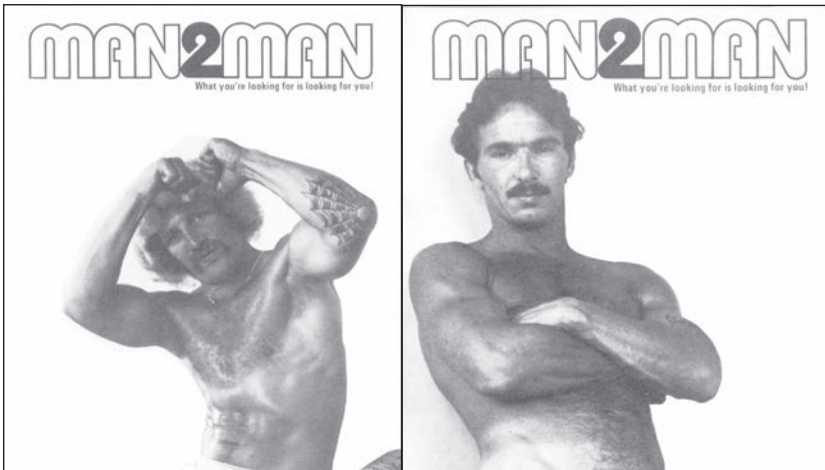




David Hurles (Old Reliable), Fritscher-Hemry house, 1981. Photo by Jack Fritscher.



Dozens of David Hurles' photographs were published by Mark Hemry and Jack Fritscher in *Man2Man Quarterly*, including centerfolds and three 1981 covers of *Man2Man*, issues 4, 6 (not pictured), and 8.

©Jack Fritscher, Ph.D., All Rights Reserved  
**HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE FROM THIS WORK**

# DAVID HURLES

1944-

**TERROR IS MY ONLY HARDON!**

**The Homosurreal Life  
of the Artist-Director of Rough Trade  
S&M Verbal Abuse Films**

---

## TOPS AT THE BOX OFFICE

From 1970 to 1995 in San Francisco and Los Angeles, David Hurles directed nearly 300 feature-length films (90-120 minutes) that at \$59 each entertained thousands of fans, and grossed a fortune through Old Reliable mail-order sales that as Mass Media far exceeded walk-in ticket sales at brick-and-mortar porn theaters.

---

David Randolph Hurles, admired by passionate film fans, is a West Coast creative genius, born in Ohio in 1944. Fascinated in 1963 by John Rechy's expose of hustlers in *City of Night*, he started his career in June 1968 on Polk Street in San Francisco shooting his first pictures of his first model, Richard Jalakas, whose wife was in hospital giving birth. In 1969, at the famously gay Sloane House YMCA in New York, he met two "gracious" Mafiosi who bought his photographs for adult book covers and playing cards. For a few months, he worked for one of the first full-frontal publishers, DSI Sales in Los Angeles, before moving to start the 1970s at physique photographer Howard Lynn Womack's Guild Press in Washington, D. C. Womack, the publisher of *Grecian Guild Pictorial*, hired the baby-faced David as a handsome assistant who had been photographed as a flexible auto-fellatio model by San Francisco porn-loop filmmaker Hal Call, the legendary publisher of *The Mattachine Review*. Womack so appreciated David's even more flexible mind, personality, and talent that he welcomed him as apprentice, photographer, and friend working at Guild Press.

In 1972, when the federal government arrested Womack for pornography, David testified as one person who was both model and photographer.

**©Jack Fritscher, Ph.D., All Rights Reserved**

**HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE FROM THIS WORK**

He became the star witness defending Womack against the government's key charge that erotic models are by definition sexually exploited adults. The judge called David an excellent eyewitness who testified uniquely about the quality of human life and dignity possible in front of and behind the camera. He and Womack won the case that helped pioneer the long legal road that allowed the American porn film industry to flourish in that first Golden Age after Stonewall.

Womack was so grateful that he helped fund the startup of Old Reliable Tape and Picture Company. "Old Reliable" is street slang for a penis that always functions. The title is a sex pun promising potency on screen and in the viewer's hand, as well as good business practices assuring clients wary of mail-order fraud.

By 1975 in San Francisco, Old Reliable was shooting still photos and Super-8 movies of hustlers, and directing verbal-abuse soundtracks starring rough-trade drifters, ex-cons, and rent boys on sixty-minute audio-tape cassettes which he sold mail-order. His muse and business model was pioneer Los Angeles filmmaker Bob Mizer who became David's longtime mentor and friend. In fact, when Mizer, who had founded Athletic Model Guild studio in 1945, died in 1992, David wrote one of the most touching and informative obituaries one friend has ever written for another.

David and I met in the post-Stonewall Dreamtime of 1976 when he was thirty-two and I was thirty-seven. We became instant platonic friends who collaborated on projects and once bought a house together. I drove him to bodybuilding contests and boxing championships where we watched firefighter Dan White win his last Golden Gloves bout before he assassinated Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone. Because I was the founding San Francisco editor-in-chief of *Drummer* magazine, David trusted me, after he first doubted me, when I told him my *Drummer* readers would love his blue-collar photography and nasty audio tapes, five of which I transcribed and edited for publication. Living South of Market near Folsom Street, David was a versatile entrepreneur, creating a museum's worth of black-and-white 5"x7" photographs, color transparencies, Super-8 films, 400 audio recordings, and feature videos of backstreet boys working out of the Zee Hotel, 141 Eddy, in the red-light district of the Tenderloin; the Old Crow hustler bar at 962 Market Street; and, after his move to Hollywood, the Spotlight dive bar at 1601 N. Cahuenga Boulevard.

His roughnecks were graduates of American oil rigs, trailer parks, carnival midways, bus station toilets, and juvenile reform schools of the redneck South. He favored white trash as well as aggressive blacks and sultry Latinos. He told me: "I would rather sniff the armpits of a tough

**©Jack Fritscher, Ph.D., All Rights Reserved**

**HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE FROM THIS WORK**

young Mexican boxer after a fight than climb between clean sheets with a Colt model.” He employed, for cash money, more than 500 vagrant and sometimes homeless street people in this order: straight, bi, and gay. He shot men of all types and races as long as they were tough, had attitude, could smoke cigars, box, wrestle, kick, spit, jerk off, and talk abusively directly into the camera. Gay magazines rejected Old Reliable’s frightening work with these S&M-tweaked delinquents who were way outside the respectable queenstream. However, as editor and talent scout for *Drummer*, I spied he was in gay media something quite new that was akin to Weegee and Diane Arbus. He was an edgy artist whose homomale art it was an honor to introduce and publish in *Drummer* 21, March 1978, perhaps the best-ever single issue of *Drummer*.

David invented Old Reliable all by himself, but *Drummer* boosted his brand nationally and internationally—exactly as its covers, centerfolds, and reviews helped popularize filmmakers Roger Earl, Wakefield Poole, the Gage Brothers, and Mikal Bales of Zeus Studio. The first mention of Old Reliable in *Drummer* was my “Prison Blues” feature in *Drummer* 21, March 1978, in which he told me: “I’ll let you in on a little secret of why I like what I like and do what other guys only beat off to thinking about doing with bad boys. I’m like every other sexual specialist. I’m 80 percent impotent unless I get sex my way, unless I’m with these ex-con biker boys. Prison turns out some of the best trade in the country.” To create a sequel to that prison feature article, I produced an additional transcription of his audio-tape monologue, “Scott Smith: Heavy Rap with a Solitary Ex-Con” followed by his audio tape “Ex-Cons: We Abuse Fags.” in *Drummer* 24, September 1978. It was the issue made famous by the Robert Mapplethorpe cover photo of a “Dirty Biker for Hire” near whose cigar-smoking face was the cover headline announcing Old Reliable’s “Ex-Cons” which shouted in shocking, big, bold, red all caps: “WE ABUSE FAGS!”

Old Reliable was a hit. *Drummer* readers ate him up. He became an immediate member of the *Drummer* Salon of writers, artists, photographers, and filmmakers. His photographs in 1978 created more sensation than Mapplethorpe who wasn’t famous until the mid-1980s. His out-laws scared men into orgasm. In his brochures, he quoted *Straight to Hell* publisher Boyd McDonald’s caution to his mail-order customers: “Never invite them into your lovely home.”

He was an authentic *auteur* director who lived the life he filmed. In 1969, he was first arrested in a male house of prostitution in Los Angeles, and went briefly to jail. After his second 1972 arrest—four times in one week—by the San Francisco police, he used his mugshot to score “street

©Jack Fritscher, Ph.D., All Rights Reserved

**HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE FROM THIS WORK**

cred” with his models. He seemed so addictively driven to his jailbirds by fear and lust that my job as a journalist was to re-characterize his dark sex psychology and pitch it as risky fun. For a lark of camp, I mimicked *True Confessions* magazine. To title one of my articles about him, I made up a *faux* quote he never said in our thousands of nightly telephone conversations, although it has since become a famous and quintessential summation: “Terror Is My Only Hardon,” *Man2Man Quarterly*, Issue 8, October 1981.

After his arrest by the SFPD, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported on Saturday, February 12, 1972, with the headline, “Vice Squad’s First Gay Film Bust,” and the text, “Vice squad officers have scored another first with the first arrest here on charges of producing obscene homosexual movies. Officers of the Bureau of Special Services went to the Dave Hurles Photo Studio, at 531 Howard Street, yesterday and arrested the operator, David R. Hurles, 27....In the fully equipped second-story studio, police found four water beds which were apparently ‘props’ in the films. Hurles was booked at City Prison on a warrant charging him with producing and distributing obscene material and for conspiracy [as well as, according to the police report, “oral sex perversion” and “crimes against nature”—all eventually dismissed]. Captain Gerald Shaughnessy called him the ‘main producer of homosexual films in San Francisco.’ Bail on the warrant was set at \$625.” Noting that filmmaker J. Brian of Calafra Enterprises was also arrested in those raids, David told me that the SFPD seized all of his prints, negatives, transparencies, films, and paperwork, among other things, and that the court denied him any recovery of his seized materials. On August 8, 1979, he called from another jail, and Mark Henry and I bailed him out later that night.

David always shot on location, and that location in San Francisco, when we met, was his living room at 10th and Mission, conveniently across from the Doggie Diner. He was a street photographer who rarely left his flat in the single-room occupancy building he managed in trade for rent. Side-stepping a touch of agoraphobia, he paid the street to come to him. Casting was easy: a sexual pyramid scheme. He paid one hustler to refer two others who would refer four others who all had learned the prison wisdom that divorced women and queers are easy marks. So the Doggie Diner was to him and his models what Schwab’s Drug Store in Hollywood had been to director Mervyn Le Roy who mythically discovered Lana Turner sitting at the ice cream counter sucking a soda straw in 1937. Even though the furniture and lamps in his flat were second-hand from the Salvation Army, he was more than once bound with duct tape

©Jack Fritscher, Ph.D., All Rights Reserved

**HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE FROM THIS WORK**

and choked or held at knife or gunpoint by his models. In my 1981 interview, “Call Him Old Reliable Because He Is,” he told me: “This Salvation Army junk hardly tempts anybody. This illusion keeps me safer, although there is the constant problem of the video cameras and recorders, the still cameras, the audio-tape recorders, the tape duplicator, and the color TV. My work requires electronic equipment and, of course, that is high on the burglary-robbery hit list. So far I haven’t gone down in a hail of hot lead.”

That real-life danger David injected directly into his duo and solo films of men aged eighteen to thirty-five. He directed so that his viewers, and *Drummer* subscribers, could enjoy the vicarious thrill of having dangerous rough trade look directly into the camera and verbally abuse them. He created metacinema in which the film was as much about the danger of his making the film as it was about the model. That direct eye-to-eye and mouth-to-ear connection between model and viewer was his genius breakthrough. He made his models become *present* to the viewer. That was how he re-invented gay film’s passive point of view of watching models who, like fish in an aquarium, never acknowledge the viewer. Directing this kind of presentational “acting,” he broke the Fourth Wall of the screen.

He assaulted his viewers who were eager to pay to be topped the way masochists seek sadists. He directed his aggressive models to push themselves into his camera on its tripod. He anticipated the way tough hustlers later on YouTube and Skype push their performance art directly into the viewer’s face. He helped introduce the homomascularity of straight blue-collar sex appeal into the casting and content of gay cinema. His down, dirty, and authentic films of real bad boys pushed viewers existentially beyond the golden bromances portrayed by gay actors in the macho movies of Roger Earl and the Gage Brothers.

His queer eye for hypermasculine men offered homomascularity men an alternative film esthetic, made way for the outré Mapplethorpe who collected Hurles’ *Basic Black* series, and changed the way masculine-identified gay men gazed at themselves and the objects of their desire. He wrote in 2008, “I recall Jack bringing his friend Robert Mapplethorpe over to meet me in 1978, before he was touched by fame. I was especially delighted when Robert asked to buy some black-and-white prints of a favorite Old Reliable model, ‘Mongoose.’ I declined any payment, rewarded instead by the pleasure of sharing the joy these photos obviously brought him.”

On June 20, 1982, we conferred in his Hollywood apartment about the feature essay, “Old Reliable: A Legend in His Own Time,” in which he said: “A couple of my boys live in bushes which makes them homeless. I really get off on natural smells, sweat, and sweaty T-shirts, and uncut cock

**©Jack Fritscher, Ph.D., All Rights Reserved**

**HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE FROM THIS WORK**

that showered yesterday. But I am turned off by filth. Why do poor boys always have stinky feet? As a rimmer, I prefer clean assholes. The balls can smell any way they want as long as they're bouncy. Many young men have used my shower to clean up. It's one of my social services."

"Do you have sex with the pricks you photograph?"

"Yes. 99% of the time. It is part of the deal, although if they're real good, sometimes I'll give them a few extra bucks."

In September 1988, I recommended his casting, style, and methods in my "Solo Sex: Who's Who In J/O Video" in *Drummer* 123: "Old Reliable's videos are like a symphony in three movements. First, the always-muscular young thugs strip off their clothes, oil up their naked bodies, and grind out tough muscle poses. Second, because they all inevitably know boxing and karate, they flex and shadow-box with the camera, free-styling into kicks and punches and hot licks, inter-actively right into the camera lens, which means, right into your face, fucker! Third, they lay back on Old Reliable's trademark couches on Old Reliable's trademark towels for an Old Reliable trademark cumshot. Video fans can carbon-date Old Reliable's videos—and his success—as his couches and tables change from early Salvation Army to West Hollywood glass and chrome."

His legend was minted when, in 1983, David said, "The French are coming with a camera crew to interview me about my work." Mais oui! The French knew his IQ. I found David, who quoted Soren Kierkegaard and Wilhelm Reich and W. H. Auden in his catalogs, to be very Jean Genet, very Pier Paolo Pasolini. He wrote about his *video verite*: "My work is not about sex. It is about life." He dared living at the real edge, and the real bottom, of sexual society glamorizing and romanticizing the very kind of tough top boys who had threatened him as a bottom boy himself, the kind of bullies who would wrestle and punch and choke, and be bad, and hurt you, the way they murdered film director Pasolini in 1975. Growing up in Ohio, David had a sweet mother whom I have hosted and photographed in my California home. Yet the bullying he took from rough boys in Cincinnati seems almost too perfectly on-brand with his Old Reliable concept to be true, but it is. He told me in "Call Him Old Reliable": "When I was a kid in Cincinnati, I wrestled with tough kids and didn't get hurt. They respected my brains. I respected their strength. I could watch fights without taking sides. Boys told me their secrets. Today they still do. On screen. And off. I was free back then to not be one-of-the-boys while enjoying all the protection and privilege of being with the tough guys. Sounds like my situation now. "

©Jack Fritscher, Ph.D., All Rights Reserved

**HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE FROM THIS WORK**

By May of 1980, David, who could take a beating from a boxer, was so bruised by vanilla magazine editors rejecting his photographs that he grew hesitant to edit his first video featuring several models solo. So Mark Henry and I abducted him gently from his flat in a scheme that involved his model “Gentleman Dan,” with girlfriend Carla, driving him to our home where we “locked” him in our bedroom with two primitive VCRs and told him he could not come out and eat supper until the edit was done. The rest is history.

He once told me one of his favorite videos, one of the ones that made him proudest, was *I, Rick* which earned him an Adult Video News AVN “Best Director” nomination, and that his favorite model, lensed repeatedly, was “Gentleman Dan” who for years, in prison and out, was his big romance—and was allegedly the model who in January 1980 gave David his very first video camera which had fallen off a truck, still in the box. Earlier in 1970, another special “boyfriend jumped off the Golden Gate Bridge,” David said, “on Christmas Eve—so I’d always remember him.” Once when a model flaked, he cast me with one of his Mexican convicts to record a duo prison-themed audio tape. Later in Los Angeles, he handed me his video camera and asked me to shoot two huge-hung hillbillies for him. His gesture was a personal and professional compliment inviting me to work inside his process. That’s how I shot the only Old Reliable video Old Reliable did not shoot: *The Adams Brothers*.

Old Reliable videos are ground-breaking and historic as erotic jerk-off material as well as *video verite* documentary films. Like an anthropologist studying a certain class of males in a certain place at a certain time, he chronicled real-time street hustler delinquents who were paid to spill their guts after a lifetime of people telling them to “shut the fuck up.” I’m nostalgic that, as part of our collaboration, he often gave me for my birthdays hustlers fresh out of prison or the military like “Mike Glacier,” “Mike B,” “Jose,” and “H. D.” who, after I bought him a new pair of Redwing boots, stole my belt buckle—as required by his DNA. His model “Barry Hoffman” was the muscular blond hustler who inspired the character of the hustler “Joe Buck” in James Leo Herlihy’s novel and movie *Midnight Cowboy*.

Some think I returned his erotic gifts by making David Hurles the model for the virtuoso pornographer, Solly Blue, in my *Some Dance to Remember: A Memoir-Novel of San Francisco 1970-1982*. The truth is that to create the gonzo world of Solly Blue I had source material from my own experience running my own erotic video company, as well as in my familiarity with director friends such as Roger Earl, Wakefield Poole, J. Brian,

**©Jack Fritscher, Ph.D., All Rights Reserved**

**HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE FROM THIS WORK**



Bob Mizer, Mikal Bales, and Lou Thomas of Colt and Target studio. The fictitious amalgam of Solly Blue is not the real David Hurler who read the novel before publication and liked it so much that he helped me find a publisher, and then wrote a wonderful review he published on Amazon. One can, however, “read” his life into that fiction. He is the dearest friend. In 2008, he toasted our ancient friendship with his introduction, “A Thousand Light Years Ago,” for my pop-culture history book *Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer*. Photographer Jim Stewart, who introduced David and me in 1976, profiled David and our San Francisco *Drummer* Salon in his book, *Folsom Street Blues: A Memoir of 1970s SoMa and Leatherfolk in San Francisco*.

In 1992, David drafted his memoirs as an unpublished work, on blue paper with a red-comb binder, titled *No Title Necessary: A Few Notes, Comments, and Observations*. He gave me a copy for safekeeping in my archives along with his collection of letters hundreds of convicts sent him from prison. His memoir consists of typed, sequential human-interest notes for each Old Reliable video feature with anecdotes about the shoot, the model’s rap sheet, and his apartment-studio, along with autobiographical reflections on his own philosophy as a director. As an intimate eyewitness to so much of him personally and professionally, I can verify the actual behind-the-camera comedy and drama that surrounded David and his wilding boys.

Afternoons at his flat in San Francisco or in his one of his penthouses in Los Angeles—where he sat sipping endless Coca-Colas—were a fascinating revolving door of hustlers stopping by to introduce another hustler for a finder’s fee, or to hang out killing time, or to twist his arm for cash to buy their girlfriends tampons—with fries and a Big Mac. One afternoon, David invited me over to meet a convict two-days out of San Quentin where David and I were once given a very serious off-limits conducted tour described in “Prison Blues.” The convict, who arrived towing his new Baby Doll girlfriend, had been an “incident photographer” who had smuggled out a stiff stack of a hundred black-and-white 8”x10” crime scene glossies he had shot inside San Quentin of inmates immediately after their being beaten or tossed off an upper tier or killed by other inmates. The photos were unlike anything civilians ever see, and the ex-con with his stolen goods was disappointed that David and I agreed there was no legitimate market where he could peddle such pictures.

Collectors and completists wishing to sample David’s nearly 300 films can find a treasure trove of his video stills in his years of monthly mail-order brochures, and in the on-going series of his seductively written and

**©Jack Fritscher, Ph.D., All Rights Reserved**

**HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE FROM THIS WORK**

lavishly illustrated *Old Reliable Video Catalog*. His *Catalog #2*, January 1995, advertised, “Over 500 photos of almost 500 men in 170 videos.” Most often, he simply titled his films with the featured hustler’s name: *Champ*, *Cholo*, *Miracle Man*, *Rabbit*, *Tico*, and *Five Days with Phil*. He frequently kited fun flights of fancy with titles for his anthology collections like *Entrees from the Cafeteria of the Damned* and *Arkansas Luggage* which was sex code he coined for uncut hillbilly foreskin. Finally, becoming an acquired taste among savvy editors who realized his pictures sold their magazines, he also offered select photographs in trade for advertising in periodicals from *Drummer* to *Skinflicks*, *Skin*, *Just Men*, *Inches*, *Straight to Hell*, *California Action Guide*, and *Man2Man Quarterly*. His masculine photos helped shape the editorial look of twentieth-century magazine erotica. When I was editor of *Man2Man* in 1980 and 1981, he supported my startup and helped create that magazine by permitting his photos on the front and back covers of issues 1, 3, 4, 5, and 8 with another dozen in the interior and centerfold spreads of issues 2 and 6. Finding our work compatible, magazine editors at Mavety Media Group’s Modernismo Publishing often paired the gray text of my sex stories alongside the dramatic black-and-white of his photographs.

In chronicling him in gay pop culture, I have devoted many column inches to his irresistible work and personality: “Old Reliable: The Company Dirty Talk Built” in *Skin 2 # 5*, 1981, page 30, alongside my companion feature articles, “Bob Mizer’s AMG Duos” and “The Spotlight: Inside an LA Hustler Bar.” I also profiled him in “Terror Is My Only Hardon: Old Reliable Speaks” in *Man2Man Quarterly*, Issue 8, October 1981, pages 24-32; and in “Old Reliable Confesses” alongside the Q&A interview, “Old Reliable: A Legend in His Own Time,” with forty-eight Old Reliable photos in the *California Action Guide*, Volume 1 #3, September 1982; and in “Beauty and Terror: The Art and Trash of Old Reliable” in *Skin 4 #3*, 1983, page 10.

Two coffee-table photography books of his work have been published: *Speeding: The Old Reliable Photos of David Hurles*, (2005) and *Outcast: David Hurles Old Reliable in Living Color* (2010). Finding *Speeding* too small a sample of his far-ranging work, he wrote me, on its title page, the kind of existential note, with italics, that a pioneer survivor might send: “Although this book covers little, it confirms that I was *there*. Indeed. I *was* there.”

Box-office receipts are a measure of success in porn as much as in Hollywood. David, cycling through thirty years, made two or three enormous fortunes of cash and condos which he earned and lost living in Los

©Jack Fritscher, Ph.D., All Rights Reserved

**HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE FROM THIS WORK**

Angeles after he sped into the fast lane of Santa Monica Boulevard's faster hustlers, one of whom late one Saturday night totaled David's brand new Corvette, crashing it through a curbside telephone booth. Unperturbed, David sometimes quoted, in his words, "two great philosophers": Miss Peggy Lee who sang, "Is That All There Is?" and Auntie Mame whose *carpe diem* was: "Live! Life's a banquet and most poor suckers are starving to death!"

In the 1990s, David told me a sad tale worthy of a Tennessee Williams' short story like "One Arm" or "Desire and the Black Masseur." He said that in 1991 a model had kicked him in the head, rupturing his eye socket bones, giving him double vision, ruining his camera eye, and effectively ending his career. He told the model, "I'm going to pass out. Stay till I wake up." Penniless but inventive, he changed his style. He perched his autofocus camera on a tripod to shoot with a new point of view that was as dispassionate as a hidden security camera. Instead of him shooting solos of others, his camera shot long-take duos of him *with* others. They were endgame videos, private reserve videos few have seen, in which his streaming parade of tricks lays him belly down on the bed.

Unable to use a still camera for production photos, he used video frame grabs in 1995 to illustrate the five titles of his new duo series, *In Private*, in his "Bonus Video Brochures" which whispered like a flasher in a raincoat: "Originally, these private tapes weren't for sale...Not everyone was aware of them...They offer maximum excitement from a minimalist point of view...How the sex moves the viewer, in the end, depends upon the angle from which it is experienced. There are 10 different sequences on each 75-minute tape. Some of the men preferred to remain anonymous... No story. No script. No acting. No kidding. No fancy camera angles. No Hollywood editing."

His shadowy frame grabs, printed the size of a postage stamp, reveal to those who know his body, his profile, and his tattoos—one of which I gave him for his birthday—that it is he himself, the director, who has become the actor, in a sexual power exchange of role playing straight out of Genet's drama, *The Maids*.

Because of Andy Warhol's *Empire*, *Sleep*, and *Chelsea Girls*, there is filmic heritage in the minimalism of his tripod-mounted camera eye. The static camera intensifies the voyeurism of looking frankly at the existential action in which the director, who famously always remained off-camera, becomes the horizontal receptacle for the seed, anger, and violence of his rough trade. His oeuvre had been solo videos, and these end-of-career duos, which he sent to me, seem kind of a delicious and perversatile victory

©Jack Fritscher, Ph.D., All Rights Reserved

**HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE FROM THIS WORK**

lap of a sadomasochistic race that started years before in Cincinnati. The transfer of seed is the transfer of life. In gay psychology, are his final videos *Baby Jane* horror films? Or are they absurdist comedies of the physical humor of fast entrances, faster exits, and slamming doors in a French sex farce? The first time we met in 1976, David announced without irony, “There are no old gay directors.”

On February 9, 2007, David sent me a copy of *Speeding* with his note written in black ink on the title page: “To Jack, My sometimes long-lost friend, a man who knows firsthand the intrigue, excitement, and also disappointment making pictures can arouse. You’ve seen my work firsthand as it happened for thirty years, *and* created your own. You are truly a man of unlimited ideas—and when you reacted or made suggestions, they were always positive and encouraging. You know some of these men—good and not good. Your constancy has been a support always. Even though there’s no point in wondering what more we might have done, we did what came our way, and that was plenty. With love, David R. Hurles. Thanks.”

Near the same time, on January 31, 2007, my friend and frequent house guest, the British art critic Edward “Ted” Lucie-Smith introduced me to his friend, Dian Hanson, the Erotica Editor at Taschen in Los Angeles, who had told him that without success she was searching for the reclusive Old Reliable to publish his photos in her upcoming *Big Penis Book*. During a two-hour phone conversation on February 1, I convinced David that Dian was so perfectly credentialed and suited to his work that he should at least talk to Taschen’s star editor on the phone. More than royalty payments for his film stills, David needed the place Dian might secure for him in the canon of gay art history. When he agreed to meet her at his Hollywood walk-up, he made one of the best decisions of his life, and it saved his life. The *Big Penis Book* brought him back to consciousness with fans, critics, and serious art collectors.

Continuing pro-active for David’s legacy, I suggested to Ted in an email on December 27, 2007, that he include Old Reliable in the exhibit he was planning for the Leslie-Lohman Gallery in New York: “David has work available, and he is desperate for money. He called me four weeks ago to tell me goodbye because he was wanting to ‘end it all,’ and he said, I was the only one who ever loved him.” Ted replied, “David Hurles is certainly an idea. Charles Leslie loves things raunchy. But the money could be a long way off in January 2009.” On May 15, 2008, Ted wrote, “Dian joins with you in urging me to use David Hurles. However, there is one sticking point: I don’t want, or have time for, any hassle. Can you perhaps deal with

him for me, when the time comes?” On June 7, he decided: “Let’s forget the boy Hurles. Life’s too short.”

Literally too short. Late on the night of October 5, 2008, David, home alone writing the overdue preface for *Outcast*, suffered a stroke. Lying on the floor, he was lucky to be rescued by the arrival of his ex-con assistant, Mykey, to whom he had entrusted a key. In gratitude, David dedicated his book *Outcast* to Mykey. Just twenty months into their friendship, Dian stood by him in critical condition in ICU and held his hand as he went in for surgery to relieve pressure on his brain. In 2008, disabled and fostered by Dian, he retired to a Los Angeles eldercare home where he continues to abide in 2022.

In January 2010, I curated the Old Reliable film photographs for Chuck Mobley’s SF Camerawork Gallery exhibit: *Autobiography of the San Francisco Bay Area, Part 2: The Future Lasts Forever*. In June 2010, Dian Hanson and John Waters curated the exhibition *Outsider Porn: The Photos of David Hurles* at New York’s Marianne Boesky Gallery. Late in his own life, John Waters wrote his personal take on the importance of being Hurles in *Role Models*. To this day, David treasures the memory of his friendship with Gore Vidal who, like Waters and Mapplethorpe and Susie Bright and Joe Gage and Paul Reubens aka Pee-wee Herman, was a fan.

In 2016, the Tom of Finland Foundation inducted David into its “Artists Hall of Fame.” His work is curated in the permanent collection of ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives.



During the Golden Age of Gay Magazines (1975-1999), only the edgiest like *Drummer* featured Old Reliable. *Skin* Cover Photo: “Old Reliable’s Hottest Studs in never-seen photos & words by Jack Fritscher.” *Skin*, vol. 2, # 5, Sept. 1981. Hurles’ photobooks *Speeding* and *Outcast* followed in 2005 and 2010.

©Jack Fritscher, Ph.D., All Rights Reserved

**HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE FROM THIS WORK**