

## *Crimes Against Nature 1977*

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- I. Author's Eyewitness Historical-Context Introduction written April 15, 2002
- II. The feature essay as published in *Drummer* 20, January 1978
- III. Eyewitness Illustrations

### I. Author's Eyewitness Historical-Context written April 15, 2002

*Drummer* and Theater  
*Drummer* and Performance Art

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"To survive, I'm butch."

—David Baker, author, *Crimes Against Nature*  
Now THAT'S acting!

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As eyewitness editor in chief and as author of a couple plays in *Drummer*, I find this a chance to remind GLBT history that *Drummer* as a lifestyle-generating magazine was essentially theatrical in its mission and presentation of gender identity and sexuality. I mean something more essential than the total obsession *Drummer* had with S&M-themed Hollywood films, or with the erotic art films of early *Drummer* contributor, Fred Halsted, the MOMA-enshrined Los Angeles director who so perfectly formed the dominant theatrical film images in the first issues of *Drummer*. It is also something more ritualistic than the bumptious burlesque theater of the extremely popular Mr. *Drummer* contests that provided great bonhomie and free leather-fashion runway photos for covers and centerfolds.

At its substantial best, *Drummer* frequently published the scripts of plays and performance pieces including in *Drummer* 5, *Isomer* (1975), a one-act play by Richard A. Steel with author photo by J & R Studios; in *Drummer* 12 and *Drummer* 13, *Pogey Bait* (1977), a two-act play by George Birimisa; in *Drummer* 22 and *Drummer* 23, *Corporal in Charge* of

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*Taking Care of Captain O'Malley* (1978), an erotic drama by Jack Fritscher from a draft concept by David Hurles who has been the performance-art and photography studio "Old Reliable" since 1971; in *Drummer 22* (May 1978), "Cigar Sarge" by Jack Fritscher, collected and republished by Richard Labonté (with Fritscher's "USMC Slap Captain") as "Sexual Harassment in the Military: 2 Performance Pieces for 4 Actors in 3 Lovely Costumes" in *Best Gay Erotica* 1998; in *Drummer 24* and *Drummer 25*, *Ex-Cons: We Abuse Fags* (1978), a one-man show by David Hurles (Old Reliable) and Jack Fritscher; in *Drummer 25*, "Horse Master," an erotic performance piece by Jack Fritscher, plus an excerpt from *Equus* which upset playwright Peter Shaffer because publisher Embry did not responsibly follow through my advisement for him to secure written permission; and in *Drummer 57, Delivery* (1982), a play by C. D. Arnold.

In addition to my friend and frequent collaborator, the screen director David Hurles, the *Drummer* salon had many theatrical links including my longtime intimate, Richard LeBlond (1924-2000), president of the San Francisco Ballet (1975-1987), who was so practically supportive of my "script" for *Drummer* that he provided the rope-and-harness photographs of the San Francisco Ballet that I requested and published with my "Bondage" feature in *Drummer 24* (September 1978). (Richard LeBlond is not Richard Labonté, my literary critic pal who was the guiding light among the founders of A Different Light bookstore which was the first 1970s venue to invite gay authors in to perform their works.)

Complementing the Hollywood Halsted and the local LeBlond, New York stage-and-screen director Wakefield Poole, who had moved west—like Harvey Milk during the 1970s Manhattanization of San Francisco—was one of the most glamorous talents circling the *Drummer* salon from his swank studio and home on the Panhandle of Golden Gate Park where he and I co-produced at least one invitation-only salon centered on the physique performance of my lover Jim Enger, the championship bodybuilder whom Wakefield had gorgeously lit, after the manner of Caravaggio's stark tenebrism, with his dramatic chiaroscuro film-studio lighting.

Responding once to my concerns about publishing his photographs to his liking, Wakefield generously defined my role as editor in chief of the *Drummer* "script" saying, "You're the director." He and his partner Paul Hatlestad provided noble support because their tastes, films, theatrical photographs, and stage shows were so essentially homomasculine that they were a perfect fit for my conception of *Drummer*. I published a 35mm color-still from Wakefield's feature, *The Bible* (1974), on the cover of *Drummer 27* (February 1979), and featured an inside spread of ten Poole photographs from the films *Bijou* (1972), *Moving* (1974), and *Take One*

(1977). This was the same *Drummer 27* that published my *Playboy*-style interview with Wakefield who had also produced the participant-cabaret party extravaganza, “Night Flight.” (See *Drummer 20*, January 1978.) On August 24, 1978, Wakefield told me:

Technically, we’re moving into the Videotape 80s....My fantasy for the 1980s is to produce a live Broadway show. Multi-media. Using all the pornstars I could employ. Just like *A Chorus Line*. Have it all take place in a discotheque.

Having filmed *Roger* (1977), Wakefield proceeded in early 1978 at San Francisco’s Nob Hill Theater to incorporate that film into the mixed-media SRO stage show he produced and directed for the Target and Colt model, “Roger” (Daryll Hanson), whose orgiastic Nob Hill performance as an erotic “Eugene Sandow” I profiled in “Pumping Roger,” *Drummer 21* (March 1978), and whose nude pose, shot by Wakefield, I featured on the “Homomascularity” cover of the “Virtual *Drummer*,” *The California Action Guide* (November 1982). In 1980, Wakefield introduced me to his friend, Georgina Spelvin, the star of his film, *The Bible*, and, most famously, the star of *The Devil in Miss Jones* (1973). In the zero degrees of separation, my literally embedded interview with the *grande dame* porn star, “The Devil in Miss Spelvin,” was published in *Hooker* magazine (1981).

In a letter dated September 7, 1978, Wakefield wrote:

Dear Jack, Enclosed is a copy of *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, *The Proust Screenplay* [written by Harold Pinter]. I hope you enjoy it as much as yours truly. I’m on my third reading and it gets better each time. — Love, Wake.

The book itself is inscribed,

To Jack, I found a copy for you today. Now you need only read and enjoy. — Wakefield

He sent the Pinter film script because we had talked earnestly of our “Proustian” responsibility as artists in the 70s to write and create the 70s from the inside out—he in the recorded visions of his films, and I in the recorded journal entries which he knew I was shaping into the 70s drafts of *Some Dance to Remember* which I shared with him and with Robert Mapplethorpe who was also capturing esthetic documentary “takes” on the 1970s. I had titled my 1978 *Drummer* interview of Wakefield Poole

with the inevitable pun, “Dirty Poole.” Twenty-three years later, Alyson Publications printed Wakefield Poole’s memoir with the same title: *Dirty Poole: Autobiography of a Gay Porn Pioneer* (2001).

With the Manhattan luster of Wakefield Poole and Robert Mapplethorpe shining in the pages of *Drummer*, I cultivated the “decadent” international S&M-leather esthetic of the Berlin photographer and film director, Gerhard Pohl, who was so sensational in his evocative Weimar ways that Christopher Isherwood might have blushed long before Pohl’s retrospective at the Schwules Museum. (Pohl is not Poole.) When Pohl spied the huge stack of journal pages I was editing into *Some Dance to Remember*, he said, “Alfred Doblin, *Alexanderplatz*?” That was at least a year before Americans had heard of Fassbinder’s film, *Alexanderplatz*. So I asked my German immigrant friend, Hank Diethelm, about what was then simply the novel, *Alexanderplatz*. Diethelm at age fourteen had been conscripted into the Nazi Youth, escaped the Russian front in 1945, starred in my underground film *Castration* (Super-8, 1972), helped me remodel my Victorian in 1975, and became the founding owner of the legendary Folsom Street bar, the Brig, from where his murderer took him home. (Hank Diethelm: March 18, 1928 - April 10, 1983.) Diethelm explained Pohl’s allusion joking that Doblin’s Berlin was like Joyce’s Dublin in *Ulysses*. Both wrote novels of a specific group of people in a specific time in a specific city that itself became a “character” which was my goal in my memoir-novel. In his stunning spins through San Francisco, Gerhard Pohl was a popular house guest who was dedicated to “‘feeding’ the downtrodden.” He contributed much “off-the-page” *frisson* to the *mise en scene* in our *Drummer* salon where, in our homes of an evening, he frequently unspooled his exotic and daring and very beautiful underground Euro-leather films of totemic dominance and taboo submission that expanded our San Francisco consciousness and encouraged us locals to make *Drummer* even more global in appeal. The secret of success in *Drummer* was that the editor had to be a top because the readers were ninety-nine percent bottoms seeking someone who would top them on page, stage, screen, and real life.

(My collaborative relationship with Old Reliable David Hurles, my personal relationship with Richard LeBlond, and my intimate relationship with Robert Mapplethorpe, as well as my professional relationship with Wakefield Poole were all four between me and each one of them, and none was ever between them and *Drummer* and its publisher, John Embry. When I exited the daily drama around *Drummer* on December 31, 1979, their relationships to *Drummer* evaporated. It was their choice; no gauntlet was thrown down. By 1986 when I returned to *Drummer*,

Hurles and LeBlond and Mapplethorpe and Poole each had other interests as did the new AIDS-era *Drummer* publisher, Anthony DeBlase.)

In the 1970s, through plays such as my *Coming Attractions*, and through actors such as my pal, the leathery S&M hunk David Baker, *Drummer* was attached to the invention of gay theater in San Francisco. I had met David Baker at the Folsom Prison bar during Christmas 1972, and I wrote the story of our erotic tumble that set my faded Levi's on fire in the feature essay, "Leather Christmas," *Drummer* 19 (December 1977). Actors and performance artists were drawn to the *Drummer* salon because of our sincere and welcoming coverage of happenings and performances in leather bars, galleries, and staged parties, as well as *Drummer's* eager photographic search for erotically dramatic leather models posed in tableaux of S&M. David Baker also acted at the 544 Natoma Gallery founded by Peter Hartman in 1977 at the same moment *Drummer* moved to San Francisco, and everything converged.

Besides Andy Warhol's Factory films and traveling musical S&M show, *The Exploding Plastic Inevitable* (1966), performed live by the Velvet Underground, and because of Broadway successes like the rugby-masculine *The Changing Room* (1972) and the masculine inquiries of *A Chorus Line*, experimental plays became important to *Drummer's* text and mindset. (*A Chorus Line* opened one month before the publication of the first issue of *Drummer* on June 20, 1975.) The experimental plays were often naked, sexual, and violent "60s Revolution" plays (and their film versions) that *Drummer* readers—having been educated in the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s—attended, or learned about over brunch. They were familiar with the form and content, and intellectually and erotically, they liked what they saw on stage and they wanted it on the page. Gay Liberation of the 1970s was a pop-culture gay lib whose consciousness grew out of the theater of protest of the 1960s when civil rights for Blacks and for the anti-war and anti-government movements both expressed themselves first in the open air as street theater and then in actual theaters as writers reflected on what was going on, what was worth fighting for, and what was worth rebelling against in influential plays from Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Jean Genet to Kenneth Brown's exercise in brutal S&M, *The Brig* (1963); director Peter Brook's *Marat/Sade* (1966); Andy Warhol's *Pork* (1971); and stage work by the Cockettes in San Francisco, and by Charles Ludlam's Ridiculous Theatrical Company in New York. Art and politics in the 1960s made sex worth something. *Worthiness* was the key word. "Male worth" was the main value behind my concept when I was driving *Drummer*.

Art usually tidies up the ragged edges of life with Aristotelian unities of time, place, and action so life can be both felt and analyzed. Art is an

invaluable walk-through rehearsal of life's problems and joys so when people begin to experience their own inescapable life, they have at least been exposed to options as to how artists have their characters live, love, suffer, problem-solve, or resign themselves. Before "theater of gay lib" itself existed, gay-themed plays represented lesbigay life in various daring and tortured ways. It is symptomatic of the anti-gay times of the mid-twentieth century that many original gay-themed works found their contents, and even their titles, censored as they crossed from novels to plays to films.

Three plays that became part of the canon of gay consciousness, particularly in the last two decades before Stonewall, were:

- the discreetly coded Broadway hit about "outing" lesbian love by Lillian Hellman, *The Children's Hour* (1934), which homophobia twisted into a straight film re-titled *These Three* (1936). After twenty-five years of social evolution, the director of *These Three*, William Wyler, remade Hellman's drama into a psychological thriller with the restored title, *The Children's Hour* (1961), starring gay divas Shirley MacLaine and Audrey Hepburn suffering the kind of shocking pain that happens when people are dragged out of the closet. In a great life-affirming departure from the worst gay dramatic cliché that the gay character must die on page, stage, or screen, in *Drummer* fiction, no character ever committed suicide.
- novelist Calder Willingham's gay-themed-S&M military-school drama, *End as a Man*, which as a 1953 Off-Broadway play at the Theatre de Lys was publicized as a 1954 Broadway vehicle starring the young prince, James Dean, who instead went west to star in *East of Eden* (1955). Besides my 1950s gaydar lust for the edible James Dean, the provocative title, *End as a Man*, resounded in my throbbing teenage DNA as a mantra about "secret rituals that make a boy a man" — which, of course, is the main theme of most *Drummer* stories, and of most *Drummer* "Leather Fraternity" personal ads articulating a real effemiphobia that counter-balances sissies' real fear of homomascularity. In 1957, two years after James Dean was killed and went iconic on September 30, 1955, homophobia caused Hollywood to retitle the film version as *The Strange One* which was a marketing pun on the Ur-gay leather-biker film, *The Wild One* (1953), starring Marlon Brando who was James Dean's doppelganger. And

- the very coded Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* (play, 1947; film 1951). My doctoral dissertation was *Love and Death in Tennessee Williams* (1967), and only the most flat-faced heterosexuals would ever not get that Sebastian Venable was cannibalized for being a bacchanalian gay in *Suddenly Last Summer* (1958); only the most flat-earth straights would not be able to decipher that Blanche DuBois was a drag version of an effeminate man who liked rough sex servicing young soldiers, and who had a lech for his/her hyper-masculine blue-collar brother-in-law—himself recently mustered out of the army, played on stage and screen by the twenty-something Marlon Brando who merged his sweaty hard-man image from *Streetcar* into his combustion-engine rebel image in *The Wild One* to become a huge biker icon behind the leather culture of early *Drummer*.

In 1967, Mart Crowley wrote a powerfully pentecostal play that spoke with tongues of fire. *The Boys in the Band* became a Broadway hit, a Hollywood movie, and a cultural benchmark. The self-eviscerating comedy, no more bi-polar than the ever-lovely (perhaps drag drama), *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962), became popular with regional and community theaters. As a matter of fact, my domestic lover and photography partner at *Drummer*, David Sparrow—when he was a student at Western Michigan University where I was tenured on the English Department faculty—starred in the 1972 WMU production of *The Boys in the Band* directed by David Karsten. Much to our amusement, he was cast as “Alan,” the only straight character in the play, while straight “college-boy” actors—who kept their balance on such thin ice—played swishy gays. David Sparrow was accurately typecast on stage, because he was a homo-masculine man playing an evolving heteromasculine character, and masculinity carried his performance as much as his presence. Some latter-day gay critics don't approve of Mart Crowley's snarly dialog, which, whatever they imagine, is an exact time capsule of the way many homosexuals of a certain age bantered with a kind of “gay gallows humor” in the oppression before Stonewall. Up through the 1960s, suicide—beginning with social suicide through alcohol and tobacco, and then physical suicide—was the only way out of the existential horror show of being outcast with other outcasts. If the brilliant Mart Crowley were figure-skating an “Olympic version” of *The Boys in the Band*, he would win a perfect 10, crowned with another perfect 10 for overcoming the degree of difficulty in nailing his quadruple-lutz routine with an accuracy that some found disconcerting.

Gay theater in the 1970s raised its profile in New York with Al Carmine's musical, *The Faggot* (1973); A. J. Kronengold's *Tubstrip* (1974) starring Casey Donovan aka Cal Culver, the star of Wakefield Poole's film, *The Boys in the Sand* (1971); Christopher Hampton's *Total Eclipse* (1974) which in Hampton's 1995 film version starred Leonardo DiCaprio and David Thewlis; Lanford Wilson's *Hot L Baltimore* (1973) featuring Richard A. Steel whose play *Isomer* was published in *Drummer* 5 (March 1976); Terrence McNally's satire of the Continental Baths, *The Ritz* (1975); James Kirkwood's *A Chorus Line* (1976); David Rabe's *Streamers* (1976), and Harvey Fierstein's *International Stud* (1978). Besides *Isomer*, the most directly related to *Drummer* were Kenneth Brown's *The Brig* and Doric Wilson's *West Street Gang* (1977) which was staged in the leather bar, the Spike, near the Anvil bar, not far from the Mineshaft. My TV-Guide-like Thumbnail for *West Street Gang*: a hot young gay basher is caught and put on trial by the leather-bar patrons. (My longtime sexmate from 1969-1974, Don Morrison, was one of the owner/managers of the Spike, and one of the producers behind *West Street Gang*. Another owner/manager/producer was Morrison's partner, Frank Olson, who was also the lighting director for the CBS-TV soap, *The Secret Storm*. Because of our incestuous sex synergy in 1970, Olson gave me an old-leather-boys-club entree to *The Secret Storm* director, cast, and set in CBS Studio 43 when I was writing my book on "electronic" theater, *Television Today*, published in 1971).

Outside New York, gay theater in San Francisco in the early 1970s was mostly drag versions of warhorses like *Hello Dolly*, staged by my friend, the actor-director Michael Lewis, at the Yonkers Production Company which also produced my one-act *Coming Attractions* (1976). There were notable exceptions mirroring the tremendous art behind gay liberation. In 1977, the Gay Men's Theater Collective created, after the style of *A Chorus Line*, the theatrical event titled *Crimes Against Nature*. It caused a sensation and gay culture-vultures may note that *Crimes* was the first gay play in San Francisco to be videotaped. Directed by Edward Dundas, a three-camera video copy of this original production saved an extraordinary documentary of the Titanic 1970s. As I have mentioned elsewhere, because of corporations warring over VHS and Beta formats, the new consumer video cameras and VCRs did not reach ordinary people until 1981 and 1982. As a result, the first decade of gay lib in the 1970s is virtually invisible because what moving images exist were mostly shot on film and were mostly silent—and as a result were mostly porn. The 1970s corporate war over VHS and Beta was a gay tragedy. Had video existed, the 1970s would be critiqued quite differently by those who missed the era, and only attended the 1980s after-party.

I speak from experience as a filmmaker once limited by technology and budget to shooting on Super-8 while lusting for video. (Pioneer Andy Warhol had a video camera as early as 1966.)

In the 1960s, San Francisco actor Paul Gerrior was the first Colt Studio icon: on silent film and in print. In my eyewitness observation, Colt Studio gained its first reputation from presenting the universally handsome Paul Gerrior as “Ledermeister.” If Gerrior had been separated at birth, his twin would have been the actor Clint Walker, the muscular, noble, and hairy-chested star of the TV show *Cheyenne*. (I printed a shirtless waist-to-face torso photo of Clint Walker on the last page of *Drummer 27* as precise nostalgia because so many *Drummer* readers had come out as teenagers ogling Walker who performed his signature scenes—stripped to the waist—week after week.) Colt founder Jim French featured Gerrior in many homomasculine erotic films, including *The Meterman*, which was appropriate because Paul Gerrior worked as a lineman for a utility company in San Francisco.

Paul Gerrior was also the legendary model in the slick-paper *Catalog for Leather ‘n’ Things*, which was the leather clothing store at 4079 18<sup>th</sup> Street, on the south side of 18<sup>th</sup> east of the Hibernia Bank on the corner of 18<sup>th</sup> and Castro. In the early 1970s, every man in the City, and every tourist, picked up multiple copies of the handsomely produced catalog which was first published in 1969 and was kept in print until around 1974. That *Leather ‘n’ Things Catalog* was like a pre-*Drummer* mockup of *Drummer* and should be included in every really complete collection of *Drummer*. There are twenty-seven iconic photographs of the hairy and muscular Paul Gerrior stripped to the waist in leather, in sheepskin, with gun in holster, with cigarette, and ultimately sized up with a cloth tape measure in two photos in which his awesome body, wearing briefs, is divided into a grid to guide mail-order customers how to measure themselves. (Measuring oneself in the 1970s was the original gay Olympic event.)

In the zero degrees of separation, Paul Gerrior was the 1960s traveling companion of my longtime friend Al Shapiro, the artist A. Jay, who was the art director of *Drummer* when I was editor in chief. (I have inherited Al Shapiro’s vacation snapshots and Polaroids which often feature the private Gerrior.) In the 1960s, Al Shapiro and Colt founder Jim French lived in the same apartment building in Brooklyn Heights off Joralemon Street in a building so gay it was called “KY Flats.” When French decided to shoot an on-location brochure to advertise his precisely registered “COLTOURS” to the Caribbean, Al Shapiro designed French’s shoot of model Paul Gerrior. Even though we had friends in common, Paul Gerrior was too beautiful for anything but my worship from afar.

For six weeks, from July 13 to August 19, 1978, during the nearly three years I was editor of *Drummer*, Paul Gerrior, who remains a very popular actor in San Francisco theater with the Actors' Collective, starred in *The Firebirds*, a play written by Max Frisch, and presented by the San Francisco Actors Ensemble, 2940 16<sup>th</sup> Street. My protege Tony Plewik, whose work I often mentored in *Drummer*, was photographer for the show which featured a fetishized fireman with fireman boots in a fireman uniform. Paul Gerrior, who was the perfect Jungian archetype of a very hairy musclemán with a Marlboro face and chin, played the part of "Sepp Schmitz, a wrestler." He was also one of the men influencing my creating the positive aspects of the muscular character of Kick in *Some Dance to Remember*.

In the intersecting worlds of leather, film, and theater during the 1970s, Paul Gerrior appeared regularly with the San Francisco Actors Ensemble, beginning in 1972 with his starring role in *Lucifer and the Good Lord*. "Sepp Schmitz" was his ninth role in SFAE plays including *Ghosts*, *Detective Story*, Tennessee Williams' *Summer and Smoke*, and as Judge Brack in Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*. When my background in Tennessee Williams converged with Colt's iconic actor, Ledermeister, my esthetic and erotic fate was sealed. Most gay men then alive lusted after him. Naturally, every play he appeared in sold out with standing room only. I couldn't keep my eyes off him on screen, on stage, or in bars like the No Name and Ramrod, or in Riley's Gym (which became the Golden Gate Gym) which was one of the gyms where our salon worked out. In fact, once in the mid-70s when he wrecked his Harley-Davidson motorcycle and broke his leg, I marveled that the next weekend he was back in the Folsom bars, stoic, smiling, and very handsome with his leg in a plaster cast—and on crutches. I remember thinking: Omigod, I can finally catch him! Knowing that cruising can become stalking, I behaved.

In 1972, I was artist enough to recognize Ledermeister in a piece of street theater that reflects exactly how roleplaying mirrors reality. I was walking east of 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Divisadero where David Sparrow and I were living with Allan Lowery, owner of the Leatherneck bar, when the spontaneous apparition every documentary filmmaker desires appeared. There, sitting with his legs down in a manhole, with his butt sitting on the pavement of the little side street, wearing all his Pacific Gas & Electric lineman gear, and one of the white-cotton wife-beater tank tops he famously filled out, was Paul Gerrior, Ledermeister, peeling the ends off wires with a knife in his big hands between his knees. Instead of cuming right there, I sprinted uphill back to my bedroom at Allan Lowery's thinking the apparition would be gone before I could get my silent Super-8 camera. I ran downhill and knelt in the street, twenty or so feet away

from Paul Gerrior doing brilliantly in real life in real time what everyone thought was acting on screen. He knew exactly what I was doing and he knew exactly what he was doing, and without so much as either of us acknowledging the other and breaking the fourth wall, I shot him, peeling wires, his biceps naturally flexing, his big hairy pecs working, for over twenty minutes to fix his real image on two four-minute reels of silent, color film. I did not interrupt him and he did not interrupt me. We both seemed, locked into that street scene, bonded, two artists knowing exactly what the other one was creating. Had the perfect voyeur found the perfect exhibitionist?

It was not until Sunday, June 24, 1979—the zenith summer of my three years of editing *Drummer*—that we converged in the same bed.

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When a famous porn star and a famous bodybuilder cruise each other on the public promenade of 18<sup>th</sup> and Castro, hook up, and leave together *entourage* with a known magazine editor, that's newsworthy on the Richter Scale! Heads turn; paparazzi shoot; phones ring; gossip ripples with aftershocks.

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On a hyper-cruise Sunday afternoon, standing outside the Elephant Walk bar at 18<sup>th</sup> and Castro, my lover-bodybuilder Jim Enger and I saw Paul Gerrior and his friend Craig Caswell walking up the crowded sidewalk toward us. (Caswell—whose name I think is correct—and I were lucky enough each to be half of a very public couple.) It was a fireball of energy when Gerrior and Enger saw each other. Fifteen minutes later, the four of us were mixed into an only-in-the-70s performance on my bed at my house on 25<sup>th</sup> Street. Let me backtrack for a moment. This is the way it is with worship: before the four of us went to the bedroom, I had Jim Enger stall our guests while I excused myself in a stealth move to take Paul Gerrior's photograph off the wall over the bed where I had kept it from 1972 and keep it even today, so perfectly the Platonic Ideal of the archetypal man was he to me. My Paul Gerrior film still exists. (The color photograph of Ledermeister called "Stoner" was by Jim French, Colt Studio, and was published in the centerfold of *Queen's Quarterly*, January-February 1972.)

Here I discreetly draw the curtain across our private theatrical (which was an archetypal 180-degree antithesis from the stereotypical *The Boys in the Band*), but my beige designer sheets with the one bold red stripe next to the one bold green stripe, like a *madeleine* from Proust, have been saved as holy relics which to this day have never been used again, or

washed. Can one brew tea from DNA? Those sheets, and their shelf-life, are among my souvenirs with a lock of David Sparrow's strawberry-roan hair, a small chunk of cement from the Berlin Wall, a fragment of bone from the leg of Saint Isidore, the posing briefs of Jim Enger, a tiny Titian, the key to Mapplethorpe's Bond Street loft, and my personal ticket and program from August 7, 1961, when Merman opened in *Gypsy* at the Curran Theater in San Francisco. I dance to remember and to think.

Exuding masculine gay appeal, another theatrical production that rocked San Francisco's pre-*Drummer* community was staged with a very new kind of uncloseted gay heart that moved self-defining gender one click farther in the evolution of identity. In the early 1970s, the drama department of Lone Mountain College premiered a nearly all-male production of *Tommy: The Who's Rock Opera*. The muscular young actor-dancers, stripped to the waist, and wearing sailors' white bell bottoms—referencing the seafood fetish of Herman Melville in *Billy Budd*, Tennessee Williams in "One Arm," Jean Genet in *Querelle*, and Kenneth Anger in *Fireworks*—set the hippie-Castro and leather-Folsom crowds on their ear. These benefit-of-the-doubt "straight" young men were the first sign of "something new" in the post-Stonewall sea change. Their debut revealed the arrival of an emerging and twenty-something homomascularity that was a 1970s "way of being" beyond the early 1950s trope of thirty-something "leather, motorcycles, and S&M." Printed on the *Tommy* program, the twenty-two athletic actors were listed with hippie names: Charming Fred, Tommy John, Golden Gai, Starlight Alan, Psychedelic Ron, and so on.

Less musical and sexy, in 1976, the Yonkers Production Company produced a one-act play I had written about gay life emerging in San Francisco on 24<sup>th</sup> Street and Castro. It was titled *Coming Attractions* (aka *Kweenasheba*) and played on a double-bill with Lanford Wilson's one-act homage to—and "out-take" from—Tennessee Williams: *The Madness of Lady Bright*. The plays were headlined on the front-page of the *Bay Area Reporter* (BAR), Volume 6, Number 5, March 4, 1976, and were noticed in the San Francisco *Chronicle* Pink Section (March 21, 1976), because *Coming Attractions* was the first little gay play written in San Francisco *at that time* about gay identity in San Francisco *at that time* and produced *at that time*.

In August 1977, spurred on by the local Theatre Workers production of Brecht's translation of Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* (whose poster I later printed with my purposely claustrophobic two-person dialog playlet, "Bondage," in *Drummer* 24), I wrote a kind of quintessential dominance-submission play, *Corporal in Charge of Taking Care of Captain O'Malley: Drummer* 22 (May 1978) and *Drummer* 23 (July 1978). (In the

six-hundred degrees of separation, Christopher Marlowe was murdered in 1593 in self-defense by Ingram Frizer—a British collateral cousin from the Northern European Fritscher line: Fritscher/Fritcher/Fritzer/Frizer. Some people become dyslexic trying to spell or pronounce my surname that sports an internal “s” and rhymes with *richer*.)

It is an historical note that my friend David Hurles, with whom I have never traded stabs, collaborated on the background authenticity of my version of *Corporal in Charge*, and he recorded his own wonderful “audio book” performance version that is still available from his Old Reliable studio. In 1991, literary historian and critic Winston Leyland included my *Corporal in Charge* text as the only drama in his Lammy-Award winning canon, *Gay Roots: 20 Years of Gay Sunshine: An Anthology of Gay History, Sex, Politics, and Culture* (1991). *Corporal* has become a classic *Drummer* chestnut. It also appeared in three anthology editions of my writing titled *Corporal in Charge and Other Stories*, published in 1984 by Gay Sunshine Press, San Francisco; in 1998 by Prowler Press, London; and in a text-definitive edition in 2000, Palm Drive Publishing, San Francisco.

The power of some of the writing in *Drummer* has endured and has entered the canon of the literary gaystream.

*Crimes Against Nature* which premiered in 1977 about the same time as I became *Drummer* editor in chief grew out of this early climate when theater of gay lib was finding its voice which was to nurture some of the strength of gay culture. *Crimes Against Nature* seemed to me to be of great interest to the men who I figured were the demographic of *Drummer*. In fact, the homomasculine David Baker, who co-authored and starred in the psycho-dramatic *Crimes*, was key to the drama collective that staged the play to reveal their own personal stories after the fashion of *A Chorus Line*, but using drumming and tub-thumping and movement that was years ahead of *Stomp* and *Tap Dogs*. David Baker appeared in a photograph by Robert Pruzan, *Drummer* 57 (October 1982), page 22; he was performing in another play, also printed, as mentioned, in full in *Drummer*, titled *Delivery* by C. D. Arnold, which opened March 5, 1982, at Studio Rhino (Theater Rhinoceros) and again on June 16, 1982, at the 544 Natoma Gallery.

When David Baker was performing *Crimes* the round in 1977, after we had not seen each other for a couple of years, I had the anonymous advantage of being a blurred face in the audience while he was brightly lit solo on stage. The cast had invented a kind of dance movement that was very stylized and sensual, and when the play ended, several of the cast, including David Baker, sat casually about on the floor of the stage-in-the-round as the audience slowly mixed and exited. Through

the milling people, David Baker and I made eye contact that, because he seemed to recognize me, impelled me to rise from my chair to begin the exact stylized movement, traveling mainly on the knees—with much leg jack-knifing—toward him. It was the 70s. Nobody cared how outrageous anyone acted. The dance thrilled us both—that night, again, and for a couple of weeks, as it had when we first had met in December 1972.

David Baker was sometimes called “Thumper.” He should not be confused historically, however, with my other pal, the legendary “Thumper,” the uber-popular and handsome San Francisco barber and wrestler Jim McPherson mentioned in my “Gay Sports” feature; in 1974, I shot Super-8 footage of McPherson’s wide smile, and his photo appeared in *Drummer* 115, page 32. It was David “Thumper” Baker who was the man I wrote about in 1972, and published, as noted, in “Leather Christmas,” *Drummer* 19 (December 1977).

Years later, in the 1990s, David Baker sent me an invitation to a revival of *Crimes Against Nature*. He had moved to Eugene, Oregon, where in the diaspora of the zero-degrees salon around *Drummer* he was living with the long-haired redhead Michael “Misha” Workman whom I had photographed on March 22 and 29, 1988, as the model, “Outlaw Red,” for my Palm Drive Video feature, *Bellybucker*. David and I hadn’t seen each other in years; so the reunion involved much hugging in the lobby of the New Conservatory Theater building at 25 Van Ness in San Francisco where the producers of the revival were seeking backing. (The evolution from “fucker” to “backer” takes about twenty years.)

In fact, David Baker and I hadn’t seen each other since February 1983 when Mark Hemry and I walked up to the apartment (kind of a rehearsal space, I think, perhaps for Studio Rhino) at 2926 16<sup>th</sup> Street, San Francisco, for the preview opening night reading of *The Ubu Cycle* by Alfred Jarry, the father of theater of the absurd, who had started riots in Paris in 1896 when the opening word of his *Ubu* play was a word that had never been said on a stage: *merde, shit*. This was as culture-changing as Lytton Strachey suddenly announcing the word *semen* in 1905 when he looked at a spot on the dress of Vanessa Bell who was Virginia Woolf’s sister. He said simply, “Semen?” His daring unlocked the Bloomsbury stuffiness the way that semen on the dress of Monica Lewinsky changed the national discussion in America in 1995.

My friend, the often scatological artist Claude Duvall, who had produced Beat poet Ruth Weiss’ *The Thirteenth Witch* (1980), was producing Jarry’s three plays:

- *Ubu Roi* (or *Ubu Rex*) 8 PM, Mondays, 14 and 21 February, 1983, retitled and re-phrased by Duvall as *King Turd*;

- *Ubu Cocu* (or *Ubu Cuckolded*), 8 PM Tuesdays, 15 and 22 February, 1983, retitled *Turd Cuckolded*; and
- *Ubu Enchainé* (*Ubu Enchained*), 8 PM, 16 and 23 February, 1983, retitled *Turd Bound*.

The evenings were whimsically billed as

a staged reading by the Noh Oratorio Satiety commandeered by Claude Duvall, with the phamous Noh Orchestre de Salon du Vay Say, playing pata-physical phavorites for hornstrumpot, importuned by Nick Shryock and Roger Anderson, David Baker, et al.

With his shaved head, big hooped gold earring, and wise-owl glasses, Claude Duvall, always in a green nylon jumpsuit, always smelling of scatological play, charged \$5 for one or more performances, and when patrons called for reservations, he gave “frank advice” about the literal scatological nature of the evening’s performance for which the audience sat on the hardwood floor of the apartment, trying to live up to the implicit dare—which came from Mapplethorpe—that “if you don’t like this, you’re not as *avant garde* as you think.”

*The Ubu Cycle* was one of those tiny gay triumphs, a success of art, particularly as, in February 1983, AIDS was still a big mystery and the 1970s’ fascination with scatology included theatrical nights not only dramatically at Studio Rhino but literally at the baths. Duvall thought his fetish was ready-made for *Drummer*, but *Drummer* failed to respond, and the scatological-fisting-crystal crowd elbowed its way into the classifieds of underground experimental ’zines like *Man2Man*, which, also, eventually, fled from the devotees of scatology, handballing, and drugs. When Sam Steward asked me in 1974 what was new in San Francisco’s sex scene, and I answered, “Scat,” he said, “That’s the end of everything.” The way that steroids were the most popular secret drug in the 1970s, scat was the most popular secret sex game that grew out of the douching for handballing as well as the abandon that came from handballers tweaking on speed. Anyone walking with their eyes wide open through the Titanic 70s observed a scatological awareness in places as public as the baths, the clubs like the Mineshaft, and the Catacombs, and on “Brown Hanky Wednesdays” sponsored by the Scatological Society of America at Dan’s Compound at 11<sup>th</sup> and Folsom—the site of the former Leatherneck bar and of the *Drummer* Key Club. The readership demand for scatology in *Man2Man* became a request publisher Mark Hemry and I ultimately could not deal with. That—combined with the fact that there were no home computers or consumer-size word processors in 1980 and 1982, and

the fact we both had careers in the real world—made the matter and form of producing that anthropological 'zine something we could no longer do. We did, however, send each subscriber a check for the amount of his remaining subscription. Leather-artist Jim Stewart of Fetters in London and David Stein of GMSMA in New York both wrote that the demise of *Man2Man* was the first and only time that a subscription refund ever happened in gay or straight publishing.

My first play, *Continental Caper* (1957), an undergraduate all-male musical written in high school, had been produced in 1958. Like walking a poodle named “Bruce,” writing an all-male musical should have signified I was gay long before I thought about tying guys to a rack and dialing their nipples like a radio. Like most gay men, with telescopes up, assessing the sea change of the late 1960s and early 1970s, I jumped at the opportunity of enjoying community theater as a gay mixer and played in the four-character comedy, *Generation*, and the musical, *The Canterbury Tales*, singing “What Is It That Women Want” (which I didn’t get) and “I Have a Noble Cock” (which I did). So by the mid-1970s, with an arts-writing-and-leather life lived in New York, Chicago, London, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, theater seemed to me an apt metaphor for the kind of dramatic S&M games that shaped *Drummer*, because plays—like sexual psycho-drama—activate the players and keep them from becoming passive which is the worst thing that can happen to a gay man, particularly gay S&M bottoms who tend to become energy vampires. As a genre, *Drummer* was not afraid to publish male-driven plays, favoring particularly those by George Birimisa, who later became a contestant in the Bodybuilding Seniors Division of the Gay Games.

At theatrical venues that were like Weimar cabarets gone mad, I often showcased in *Drummer* huge parties like *Night Flight* and *CMC Carnival* as well as many exotic theme bars, like the No Name, that all seemed to me to be gay theater which queer keywords turned into the term “performance art.” For the same reason, in my writing I championed actors like Richard Locke in *Drummer 24* (September 1978) and his directors, the Gage Brothers, in *Drummer 19* (December 1977), as well as Roger in *Drummer 21* (March 1978), and his director, Wakefield Poole, in *Drummer 27* (February 1979).

The No Name bar nightly encouraged outrageous performance behavior among its pot-smoking customers sniffing poppers and cruising and moshing together in the theater-in-the-round rear-section of the bar where cardboard beer boxes were stacked like a banquette along the walls surrounding the pool table. In the midst of the sex-crush, late one midnight in 1973, I stood back in the crowded shadows watching, ten-feet away, a muscular man, aloof and costumed for role play, in full leather

resting his butt against the lighted pool table. All around me in the dark corral of boxes, men were stroking themselves under the dim red light, sharing joints, and nipping at one another, but I had eyes only for the leatherman who stared from under his leather Muir cap like some dude from Ipanema into mid-distance. After twenty minutes of teasing myself up to eruption, I felt someone (watching me watching the leatherman) slip a bottle of popper up to my nose. I sniffed and strode hard-on-first directly up to the leatherman whose long legs and boots were kicked out and crossed at the ankles. I straddled his leather chaps and looking directly into his mirrored shades, I shot hot white clots all over his thigh. He screamed, “You can’t do that!” I said, “Why not?” He said, “I’m from LA!” The surrounding audience roared with laughter and applause. Like *The Reluctant Debutante*, he rushed out of the bar, pulling at his costume, running from his reviews, shouting “That’s not my *scene*!” Did he know he had caused me to suspend my disbelief? (I thought he was a man.) Did he realize he had been paid the ultimate compliment of orgasm? Did he appreciate the improvisational stand-up comedy of gay bars in the 1970s when *in situ* radical sex upended tradition through the unexpected juxtaposition of opposites? Did he comprehend that a man shooting San Francisco cum on his regal LA leathers was a comedy of manners virtually born among the groundling humor at Shakespeare’s Globe Theater?

It does not harm the deep-dish metaphor of leather as a fetish to point out the quite literal theatrics of leather culture. Before irony deconstructed the roleplay “scene” in the 1980s, performance sex had to be honored if I were to create a reciprocal editorial policy for a magazine that voiced—and echoed—the identity of the readers. They were all suddenly actors, activated by the times, relieved from the passivity of the closet as they cast about to find their new playmates, partners, and friends. The behavioral keywords of early leather culture—as it got “the show on the road” from the 1950s through the 1970s—were, pointedly, theatrical terms.

*Drummer* was always a theatrical magazine filled with a colorful cast of actors, scenarios, erotic sets, exotic costumes, bizarre props and fetishes, stage-y sex in “play” rooms, and casting calls for role-playing characters. S&M sex is at essence theatrical ritual. In leather bars, we were “Method actors” kitted up to signal the part we would play in the “costume drama” of ritual acting: leather + denim + tit clamps + yellow hankie on the left.” Under dim red lights, we cruised for “leading men” with the standard 1960s-1970s opening line: “What’s your *scene*?” Eyewitness evidence exists in the fourth word of the title of the handmade magazine, *The Way Out Scene*, whose publisher, D&W Enterprises, described in Volume 1, Issue 8 (September 1975) that the little samizdat folio was a thousand

copies per issue “printed on a silk-screen mimeo made by Gestetner of Yonkers, NY.”

The mimeographed ads of *The Way Out Scene* and the personals ads of the “Leather Fraternity” in the glossy *Drummer* were filled with intimate *cri de couer* pleas that—today making me weep with nostalgia—were, I state, “Casting Calls” written by horny men directing their own “sex scenes” and seeking “character actors” as tops, bottoms, studs, bearded men, muscle guys, sadists, slaves, hippies, huskies, and even “inexperienced” ingenues. (John Dagion, the creator of *The Way Out Scene*, quickly evolved that periodical into his long-running small-format zine, *TRASH: True Relations and Strange Happenings*. Dagion, my long-time acquaintance in the zero degrees of gay publishing, has continued publishing his stylishly under-produced *TRASH* for the twenty-first-century underground. *TRASH* is to *Drummer* what the skid-row Tenderloin is to bike-row Folsom Street.)

Editing *Drummer* with such theatrical reality in mind, I massaged its thirty-day format to address the readers’ genuine ever-morphing stage-iness. I aimed to give them a magazine that in editorial content and masculine attitude was a positive environment in which to re-write their “scenes,” re-cast their “actors,” and re-invent the narrative arcs of their Id-fetish “scripts” in *Drummer* every month.

It is amusing that this introductory essay is longer than the original notice in *Drummer*, but when the editorial “manifesto” was originally published most readers were, as it states, “dudes” steeped in the culture, innuendo, and personalities that it seemed necessary to reconstitute here—these many years later—for context.

A *madeleine*, after all, is just a tiny cookie.

## II. The editorial essay as published in *Drummer* 20, January 1978

### Getting Off

## *Crimes Against Nature* 1977 Gay Guerrilla Theater

*Crimes Against Nature*, written and performed by the Gay Men’s Theater Collective, has been the held-over hit of the 1977 San Francisco Season: Like *A Chorus Line* and *Hair*, *Crimes Against Nature* is a high-energy semi-musical in which the characters/actors expose the most private truths of their lives. *Crimes*, headed for Los Angeles and New York, deals specifically

with athletics, jockstraps, and All-American dads' attempts to program their All-American boys into sports against their nature. *Crimes* is subtitled "A Play about Survival." As with *Hair*, one of the characters is shot, but in *Crimes* the fun and games turn serious. This play, like *Drummer's* sports issue, is about fun that becomes self-defense. Like *Network's* Peter Finch, gay men today are mad as hell and won't take it anymore. If a gay man wants to jock it up, it's not only okay, it's a celebration. Why should straight guys wear all the juicy equipment? When you grow up, you can play the way your nature calls.

#### CONTENTS: DRUMMER'S NEW BROOM SWEEPS

Taste is as taste does and *Drummer* tastes a bit of everything. *Drummer* has pinned its nuts on. Reality and fantasy both are in this issue. Jerk to what you like: drawings, comics, hot fiction, articles about the actualizing of fantasies, new photos by new photographers, the CMC Carnival, the I-Beam macho disco, and parties like *Night Flight*. You name it.

This masturbatory self-congratulation is to warn you that a new *Drummer*, good as the old, and even better to come, is in your hand right now.

#### DRUMMER GETS MORE AUTHENTIC

If you don't have *Drummer*, buy it. If you can't find *Drummer* to buy, subscribe, because in our next issue you're gonna get put in "PRISON" so authentically you wouldn't believe, and on top of that, the biggest up-front pumped-up exclusive of 1978 will be heading your way: ROGER'S BACK AND DRUMMER'S GOT HIM! (And Roger's ten inches is no crime against nature!)

#### NATURAL VS NORMAL

As Capote's Holly Golightly said in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, "I'd rather be natural than normal." The "norm" is what most people do: Dull. The "natural" is what men do according to their nature: Fanfuckingtastic! As David Baker, author/actor of the *Crimes'* collective says: "To survive I'm butch." He survives, as does the play, in the best *Drummer* tradition. If it's okay to be straight macho, it's just as okay to be gay macho. If it's okay to be straight kink, it's okay to be gay kink. After all on a desert island which would you rather have? *Drummer's* gay machismo or *Reader's Digest's* "I Am Joe's Pancreas."

You read *Drummer*, dude, because you're macho, mad as hell, hot, horny, jocked, leathered, and getting in shape for THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST!

### III. Eyewitness Illustrations

Advertising flyer from the 1997 revival of the 1977 original production of *Crimes Against Nature*. *Drummer* succeeded because its issues so often featured erotic plays that seemed to catch the essence of sexual action in an age when *Drummer* readers followed edgy gay theater of the S&M kind on stage and in playrooms at home and at the baths.

Excerpt source: ©[Jack Fritscher](#), [Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer](#), San Francisco: [Palm Drive Publishing](#), 2008

“Thank you for supporting my theater work.”

Eyewitness Document

“Letter from David Baker to Jack Fritscher”

Keeping the Voice of David Baker Speaking

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David Baker  
xxx-A States Street  
San Francisco 94114  
December 27, 1997

Dear Jack,

Greetings from your old friend, David. What a wild adventure this last year has been. My father died on April 15....Fortunately, I had a chance to spend some quality time with him in Portland...in the hospital for his final week....I miss my dad tremendously [his biological father was gay]. During the next month, I got sick with a cough and was in bed for several weeks, isolating myself and grieving. I had this very weird condition where I would pass out if I started coughing vigorously. Several times, I would be standing, start coughing, and the next minute find myself face down on the floor and bruised. It was scary. I learned to get on my knees with my head on the floor whenever I started coughing (a position that I grew to call the “crash position.”)....Fortunately, it wasn't TB or pneumonia either. My dad left all he owned to me....I let his life partner [man's name] stay in the house....

So, it happened this year, the 20-year-revival of *Crimes Against Nature*, the show that 11 of us wrote, directed, produced, and were in (even Off-Broadway), in the 70s. It was astutely directed, as you know, because you were there, by Ed Decker at the New Conservatory Theater. There was a cast of 8, and we told 8 of the original stories with very tight choreographed movement done by Keith Hennessy. It was a thorough joy to see the old girl back up on her feet again. Only this time it was much tighter and fuller. The biggest delight was having the 5 living of the original 11 cast members spend time together. We even shot some film footage of us discussing the show and how we'd changed since the original production in 1976. Just think

**Excerpt source:** ©[Jack Fritscher](#), [Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer](#), San Francisco: [Palm Drive Publishing](#), 2008

how much you've changed since 1976. I am so thankful to be conscious and free....

The production also connected me with my grief over the loss of 6 of the original cast. I found myself crying during the show just to hear the voice and lives of my old compadres coming alive again. This was the first show I've done in 10 years and I was pleased to see what a professional job I did acting. I was interesting and real which felt rewarding to be so creative. Actually, I've changed over the years so that the story I told was much closer to who I am now than was my original story....They say the show took 10 years off my look which I think it did....Nevertheless, my T-cells are down to the 300's and my viral load is edging up. My interior infant feels helpless with this looming disaster. I am doing what I can to stay healthy at the same time I feel helpless....

Jack, I hope your holidays were bright and filled with cheer. Great to see you again after all these years. Thanks for supporting my theater work too. The years have treated you well....May comfort and joy surround you this holiday season! Hope to see more of you this coming happy new year. Love, David [Baker].

---

Text below was written on the back of the photo of David Baker and Michael Workman on the opposite page.

Christmas Solstice 1989

Jack,  
May Peace fill your hole heart.  
Happy Solstice.  
I hope you have a great New Year. All is well here and I hope all is well with you. I think of you often. Be well and big bear hugs.  
Misha and Dave

PS This picture was taken the last day I shaved. I ran out of shaving cream so the beard is coming back.

© Jack Fritscher

San Francisco actor, David Baker, star and producer of *Crimes Against Nature*, set up camp in the lap of the redheaded bear Michael “Misha” Workman for this Solstice card sent to Jack Fritscher (1989). Fritscher had photographed Workman in stills and video for the Palm Drive Video feature, *Bellybucker*, March 22 and 29, 1988 and for a full page in *American Men*. Three of his photographs of Workman appeared in *Drummer* 119 (July 1988).

Excerpt source: © [Jack Fritscher](#), [Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer](#), San Francisco: [Palm Drive Publishing](#), 2008

© Jack Fritscher

Gay liberation in the 1970s required the invention and coining of many new gay words such as *homomascularity* to deal with the uncloseted concepts of the love that formerly dared not speak. In order to fill *Drummer*, Fritscher and other authors had to pioneer a new gay linguistics beyond Polari. *Drummer* was akin to the way that Lytton Strachey said the word *semen*, and Alfred Jarry said the word *merde*. *Drummer* salonista Claude Duvall's Noh Oratorio Society shocked San Francisco with Jarry's scatological *Ubu Cycle* at Studio Rhino, February 1983. Studio Rhino publicity kit. (continued bottom next page)

**Excerpt source: ©Jack Fritscher, [Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer, San Francisco: Palm Drive Publishing, 2008](#)**

*Delivery*, advertising poster for the San Francisco production of the play by C. D. Arnold which was published originally in *Drummer* 57 (1982). Poster publicity photograph (not shown) by *Drummer* salonista Mark I. Chester.

*Tommy*, the early 1970s rock opera that was the mega-hit at San Francisco's Lone Mountain College, taught Castro Street and Folsom Street the new style of being a masculine-identified homosexual whose quintessential core identity was as valid as that of the then dominant and dominating identity of drag queens, androphobic sissies, and the politically correct controlling almost all of the gay press except for *Drummer*. *Tommy* publicity kit.

(continued from previous page)

In the gorgeously incestuous DNA of the *Drummer* Salon, Claude Duvall through his Noh Oratorio Society commissioned *Inquiries of Hope: Ten Poems of Kirby Congdon*, the first musical piece mourning AIDS (1984), by composer Louis Weingarden who also founded Stompers Gallery on 4th Street in New York which featured the first exhibits of Mapplethorpe and Tom of Finland. Louis Weingarden, an intimate part of the Fritscher-*Drummer* salon, was peer to Lewis Friedman, the legendary founding impresario of the Manhattan cabaret, Reno Sweeney, where Mapplethorpe and Fritscher went on dates, as they did to Stompers, to see and be seen. Lou Weingarden died of AIDS in Manhattan in 1989. Fringe *Drummer* salonista Lew Friedman, HIV positive, exited New York and opened his Sweet Life Café north of San Francisco in Santa Rosa, and died nearby in the Russian River village of Cazadero in 1992 close to his neighbors *Drummer* editor Jack Fritscher and *Drummer* publisher John Embry.

**Excerpt source:** © [Jack Fritscher](#), *Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness*  
[Drummer](#), San Francisco: [Palm Drive Publishing](#), 2008

Are there sexists who hate masculinity and sexists who practice sissyphobia across the range of the Kinsey Six? The minute after gay liberation broke out, the gay gender wars began. In the 1970s, graffiti began to appear on toilet walls across San Francisco, and high on the outside wall of the abandoned Falstaff Brewery South of Market: "Queers Against Gays." From before the 1849 Gold Rush miners, San Francisco, countering a kind of "Viva Las Divas" metastasis, has long been the prime mover of gay masculinity. The gay civil war over gender was a central and controversial theme in what *The Advocate* called the "Gay *Gone with the Wind*," Jack Fritscher's story of Ryan "Miss Scarlett" O'Hara and the burning of the Barracks baths: *Some Dance to Remember: A Memoir-Novel of San Francisco 1970-1982*, Reel 2, Sequence 6 and Sequence 8. Plutonium Players publicity kit.

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

Cover, *Bay Area Reporter* (March 4, 1976), headlined Jack Fritscher's play, *Coming Attractions*, double-billed with Lanford Wilson's *The Madness of Lady Bright*. "Coming Attractions" (1973) was the first gay play written and produced in San Francisco about life on Castro Street. Actor Michael Lewis who starred in both plays was the founding owner of the gay small business, the Nelly Deli, inside Dave's Baths where one lazy afternoon, serving Jack Fritscher a cup of coffee, he mentioned that his Yonkers Production Company was looking for new one-act plays. Fritscher wrote the short story for *Coming Attractions* in 1972. The story and play were published together in the anthology *Sweet Embraceable You: Coffee-House Stories*. *B.A.R.* cover used with permission.

**Excerpt source: ©[Jack Fritscher](#), *Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer*, San Francisco: [Palm Drive Publishing](#), 2008**



Captions: Eyewitness documentation of the existence of graphics providing internal evidence supporting Jack Fritscher's text are located in the Jack Fritscher and Mark Henry 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**

Magazine cover. The "Superman" cover of *American Theater* magazine, (November 1985, Vol. 2 No. 8) begins to reveal what Jack Fritscher contends is an essentially Shakespearean drama in search of an author who can do poetic justice to the motives and hubris of the quartet of "Dan White, Harvey Milk, George Moscone, and Dianne Feinstein" tangled in the helix of San Francisco politics and sexuality.

**Eyewitness  
Illustration**

Video box cover and three advertisements. San Francisco Colt Model Ledermeister in the 1960s and 1970s was the Platonic Ideal of the homo-masculine leatherman who loomed like desire above Folsom Street and *Drummer* magazine. Appearing on page, screen, and stage, he was the star model in the Colt magazine *Manpower #6: The Leather File*, and in the catalog for the Leather 'n' Things store at 18<sup>th</sup> and Castro. In the early 1970s, every man in the City, and every sex tourist, picked up multiple copies of the handsomely produced catalog which was first published in 1969 and was kept in print until around 1974. That *Leather 'n' Things Catalog* (top right) was like a pre-*Drummer* bespoke mockup of *Drummer* and should be included in every really complete collection of *Drummer*.