with the survivors, Jean Marais, Alice B. Toklas, Virgil Thom-

son, and Messiaen. How lucky for Rorem, we think, and how fortunate for us, that he had the wits to write about them throughout his personal successes and failures, heartbreaks and hangovers. Especially in the diaries, but also in the collected essays, the portrait gallery he presents is bustling, choice, sharply observed, intuitive, with just the right amount of offhandedness (after all, it's *his* life) to be utterly convincing and worth a shelfload of definitive biographies.

The effects of such a constellation of teachers is less clear. Rorem has carved out his own quite solid place in music. And while he is best known as a composer for the voice, my favorite compositions, and those I would recommend to anyone who wants to become acquainted with Rorem's music, are the instrumental works. *Lions* (1963), *Lovers for Harpsichord, Oboe, Cello, and Piano* (1964), *Night Music for Violin and Piano*, and *Water Music for Violin, Clarinet, and Orchestra* (all available on record) are polished, individual pieces, indebted to the modern French tradition of sonority and elegant expression.

But it is as a writer that we are now considering him. If as a diarist, Rorem is a Saint Simon without a Versailles, if as an autobiographer he often approaches the sly honesty of J.J. Rousseau, as an essayist he is not quite a Montaigne, as an epigrammatist not yet a La Rochefoucauld. It's no mistake that all these comparisons are French. Rorem's own likes and dislikes formulated through those wild and creatively active years of the early diaries remain stamped in the Gallic mold, what he himself calls "a French bias." His musical gods are Debussy, Satie, Ravel, and Poulenc, rather than Bartok, Prokofiev, Mahler, and Ives. Stravinsky, too, who—mimetic as a monkey—could be as French as Ravel, in *Persephone*, as Italian as Rossini, in *Pulcinella*, is also held aloft for contemplation. But when Rorem goes out full tilt against some composer it's also usually the French who come in for it: Berlioz (really?), Boulez's compositions (whose compositions are minor, I grant, despite their wide influence), and Boulez's conducting (without much regard for his magnificent recordings of Ravel and Debussy).

If with years and distance, residence in Manhattan and Nantucket, Rorem has moved physically away from Paris, it remains in his bones, in the precision and in the tenacity of his opinions. The

## Best Seller List

### HARDCOVER

1. **The Male Couple**, by David McWhirter and Andrew Mattison (Prentice-Hall, \$16.95).
2. **Nightwork**, by Joseph Hansen (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, \$12.95).
3. **Parisian Lives**, by Samuel Steward (St. Martin's, \$12.95).
4. **As If After Sex**, by Joseph Torchia (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, \$13.95).
5. **The Family of Max Desir**, by Robert Ferro (Dutton, \$13.95).

### PAPERBACK

1. **Saul's Book**, by Paul Rogers (Penguin Books, \$6.95).
2. **I Once Had a Master**, by John Preston (Alyson, \$7.95).
3. **Cum**, edited by Boyd McDonald and consisting of materials from *Straight to Hell* (Gay Sunshine Press, \$12).
4. **Sudden Death**, by Rita Mae Brown (Bantam, \$7.95).
5. **Shuttlecock**, by Phil Andros (Perineum Press, \$7.95).

The *Christopher Street* best seller list is compiled from monthly sales reports from A Different Light and Three Lives Bookstore in Manhattan, Lambda Rising in Washington, D.C., Giovanni's Room in Philadelphia, Glad Day Bookshop in Boston, Chosen Books in Detroit, Unabridged Bookshop in Chicago, Walt Whitman Bookshop in San Francisco, and A Different Light in Hollywood.

very idea of taking on a highly general topic and either systemizing it or crystallizing it remains typically European. It also confers a breadth, an authority that makes many of Rorem's essays on music, even with his blind spots, particularly compelling. I don't think it's too early to state that Rorem is currently one of the two or three best writers about music, specifically about the music of this century. I will forever thank him for introducing me to Erik Satie's marvelous and neglected cantata, *Socrate*, for restoring my interest in Ravel's *L'Enfant et Les Sortilèges* and Debussy's *Pelleas et Melisande*. Rorem's willingness to take on other less malleable topics, "On Vanity," "Being Alone," Auden, Noel Coward, Shaw as a music critic, is also commendable. These are true essays—the testing out of an idea to see where it will end up—and if the result is sometimes surprising, it is never forced, or lacking in interest, anecdote, and the play of a cultivated mind over an intriguing subject.

In one early diary entry, Rorem confesses to a crime when he was a child: the maiming of a family horse which had to be destroyed, an especially horri-

ble act in a nonviolent Quaker environment. He tells the story with such recall, such empathy for the child he no longer is, and with so little apology, that we are left with an intense, almost surrealistic image, a canvas by De Chirico or Max Ernst: we cannot believe this actually happened. I can't figure out why he chose to include this sordid anecdote in his published diaries, except perhaps as a warning to others, a bit of self-defense. For that matter, I cannot really understand why he caused the diaries to be published in the first place—delighted as I am that he did. I've kept journals for nearly fifteen years and wouldn't dream of letting them reach the public until I and most of my coevals are long gone. Is it for self-exposure? Exhibitionism? Because some of the writing was too good not to publish? Too easy answers, and ill-suited to the shy, gracious person I know in Rorem.

Perhaps we have to look elsewhere: to the idea of writing as *revelation*, as an almost automatic activity, by which not only Rorem's readers but the author himself will discover who this dually talented, ambiguous person, Ned Rorem, really is. □

### I'VE HAD ORGASMS

I've had orgasms  
 every which way, he said  
 orgasms that pointed  
 south toward women  
 and north toward men  
 orgasms that pointed toward bathrooms  
 orgasms that pointed toward heroes  
 orgasms with heroes  
 sunlit orgasms with cowards  
 I had orgasms in the 60s  
 orgasms in the 80s  
 my mother was still  
 having babies in  
 the 70s every which way

Do the orgasms change, are they  
 changeless, are they  
 the center of  
 an ever dying, ever confused  
 reason besotted  
 self?

Will you have one with me, I asked.  
 Why not, he said, I'm  
 a dead man,  
 my orgasms are yours  
 They're public property.  
 I've had them every which way.

Sean Lawrence

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## CS HEALTH

by James E. D'Eramo, Ph.D.

# Fellatio: An American Specialty

*To suck or not to suck is not really the question.*

Schools of thought differ on trends in gay sexual practices over the last twenty years. And much of the talk we hear on the subject is derived from personal experiences rather than controlled studies or statistical analysis. If you bring up the topic of fellatio at your friendly neighborhood gay bar, you might be told that it has taken a second place to anal intercourse. But in America that preference seems to have developed only over the past decade. Indeed, before the mid-Sixties, American gay men enjoyed an international reputation for giving "good head." The gay men in Europe seem to have a long-standing predilection (at least from the times of Ancient Greece) for anal intercourse. No one can be certain why or if this disparity actually exists. But it is true that the French call fellatio "*le vice americain*."

Until recently, European gay sexuality has had a history of being discreet or even closeted, and more closely aligned to Western cultural taboos related to male sexuality. Hence, a preference for anal intercourse among gay European men may have developed as a function of heterosexual male role models. Along with the American sexual revolution of the Sixties came an explosion of gay male porn films and magazines which increasingly featured anal intercourse as the ultimate form of gay sexual interaction. The influence of porn created a paradigm of gay male sexuality to be emulated, and the resultant peer pressure helped anal intercourse attain its primary position in the homosexual psyche.

I recently overheard a conversation at a gay bar that reflected this attitude: "Did you have sex with that hunk last

night?" asked one man. "No," replied the other, "we didn't fuck. We just fooled around and he ended up sucking me off." Most heterosexual men think of sex only in terms of genital intercourse, and it is a bit disturbing that some gay men are shackled with this viewpoint as well. But it may not be as bad as all that. According to *The Hite Report on Male Sexuality* [1], based on a detailed questionnaire and the responses of over 7000 American men, "Fellatio is the most popular form of sexual activity between men. Although a majority of gay men also enjoy anal sex, and some gay men only wanted mutual masturbation and embracing, oral sex is still the daily staple which most gay men enjoy most frequently."

The word fellatio is derived from the Latin verb *felare*, to suck, and may be defined as oral stimulation of the penis or taking the penis of another person into the mouth. But this definition is limited in scope. Some men can perform fellatio on themselves as a form of masturbation, and men can both give and receive fellatio alternatively or simultaneously (sixty-nine). Fellatio can be part of foreplay and sexual arousal techniques which may lead to ejaculation via masturbation or anal intercourse. Of course, fellatio may also be the primary stimulus for ejaculation. Indeed, the desire to suck cock is regarded by some as a primary homosexual urge.

But the AIDS epidemic and other diseases, including amebiasis and hepatitis-B, have caused well-advised gay men to reevaluate the ways in which they satisfy their basic sexual needs. The most sure-fire way to prevent developing AIDS and other STDs is sexual abstinence—and of all the preventive measures, abstinence is also the most likely to fail because it is a practice which, for most people, is very hard to keep. In some ways, preventing STDs through sexual abstinence is like trying to lose weight through starvation. Yet, it is known that weight reduction is best accomplished by

changing eating habits and increasing exercise. Quite probably the prevention of AIDS and other STDs is best approached by changing the ways one has sex so that exposure to infectious agents are minimized. Two healthy men who are sharing a *consistently monogamous* relationship are not under the same kind of rigorous pressures to change their sexual practices as are men who do not have such a relationship. For most gay and bisexual men, the issue becomes not whether to have sex, but rather how to have healthy sex and with whom.

This "how-to" principle does not apply to all sexual practices (for example, rimming is always dangerous), but it does apply to fellatio. The question then is not whether to suck cock, but rather how to do it in a relatively safe way. The agent which causes AIDS (which some scientists believe is LAV/HTLV-III) may be present in the semen; however, this has yet to be demonstrated. Therefore, one should never allow his sexual partner to ejaculate into his mouth, nor should one ejaculate into anyone else's mouth. There are many infections which can be spread by fellatio. The litany is truly impressive. If you are the active participant in fellatio, you are at risk for contracting the following infections (listed in the approximate order of frequency): oral gonorrhea, herpes I and II, pharyngitis (sore throat caused by *Chlamydia* or other bacteria), oral venereal warts (oral condyloma acuminatum), syphilis, hepatitis-B, amebiasis and other enteric diseases, lymphogranuloma venereum, granuloma inguinale, and chancroid. If you receive a blow-job, you may contract these diseases (again, listed in the approximate order of frequency): flu, viruses (including herpes I and II), nongonococcal urethritis (caused by *Chlamydia* and other bacteria), gonorrhea, and *Neisseria meningitidis*. These lists were compiled by Dr. David G. Ostrow and Alfred Obermaier. [2] Chlamydia, followed by gonorrhea, are the most common of all

STDs. Because fellatio is a regular sexual practice among gay men, pharyngeal gonorrhea is very common as well. This infection is a compound problem because pharyngeal infections often go overlooked or untreated, since they are frequently asymptomatic. According to Dr. Daniel C. William, the practices of rimming and fellatio within the sexually active gay male population most likely account for the high incidence of amebiasis and other parasitic protozoal diseases in the gay community. Although rimming is the primary mode of transmission of amebiasis in gay men, occasionally fellatio is the source of the infection. [3] This is why washing before fellatio is important. In addition, according to Dr. Alexander A. Fisher, receiving fellatio exposes men to teeth scratches, scrapes, and bites which may lead to extensive lesions caused by many kinds of bacteria, and men should be cautioned to avoid excessive trauma and irritation of the penis due to strenuous or "rough" intercourse or fellatio. [4]

Yet fellatio remains a viable form of sexual interaction between men, if the risks are kept in mind and the precautions are observed. In the booklet *How To Have Sex During An Epidemic: One Approach*, readers are advised, "Unfortunately, sucking your partner cannot be made risk free (unless your partner is wearing a rubber!)." The booklet is clear about the risks of contracting cytomegalovirus (CMV): "Since the highest concentration of CMV is carried in the sperm (and urine), swallowing of a load of come can be a massive inoculation of CVM. If you want to REDUCE your risk of getting CMV, suck—but don't let your partner come in your mouth." Researchers are convinced that CMV plays an important role in the pathogenesis of AIDS. "Getting sucked by your partner probably poses no risk to you of contracting CMV since you are not taking in any of your partner's body fluids. However, since you are concerned about protecting your partner's health, protect him from CMV—DON'T COME IN HIS MOUTH."

In 1977, a book entitled *The Joy of Gay Sex* [6] outlined the positive and creative aspects of gay sexual interactions, including some passages on the techniques and pleasures of fellatio. These affirmative remarks and insights are still valuable, but AIDS has introduced new factors to the realm of sexual encounters, and imaginative approaches to sex acts like fellatio must



"Oral sex is still the daily staple which most gay men enjoy most frequently."

ANDY WARHOL

BLOWJOB (1963-64)

be aimed at disease prevention.

The clearest instructions about fellatio have been recently published in "street language" by the Safer Sex Committee of New York. In a sex-positive brochure entitled "Healthy Sex is Great Sex" [7], the following recommendations are made: "Sucking and getting sucked can be great for you and your one and only love. Here's how to make it safer:

- Shower thoroughly. Make sure his cock and balls are washed before you put them near your mouth. Wash yourself too.

- Only come outside his mouth. Don't let him come in yours. *Sucking* can still be *dangerous* because sucking can spread diseases such as syphilis, gonorrhea, and herpes. Spitting his cum out does not protect you."

Before most men ejaculate, a fluid commonly called pre-cum issues from the penis. The relative infectious capacity of this fluid has yet to be fully determined. One should avoid the intentional ingestion of pre-cum, but the accidental ingestion of pre-cum remains a risk. Also, oral contact with the male genital area may spread other diseases like amebiasis.

Thus, performing fellatio without

swallowing semen is far from a foolproof practice. Yet it remains a sexual activity in which most men will continue to engage. Of course, it is wise to make it as healthy as possible. Besides the recommendations outlined above, a man can decrease the chances of infection via fellatio by having sex with only familiar and healthy partners who are not promiscuous—or better still, within a monogamous relationship. For those who will not abstain from sucking, healthy fellatio is crucial to continuing a great sex life. □

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2. Ostrow, David G.; Sandholzer, Terry Alan; Felman, Yehudi M., editors, *Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Homosexual Men*, Plenum Books, New York, 1983, page 14.
3. *Ibid*, pages 87, 96.
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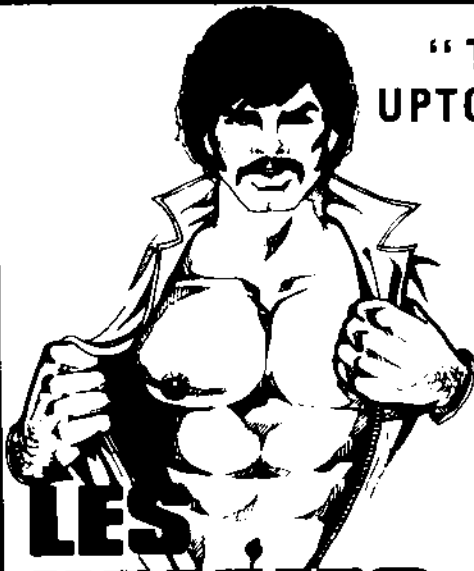
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GWM 30 6' 175 successful NYC artist sks 18-25 GWM need hot boy to travel. Pic gets mine. MM, PO Box 725, Northville, MI. 48167. Let me know how you feel about the kind of accommodation you'll make.

GWM nud-30's Stanford hitech lawyer sks similarly intellectual, attr, wordly, unaffected. Sindpt achiever. TOM 1635 Bush St., #4, S.F., CA 94109.

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Looking For Love Not Games! GWM 27 6' 6" 250# Write Brian PO Box 15846, P.C., FL 32406. Want warmth & love not S/M, bondage, mind games, pain.

GWM 24 5'7" 155lbs dk blond grn eyes moust sks frnds 18-27 for whatever. Occupant, PO Box 4295, Panama City, FL 32401. Your photo gets mine!

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I am looking for fun loving friends in Panama City. I am GWM 27 250# 6'. No I over 39yrs wanted. No SM, ferns. Write: BJS, PO Box 15846, Panama City, FL 32405. Longing.

Attractive GWM 27 5'6" 130lbs seeks So. FL GWM 18-35 for friendship, sex & possible romance. Send photo, address, & phone to Bob: CSP BOX 221

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### CIA

Czech/Irish/Aquarian. V handsome 33, 6'1", 160lbs, brn/bl. Health enthusiast/marathoner with swimmer's build (42" c 30" w) Gregarious, sensitive, supportive. Looking for right person to grow with. Likes: Flannery O'Connor, Wheaties, T. Williams "Shadow Wood", underdogs, R. Tagore, mornings, John Paul II, H:O-bodies of, Alice Walker, thunderstorms. Write if lightning strikes. CSP BOX 214

### SPEAK DUTCH? WORKOUT?

Sign? GWM, 37, wishes to meet and learn from you. Privacy respected. Christopher, Box 64, NYC 11215.

GWM 5'10" brn/brn 160 seeks an older brother smart & strong who can spend time with an ironic guy. Need muscles & brains. Photo. PO Box 3896, NYC 10185.

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Want a friend? Buy a dog! Want a lover? I'm your man! GWM, 42, smokes, drinks & makes love to 18-25 GWM's. w/ foto write Box 696, Sta 37, Bronx, NY 10458.

Romantic masculine well-built prof'l handsome WM 30 6' 170 w/ passion for perf. arts (esp. music) sks cohort. Ph/ph to JP c/o POB 1259, NYC 10159

Chubby GWM 50 5'11" 255lbs, masc, Gr/P. Fr/AP well hung any sex scene, kinky or not. Seeks Dom/M, fem, or butch, 18-55, any race, slim to mod build. No pain, seat, or FF. Box 705, Larchmont, NY 10538.

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## •NEW YORK•

### 26 YR BLOND SKS LATINO

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GWM 34 inexp slim trim beard hair redg a bit. Sks sltly dom GWM or Latins 28-36 slim to teach me. Smoke pot OK. PO Box 524, Yonkers, NY 10704.

Kiss n cuddle a GWM 40 5'10" 160 who enjoys TLC/sensual touching/romance/humor/walk/swim/arts (esp opera). CS, Box 474, NY NY 10272.

Attr Frenchman 30, 6'2" secure lots of interests seeks attr male to meet in Eastern L.I. or NYC. Write with photo & phone#. PO Box 1481, Riverhead, NY 11901

Attr sincer, intell, GWM 6'1", 170, brn/brn clnshvn, hlthy, loves to hug & cuddle. Skis, dances, laughs, loves & enjoys life. Write Box 301, NYC 10021.

Busy, bicoastal SK Professional, 38, runner, in NYC often, seeks GWM for theatre/dinner dates, country/beach excursions, breakfast. Non-smoker a plus, no body hair a must, punk/wave a fantasy. Photo/phone soon to Jim. POB 14-274, San Francisco, CA 94114

### PENNY LOAFERED WASP

Goodlooking young, exec, boyish 32, blue eyes, br hair, 5'10", 155, fun, bright, sincere, clean-cut. Seeks cute & healthy 18-35 bottom (esp. blond). Letter/photo to: PO Box 152, White Plains, NY 10605.

GWM 24 5'9 150 masc attr jock prof v educ semi-pretenious diversified interests seek a monog rel with sim GWM 25+ ph/ph if poss. CSP BOX 211

Should you (GM/25-35) and I (WM/29 /6'/155) be together? I'm intelligent, creative, pass for straight, enjoy theatre, books, games. If you're a similar man, let's meet and find out. CSP BOX 215

GWM 44 tall trim goodlooking masculine seeks sensual sincere guy of any race or ethnic background for dating & possible relationship. Tell me about yourself & be sure to include a photo with your letter. Box 20007, Cathedral Finance Station, New York, NY 10025.

Got something to immortalize? I've got the video camera, AMG, pose & tease ideas. 39, 5'8", 155, hung & up for duals, etc. James, Box 1330, Brooklyn, NY 11201.

## •OHIO•

GWM 32 chunky masc 6' 250# sks masc WM 25-35 for fun, action, friendship/poss relshp. No ruff stuff. Boxholder, Box 2534, Toledo, OH 43606.

## •OREGON•

WANT YOUNGER GUY 18-28 Slim, attractive, intelligent, fit, non-smoker for quality rel. I'm 35, similar. POB 9281, Portland, OR 97207.

## •PENNSYLVANIA•

GWM 65 6' 150lbs sks friends quiet eyes home. Golfer. Correspondence. Sincere ltr and pic gets mine. Write 110 N. Euclid Ave., Pgh, PA 15202.

Shy, discreet GM, 22, bl/grn gdlkg WASP sks friend/lover. Classy, sincere only. Drink OK. No dope, weirdos. Box 2052, Pgh, PA 15230. Won't regret it. Pic nice.

GWM, 20, BROWN/GREEN, ATTR. SLIM, SKS QUALITY MEN ONLY FOR FRIENDSHIP BOX 1362, MEDIA, PA 19063

Healthy & Happy, handsome & hung GWM, 32, 5'9", 150, seeks sensitive & mature YGM with smooth & slim boyish body. Box 372, Mt. Gretna, PA 17064.

## •RHODE ISLAND•

GWM 28 5'6" 130# br/br mstach brd seeks N.Eng reg-type guy w/sense of humor 4 frndshp poss more. NO: Married drugs boozers! POB 615 Cov., RI 02816.

## •TENNESSEE•

GWM cpl 27 blu/bl 5'11" 165 hairy w/ brd. 24 br/br 5'6" 130 smooth. L:kg for hot 3rd for fun. Send ltr phn pic adds to: M&M, POBox 4353 Chatt, TN 37405.

## •TEXAS•

GWM 38 5'11" 155# prof likes travel, foreign cine, sunn ing & margaritas. Wants to meet other attr prof 28-38 R's. Send photo & letter for response. (Houston/Austin/SA/Corpus area) CSP BOX 207

BALLET DANCER NEEDS OTHER BALLET DANCER BROOKS 8711 Cinn Ck Dr. #1824 SA, TX 78240

## •VERMONT•

GWM 36: lean, limber, lusty, loving, loyal, literate, level-headed. Likes long play. Prizes perky part-time partner. RD3 Box 462, Putney, VT 05346.

## •VIRGINIA•

VA TIDEWATER BI WM EDUCATED BUSINESSMAN 40 5'7" SLIM WELL DRESSED INTO SUCCESS DISCREET SEEKS SAME FOR QUALITY TIME TELL ME ABOUT YOU PHOTO AND PHONE RECEIVES SAME. BOX 1565 VA BEACH, VA 23451

## CORRESPONDENCE

TRUE/FALSE: Persons born breech act spacy/naive, be queen-vampire, easy hypnotized, act/sing, w/exc memory. Dazzling smile & large plaintive eyes. Miss Dearborn, Box 2613, Tsn, AZ 85702.

This month I fell in love with two clients, my receptionist's husband and an emergency room doctor. It should have been you. PO Box 157, West Chester, PA 19380.

DEAREST SNUGGLE BUNNY. LIFE JUST WASN'T THE SAME WITHOUT YOU. WELCOME HOME!

LOVE, H. BEAR

PATRICK DARLING! WE MADE IT! LAGUNA... YOU AND I TOGETHER... I LOVE YOU TOO, JIMMY

HOT, HUNKY, & UNINHIBITED? My real life photo collection needs you! Why not? PO Box 68384, Oak Grove, Oregon, 97268.

Need info on NAMBLA. Discreet. BCP, PO Box 27025, Glendale, CA 91204.

TEAROOMS-Where? Which are safe? Best times? Making a list. Your contribution gets the whole list. Public Places, Box 15351, L.A., CA 90015. Super-hung mania lowering your self-esteem? We smaller guys deserve better from our Brothers! Let's share feelings/support. David CSP BOX 222

## COMMUNIQUES

MODEL OF "THE BAY": MAURICE, BOX 5433, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94101

Once upon a time there were 2 boys: Frank & Chris. Frank had grey hair; Chris had a cute ass. (Three years now & I still love that story). C.J.

CHUCK Be sure to get in shape for Hanns Ebensten's Himalayan Trek in Nepal. JACK

DEAR PHIL. THANKS FOR THE 4 YEARS. YOU GAVE ME A LOT. BRUCE

7TH DAY ADVENTISTS NY Chapter of SDA Kinship Int'l Inc. meets second Sunday each month. R. Bouchard, 95 W95th St NYC 10025

LARRY WELCOME HOME TO CHICAGO. LOVE YOU. DAVID

'skeeter' Well, this misses the actual anniversary by at least a month but I thought you might like a Christopher Street message to ad to that collection you're keeping. So here it is! To the next year and continued success and that not far off Tony. Much Love, your 'earl'

**YOU'RE  
NOT  
GETTING  
OLDER.**

**YOU'RE GETTING GAYERY**  
*Happy Birthday!*

**I  
HAVE A  
NEW  
GAY  
SOCIAL  
DISEASE...**

**Tardiness.**  
**A Happy  
Belated Birthday**

# CS THOUGHTS

by Frank Perich

"If we can get heavy for a moment, I've always been of the opinion that I'm not going to live much past tomorrow, and that's why I want to get everything I can into what I'm doing. That's why I take chances. I don't give a damn what's going to happen to me tomorrow because I don't think there's going to be too many tomorrows left."

*Arthur Bell,  
1932-1984,*

*in an interview with  
Chuck Ortleb and Tom Steele,  
March 3, 1984*

"I tend not to admit that I love someone if he is male until after he can't hear me."

*John Leonard  
in his introduction to  
Friends and Friends  
of Friends, 1979.*

"Mayor Koch wouldn't have time to be gay or straight; he's too busy climbing into bed with the landlords and big business, a strange place for an avowed liberal. . . . Marie Antoinette said of the people she was starving out: 'Let them eat cake.' Ed Koch says, 'Let them read my book.'"

*Letter to  
People magazine,  
April 30, 1984*

"Many a patient, after countless sessions, has quit therapy, because he could detect no perceptible improvement in his shrink's condition."

*Brendan Francis*

"Parade, the Sunday newspaper magazine, reported in the March 4 issue that Dr. Charles Socarides of New York suggests 2 percent to 3 percent of the adult population is homosexual. The Kinsey Institute puts the figure at 4 percent for males and 2 percent for females. Gay liberation groups claim that the figure is much higher, and I suspect they are closer to the truth than the doctor in New York."

*Ann Landers,  
New York Daily News,  
May 4, 1984*

"PLEASE! NO KISSING IN BACK SEAT OF TAXI (unless driver included)."

*sign in a taxicab,  
New York Times,  
May 11, 1984*

"When you really want love you will find it waiting for you."

*Oscar Wilde,  
De Profundis*

"Passion has as much conscience as a worm entering a luscious apple."

*Paul Eldridge,  
Horns of Glass*

"The privileges of beauty are immense. They even have their way with those who pretend not to notice."

*Jean Cocteau,  
The White Papers*

"For a man to have sex with another man is to become doubly a man."

*Jean Genet*

"Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened."

*Winston Churchill*

"Voting [for Oscar nominees] is of the utmost importance to Ann Miller, an Academy member since 1937. 'Since I've been doing *Sugar Babies*, I haven't had a chance to see a lot of movies. So I rely on friends I trust to tell me who to vote for. Now that *Sugar Babies* is in Los Angeles, I could walk to the screenings because I live only eight blocks away, but I'm refurbishing my home so I probably won't have time to see most of the nominees.' Under the circumstances, will she still vote? 'Oh, yes, I always vote, whether I've seen the pictures or not,' Miss Miller insists. 'It means so much to these kids.'"

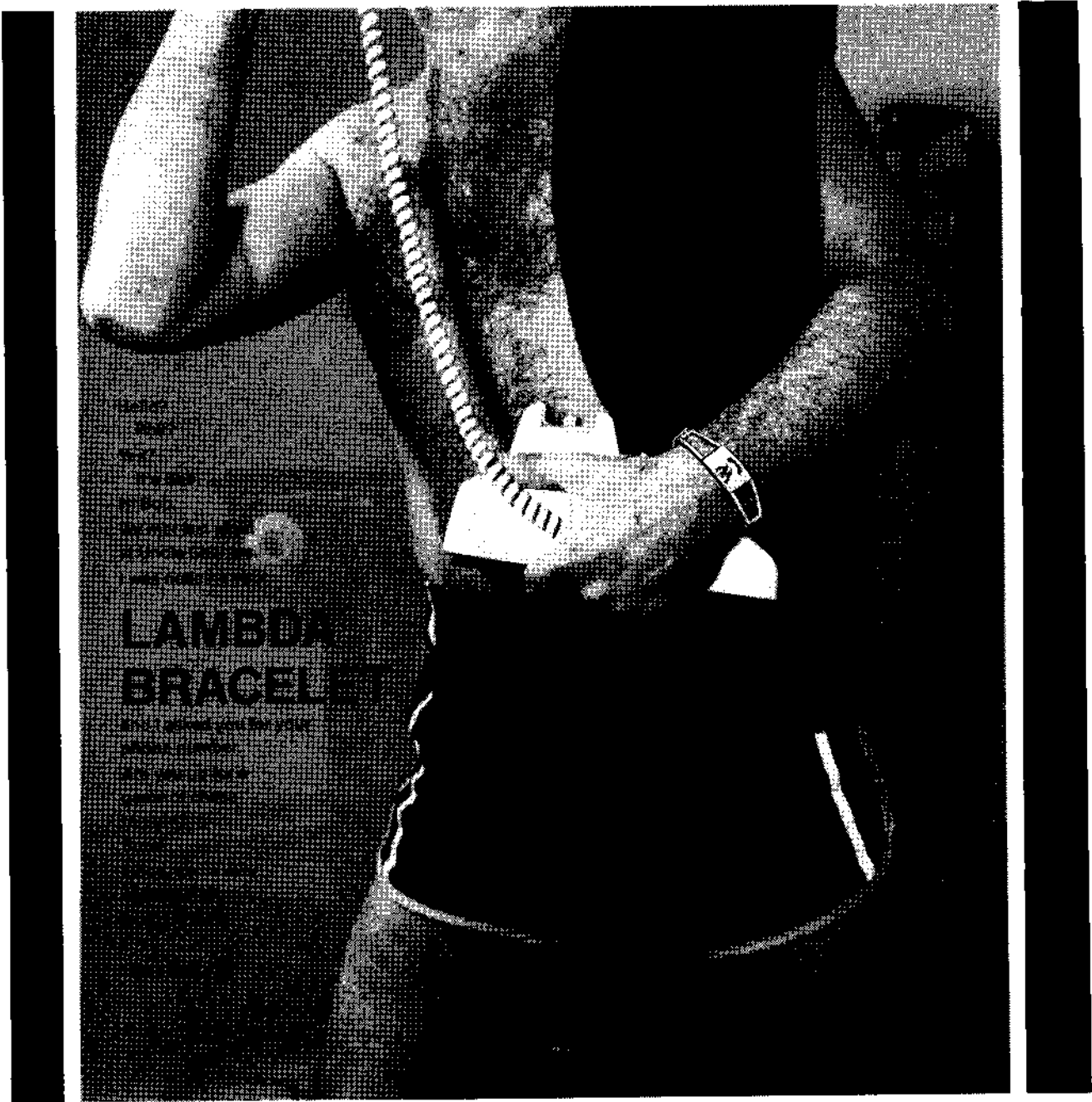
*from "The Oscar Chase:  
A Peek Behind the Screen,"  
New York Times,  
April 8, 1984*

"Archbishop O'Connor is a wonderful speaker, he's going to be a good Pope."

*Young girl responding to a TV  
reporter's question on how she  
feels about the Archbishop's  
saying mass at St. Patrick's.*

*CS Thoughts editor Frank Perich  
welcomes your nominations for the  
column. Please send them to Thomas  
Steele, CS Thoughts, Christopher  
Street magazine, 249 West Broadway,  
New York, NY 10013.*

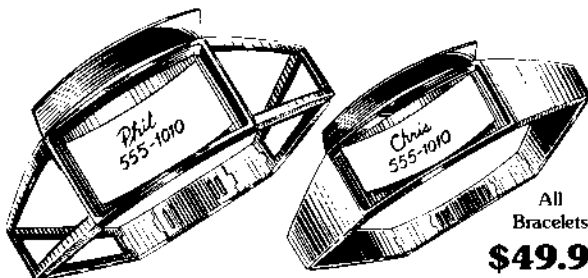
*This issue, we wish to acknowledge  
the contributions of Mr. Nyeja Noiret.*



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