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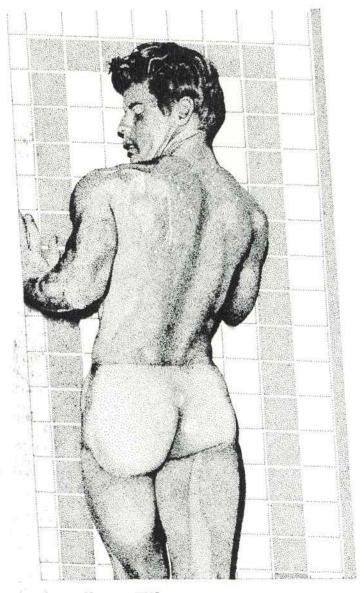
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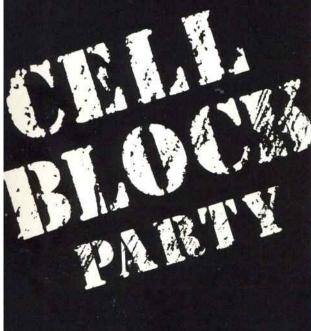
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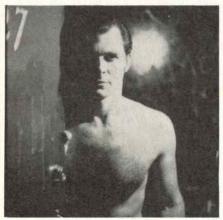
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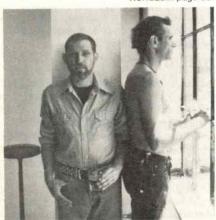
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### ALTERNATE

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Printed in the USA May/June 1980

Editorial and Business Offices 15 Harriet Street San Francisco, CA 94103 (415) 864-3456

Published bi-monthly by Alternate Publishing Company. Copyright 1980. All Rights Reserved. Subscription rates: 12 issues/\$20 Third Class. Address all correspondence to the editorial offices in San Francisco. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The Alternate can assume no responsibility for materials sent through the mail. The publication of any individual's name or photograph is not intended to indicate or suggest the sexual preference of that individuals.

### DIRECT CURRENT

#### **GAY ART ISSUE**

Gay men and Lesbians are establishing their identity by setting up economic strongholds, residential neighborhoods, and vacation resorts. They are actively compiling tracts about their historical development, and laying claim to the names of the great and the famous among their numbers. It is quite natural that the terms "gay," a current phenomena, and "art," the rebellious outlaw and heralder of social, political and philosophical changes, have been joined.

But most of the newspaper and magazine illustrations I see in gay publications do the disservice of perpetuating the cultural sterotype that "gay art" is sexual art. I find their content juvenile and their execution mediocre. This genre is too posed, too pretty, too limiting in explicitness, and too limited in content. Overemphasized musculature and attention to genital endowment alone, are the elements of homoromantic and pornographic fantasies. There is more to art than that!

Art is the complicated and difficult translation of a thought process into a physical reality, bringing forth insights. The mature artist holds enough information in reserve that it becomes the job of the viewer to compliment and complete the statement. Art serves the very real function of giving pleasure. It is a focal point where the mind comes to rest, or to reflect, or turns to for a sense of stability. If selection of art is made with care, the price, when divided by the number of years of enjoyment received, becomes inexpensive. To say nothing of potential investment returns.

Fortunately there are very talented, up-and-coming artists who are producing a sensibility of a higher order, because there is validity in a man painting a man and a woman painting a woman.

Wayne Douglas Quinn San Francisco, CA

#### FIRST EXPOSURE

I recently had my first exposure to Alternate with the March/April 1980 issue, featuring gay art. I discovered the articles to be well written and informative; well above those of other publications I have read. Not being knowledgeable of gay art galleries or artists I found this issue most beneficial. As a result of this I am interested in learning if a similar issue has been prepared, or is being prepared, which would concentrate on gay authors, and publishing houses dealing specifically with gay authors. Being a poet constantly in search of a new market such "leads" would be

most helpful, and I personally would find it most comforting to have my own awareness heightened with regard to my contemporary poets; especially those currently publishing in California.

S. R. Jetmore San Diego, CA

(Editor's Note: We began looking at gay literature in Alternate No. 11, and that issue will give you an overview of the state of the art. You might watch for Alternate No. 15, our Survival Issue, which will go into more specific detail about gay publishing houses and publishing opportunities, both here on the West Coast and across the country. There is a great deal of gay poetry being published by small presses today, more poetry than prose, perhaps. We suggest you look into publications like Gay Sunshine, Little Caesar, or Fag Rag to learn what is currently available.)

#### TWO FEW GALLERIES

If I learned anything from your Gay Art issue (Alternate No. 12), it was that there sure aren't many galleries showing gay art work. That's a real surprise, when you consider that probably a lot of regular art is purchased by gays each year. Is it the art or the gallery? Is it that gays are still uncomfortable buying obvious gay paintings or that the galleries, knowing they have a captured audience, just don't need to even consider hanging gay work by gay artists?

Mary Carr Santa Cruz, CA

(Editor's Note: Probably a little of both. An art gallery is a tough business, much like publishing. Few people are willing to take a chance on something that might not catch on, or might cause them more problems than financial return. For the few openly gay art galleries, they end up with a captured audience—it's just that there aren't enough gay art galleries to go around.)

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

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### INDISCREET

#### MOVING TO THE COAST

Dear Tristano,

You, the last bastion of respectability and contemporary thought, considering a move to sunny California – well I never. Per your request I have composed a minor litany of facts about this mystical land. Before you pack up and/or sell your few pitiful possessions please read this closely - the dirt my dear, the pure unexpurgated filth about San Francisco, California, and its environs.

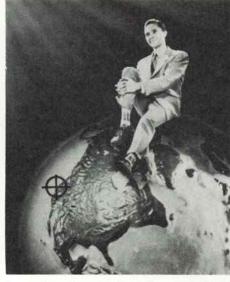
In the first place, no one will be impressed by the fact that you are from the East. Nearly everyone here is from the East, as in Iowa, Arkansas, and Ohio. There is no discrimination what so ever.

The state itself is very large. San Diego is nearly seven hundred miles south of San Francisco (I think of it as SAN-FRANCAL), like Boston to Florida. Since we never had any desire to trot down to Florida it would appear frivolous to attempt San Diego - land of beach bums and conservative californians. I've been no further south than Carmel-bythe-Sea, where Father Junipero Serra set up his mission and enlightened so many once content souls. The entire mission has been faithfully restored, even the old boy's bones have been preserved. Considering that it's less than two hundred years old, I was not impressed. I knew cockroaches in my old apartment who had been around longer than that. I've not been to L.A. but I've received many descriptions of the fabled City of Angles, all of which convince me that I wish to die without first hand knowledge of the city itself. I understand it's just concrete in search of architecture.

The Pacific Ocean is blue, but all the faggots travel ninety miles north to the Russian River. It's not very wide and it's not blue, but they say the property is owned by Fred MacMurray. This alleged fact is as close as I've come to dealing with a bona fide movie star. Either they are dead or they live in Connecticut, so

There is scenery for days. Mountains and valleys everywhere with great panoramas which I assume were originally built by Mr. Cecil B. Demille, Nevertheless all this nature can be quite moving, particularly in those areas where no one has bothered to build an exclusive condo complex.

You'll be appalled to learn that many persons are indeed mellow here. This is an essential fact to grasp, as it takes up a great deal of time. Being mellow is certainly a full-time job, and I'm but an apprentice. The most important trick I've



learned to date is that after your third cup of coffee and fifth cig you take two quaaludes. This clever old Sanfrancal home remedy works wonders on frayed Eastern nerves.

The bar scene is absolutely endless something for everyone here in Sanfrancal. But don't feel you'll be overwhelmed as no one bothers tricking. People are shockingly friendly, but just when you think you've clenched the deal they tell you about their lover and their obligatory open relationship. This means they only do it in backrooms, bathhouses or parks. As far as I have been able to ascertain, all these lovers and their obligatory open relationships are products of their former lives in Dubuque, Omaha and, yes, even New York.

Your penchant for shopping will be strained. While there are coutless numbers of chic little shops on nearly every corner, they all carry the same merchandise. It's rather like visiting those architecturally individualized McDonalds. But most importantly before you sell the cherished Melmac to friends at ten cents a plate, keep in mind that anything pre-1970 is priced as though it arrived on this shore with the ill-fated Donner party.

Stop fretting about the possible loss of your individuality. All faggots come to look and behave like a clone of one type or another here. But the change is so gradual that I didn't realize my short do, moustache, sleeveless t-shirt, and leather jacket were clonish until I was mistaken for three other faggots in one day on Castro St. Later that same day I ran into those three individuals and only Kitty Carlisle herself with the aid of Peggv Cass could have chosen the real me.

There is great potential for change here however. You remember Mike Allen. always wore Carmelita Pope drag to Store 24, well that one is now so butch I'm convinced he had a body transplant. He spends his mornings, afternoons, and evenings in full leather, and most nights he can be seen stark naked chained to trees in various parks throughout the city. His master is a living doll though, as

he usually stays close by.

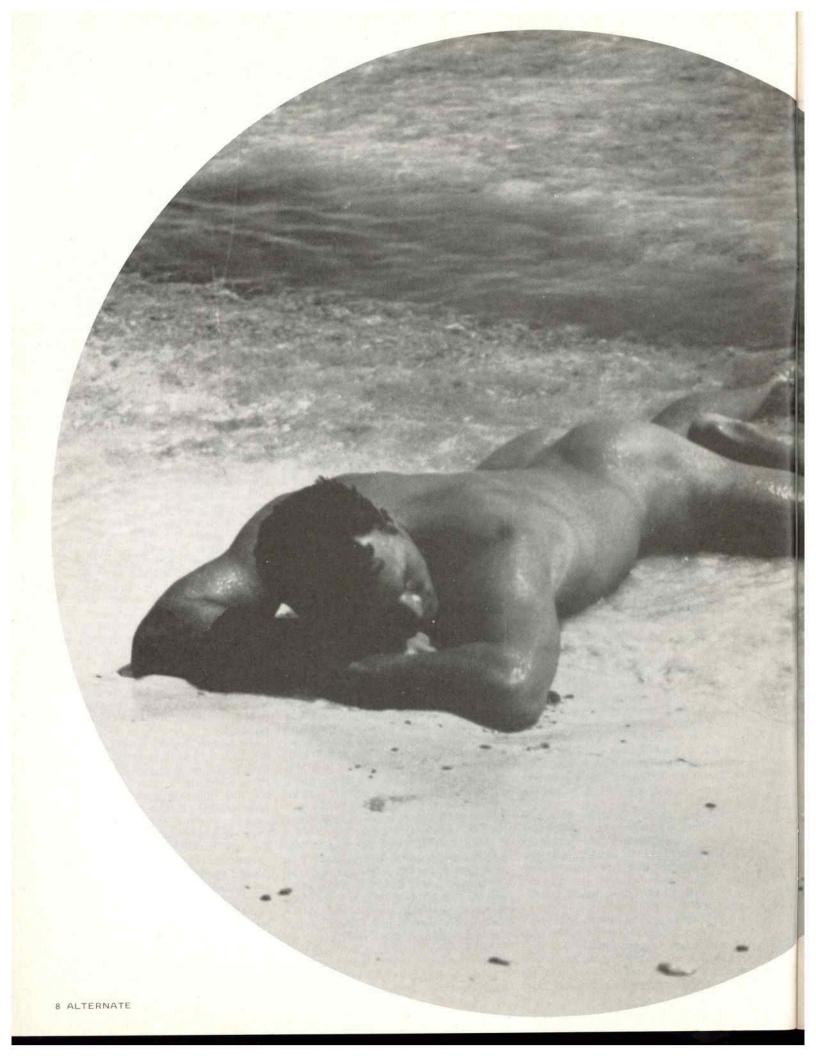
Therapy is a must of course and a major industry here. We Easterners quickly realize how much negative energy we must work through in order to carve out our own inviolate space so that we can hear all the other individuals flowing in their inviolate spaces. I'm cheating, negative energy, and am seeing a psychoanalyst with an M.D. and all. I just tell people I'm seeing a therapist who follows a rather recent trend in Eastern philosophy. At this point the other party will tell you how many times he's been rebirthed, that he practices hug therapy, that at the present moment he's involved in a therapeutic relationship with a person who is neither male nor female and who has managed to flow the the cosmos. Just nod my love, as there are no empirical statements which apply.

As far as gay politics go there are several gav democratic and republican clubs. They support various candidates, all of whom seem to own businesses and wear very nice, albeit dull, clothes. When I mentioned the lack of more radical gay politics I was told by several informed sources that it is not necessary here, that those energies are directed to more pragmatic issues like supporting the very popular gay marching band and twirling corps, and saving the whales. Despite enormous research on my part I've yet to discover what the huge, less than attractive whales are being saved for, although I assume it's to be some wild

occasion.

Remember this is the mecca where all sophisticated faggots eventually turn up. I have been here for one year and can think of no where else to move. All other cities on this globe appear too provincial. Imagine what this does to that dream of returning to the country. One of our more paranoid friends, Creamora, swears this city has been designed by the U.S. government and the Council of Born Again Christian Churches to lure all the gay people to one place, and then nuke them. I, on the other hand, feel quite like Ms. Peggy Lee flailing her arms and reaching for her respirator while singing "Is that all there is."

Love, Gregg nee' Sr. Lumilla of Bavaria P.S. The housing shortage is severe bring a tent.



# CALIFORNIA

### HEAVEN OR MAYBE HELL

By MICHAEL ENDICOTT-ROSS

California promises you everything — and, invariably, gives you back only what you give. Promises notwithstanding.

Edged on its Eastern side by the Sierra Nevada mountains, guarded on the west by the Pacific — the last frontier of the United States rests like a sanctuary for the exiles of the world. And although other cities in other states lay claim to specific notoriety: New York the fashion, art, and publishing capital of the world, Houston the oil center of the Western hemisphere; Miami the last bastion of political refugees; New Orleans the city that care forgot — these are the things of the present and the past. California is unquestionably the future. And to see the future, you must look to California.

From the beginning of the country's history, California has held rank as the land of promise. The vast interior valley is the marketbasket of the Americas. The gold-rich mountains and streams unearthed hundreds of thousands from their prior dirt-farm existence. The Pacific Railroad, which began on the California coast and joined its Eastern counterpart in Utah, made the land of promise a possibility for all and sundry, bored or defeated by the industrial revolution.

The Los Angeles basin, by 1847 no more than a settlement of 5000 spartan orange growers, would — with the development of the Owens Valley Water Project — by the 1920's, become the home of the most influencial industry in history: The Movies.

And years later, after the backroom scandal of the Project had ruined reputations and lives — the city would forgive — forget — and name its most scenic drive after the corrupt mastermind, Russell Mulholland.

Coastal villages like San Diego and Long Beach would, in World War Two, explode into major cities with the arrival of companies named Hughes, and Mac-Donald, and Lockheed.

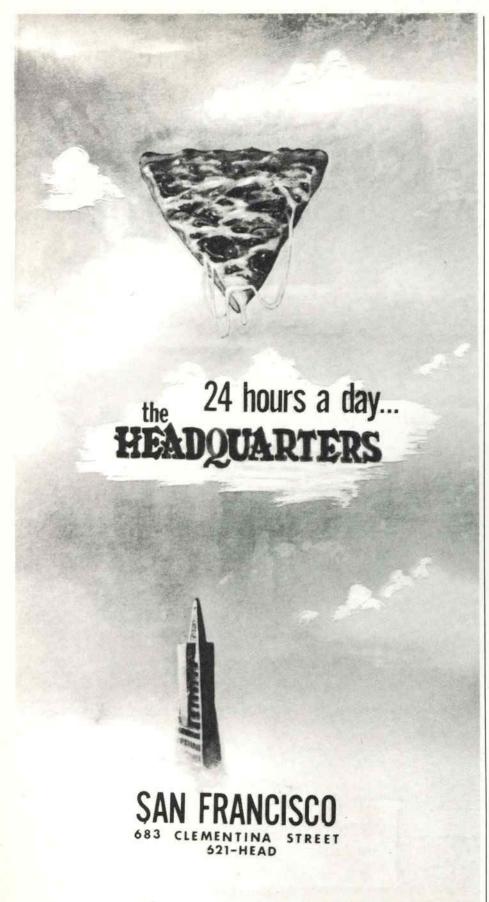
Protected ports like San Francisco, would blossom from their origins as missionary rest stops into world trade giants, only to be leveled by the Earthquake of 1906 — then re-emerge, after painful rebuilding, into even grander lacivious playgrounds.

The Chinese laborers, brought to the West Coast by the boat load — much like the Viet Nam refugees — called this brave new land The Gold Mountain. For the speculators of 1849, California would indeed seem to be made of gold, until the great glint had panned its last. What seemed, in the fertile imaginations of its settlers, as a paradise, would hold less than the promise. Even the seemingly endless fertile valley — the salvation of dust bowl migrants — would be co-opted and consumed by giant agribusiness.

Geographically, California is a land of extremes. Snow-capped mountains drift down into vast redwood forests, which border rolling hills that turn into rich farmland which give way to rocky cliffs, sheer ocean bluffs, long expanses of beaches, and savage desert wasteland. Socially, California is a state of extremes: The John Birch Society, Jim Jones' People's Temple, Krishnas, UFO-ers, Flower Children, est, Scientology, United Farmworkers, Greenpeace — all call the Gold Mountain their home.

In cities like Los Angeles, the extremes run from the film and oil rich of Beverly Hills and Trusdale and Newport Beach to the poverty of the East L.A. Mexican

photo by Roy Dean



barrios and the squalor of Watts.

In cities like San Francisco the split is between diverse cultural minorities: Chinese, Japanese, Italians, Irish Catholics—and the ever-growing gay populations.

In cities like San Jose, once the home of Easternish WASP's and rural Blacks—the microprocessor industry has boomed with the fever of the gold rush bringing a new middle class and a new blue collar population out of the closet.

Cities like Oceanside win titles like Murdertown, USA.

Cities like Eureka, once California's northern-most thriving port, fall into rotting decay and are forgotten as anything but the town named after the state motto.

Cities like South Lake Tahoe, riding the border with Nevada, live a double standard — where residents are employed a hundred feet away in a gambling industry that is illegal in their home town.

The state itself is divided between water-wealthy Northern California and water-desperate Southern California; resulting in a geographic resentment that surfaces every couple years when a State Senator or Congressman presents the ritualistic Bill to divide the state in half—each seeking their own liquid destiny.

Water may be the one thing that marks the greatest difference between the two Californias. It is the foundation on which vast social and political differences are built. Los Angeles, with its monetized class, and its class consciousness, is as conservative as a mid-western farming community. Politics are pin-striped grey wool, progress is a Communist-inspired plot

Northern California, which is centered by the lifestyle and pulse of San Francisco, is lush vegetation and liberalisms. Progressive politics filter down to community levels. Neighborhood, a concept impossible in Los Angeles, is the heart of the Northern lifestyle. Diversity, anathema to high-walled homes in the Hollywood Hills, is the byword in San Francisco's everyday life.

It has been said about California that in the rise of American society — imagined as a pinball table titlted on its end, all the loose balls rolled into California. But it was not gravity that pulled loose balls westward, it was the promise.

California, if it did not already exist, would of necessity need to be invented.

#### TO BE GAY ON THE EDGE

There have been five great migrations to the Golden State. Besides the wanderings of Father Serria — setting a mission every days ride apart, allowing a network for his followers; waves have come from the '49 gold rush, the Chinese workers, the movie magicians — coupled with the disenchanted of the depression. Eras and patterns easily charted. But the fifth great migration doesn't have the specifics

of a date or place. Yet it has been the single-most influencial of all migrations; not only to the destiny of the state, but to the world. In a cohesive sense, California is the home of the contemporary gay movement.

Gay men and women have been escaping to the promised land from the very beginning. There were gays among the original westward settlers, among the railroad builders, among the gold-stricken, among the movie stars, producers, and

impresarios.

Because California has been a conglomerate of what is great and what is not in the rest of the world, because California has been, if nothing else, the American testing ground — gays have stayed here, consistently, more than anywhere else. Even conservative establishment estimators peg California's gay population at 15% of the whole state. In certain cities, like San Francisco and Laguna Beach — the figure runs 5 to 10 per cent higher.

Gays have come here and stayed here because they, like the majority of the residents of the state, live at the vibrating edge. Geographical insecurity (the longest earthquake fault in the world runs the length of California) gives way to social and political possibilities. Here concepts of social cohesion can be challanged and redefined. Progressive can become a con-

servative definition.

Structurally, the reality of politics in the two major cities, Los Angeles and San Francisco, are almost impossible to comprehend. Yet, perhaps in their radical difference comes the balance of power

that keeps California taunt.

Southern politics follow the established pattern of Eastern power struggles, ascension, and decline. Political families rule — cross-government based political philosophies entrench themselves and form dynasties. While that formula allows for an occasional change of brokers; it is ultimately power-brokers from similar molds that pick up the torch of the political ruling class when it is handed down from the hierarchy.

Money and power are wed in Southern California, as they are in the best Atlantic families. While money can exist without political power, the reverse would be an extraordinary exception to the rules.

Part of the structure of politics in Los Angeles is due to the city's design. Importance must be decided on a larger scale than is usual. The city stretches for miles in any given direction, encompassing a myriad of classes and cultures. And while areas might define themselves into predominantly-Black, or predominantly-Latin, or predominantly-gay — in proportion to the much larger general population their numbers and potential political prowess remains undeniably small.

San Francisco is ruled by minorities. While there are class differences that run the gamet from extremely wealthy (this

is the second largest financial center in America) through middle class to poverty; those differences can and usually do exist within the basic local community concept.

While both cities share a local supervisor position within the city government — it is only in San Francisco that an openly gay candidate for supervisor could be elected. At the base of that is the neighborhood concept. San Francisco is condensed, geographically. A land area that could easily be a group of small villages has been developed into a city with three-quarters of a million population. Neighborhoods are saturated, and take on cultural identities that allow for specific representation.

The impact gays have had on Los Angeles politics is the impact of a threat. In San Francisco, there are both elected and appointed gay figures across the

city's political board.

#### BECOMING ONE OR THE OTHER

To the outsider, California is viewed as a whole. Americans are not used to thinking that a single state could contain two completely different cultures, each with a major impact on all of society, like San Francisco and Los Angeles. Migrants to California now decide where they will settle based on any number of other givens: Weather (it is radically different between north and south), Employment Opportunities (while basic skills apply anywhere - marked differences in opportunities exist), Housing (Los Angeles has a broad range in both price and location; San Francisco is a closed market), Political Activism (L.A. deals behind the scenes - San Francisco takes grievences into the streets), Lifestyle (the two areas represent two whole catalogues of differences).

To insiders, to gays who have already lived here, there is another consideration invariably overlooked by the potential immigrant: Temperment. To be happy in San Francisco requires a whole different approach to life than Los Angeles, and

vice versa.

That is most obvious when you consider the gays from the second largest gay community - New York their geographic preferences. The New Yorker, who understands aggression, upward mobility, the ascension of class and wealth, and the competitive environment will nine times out of ten choose and prefer Los Angeles. To the New Yorker, San Francisco is as much like Big Sur as Big Sur used to be to Californians: an artistic retreat where the local population has no intention of disturbing their self-secure environment. New Yorkers complain that life doesn't move in San Francisco, that no one works for a living (difficult to reconcile given the extremely high cost of living in the Bay Area), that gays have selfcentered motivations for clinging to peerage instead of intergrating into the mainstream.

In Los Angeles, The New Yorker finds little of those contentions. Los Angelians are goal and career orientated. But that is not to say that Los Angeles, in part, is not politically orientated. While no open gays have been elected to public office (remember that L.A. views political power as a behind-the-scenes reality), a number of daring projects have come from the L.A. political think-tank.

A semi-serious, semi-publicity stunt a few years back called for a mass migration to a specific county in Southern California with the ultimate goal of overtaking and ruling the area. It appealed to enough gays, and struck enough of a sensational chord in the media for the Alpine County takeover to raise social issues heretofore ignored. Current underwater rumors have it that Hollywood, a section of the Greater Los Angeles Area - will attempt to isolate itself from the megalopolis by incorporating into a separate city and electing a gay political class. Areas of the city, notably West Hollywood and Silver Lake, have begun to crystalize into ghettos dominated by

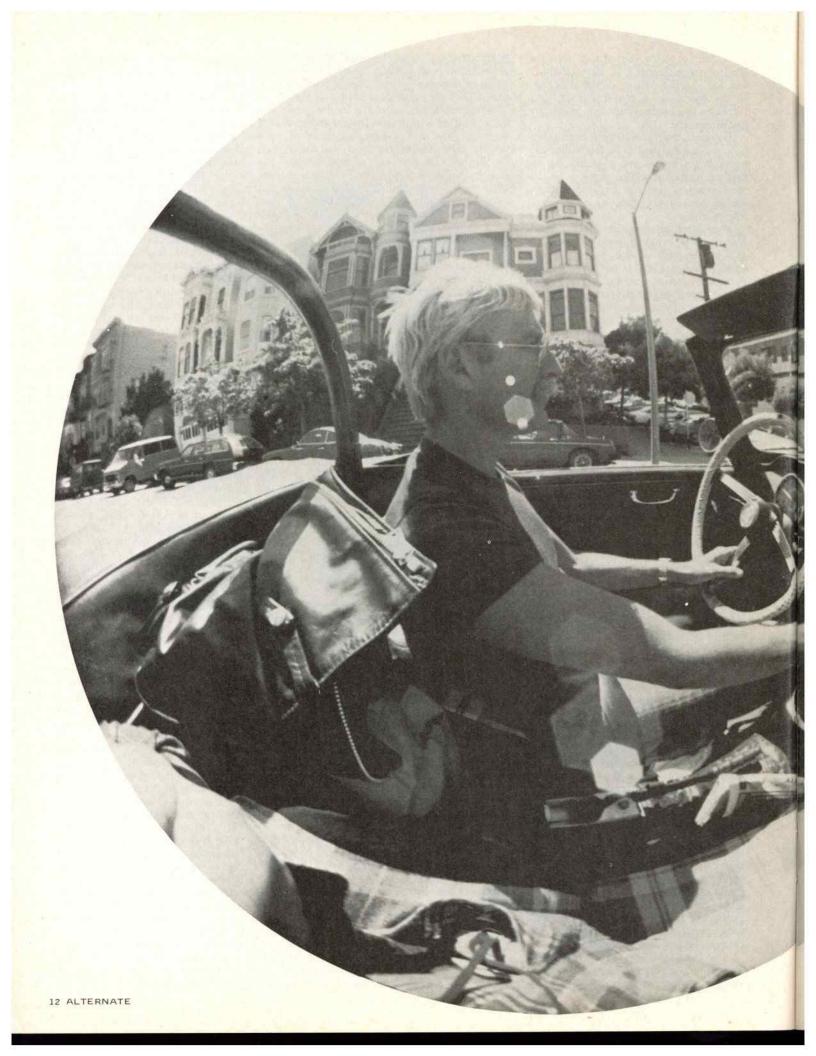
The gay ghettos of San Francisco, on the other hand, are spreading to the point that gavs are intergrated into all areas of the city. Besides the best known Castro, Polk, South of Market enclaves, gay migration has reached into the traditional upper-class and suburban neighborhoods. New gay development areas, like the famous Haight (home of the 1960's counterculture) and the Hayes Valley district are met with the usual resistance. Fringe areas, like Buena Vista Park and Twin Peaks, can only find new residents from the dual-income gay couples and disposable-income gay migrants. San Francisco also faces unique social pressures like a 1% vacancy rate in housing, a preponderance of single residents, and a decline in single-family dwellings. Since there is little or no new housing construction possible in San Francisco proper - former Victorians are turned into multi-unit residences and co-op conversions with regularity. San Francisco borders on becoming the largest adult community in the nation, and that status is attractive to non-nuclear family orientated gay men and women.

In all, California has everything there is to offer anywhere else, and has it in the confines of a single state. That access and conclusiveness is a magnet for a public migration coming to terms with contemporary social needs and values. And gays stand at the edge of those needs and values, and represent the vibrating

edge of the future.

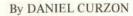
California does promise you everything – and asks that you give everything, then gives back only what you give.

Promises notwithstanding.



# SAN FRANCISCO

### Searching For Valhalla



It seems like only yesterday that San Francisco was a dream come true - with its temperate climate, its occasional fog for atmosphere. Hippity-hop hills everywhere, giving views you couldn't buy in heaven; sweet green in winter, goldendry in summer, hills giving carnival-ride thrills if you drive anywhere at all. Liberal, friendly people. The Gay Parade in June - awesome in the numbers and the playfulness and the anger. The Marching Band and Twirling Corps, The Gay Men's Chorus, the Lesbian Chorus, our own newspapers. Our own politicians. And heartbreakingly beautiful, beautiful, beautiful men everywhere. Doing their laundry on Saturday night. Lined up outside the Elephant Walk at 18th and Castro at any midnight. At twilight, looking in the windows of the chi-chi shops springing up on Market St. Watching the bellydancers on Sunday afternoons in front of the Hibernia Bank. Marching with lighted candles through the night to memorialize the assassination of Harvey Milk.

And much, much more . . .

And I can feel it escaping through my

fingers right this minute.

Will it all disappear? Will the fundamentalists and the right-wingers and the intolerant "liberals" and the self-serving politicians and the drab, decent citizens and the internecine squabblers destroy the fabled city of San Francisco?

They're certainly trying -

Well, gays have peeked out of their closets, you see, and the status quo is being tampered with. People don't like that. It's commonplace now for newspaper columnists to write blasts about gays taking over the city (meaning they hold hands in public and vote for those who offer them the most crumbs). The Chronicle and The Examiner run lots of gay news now, some of it sympathetically presented, some of it stacked to create dislike of homos.

In a way it's easier to deal with the head-on verbal attacks than with the casual bigotry that shows up everywhere. We think we've made in-roads in understanding and equality — and then we read Gerald Nachman in *The Chronicle* complaining how gays are ruining the cabaret business in town - because gays make up most of the cabaret audience, and thus

performers aren't free to sing songs 'straight." This is absolute nonsense of course -Ruth Hastings, Sharon McKnight, you name it - sing 99% of material that isn't "gay." If they sing one campy number, they're "catering."

TV columnist Bill Mandel can even accuse the gay baseball team of getting a better field to play on! Herb Caen can make his periodic queer jokes. Why? Because they resent us terribly. Once they hated us for being faggots and dykes remember those days? Then they felt about ten minutes' worth of sympathy, when John Briggs and his gang of dullnormals tried to kick us out of the teaching profession. (Right now the same gang is trying to repeal the gay rights ordinance in San Jose, down the road a piece, on the same grounds.) Now even the liberals are mad at us because we have a gay rights oriinance and enough political power to elect a few officials and throw the city's vote one way or the other. Nachman, Mandel, and Caen can get away with these cheap snipes because we really haven't conquered the deep aversion to us, not by a long shot, and if you challenged every put-down or sneer in print or in conversation you'd go crazy.

Last December, the gay vote did throw the election to Dianne Feinstein. Now she is reneging on her promises to appoint gays to political office. The spoils system still operates, boys and girls, natch, only we're not really a part of it. The Mayor appoints one lesbian to the Police Commission and tells a deaf Congress to enact gay rights legislation and we're supposed to say thanks and shuffle out the door. Why? Because the straight establishment

is frightened.

"Why, I do believe those homos actually want to control their own lives! If you ask me, they're getting entirely too uppity. I saw that article in Playboy that shows them practically shoving the poor straight couples off the sidewalks! Let's shove 'em back and show 'em they ain't sharing power with us - I don't give a shit how many of them there are!"

"Yeah, you know - maybe Dan White had the right idea. If you give those queers an inch, they'll . . . suck you off.

Har! Har!"

And so the word goes out directly, or indirectly, to the police, to the Vice

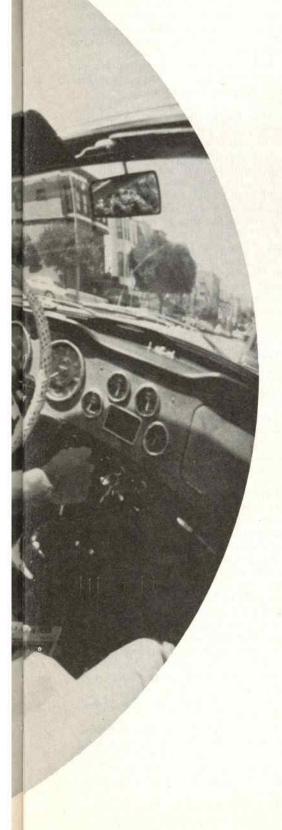


photo by Jim Moss

Squad, to the Board of Permit Appeals. It's okay to be fascist again. "Go out and raid adult theaters. Arrest some old men playing with each other. Vice has got to stop! Besides, these raids will make the citizens think they're getting their money's worth!"

I think a big part of the current backlash is envy. It eats their guts out to think we have sexual fantasies come true—luxurious, hot, sweaty fantasies that make the flesh and the spirit tingle and yelp with delight. They want us to be as frustrated as they are. My considered advice to them is: Go fuck the way you want to and let us do the same! How many times, for how many centuries do we have to say this?

It's the envy mixed with anger and traditional contempt that makes it dangerous to walk the streets of San Francisco alone at night — sometimes even with several friends. Everybody knows somebody who's been attacked, or harassed, simply for being gay. It's truly sick. (It's got to be eradicated in the schools, starting with kindergarten. Bigotry does end with proper education.)

In the meantime, "Call the police," you say. "Don't you have gay cops on the force now?" Supposedly we do. I've seen little evidence myself. (Maybe progress means that gays in San Francisco now have the inalienable right to be beaten up by gay cops.) More likely, the cops aren't out patrolling the streets to make it safe to walk around. They're too busy playing with themselves as decoys in movie theaters, like the tireless, brave crime-fighters they are. If you do manage to flag down a cop car, the chances are good you'll be dismissed or sneered at if they think you're just the victim of a queer-bash. You may even have to take a lie-detector test. Cops reflect the vibrations around them, and it's okay now to make it tough for us. (Must be almost nostalgic for them the good old days!)

Of course the cops aren't the only fascists around. The lesbians, or some of them, are getting into it. Sally Gearhart, of Word Is Out fame, writes articles attacking men and even calling for a reduction of the number of males on the planet. And the men are supposed to grin and nod and beat their breasts and say excuse us for living. Rabid anti-porn ladies are out in pants suits instead of corsets and bustles, trying like mad to stop rape by censoring pornography, which nobody has proved rapists even read! In fact, the whole air of latterday feminism in this city is shrill, onesided and unfair. Men are to blame for everything. God knows, they are responsible for lots of bad things, but they're not alone. The men mutter behind their hands, but most of them haven't ventilated their resentment yet - too polite. But they will. Nobody is going to sit around forever and be called names and

criticized no matter what they do or say. (A student of mine put it well: He saw a woman at a party taking a heavy turkey out of the oven and he wondered if he should offer to help. Finally after some hesitation he said, "Can I give you a hand with that?" She said, "I don't need any man to help me with any thing!" The student said, "If I hadn't offered to help her, she would have said, "You just gonna sit there and let me do all the shit women's work?") When a no-win situation is created, something will explode. And I'm sure a man scorned is far worse than a you-know-what...

Every movement apparently contains the seeds of its own destruction. People start off with a great insight (women are exploited, etc.) and then the insight descends into cliches in the mouths of dumb types on every talk show. The ambiguities and nuances are left out and all we get is hard-nosed, doctrinaire halftruths posing as The Truth. So now woman-hating is taboo, as it should be -but man-hating is "in." Soon enough, though, people get tired of hearing it, even women, and the movement collapses - especially when it becomes obvious that all the so-called "oppressed" want is power and flattery. Even worse, it's dawning on men that women in general, and lesbians in particular, are still crying poor, when in fact Affirmative Action gives them special advantages in hiring and promotions. It's this lack of honesty and subtlety that feeds the animosity toward us and the whole kit and caboodle of us will get dumped when we become too much of a boring nui-

Still San Francisco is beautiful . . . so beautiful. (Well, a lot of it anyway.)

You can go to a zillion bars and cruise until death do you part. Once in a while you even might go home with somebody! (We suffer from the overstocked candy-store syndrome here. There are so many gorgeous men running around we can barely decide on *one* for the night.

Where else can you find the scuzzy charm of The Balcony, where the soft-core leathermen congregate on Sunday mornings, not quite burned out from the night before. Where the staff has pierced nipples and incipient schizophrenia and the customers dance standing in place and sometimes pour beer on their heads to cool off. Where the soggy floor and the bumping knees and pumping music flow together and make this damn, dreary world better for more than one brief, shining moment . . .

Where else can you go to the Castro theater and hear live organ music and watch MGM musicals and smile at people who seem to be happy that you're there too. And sometimes even attend latenight benefits for gay causes.

And the Midnight Sun, with bodies huddled together like it was an immigrant

ship. All those clean, well-exercised, handsome bodies and (occasionally) intelligent faces, watching Saturday Night Live re-runs and snippets of I Love Lucy and taking sips of their gin-and-tonics and leaning this way and that to let the new arrivals past, and no, not quite touching. Just eyes darting here and there, hoping, avoiding, waiting, passing through, meeting a friend, and chatting about your new lover, who is home in Cedar Rapids visiting his folks.

And you run into Armistead Maupin on the street and he tells you that Gore Vidal called to say he liked *More Tales of the City*.

And Harry Britt, the Supervisor, stops by your party for a little while, before he's off to some other function.

And the drags have their Cable Car Awards and their election of an Empress.

And The Brig has its macho idols trying to out-butch each other across the bar. And someone takes you home and puts you in the sling in his "playroom" and it doesn't really hurt, and you think, "That wasn't so bad!"

And your mother comes to visit and you take her to the Metropolitan Community Church service, because you know she'll like that. And she does.

And you can join a gay atheist group if you want to.

And you join a gym because you're getting a little loose around the pectorals, and you go faithfully (more often than church), like you're going to be a model in a magazine. And, by god, you almost are. And across the way there are all these fantastic Greek gods, with muscles that sing and holler at you, and then you see them at the Music Hall or Alfie's, where they dance like stereophonic angels, and show off all that incredible flesh, that magnificent, delectable aesthetically-pleasing flesh. (And you don't give a damn that somebody says you're only interested in them as sex objects or that most of them don't know how to read and write.)

But you do mind, a little, when you see that some of them — too many of them — are on drugs. Here they are with these god-like bodies and their heads full of MDA and coke and LSD and speed.

And you finally snatch one off the dance-floor and take him home to your bed — and while you're having sex he's so high he's doing his laundry too . . .

And you muse about the other paradoxes as well:

The physical fitness and the flushed, alcoholic faces.

The one-night stands that you know more intimately than the man you lived with for two years. And that you never see again. Or you see and they don't speak. (Were you that bad in bed? You worry.)

And those little slips of paper on your dresser, with the names of tricks that you never called . . . and they never called

you, after all that furious panting at the baths . . .

And the fact that you sort of want a lover but can't find one. And, honestly, David the Matchmaker seems just too damn desperate...

Or you have a lover but feel stifled because he wants to be monogamous and you don't. Or vice versa.

And the couples you know are seeing counselors, or should, and the people without lovers envy the ones who have them...

And the parties . . . And Gay Rap . . .

And Games Night and live theater . . .

And hiking groups . . .

And winter solstice get-togethers . . . And you wonder what you'll be doing

in ten years . .

Behind all the hand-holding in the streets (called "affection" when straights do it, "flaunting it" when we do), behind the sense of taking our lives into our own hands for probably the first time ever, including ancient Greece, there lies... anxiety.

Anxiety over what Dan White did to Harvey Milk — shot him in the back of the head, which they can do to any (or all) of us. "Kill Fags!" scrawled on walls here and there throughout the city.

How dare those cocksuckers change our attitude about their role! I mean, how are the whites, the blacks, the ethnics going to feel good about themselves unless they have a scapegoat, without somebody lower on the totem pole to feel superior to and to blame when things don't go well!

Dan White, who killed two men in cold-hearted rage, and got a tap on the wrist from both the prosecution and the jury. "It's okay, Dan boy, we know how you felt!"

Dan White, who is getting conjugal visits from his wife right now, lest the poor bastard suffer any hardships in prison.

Yes, Dan White is hovering here in the background, or his spirit is. He'll be out in a couple of years. That's right, a couple of years. Who knows — maybe he'll run for Mayor. Maybe he'll be appointed Sheriff, since he's so good at taking care of queers and queer-lovers.

The last time he killed, the homos got angry enough to riot in front of City Hall. What a surprise! Of course we're paying the price now. We broke some windows in City Hall and burned some police cars in return for the murder of our leading politician, so now we're being punished, like the bad dykes and faggots we are. We also protested the movie Cruising, and the cops were waiting, hoping, I'm sure, that they'd have some excuse to rush in and break some heads. I saw them waiting in their cars, waiting . . .

Actually I felt mixed emotions about the *Cruising* demonstrations. I was proud we were no longer simply being victims of whatever anybody wants to dish out to us — god knows, it's time we stopped all that. And yet I spied some simplemindedness in the speakers who climbed up on that truck in front of the St. Francis Theater, something stifling about our self-righteousness and rhetoric. I asked myself how we can control our own destinies without becoming vicious blowhards like our enemies, as one-dimensional and ignorant as those who hate

And if San Francisco (this demiparadise, this throne of queens, this San Francisco) is so awash with resentment and anger, what must it be like elsewhere, in places where they can't even get a gay rights ordinance passed, or where people still talk in whispers about that subject, where people still resign their jobs if they're caught by spies while having a quickie somewhere (a fine of \$10 would be too much), where someone gives up a job as the head of a law school because some fucking cop pretends to be a male prostitute and arrests the poor sucker. (It happened in Denver to the man coming to take over as head of the University of San Francisco Law School and he resigned! Incredible!) Yes, what must it be like out there - in Indiana, where gay liberation means men wear scented deodorant. Out there in teeming, macho South America. In crazed Iran, where they shoot you in the name of Allah. In Russia, where they put you in concentration camps. In China, where you don't exist, and so you're married with six kids and miserable.

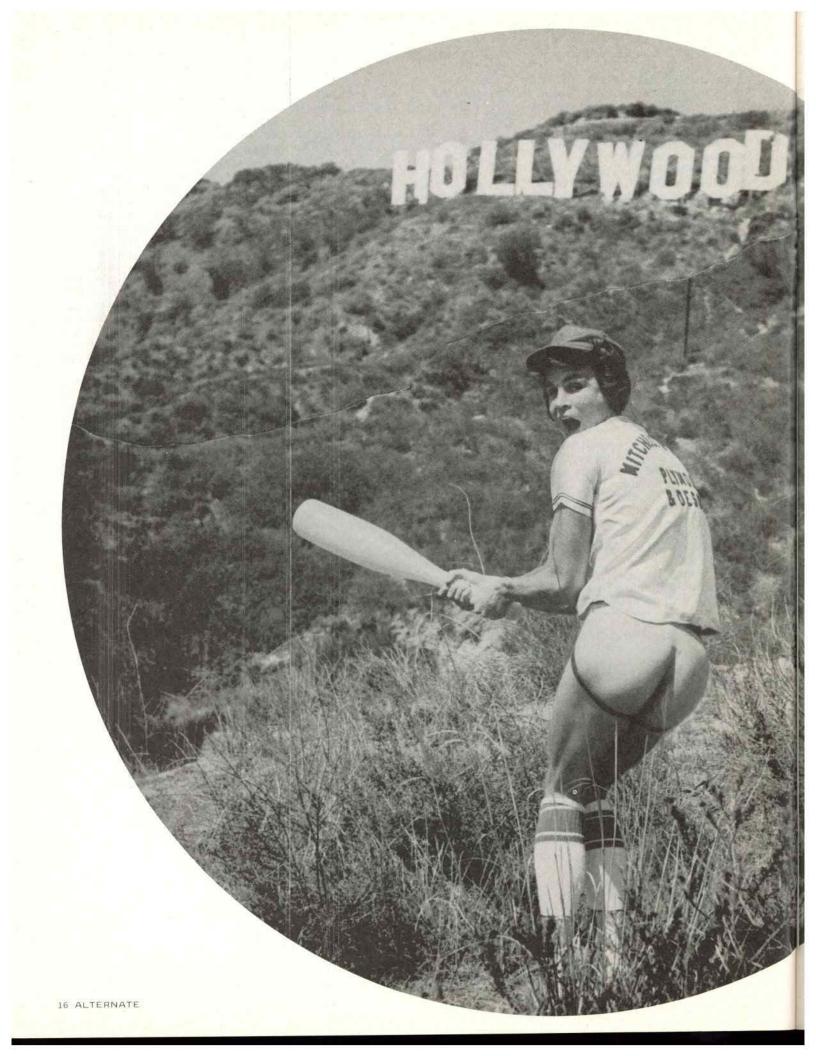
How can I ever go out there again? I ask myself. Where I grew up. Where it's surely far worse than here. How can I ever leave this fabled city of faggots if I ever have to? If the jobs dry up. If the big quake comes. If the backlash becomes even more intolerable. It took me years to find out that San Francisco is where I'm the happiest I've ever been in my whole life (with or without my kvetching). How can I ever possibly leave it?

I can't.

And that's why I pine these moments as they happen to me here day by day, and pass into memory and history. It truly is a time that has never been before — and may never be again.



"Just as I expected - they're all foam rubber."



# LOS ANGELES

The Hollywood That Never Was



Lucy Ricardo taught me all I knew about Hollywood. It was a sidewalk with stars' footprints, it was a restaurant with stars' portraits, it was marquees, maps, billboards, all paying homage to the stars. And then it was the home of a star: entirely surrounded by a high stone wall and guarded by well-trained police dogs. "Just a grapefruit, Mr. Holden, is that too much to ask?"

What are these things: stars? These creatures who have attained nothing less than the love of the world — and yet there are the stone walls, there is the cliche "lonely at the top," and even Miss Davis, the epitome of the word, entitles

her book The Lonely Life . . .

What is Hollywood, the residence and working place of these creatures? We are told that Hollywood is it — and indeed, the most-seen images and most-listened to words in the world are generated from this town. What Hollywood chooses to offer actually defines our national culture. For those who want attention, it promises the ultimate orgasm. But what is it like to actually live in the middle of such awesome spectacle? And how, in this kaleidoscope of images and search for mass identify, do gay people fit in? Hold everything, Lucy, I'm on my way.

I slowly walk off the plane at LAX. I am pleasantly aware of the looks I am getting. I am wearing my tight jeans, my red and black cowboy shirt, my Mick Jagger black scarf around my neck, and a huge button I had worn only days before marching up 5th Avenue, Lesbian and Gay Rights Now! My friends, after a royal greeting, take in what they see before them: "God, Harry, I can't believe you're wearing that button. How gutsy. I guess I haven't realized how closeted I've become since moving here." Suddenly the looks I am getting don't seem so pleasant. I am in Hollywood.

Most people live in their homes and take trips in their cars; people in Hollywood live in their cars and take trips in their homes. It is the large suburbs in which people spend more time alone with their minds than any other city I've encountered. Contact is limited to neighbors (if you have some you like), a trip in a car (if you can afford one. And its gas. And its insurance) or a trip on a bus (one arrives every forty-or-so-minutes).

There are few hang-outs, street artists, stoop-sitters. What is visible is freeways, highways, biways, cars, more cars, bill-boards...and those lovely plants.

I find my home in Hollywood. It is the one I can afford. Placed directly across from the Hollywood Cemetery ("Valentino is a neighbor!" I will later joke to friends), it is a small "unit" in an icecube-tray-looking Spanish courtyard affair, replete with Murphy bed and roaches. I had no idea Murphy beds really existed; I had assumed they were fabrications invented for comic shananigans in old movies . . . but there it was. I lower it and peek behind it, half-hoping to discover a secret passageway. I am told bit players from Paramount used to live here. All those names on all those credits on all those old films on TV come to mind. I used to live on those films. Where are those people now? The palms in the cemetery sway in the smog-filled breeze.
"Howdy!" My next door neighbor.

Elfishly handsome, slight strong body. Five minutes into the conversation, he implies his sexual preference by mentioning the names of some local bars - still the new kid in town, I am not familiar with the names, but can only assume that Boot Hill and The Meat Rack are not straight establishments. As we talk, I become aware of a weariness in his face and voice. I learn he has had the same job for many years. In all that time, he has told none of his co-workers that he is gay. When asked if he is seeing anyone, he croaks a laugh, "Hell, no, I've been through all that. No, I'm very content with my little home, my little job, and my little one-night-stands. That's one night, thank you. In fact, I'm thinking of putting up a sign on my door: No Sec-

A friend tells me her favorite game is to go to parties and count the pinky rings. "I know that code was big in New York in the 40's and 50's, Harry, but they still use it out here! Pinky Rings! They may call it Hollywood, but face it, Harry: you are in Dodge City. God, most gays in the upper echelons are married and buy their sex!"

Santa Monica Boulevard. Packed with shirtless young men. Most of them beautiful, most of them stoned, some with chipped teeth, none looking happy.

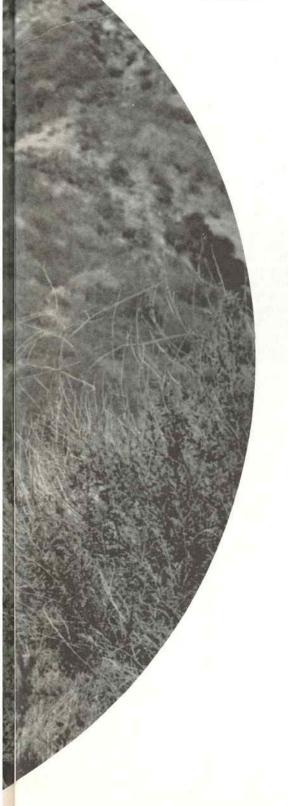


photo of Michael Kearns by Joseph Dearborn

Thumbs out, waiting . . . If they are lucky, they will get paid nicely for filling someone's mouth. If they are somewhat lucky, they will find a roof and companionship as someone's houseboy, pet, or slave. If they are not so lucky, they won't live to get out of the car.

West Hollywood. Boy's Town. More shirtless young men - only these are the residents, not the runaways - you can tell because the faces are a bit older, the muscles a bit more defined, and the clothes much nicer. Any chipped teeth have long since been capped. The stores and boutiques sport such names as "Machismo" and "Ah, Men." I am browsed over casually much as the items in the stores are. At one point, over the pate bin in a deli, I fall into conversation with a couple. One is excited because he may be invited to Donna Summer's for the weekend. The other is miffed because certain friends refused to attend a party he gave: they heard that there might be straights there.

"Faggots!" The beer can clangs to the sidewalk, the truck revs and squeals out of sight. I gather my lungs and let loose with the loudest *You'd better believe it!* I can muster. The reaction I get from the gay men around me is an odd combination of delight and embarassment. Emphasis on the latter. Welcome to Dodge

City, Harry.

Night falls and I am out with a friend. "It's a police state, Harry, look at that up there." I see a huge beacon of light pouring down from the sky and moving precisely back and forth over the city. "Well," I reply, "the lay-out of the city requires that kind of patrolling, right?" "Try putting one toe on the street while that Don't Walk sign is on, and that helicopter will be on your head. It's not regular cop training they get out here, Harry, it's more like the Marines or the Green Berets. These guys are out for blood, they're machines." You never told me about all of this, Lucy. Look at the jam you've got us into now.

We arrive at the town's hottest, most chic disco. I am refused at the door because I do not yet possess a piece of California ID with my photograph on it. All of my other pieces of ID mean nothing. "Don't feel bad, Harry, they reject women if they don't have about 5 picture IDs and the right kind of shoes! Not to mention Mexicans and Blacks - they need about 10 picture IDs to get in. Yes, Harry, the hottest place in town is also the most sexist and racist." Racist? What year is this? Racist! I suddenly remember the looks I've gotten from the many Mexicans in town: no looks at all - eyes straight to the ground. Racist. Where's Matt Dillon? He'd never stand for this!

My mouth is open in disbelief. I am standing in front of Barney's Beanery, a bar in the heart of Gay Hollywood. On the door hangs a sign which reads: "No Faggots Allowed." Above the building

looms a huge Coors billboard, and above that, somewhere in those hills, is the apartment building where Sal Mineo was murdered. I shudder violently and suddenly feel very sick. It is time to go home.

The Gay Community Services Center. In the lobby I recognize some of the street hustlers I had seen hitching days before. Their faces are relaxed, they're smiling, joking with each other. Friends. I have a delightful conversation with a beautiful black woman who leaves me laughing and feeling very warm inside. Later I am told that she is not a woman. I am given information about the Gay Speaker's Bureau and am told that I may be a bit too swishy to be a good speaker.

Christmastime. Weather spring-like as always. Street decorations elsewhere may consist of colorful bells and Santa faces; in Tinseltown, they consist of colorful bells and up-and-coming faces: large black and white blow-ups of those who need exposure grace each pole in Hollywood's spirit of Christmas. Somehow, I had never before associated the birth of Jesus with Steve Allen and Connie Stevens...

"Look, there's Lily Tomlin!" A car with the license plate MS COMIC drives by

Boulevard Nights opens. Fights break out in theatres, A 15-year-old Mexican girl speaks: "All my old friends are still in those gangs. My brother's best friend was killed in one of those fights in the theatre."

A friend who worked on the film speaks: "Did you hear about all the trouble at the theatres? Free publicity for the film! We couldn't have bought that kind of attention!"

Cruisin' opens. More protests. Windows opens. More protests. I meet a man who worked on Windows. He is scowling. "The script was brilliant. People all over town were flipping out over it. It was an in-depth psychological drama about a very sick man who hires a rapist to intimidate his estranged girlfriend back into his arms. Then the script was sold and it was changed from a rich drama to a cheap thriller. All depth of personality was removed, and the characters were changed from a man and a woman to two dykes — to spice it up a little."

A friend submits a TV movie screenplay she wrote for a friend about a deaf actress who is given a chance to act in movies and becomes a heralded success. The Powers that be insist that the script contains not enough sex and violence. My friend adds a belly dancer and a kidnapping. The Powers are pleased, but insist that a deaf actress could not be seen for the role: they need a name. A deaf actress will not be seen for the role of a deaf actress who is given a chance to act in movies.

"Hey, you know what we do with Iranians?" Street kids on Hollywood

Boulevard are taunting a young man. I ask him what's happening. "They're doing it a lot now. Yesterday a man yelled at me for forty-five minutes when he found out I was Iranian. Then I said. 'Are you finished?' and he said he was, so I said this, I said this. I said, 'Alright. That's what you know. You know what you know. You know what American television wants you to know. You know we have hostages. That's all. What you don't know is that the U.S. has had control over Iran for the last 25 years, and that the U.S. is responsible for putting the Shah into power in the first place. This is 25 years of anger toward America that is happening now. All we want is for the U.S. to admit what they've done to our country and apologize.'

A friend visits after an evening in a Belaire mansion. "They're so bored, Harry, it's like Citizen Kane and his wife doing jigsaw puzzles a hundred feet apart in the same room - they ran over to me when I walked in like I was some new young blood they could feed off of. They showered me with liquor and cocaine, they offered to get me anything else I might want. They were delighted that I could speak two sentences in a row, and they were floored when I showed any sign of enthusiasm about anything. The woman flipped out over my thrift store shirt, and offered me about ten of her designer blouses - she sounded embarassed that they weren't from thrift stores! They didn't want me to go, Harry. There were so lonely.'

A bag lady is wheeling an old arm chair in a cart. She stops me and launches into the funniest, cleverest, most entertaining sales pitch I have ever heard in my life. When I explain I have no money, she shrugs "that's life," then looks very serious: "You know what? Last night I dreamed that all the jockeys were going to march down Hollywood Boulevard, but they were going to bring their makeup with them, so by the end of the march, they'd all be women." She throws me a kiss and leaves. The very next night, the "Women Against the Night" march takes place on Hollywood Boulevard.

A man who works in a Disney Studios office explains that he is required to wear a jacket and tie to work at least four days a week. On a fifth day, he is permitted to wear a sweater and tie if he likes.

I learn that a star who was also a transvestite used to be a favorite target of L.A. police. Upon seeing him, they would shout such greetings as "Old Fairy!" and "Has-been!"

Marlo Thomas, who has done nothing quite so brilliant and beautiful and important as her amazing *Free To Be You and Me* several years ago, is advised by Those Who Know to avoid in the future things so "controversial."

A friend is advised that showing affection for her female lover in public may "hurt her image."

Charles Nelson Reilly's treatment for a gay-themed sit-com is turned down be-

cause "the world isn't ready yet."

The Village People do a TV Christmas

special with Anita Bryant.

What the hell is going on here?

I attend a meeting of Gay Actor's Rap (now Gay Artist's Alliance). Men of all kinds share what it's like to be a gay

actor in Hollywood.

"Most of the town is gay, but unfortunately, most gay men, deep down, still hate themselves, and that is reflected toward us. The name of the game is be as gay as you want, just don't talk about it. Ever." Visions of pinky rings dance in my head.

Things have not changed since Mont-

gomery Clift?

"If you are openly gay, it is career suicide. The gay people in power are terrified themselves of being discovered the guilt-by-association paranoia is so thick that hiring the best man for the job takes a far back seat to hiring a straight man for the job."

"One of my agents sent me up for a family man role in a beer commercial. She told the casting director that I was married and had two kids so he wouldn't

suspect that I was gay."

"A producer said he wanted very much to help me professionally. He seduced me that night, never called, and finally when I called him, he said he preferred not to mix business with pleasure."

"I know about a straight man who was fired on the spot from a commercial job because he was camping it up on the set. They thought he was gay. They proceeded to hire a gay man for the job, thinking he was straight,"

"My agent says 'fags' a lot. I want to say something, but I don't dare."

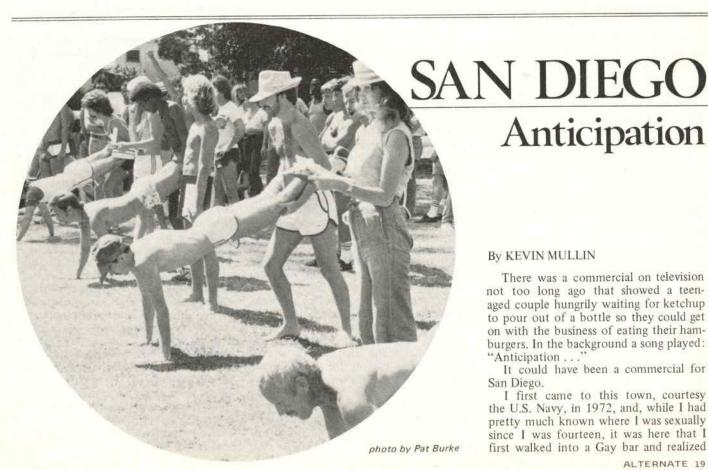
"When I was doing Boys in the Band on Broadway, I got a Folger's coffee commercial. Immediately, Mr. Folger himself sent a memo to all advertising offices stating that under no circumstances would any cast member of Boys In the Band represent his coffee.'

"I read for a gay character in a film. During the interview, I noticed a long two-column list on the desk. I recognized several of the names. I was later told that it was a list of known gay actors who would not be seen for the role. And this was for a gay character! It was a black-

A weight of indefinable nature begins to grow thick in my skull. I hear cracking sounds. Something is happening to me in Hollywood. I simply cannot believe what my senses tell me. It's just too much input, that's all, you're just shortcircuiting from all the culture shock. Give it a rest for a while. Relax. Turn on the boob tube.

"CBS Reports: Gay Power, Gay Politics." An excellent Lesbian speaker at the great Washington Rally brings the ocean of people to a joyful, thunderous roar, Alright! On national TV! A lump forms in my throat. Gay men in San Francisco are shown, speaking beautifully and looking gorgeous! Children are shown! They're talking about . . . they are talking about seeing two men "doing weird things to each other" in a public park. The children's parents speak in tight, solemn voices, Their faces are bright white. An "S&M consultant" is interviewed. He brings forth chains, whips, handcuffs. He slaps a rubber paddle with relish against his hand and explains that the tiny holes are cut into it because they leave such interesting marks on the body. He holds up a billy club: "Regulation night stick. Makes a perfect dildo." On the word "dildo," he thrusts the stick between his thumb and forefinger so that it is pointing straight toward the camera. A coroner is interviewed. He tells America that for the past several months, about 10% of the deaths he's encountered have been the results of S&M scenes.

I will not deal. I change the channel. The man who wrote Star Babies is being interviewed. He tells us that these kids are warned from the day one: "Be careful what you say; it's your father's name that ends up in the papers, not yours." In interviewing them, he dis-



By KEVIN MULLIN

There was a commercial on television not too long ago that showed a teenaged couple hungrily waiting for ketchup to pour out of a bottle so they could get on with the business of eating their hamburgers. In the background a song played: "Anticipation . . .

Anticipation

It could have been a commercial for

San Diego.

I first came to this town, courtesy the U.S. Navy, in 1972, and, while I had pretty much known where I was sexually since I was fourteen, it was here that I first walked into a Gay bar and realized

ALTERNATE 19

covers one thing they all have in common: "No sense of personal identity and an overriding need for someone to listen to them."

I still won't deal. I change the channel. It is a commercial for the Army. It is sponsoring a late night teen rock show. Get 'em while they're young. But what's this? What am I looking at? A series of quick cuts: Two soldiers walking, arms around shoulders. A soldier pushing another soldier forward, the palm of his hand flat against the ass of the man in front of him. Two men in a wrestling ring: one approaches the other from behind and slams his groin — hard — into the other man's ass. They are selling the Army with gay sexual images.

Pain is what I feel. Pain and abject terror. A close friend once said, "Harry, when you feel a certain amount of pain in life, you begin to develop numbing devises to protect yourself from it. It's an inner padding. It may be limiting, but it keeps things simple. I like my padding."

That's what the thickness in my skull was. After all, isn't one *defined* by the feelings one feels? So what happens when

you stop feeling?

Another game in town comes to mind. The game of control. Take a jaded personality, introduce it to an impressionable one, and you have all the makings for a chilling real-life Edgar Bergen-Charlie McCarthy act. For someone who has

given up on their own life, the remolding of a young one can be a fascinating experiment. This dynamic goes beyond oneto-one relationships. If you do not know who you are, Hollywood will be happy to tell you. If you do know, you've got a chance. Do you trust the internal mirrors or the external ones? If you are Farrah Fawcett, do you really believe that you are the ultimate one year and passe the next? If you are Dolly Parton, do you really believe that your breast size is a valid invitation to jokes from around the world? If you are Orson Welles, or the Smothers Brothers, do you really believe that your work is rocking the boat, and you had better "cool it"? If you are me or a thousand others, do you really believe that to tell the truth about being gay is to invite "career suicide?"

If you are anyone, do you really believe that the insanity happening in the world right now must continue?

Hollywood, what are you doing? How are you helping us? Surely, you are aware of your influence. The messages you transmit to the home screen are watched . . . how long? Is it 8 hours a day average? That's a lot of time. What a responsibility. People spend more time with you than with anybody else. So what are you doing about it? You are giving us more padding. You are feeding us popcorn when we're dying of malnutrition. You are telling us to ignore our minds and parrot your laugh-track, cop to your

standards, clone on to your silly spectacle. Now, Hollywood, when we need you the most, you are manipulating realities so that we have no idea what is true and what is not, what is real and what is not. You are stirring up our primal needs and holding up a product as the answer. You, who have such true riches to offer, are offering us your dregs, your worst possible face: get what you can and fuck 'em if they can't take a joke. You've sold your soul to big business, Hollywood. You've sold out. In the doing, your message is clear: you don't matter and we don't matter.

Oh, what the hell, maybe you're right. Integrity is just a big joke anyway, has been for years.

Lucy, I'm home! I'm not sure where I've been, but this is what I know: passive conditioning does not hold. There is very much a balance of nature. The human spirit can not be forever paded. Bought off. Numbed. The tears of the heart do not remain buried. They gather. And they build. And they . . rain. "Were you affected at all by the flood?" Rage of the heart does not remain buried. It gathers. And it builds. And it . . . rumbles. "Did you feel the last quake?"

Art is born in a very private place. It is wrenched from the agony of not being able to express ourselves in the outer world. It is communion with the soul manifest. The need to share our art forces

how many other men shared a preference. The bar was called the Downtowner, and featured female impersonation shows. Since I'd been stage-struck since age three, and hadn't seen many footlights in the four years I'd just spent in the Navy, I jumped at the chance to work backstage.

While I sometimes regret having spent my alloted "new face in town" period in the shadow of all those yards of turkey ruff boas, I am firmly convinced that I could not have had my social coming-out among a better group of people. Even as recently as eight years ago, the only truly up-front Gays seemed to be the

drags.

San Diego has come a long way since the days when we sat around the Royal Inn commenting on how it was an election year so the Vice would be out in full force, calmly accepting it as a way of life. Our Gay Center and Metropolitan Community Church opened in 1973. In 1974 we had our first Gay Pride Parade, and in 1975 the San Diego Democratic Club became our first viable Gay political organization. Stepping Stone Recovery House for Gay Alcoholics opened its doors in 1977, the same year that (in the wake of Anita Bryant's campaign) the city's Lesbian/Gay population was pub-

licly estimated at 72,000.

1978 brought the surprising landslide defeat of Proposition 6 (the Briggs Initiative) in our traditionally ultra-conservative city, and the founding of the San Diego Lesbian Organization. In 1979, all hell broke loose: the Gay Alliance for Equal Rights and Greater San Diego Business Association were founded, as were the San Diego chapter of the Gay Academic Union, and the Mariposa Foundation. San Diego Update published its first issue and, within the year, launched the city's first regularly scheduled Gay Television program.

And, in 1979, Al Best (without a single rhinestone or feather) became San Diego's first openly-Gay candidate for City Council, placing fifth in a field of eleven contenders from his district.

We're growing up, slowly but surely. Adolescence has set in and, with it, the growing pains. "Anticipation . . ."

All in all, San Diego is not such a bad place to grow up. The climate here is, undisputedly, one of the finest in the country. (Try skinny-dipping at 3 am Christmas morning in San Francisco and see what it gets you . . .) The sun shines here on such a regular basis that it's almost a welcome relief when the city is hit by one of its unpredictable rain-

storms. Visitors from larger metropolitan areas are in for a real treat — the sky is valiantly holding onto its blue.

With weather this nice, it's only logical that we have so many ways to enjoy it. Beaches, naturally, head this list; and Torrey Pines Beach (more commonly known as Black's Beach) is probably our most famous. On weekends you can find literally thousands of people scaling the cliffs to openly defy the law by swimming and sunbathing in the nude. (F.A.I.R., the nude beaches committee, is trying to get the law changed again in November.)

Black's has a large section that has traditionally become the turf for Gays. It's a comfortable and easy place to be—at least for those of you who are comfortable and at ease in large crowds of

naked people.

For those of you who prefer the security of Spande, (and I'm with you — I mean, I burn so easily . . .), there are several other options. Ocean Beach has managed to retain a certain quality that is reminiscent of the Sixties, Pacific Beach abounds with beautiful bodies and roller skates, and Mission Beach is the place you'd be most likely to find Frankie and Annette if they were still doing that sort of thing.

us to face tenuous bridges to the outer world. Not trusting to reveal the intimacy of our art in life, we develop masks to protect ourselves from the threatening world that was, indeed, our original cause for retreat. We wear those masks, and we fool each other with them. We still believe that what lies behind them is some-

thing to be ashamed of.

Hollywood is full of gifted people who do not yet fully understand the importance of their gifts, nor how to extend those gifts into a way of living. It is safer to flash one's art than hide behind stone walls and watch dogs. Easy, painless pathways to the outer world are chosen, pathways that are tried and true. Family members. Old friends. Sex partners. We gravitate toward familiar images and relate to them in familiar ways - ways that do not threaten to expose our psychic complexities, our deeper emotions, our demons, our love. We may warble a song that will tear your heart out, we may be a whiz at calculus - but when it comes down to talking to each other - really talking to each other - we are still quite

The time has come.

It is time to take off our masks. Show

it all. Open wider.

It is time to shake our bootie, strut our stuff, sing out loud. It is time to create new languages based on selfaffirment and shared purpose. It is time to show the pain. Show the love. Show



the need. Release ourselves. It is time to tell the truth. We are reality. We are It. Life is the ultimate art form and everyone is an artist. It's time for our play to become our work. For life to become a dream. It's time to do it.

When you imagine all of the existences

possible in the universe - all of the zillions of possibilities that exist - we have all - all of us - chosen to be human beings on Earth, right here, right now.

We are a family.

The truth is: we are a family. Pass it

Then there's La Jolla for those of you who have lots of money, or are looking for lots of money, or (at least) aren't offended by lots of money.

If you're just not into beaches, Balboa Park is the place to spend your days. The sunbathers are out almost as soon as the sun is, and a large area of the park has been unofficially dubbed "Queens Circle." Lots of good things going on here including, on Sunday afternoons, a Gay

volleyball league.

Downtown San Diego is located fifteen blocks south of Balboa Park, Be prepared for some confusion due to an elaborate one-way street system, and a massive "redevelopment" ongoing in the area. The handling of this project has fluctuated between farcical and downright embarrassing for years now, and will undoubtedly continue in a like manner throughout the decade.

Much of what is good about the redevelopment process has come about as a result of private investors. The Gaslamp Quarter is a restoration project designed to retain the Turn-of-the-Century flavor of a large area of downtown, Columbia Square has finally won a lengthy fight for its existence, and Seaport Village – the first new major tourist attraction in over a decade - is nearing completion.

Spread over a fourteen acre area at the foot of Harbor Drive and Pacific Highway, Seaport Village offers a historical perspective into California harborside settings of a century ago. Many of the attractions are already open, including shops, restaurants, an art gallery, and a little place specializing in wooden toys. The whole project is set on Coronado Bay.

The City's participation in its own redevelopment has been hampered to a large part by its traditional conservation. Seemingly unwilling to come to a decision of any kind on almost any matter, the City Council has stalled to the point that many of the project's original backers have pulled out in the face of skyrocketing building costs and continuous re-drawing of plans.

The Council remains steadfast, however, on the idea that a parking lot is more important than a theatre.

The Lyceus, our second-oldest and best-equipped live theater facility, unfortunately occupies a space that has been designated for the southeast corner of a parking structure. Countless attempts have been launched to save it, but it is now apparent that it is a lost cause. Joining the Lyceum in its fate will be the Second Avenue Theatre, just a block away. While this 49-seat house has none of the history or sophistication of the Lyceum, its most notable contribution has benefits accessibility to fledgling groups, many of whom have produced plays with a special interest to the Gay community. The Women's Theatre Ensemble opened the Second Avenue with their highly-acclaimed production of The Killing of Sister George, for example, and Carpenter's Children (San Deogo's first viable Gay theatre group) broke week-night's attendance records with their production of The Dear Love of Comrades, written originally for the Gay Sweatshop of London by Noel Grieg and Alex Harding.

So what San Diego is really about is a little of a lot - the beginnings of some major growth. We've moved from childhood complacency through adolescent squawking, and now stand on the verge of an adult battle with an ultra-conservative environment. Like all brothers and sisters, we're prone to sibling rivalries and high emotional disagreements; but, by the same analogy, we stand together when we're attacked.

Borrowing, again, from that TV commercial: "San Diego - it's Slo-o-ow Good!"

## ART **FOR GAY RIGHTS**

Jim Hoffman's striking reworking of traditional American imagery and the universal Gay lambda symbol was conceived as a fund raising project for San Francisco's Gay Rights Advocates, a public interest law firm that specializes in cases affecting the legal rights of Gay men and Lesbians.

The silkscreened poster, which is seventeen by twenty-four inches, is printed in red, blue and two tints of grey on white. The edition was set at 2000; with 100 copies hand signed and numbered.

The fund-raising art project was cosponsored by Hoffman's design company, On Sight, and the San Francisco Real Estate firm of Langley-Tackes. "I knew the minute I saw it that this would be a collector's item. And we support the Gay Rights Advocates very strongly. The decision to back this poster was practically automatic," said Rob Tackes.

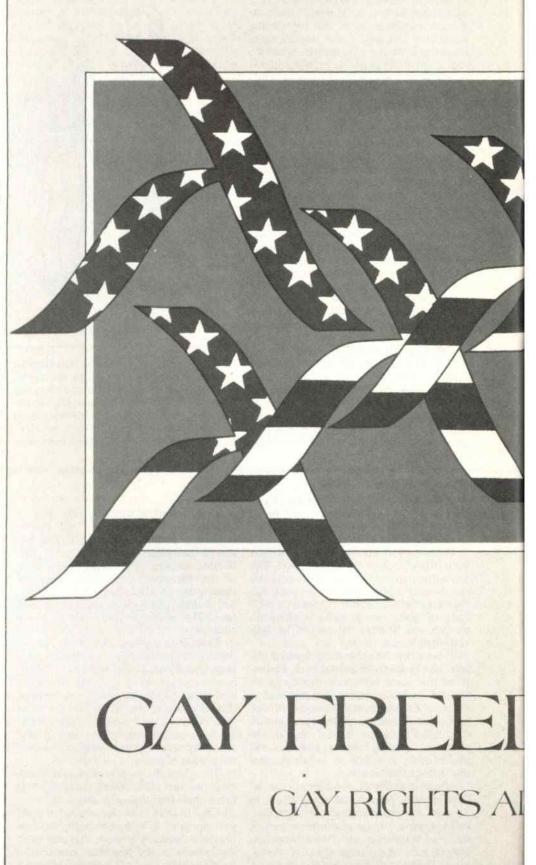
Don Knutson, from the Gay Rights Advocates, admitted, "We were delighted when Jim approached us with this idea. It's an honor to be part of such a handsome statement of our community's goals, and it is especially helpful that we haven't had to devote any staff time or

money to the project."

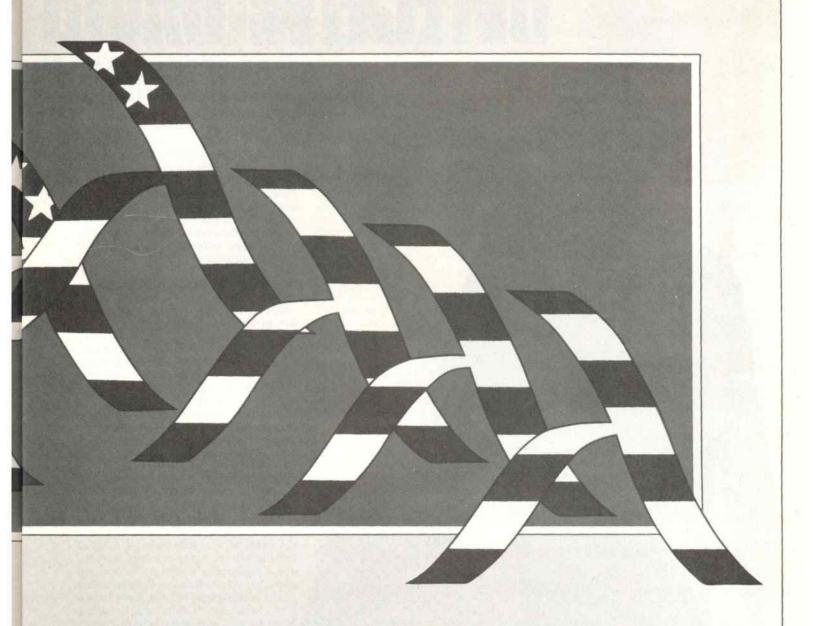
Hoffman has originated a number of other fund raising events in San Francisco for the gay community, including the "I Love a Parade" auction for the Golden Gate Business Association's celebrity auction which raised \$10,000 for the 1978 Gay Freedom Day Parade.

The signed and numbered edition of the poster is \$25, and the regular unsigned edition is \$10. The poster can be ordered from: On Sight Poster, 742 Castro Street, San Francisco, CA 94114. There is a \$1 charge for postage and handling, and California residents should add 61/2% sales tax.

It is expected that the poster will sell out. On Sight is already planning a similar effort for next year.



PRODUCED FOR GAY RIGHTS ADVOCATES BY 1



## DOM IN AMERICA

DVOCATES~SAN FRANCISCO

ANGLEY-TACKES, REAL ESTATE, SF, AND DESIGNED BY ON SIGHT, SF 1980

# DETECTIVE DAVID CALIFORNIA'S

By JOHN PRESTON

California is the home of the American private eye. Of course Nero Wolfe is in comfortable residence in Manhattan, and Lew Archer sails out of Ft. Lauderdale; still the spiritual home of the American detective is on the West Coast.

The reasons are many. Certainly one is the fantastic opportunities the state offers to the detective novelist. Dashiel Hammett could have the Continental Op/Sam Spade run between seedy San Francisco hotels, sumptuous suburban manors and the depths of exotic Chinatown without the slightest strain on his

believability. And, in *The Red Harvest*, the Continental Op could even add a trip to a disintegrating mining town without having his reader question the truth of the train schedules involved.

It all reflects the vast diversity of California. The common cliche about there really being two states — the northern half centered in San Francisco and the southern half capitaled by Los Angeles — is only the beginning of the enormity of the Bear State's range. There's desert, mountains, isolated seashores, primeval forests, old cities, boom cities, small

towns, resorts and mafia strongholds all within one boundary and two day's easy drive.

Joseph Hansen, one of the acknowledged masters of the contemporary detective novel, has used all these attributes of the state in creating his increasingly well known David Brandstetter series. He has also topped another of the constant themes of California that have drawn other novelists who write in the genre: California as the last frontier. The last place where the tide of creation might still be handled within a human scale.

David Brandstetter began his literary life in 1970 as the insurance claims investigator for a large Los Angeles based insurance company. He'd eventually have to go free-lance and become the classic independent in the tradition of Sam Spade. His company job was assured only so long as his father, the company's chairman of the Board, lived. Once dad had died, Dave had the choice of conformity or the decision to become a loner. There's no real choice there for a detective hero. As Dave said himself, "I like the job . . . I'm not ready to give up my sex life for it." (Troublemaker, 1975)

Like most classic detectives, Dave isn't really an image that walked out of the pages of GQ. He's on the far side of middleaged, he gets winded, wonders about his body, needs glasses to read with. But, as much as Lew Archer or Sam Spade could attract women. Dave can attract men. And California's enormous range of gay lives gives him all the opportunities, or traps, to have his sexual prowness measured. He's not any more lucky in love than the others are - his detective comrades, that is. There are all the pitfalls here that come with the part of falling for a detective. There's the lover who always seems to need him at home when he can't possibly get back in time, there are the seductive youths who'd do anything to get him in bed to keep him from his appointed rounds, or to find out how much information he really has. And, just to make sure he remains human, Dave is as vulnerable for falling for someone who's too involved in one of his plots as Sam Spade was in The Maltese Falcon - there's the beautiful young black man from the local television station who's latest assignment from the news desk is to find out just what Dave knows – during pillow talk.

# BRANDSTETTER AVENGING ANGEL



If Sam Spade can be forgiven for falling in *The Maltese Falcon*, then Dave has to be forgiven for falling in *The Man Everybody Was Afraid Of*. And the end is just as unclear. For Dave has one whole set of circumstances to deal with that the Continental Op never dreamt of: homophobia. His experiment with mixing work and pleasure is abruptly ended by the intercession of the young man's family; it turns out he's 18 months shy of 21 and even David Brandstetter can't fight the laws on statuatory rape.

That leads to the uniqueness of David Brandstetter. He may be out of the classic mold of the American detective, but he is unquestionably gay and as such has to deal with a whole range of attitudes and situations that no other of the mainly macho American male flat feet ever dreamt of. California's role as the hub of much of the gay activity in this country once again earns its center stage as the arena for the solving of society's crimes, both those that are perpetuated on its citizens, and those that it perpetuates on otherwise innocent beings.

The detective novel in America is a highly contemporary form. It really didn't develop until the 1930's. It has always been a vehicle for astute social criticism. Author Joseph Hansen has certainly used the gay situations that his California world offers to heighten the suspense and to finely hone the plots of his novels. The whole series opened with Fadeout, where a regionally popular songwriter finds the walls of his closet tumbling down with the assaults of male sexuality around him and with the sudden reappearance of a supposedly long lost lover returned from Europe. He pays for it with his life. In Death Claims a gay bar owner has a fatal flaw: an obsession with beautiful men, young men. The boys he loves don't kill him, but his obsession puts him in mortal danger that ends his life as his reason leaves him in his quest for emotional fulfillment. Then Troublemaker, where Dave has to sift through the hypocrisy of a movie star and the shame of a gay man's father to discover the cause for murder - the unrequited love of a homosexual for his straight partner, a man who at first seemed to be a paragon of virtue, but who eventually is shown to be capable of extraordinary

By the time Hansen got around to writing the last two of the novels that have so far appeared in the series, his social critic's eye had been sharpened, and the targets for his criticism even more clearly delineated. The Man Everybody Was Afraid Of is clearly modeled to some extent on the infamous Chief Davis of the Los Angeles Police Department, though here he is translated to a mythical small city further north on the coast. Skinflick doesn't have a bouffant-haired singer pitching orange juice in its list of characters, but the deep seated hatred the author feels for evangelists who would use their pulpits against others' sexual fulfillment is startingly clear.

In the series as a whole Joseph Hansen has created a character in David Brandstetter who is the avenging angel of homosexuals. Human, flawed certainly, not omnipotent, but honest, driven by a sense of justice and motivated strongly with the knowledge that his understanding of certain situations far surpasses that of the established law enforecement agencies. One of the peculiarities of Hansen's career, strangely enough, is that he has only very recently begun to receive any acknowledgement for the development of this character from any gay critics. A middle-class role model must not be worthy in the eyes of our radical literary establishment. Or perhaps we're all so focused on the long awaited Messiah in the body of the Great Gay Book that we've disdained something as mundane as a detective novel. For whatever reason, only the recent publication of Skinflick has drawn any gay critical attention worthy of note. We've abandoned our best-selling novelist and our best character in contemporary American literature to the straight audience.

It will be interesting when someone can finally explain why the London Times lauds a book as the best to come out of America in the detective field since Dashiel Hammett, and then gay men in the novel's home country refuse to buy it. That was the fate of, The Man Everybody was Afraid Of. There's been a reprieve issued by Hansen's publisher though, three of Hansen's detective series which are out of print will be reissued this fall in trade paperback. With the continued commercial presence of this work, we can all read the body of the five novels so far published and watch Hansen as he develops his gay criticism and his gay characters. And for those who want to look, we can also see just how completely a significant novelist can use California.

Like all the extremely popular detective series, each of the Hansen books stands alone as a good read, well-written and carefully structured. But, it also shares another characteristic of the best series while the books can be taken separately, they also form a whole when read together. There is a breath of character development in the entirety of the series that transcends the individual novels. Subplots that might seem inconsequential in isolation become obvious and extraordinarily rich in the whole. The most significant example of this is David Brandstetter's love affair with Doug Sawyer, Every single exchange between the two is an insightful look at two men attempting love. But when the whole series is integrated, the reader is given one of the most sincere and painfully honest portraits of a gay male relationship that has existed so far in our literature. The complexities that go on between the two men are far beyond the scope of this article; the machinations they impose on themselves and one another that begin with Doug's appearance as a murder suspect in Fadeout and end with the demise of their relationship in Skinflick are a fit subject for their own article. What is relevant here is the ins and outs of Doug and Dave's relationship and characters and the way the author has taken California and used it as the something more than simply a background for his novels. California becomes a character in the novels, reflecting the mood and the temperments of the two and for other men.

It is probably one of the signs of a really good novelist that inanimate objects and settings take on the function of character in their writing. Certainly Hansen's portraits of pieces of California landscape as reflections of Doug and Dave fit into this category. In Fadeout, where we're introduced to both Doug and Dave, Doug has come back to California from Europe and has reclaimed his prewar adolescent lover before the lover is murdered. The two had spent their happiest times together in the mythical town of Bell Beach. Dave has come to the resort to discover the murderer of Doug's ex-lover. This is what he sees as he looks over the site of the past life the two men hoped to reclaim in a try to recapture their past:

Bell Beach was lost miles from the freeway. Sand lay in the empty, sun-baked streets. Wiry brown grass thrust through the sand. In the grass, gulls and pelicans stood like moth eaten museum pieces. The buildings were cheap stucco with mad carnival turrets. Gaudy paint had faded and scabbed off. Shingles had curled and turned black, Windows were broken.

Where not broken they were boarded up, had been for years: the rust from the nailheads had written long, sad farewells down the salt silvered planks. The corrugated iron roof of a hot-dog stand had slumped in. A metal filling station turned to black lace in the sun, Beyond padlocked grillwork in a crimson-and-gilt barn shadowy carrousel horses kicked through gray curtains of cobweb.

In that description lies the truth of our attempts to find our lives in the past. Doug and Dave both attempt to do that impossible task with one another through the series. But the cobwebs will always remain over the reality that functions more concretely than our fantasies. The California scenery becomes the very conflict between our past and our present. The detective must see the truth, just as Dave does see the real substance of what Doug and his ex-lover fantasized over in Bell Beach. He doesn't have to like it, but he most observe it. The California countryside and cityscapes force the presence of that reality onto his

mind

By the time Doug and Dave get to Death Claims (1973) the detective doesn't even have the comfort of distance when he looks at California and finds it reflecting the emotional state of its inhabitants. The situations have shifted. He's no longer seeing Doug and his exlover attempting to create a lost past, he's seeing the truth of himself and Doug in the bright sun of still another fabricated beach resort:

Arena Blanca was right. The sand that bracketed the little bay was so white it hurt the eyes. A scatter of old frame houses edged the sand, narrow, high-shouldered, flat-roofed. It didn't help that they were gay with new paint - yellow, blue, lavender. They looked bleak in the winter sun. Above them gulls sheared a sky cheerful as new denim. The bay glinted like blue tile. The small craft at anchor might have been dabbed there by Raoul Dufy. It was still bleak. So were the rain-greened hills that shut the place off. He drove down out of them bleakly.

The bleakness was in him. After only three months he and Doug were coming apart. The dead were doing it — Doug's dead, a French boy, skull shattered in a sun-blaze blend on the raceway at Le Mans; his own dead, a graying

boy interior decorator, eaten out by cancer in a white nightmare hospital. He and Doug clung tight, but the dead crept cold between them. Neither he nor Doug knew how to bury them and in their constant presence they treated each other with the terrible empty gentleness people substitute for love at funerals. It was no way to live and they weren't living.

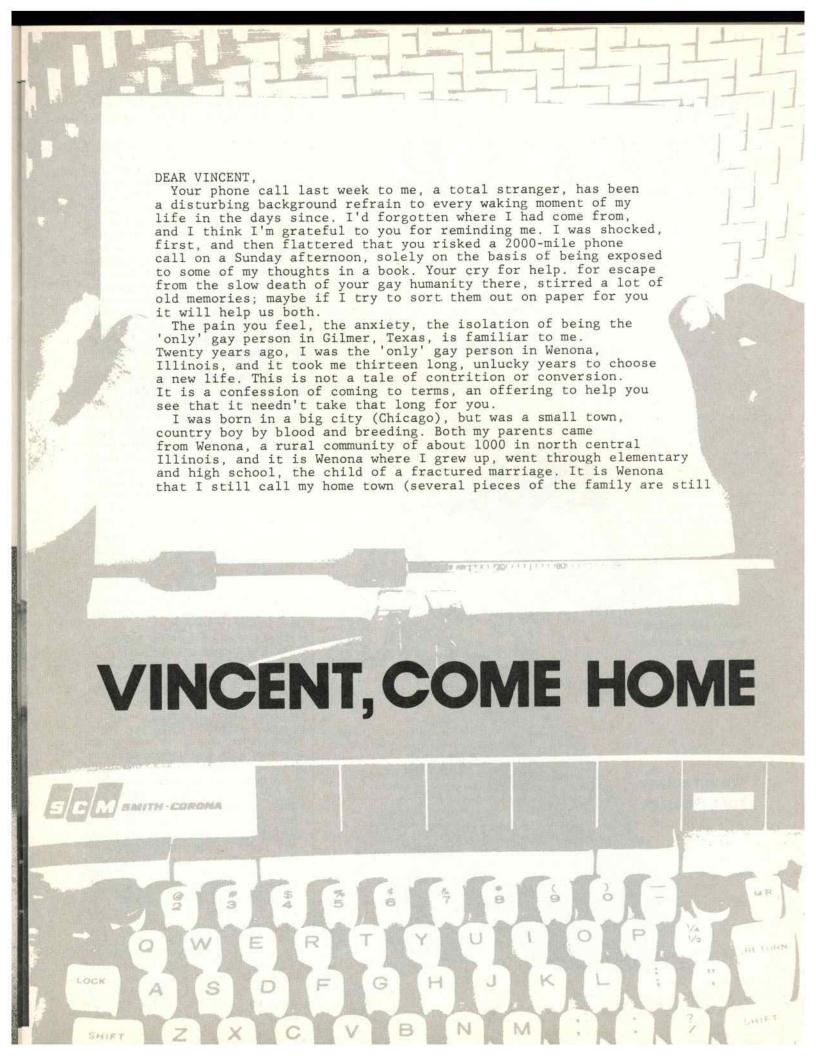
And so the white sands of Arena Blanca stand witness to the searing light of Dave's knowledge, and the cold winter of lost loves that can't be released conveys the chill of a distanced realtionship. Through it all, the bright sunlight of California refuses to let the private eye indulge himself with the self deceptions that reign through the inhabitants of his world. It is, in fact, his function to cut through the veil of deceit and self-deceit that keeps people from the truth. It is always the detective's glory and his curse that he must tear off the veils for himself and for others.

California's landscape and its wide ranging physical and social spectrums have been the comfortable home for most of America's most heroic characters. Joseph Hansen's David Brandstetter is just one of the operatives who inhabit this last frontier, the country of the widest extremes, the place of the last hope. It is of more than passing interest that he happens to be gay.

# Sweat It Out...

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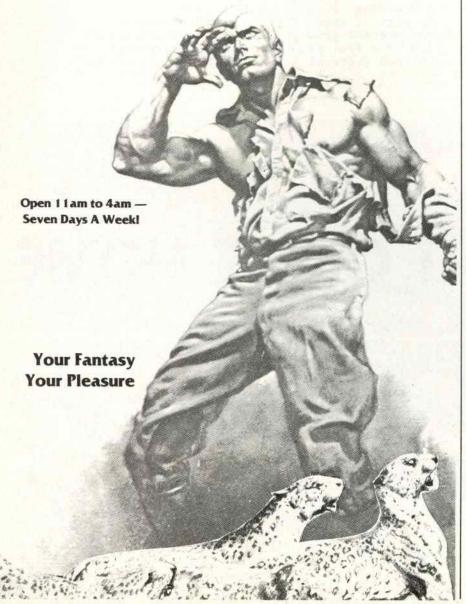




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there, or in the immediate vicinity), even though it was Wenona I left eagerly, never intending to return except for brief visits.

First there was college, a voyage of discovery, and then a succession of more and more "important," "meaningful" jobs. In 1973, I was acting public information officer in the State of Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. I had passed 30 without marrying; had my family nearby, a wonderful collection of friends, straight and gay; a good job with a salary that permitted me to support a comfortable home, a current love relationship, and a brand new Corvette convertible. But my discomfort increased on a daily basis, and I knew the reason why. Despite my success, my acceptance, my image, I was a fraud. A phony. A stranger in a strange land. I lived two lives, as you do, Vincent.

And I was one of the lucky ones. Springfield, Illinois, the state's capital where I lived and worked, had an increasingly visible gay community, and I had friends in both Chicago and St. Louis where I could go to "be myself." It was a short step from learning to be myself on weekend getaways to wanting to be myself full-time, up front and honest in my everyday existence. I got involved with "movement" groups. I pioneered television confrontations with the governor - nominally my boss - and found an exhiliration in it. But it wasn't enough. There were still the nights to go home to a closeted relationship and the sure knowledge that I would never be allowed to relax; that to be as open as I wanted to be meant living my life in a state of siege. I needed my people.

Here's what I did. In the summer of 1973, I vacationed in San Francisco. I'd been there before, and was sure I'd found home. I visited a gay friend who'd left Springfield behind only months before, and speculated out loud about a move for myself. Only half seriously, we looked through the classified ads for apartments. Three-quarters serious, we went around to look at a few that sounded promising. When we stumbled onto a ridiculously cheap three-bedroom house with garage and fenced yard, patio, and fireplace on a hilltop in Pacifica, we got totally serious. Three of us could manage it very well my friend, his friend, and me. I used every penny of my remaining vacation money to pay my share of the deposits and the first month's rent. I was committed, and my world, that is, my perception of the world, seemed different overnight. I returned to Springfield, gave two weeks notice at my job, and a month later was on the road to California, blissfully unconcerned that the entire country was in mid-recession (the first oil crisis, remember?).

My "lover" and I had parted company; that expensive bauble, the convertible Corvette, had shattered in a mo-

## "...the status quo has its own price..."

ment of highway carelessness; and my savings had evaporated into vacation expenses. I used all of my last two paychecks to pay most of my debts and finance that trip. With my worldly goods loaded in a U-Haul truck, I drove 2000 miles cross-country, eating hamburgers and chili in truck stops, sleeping in the cab with my Irish setter to keep me warm. Arriving in San Francisco two days later, I had no savings, no job lined up to provide me with living money. My grubstake, to put it in appropriate frontier slang, was \$100, of which \$20 was a parting gesture from my father, who didn't want to see me go but recognized the necessity he saw in my decision; \$50 was a refund of a deposit I had made on the rental truck, collected here in the Bay area after I had unloaded my furniture and turned in the U-Haul; and \$30 and some change was the "surplus" from my gas and meal buying money for the overland haul.

During my first month here, I did a lot of job-hunting, and after putting in my resumes at a dozen places, I signed on with a temporary agency, one of those "Kelly Girl" types which provides a person with a survivor's wage, which I saw as a stop gap until the employment offers started coming in. They didn't not the way I had expected or envisioned. But I did survive. I survived four months without a permanent job. I survived low salaries and starting up from the bottom. I survived jobs that evaporated beneath me, employers who went out of business, or moved their companies elsewhere. I survived the early departure of my "friends" from our housing arrangement, leaving me to afford \$295 a month rent on take home pay of \$360 a month. That, after leaving a \$16,000 a year job behind.

(Doesn't sound like much now, does it? In buying power, though, it was the equivalent of today's \$30,000.) Now, six and a half years after making my start on the west coast, I'm just now back to \$16,000 a year. And I'm living better on it, despite six years of heavy inflation, than I ever did in Illinois.

Don't feel sorry for me. I've found a lot. I've been involved in some important turns of history. I've seen things happen — occasionally I was lucky enough to make things happen. Sure, I could have, and did, make things happen back in Illinois, too. But the price was high. Since making my move, I've seen good things (and some bad) happen to me. I've found friends. I've found support and understanding and love. I've grown. I wouldn't think of trading it for the \$30

or \$35,000 a year that I'd be making today if I'd stayed in Illinois.

There are good things about small towns, and about "middle America," whether it's Gilmer, Texas; Decatur, Illinois . . . or San Anselmo, California. (The murderous hinterlands of straight society are not defined by geography.) I am nostalgic for those things, even as I wonder how many of them are real and how many the product of creative remembrance, in me, in other writers, in media hype. Now is not the time though, to try to describe them to you, enumerate them, or convince you of their existence. In your present circumstances, it would be a little silly; besides, I suspect you have your own positive feelings about them, or you wouldn't still be in Gilmer at this stage in your life.

I have a personal conviction, however, that for 99.4 percent of the gay people who are even now growing up (or grown up), questioning themselves, dealing in whatever fashion with the world they have in small town middle America, the only reasonable route to survival as a whole person is . . . to get out. That's not a negative thing, as in running away. It's a positive thing, as in running toward. There will be some who will learn enough about themselves, and about liking themselves, that they will some day be able, willing, perhaps eager, to go back. But that's not the goal. Living well that is, in a whole, healthy fashion, is

the goal

You can see that I don't equate living "well" with material status. I'm not saying that anyone's escape has to entail sacrifice; for many, it doesn't. (These are merely the details of my own personal experience.) What I am saying is that the prospect of sacrifice should not be the deciding factor in staying where you are. Nothing happens by accident. We make our own heavens or hells, our own peace on earth or our own battlegrounds. Subject to a few actual physical limitations, we can be or do virtually anything we want to badly enough. All that is necessary is to accept the responsibility to make the necessary decisions, and pay the price for them. In any case, the decisions we make - even if they are to stay put, or not to decide - are no one's responsibility but ours. If we decide against Option A, there are only two possible reasons: either we are not ready to pay its price, or we do not really want it. But before deciding, most of us fail to accurately assess the price of Option B - the status quo. You have reason to know, Vincent, that the status quo has its own

Get out, Vincent. If you can type, you can survive. If you are willing to face the possibility of mistakes, to mold a new world, a new life, to build it again from scratch, if necessary, you can do that, and it will show you strengths inside yourself. It will help you admire yourself. It will teach you control over your own existence. It took a particular kind of courage to track down my phone number, make your call and spill your guts on the phone (that in itself shows that you are resourceful, and a survivor). It is easier to talk to a stranger, sometimes, but the real test of your courage remains ahead.

If you can't get to California right away, at least get to Houston, or New Orleans, the closest large cities that are in any way hospitable to gays. They're not ideal, but they're improvements. over Gilmer. (San Francisco isn't ideal, either, or New York or Los Angeles. But I believe, for myself, that San Francisco is as close to the ideal as I have yet found. And I haven't really stopped looking - just suspended the search for a while, and worked a little to improve on where I am.) You may find that California is not for you - it's not for everybody. But there are no irrevocable decisions. There are only new choices, new opportunities.

I think, Vincent, that none of us, or damn few, ever reach a state of true peace with ourselves in this lifetime. When I say "us," of course, I mean our fellow-gays. "They," most of the rest of this world, are actively determined to prevent that happening. The good fight, then, I suppose, goes beyond struggling to end that oppression, toward trying in whatever ways are open to us to avoid it, to opt out of it, short-circuit it, neutralize it; to lead our lives that we need only justify to ourselves, not to anyone else.

I'll reaffirm this, which I told you on the phone Sunday: If you come to San Francisco, I'll sit with you and tell you, show you, help you as much as I know. That is to say, I'll try to be your friend, which is the least we ought to do for each other. Meanwhile, I'd enjoy hearing more about you and the things that are percolating in your life, for good or ill. And I'll try to share more of who I am in another letter, if we have time for that before you make your first jump. Let's keep in touch, I care.

Larry Reh

Vincent is a real person. The phone call actually happened scant weeks ago. His name and his town are disguised, for the usual reasons. The outcome of his deliberations are not yet known.

## THERE IS NO THERE TH

## New Yorkers Look at California

By JOHN PRESTON

Most New Yorkers get their information about California from television, so what do you expect? But, then there are those of us who have really experienced it; I talked to over 20 gay men who spent time On The Coast for one reason or another and have returned to Gotham with, well, shall we say, distinct impressions of life on the frontier.

The one major difference between those New Yorkers who have lived in California and those that haven't is that the former clearly distinguish between San Francisco and Los Angeles, and for them, to be blunt, that's really just about

all there is.

The most endearing aspect of San Francisco from the New York eye is sex. In fact, the one thing that all Easterners are willing to grant the Bay City is its position as peer to The Big Apple in terms of sexual availability, sexual activity, sexual diversity and sexual appreciation. In this one category San Francisco reigns supreme with New York, Amsterdam and, maybe, London as a world center. But when pressed, the only other thing that a New Yorker has to say about San Francisco that's even pleasant is that it's pretty. (Basically they don't even like the weather - those sudden fog-caused drops in temperature dampen any enthusiasm for that.)

How do Easterners explain San Francisco as such a massive sexual capitol when they can find nothing else good to say about the place? The answer was nearly unanimous: "Of course they're good at sex, they don't have anything

else to do."

And therein lies the rub. To the New Yorker who's used to battling subway strikes, for whom shopping is akin to a military expedition, who perceives a trip to Brooklyn as an over night journey, there is nothing to do in San Francisco. Any time period longer than a week begins to feel like time spent flying over a cuckoo's nest. They go stir crazy. They want to talk, to go to the theatre, meet more people, move, action! And, instead, they get another bottle of Calistoga water.

It says as much about New York as San Francisco, of course. But the fact remains that San Franciscans don't do enough to still the needs of the voracious New York spirit. It makes sense, the only reason anyone moves to New York is to Make It. The overwhelming belief in Manhattan is that you don't succeed unless you succeed here. The work ethic is paramount. The energy of the city comes from the excitement of all those people doing all those things. Put that whirlwind in the middle of Castro Street and you have a storm of frustration, because, let's be honest, no one moves to San Francisco to do anything. Except have

When a group of us who live in Manhattan got together to discuss the experience of having lived in San Francisco. we were faced with a dilemma. We were sure our perceptions were correct, but we know that somehow some things come out of the Bay Area. Books are written, thoughts are thought, magazines are published. How? We all shared a common memory of nevar meeting people who were doing anything: our friends, lovers, tricks all were unemployed, or waiters, or unpublished poets who seldom were able to come up with examples of their work. In New York, of course there are gay men who are waiters, but each and every one of them at least claims to be in an off-off-Broadway show. Our only explanation was that the people who went to California to work were in one of two categories: They were either people who worked in solitary and needed a sense of privacy that Manhattan spurns, or they were ashamed of themselves for having any material

You see, in New York, the value of a person has very much to do with what you are doing. There is no social stigma to being a waiter, or a secretary (in fact, the gay male secretary is a booming phenomenon), but you have to be doing something — writing, acting, beginning a career, moving toward a goal. And one of the ways you expect to do that is by knowing people. You go to parties to meet people who might help your career,

you spend time with others trying to achieve similar objectives, your weekends on Fire Island have as much to do with success as they do with relaxation. Given this set of values, the New Yorker cringes at the idea of spending his time at an encounter group, or attending a yoga workshop or — god forbid — doing est or the Advocate Experience. How can anyone afford that time?

Time is money. Time has value. There is not enough time to do all the things possible. Every Sunday Times or Village Voice produces a new sense of loss as more and more things are listed that the New Yorker just doesn't have time to do. And, socialization — even, or maybe especially, sexual socialization — just isn't that kind of priority here. Sex is a need to be fulfilled, not a value itself.

And so the basic point evolves - Evidently, the Northern Californian finds his values in his personal life and space. He has gone to California specifically to focus on his self. The New Yorker can't conceive of that isolation, his value is one person in community, in a group. Because of that a constant set of measurements is taken in New York. It looks like violent competition to an outsider, but in fact it most often is a mutual gauging that doesn't have to lead to a one-up-manship on the participants' part. Who are you in relationship to career, community and productivity are the questions being asked here. The words hardly even translate to a San Franciscan. And everyone feels strange about

There's the cultural gap between New York and San Francisco. It would be merely interesting if Californians left it there. We New Yorkers could probably shrug our shoulders and not a difference of style. The real trouble starts when San Franciscans start to deny it and try to tell us that they are as much a center of the world as we are.

Please, I feel faint at the thought.

You must understand that New Yorkers understand that some people have to live in some other places to succeed in their lives: people in government have to live in Washington, people in oil



have to live in Houston, people in education have to live in Boston. Those places are explicable. And they have their points. No New Yorker is quite willing to dismiss Harvard University, the Congress or Texaco. Those are centers of power we understand. The only thing we understand in San Francisco is the Bank of America.

The most unfortunate sight I've ever seen is a San Franciscan trying to convince me that there is theatre in The City. Minneapolis has more theatre! Or that the museums are "significant." I, and every New Yorker I talked to, am convinced that Art in San Francisco is a good lay. The price you pay for your attention to sexual hedonism is your

stereotype. The only pause to such a sweeping judgement might be the San Francisco Opera. Still, once again, even Minneapolis does better, especially when anyone can observe that the S.F. Opera can flourish only because of social pretentions.

I don't know many New Yorkers who are so bold as to cut Boston as a cultural center; a surprising number acknowledge the cultural center-status of Chicago and even Washington and Philadelphia. I know of no New Yorker who will credit San Francisco as anything but a stop on a road tour.

That may be harsh. But it's the truth, And I asked them for their honest opinion for this article.

And then there's Los Angeles.

If it takes time and thought for the New Yorker to understand the differences between New York and San Francisco — he will *never* understand the differences between New York and Los Angeles.

First of all, the physical presence of the cities are utterly incomparable. The expanse of the L.A. Basin is beyond the grasp of someone who's used to having the world clearly defined by river boundaries. The dependence on the car is the final breakdown in translation. There are many, many New Yorkers who haven't been behind the wheel of a car in years, decades! For one of them to find himself on the Santa Monica Freeway, worse, find out he *has* to be there to get anywhere else, is sheer terror. And sheer disbelief.

Los Angeles was a source of great surprise to the New Yorkers I met who had lived there for any period of time. The first surprise came on the first drive from the airport. Since television is the source of our fantasies of California, we all expected it to be brand-new. We had no idea there were houses more than five years old or buildings where the foundations had begun to crack. We had no expectation of slums, or poverty, or the extent of the smog.

After we were greeted by them, the shock of discovering the wealth of Bel Air or the luxury of a Hollywood Hills house is doubled. If New Yorkers' lifestyles are forced to have a basis of reality in the physical assaults that take place everyday - the lack of space, the noise, the pollution, the very turbulence of the city - at least there is a sense of a reality about the place. The construction of the fantasy that is Los Angeles in homes behind fences to keep out the inhabitants of the rest of the city is so alien that it always appears that Southern Californians have taken the very last trip - they have cut themselves off from society in a flight of day dreams that astounds an Easterner. The clothes, the bodies continually baked in sun and hardened in gymnasiums, the

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kept boys of thirty-five, the adulation of the "Star" all combine to leave the Easterner with the impression that he has walked on to the set of a Hollywood movie.

At least, though, the drive to become a "Star" is something the New Yorker can understand. It is a vocational drive, that element that he cannot find in San Francisco. And the love of elegance in Los Angeles, while taking a different form, is still a love that the New Yorker, who will willingly spend a week's salary on a good dinner, can understand. In some ways, actually Los Angeles is the most simpatico city to many New Yorkers who travel a great deal. They can translate the Manhattan obsession with the theatre to be able to understand the Los Angeles obsession with film; they can understand striving, they know what sacrifice for glory's sake is all about.

And, at least when Los Angelinos take on one of those strange pseudo-religions, they wear them no more seriously than they wear last year's fashions. San Franciscans on the other hand, are forever damned as the people who invented the

line, "What is your sign?"

What does California mean to a New Yorker? I asked my questionees for some quick reply answers, no thought, just free associations. This is what Californians are judged for:

The Advocate
The Advocate Experience
Hari Krishna
The Peoples' Temple
Jerry Brown
Frances Ford Coppola
Colt Studio
Folsom Street
Drugs

Now, even granted the New Yorker's love for the last three on this list (those items listed are the ones most often mentioned), still you can see why you get a bad press.

I tried to carry some of the conversations beyond the superficial gay-themed exchanges that brought out the torrent of abuse above. There are many people who admitted that they were forced to go to California because of jobs, family or lovers. Those people, like Edmund White in his California chapters in *States of Desire*, admit that what really bothered them was not being in New York. There was no way California could have matched their loss. What then, I asked the most serious of them, did they *really* see in California? Good or bad.

There is no question that the gay population of San Francisco has a lot of admirers. The sheer power of the gay organizations and community has to be respected by New Yorkers who can't even get a minor civil rights bill passed by the City Council, even when they have a supportive mayor. The presence of so many single or two unit houses is

an important building block for that kind of power base, to be sure, and the existence of so much living space sends a New Yorker into ecstacy. But, there is a question about the kind of ghetto that's being produced. People in San Francisco, and to some extent in Los Angeles, seem to have their power base, but they seem to have few, if any, contacts with the larger communities. Christopher Street may look like Castro Street, but Greenwich Village is not anywhere close to being as much of a gay neighborhood as The Castro is.

New Yorkers don't have a civil rights bill for many reasons, but one is that they are working too hard to accumulate power in too many other arenas. To the New York mind it's all well and good to achieve the power of the ballot box, but to him, the real power is being editorial director of a publishing house, or an executive in a service organization and making those kinds of institutions respond to the gay community. It's a difference in perspective and a difference in priorities. The vote's still out on whether anyone is "right." But, the underlying feeling in New York — at least insofar as San Francisco is concerned - is that it is such a small city that political victories really aren't any more important than comparable ones in Minnesota, or even in Provincetown or Key West. A strong ghetto isn't power to the men in New York that I talked to.

There is also a discomfort with the transience of the population in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Everyone is from somewhere. Now, New York isn't all that different in that respect. But there is more of a sense that people are going to stay here. The commitment to place, and the accompanying security that comes with committed friendships and vocational choices, is much stronger. It is so sought after here that its basence in other places is strongly noticeable.

Finally in an age of post-political consciousness, I was surprised by one element that came up over and over again. New York is no longer a racially integrated city in many respects. But every New Yorker mentioned the racism of California as a major factor in their discomfort with the place. All the horror stories of Harlem and all the reports of Hispanic youths in Chelsea roaming the bar areas aside, many people here have not encountered the type of racial tension that they found boarding a Filmore bus in San Francisco or during a drive through the Chicano neighborhoods of Los Angeles.

In many ways, it all comes round to some common points: New Yorkers don't think that California is that *serious* a place. It all seems too frivolous, too hedonistic, too bizarre, really. It is, when all is said and done, a very nice place to visit, but they just don't want to live there.

# The Great Hollywood Remake of 1980

FLIGHT 1650 is a hallmark of the new Hollywood emerging in the 80's. An entertainment complex that includes a bathnesse and a discotheque, Flight 1650 has a very masculine atmosphere — chain-link fences, bars, high-tech decor. Gone forever are the last vestiges of Liberace's restaurant that occupied the same space many years ago. Where there was once red flocked wallpaper you now see black walls and leather.

ALTERNATE 33



Sometime during the 80's West Hollywood will change from being an unincorporated area and become either a part of Los Angeles (meaning it will have a seat on the L.A. City Council) or become a city in itself (meaning it will have to have a mayor). One of the most talked about non-candidates for this nonexistant position is Judge Randy Schrader (right), recently appointed to his position by Governor Brown. An openly gay man who lives in the Hollywood Hills with his lover Dr. Rex Reece (left), Schrader is flattered by all the speculation and says, "I really haven't had a chance to think about that. I was just appointed two months ago. Right now, I'm just trying to do my job as a judge as best I can."

Stephen E. Schulte is the executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center. The largest and most active such organization in California, the Center has 80 full-time employees and an annual budget of one and a half million dollars. Most of the Center's budget comes out of CETA funds which are being drastically reduced by the Federal Government, Private donations, which now account for only about a quarter of the budget, will have to be increased significantly just for the Center to hold its own during the next year.

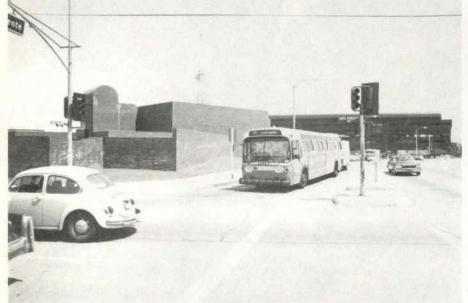




Without question one of the most famous and influential gay men in Los Angeles is Scott Forbes. Owner of Studio One, the Backlot Theatre Cabaret and LA bar, Mr. Frobes also produces special events such as Gay Day at Disneyland and Magic Mountain which drew tens of thousands of gay people. Scott Forbes' interests go beyond his commercial successes - he has, through benefits and other activities, raised incredible sums of money for gay charities and is on the board of directors of the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center. If West Hollywood becomes a city in its own right, he stands a good chance of becoming the nation's first gay mayor.

Santa Monica Boulevard is the link between the three major gay areas of Los Angeles. West Hollywood is at one end, Hollywood in the middle and Silver Lake at the other end. One of the most common sights along the street are hitch hikers - their destination your bedroom. Some of the men with their thumbs out are hardened hustlers. However, some are teenagers who are too young to gain access to the clubs and bars and use this as a method of meeting other people who are gay. But be warned - danger is ever present for both the hitch hiker as well as the driver. And the Los Angeles police are not the most enlightened in the nation and regularly have "crack-downs."



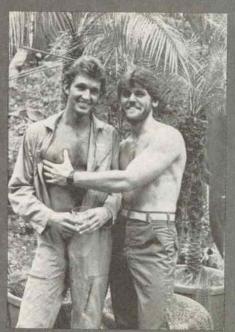


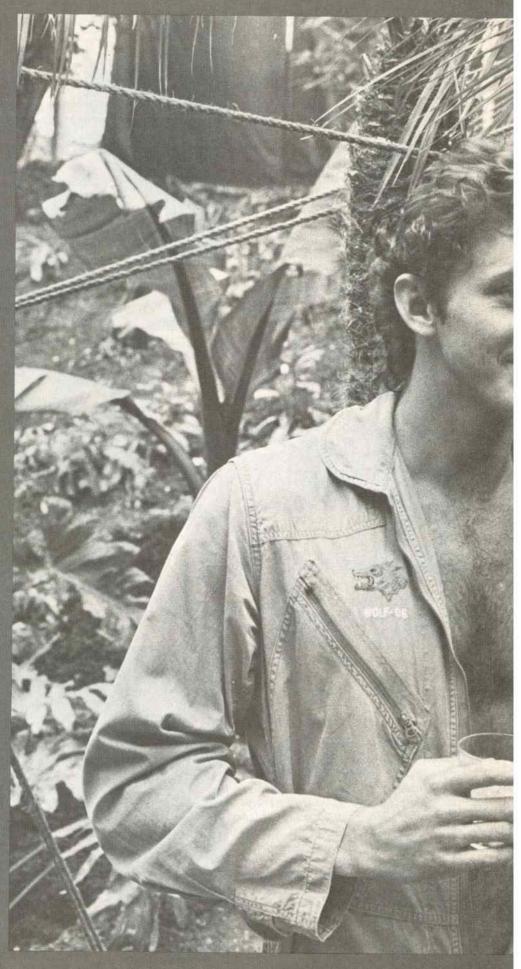
Fort Apache is what local West Hollywood residents have dubbed the new County Sheriff's Offices, which sits right at the crossroads of the dynamic gay ghetto. With a proclivity for castle-like police structures, and the largest budget of any county sheriff's facility in the state - the West Hollywood bluecoats have dug in and are prepared for commando-like raids and arrests - a future scenario they themselves have predicted. Amazingly, this tribute to low-slung brick and concrete sprawl sits right next to the Pacific Design Center, an unmistakable edifice that has drawn its own share of public scorn.

The parade attitude in Los Angeles is as laid back and beachworn as the myth that surrounds its residents. While the Hollywood parade lacks the bare breast dynamics of San Francisco's Lesbian militants, the barechested young man, preferably blonde, is still the rage. The L.A. Parade, which one could assume to be the most lavish, given its Hollywood home base, usually isn't. However, gays in L.A. managed to break into the otherwise sacred procession of the Santa Claus Lane Parade.

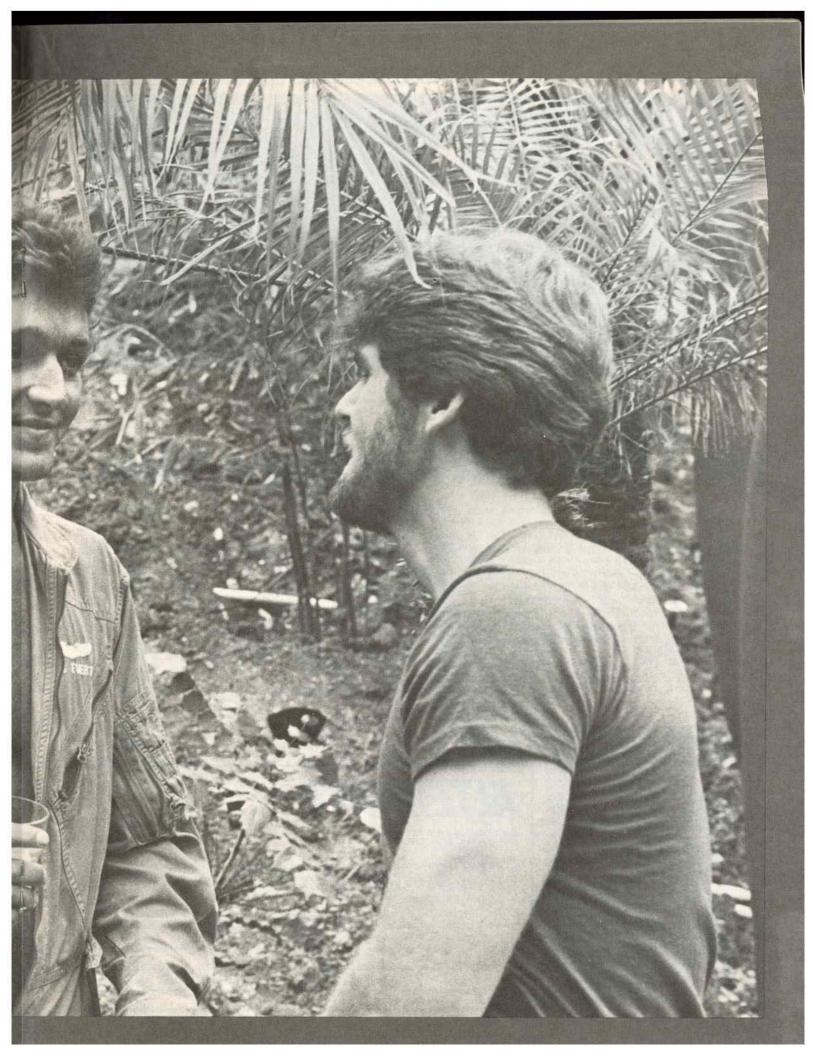


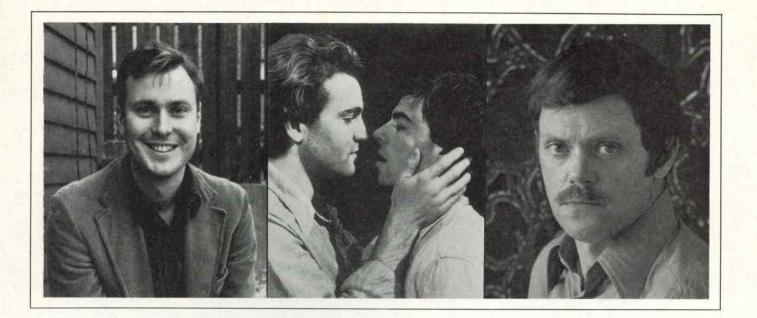
Anchoring one end of Santa Monica Blvd. is the Silver Lake section of Los Angeles. This neighborhood has recently gone through a gay population explosion that makes it a rival of Hollywood and West Hollywood as Los Angeles' major gay ghetto. Silver Lake now boasts the most popular bar in the entire Southland, Jungle. Decorated along a military motif, Jungle just celebrated its grand opening and was an immediate success. Launched by Bill Larkin, the owner of the Blue Parrot, Hollywood's most popular bar, Jungle has become the center of social life in Silver Lake and should be put on the "must see" list of any visitor to Los Angeles.





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# We Think GAY is Incredible!

Which is why you don't see a lot about non-gays in THE ALTERNATE. A lot of gay publications cover the entertainers, writers, muscians and celebrities that gays know and admire; but THE ALTERNATE would rather introduce you the constellation of incredible gay talent in the world.

We all know that whatever the profession, whatever the position — there is a gay aspect somewhere — from the arts to the sciences. And they think gay is incredible — and we think they deserve your attention.

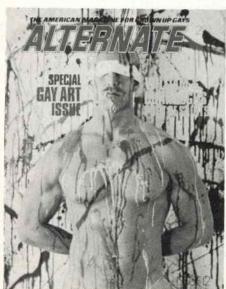
East issue of THE ALTERNATE presents yet another aspect of our world. In the past, we have looked at art, politics, literature, music, filmmaking and the legal system. In the

future, among other things, we are planning explorations in the sciences, sociology, photography, history — even the future itself. In short, anything and everything that affects your environment and culture as a gay man or woman.

Which is not to say that we ignore the rest of the world, but rather that we place the emphasis on the parts of the world that affect us as gays.

In addition, THE ALTERNATE regularly presents outstanding fiction, art, photography and theatre by the highly-creative gay men and women of the world.

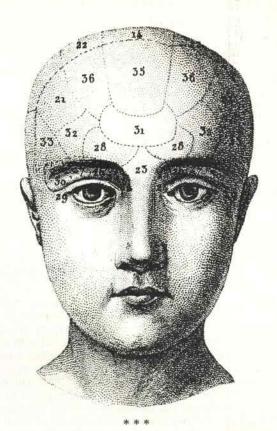
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# RAFFADALLI

#### The Fiction Contest Winner



By RON HARVIE

Raffadelli yanked himself up as high as he could and wrapped his legs around my ribs and squeezed so tight he quivered with the strain. I gripped both halves of his small hard ass: two cool suede-covered boulders. He said my chest muscles did fantastic things when I flexed them. I flexed them violently and bounced Raffadalli on my hands. He rubbed his cock up and down the scar under my left nipple, using my chest hair as a source of friction; and he dragged his balls like lawn-rollers. On each upstroke he gasped and his cockhead shone like a lightbulb. On the downstroke his breath escaped and he blurted out his fantasy a phrase at a time, like a vocal orgasm. How he wished he'd been there when my chest was cut. How he would have cradled me and stanched the blood with the shirt torn from his own body. How he would have kept that shirt, never ever washed, like a secret treasure. How after I was dead he would have slept in that shirt and come in it every night until he died too. His voice cracked as he arched wildly out into space, then he snapped back against me. Vibrating with release, he clutched my neck for dear life, finally collapsing at my feet, breathless. Slowly, a snaky grin crawled across his face: "Jackie Onassis still has the pink suit she wore in Dallas you know. It's in a box under her bed." I squatted down gripping my cock: "If you tell me she wears it late at night, I'll drown you Raffadalli." Wide-eyed and slack-jawed, he gasped. "Geary, how gross! What kind of sicko am I living with! Arrghh!" He collapsed again, this time laughing.

Raffadalli, crazy Raffadalli . .

I knew it. I knew if I took this job I'd end up mindlessly mooning about Raffadalli. But I figured it might work as some kind of exorcism: force me to face my dreams, stare them

down, bury them. It's not happening.

Yesterday: the southern peninsula of Haiti was Raffadalli's half-hard cock. Today: the islands of St. Lucia and St. Vincent are Raffadalli's balls, hanging one above the other instead of side by side. And this minute I've spotted Raffadalli's eyebrows in the Virgin Islands — one curved gracefully like St. Thomas, the other clumpy, split at its far end. The island of St. John: Raffadalli's quizzical off-center eyebrow. And all the time, lurking over it all is Florida, where Raffadalli is right now, Damn him.

My name is Claude Geary. Forty-four. Map-maker by trade. Some people insist on calling me "artist" but I insist right back on map-maker. And they usually don't argue with six-three, two-twenty-five looming over them. Still it's true alright: I am part artist. Even though I spent years studying the science of cartography — you had to be a scientist to get anywhere in the fifties — all I ever wanted to do was create beautiful portraits of the world. Which is what I do now. They say I'm the best map-maker in America — "a stunning artist in the purest sense of the word" according to one critic, who I later discovered was a short, straight bastard given to making cracks about "faggots" to the wrong people — like me — and leaving gallery parties fast on the advice of the right people — me again.

Right now, I'm working on the charts for a big, expensive coffee-table tome called 'The Spanish Main.' One of those Christmas-present books. These days, most of my income comes from decorating books, although. I still get nice fat royalties from poster sales of the Thirteen Colonies series — my Bicentennial project — and there's still the occasional private commission, like the incredible job I got last year from the Saudi Arabian Embassy for a map-mural for a reception room. In fact, that was what I was working on the night

Raffadalli appeared - damn it, there I go again.

No. Control. This is cool, calm Popes Creek, Charles County, Maryland, Not old downtown Washington, For 15 years I lived in Georgetown and worked at the National Geographic. My apartment and my job were both fulfillments of boyhood dreams, and I'd probably still be there, except. In 1968 they sent me to Houston for a course in the role of satellite-gathered data in modern cartography. My boss figured that exposure to all the NASA wizardry would curb the growing "artiness" in me. It did just the opposite: the first time I watched pictures of the earth flash on TV screens at the exact second they were being filmed ten thousand miles up, I got a hard-on so fast it hurt. There it was, the Atlantic coast of Brazil, great white weather systems swirling over the dappled brown land and out over the sea. The sea! I recall the popular new description of the Earth at that time: The Blue Planet. Blue? Calling the Earth "blue" is like calling the Hope Diamond "shiny." I pressed against the machinery to steady my-

#### THE CONTEST AND JUDGES

There were 16 finalists in The Alternate Fiction Contest, representing a wide range of writing styles and

ideas. The judges were:

Daniel Curzon, the author of Something You Do in the Dark, Revolt of the Perverts, The Misadventures of Tim McPick, and most recently, Among the Carnivores. Mr. Curzon edited Gay Literature and is a frequent contributor to The Alternate.

Lawrence Reh, the author of If I Could Crown Your Hill With Gold, is a former editor of The Advocate and

a frequent contributor to The Alternate.

Penni Kimmel, under various psuedonyms, has published scores of erotic gay novels. She is also a frequent contributor to *The Alternate*.

Raffadalli succeeds because it does one of the most difficult things a story can do — flesh out a kind of 'most memorable person I ever met' character. Usually writers don't convince the reader that the so-called super persons are really super or special or even interesting. But Ron Harvie manages, through excellent and original images, to capture the essence of the title character — and manages to bring the narrator to equally vivid life.

Daniel Curzon

The best entries were from writers who have a gut sense of what is basic to a good story: a good story. They are believable narratives about people real enough for us to recognize, flawed enough for us to care about them, strong enough for us to identify with them and learn and grow. Raffadalli is all of that and still inventive, still fresh. Reading it, I grinned and groaned, feared and frolicked, got a little hard with desire, and melted with empathy — not necessarily in that order. Though Ron Harvie didn't tie the tale off neatly at the end (thereby leaving destiny in my hands, in my mind) he did leave me satisfied. More I could not ask.

Lawrence Reh

Explicit sex, in our puritanized English, is supposed to be "socially redeemable," a cultural cents-off coupon used to purchase something of dubious virtue. Thus, when a story starts out with a fuck scene, however finely crafted, the temptation is to underrate the whole.

When you've gone back and back to a story and discovered that the libidinous interest is rife with id and ego, that it is not only freshly crafted but is also an integrated and consistent metaphor that frames the plot and characters with as much emotional significance as erotic stimuli, the temptation is then to overrate. You re-read with a wary eye.

When you have been coerced into working out your own fantasy through the author's imagery — who doesn't wish for the skill of recreating at will the (real, not Romaahntic) presence of an absent lover? — and it

still holds up . . .

When, finally, the tricky mechanisms of beginning/ ending inversions and actiondialogue coordination are not only successful but strike you after you've been quite satisfied . . . then you've got a winner and its name is "Raffadalli."

– Penni Kimmel

self and before I could stop, right there in an ice-cold room surrounded by short-haired straight men in short-sleeved white shirts, I came in my pants. Not only that, I whooped out loud; I realized I'd been right all my life. The Earth is a work of art, not a lab experiment. That color, that blue, proved it forever.

Back in Washington, I became a recluse. Every spare second I spent trying to match that blue in paint. But no oils, acrylics, inks, washes, no chalks even, gave me what I craved. I slaved and I swore. I didn't have sex for almost a month: unheard of. I smoked hash and swallowed pills, but all they showed me was how fast the cosmic revelations of one minute fade in the finger-pointing light of another. Finally: a loud "Screw it!" in the manly voice of a failure who'd cut off his balls for a lick of success.

Then I let two friends talk me into a trip to Morocco. It was supposed to be a two-week fuck-festival starring us three plus a cast of thousands of boys with Arabian stallion cocks. But: the first afternoon in Marrakesh, I strode off to stalk the market while my friends, suddenly conservative, cruised the hotel area. Surrounded by jabbering, tugging little people dressed in old sheets, I suddenly saw a flash out of the corner of one eye. Whirling, I spotted a man draped in blue. That blue! The blue-planet blue! I crashed through the growling crowd. I leapt to block his way. I fondled his clothes. To me the cloth felt sacred: I was possessed. He glared at me. I tried to indicate that he should come with me. He didn't understand, didn't want anything to do with me: I was crazy. In hopeless panic, I tried to rip his djellaba - right there, in a teeming foreign market, I was trying to pull a man's clothes off! At last, the man peeled off my twitching hands and grinned at me. He made a gesture: I was to follow him. He led me, drunk with mad desire, to a cluster of stalls and tents at the edge of the market. He bent and entered one - I had to crawl to follow. Pitch black. Suddenly, light flared from a flap in the roof: in the circle of sudden light, he stood stark naked. Naked and old: brown, wizened, knobby, old. The blue djellaba swirled like holy water around his ankles, but his lumpy cock and balls swung between his crumpled thighs like weathered seed pods on a dying tree. And he stank. I crouched to leave. He pulled a knife - thin, curved, shiny as a sliver of moon. He laughed at me with his flinty eyes: watch they said, it will end like this for you too, you will need a knife to open the way for your cock, someday you'll see.

He raped me and he was enormous. When he was done, he lay kneading fistfuls of my flesh in his crusty hands. In my daze, I wondered what it would be like to spend the rest of my life in a tent, a nomad. But at last, I moved to dress. I gazed glassily at the snarled blue cloth on the ground. This time, he understood. Crouched with his sticky cock wiping the dirt like a mop, he folded it neatly for me. Then he pointed at my T-shirt, my ancient Washington Redskins T-shirt. I peeled it

off again and gave it to him.

Away: all through the market and the streets of Marrakesh, silent, swaying people eyed me suspiciously. A huge, pink, half-naked man trotting like a kid and clutching a lump of wrinkled blue cloth: drugged, they must have decided. And I was. Drugged with blue-planet blue, bought and paid for.

At home, I washed it and pressed it, handling it like a fragile spider web. I hung it on my studio wall as my private

inspiration. My blue djellaba.

One morning shaving, I glanced casually out the bathroom window: I nicked my chin with the jolt. There, in my morning-glory garden, strolled a blue Moroccan. Raffadalli! Swishing around in my djellaba! "Grabby fucker!" I yelled as I tore downstairs into the yard. The towel around me dropped halfway across the lawn and I charged on bare-assed and hollering. He hooted and darted to the back of the house. He stopped to tease me with stupid nyah-nyah noises then ran down

the driveway where he thought I wouldn't dare go. I went. I grabbed him just before we hit the County road. I heaved him over my shoulder and bounced him back to the house. Squealing and giggling, he drowned out my cursing and he paddled my ass with a silly smacky sound that made him gag with laughter. In the morning-glory garden, he squirmed off me and tumbled to the grass. He rolled over and lay still in the sun. His eyes travelled over my naked, heaving form. Gently, he lifted the djellaba off over his head and sprawled bright as a pearl in a setting of blue-planet blue. He lifted and parted his legs. He displayed his anus: the sweet secret spot that had welcomed my tongue but never my cock. Sunshine lit the misty valley deep below his balls. He was the most beautiful man in the world.

"Fuck me" he said quietly, "Please fuck me, Geary."

I blinked in disbelief: it was the first time I'd ever heard Raffadalli say the word 'fuck.' In any context. He never talked like that, not even during sex. That makes him sound coy or limp: he wasn't. He would bury his face in my ass for what seemed like hours. He would suck me to the brink of orgasm five, six, seven times, not allowing me to come for wild eternities as his tongue swirled and spiraled over my aching cock. He would fuck me till I bawled. But he would just never talk about it. And he would never let my cock into him. I would carress and flatter and tease and yes, nag. But to no avail. And I gradually understood that when I could get him to talk about fucking, that's when he'd talk himself into it. So my encouragements and directions and corrections and congratulations became the tools that whittled and carved away slices of his silence: my words smoothed our lovemaking closer to perfection. At least, that's what I believed.

"Fuck me, Geary" he whispered again, arching his long, hard body. The words hung in the air like a threat I didn't understand, a threat I ignored as I dove deep into the dazzling flesh on the blinding djellaba. This time, at last, I was the silent partner while he purred, growled, roared "I love you

love you love you Claude Claude Claude!"

Afterwards: cock twitching, blood vessels pulsing in doubletime, rivulets of sweat sparkling over his belly, he lay spent. I leaned on my trembling elbow and watched. He opened one eye and cocked an eyebrow.

"Why so serious, Geary? This is heaven."

"Well, now that you've asked me to fuck you, you'll want to ask others." My voice sounded dead.

His assen area dishared in the sun

His green eyes flickered in the sun. A faraway look wasn't quite erased by a Raffadalli smile. He buried his face in my wet chest hair and breathed several times. "No."

"Yes." Now I was shaking hard, so I pretended to be laughing. "And like we used to say during The War, loose lips sink ships!" Inside my head, I saw clearly a terrible sentence being written: success is the first step towards failure.

\* \* \*

Blue Djellaba: that's the legal name of my color. Concocted by a lab in New Jersey, it cost me a bundle but it was worth it. And I own the registered name too. So every time I use the color, I feel like an old aristocrat puffing on his private tobacco blend — while armies of filthy peasants rage for the right to slit his throat. Now, that's a typically bizarre thought. My mind has always been prone to weird twists. Just like my maps. Quirky: a river will wind a thousand miles to the sea, flowing north then suddently east, south then wildly west on its journey. A coastline will jut and jog in a rhythm too intricate to follow then suddenly straighten to a strand of beach too simple to be true. One border slashes across the land heedless of all barriers, while another frontier is sheer logic itself. Islands clot at one end of a lake leaving the other end clear as air. Tiny neat Nepal scrunches between calm China and

sloppy India. The Americas are joined by a frayed thread of half-forgotten republics. And all of it, the whole thing, is subject to change without notice! Wonderful! What pure sense! A map is the perfect explanation of the mad whimsy of life. And I never tire of it.

The Spanish Main again: my 'sunken Treasure' map is going to be a double fold-out page: it takes space to show where all the gold-crazed conquistadors became shark food. The thumb of Yucatan, the razor-sharp curve of Cuba, the snares of the Bahamas. And worst of all, the Florida Keys, strewn along the shipping lane like galleon-eating alligators.

The waters I'll wash in Blue Djellaba blue, of course. Cuba will be rough tobacco brown. And the Keys a murky mangrove green — although Raffadalli says the only paint they use in Key West is instant-peeling white. Raffadalli lives there now. He's working in an Italian restaurant. Waiting.

He's been there since he left me.

The first time I mentioned getting out the yellow backpack, he dismissed the idea with a snort: Geary, you can't have that big, expensive beef in the freezer all to your fat self!

The second time it was: Geary, those awful people from Washington are coming next weekend and you need all the moral support you can get!

Number three was a little shakier: Geary, Loudon invited

me to the gallery opening too, remember?"

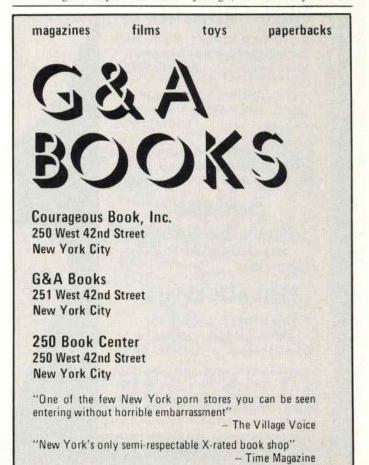
Finally the fourth time, I shook his shoulders and my eyes stung. "Raffadalli, you're going to leave me sometime —"

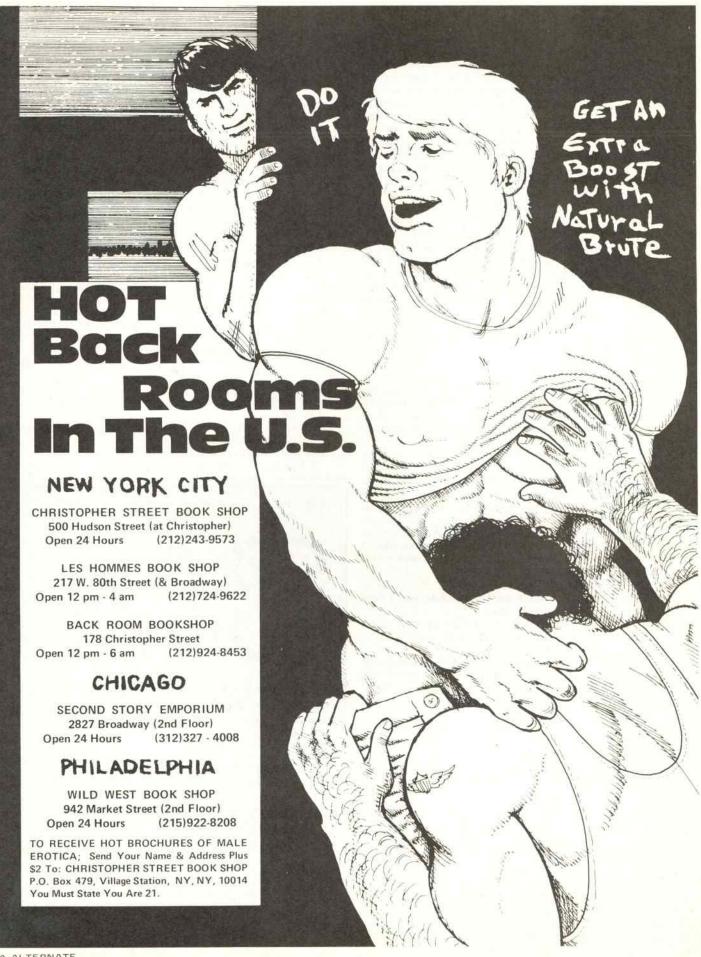
"No Geary!"

"- and I'd rather it be now while I'm still young enough - ha - to stand the shock."

His whole body clenched like a fist.

"I figure maybe the sooner you go, the sooner you'll be





back. Does that make any sense Raffadalli?"

He shook his head tightly - or did he just shake?

"This old hulk wants you back, you know. That's why you've got to go. To be able to come back on your own steam.

"I came here on my own steam the first time." His voice sounded like wind through a crack.

"By accident, Raffadalli, I want you back by choice."

Dead silence.

"Tell me you understand. Please, Raffadalli."

But he couldn't answer: he would have drowned in the

That's the story of me and Raffadalli. Except how it all

happened in the first place.

Last May 8, it rained like hell all day and into the night. Around eleven o'clock, while I was still in the studio working on my Saudi Arabia project, something banged on the front porch. A fallen branch I figured, then I heard it again: somebody pounding on my door. Probably just old Loudon with this week's who's-fucking-who-in-Washington gossip but what a night to pick to drive! I opened the door a foot.

"Is this the way to the bridge to Virginia?" The voice came from something that looked like a cross between a scarecrow and a leaky hose. Water dripped off every rat-tail of hair, off a limp mustache. It ran down an exposed hairless washboard chest. It soaked into baggy shorts and dripped off them down ropy legs into soggy gray hiking socks. A lumpy yellow backpack sat in its own puddle beside a pair of big, booted feet.

"It's the way if you're not in a hurry" I laughed, "but you

should have stayed on Route 301.

He slapped a rain-sodden handful of paper against his shiny thigh. "Why can't anyone draw an accurate map anyway!" He looked over his shoulder at the weather. "Do you have a garage where I could sleep over?" he asked flatly.

"No. Sorry."

"O.K. thanks. Have a nice night." He heaved himself together and dropped off the porch with a splash. The rain drummed mercilessly on his yellow pack.

I watched. I swallowed. It was late at night, Cold and stormy. I was forty-four and alone. Even he was worth a shot. "Hey - there's a room inside. You'll drown before you hit the highway.

As if he'd expected my offer, he turned and walked into my house and stood dripping carelessly on the hall rug. I was just about to change my invitation to "fuck off" when he stuck out a pale hand.

"The name's Raffadalli, Donald Raffadalli, from Boston."

We shook.

In the bright inside light, I examined my midnight stray. Hair: brown, thin, badly cut. Mustache: a joke. His cheeks were concave and pricked with not-so-old acne scars. Although he was at least six feet, he weighed in at 140 tops. Painful. And the veins on his arms and legs looked added-on, like Tudor timbering on a house. I had to stifle a sneer.

I found an old brown robe in the spare john and tossed it to him. He peeled off his ruined shirt and slid into the dry

terrycloth.

"Pants too, Donald" I said like a tired parent.

"O.K. but there's just one thing" he said, sliding his shorts off under the robe. Hell yes, I thought, here it comes: the old

nothing-personal-but routine.

He looked me straight in the eye. "For the record, my name is Donough, not Donald." He spelled it out then kept on tałking, more to himself than to me, while his eyes scanned the house around him. "My mother has this thing about Ireland, an obsession. Poor ma. Finally got to go two years ago. First night in Dublin, she gets food poisoning and has to fly home flat out in the aisle of a Pan Am jet. Didn't faze her though - she's still nuts about Ireland. Poor ma. But I came out ahead in the Irish name sweepstakes. My sister got stuck with Mayourneen - Mayourneen Raffadalli, are you ready?"

I gasped in disbelief. He shook his hair like a wet mutt. "Why am I telling you all this? And why are you listening?" He flopped in one of my living room sofas. The huge robe on his skinny frame made him look like a collapsed terrycloth pup-tent. "Is this where I sleep?" He spoke as if he deserved to be in my house. I thought he might well bark out an order for food. He annoyed me.

"In this house most people sleep upstairs in a bed" I said

thinly, suddenly wishing I'd phrased it differently.

He looked at me again. He had a powerful stare for such a scruffy kid. "Another thing," he said, "if that's the price of a room around here, I'll go find another inn."

"If you're trying to tell me you're straight" I said icily, "relax - nobody's perfect. And I didn't ask you to sleep in one particular bed, did I?"

"No? Well I guess I just misinterpreted the way you've been eyeing me ever since you opened the door." He was taunting me in my own house. My neck burned.

"Guess so" I said loudly, as if my audience was stadiumsized. "You see, I've never seen a body that scrawny and

lumpy, that's all.

His face went dead as a mask, "I know what I look like thanks." He stood and walked quickly upstairs. I heard the bathroom door shut, click, lock. Water ran. I suddenly wondered if he was crying. I gulped a guilty throat. Then I lectured myself: smart-ass kid, that'll teach him. And then: Geary you old pig.

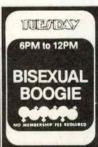
First light in the morning: him standing by my bed. He was



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OPEN 7:00 A.M. to MIDNIGHT DAILY FEATURING: BROWN'S B&D SPECIAL ROAST BEAST SPECIAL AND OTHER HOUSE FETISHES dressed - at least, he was covered in clumps of cloth - and his pack sagged across his big orange boots. "Thanks for the hospitality.'

'Any time.'

"One question. Did you ever play football? In school?"

"Some. Why?

"Thought so." His eyes looked past me. "It must be great to be able to plow straight guys into the mud. Me, I always took the plowing.'

This double revelation at 6 in the morning stunned me momentarily. Then - maybe it was the too-clever retaliation, maybe it was just the dawn - I continued excitedly. "The best part is that they admire you for hitting them. The harder you slam, the bigger hero you are." And inside my head: sorry I plowed you last night.

"Yeah. Well thanks again for the bed. See you around." He disappeared downstairs. The front door opened and shut.

I got up and watched him walk away. The pack made him lurch clumsily and its weight seemed to buckle his sapling legs at every step. I opened the window, "Hey Raffadalli - did you eat anything?"

He turned and shrugged.

"You'll never make the highway if you don't, kid."

We sat on the side porch and ate in silence. He looked around the property. Finally, he spoke. "This place is a mess." "What the hell do you know?"

"My uncle's a landscaper. I work summers." "No! Not an Italian gardener!" I laughed.

He fixed me with his strange stare.

"Sorry. You seem to bring out the bitch in me."

"Like the garden brings out the slob?"
"Fuck you Raffadalli!" And then I went on recklessly. "How much would you cost to tame this jungle?"

"Me?" he hooted, "forget it. I'm travelling, baby."

"Even you need money to pay for some things" I sneered. "How about twenty bucks a day here?"

He tossed his head derisively. "Fifty minimum."

"How many days work do you figure it?"

"Oh two. Maybe three" he answered and quickly pretended he hadn't said anything.

"O.K. You're on."

"Hey - wait a minute -"

"Deal or no deal, Raffadalli?"

So all day as I worked in my studio, Raffadalli savaged the yard, clashing and ripping and gouging and burning. From time to time he'd shout up "Geary where's the pitchfork?" to time he'd shout up "Geary where's the pitchfork?" or "Geary why are you torturing your rhododendroms?" or "Geary does the government pay you to run a weed farm?" And I'd look down and swear at him and then watch for a minute as the kid, dressed only in worn-out shorts and sweatsocks and ridiculous boots, knotted every ropy muscle with his work. Outside, he shone with sweat, while inside, I fussed over the dry details of the coast of the Persian Gulf. I began to envy him. And I wished he liked me better too.

He worked on and on. All day, even after dinner. Finally in the dark, I heard him plod upstairs and wash and brush and shut himself in the guest room. With not so much as a snide

"Good-night Geary."

I sat calmly at my drawing board for several minutes contemplating the vast, calm Arabian deserts. And then I went nuts. That's the only explanation: temporary insanity. I flung all my clothes on the studio floor. I seized up my steel straight-edge: my hand demanded something to throttle.

I bashed open the guest room door and loomed over the bed waving my cock and my weapon: it was ludicrous but I couldn't stop. He blinked at me, half-smiling, half-cringing. I ripped back the sheets. "So you do have a cock! Well let's see if it works!" My words hissed through my chilly teeth.

"There's no one else here, is there?" he asked softly.

"You're on your own Raffadalli. Fuck or fight!" "No - I mean you live here by yourself don't you?"

Everything inside me was pounding like a thousand jackhammers and he was talking like a patient nurse. I felt suddenly cold and inexplicably vulnerable.

"So what!" I shouted, trying to regain the offensive.

"Geary, people who live alone are failures."

Now I was an old Moroccan. But I didn't rape him. Technically.

Now, it's another May. Raffadalli and I are both beside the Spanish Main: him in person, me via my drawing-board. A nice touch. Raffadalli would appreciate that. He'd like the work I'm doing now too, not to mention the money. Well, some day he'll see it - then again, maybe not. I'm not holding my breath. Or punishing myself anymore either. I'm over all that regret business now: I've even had a few hunks down here for weekends. Things are going very well. Except, the garden's a little tired-looking: it's been so dry here lately and I've been so busy ...

So. Eleven o'clock. Quit time.

And - is that rain I hear?

Hell, it's pouring. Deluging.

Sheets of the stuff, cats and dogs of it.

But of course. Why am I surprised?

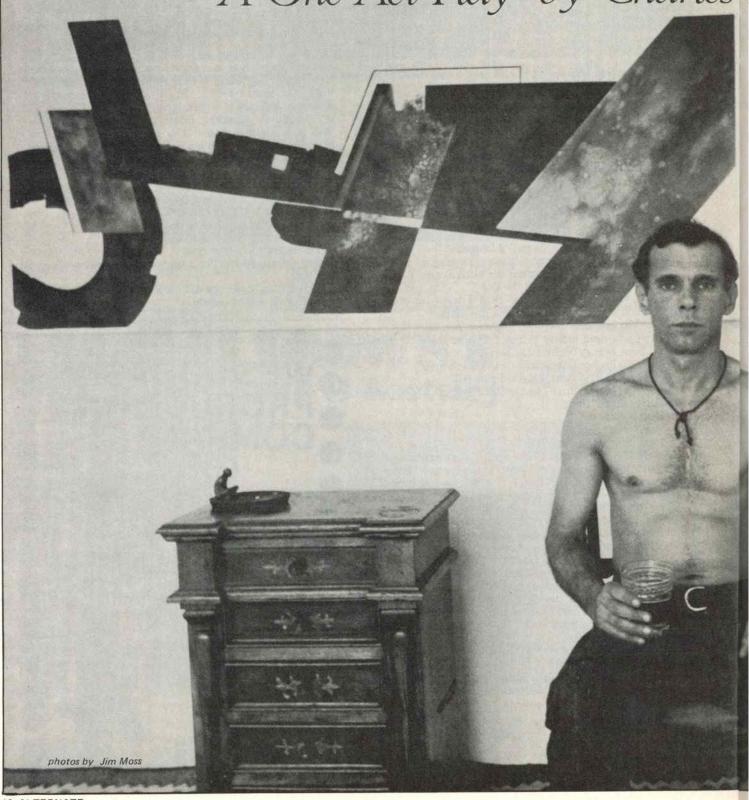
He always was a smart-ass.

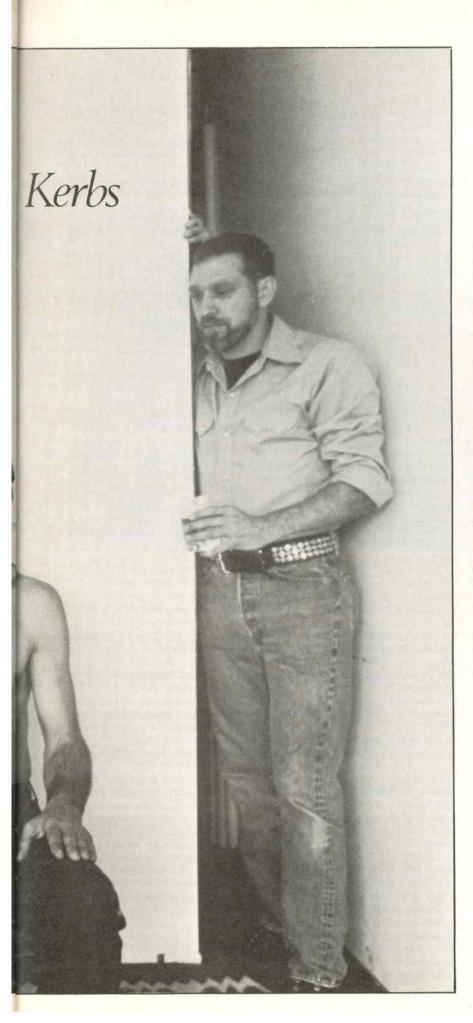
Only he would wait for a rainy night in May.

Better bring down the old brown robe I keep by the bed. Raffadalli will be soaked.

EST COAST Where the Southern California men go to dance 1845 HANCOCK ST. SAN DIEGO CALIFORNIA

# CHARLES' FACE, JOHN A One Act Play by Charles





SCENE: An apartment in the West 60's, off of Central Park. One large room with a large window, a small bedroom off right, a kitchenette and bath next to each other off left. There is a sofa center, a large table by the window with two chairs beside it. The entrance is across the room from the window. It is early afternoon. Two men enter; they are in their late twenties or early thirties. Although there are slight physical differences the men look strangely alike. They are John and Charles.

CHARLES: Sit down. Would you like a drink?

JOHN: What do you have?

CHARLES: Gin and tonic would be cool-

ing. Scotch?
JOHN: What kind?
CHARLES: Chevas Regal.
JOHN: Fine.

CHARLES: Soda?
JOHN: Ice and water, Expensive taste,
CHARLES: From a penny pocket?

JOHN: Pardon?

CHARLES: Nothing. Its the only scotch

I really like.
JOHN: It's good.
CHARLES: I like it.
JOHN: What do you pay?
CHARLES: For the scotch?
JOHN: How much is your rent?

CHARLES: Oh. 165.

JOHN: That's not bad; it's a big room.

CHARLES: It's big enough for one.
There's a smaller room.

JOHN: Utilities included? CHARLES: Yes.

JOHN: Been here long?

CHARLES: About a year and a half. Here's your scotch.

JOHN: Thank you. (Charles sits on the sofa with his drink.) It's really very nice

CHARLES: Gets a little hot this time of year. There was a large tree right outside the window but the people who bought the building across the way cut it down.

JOHN: That was stupid.

CHARLES: Yes, it was really quite beautiful. Imagine cutting down a full grown tree in New York. I just came home one evening and it was gone.

JOHN: Well what could you do?

CHARLES: You'd think the laws of conservation might somehow be applied to cities. True it's not the same thing as a forest or state park, but plants do supply the oxygen and God knows we need some protection.

JOHN: You like plants?

CHARLES: Yes.

JOHN: You don't have any.

CHARLES: I don't have much luck with them. I can't seem to keep them longer than a week or two, then they — die.

JOHN: Yeah, No pets either? CHARLES: No. I had a cat but . . .

JOHN: She died too?

CHARLES: No, she ran away.

JOHN: Oh, (pause)

CHARLES: Do you have any?

JOHN: What?

CHARLES: Plants or pets?

JOHN: No plants. A dog. It's a very large dog. Well it isn't large yet but it will be soon. It's six months old. I've always been a dogman. Always had dogs. My family had dogs. They're not very hard to keep. It's the training that's important. You've got to get them trained immediately; otherwise, they run all over you. They get spoiled, ugly, wilful, vicious. They begin to mistrust you. They become sullen and if it's a very large dog, say a possibly dangerous dog like a Doberman, a Great Dane, or a Police Dog . . . A German Sheppard, they sometimes turn on you. You've got to always keep in mind with a large dog that they are carnivorous; meat eaters; flesh eaters.

CHARLES: What kind is yours? JOHN: A Danish Police Dog. CHARLES: I hope it's trained.

JOHN: Oh, yes indeed, yes indeed. You wouldn't believe this...

CHARLES: I might.

JOHN: Huh?

CHARLES: Go on.

JOHN: The dog . . .

CHARLES: Doesn't it have a name yet? JOHN: It's not an it; it's a he. He doesn't have a name yet.

CHARLES: Strange.

JOHN: What's strange about it? I don't think it's strange. I said he doesn't have a name yet. That doesn't mean he never will.

CHARLES: You're right. Go on. I'm sorry I interrupted you. You were talking about his training, and I wouldn't believe it. Believe what?

JOHN: Yeah, well I sent him to training school. He's only two months old but he's growing very fast. He's had special training. He's the perfect watchdog. Like when I go to bed . . . I keep a low socket light next to the bed . . .

CHARLES: I do that too. I leave a small light on in the kitchen.

JOHN: Yeah, well, I leave it on for when I get up in the middle of the night, when I need to piss. I can't really wake up, fully you know? And it's nice for sex and things. Anyway, I watch this dog, six months old, he goes from room to room checking, to make sure everything's okay. After he makes his rounds, he plops down at the foot of the bed, his ears up. He even sleeps on the alert — ears up. I've never seen those ears relax; even when I pet his head, up on the alert.

CHARLES: Room to room? JOHN: Yep, room to room. CHARLES: That's some training.

JOHN: That's not all. He's trained to attack. You ought to feel the tension

on the chain when I walk him. Fantastic! The other day a kid came running down the street, I felt his whole body stiffen - the dog's - then relax. I thought that was all there was to it so I let it go. Well, this kid comes running by, he passes us and the dog goes into action. He just reached out for the kid, like I reach out for this drink. As natural as that. Pluck! Just like that. He grabbed the back of the kid's pant's leg and he snaps his head back. The kid was thrown backward onto the sidewalk. Then the dog went for him. Well, I pull him up tight on the choker - neat trick, huh!

CHARLES: A six month old puppy threw a kid down on the sidewalk?

JOHN: That's what makes it neat. It was like a judo trick. Size against knowledge. You should have seen it; it was really impressive.

CHARLES: I'll bet the kid was impressed.

JOHN: No, just surprised; he wasn't hurt.

CHARLES: Lucky kid.

JOHN: No, no, I had the dog on choker — he would have killed himself if he tried to pull against that choker.

CHARLES: Himself or some . . .

JOHN: Oh, you're taking it all wrong. You didn't like that story, I can tell.

CHARLES: It's not that.

JOHN: You're the sensitive type, right? CHARLES: It's just the thought of training something as innocent as a puppy, to... attack.

JOHN: You don't like violence?

CHARLES: Not exactly. JOHN: Where you from? CHARLES: Philadelphia.

JOHN: Un huh.

CHARLES: You mean it still shows?

JOHN: Un huh.

CHARLES: Are you a native New Yorker? JOHN: No, Florida. Mind if I take my tee-shirt off?

CHARLES: Are you warm? I could turn the air conditioner on?

JOHN: No, I just want to take my shirt off; get comfortable. Do you mind? (he takes it off.)

CHARLES: No, of course not. I thought it was cool enough. I could turn the air con . . .

JOHN: I'm fine now. (He stretches)
That feels better. It's too small for me
but it looks good, and it's good
enough for a stroll through the park
on Sunday.

CHARLES: Yeah.

JOHN: Any scotch left?

CHARLES: Sure. (He rises, crosses to John, reaches for the glass. They stand close for a moment, aware of each other. Charles turns away, starts to the bar, turns back) You have a very nice physique.

JOHN: Yeah? You a sportsman?

CHARLES: (John goes to the window, passing his hand over his chest, Charles

makes the drink.) Only in front of the TV.

JOHN: Did you see the Met's game last Saturday?

CHARLES: No.

JOHN: Didn't miss much. Hey! Some broad's taking a shower; very nice. (Charles crosses with John's drink.)

CHARLES: Your drink. (He looks out) JOHN: Thanks.

CHARLES: Oh yeah, that's Ruth.

JOHN: Not bad. Does she do that often with the window open like that?

CHARLES: All the time.

JOHN: You ever take her up on the hint?

CHARLES: No, I like her girlfriend better – Shirell.

JOHN: Her roommate?

CHARLES: No, girlfriend. (He leans out the window) Hey, Ruthie, send Shirell to the shower. I got a guest. Yeah, he wants to see the real beauty of the family.

JOHN: What she say?

CHARLES: She said fuck me. She pulled the curtain. Up tight dyke!

JOHN: Dyke? How do you know?

CHARLES: We used to put shows on for each other.

JOHN: We?

CHARLES: (Embarassed) My girlfriend and me – when I first moved in. But that's a silly story.

JOHN: Tell me.

CHARLES: It would bore you. It's silly anyway.

JOHN: Come on, tell me. I told you about my dog.

CHARLES: That's not the same thing.

JOHN: Isn't it?

CHARLES: I mean . . .

JOHN: Tell me.

CHARLES: No, we don't know each other well enough for true confessions. JOHN: How are we going to get to know

each other at all then?

CHARLES: Listen, can we drop it. I really don't want to discuss it. I'm sorry I brought it up.

JOHN: I'm beginning to think you know something about violence you don't want to admit.

CHARLES: What do you mean?

JOHN: You know how to provoke it.

CHARLES: What?

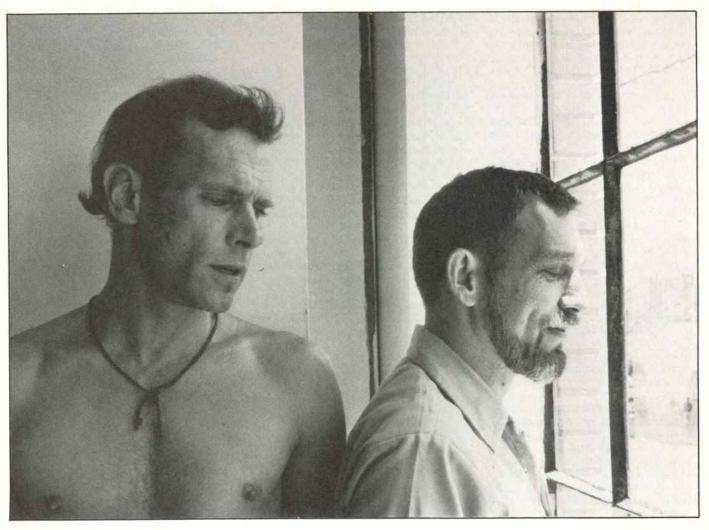
JOHN: You've made me angry. I've know you just this short time and you've made me angry. What do you think? (Turns back to the window) You think they'll put a show on for us?

CHARLES: (Coming over to John and the window) No, she's pulled the curtain. I'm sorry, I know that's an unforgiveable thing to do . . . start a story and then not finish it.

JOHN: Don't apologize Charles, just tell me the story.

CHARLES: That's the only way to amend the situation, isn't it?

JOHN: I'm not interested in amends, Charles, just the story.



CHARLES: (Pause) Well, like I was saying, when I first moved in here it was summer . . . No, it must have been spring because we didn't know how hot this place could get.

JOHN: The weather?

CHARLES: Yes, well summer. We didn't know how bad it could get. We got the air conditioner the following summer.

JOHN: A friend of mine swears the West side is cooler. He swears to it. Says he can feel the difference. He can feel the difference as he crosses the park from East to West. Do you believe that?

CHARLES: No, I can attest to how miserably hot it gets over here — on the West side.

JOHN: Attest. Attest. You don't hear words like that too often these days.

CHARLES: You don't want to hear the story now, do you?

JOHN: Oh, yes. I do. I didn't mean to interrupt you. I'm sorry, go ahead. You have my complete attention now. Do you mind if I sit here by the window?

CHARLES: No.

JOHN: Now, your story.

CHARLES: Oh, well it's not really much of a story. One day we saw one of the girls taking a shower. Actually I saw her. Well . . .

JOHN: Was it Ruthie?

CHARLES: I don't remember, no, it was Sherril. The curtain across the window was open; it was summer, very hot. You know how humid a bathroom can get in the summer with the shower on. I was watching her.

JOHN: She's the beauty you said. CHARLES: Yes, that's what I said. JOHN: Why are you getting testy?

CHARLES: You're the one that's being testy. You, you keep checking what I say against what you remember my saying.

JOHN: That annoys you?

CHARLES: Well, I don't find it particularly amusing.

JOHN: You're right. It's a habit. I do it with everyone I know. I don't know why I do it. I'm really unaware of it most of the time. You have a right to

be annoyed.

CHARLES: I'm not annoyed. It's just that I'd like to finish this stupid story.

JOHN: Okay.

CHARLES: Well, Ruthie came into the bathroom; she joined Sherril in the shower; they had sex. Or rather, they started having sex. I called Janet. We were both fascinated. They saw us and drew the curtain. Ruthie drew it,

that's it, but Sherril opened it again. She's really quite funny.

JOHN: This is embarassing you?

CHARLES: Yes. Yes, it is. JOHN: Don't let it.

CHARLES: It's rather personal.

JOHN: I mean, don't tell me then, if you really don't want to tell someone something, don't. The only real problem here is that we don't know how to get comfortable with each other, right? Right?

CHARLES: Right. JOHN: Charles CHARLES: Yes?

JOHN: No, I'm just saying your name. That's a nice thing isn't it? Using someone else's name, isn't it? Charles. Charles, it's almost beautiful in a way. Charles, do you hear it?

CHARLES: I hear it all too often at the office.

JOHN: That's not what I meant. I say that sound, Charles . . . I say the sound Charles and it reaches for you. We take it all for granted don't we? Yet I know, I'm aware that when I say that sound, Charles, I'm reaching you — and you respond to it; you respond to that, Charles, with all that you consider you know is Charles. For me I call just a name, Charles, but to you,

it summons all you know as yourself. Isn't that strange? It works the same way when you say my name, you know.

CHARLES: Yeah, I guess it does. JOHN: You're avoiding me again.

CHARLES: Why do you come at me as if you're expecting something? You want to have us get comfortable? That doesn't make me comfortable. Let's just relax.

(A pause)

JOHN: What did you do today? CHARLES: I went to the park. JOHN: I mean before that.

CHARLES: (Slowly, as though thinking, for facts) I slept late.

JOHN: 10 - 12 - ?

CHARLES: Not that late. Nine-thirty is plenty late for me.

JOHN: You have to be to work early, huh?

CHARLES: I didn't work today. Today's Sunday. Oh, I see, yes, I get up about seven-thirty weekdays.

JOHN: Where do you work?

CHARLES: Seventyth Avenue and Sixty-Seventh Street. Bookends, it's a chain.

JOHN: I've been in there. I never saw you.

CHARLES: You wouldn't have.
JOHN: Oh, yes. I'm very observant.
CHARLES: No, I mean, I'm in the base-

ment. I'm a stock clerk, JOHN: Does it pay well?

CHARLES: It's okay. Say, what is this?

JOHN: You relaxing?

CHARLES: (Smiling) Yes, I am. What do you do?

JOHN: Everything. CHARLES: Seriously.

JOHN: Seriously. I've read water meters for the Broadway Water Control and Safety Company. I've been a top New York photographer's representative. You heard of Burt Stone?

CHARLES: Everybody knows his work.

JOHN: They do now. I've toured with the national company of "My Fair Lady" in the chorus. Delivered magazines to news stands, emptied garbage cans, washed dishes, managed restaurants.

CHARLES: A man of many talents.

JOHN: Yes, oh yes, jack-off of all trades, you might say.

CHARLES: Sounds like a man searching for something.

JOHN: Been in the Marines, the Merchant Marines, been to Macao, New Zealand, been everywhere, done everything.

CHARLES: And.

JOHN: And?

CHARLES: And what did you find, if anything? It sounds like a leading question.

JOHN: It is. I don't mind, I like it. I can feel you relaxing clear across the room. What I found was...

CHARLES: The meaning of life.

JOHN: (Smiling) Relaxed and even bold.

CHARLES: The Scotch.

JOHN: Bottled bravery. It's good enough. I am even beginning to detect a sense of humor.

CHARLES: Oh, I'm funny to a great many people.

JOHN: With a twist of irony.

CHARLES: No, forgive me. I didn't mean to side track your life story.

JOHN: You have, Charlie, you have done just that and I don't mind. Not a bit. I'm even beginning to like you, Charlie

CHARLES: Charles, please.

JOHN: Fine, Charles.

CHARLES: And what do you mean like? JOHN: Just that,

CHARLES: I mean, there are likes and there are likes.

JOHN: The more we find out about each other will qualify that won't it?

CHARLES: (Confused) Yes, I suppose. JOHN: You been married, Charles?

CHARLES: No, John, I have not been married. And what has that got to do with liking me?

JOHN: You look married.

CHARLES: What the hell does that mean?

JOHN: You have a quality about you that says you have a lot of things settled about yourself.

CHARLES: Well that's true. A lot of me has been settled, whether by myself or others. What does that matter anyway?

JOHN: What do you think?

CHARLES: I — think it matters. I know what I think. I asked what you think. What do you think?

JOHN: I think it matters.

CHARLES: Well it does and it . . . but we're talking about me again, and that's half scotch. How did you do that? How did we get on me again? What about you? What do you do, what are you doing?

JOHN: What work do I do? I don't work. I'm not working at the moment,

unemployed.

CHARLES: What are you looking for; in all your restlessness, what did you want?

JOHN: One thing at a time. Now, what was I searching for? I never knew; eventually I discovered that movement alone wasn't a search, and today I was looking for you.

CHARLES: Me?

JOHN: And there you were, standing by the fountain, drinking a coke and eating a pretzel. I watched you for a while. I liked the way you ate the pretzel and followed the crowds with your eyes and I said, "This is a man who wants to talk to one of these people," so . . . CHARLES: You came up and said,

CHARLES: You came up and said, "Want another pretzel? I'll buy." The "I'll buy" got me. I must have looked starved.

JOHN: No. (Pause) No. you looked -

excited.

CHARLES: Did I?

JOHN: Yes. (Turns back to the window) They're gone. Last night I went downtown to the Village, it was the usual circus on Eighth Street. But I saw this chick, about five-feet-four-inches tall and weighed about one-forty. I figure she was 20, 21 years old. She had blond stringy hair and pink, pink skin and when she moved, she moved (Turns) everything bounced, shook like crazy, but her skin was real pink and tight and very, very healthy looking. She was hopping along the street all dressed up, or kind of undressed up, she had on this knit white mini dress and no underwear. You could see, course you could see right through this white knit dress. You could see her dark pink nipples and her triangle shadow - oh man, she looked fabulous! She bustled the whole street with that walk of hers; it was like she was coming from a great fuck, the greatest, hot and clean and moving on to the next, greater and hotter. She made me think of the National Anthem just before a ballgame, when everybody's just got to standup and salute the flag. You should have seen her. She moved everything. And at the same time made you think of what your body smells like when the sweat mingles with a freshly washed shirt. You should have seen her.

CHARLES: She made quite an impression on you.

JOHN: She made an impression on everybody. I followed her down the street. She ducked into one of those clip joints. She was great looking. What'd your girl look like?

CHARLES: Quiet.

JOHN: Quiet? I don't understand?

CHARLES: What?

JOHN: A quiet girl that puts on sex shows for the neighborhood dykes?

CHARLES: Yes. Well maybe I don't mean quiet . . . confident.

JOHN: Confident? What a fine word. Confident. How nice it is to feel confident about something. She was confident. Do you have any music?

CHARLES: A radio.

JOHN: Radio. No records, no favortie kind of music?

CHARLES: No, I don't like music.

JOHN: Hump. Not any kind?

CHARLES: Just what I hear on the radio. Whatever's on, you know. Would you

Whatever's on, you know. Would you like me to turn the radio on?

JOHN: No, thank you. (He sits) Is she

JOHN: No, thank you. (He sits) Is she pretty?

CHARLES: Janet? JOHN: Yes, Janet.

CHARLES: Janet is very, very pretty; even beautiful.

JOHN: Even beautiful?

CHARLES: Yes.

JOHN: Charles, you're beautiful too. (Charles laughs embarassed) You are. Men are beautiful too. I once spent an evening with an Arab poet in Morroco. He was a very great admirer of men. We sat outside a cafe all evening watching people go past and as we drank he spoke to me, telling me about the men he had loved.

CHARLES: Loved? Physically loved?

JOHN: Oh yes, physically. We sat and drank and he would point to a passing man and describe the man in the most extraordinary way. Every man as he described him, no matter how plain he appeared to me, the poet made me see each man with a particular physical quality that I had overlooked or actually had never ever looked for before. He read a man's body as men read women. There was a kind of magic about it. When he turned his large eyes on me, large brown eyes, full of his frightening magic, so that when he looked at me again I knew what a woman feels when a man looks at her. (He laughs low)

CHARLES: Sounds disturbing.

JOHN: Yes, but a little exciting too. It was the first time I ever experienced the complete doubt of my body, that and one other time when I was trapped by a fire in the ship's hole.

CHARLES: Sounds like you've had quite

JOHN: (Stretching and patting his stomach) Yep, it's been okay.

CHARLES: Traveled the whole world? JOHN: Most of it.

CHARLES: Where haven't you been? JOHN: Inside another human heart.

CHARLES: What?

JOHN: (Laughs) I haven't been to Greenland. Never made it. Can't see how I missed it, so damned big, but missed it I did.

CHARLES: Travel fascinates me.

JOHN: It does most people. You should. Unattached, still young, the world's a terrific place Charles, something very special.

CHARLES: John. JOHN: Yes, Charles.

CHARLES: Have you ever been to Africa?

JOHN: Yes Charles, I have. The Ivory Coast, Senegal, very beautiful. (The shadows have become dark in the room. There is a long pause between the two men)

JOHN: (Rises) I'm going Charles.

CHARLES: I . . .
JOHN: Yes Charles.
CHARLES: John . . .
JOHN: What is it Charles?
CHARLES: I'm frightened.

JOHN: Yes, Charles. I know; it's too bad.

CHARLES: I...

JOHN: You want me to guess at it. Is that it Charles? No guesses. I know. (Pause) There are a lot of people like you in the world Charles. You would do it if you could only get someone to take the blame; if it were some-

thing I did to you instead of something you wanted. Right? It's alright Charles, you're not alone, only this time.

CHARLES: It's dispicable isn't it?

JOHN: It's not even that. It's just sad. No, it's not sad, it's just the way it is. (He starts)

CHARLES. Don't go John. I'm relaxed now. It's been so nice talking to a total stranger like this. Very curious behavior for me. I'm usually so, reticent. Reticent, another seldom heard word.

JOHN: Yes, it's a good word.

CHARLES: This morning when I was shaving, I started looking at my face. You ever do that? Really look at your face? It's hideous. A hellish experience. All those pores, with hair growing out of them. I usually try to avoid really looking at my face in the morning, up close anyway. But this morning I couldn't put it off any longer. I looked so closely, I got up so close to the mirror I couldn't recognize the ugly bastard. The fucking thing had a million ugly little holes in it with a million mean, stubby little black hairs growing out of it. Disgusting, God, what a horrible sight. He tried to smile, poor fool. That once boyish smile was grotesque; old teeth; unhealthy teeth, capped; cracking. He looked like a ghoul. He wasn't a movie star anymore. He never would be; he'd never make it. Your Moroccan poet would have had a bad time with my bathroom mirror this morning. Want another drink John?

JOHN: No.

CHARLES: I do. John, have you noticed I've started saying your name John?

JOHN: Yes.

CHARLES: John. It's a nice name. John. A good word John. You're very right about a person's name. Very right. (He pours himself a drink. To John) You're sure?

JOHN: I'm sure.

CHARLES: Well there we were — the ghoul and I, face to face for the very first time in a good while. What was I looking for? It was just a face; mine. But it was such a disappointment. Jesus, what a let down; what a nasty trick. What am I getting at? Who knows. Do you know John?

JOHN: Is that what frightened you?

CHARLES: Frightened me? No, I'm not frightened. It was just some poor stupid face, not a Halloween mask John.

JOHN: I meant CHARLES: Meant JOHN: The changes.

CHARLES: With the face. No, I expected those changes. I really did. What disturbed me were all those little holes and what was coming out of them; black little worms, hairy little black worms. What was behind that face to be pushing all those little black worms

out? You shave every day don't you John?

Doesn't it frighten you, to be holding a razor in your hand and to be looking at your own face? Neck? Do you shave naked, John? I do. Ever think you might drop the razor and oops! (Winces and clutches his groin) Oh my, oh my.

JOHN: That's a pretty macabre fantasy. CHARLES: Macabre, Beautiful word. Macabre; one hundred points to John. Macabre. You win. Go home. This is dispicable. No more invented life, no more stories, no, nothing.

JOHN: Charles.

CHARLES: Yes, that's my name. CHAR-LES! Go home, to your no-name dog. I'm tired. Don't you get it? No? It's no longer amusing. No longer flatter-ing. What the fuck did you think was going on, you deluded faggot? Did you think we were going to make it. (Mincing) So you bought me a quarter pretzel and now you want to squeeze it out of me, naughty boy. (Laughs, then salaciously) Maybe if I were drunk out of my mind I'd let you give me a blow job, but I'm afraid I'd puke all over you. Get out! (He throws the drink in John's face. John grabs him by the shirt front. Charles struggles. John slaps him then dumps him on the sofa. Charles whimpers then begins to giggle. John stands over him breathing heavily. Charles looks up. He is very excited) What are you? (John pulls his hair and head back. Charles gives a little hurt sound)

JOHN: (Begins undoing Charles' shirt and belt) It is the need for love itself Charles, never love itself. It is the exercising of love that is the need, the only intention of the knowledge of love at all. When this remains undiscovered in a life Charles, that life ceases all reaching after attainment and fulfillment it forms hybrids, hybrids of imagined love, and all sexual desires become no longer the very private science it once was, but rather a mindless repetitive; vingeties of early opportunities. Hold still Charles.

CHARLES: What?

JOHN: Now I'm going to hurt you, and in a little while you won't care. You'll only be glad I'm here. (He pulls Charles' arm behind his back. Charles' face is near his. He tries to kiss

Charles' mouth. Charles resists. John yanks his arm. Charles allows John to take his mouth) It's not a bad face Charles...

(CURTAIN)

Charles Kerbs is an artist and playwright who lives in New Orleans, but would consider moving elsewhere. American Premier of *Once Upon a Time in the East*, a film by famed gay playwright Michael Trembly and a revival of the impressive *Portrait of Jason*.

Special films will be shown at the Performing Garage at 33 Wooster Street. That special series covers an even greater range beginning with Kenneth Anger's near-classic Scorpio Rising to Viscounti's Ludwig.

Leslie Lohman Gallery, 485 Broome Street, is having its Annual June Group Show. The event is the occasion the gallery uses to show especially promising artists who might not be quite ready for an individual show. It's become a perennial favorite for gallery goers who want to see who will be the evolving artists of the coming year.

Robert Samuel Gallery, 795 Boradway, is showing the work of photographer Lynn Davis in June. She's a striking portraitist of significant note. Later, Robert Samuel will also have a seven-person group photographic show. The quality of work to be displayed in that group is awesome, including George Dureau, Robert Giard and Starr Ockenga.

Stompers, 259 West Fourth Street, continues its reputation as the gallery on the cutting edge. San Francisco artist Lou Rudolf will be displayed, to be followed in June by a new show by Brick, whose first show at the gallery last year produced one of their finest successes.

And the Stoned Wall Gallery, 221 West 28th Street, is reaching into Texas for its most impressive show to date, the collages of Robert Shown.

Information about the Gay American Arts Festival can be had by calling 212/691-9682, or writing The Glines, Cultural Council Foundation, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

The crowning glory of the Festival takes place at New York's monumentally prestiguous Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center. Eartha Kitt leads the list of performers who will hold a Benefit for the Glines on Monday June 23.

All in all, this must be the largest single undertaking the gay arts have yet seen. It's a mammoth event. The perfect lead up to Gay Pride Day on June 29th. After all this culture, maybe the sense of liberation and self-image can be taken a step further when the mass of marchers come together for their annual pilgrimage up Fifth Avenue.

Leslie East

#### EVENTS

#### SEMAINE DU CINEMA GAI — MONTREAL 1980

Montreal businesses, under the name Sortier Inc., have planned a Gay Arts Festival to coincide with Gay Pride Week in Canada. The events, which include a massive 22 film retrospective and 10 art exhibitions, will be held from June 26th through July 2nd.

The films will range from the controversial French film, Race D'Ep to the popular American documentary, Word Is Out. For a number of the films, it will be the first time they have been seen in Canada.

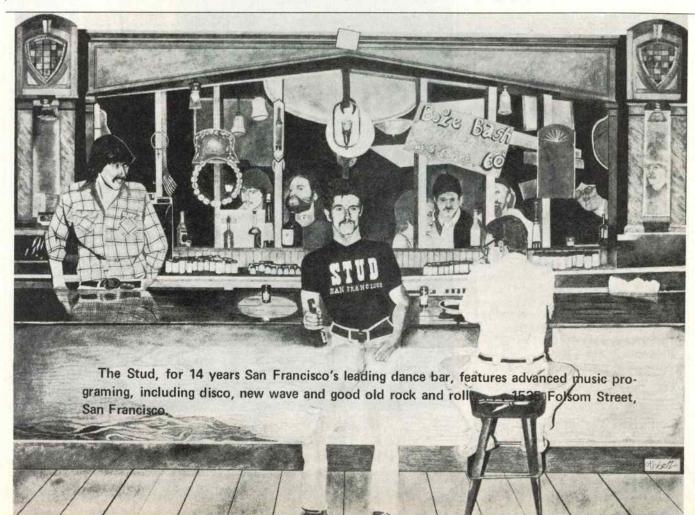
The Festival, which promises to become an annual event, and larger each year, is a first for Canadian gays.

#### DRUMMER EROTIC ART

A part of *Drummer* magazine's Gay Pride celebrations in San Francisco is the Second Drummer Erotic Art Show. Staged at The Headquarters, a South of Market bar and restaurant, the retrospective show will feature work from many of the artists who have appeared in Drummer over the past five years. The show opens June 2nd, and runs until July 2nd. The Headquarters is located at 683 Clementina at Eighth Street in San Francisco.

#### NUKI/EROTICA

May 1 — September 30, Gallery 512, Star of the Sea, Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971; (303) 227-7325; watercolors and polagraphy.



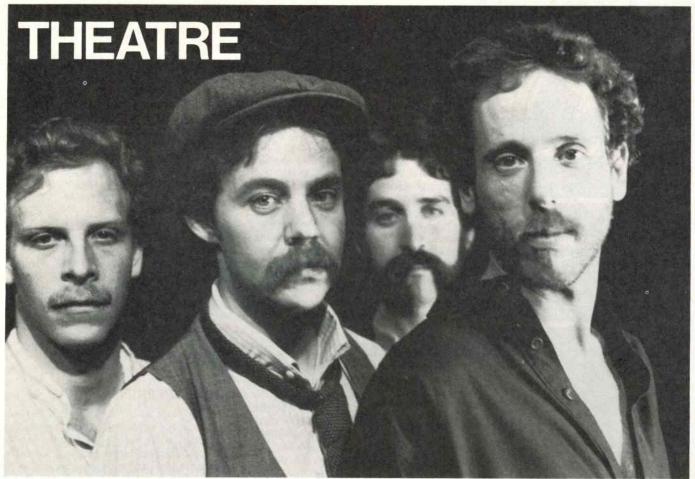


photo by Miles Frieden

#### THE DEAR LOVE OF COMRADES

. . . I will establish in the Manhatta and in every city of these states inland and seaboard.

And in the fields and woods, and above every keel little or large that dents the water,

Without edifices or rules or trustees or any argument. The institution of the dear love of comrades.

Walt Whitman

If all homosexuals were seven feet tall, or had twelve fingers or cerise hair, we probably would have come much farther in our struggle for acceptance. There are definite disadvantages to being the invisible minority. For one, heterosexuals can't readily identify us and are therefore able to gloss over our actual numbers and treat us as mere oddities rather than a full tenth of the population.

An equally important drawback is that we often can't identify us, and our heritage suffers immeasurably because of that fact.

While it is undeniable that George Washington Carver was Black, or that Susan B. Anthony was a woman, the sexual preferences of people like William Shakespeare and Eleanor Roosevelt will always be open to debate; and conjecture is pretty shaky ground on which to

build pride.

We owe a debt of gratitude, therefore, to Noel Creig for writing his play *The Dark Love of Comrades* and presenting us with a relatively unknown but absolutely open pioneer of Gay and human rights.

His name was Edward Carpenter.

One of the leading lecturers and writers on socialism in late nineteenth century Britain, Carpenter sought to establish a Utopian society at Millthorpe, a farm outside Sheffield. It was here, also, that he began to lean an openly homosexual existence, surrounded by the three men he loved most. George Hukin, George Adams, and George Merril.

The Dear Love of Comrades deals directly with the seven-year period (1891–1898) that Carpenter shared with all three of the Georges, and their relationships to him and each other. He had idealized a world without commitment, marriage or jealousy in which love — both affectional and sexual — was shared in a communal arrangement along with the housekeeping and gardening chores. (And you thought it all started in the Sixties!) Unfortunately, intellectual rhetoric was no more a match for unthinking emotions a hundred years ago than it is today.

George Adams is passionately in love with Edward, but has lived with the knowledge that Carpenter has preferred Hukin to him for some years. Faced with the prospect of losing even more ground to Merril, he convinces Edward to allow him and his wife (a front for 'respectability') to move into Millthorpe and run the farm. From this vantage hold, Adams is able to manipulate all four of their lives for nearly seven years. (The pressures eventually take their toll in a powerful vouyeristic monologue in Act II.)

Merril wants nothing more than to live openly with Carpenter, regardless of politics. With a little help from Adams, though, he is forced to move to Blastow and rely on Adams for all communication with Edward. Letters are waylaid, and messages reinterpreted to keep Carpenter and Merril unsure of feelings on either side.

Hukin is the most successful at living up to Edward's philosophies. He is capable of love for his wife and his friends, and able to physically relate to most of the other characters — except Carpenter.

In what is, perhaps, the best scene of the play, Carpenter (now in love with Merril, but still sexually attracted to Hukin) is accompanying Hukin to London on a train. He hands him a manuscript he has been writing, and has Hukin read aloud the chapter on jealousy and its consequences. Carpenter proudly announces that he is now able to live up to his own theories, and that he no longer



# Liberty & Justice For All!

The 1980 Gay Freedom Day Parade & Celebration

San Francisco

#### Friday 27 June

Start your Gay Freedom Day weekend with

A Gay Musical Celebration at Grace Cathedral featuring the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Marching Band & Twirling Corps, S.F. Gay Men's Chorus, S.F. Lesbian & Gay Men's Community Chorus, Lambda Pro Musica Symphony Orchestra, and the Great Organ of Grace Cathedral-8pm.

#### Saturday 28 June

Watch for details of special events to be announced.

#### Sunday 29 June

The Gay Freedom Day Parade starts at Market & Spear-11am. The Celebration will be held at Civic Center Plaza-Noon.

Following the Celebration-4pm Conceptual Entertainment's 2nd Annual Gay Day Tea Dance at the Galleria Design Center.

For more information call 415/ 641-0100

feels a need to "own" Hukin. George takes up the challenge, announces that he and Merril have slept together, and Carpenter heads back to the drawing boards.

After an extensive run with the Gay Sweatshop of London, for whom Greig and composer Alex Harding originally wrote the play, Comrades had its American premiere staged in San Diego by Carpenter's Children, a Gay theater group formed expressedly for that purpose (although they have continued as a group since the show closed). It was the time-less and universal qualities of the emotional content of the play that survived the trans-Atlantic cross intact, and made the show a success.

The political content didn't seem to fare as well, Most Americans are familiar enough with the Oscar Wilde trials to see both the humor and tragedy of a prissily elegant publisher's need to bow to the social atmosphere and refuse to print Carpenter's treatise on homogenous love. (Another of Greig's exquisitely written scenes.) Do we know enough about the Walsell trials, though, to be able to empathize with the character of the young anarchist Fred Charles? General audience responses indicated that we do not, and in a play that runs twoand-half hours (with intermission) there is no more time available to add further clarification. As much as I personally like the character, I think, in the long run, it would be better to eliminate him and concentrate more fully on the Socialist politics of Edward and his Georges and the effects those politics had on their Utopia. (For the record, Carpenter and Merril eventually lived together for thirty years.)

There are a dozen songs in *The Dear Love of Comrades* — eleven by Harding and one, "England Arise," by Carpenter. Originally conceived to reflect traditional English music hall fare, the score was (with varying degrees of success) softened with a more familiar musical comedy approach for the American presentation. In either case, Harding's talents as a lyricist are readily apparent. Confronted with Merril's invitation to spend the

night, Hukin sings:

"But I wonder how Edward will take it? So would it be better to go? To avoid hurting Ted

I'll avoid George's bed!
Yes I will no I w

Yes I will . . . no I won't . . . I don't know!"

And in another number, "Seasons,"
Adams advises:

"Take a lesson from the crops, put your lovers in rotation!"

The Dear Love of Comrades is not a perfect show, but it certainly is a valuable and successful one. Because it is based on historical fact, and because it is neither shocking nor bizarre, heterosexual audiences are able to realize how little differ-

ence there really is between their emotions and ours, and how distorted a picture they can have of what we're actually like.

For Gay audiences, Greig leaves a very clear message in Hukin's final speech to

Carpenter:

". . . there are people living here and now who'll thank you much more for doing the one thing that you're not supposed to do. Which is to be homosexual. Not think and write and talk about it, but be it. In whatever way you can. And, something else, you won't be thanked for it and you won't be remembered for it. But, you might be loved for it."

We need more heroes and role models of our own — to thank, to remember, and to love. We need to know who they are. Thanks to Noel Greig and Alex Harding, we now know Edward Carpenter.

Noel Greig and Martin Worman, the director of the American premiere, who both found themselves unexpectedly playing the role of Edward in their productions, are currently collaborating in New York on rewrites of the script.

- Kevin P. Mullin

#### PLAYS IN PRINT

Gay plays are being published in reading editions somewhat more frequently, although what is in print is only a drop in the bucket in terms of the gay theatrical material that goes from production to lost play around the world. A great starting place, and the first reference work of its kind, is Terry Helbing's Directory of Gay Plays. Published in conjunction with the Gay Theatre Alliance, this Directory is a highly-readable and very informative collection of over 400 gay works for the stage. Some are well known, others have had only localized productions, and still others have not yet seen their theatrical debut. Besides the bulk of information on gay plays, the Directory includes an appendix of contemporary lost plays, and forms for playwrights to have their material included in the next edition, and a listing of gay theatre companies in the country. This volume is extremely informative and well worth the admission. (JH Press, Box 294, Village Station, New York, NY 10014, Trade paperback, 1980, 122 pages, \$5.95.)

James Purdy is well known as a novelist, but his plays might have escaped his readers. New London Press has issued Two Plays by James Purdy (Trade paperback, 1979, 52 pages), A Day After the Fair (based on a short story of the same name) and True.

Seahorse Press has published two plays by Doric Wilson in a single volume; A Perfect Relationship (See Alternate No. 12) and The West Street Gang, (Trade paperback, 1980, \$5.95; Seahorse Press, Box 509, Village Station, New York, NY 10014).

## MUSIC

#### THE GOLDEN GATE PERFORMING ARTS

In April of 1978, armed with posters and flyers, a young 31-year-old musician, conductor and teacher went around Gay San Francisco advocating the formation of a gay marching band. Its sole purpose would be to march in San Francisco's annual Gay Freedom Day Parade and Celebration. Jon Sims was hopeful yet unaware of what he was actually starting.

In less than two years from the innocent beginning of that single marching band, five other basic musical groups have sprung forth. The San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus; the San Francisco Lesbian Chorus, which has since left the present group and gone its own way; the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Men's Community Chorus and Lambda Pro Musica, a gay symphony orchestra; can all trace their roots to the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Marching Band & Twirling Corps. Each group in turn has fostered smaller entities that specialize in a particular musical or specialty area.

To facilitate the continual growth of these musical groups with legal, financial, insurance, public relations and overall organizational support, Golden Gate Performing Arts, Inc., a non-profit organization was created. GGPA was founded by Jon Sims in early 1979 with the assistance of Jerry Berg (legal counsel) and Dick Kramer (Director of the San Fran-

cisco Gay Men's Chorus).

At present, GGPA is made up of 10 Board Directors. Each Director of the separate Musical Groups, and elected representative from each of the groups chosen at-large and two members of the Performing Arts Associates, a support group of GGPA made up of lovers and friends of group members; are the Board of Directors for Golden Gate Performing Arts. Chris Lirely is the acting Chairman

Lirely, an executive with a large food manufacturing firm in the Bay Area, has the business expertise to help guide the organization through its youth. They are in the process of filing for their tax-exempt status, so that gifts received are not taxed and benefactors may deduct those gifts.

of the Board.

Each group is autonomous. This gives them the freedom and independence to express their art to the best of their ability. "GGPA is set up to be the corporate structure of all the organizations, the business side for those organizations," Lirely stated. "It is the unifying element between all the groups. The main purpose of GGPA is fundraising. In many art

organizations, the artists should not be involved in any fundraising, it hampers their creativity," added Lirely. "If they have money to worry about, they can't worry about making their artistic statement."

Working in close association with GGPA, is the Performing Arts Associates. PAA was the brainchild of three Gay Men's Chorus "widows" whose lovers were at rehearsal every Monday night. These men would go out to dinner, bowling or possibly to a movie, just to pass the time. At one of their get-togethers in the fall of 1979, they decided to get other "widows" and friends of group members and form an auxiliary to support GGPA in fundraising. Their Christmas Bazaar of 1979 helped finance the Men's Chorus to Sacramento to march and sing for gay rights. They held an Easter Bazaar this year to help defray the initial costs to GGPA in the formation of the Lesbian and Gay Men's Community Chorus and Lambda Pro Musica. PAA's fundraising efforts paid for six months rehearsal space and provided funds for the premiere performance held May 17, 1980.

PAA is under the leadership of Michael Samuel, one of the original three. They are responsible for many social events for the different groups. After each major performance series, PAA will pull together and take full responsibility for a party for group members.

As PAA's membership grows, so do their activities. Pot Luck Suppers, Theatre Parties, roller and ice skating events and bowling are just a few.

In the near future the different group members that are on the Board of Directors of GGPA will resign their positions to be filled by members of PAA. "The idea is to get the organization back into the hands of the community," remarked Samuel. "To remove the priority-interest factor, to get someone who is not particularly interested in one or the other but to all the groups equally," added Samuel. "This will allow GGPA to be more objective."

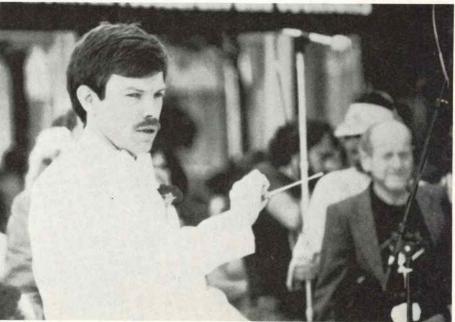
#### SAN FRANCISCO GAY FREEDOM DAY MARCHING BAND AND TWIRLING CORPS

As the band works its way up the street, so does the cheer and pride. The piece they're playing "California Here I Come," has to compete with the noise from a crowd on the verge of hysterics. The energy around you is so great, the pride so intense, that anyone present can't help but feel it.

Everywhere the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Marching Band and Twirling Corps goes, with them they take a statement of pride and love. This statement is not just their own. They represent the finest aspects of the community at large.

In 1977, when Anita Bryant was practicing her own kind of McCarthyism, Jon Sims marched in the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade for the first time. It was then that he decided what the parade needed was a real marching band.

Sims definitely had the proper credentials for starting such a band. He received his Bachelor degrees in French Horn as well as Music Theory and Composition, both from Wichita State University. He earned a Masters degree in French Horn at Indiana University. He has also taught music, everything from fourth grade to college, performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and has worked



Jon Sims, photo by Steve Frashuer

with an arts and entertainment public relations firm in San Francisco.

Even with all that behind him, Sims knew that it would not be an easy task forming a complete Marching Band. In April of 1978, after tossing the idea around in his head for several months, he started recruiting musicians through press releases, public service announcements and posters. Soon the momentum grew.

"At our first rehearsal we had 55 musicians show up" recalled Sims, "and we probably have not had less than that many since then." The band members are a highly diverse group ranging in age from 18 to over 50. The members encompass both professionals and basic laborers. There is even a former U.S. Twirling Champion and a few straight musicians as well.

The majority of the initial cost of starting the band; uniforms, instrument rental fees and sheet music, came out of the pockets of the band members. The remainder was donated by Sims, another member of the band, and several members of the community.

Since the band's premier performance to a crowd of 240,000 at the 1978 Gay Freedom Day Parade, it has achieved stature as being one of the most accomplished amateur marching bands in the state of California. Last year, they were named "Outstanding Civilian Marching Band of 1979" by the Northern California Parade Sponsors Association. The Band has won awards in every parade competition that it has entered: The San Francisco Chinese New Year's Parade (First Prize 1979 & 1980), Columbus Day Parade (First Prize 1979 & 1980) and the Redwood City Fourth of July Parade, the largest and most competitive Independence Day event in the State (First Prize in three divisions 1979).

The Band's concert proficiency has in-

creased to a repertoire of the more demanding works from composers like Gershwin, Bernstein, Beethoven, Shostakovich and Holst. The Band's Concert performances has taken them to San Jose, Berkeley, and in June of last year they performed at Hollywood High School in Los Angeles in conjunction with the Christopher Street West Parade. For San Francisco's own Gay Freedom Weekend, they performed "A Gay Musical Celebration at Grace Cathedral" with the Gay Men's Chorus to an overflow crowd who were greeted by Mayor Dianne Feinstein and the Dean of Grace Cathedral.

National as well as world exposure of the Band has occurred with a live broadcast via satellite in S.F.'s Chinese New Year's Parade as well as inclusion in an ABC Closeup documentary on gay lifestyles. The group has been filmed by Canadian, German, Japanese and Italian television.

San Francisco's Gay Freedom Day Marching Band and Twirling Corps just keeps on growing. In addition to the Band and Corps there is a Guard under the direction of Dick Thompson, Flags, red boardered rainbow in color representing all the nations of the world, donated by the Gay Tavern Owners of San Francisco; Chinese ribbons of red, blue and silver and a rifle precision team. The teamwork of this group gives the band the necessary color and traditional flair. The newest group to join the ranks is the Tap Troup. The group, choreographed by Bess Bair, better known as Rosie Radiator; promises to add another facet to the Band's scope of entertain-

The Band's Concert side has fostered two smaller musical bands. Pure Trash, a jazz, comedy and improvisation band formed under the direction of David Kelsey (pianist for the Concert Band). Pure Trash is probably the only gay Dixieland Band of its kind. Plans in the future include recording, television and benefits. Another offspring is the Varsity Drag, a swing ensemble which on May 12 along with one of San Francisco's leading Cabaret entertainers, Ruth Hastings, performed at San Francisco's most renowned night clubs, The Venetian Room at the Fairmont Hotel.

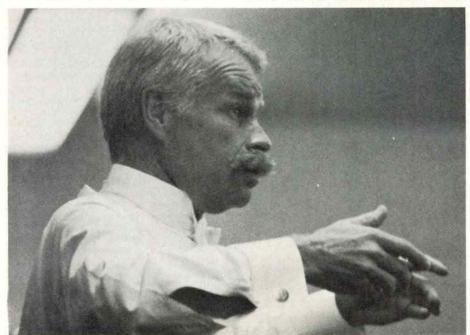
Plans for the future growth for the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Marching Band and Twirling Corps is always in the planning. A hand precision team is one idea of Jon Sims, who around the country is becoming known as the 'Grand Dame of Gay Music.' In fact many of the gay marching bands around the country have called upon Sims and asked "how did you do it and what is it all about?" Sims was very instrumental in the formation of New York's Gay Marching Band in the Summer of 1979 and promises to be a continual inspiration to other groups which may form in other cities around the country.

#### THE SAN FRANCISCO GAY MEN'S CHORUS

Formed in October of 1978 by Jon Sims, their first rehearsal was held the night before Halloween. Four weeks later, Dick Kramer – the present director – attended his first Monday rehearsal. It was the night of the infamous double murders of Harvey Milk and George Moscone. The men who showed up that night experienced an unplanned emotional and hastily rehearsed debut, singing a Mendelssohn Hymn on the steps of City Hall following the spontaneous candlelight march of thousands of mourners.

Dick Kramer, a native Californian, is the musical director and conductor of the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus and Chamber Singers. Graduating with honors from Occidental College in Los Angeles with a specialization in Choral Music, he has taught music in California, New Jersey and at the highly respected Kamahameha Schools in Honolulu, Hawaii. Kramer has sung professionally with the Roger Wagner Chorale, the Sante Fe Opera in New Mexico, was soloist at the Carmel Bach Festival and many churches in New York and California. He was also a pioneer student and instructor in the field of sensory awareness. With this strong background of body consciousness and the science of breathing, he is able to facilitate a unique approach to the teaching of music.

Kramer has built the chorus from a great variety of musicians with formal training and those who just enjoyed singing. The group's repertoire has grown from popular tunes like "If My Friends Could See Me Now," to such renowned classical pieces as "La Pastorella" by Franz Schubert and "Pilgrims' Chorus from Tannhauser" by Richard Wagner.



Dick Kramer, photo by Steve Frashuer

The Gay Men's Chorus, like the Band, is gaining national recognition and acclaim. In addition to performing the annual Gay Freedom Day Parade, they performed at Hollywood High School and the Christopher Street West Parade. They will be returning again this year. Other appearances have included the San Francisco's Cable Car Awards (a gay awards night for outstanding businesses and organizations), the late Harvey Milk's Birthday Party, the Castro Street Fair, the Chinese Cultural Center and the YMCA and Salvation Army Senior Services.

This past November they again marched to the steps of City Hall carrying candles in memorial to Harvey Milk and George Moscone. They stood and sang about brotherhood and love to a crowd of 25,000. In January, they marched in pouring rain in Sacramento in support of gay rights,

Adding a sense of business professionalism to the Chorus is the Chorus Manager known simply as Jay. Jay has taken on the task of Public Relations. He is responsible for press releases within San Francisco as well as the communicative link between all the groups of GGPA.

Another function that Jay has taken on is the initiative of contacting and being of service to other Gay Men's Choruses as well as other music groups forming around the country. As he hears of a new group, the first thing he will do is send them a newsletter from GGPA. According to Jay, there are 12 Gay Choruses, 8 Gay Bands and 1 Orchestra at present in the United States.

The Chorus consists of 135 voices. Kramer will be holding auditions in the near future to bring membership up to 150 members. With auditions required, Kramer is assured that the professionalism and quality of the group will continue to grow.

San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus has grown to include two smaller groups. The Chamber Singers is composed of 24 solo voices specializing in challenging music from the earliest polyphony and Gregorian Chants through standard chamber works and modern contemporary repertoire.

Under the directorship of Bill Ganz, Men About Town, a sixteen member swing chorus, is gaining in popularity and demand for their out-of-the-closet campiness and originality. Specializing in popular music from 1920's to the present, the group utilizes original sets; the musical arrangements more than make a statement.

As for the future of the Chorus, there are plans under way for a quartet of men who will do barbershop as well as other music forms. "I think that we are going to see a small sort of Opera group spring out of the Chorus," invisioned Kramer. "We have some good voices. Anything that involves singing can and will happen."

### THE SAN FRANCISCO LESBIAN AND GAY MEN'S COMMUNITY CHORUS THE LAMBDA PRO MUSICA

The two newest groups to join the ranks of GGPA are the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Men's Community Chorus and Lambda Pro Musica, a gay symphony orchestra.

The Mixed Chorus is under the Conductorship of Robin Kay. A native of the San Francisco Bay Area, she has spent her life studying and performing music as a pianist, singer and conductor.

Her piano training has been with many well-known instructors, most notably with Maestro Vladimir Brenner, an international concert artist and staff soloist with the NBC Symphony Orchestra in New York. In the early 1970's, Robin studied the entire works of Scott Joplin with two Joplin contemporaries. She is considered a leading interpreter of Joplin's works and has performed them widely in person and on radio.

Conceived by Jon Sims, the Mixed Chorus consists of 135 male and female voices. The group promises to be a very important link between the Gay and Lesbian Communities as a whole and the ever growing GGPA. This group promises to open up a new facet of musical growth by combining the talents of the Lesbian and Gay Men's Communities.

"The first night we had 80 men and only 10 women," remembered Kay. "When I first met with the different groups, after a fantastic reception, the first question I asked was; Do any of you know any women?" added Kay.

After the first rehearsal and the disappointment in the show of women, Robin set a date of six weeks to reach 50 women. That goal was realized. At the present time the ratio is approximately 60-40% and their music repertoire ranges

from classical pieces sung in both Latin and German to a popular Gershwin medley.

Future plans for the Mixed Chorus are much the same as for the Men's Chorus. Chamber groups, swing ensembles and opera are just a few of the projects Robin Kay has in mind. With the sensitivity and warm humanity that this woman posesses, the San Francisco Lesbian & Gay Men's Community Chorus is guaranteed a long and prosperous life.

Lamba Pro Musica, the gay orchestra, met the first time on January 24 with a dozen string musicians. Since then, it has grown in size to 30 musicians ranging from Violin and Cello; Horn and Trumpet; to Oboe, Clairinet, Piano and Percussion.

Directed by Jon Sims, the music repertoire includes Bach, Beethoven and Vivaldi. Lambda Pro Musica, as it continues to grow and expand will be able to provide an instrumental class much needed for opera and the finer side of musical art.

The premier performance for both the S.F. Lesbian and Gay Men's Community Chorus and Lambda Pro Musica was in May. Both groups performed separately and combined. Once again, GGPA had proved that the arts are not the sole property of any one segment of society.

Each of the separate entitles of GGPA will appear in the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade on June 29th. New sub-groups may have formed by that time, and existing groups may have dissolved. If you are interested in learning of future plans, schedules, etc., you may do so by writing: Golden Gates Performing Arts, Box 14665, San Francisco, CA 94114. (415) 864-0326.

Craig A. Parker



Lambda Pro Musica, photo by Guy Corry



It's about time that we had a club of our own. And not just a club, but the kind of place that the fun-seeking sensualist in you has been searching for. There are a lot of things you could join — Discos, Encounter Clubs, Glory-Hole Clubs — the DRUMMER KEY CLUB is none of these. We have taken the concept of a place where OUR people can enjoy themselves: well-run, friendly, exciting and inexpensive and come up with a concept you can't resist.

Memberships in many places can cost you anywhere from a few to thousands of dollars and about all you get is the privilege of paying five to fifteen dollars at the door for admission. People like to associate with their own kind and are usually charged considerable for that right. Ours is a different concept. We are expanding the Leather Fraternity, including all its privileges and benefits, and

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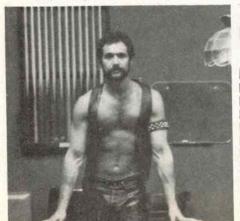
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#### JOE ORTON: DEAD RIGHT

Up Against It by Joe Orton; 1979: Grove Press; paperback; 70 pages; \$4.95

If you aren't a Joe Orton fan, or a true fan of farce - this screenplay for The Beatles (never produced) might confuse more than comfort. But giving Orton a free hand in dabbling with your senses (and reading John Lahr's introduction) will afford the reader a wonderful journey into one of the finest comic minds

of our age.

Lahr is indeed a Joe Orton fan. His biography of Orton, Prick Up Your Ears, was just what the theatre needed to set the record straight - and gay. Orton's genius sprang directly from his view of contemporary society as a gay man. His biting wit, even if out of social frustration, brought the theatre to its knees in plays like Entertaining Mr. Sloan and Loot and What The Butler Saw. His murder by his lover, equally a social outcast, ended a career that was destined to alter the English theatre forever.

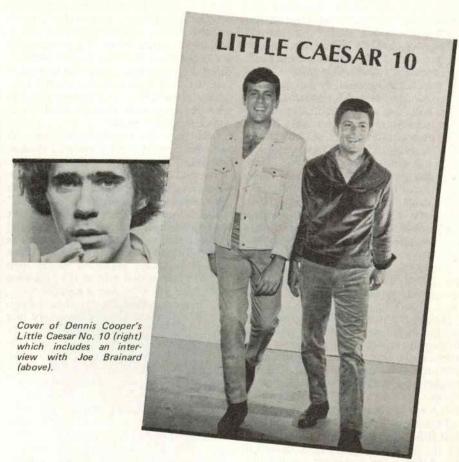
Orton is not as well known, respected, loved nor feared in America as he was in the United Kingdom. And a good deal of that obscurity came from his very English sense. But through the middle of trans-Atlantic translation, when his plays were performed before comprehensive audiences, his genius was highly visible.

Up Against It, had it made it to the screen with The Beatles in the leading roles, would have most probably altered their destiny also. As it is, all that remains is the screenplay, which Orton would have reworked and honed as was his want - and John Lahr's fine appreciation of what was going on in Orton's head. While screenplays are not easily read, this foray into cinema by Orton deserves an attempt.

Charles Musgrave

#### MEDIA NOTES

Dennis Cooper's Little Caesar 10 is a cachet of new wave writing and photography, contemporary literature, modern poetry, and avant garde graphics. Like all the other issues in this series, Little Caesar is written by the brightest of new writers and intended for the willing reader. A serious interview with porn filmmaker Toby Ross, an interview with Joe Brainard, and a section from Robert Peters' poem cycle A Boy and His Dog highlight this trade paperback magazine. Available from: Little Caesar Press, 3373 Overland Ave. (2), Los Angeles, CA 90034; \$2; 136 pages.



Colorado Gay is a quarterly small press gay magazine you may never see in your bookstores. It was intended by editor Tom Gehling as an outlet for gay writers, artists and poets in Colorado, and is mainly distributed locally. The Winter 1980 issue contains artwork by Bob McClain, poetry and fiction. Available from: Tom Gehling, 512 W. Colorado Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80905. Paper, stapled, \$1; 40 pages.

- John W. Rowberry

#### MUCH ADO OVER MARGINS

The New Couple: Women and Gay Men by Rebecca Nahas and Myra Turley; Seaview; 1980; 292 pages; \$9.95.

Gay behavior continues to fascinate heterosexual social scientists. Yet another "study" has surfaced in that Bill-nothis-real-name case study 'n commentary (let-tjis-be-a-lesson-to-you) style of books of interviews.

Sociologists Rebecca Nahas and Myra Turley spent four years researching The New Couple - the "emerging new American lifestyle" of woman/gay man duos - and one must wonder which four years? Much of this book sounds like it was packed on ice from the 1950's.

Here is the way the press release from Seaview Books begins:

There have always been relation-

ships between gay men and "straight" women. Sometimes the woman knew the man was gay, as in the case of a woman and her favorite hairdresser or interior decorator (what the authors of The New Couple would call "marginal relationships"). (italics mine)
A full third of the book is devoted

to such "marginal relationships" gays in hairdressing, fashion and the arts which is to say Visible gays in New York and how they relate to straight women. (Marginally.)

This is not to say the authors don't dedicate several pages to speculation about why gays flock or seem to flock to these fields.

Another third of The New Couple considers "traditional couples" which are characterized by lack of "mutual acknowledgement and acceptance of the man as a homosexual." Here we find women who don't know the man is gay and even men who don't know they're gay. And we are treated to the following eyeopener about the problem this poses:

One frequent stumbling block for such couples is their sexual relationship or their lack of one.

These couples presumably live in sections of the country where gay bars don't exist, Village People hits aren't aired and the post office blocks delivery of gay publications. Gay sex is limited to impulsive tearoom quickies and the marriage rests on simple ignorance and default. But of course such men are just "still in the closet" or living in pre-Gay Liberation America. This, the authors can't accept. That such men are actually not sexually interested in their wives—or "gay," as it is commonly defined.

Women are not undesirable to such gay men, but anxiety about sexual performance with a female may dampen desire and cause sexual dysfunction. Anticipation of failure may destroy whatever chance the man and woman have of experiencing physical intimacy. Because sex cannot be integrated, one or both partners consider their relationship a failure. The man's sexual conflicts become so unmanageable that he cannot resolve them; instead he often retreats from the woman, her friendship, and any contact with her. (Italics

Of course studies about sociological groups by those *outside* the group are inherently risky. There is always some stickler who doesn't like being sliced and put on a slide finding evidence of hidden racism or sexism or homophobia or agism. To this extent, at a time when too many studies take the E-Z detour of reflexiveness (BEATEN WIVES IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST by Beaten Wife in the Pacific Northwest), I commend the authors for accepting this liability. And it is with due respect that I point out the following glitch in their intended neutrality toward homosexuality:

Gay men and gay life continue to provoke, if not moral outrage, a morbid curiosity in many people. We sometimes detected skepticism about the importance or respectability of the subject of our book, and even reservations about our own sexuality. (Italics mine.)

And while the authors don't endorse such methods, they do see fit to provide a run-down of "desensitizations" or cures for homosexuality including the notorious "aversion therapies" of nausea drugs and electric shock. And a summation of cause thories for homosexuality.

Their own preference leans toward the Freudian:

. . . the potential for both heterosexuality and homosexuality inherent in the embryo, whose sexual differentiation does not begin until after the seventh week of Intrauterine life, and in the polymorphous infant, may persist into adulthood, not only in those who describe themselves as bisexual, but in a number of primarily heterosexual or homosexual men and women.

But it is inconsistent. While the premise that the "homosexual" - they balk

at "bisexual" — could-if-he-would-and-should have sex with women (and what's more — wants to) is the veritable mortar of The New Couple, no mention is made whatsoever of straight women's homosexual potential. While it is unthinkable to the authors that the gay male does not have a prior sexual attraction to women and all their theories hover around how this "attraction" is thwarted, this apparently irrepressible female allure leaves other females unmoved.

Worse — the female respondents, all of whom spout some form of Feminisn or dissatisfaction with "aggressive" heterosexual men and "roles," never even compare their nonsexual friendships with gay men (sans the "fear," "threat," "risk," "pressure" and "worry" of sex as sex without "intimacy," "love" and "affection" is unexceptionally cast in The New Couple) with women friends! The choice is always presented as gay men versus heterosexual men as if to say even with "friendship" a man is superior.

This is especially suspect when the preferable gay qualities are sensitivity and compassion toward women and similarity of values and interests. Nonetheless, the straight women respondents' motives for forming New Couples, even at the loss of sex, remain clearer - if not admirable then do the gay men's. One gets the impression the female respondents were located through a mental health clinic or crisis hotline; the majority of them are facile at psycho-analytical self-profiles and refer repeatedly to "my shrink." Tales of mammoth weight problems, suicide attempts and bouts of self-hatred interlard and even chronicle their accounts of relationships with gay men. The majority are "loyal" to their gay other half (while few of the gays are) and express opinions that sex is not only unnecessary to a good relationship, it can be an outright impediment. In the last third of the book, "New Couples," a woman involved in such a couple is asked, "Did you ever have a physical relationship?"

We tried that, but it didn't work, After one failure we decided to stop messing around with a good relationship and leave that alone . . . Every woman I've talked to who has tried to regain the same emotional friendship with a heterosexual man that she had before they got involved sexually says she can't do it. It's never as uninhibited as it was before. It's never as free. Once you've been involved with someone sexually and you aren't anymore, you meet them again and no matter how filled with anxiety you might be, you're not going to break down and cry, and he's not going to be able to put his arms around you. Because, again, everybody starts to wonder, "Will it or won't it work?"

Of these women it can be said what the authors say about gay men that avoid women — that "anxiety about sexual performance" may "dampen desire and cause sexual dysfunction" and that "sexual conflicts become so unmanageable" that one "retreats" — but it is not said.

While the authors list the reasons for gay men following their natural preference and shunning women as 1) fear of "rejection" 2) fear of "failure" 3) fear of "intimacy" 4) fear that the woman is "insatiable" and 5) revering the woman "too highly" so she seems "untouchable" (the "pedestal syndrome") they must feel these same reasons are valid when women use them to shun their sexual preference — heterosexual men.

Not once do the straight women respondents in *The New Couple* come under fire for the reactionary reasons they admit planted them in New Couples — fear of men, sex and their own sexuality. The New Couple as a *hamlet* from these threats.

As I say, the book is inconsistent.

The authors are so eager to prove that women indeed hold a place in the gay future, that Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation are one and the same vision—an aesthetic and moral resistence to "macho" aggression—and that gay men aren't really gay (?), that they take to redefining terms. Like "lovers":

... the man and the woman of the new couple are more than casual friends, even more than close friends to the extent that their lives intermingle and their psychological and emotional bonds, whether within a sexual context or not, qualify them as lovers. (Italics mine.)

I don't know about you — but my "little black book" just doubled in size. Or Platonic:

None of the individuals involved in social marginal relationships desires or expects a primary love commitment; they are content with Platonic friendship, whether intense or casual, sexual or nonsexual. (Italics mine.)

In fact, they even redefine celibacy as lovers who are not within a sexual context but "may be monogamous"!

Nahas and Turley credit the Gay Liberation Movement for the New Couple. Because gays are finally enjoying acceptance from straight society, they are now "free to experiment with opposite-sex relationships" and "to integrate love relationships with women into their lives." We already know that gays — as the authors see them — want to do this but we don't know why they couldn't "integrate love relationships with women into their lives" before. Doesn't the rather exhaustive process of "coming out" seem a high price to pay for getting what you had originally? One is tempted

to say, why "come out?"

Peer group pressure! Gay peer group pressure is the reason gay men couldn't "experiment with opposite-sex relationships" before! It would have meant giving up what is secure — the comfortable gay identity. That gay men are something of veterans at this — having already given up a much more "secure" and "comfortable" identity known as heterosexuality (and even normality) doesn't seem to bother the authors.

How much stronger one's conviction must be to buck heterosexuality (and how many have not yet done it) escapes them. Do they really believe the pressure to be heterosexual and the pressure to be homosexual have become comparable?

If nothing else, the authors of *The New Couple: Women and Gay Men* have discovered what causes homosexuality: nothing does! It doesn't exist!

Martha Rosenberg

#### HANSEN'S BRIEFS

THE DOG AND OTHER STORIES by Joseph Hansen; Momentum Press, 512 Hill Street No. 4, Santa Monica, CA 90405; \$3.50.

Most often gay fiction takes place in states of mind, locations like the Mineshaft, Polk, Fire Island. These places exist for a large number of people quite apart from reality. They are the loci of the gay imagination. But many of us also live in unnamed places like most of the places in this book of short stories by Joseph Hansen. Those who have been complaining that gay literature is too urban or fabricates too much will be delighted with this.

Since no one can agree on what gay life actually is, perhaps we'll stop waiting for the big gay novel that takes it all in — at least for a while — and enjoy. If so, the short story, of which these are wonderful examples, just might be the gay form of the 80s. In and out, quick and clean, just a glimpse of this world or that. How like gay life, which is still more fragmented than whole, still serendipitous.

In this book we confront imaginative possibilities. What if an overweight doctor were to die on his young charge after taking dirty pictures — and the pictures were misplaced? What if a young woman used to taking care of her mother were offered sudden freedom, would she take it? What about a ten-year-old boy, and an Indian with a guitar, a coffin, and a jail cell? The human solutions are as satisfying as the literary ones.

Perhaps this comes from Hansen's experience with plotting detective novels (Skinflick, Fadeout, etc.) but I tend to think it has more to do with the opportunities the story form allows. Nothing much has to happen, just that much. And I suppose this is what makes these stories more "real" than most gay novels are able

to be. In a short story, it's not really necessary to hype the action.

These stories are swift and ironic, rather startling in their effects, though their aims seem modest. They contain hard facts and enigmas alike - like something you glimpse briefly out the window of a speeding bus, something odd sticking out of the landscape, and a little frightening. Although they take place in South Dakota, California, Wisconsin, in the South, there's a remarkable consistency to the collection. Hansen captures the middle range of America (again, everyone complains gay writers never do this) and it's seen very clearly, as if through a vewfinder. It looks very easy but I know these stories took a lot of hard work. They go by, however, smoothly. The problem is, there are so few of them and everyone will want to read more.

- George Whitmore



Photo of Judy Grahn by Lynda Koolish

#### HIGHLY UNCOMMON

The Work of a Common Woman by Judy Grahn; St. Martin's Press; 1980; 158 pages; \$8.95

Men who have had no other experience with women's poetry than the likes of Emily Dickenson or Sylvia Plath might do well to test the water with Judy Grahn. Dickenson and Plath, for all their greatness and power, still represent women crushed under the mountain of repression, mainly sexual oppression, that was the catalyst for their art. While Judy Grahn has suffered the twenty-first century mutation of the same old second-classness; her grace and voice come from a direct confrontation.

But that's perhaps too easy, to say that the time makes the expression — obviously Grahn is a woman searching for a definative form of protest; and in poetry she allows herself the whole range of creative possibilities.

Two individual works stand out from this collection of earlier published chapbooks. A short poem, Vietnamese Woman Speaking to an American Soldier, carries in its brief 22 lines a wealth of information about women both in America and across the globe. Crystalized in the poem is a pacifist statement keenly underplayed, and a moving portrait of the woman as ultimate victim. When she writes short, quick verse she has a lasting effect; the reader only able to accept a few poems in a sitting, and then going back to reread them again and again.

A later poem, one of the longest in the collection; A Woman is Talking to Death, is both, as Adrienne Rich notes in her introduction, a love poem and a political statement. That it works on either level; and works twice as well when both elements are considered, only speaks to Judy Grahn's ability. Like fragments of a section of an individual life, each compelling, it leaves the reader both satisfied and hungry. Her delicate use of repetative metaphors weave through a narrative of death and passions that catch in the throat. And while the bulk of her work is vibrant and viable, it is in this epic treatment that Grahn strikes her finest chords.

Charles Musgrave

#### **UNCUT KAYYAM**

There is a similarity between Nuki's small book of art and poetry, *Lines and Images From the Rubayiat*—and the first printed editions of Constantine Cavafy; both were originally intended for private circulation among friends. In Cavafy's instance, it took a great deal of pleading before he would allow his delicate verse to appear in commercial editions.

But the similarity just might end there. Cavafy wrote poetry, and while Nuki photographs a kind of sexual poetry (coupled in this edition with a new version of Omar Kayyam's legendary quatrains) — his gay cultural ancestor might well find these images shocking beyond comprehension.

The difference is the difference of the age. Nuki can explore these lyrical and exotic penile images with the liberation of the camera and of explicit watercolour while Cavafy was limited to metaphor.

There are twelve images in this small art book and an equal number of passages from the Rubayiat. We can only speculate if the original author would find a symbiosis between lush genitals coupled with flowers and fruit and his prophetic writing. Regardless, this small volume will interest both the gay art collector and the small press fancier. Available from: Personal Publications, Box 9005, Washington, DC 20003. The trade edition is \$2.95: a signed, limited edition is available for \$10. Both are 32 pages, stapled, recycled paper.

Michael Endicott-Ross

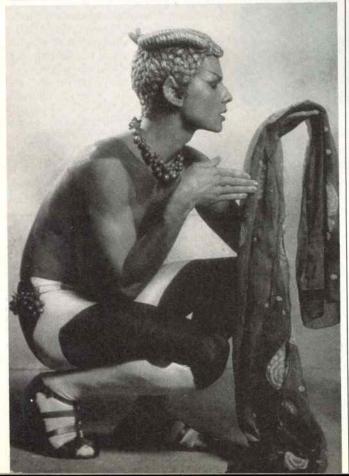
#### ONE PERFECT WORD

Nijinsky: The Film by Roland Gelatt; Ballantine Books; 1980; Oversized paperback; 132 pages; 140 color photographs plus illustrations; \$15.95

While the public has gotten used to movie-book tie-ins, nothing has ever been attempted as lavish as Gelatt's examination of Paramount film biography of Vaslav Nijinsky. Besides the massive amount of information about the film's actual production, and the actors and dancers who appear in the Herbert Ross film — The sheer amount of large photographs make this the ultimate theatre-goer's program.

Beyond the lavish attention to visuals, the book manages to place the film biography in a proper context — necessary for people who know little about Nijinsky other than his name. The behind-the-scene coverage of the filming is perceptive and rewarding. And the book itself, with its silver and gold cover, is a coffee-table treat.









#### ANOTHER PERFECT WORD

Baryshnikov on Broadway: Photographs by Martha Swope; Harmony Books; 1980; Oversized paperback; 96 pages; \$8.95

This isn't really an instant-book, although it was released right after the television special of the same name. Martha Swope, who is well-known for her work in *After Dark*, photographed Misha, Liza Minnelli, Nell Carter, and the cast of A Chorus Line all during rehearsals and on stage. The photographs are presented as complete images, each one capturing some new facet of the Baryshnikov genius as he leaps, stretches, plays the piano, rests, clowns, sings, dances, and smiles. In and out of costume, Swope's camera captured Misha at his most appealing.

If you missed the television special, then Swope's chronicle will do as a pacifier until it is repeated. But if you saw it, don't despair; Martha shows you a little bit more.

Charles Musgrave

#### ALIEN ANTHROPOLOGY APPLIED TO THE CALIFORNIA TIMELINE

California has an intergalactic reputation for harboring more aliens per square kilometer than any other area on Gaia's surface. This reputation stretches back in the timelines to the pre-gold rush era. This reputation reached its most vulgar and widespread mythic stage in the postneurologic, pre-migration days of the

'60s, '70s, and '80s.

The science of exobiology was then in its definition stages. In those days, exobiology was called "the science that deals with (1) the evidence (in practice the lack of evidence) of the existence of life or of intelligent activity on other planets or celestial objects; (2) the precautions that must be taken to prevent the contamination of celestial bodies by earth organisms and vice versa."

By the early '80s, however, humankind was beginning to wonder whether or not there was any choice in the matter.

"Contamination" of earth, it was said, had probably taken place many times in the past. Space-travelling microorganisms could have been responsible for certain outbreaks of disease in earth's past-history, creating new forms of influenza, plague, and goddess only knows what else at widely separated locations on the globe. When astronomer Fred Hoyle first made this suggestion, he was politely ridiculed in scientific circles.

This idea, that life is eternal and spreads intergalactically, was first made popular by one Svante Arrhenius in 1907. In a book called Worlds In the Making, he advanced the theory that life travels in the form of spores driven by solar radiations from planet to planet. When it was shown that bacterial spores, made up of mere protien and nucleic acid, could not resist ultraviolet, solar x-rays, and cosmic rays, the interplanetary life migration theory was thrown on the intellectual dust-heap.

It was revived again, as we have seen, by Fred Hoyle and astro-neurologician Leri, also called "the Commodore." The so-called "star seed transmissions" held out the possibility that micro-life and prelife forms (chemicals, after all) could survive space. And if they could do it, why not humans? Humans shielded against harmful radiation and life-supported by technological intelligence, to be sure, but life all the same, reaching out to create new exo-ecological niches. (It was also in the early '80s, remember, that the design of self-regulating space colony life-support systems came to be



UFO Exposition, San Diego 1993.

known as exo-ecology.)

Exo-biology led to a whole-systems approach to planetary study, and soon after, exo-psychology, exo-theology, and exo-anthropology made their appearance.

Exo-psychology, according to the early work of the aforementioned Commodore Leri, is: the study of the evolution of the nervous system in its larval and extra-terrestrial phases. The whole systems view of exo-psychology has since come to be known as a sub-study of noospherics, which concerns itself with planetary life interactions and Gaia's nervous system in particular, the neurons of which are intelligent creatures, if any can be found, on a given planet. But we digress . . . again.

Exo-psychologists may or may not study exo-theology, depending upon which camp of priests one consults. But back then, exo-theology concerned itself with the implications of the Big Bang theory for the interpretation of the Genesis creation account. The subject has faded in importance as humankind has come in contact with more and more alien species.

Exo-anthropology is really a misnomer, if you insist that a word be true to its linguistic roots. Exo-anthropology concerns itself with the study of alien cultures, after all. It began as scientific speculation about contact between human and non-human cultures. It was first practiced - as many modern sciences once were - in the imaginations of science fiction writers. It soon became concerned with making specific plans for such contact, and led to SETI (Searches for Extraterrestrial Intelligences) with radio telescopes and messages on plaques affixed to spacecraft of one kind or another.

Exo-anthropology then moved to a concern with the projection of alternative cultural scenarios. How should a space colony society be structured? How should a space colony be governed? What is or might be the relationship between a colony and its mother planet?

The establishment of exo-anthropology as a legitimate pursuit took place in 1975, when Cultures Beyond the Earth was published. Subtitled "The Role of Anthropology in Outer Space," the book lent a kind of academic legitimacy to the observation of various aspects of earth's own culture as if alien oneself. Many psychedelic pioneers had 'mu-tated' into alien life forms during this period. Popular expressions of this feeling/activity took the form of television shows like "Star Trek" and "Mork and Mindy.'

"In considering the existence of interplanetary cultures," wrote exoanthropologist Barbra Moskowitz, "it is naive to imagine all cultures as 'less' civilized than ours. When circumstances arise so that we are in contact with 'more' advanced be-

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ings, our entire orientation to the situation will change. Our goal at that point will be to live through the experience. Choice in action will be ours only insofar as it is granted to us. Our studies and researches will be limited, if existent at all. It is quite possible a more advanced culture will not react belligerently to us, but this is not the point. In the definition of more or less advanced, it is the potential for destruction that is important. Anyone operating under the weight of possible destruction is not free.'

The prophetic character and irony of these words, lent by our historical vantage point, certainly, is that even as they were being written, alien intelligences were invading earth, assuming the forms of mutating/mutated consciousness; people Leri dubbed "futique" as opposed to "antique" species. And they were all operating under the weight of possible nuclear annihilation.

It was seen/discovered by these alien anthropologists that the future — or what earth's natives called "the future" — did not arrive at all cultural points on the planet at the same time. There is, in fact, a "cultural timeline" that extends from the Australian bush people on one hand to California's micronets on the other.

There are global differences in the rates of adoption of new scientific knowledge and cultural innovation generally. Some have tried to explain these differences in terms of exo-psychology: neanderthals and mutants. It was pointed out that smoking a joint on the streets of Berkeley or San Francisco was not the same as smoking a similar joint on the streets of Cleveland or Toledo.

In fact, there are probably as many timelines as there are individual nervous systems. Since no one has yet found a way to correlate that many variables in one model, exo-anthropologists have contented themselves with mapping out broader timelines, shared by groups and networks, and, very rarely, individuals who have "warped" into the future far ahead of their physical contemporaries (R.M. Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness* people; Einstein; H.G. Wells).

In studying California's timelines, exoanthropologists have noted a remarakable thing: California has been a "crucible of the future" for the rest of the globe for quite some time. Not in every single cultural aspect, certainly, but in many nevertheless.

The space colonization movement, as represented by the L-5 Society and its corporate aerospace allies, took up a stronghold in California early-on, supported even by otherwise conservative politicians. It is doubtful that — had an earthquake done-in the Golden State as many predicted/hoped it would — there would even be any space colonies today

if it had not been for the support provided by California's spacers.

Closely allied to space technology are the technologies of intelligence: microand cryocomputers; brain/mind research and genetic recombination. These, too, have had timelines mapped as California "future" by much of the rest of the planet.

In the area of non-technological cultural evolution (although the strictest exo-anthropologists would be quick to assert that one cannot draw too strict a line between technology and the rest of culture) California has been on the front-edge of the wave. Sexual liberation, "lifestyle" experimentation, "human potential" exploration (sometimes confused with Freudian narcissism by more backward scholars), UFO contactees, and myth-making (researched and developed in San Francisco; packaged, exported and promoted in Los Angeles/Hollywood) have all either originated in California or were given strong future vectors there.

It was in California that the Universe was discovered. It was in California that time/space/consciousness links were first unravelled. It was in California that Cyberon was established, that unique demonstration of the practical applications of the future by single consciousnesses linked to futique nets of Aquarian conspirators.

Given these facts, one should not wonder that California also developed a reputation for harboring "kooks" and "crazies," both labels sometimes misapplied by people who had no real understanding of the cultural phenomena they were observing or purported to observe.

It is also therefore not surprising that we aliens flocked to California to become exo-anthropologists ourselves, sometimes making forays back into our genepools' origins (particularly during Winter Solstice) to make confirming observations and take more field-notes. These time trips back to the midwest and east are mentally exhausting, however, and most alien anthropologists warn against prolonged immersion in and exposure to "the past."

Perhaps it is the sunshine. Perhaps the

Perhaps it is the sunshine. Perhaps the spectacular landscapes. It could be the ocean. Or perhaps the deliberate work of intelligent invaders. Whatever it is, California has more future per capita, still, than most galactic ports. And for 1998, that's saying a lot.

For more information on Space Colonization, Time Travel, and related "out there" topics, write: The Institute for the Study of the Human Future, Inc. (ISHF); Suite 1362; 2000 Center Street; Berkeley; CA 94704. Also: Space for All People; 1476 California No. 9; San Francisco, CA 94109.

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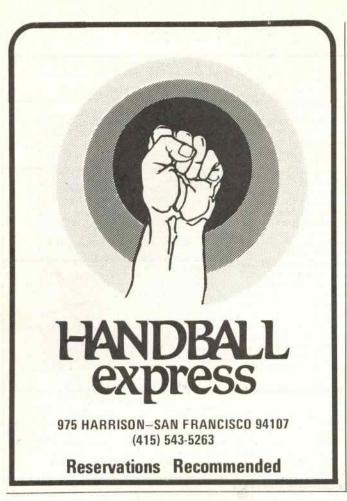
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