

Giftng

Written September-October 1977, this feature essay was published in *Drummer* 19, December 1977.

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I. Author's Eyewitness Historical-Context Introduction written December 14, 2003

As a writer who is a stylist, I tried to make even *Drummer's* editorial advertising amusing through wordplay. Historically this "Giftng" piece is as much clock as calendar. It marks the first mention in *Drummer* of some leather heritage artists, such as Bob Mizer offering Harry Bush at Athletic Model Guild, David Hurles offering audio tapes years before he began to create video tapes at Old Reliable Studio (1981), and the Wizard's Emerald City, one of the first gay businesses to widen its way out of the Castro to an Upper Market Street location near Van Ness.

The uncredited model for the Accu-Jac device is the porn star Jack Wrangler. He finally took his pump, and exited gay culture to marry the legendary 1940s Big Band singer, Margaret Whiting, who, when Wrangler protested (as did we all) that he was gay, told him, "But only around the edges, dear."

The model "Tom" was a popular hot man in San Francisco whose name, as written in my sex Rolodex of friends, was "Leonard Sylvestri." He also appeared as "Tom" in the David Warner photo layout, "Construction Workers," which included "Richard Moore" who wrote the photo captions in *Drummer* 18 (August 1977), page 21.

In the 1970s, I knew "Richard Moore" as "John Adams," but he was also known as "Ivan" and "Olaf." He was a man-about-town who shaved his balding head and nearly always wore a curly wig. Sometimes he costumed himself as a silvery, glittering, and nearly nude "Mercury on Roller Skates" for the gay parade and for street fairs.

(The two David Warner "lumberjack" photographs of "Richard Moore" appeared in *Drummer* 18, page 20; "Richard Moore's" text for

Excerpt source: ©Jack Fritscher, *Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer*, San Francisco: Palm Drive Publishing, 2008

the photo spread is a good example of the weak, coy, and silly prose that I labored to delete from *Drummer* beginning with the first full issue that I signed as editor in chief, *Drummer* 19.)

Before “bears” came into existence in the 1980s as an acceptable body style possible for men like him, “Richard-John-Ivan-Olaf” struggled with his own bald, beefy look that he buffed with weightlifting. Like “Tom,” he was a bearded muscle guy living on Polk Street in a gay youth culture fixated on chicken. I saw that he and men like him might appreciate *Drummer* coming to their rescue through articles and illustrations celebrating the secondary male sex characteristics of men in their thirties. “Richard Moore” was an entrepreneur who hustled himself and his stable of gladiator musclemen out of his second-floor apartment on “Polkstrasse” where we often spent languorous afternoons on madras cushions, lying under his Casablanca ceiling fans, chatting among his potted palms.

(The afternoons I spent with another San Francisco entrepreneur, David Hurler/Old Reliable, in his apartment of hustlers were a different kind of languor; Old Reliable’s rugged models, mentioned in this “Gifting” feature, were essential to my virilizing *Drummer*.)

As a writer and editor, I was never one of “Richard Moore’s” clients, but we did work together on several projects. On July 30, 1987, he introduced me to one of his latest ingenues, Larry King, who was a twenty-five-year-old African-American freshly discharged from the US Navy for being gay. The deeply complexioned Larry King was built like a football linebacker at five-foot-eight and 235 pounds. He could afford to be the strong silent type because he also sported nine inches uncut. John Adams sat intent on set as I directed and lensed Larry King for my Palm Drive Video feature, *Big Black Dick Black* (1987).

The last time I saw “Richard Moore,” I was spending a week videotaping the 1988 Police Olympics in Bakersfield, California. In a sad *Sunset Boulevard* scene, he pulled up in front of the arena in a drop-dead vintage yellow Rolls Royce stretch convertible driven by a uniformed bodybuilder-chauffeur who helped him walk from the car. He was so gaunt, I did not think he would survive sitting in the audience of the Cop Olympics bodybuilding.

Standing on the stage, and shooting the physique contest close-up, I confess that in the midst of all that healthy male flesh, death mesmerized me, overcame me, dissolved me with sadness; I could not turn away; I discreetly panned my video camera into the audience to film a half-minute cameo of him sitting alone with his bodybuilder-caregiver in the twentieth row. I panned back to the rowdy physique action, stifling small gasps of tears and panic I had to hide by pressing my face into my viewfinder because my tripod stood on stage in the midst of bright lights,

sweating muscle, and hearty rounds of applause and cheers. That moment defined an existential archetype that Michelangelo could have painted, opposite his “Last Judgment,” at the other end of the Sistine Chapel: gay sexual outcasts, threatened by plague, surrounded by nearly nude straight law-enforcement heroes exuberant with health.

In 1989 during the Great Dying when I could no longer reach “Richard Moore” — John Adams — by telephone, I wrote in my Rolodex: “Dead, I think. He just disappeared.”

The model “Tom”/Leonard Sylvestri, if memory serves, had himself gone missing during the late 1970s after he seemed to become ill, grew gaunt, and probably went back to wherever he had immigrated from, because in the 1970s it was unfashionable to become sick in San Francisco. Of course, by the mid-80s, remembering Leonard, I figured he may have been one of those extremely early cases of AIDS that occurred in the 1970s before anyone connected the dots of the emerging pattern of deaths. How horrible it must have been for this sweet hot man, leaving the Titanic 70s party, not knowing what was afflicting him, while the band played on.

Hanging Tree Ranch, an early S&M leather mail-order business was famous for employing Richard Locke as a bondage model (*Drummer* 10, page 4) before Locke himself became legendary as the leading man in the Gage Brothers’ films, and as a face in the pages of *Drummer*. Although Locke was never on the cover, as editor in chief I produced an interview with him in *Drummer* 24 (September 1978), and introduced him and his manuscript for his autobiography then titled *I Didn’t Do It for the Money* to my own publisher Winston Leyland at Gay Sunshine Press. Eventually, the synergistic-genius film producer Jerry Douglas published *Locke Out: The Collected Writings of Richard Locke*, Firsthand Books (1993).

Tuffy’s Sport Shop at 597 Castro was the first commercial and community-minded articulation — and “alert”! — that gays could dare play the sports we weren’t allowed to play in high school. See more about Tuffy’s in my feature article “Gay Jock Sports” in *Drummer* 20 (January 1978). My gay sports article appeared two years before Tom Waddell first began talking publicly in 1980 about creating the first Gay Olympics (Gay Games 1982) whose first physique contest Mark Henry and I videotaped as a documentary at the Castro Theater for our Palm Drive Video company.

II. The feature essay as published in *Drummer* 19, December 1977

Gifting

OWN A PIECE OF THE ROCK. Give that special artist or photographer (who has everything but inspiration) a shot at Tom. Versatile modeling.

TUFFY'S SPORT SHOP can get your rear in gear for sports you once thought you'd never play. Athletic uniforms, shoes, equipment, and university insignia clothes are Tuffy's specialty. In addition, Tuffy sponsors the USA Athletic Club whose 500 professional, collegiate, and just-plain-fun jocks get into flag football, basketball, boxing, wrestling, tennis, skiing, and racquetball. Suit up your jock with something from Tuffy's and then gift him with a USA Athletic Club membership. Check it out with Tuffy. 597 Castro, San Francisco. (415) 621-2128.

CUZ NOBODY DOES IT BETTER. Accu-Jac is the perfect fit for the man who "wants to be alone" with his Target movies, his Old Reliable audio tapes, his titclamps, his dildo, and his Rush [a brand of poppers]. Accu-Jac won't supplant human relationships; but on a rainy night in Rio it comes in handy. Recommended for men who want to make really hot love to themselves. Bionically yours from JAC MASTERS, INC. \$3 gets you a Catalog of Adult Toys: 757 North La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles 90069.

BOX IT ALL UP in brown leather from Hanging Tree Ranch in San Diego. Send \$3 for color brochure for hides to highlight your hide.

AMG Athletic Model Guild offers a set of six 8x10 drawings by Harry Bush for \$9 and their latest issue of their magazine *Physique Pictorial* for \$1.25.

VELCRO MAD-MONEY BANDS. Your asshole may have more deposits, withdrawals, and interest than the Bank of America. So stash your cash inside the secret compartment of this watchband in brown or black leather. \$7. Wristband and cockring stashes also available for the truly paranoid. Take in the whole trip at The Trading Post, 960 Folsom, San Francisco.

SCULPTURE by Michael Drew. Sand color, glazed terra cotta, 11x7½. One-of-a-kind commissions for \$40. Exclusively through THE

WIZARD'S EMERALD CITY, 1645 Market Street, San Francisco.
(415) 863-1901.

HOT STUFF from Old Reliable is hot, reliable, and *authentic*. Cons, bikers, and punks are only a few of the tramps and trade who will burn your ears. Stick something nasty in your [audio] cassette [player] on a cold night alone. If you state you're over 21, a buck gets you a jerkable brochure that comes all year long. OLD RELIABLE, PO 5927, San Francisco 94101.

III. Eyewitness Illustrations

In the 1970s, the “very out” advent of gay-owned small businesses was the first sign of the dawn of the gay economy that was to grow into the fabled GLBT billion-dollar disposable income. While editor in chief of the small business known as *Drummer*, Jack Fritscher often wrote promotional copy for gay startups such as the Wizard's Emerald City owned by Dick Trask, one of the stars of the handballing independent-film classic *Erotic Hands*. In the business-mind of publisher John Embry, *Drummer* seemed to exist primarily as a vehicle to sell merchandise by mail order.

Display ad in *Drummer*. Old Reliable was the wildly successful photographer who was most responsible for expanding the *Drummer* concept of homomascularity and S&M as rough sex. When other gay magazines ran in terror of Old Reliable's scary ex-cons and drop-dead sexy rough trade, editor in chief Fritscher coaxed Old Reliable into *Drummer* 20 (January 1978) and brought him out aggressively as a "personality" in *Drummer* 21 (March 1978). Because of Old Reliable alongside all the other fresh *Drummer*-forming essentials of that issue, *Drummer* 21 is the best issue of *Drummer*. *Drummer* 21 is the perfect *Drummer* issue. *Drummer* 21 is the Platonic Ideal of what *Drummer* could be. In 1986, *Drummer* publisher Tony DeBlase wrote about 1970s *Drummer*: "Fritscher's discovery David Hurles' Old Reliable photos and A. Jay's drawings characterized this era....and A. Jay's illustrations for stories and ads had exactly the right look for Jack Fritscher's version of *Drummer*." Photographs by David Hurles. ©David Hurles. Used with permission.

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Back Cover, *Man2Man Quarterly* #6 (Spring 1981), “Mongoose.” In 1978 when Sam Wagstaff and Robert Mapplethorpe began to collect David Hurles’ Old Reliable photographs, Mapplethorpe’s first purchase was “Mongoose.” Photograph by David Hurles. ©David Hurles. Used with permission.

**Eyewitness
Illustration**

Front Cover, *Speeding: The Old Reliable Photos of David Hurles* (2005) illustrates the “Zero Degrees of Separation in the *Drummer* Salon.” When longtime *Drummer* and Mineshaft artist Rex wrote and designed the coffee-table book *Speeding*, he chose for his front cover the exact same Old Reliable photograph of the model Mongoose that Jack Fritscher had published on the back cover of *Man2Man Quarterly* #6 (1981) which also included a full-page drawing by Rex. Twenty-five years on, it was perhaps exigencies of the culture war that caused Rex to crop the image that Fritscher in freer times had published full-frontal.

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“Old Reliable’s Tico Patterson,” cover of the “Virtual *Drummer*,” *Man2Man Quarterly* #4 (Spring 1981). As he did in the pages of *Drummer*, and on Santa Monica Boulevard where he worked hard for the money, Tico Patterson typified the kind of rough and handsome Latin flavor that had so much appeal in the 1970s with *Drummer* coverman, Val Martin, who was the first Mr. *Drummer*. Tico folded out like stapled origami in his classic centerfold in *Man2Man Quarterly* #4, and in his solo action video from Old Reliable Studio. Cover design by Mark Henry. Photograph by David Hurles. ©David Hurles. Used with permission. See *Drummer* 19, page 20.

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Captions: Eyewitness documentation of the existence of graphics providing internal evidence supporting Jack Fritscher's text are located in the Jack Fritscher and Mark Hemry GLBT History collection. Out of respect for issues of copyright, model releases, permissions, and privacy, some graphics are not available for publication at this time, but can be shown by appointment.

Eyewitness
Illustration

Photograph. The model "Tom," Leonard Sylvestri, was an intimate in the *Drummer* salon via the popular Castro barber, Jim McPherson aka Thumper. See *Drummer* 19, page 21.

Eyewitness
Illustration

Photograph. "Richard Locke with Bridle Bit." With his universal sex appeal, Locke was a model for Hanging Tree Ranch mail order at the same time he appeared in *Playgirl* and in the Gage Brothers films. When editor in chief Fritscher looked around and saw that the 1970s *Drummer* demographic was approaching forty years old, he set in motion the further glamorization of Richard Locke to prove that a gay man could be more than twenty-one with a twenty-eight-inch waist. Fritscher's concept in *Drummer* 24 (September 1978), "In Praise of Older Men," sparked the already simmering "daddy" concept and led to the several special issues of *Drummer* titled *Drummer Daddies*. "Richard Locke with Bridle Bit" appeared on the cover of Fritscher's special issue, *Drummer Rides Again*, 1979, which, after Fritscher had prepared it, publisher Embry re-edited subtracting most of Fritscher's writing and photography because Fritscher had exited *Drummer* over money issues.

