

***DRUMMER* COLUMN: SATIRE, ASTROLOGIC**

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DR. DICK

***DRUMMER* GOES TO THE DOCTOR**

Amoebiasis

Christmas 1978

by Jack Fritscher

- This entire column "*Drummer* Goes to the Doctor, Amoebiasis" is also available in Acrobat pdf.
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AUTHOR'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT INTRODUCTION



DRAFT VERSION



Dr. Dick Hamilton was an excellent gay doctor serving the gay community. I met him after he had taken tender and professional care of bar-owner Hank Diethelm who was being tended by Tony Tavarosi, Peter Fisk, George Benedict, and the African-American S&M top and medical nurse, Jim_____, and me who together kept Hank-off on a bad drug trip having to do with being forced to be in the Nazi Youth in Germany—from being institutionalized. I asked Dr. Dick if he would write a gay health column for *Drummer*. He was so busy that he agreed to give me information in telephone interviews if I would write the actual column, which I tried to make read like amusing magazine entertainment while trying to inform. At the time, it seemed to me that too many gay men were sick too much too often from too many different things. I wanted *Drummer* to address the problems to raise awareness. This was 1978, years before AIDS, but gay men were very much in need of health care from a doctor who did not shoot them up with antibiotics which, unfortunately, the San Francisco Department of Public Health did to every gay man the minute he walked in the door. Those 70's antibiotic shots, I think, had a lot to do with destroying the immune systems of very many San Francisco gay men, leading to the HIV-ADS tragedy. --JF, July 14, 1999

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YOU SAY YOUR ASS IS FALLING OUT? After a successful all-night orgy and fantasy trip, every guy feels this way. But usually your cooperative ass tucks back in and is ready for a new go-round next weekend.

When your ass is in trouble, though, you know it. If you're unlucky enough to slow down on douching for a while—long enough to store up a regular bowel movement—it won't look regular at all. Instead, it will look like brown ping pong balls or a moth-eaten chocolate banana instead of a well-packed Snickers bar. You notice some clear globs of mucous (not the solid white stuff; that's your fantasy again, men). And the globs may be flecked with yellow pus or red blood. To top off these joyful happenings, you may have gas that just doesn't stop. Maybe you "ain't never birthed no babies, Miss Scarlett," but shitting sure comes hard—like a Roman candle going off. The ultimate insult is the fruitless shit on the quarter hour and a dibble of pus and mucous on a chocolate drop when the clock strikes twelve. Man, that's trouble.

What's happening is that an old tropical disease, amoebiasis, is starting to make its home in your friendly asshole. This is a form of amoebic dysentery that is transmitted sexually. Rimmers take note: amoebiasis is caused by a shapeless blob of protoplasm that can come out of an infected ass with a protective shell that dissolves in the acid of your stomach. This carefully packed cyst can come wrapped in a ball of shit or hide in the petals of that beautiful blossom that we buttholers all worship so much. Another quick way to catch the rascal amoeba is by 69ing with a joy stick that has already been up an infected ass. And for those who cherish the notion that handballing is disease-free, forget it. An amoeba can hop an express train under your fingernails while you're ploughing some fine ass. Next stop: inside you, especially if you've never gotten over biting your nails.

Do you have amoebiasis?

Let's find out.

It often takes about three months from the time of joyfully acquiring the parasite (it doesn't eat much, and it doesn't get active until it's joined by large numbers of others—orgies always were better fun). You'll probably share your disease with several friends, especially if you get your ass frequently serviced, before the first symptoms develop. Fortunately, one cyst doesn't always a garden make. But if you frequent bath houses where handballing and immoderate drug use occur; suck cock in bath houses, at orgies, or through gloryholes; and eat ass, you are a prime candidate for a heavy case of amoebiasis.

A few more questions are important. When was the last time you were treated for

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gonorrhoea? If you're getting clap more often than usual, it might mean that amoebas are an underlying problem. They can penetrate the mucous barrier of your ass to create an easier pathway for the gonococcus to enter. When douching or farting, do you detect a foul, metallic, smell? This occurs about the third month and may either mean you have amoebas or need to eat two bran muffins or take Metamucil to improve texture. (Yogurt and 6-8 brewer's yeast tablets have the advantage of improving over-all ass odor, but the disadvantage of increasing gas volume.) Finally, have you been finding that you just can't get enough of sex, or can't find a dick big enough to satisfy you? This, of course, can either be out-and-out greed or the slow, irritating process of the asshole beginning to act up with amoebas.

So you've been fucked silly, washed all the foul shit down the drain, had the clap fixed four times in the past two months. What's next? There you are, sitting at home and wondering whether to wait any longer. (Little do you suspect that this is the fifth month of amoebic- homesteading in your ass.) You have a gut fear about what might or might not happen at the doctor's office, where you figure the medical truth may be a custard pie in your face.

Whatever you do, swallow your Adam's apple along with your pride, take this article along with you, and get those ping-pong-ball specimens analyzed for parasites. Further waiting may result in "lumps" (swellings) around amoebic ulcers. These lumps might make you think you have hemorrhoids. Talk about instant paranoia!

Home remedies can sometimes make an infected ass feel better temporarily, but they don't get at the root (you should pardon the expression) of the problem. Douching your ass in warm water three times a day can be soothing, but it doesn't cure the cause. Any old antibiotics left around may also make things feel better without a cure. Don't use them. The real cure process calls for submitting at least one and maybe three stool specimens to the lab as directed by your doctor. Depending on your age, he may decide to do a sigmoidoscopy and give a barium enema to look for cancer, too

I usually treat with tetracycline and Flagyl or tetracycline and diridoquin. Following treatment, symptoms are usually gone. If not, then we do further studies. For milder symptoms, Chinese herbs, comfrey tea, fennel tea (especially to treat excess gas), and yogurt are particularly good for those post-treatment "blahs." Even though follow-up specimens may be negative, the medication sometimes leaves some irritation.

Amoebiasis is bad in several ways. It's spreading fast in San Francisco, and it must be controlled for the general good of the gay community. True, the chemicals needed for its cure are no fun to take. They can make you feel fairly rotten for twenty days or so. But the medication is nothing compared to the treatment for amoebiasis as late as 1929. Back then, doctors cut holes over the appendix into the colon to wash solutions back and forth between there and the ass hole.

Today, things aren't so bad, treatment-wise. So get your tail to a doctor before it falls out. Keep yourself—and all your future lovers—happy.

Merry Christmas!

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