

Headline on *Drummer* cover:
“Jack Fritscher takes on the Academy...”

THE ACADEMY!
INCARCERATION FOR PLEASURE
Going Undercover for *Drummer*
[The Art, Life, and What Turned out to Be
the Death of Chip Weichelt]

by
Jack Fritscher

Written December 19, 1989, and published in *Drummer* 145, December, 1990,
with five of my 35mm photographs.
“Introduction” written September 19, 2001.
“Obituary Post-Script to Introduction” written June 20, 2003.

Historical Context Introduction

To produce and write this *Drummer* cover feature, and shoot the photographs, I pitched *Drummer* publisher Tony DeBlase, and editor Joseph W. Bean, on the idea of my going undercover as a “gonzo journalist” to write this feature of the world-famous Academy Training Center from the inside out.

The gay world is always the leading edge, the avant garde of straights. My 1988 gay gonzo idea was, fifteen years later, repeated by the straight journalist Bob Drury, who spent four days in solitary confinement at the Eastern State Penitentiary in Pennsylvania. Drury’s claustrophobic magazine article appeared in *Men’s Health*, October 2003, pages 170-175.

My intent was explained to *Drummer* readers in a side-bar written for this issue and included below. Actually, my cover as a “big, bad, outlaw leather biker” was meant to conceal my *Drummer* identity from the other clients that weekend at the Academy Training Center, so I could maneuver them and journalisticly witness their reactions inside the experience.

I had met the founding inventor of the Academy, Chip Weichelt in June of 1989 when I called him to interview him about his successful realization of his lifelong fantasy of a place where, for a weekend, masculine gay men could experience imprisonment, immobilization, and interrogation from masculine straight men who were cops, sheriffs, and guards whose profession was law enforcement with prison lifestyle skills such as physical restraint, extraction of information, and corporal punishment. (I had first corresponded with Chip in summer, 1987, when his Academy was in start up and he was going by the name, “Jeff.”)

Anyone who dares achieve legitimate actualization of erotic fantasy is an erotic hero. T. S. Eliot’s “J. Alfred Prufrock” who wonders if he “dares to eat a peach” is the archetype of the Naugahyde-folk whose wishful thinking about leather reality stops with fantasy.

Among the tribe of genuine leatherfolk, the men who actually understood *Drummer*, and used *Drummer* as a guide into realizing their sexuality, might have engraved on their tombstone the existential endorsement: “At least, he dared!” The men who actually dare attend the Academy are erotic adventure heroes.

The largely unknown and self-effacing Chip Weichelt, with his innovative creation of the Academy, is as much a genius and *auteur* of leather culture as any writer, photographer, editor, or graphic artist in the gay pantheon.

His invention of the Academy is the equal of Steve MacEachern’s creation of the Catacombs or of Tony Tavarosi’s invention of leather-bar design simplified to “black paint and red light bulbs.”

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His photography—in its own perfect masculine moments—approaches that of Robert Mapplethorpe whose bio-memoir I wrote in *Mapplethorpe: Assault with a Deadly Camera*.

In a way, Chip Weichelt in 1987 invented the first gay reality TV, because he recruited the cast which he put in a strange environment so he could turn on his cameras to catch what happened. It wasn't until 1990 that the reality-TV show *Cops* premiered. It was 1992 when MTV introduced *The Real World*.

As an analyst of gay culture, particularly of the moving image of film and video, I suggest to anyone studying lesbigay culture that Chip Weichelt in his original material and high-tech form, is one of the most original and best film makers of the whole lot of erotic film makers, videographers, and gay photographers. He dares to take feature videos into an erotic zone beyond fucking and sucking.

He subverts overt sex which occurs not on screen but in the viewer's hand.

He lenses archetypes of desire.

He externalizes on screen the masculine images masculine-identified men actually think of when they think of sex with men. No one on screen is thinking of getting in touch with his feminine side. The Academy is politically incorrect, yet perfectly sensitive where it counts.

Chip is light years beyond even the 1970s classic homomale films of the Gage Brothers who, if they had been filming *Kansas City Trucking Company* in the last decade of the twentieth century, might have evolved similarly into the "Zipless Fuck" Erica Jong made famous prior to the age of safe sex.

Like the Academy experience itself, his videos of contact and desire are the archetypal essence of homomale.

Drummer, at least my "liberationist idea" of *Drummer*, was to seduce readers into daring to realize that, by the very trans-magical act of jerking off to the erotic contents of *Drummer*, they became informed and empowered to dare to exit their masturbatory solitude and go out and seek interaction with real live men who would top them, or bottom to them, in whatever ways they wanted as the 70s opened up all kinds of sensual and mutual S&M games.

Evidence this fact of the *Drummer* mystique. The first and only place Chip Weichelt advertised the Academy was in *Drummer* magazine, because the *Drummer* audience was precisely his target, as it was always mine.

Chip Weichelt's Academy plugged directly into the synergistic desire of *Drummer* not only to have a Mr. *Drummer* contest but also to have a world-famous "*Drummer* dungeon" where international players could pay a fee and experience the mondo-beyondo of their leather fantasies as tops and bottoms.

In 1977, *Drummer* publisher John Embry tried to create an international dungeon which in the pages of *Drummer* was called "The Quarters Academy."

In the Mapplethorpe-cover issue, *Drummer* 24, September 1978, Embry commissioned a feature titled, "*Drummer* Inspects the Quarters Academy," which tub-thumped the Quarters without identifying the article as actual in-house advertising for a *Drummer* venture entirely owned by Embry.

David Sparrow and I took several rolls of black-and-white photographs at the Quarters, and twenty of our photos were published with this article.

On page 11, at the top is a photo of Robert Dunn, wearing a cap. Robert Dunn was the top in charge of the Quarters, and he evolved as Robert Paul Dunn into the "Advertising Account Executive" of *Drummer*.

Although S&M players were looking for such an idealized play space, the Quarters—which was truly an excellent merchandising and tourist-vacation idea—was an ill-fated venture that turned from its earnest intention as a world-famous playroom, owned and staffed by *Drummer*, to no more than a studio set for some light S&M photography, such as the photo feature, with John Embry's cartoon-balloon dialog captions, "The Day They Installed the Phone in the Dungeon," *Drummer* 25, December 1978.

As the twenty-seven Sparrow-Fritscher photos show behind the hunky bodies, the problem with the Quarters was that the facility was no more than a funky basement South of Market equipped with the primitive equipment available in the 70s before the rise of S&M

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designers and builders crafting racks, slings, cages, and cells.

When the handsome young leatherman, Tom Gloucester, went missing after exiting a Folsom Street leather bar, several of us from the Pacific Drill Patrol uniform club—of which he was a member—spent days searching for him. Thinking he might have been locked away in some rogue leather trip, we had to break into the Quarters basement which was always more abandoned and creepy than fantasy would have it, because publisher Embry, living virtually incognito after having become seriously ill for most of a year, had let the Quarters stand empty with no key available. Gloucester, as noted in *Some Dance to Remember*, was found bound and shot in the woods north of San Francisco in Tehama County.

The Quarters' physical facility was campy, almost like "leather Mickey and Judy putting on a show in the barn," compared to the production values of the physical plant Chip Weichelt designed, built, and populated ten years later in Missouri with real cops, real deputies, and real pro-wrestlers as the keepers of men seriously dedicated to acting out the major fantasies of leather culture.

Chip had been advertising the Academy in *Drummer* classifieds with a wanking-hot photo of a beefy cop with big arms exploding through a white teeshirt. The seductive copy, issue after issue, became a lynchpin for *Drummer* readers' fantasies as the 80s became the 90s.

The Academy was perfect for transpositional play in the age of safe sex, precisely because at the Academy there was no sex, but there was plenty of masculine action-adventure satisfying both physically and psychically.

From the moment modern-leather S&M iconography emerged out of *The Wild One* (1954) and *Scorpio Rising* (1964) to the day John Embry started the Quarters, leatherfolk had unanimously dreamed a certain quest: that, like Oz itself, there would rise some hyper-physical place, deep and dark and mysterious, where powerfully irresistible and relentless men could conjure the transformational spirits of de Sade and Sacher-Masoch wielding ropes and guns and cigars and muscle power—in short, a place where a gay man could get straight men to top him with the choreographed brutality and violence implicit in S&M but made safe by volition and ritual. Highly charged erotically, play at the Academy was very hands-on and psychological, but not sexual the way it was at the Mine Shaft fuck bar in Greenwich Village, and the Slot Hotel and the Barracks baths in San Francisco.

As young recruits, all cops are trained how to "act" approaching a car, or approaching a prisoner. They are taught how to restrain and how to intimidate by size and psyche. Recall the world's most famous gay prisoner, Jean Genet, and his play *The Maids* in which male actors play actresses playing the maids playing the part of their mistress who plays the maids herself. Then consider the roles Chip constructed for his police officers.

The fact that the "real cops" at the Academy had actually gone underground inside the Academy, pretending to be "rogue cops," made them seem as if they actually had become the rogue cops they pretended to be. (What if one lost control?) Moonlighting in a highly secret place like the Academy, they "acted out for pay" the most extreme bad-ass stereotypes of their very "copness."

The cops took on an ever-changing cast of strangers who could not get enough of their manliness, of their force at restraint and confinement, of their confidence with guns and intimidation, of their inventiveness at prison brutality, of their transmitted sense of masculine pleasure in which they played big wild boys who got off on their own sadism. They were nonplused by the weirdest bondage and hoods and rough interrogation and execution scenarios.

On these Academy weekends, these Southern cops—these men from the American South caricatured by *bubbas* and *rednecks*—made extra money for their girlfriends and wives and ex-wives. They also got to hang with like-minded law enforcement guys in the gentlemen's club atmosphere which Chip afforded them upstairs—when they were not downstairs harassing and torturing the clients.

One cop told me he liked the weekends because he got extra pay and extra practice on his "take-down" techniques. Chip thinks the cops get off on giving no-nonsense "attitude" they can't get away with when on actual duty.

It's clear the cops are acting out some of their professional tensions by beating on the

Academy's weekend list of "drug dealers," "kidnappers," "molesters," and "cop killers."

The cops, sheriffs, and guards gladly brought along and used their actual police cars, guns, uniforms, badges, and attitude. In the same way the prisoner-clients were working out subliminal stuff, figure what sensibilities the real law enforcement personnel were working out.

Homosexuality was never mentioned in any scenario.

The words *fag* and *queer* were never used.

That editorial subtraction alone indicates that Chip had instructed the straight cops not to go there, because it was understood that most of the prisoner-clients were homosexual—and that they all were paying lots of money for a stay on Fantasy Island.

I had to wonder at the interesting subtext, especially in the context of the Deep South: was any of what the cops did an acting out of a Kabuki-like homophobia?

Who cares? I never got an anti-gay feeling from any of them, but a gay man has to wonder what analysis—or what *feeling*—goes on in a 220-pound straight cop's head while playing "Redneck Cop" when he is

- 1) choking a prisoner by locking his big-bicep arms around his neck and pulling the prisoner's shoulders and butt up against his uniformed cop front to cut off his air, or
- 2) lowering a prisoner's head down into a toilet bowl for a drowning "swirlie," or
- 3) hog-tying a prisoner into painful rope bondage for electrode shock therapy, or
- 4) blowing cigar smoke into a tube on a gas mask fitted tight on the face of a prisoner whose body is tied down inside an iron lung, or
- 5) putting a noose around the neck of a condemned man standing on a chair, or
- 6) actually pulling out a .357 Magnum and shooting a prisoner in the chest with blanks that bruise the flesh, or
- 7) nailing a panicked prisoner zipped inside a hooded tight rubber suit wrapped with leather straps into a wooden coffin and shoveling clumps of dirt to bury the coffin in a shallow grave.

The allure of the Academy reality was always that the cops were straight and that there was no sex.

If the cops had done male-male sex, their appeal would have been violated, because they would have then become just another gay man in a uniform, even if they were real cops.

Devotees of the Academy typically had "had enough" of unsafe gay sex and wanted instead pure masculine leather action-adventure. Many returned more than once. I attended twice—once again in 1991.

For someone who has had sexual contact with approximately 13,000 men, it's interesting to me that some of my gay partners rather blur, but every moment at the Academy seems distinct as a fourteen-year-old boy's first wet dream.

Actually, I pity the poor suckers who jerked off in *Drummer* to pictures and articles about the Academy, but failed to call the free 800 number and get themselves off to the longitude and latitude of the Academy, first in Washington, Missouri, and then in Alpharetta outside Atlanta, Georgia.

When the Academy first opened, I figured a wonder spot like that was very *Brigadoon*. Something that fantastical only surfaced every hundred years, and a man had to grab its gusto the brief moment it existed. The Academy, however, was in full-swing business for a dozen years.

Chip's classified ad copy for the Academy in *Drummer* read:

THE ACADEMY

The Academy, a full-time staffed facility, continues to offer men with a serious interest a unique alternative service. The Academy can design and implement each detail of your experience in various environments and scenarios for weekend or week-long sessions.

Special situations such as public arrest, hostage and other complex programs are executed in realistic correctional or military atmosphere.

Cell confinement, immobilization, isolation, interrogation, sensory control and endurance situations are all offered in safe, sane, discreet, and monitored environment.

All Academy programs are administered by professionally trained military, corrections,

and law personnel.

A brochure or videotape is now available. Reservation and deposit require (deposit and/or video may be charged by credit card). References provided after commitment. Contact: The Academy, PO Box 163, Washington MO 63090. (314) 239-7571 or 1-800-525-7717. The Academy cannot offer sexual situations as part of their programs.

In October 1989, right after the Loma Prieta earthquake that so damaged the *Drummer* offices while publishers Tony DeBlase and Andy Charles were in England, I began persuading Chip Weichelt to edit together some Academy videos from his private footage. My reasons to him were that his weekends were so labor-intensive for him and the half-dozen instructors, as well as the clients, that the labor could be extended through video. Why let the highly produced weekend evaporate? It could be replayed and enjoyed forever on video by hundreds of viewers who would gladly pay to help support the production of future weekends.

Old Reliable had begun his video mail-order in 1981, and Mark Henry and I began Palm Drive Video in earnest in 1982, so my experience as a video producer very much appreciated the set, cast, costumes, and directing that Chip was marshaling on his once-monthly extended weekends. He had a weekend trip he could sell live one-on-one to a single client. This trip, if taped, could be mass-marketed to gay guys ever hungry for actualizing fantasies.

In the eighth year of AIDS, with the death toll speeding each week, the documentarian in me figured Chip's angle on this gay subculture needed to be preserved and reported.

Actually, Chip had from the first wired the Academy with black-and-white surveillance video cameras in each room and cell. Yet he had not ever shot Academy footage with a handheld camera. Not to freak him out, I suggested he edit his library of footage into an easy hour's tape.

Actually his style was very like Warhol's film style in *Empire*, *Blow Job*, *The Chelsea Girls*, and other films. I told Chip he had a new kind of "Security Camera" style. The fixed cameras—that never move and never shy away from the wild action—penetrate unblinking into the black-and-white secrets of the Academy. In this way, human truth emerges. This is the video verite of Old Reliable and Palm Drive Video.

Whatever Chip thought about "art," he was a canny entrepreneur. He ran with this idea and edited the gay-history tapes which, through several editions, became eventually the DVDs *The Academy Training Center Instructors Series: Washington, Missouri, 1989-1993*, and *The Academy Training Center Instructor Series: Atlanta, Georgia, 1995-1997*.

By 1991, Chip moved beyond editing his own "found footage." Like everyone else, he wanted to direct. He began writing and casting his first scripted color-video feature for which I suggested the title *Atlanta Knights*.

For his story boards, I mentioned that he shoot no scenes with shirts on when the scene could just as well be played stripped to the waist, and that fetish angles might be best achieved with the camera on the floor shooting across at the boots and up at the cops, because most voyeurs view from the bottom.

During the casting, Chip sent me some test pictures of Dave Monroe who was to star in the feature. He was hot, big, tall, and muscular, but not as commanding as he could have been. His facial bone structure suggested "high-school principal" more than "sex top-cop." I suggested he grow a moustache before filming. The transforming authority of facial hair worked. Monroe had *gravitas*.

Atlanta Knights was a hit. Dave Monroe worked at the Academy and then, leaving Chip and the Academy behind, took his moustached, handsome, uniformed look on a tour of his own making. He took nearly full-page ads in *Frontiers* magazine, offering his non-sexual fetish services in Los Angeles on a modeling-fee basis: cop, muscle, cigar, handcuffs, gun.

Somehow his fast rise and mysterious demise reminds me of the *mise en scene* of Tennessee Williams' stories in his 1948 book, *One Arm*, and James Purdy's 1967 novel, the violent and blatantly homoerotic *Eustace Chisholm and the Works*, because the drop-dead gorgeous Dave came allegedly to an untimely and gory end on the wrong end of a rifle in a rural bath tub in the Deep South. It seemed suicide. The bloat of bath water and southern heat thwart forensic evidence. Case closed. Or at least, so said Chip who told me those details and no more;

so I can only offer his story the way he told me.

Art and life imitate each other, so it is emotionally worth noting what Tennessee Williams wrote in "One Arm": "The body, unclaimed after death, was turned over to a medical college to be used in a class room laboratory. The men who performed the dissection were somewhat abashed by the body under their knives. It seemed intended for some more august purpose, to stand [as muscular bound bodies tied standing in tall glass display cases at the Academy often did] in a gallery of antique sculpture, touched only by light through stillness and contemplation, for it had the nobility of some broken Apollo that no one was likely to carve so purely again. But death has never been much in the way of completion." –Tennessee Williams, "One Arm" in *One Arm and Other Stories*.

The geographical provenance of the Academy, which helps the clients' willing suspension of disbelief, is precisely the fact of its physical and psychological location in the American South of redneck trailer parks, trucks, alcohol, tobacco, and firearms. Has any gay culture analyst ever considered what "the dialect of gay S&M sex" sounds like?

My theory is that the "southern drawl," which transcends race, is subtly understood in the United States as the language of American leather sex. The "southern drawl" is no longer just for drag queens.

In role-playing, sex dialogue drips innuendo when laced with a Dixie drawl from "Ah've always depended on the kindness of strangers" to "Who's yer daddy?" and "You hear me, boy? You call me: 'Sir, Yes, Sir!'"

The dialect spoken at the Academy and on Chip's videos is the same accented, taunting, ironic, aggressive redneck dialect that S&M players tend to assume when they are role-playing cops, D.I.'s, truckers, and other good ol' boys.

In my personal experience, I've heard more southern accents during S&M role play than in all twelve reels of *Gone With The Wind*. There's something sexually transcendent in a southern drawl that helps the willing suspension of disbelief. "C'mon, boy, git on yer knees an suck yer daddy's dick."

So mesmerizing are the dramatic intonations of the southern drawl that I designed the whole *outré* southern culture of drawling men into the character of Kick in *Some Dance to Remember*. In the *Drummer* play, *Corporal in Charge of Taking Care of Captain O'Malley*, I wrote the characters with a southern accent in mind. On the female side of the southern drawl played for laughs, I wrote the narrating lesbian character, Laydia Spain, in *The Geography of Women* so that the whole novel, told in Laydia's voice, is written in a designed dialect that by the third page has the reader thinking with a southern accent that is automatically transporting. For *Classic Bear* magazine, I wrote a one-sentence story told in one long drawlin' voice that was republished twice: *The Best American Erotica 2003* by Susie Bright and *Kink* by Ron Suresha. The point is that the Southern drawl is a great tradition in gay literature from Tennessee Williams, Flannery O'Connor, and Carson McCullers to Rita Mae Brown, Dorothy Allison, and Alan Gurganus.

Once a writer gets a voice going in the reader's head, art wins.

In this same way, Chip used the culture of the American South to identify his Academy, which could never have worked in, say, San Francisco. Ain't that a cultural observation about Gay Mecca! The Academy had to be the destination of a journey to a straight place. The psychology of the journey was the same as Joseph Conrad's novel, *The Heart of Darkness*, or Francis Ford Coppola's film, *Apocalypse Now Redux*.

Had the Academy Training Center been in San Francisco, urban irony would have laughed at the straight cops, and the cops themselves would have become pursued targets as gay men tried to seduce them to compromise them to undo them. It is ironic that for all the sex in San Francisco, one of the greatest erotic trips in leather culture could not exist there. Chip's Academy experience was based on a kind of delicious fear that the gay men was so deep in straight territory that no gay brothers could run out of a leather bar and rescue him the way we had tried to rescue Tom Gloucester.

In 1995, Chip edited together more of his surveillance footage into the documentary feature, *The Academy Pictorial History* (Parts 1 and 2) which reveals how revolutionary were his

ideas of re-inventing classic bondage inside the Academy. As his video feature production grew, Chip moved the Academy out of Missouri to an even more expensively designed capture, restraint, and confinement facility outside Atlanta. Georgia offered a wider talent pool of big-built, commanding, and authoritative men willing to be instructors at the Academy.

Chip's professionally produced videos, handsomely cast and digitally photographed, are a very particular genre of masculine film making no other artist, straight or gay, has ever achieved.

Without being political he has enshrined images of heteromascularity and homomascularity that are a miracle of archetypal clarity in a politically correct age that too often denies the glory of honest manhood, its grooming, its power, its heroism, and its need for one-on-one bonding through pecking order and discipline.

Chip Weichelt's action-adventure videography, produced through his Academy Entertainment and Fleetwood Productions, includes, besides *Atlanta Knights* and *The Academy Pictorial History* (1 and 2): *Academy Training* (Volumes 1-4), *Force Recon*, *The Academy Brig*, *The Collector*, *Final Justice*, *Top Cops* (1 and 2), *Cold Steel*, *X-10*, *Kick-Ass Cops* (1 and 2), *To Serve and Protect*, *High and Tight*, *Manhunters*, *Boot Camp Corrections*, and *Beyond the Law*.

His *SWAT in Training* triumphs as a dreamy casting coup, because it stars the stunning blond bodybuilder, Scott Klein, both as uniform top and bondage bottom.

The five photographs in *Drummer* 145, pages 25, 27, 28, and 29, are pictures I shot inside the Academy.

The Academy "exterior" photo introducing the feature article is actually a vintage-deco power station that I lensed early on a Sunday morning near Fresno, California, because it looked archetypically like what I figured *Drummer* readers thought the Academy would be.

In keeping with the cops-and-cigars theme of *Drummer* 145, on page 70, there is a cop-and-cigar photo of the model called "Brutus" who appeared frequently on the cover of *Drummer*. My photo of Brutus, including a little free-verse poem, is from the Palm Drive Video, *I, Brutus: Muscle-Cop Road Warrior*, shot October 5, 1990.

In 1995, two of my Academy Training Center photographs, that had originally appeared in *Drummer*, appeared in the British coffee-table photography book, *Jack Fritscher's American Men*. One was on page 43 titled "I Said, Fuck You!" and the other on page 56 titled "Behaviour Modification." (*American Men*, with an Introduction by Edward Lucie-Smith, was published by GMP, Gay Men's Press, London.)

On the *Drummer* 145 contents page, Joseph Bean wrote, "The Academy: Incarceration for Pleasure, Real cops and rough fun in Missouri. Jack Fritscher was there, and brought back words and pictures."

Actually, I had brought back more words and photos, but, while some of my writing had been censored by *Drummer's* publisher and printer back in the 70s, this was the first time any of my writing for *Drummer* was ever edited for length. I didn't mind, because I held publisher Tony DeBlase and managing editor Joseph Bean in the highest professional regard, and trusted them both personally to make the parts of *Drummer* be in balance. However, in this collection, this Academy feature article is restored as originally written to document the full Academy experience. -JF, September 19, 2001

OBITUARY POST-SCRIPT TO THE INTRODUCTION

In May, 2003, I received word that Chip Weichelt had died suddenly and mysteriously in Las Vegas.

In the year before his death, he and I had continued to talk many evenings, always late and long, at one or two in the morning, as well as often e-mailing each other. He was on the road trip of his life. He had left Atlanta behind. Like every founding genius, he discovered that what he had founded was trying to consume him with complications and details and people and politics and money. He was famous for his "money troubles" and he was always hustling to keep going financially.

In 1999, he had showed up at a rather primitive camp in the Pennsylvania woods to attend the annual Delta S&M run produced by Harold Cox and Bob Reite. The driver of Chip's Crown

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Imperial Limousine was a drop-dead gorgeous bodybuilder cop who starred in many Academy videos

Chip's cash register was always running; he was intent on renting the cop's "traveling Academy services." However, Chip, accustomed to the carpet and amenities of his luxurious mansion with his garage full of cars like the Ghia Landau Limousine he had just sold, lasted only one night at the campsite, and besides, the Delta run, with its intense group of S&M veterans, looked askance at anyone selling S&M scenes for money. Just as the Academy could not have existed in San Francisco, the Academy experience did not travel well.

Chip would give a man the shirt off his back to fulfill that man's fantasy, but Chip always, always, always asked for a credit card number to pay for that shirt, and a couple others. (I have the receipts!) Hey, he was a producer! (If that is not clear, see Mel Brooks' play, *The Producers*. Chip could have starred.) I figured, whatever! I've worked with other visionary geniuses like author Sam Steward, and photographers Mapplethorpe and Old Reliable, and bodybuilder performance-artist Jim Enger, and High Priest of the Church of Satan, Anton LaVey, whose quirks anyone could forgive because their work was so dazzling.

Actually, while I mentored Chip into video production, I paid for every video of his I got. I even distributed his work. I bought his titles in quantity for my own company, www.PalmDriveVideo.com, and sold hundreds of copies of his Academy Entertainment, Fleetwood Productions.

In the fall of 2002, Chip rang me on his cell phone. He wagged on about his adventures in the luxury motor home he had bought to take his show on the road where he could meet new bodybuilders and fresh cops. Actually, he was heading west on the run. Something had happened in Atlanta. All his life Chip had bluffed at poker, and won, until somebody had called his hand. Chip was a hustler and, ultimately, he confessed to me, he had been out-hustled. He felt his fantasy career had peaked, and if he started moving, like a hypochondriac running away from health problems, he could recapture what he had intended at the start, or that he could outrun death like the hero in *Appointment in Samara*.

The story he told me about his abrupt exit from the Academy sounded like a butch version of *All About Eve*—done with a southern drawl.

Was it true that one of the handsome young men Chip had hired had pushed him aside in the affections of the rich older gentleman who sponsored Chip's Academy? Was Chip trying to live out the plot of a new movie? Did he want to be arrested by strange, dangerous cops, not just by cops he had interviewed and hired? Was he lying about some fantasized Academy plot to cover his own tracks?

Where there's money and sex, there's an indie film.

What he told me could have been true, or it could have been one of those meandering late-night tales told by a bitter man on the lonely road. Chip was, as mentioned, very much a hypochondriac who often asked me questions about his health. I read once that hypochondria goes with high IQ. Over the years, Chip repeatedly told me about his heart and his lungs, and his trips to the doctor, and how afraid he was of dying.

At any rate, in the Pacific Northwest, his huge motor home developed mechanical trouble which he insisted the manufacturer repair. Full of galloping anxiety, Chip was pushing the mechanics and eager to get on to the action in Vegas.

He sent me his first attempts at putting his sharply shot videos on DVD, a two-disc set, *Taken By Force*, starring young bodybuilder cops sitting in white briefs on the front porch of a country cabin, smoking cigars, and shooting handguns. The imagery was perfect Weichelt. He was a master in control of his material. This, his last video, turned out to be a crystalline distillation of his erotic desire produced with perfect casting, and shot with perfect technical achievement.

On Sunday, December 1, 2002, I received one of my last e-mails from Chip whose address was academy@leathertribe.com. Chip sent it at 21:20 hours. It read:

"Jack—Sorry I haven't called lately. Having a difficult time. I am in Oregon right now getting my coach repaired, near Eugene. Last couple of months have almost done me in. Had so many problems with coach breaking down I just about went bankrupt. Came to Monaco factory

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to get it fixed and finally Monaco admitted problems in past should not have happened. They are trying to help me get back on my feet. Almost ended up in hospital from worry over everything. Didn't know if I should call you so late (as usual), but wanted to tell you that *Taken By Force* is a wild video of an actual kidnaping we did with [name deleted] the guy who does my site. 2 Big burly guys took him [the victim] out of his house and he didn't know when it was going to happen. Academy members' version has additional scenes. Lots of abuse in this tape because X is a real pain pig. Also re-edit of *Sealed Up* is out and I am hoping to be able to re-locate to Las Vegas after coach is fixed which should be by the end of this week. Have a nice place to park coach in LV. Already checked it out. My new cell phone number is X. Give me a call. I will call you. -Chip

On New Year's Eve, as 2002 became 2003, I sent Chip an email dated Tuesday, December 31, 2002, 4:26 PM: "Dear Chip, All the best for a wonderful and happy New Year. Hope our paths can actually cross in 2003. Cheers, Jack."

That same Tuesday night, in an e-mail dated December 31, 2002 16:50, Chip responded: "Hi, Jack, Remember I sent you an e-mail a couple weeks ago bringing you up to date on my adventures. I am still in Oregon at the Monaco factory, but will be leaving here to head south hopefully at the end of the week. I am probably going straight on to Las Vegas, but they tell me there is snow on I5 so I may have to go down the coast. My new mobile phone is working: 770-241-XXXX. Maybe you could give me some info on what is the coolest route to take and where there are some neat rest spots to stop. Can you see me driving in? I will have the 42FT RV and a 20FT trailer with my car in it! Happy New Year." -Chip

Who knew Chip had an "Appointment in Vegas"?

Who knows the details of what actually happened the night Chip Weichelt died?

Whoever knows really how gay men die?

One hopes in ecstasy during the perfect sex trip.

One hopes not alone and lonely.

One hopes not in punishment the way gay men always died in books and movies before Stonewall.

According to the national gay grapevine, as details surfaced, Gary (Chip) Weichelt died in his coach in Las Vegas and was taken to a hospital by a pair of unidentified people. His death became instantly laced with murky gossip of how the "master copies" for his videos disappeared from his coach, and how a sister (few knew he had) appeared in Vegas, apparently not knowing her brother was a famous entrepreneur with a legendary body of video art.

The Las Vegas Review Journal all-too-simply announced his death in its obituary column on Thursday, May 22, 2003:

"Gary Weichelt, 52, died Sunday [May 18]. He was born July 26, 1950 in Texas. A business owner, he was a resident of Las Vegas. Burial is private. Hites Funeral Home handled arrangements."

From Texas to Vegas in 52 years is the straight line that is the shortest distance between two points. Life should be the longest distance between two points: birth and death.

Chip's knots in that straight line tempt me to want to pitch a video documentary of his life to A&E or the "Histories Mysteries" channel, or, maybe, even better, a dramatic film bio of his life for HBO or Bravo where the truth could be told with Chip in the center of a colorful cast of characters who would throw an entirely different angle on gay men and their truly masculine sides.

The Hollywood movies *Boogie Nights* and *Wonderland* don't even come close to the men's action-adventure videos that Chip invented and introduced into gay culture.

Thousands of gay men attended the Academy Training Center.

Thousands more were fans of his movies which will unreel in the gay underground forever.

Long before Chip died, I had in my 1990 novel, *Some Dance to Remember*, killed off the gay video director, Solly Blue, because readers believe the maxim that as you live (adventurously) so will you die (murderously). Chip, who admitted he had only "read around" in *Some Dance*, had asked me early on, because he was taken by the death of Solly Blue, if I

thought his major sex trip was dangerous.

He liked a big cop to tie him immobile in a sitting position, hooded with duct tape and a gas mask, so that the muscular cop smoking a big cigar could blow cigar smoke down the tube filling the gas mask fitted tight to his sweating face.

I dodged the obvious bourgeois answer as well as the existential answer and gave him the answer he wanted to hear. I told him he didn't do that scene every day or often enough to worry about the bad effects of second-hand cigar smoke.

I didn't want to take his scene away from him. Chip was a fragile man, petite, actually, who had never exercised a day in his life. He always seemed perched on an edge of vulnerability.

When I mentioned to him in early 2003 that he had included several photographs I'd shot on his Academy website, and that he included in one of his latest compilation movies two scenarios of me fighting cops at the Academy, he right away jumped and said, "I guess I should have got your permission."

Duh, yeah, he should have, but that's the way it was with him.

While he always wanted your credit card, Chip always presumed if you were his friend, you'd forgive him anything.

I did.

I do.

More than any need to forgive, I am so very happy his work exists, and I hope his legal heirs do not let it disappear, because no successor will ever be able to replicate Chip's exact vision that so reflects the fantasies of so many men.

Maybe in the sorrow of his passing, I can eulogize him a bit.

I think the form and content of his some of his still photographs of cops, and many of his video frames, are as singular, as pure, and as perfect a series of moments as any perfect-moment photograph by legendary gay leather photographer, Robert Mapplethorpe.

No other gay artist has ever given the uniformed BDSM world of men such perfectly actualized reality on location and on screen. -JF, June 20, 2003

**The feature article as written for
Drummer 145, December 1990**

THE ACADEMY
(INCARCERATION FOR PLEASURE)

by
Jack Fritscher

ROUND UP THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS, and head for Missouri where the Academy Training Center shows in spades what the "Show Me" state promises. The Academy (featured in *Drummer* 86 and *Drummer* 109) is a correctional facility staffed by actual straight cops and prison guards who are real as hell! A man, daring enough to be incarcerated for pleasure, can act out, act up, and live the reality of arrest, booking, cell time, bondage, and rough police interrogation. Being the gonzo kind of journalist whose credo is "Live it up to write it down," I could not resist the challenging opportunity of the Academy.

My interest was, Oh yeah, Buddy, as much personal as professional. At this century's end, we live in a society that flaunts melodramatic dinners in mansions where murder mysteries are played out by actors mixed in with real guests. Corporations send employees out on death-defying para-military weekends to walk tightropes strung 40 feet in the air between trees to enhance workers' confidence and aggression. Fans attend baseball spring training camps to

workout with their favorite team. Parents send their kids to Space Camps.

In the Gonzo Tradition of Journalism, writers George Plimpton and Hunter Thompson have each penetrated closed fraternities of males: Plimpton, a nonjock, worked out with a pro-football team so he could write about it inside-out in *The Paper Tiger*. Non-biker, Hunter Thompson, talked his way into riding with Sonny Barger to write his explosive inside book, *The Hell's Angels*.

Maybe it's the outfall of TV. We have a video eye on everything; but voyeurism ain't enough for some guys. Sometimes, something in your head clicks, when you see some group of males so distinctly what they are in their closed fraternity, the outsider in you demands, out of intellectual, psychological, and erotic desire, that you oftentimes have a flaming desire to penetrate deep into its inner circle of masculine fraternity or die!

Jeez! Mystery mansions, corporate paramilitary games, at the Academy a man can have it All! What a society!

AUTHOR'S SIDEBAR

Participatory journalism goes over the edge into personal reportage. Unlike baseball or football whose home runs or touchdowns are objectively there or not there, sex as a sport is like gymnastics or bodybuilding: the outcome depends on subjective judgments. As a journalist, I have written many articles for *Drummer* which are highly subjective: "Inside San Quentin: Prison Blues"; "Pumping Roger"; "The Catacombs"; "The Night Flight Party"; and numerous enthusiastic reviews of films and videos. As a journalist, I try to whip the reader up to an inside look at something that might otherwise be missed.

Now, in the last decade of this century (sex being what it is becoming), novel, fresh experiences are few. Never have I commercially endorsed any person, place, or event in my reporting. My enthusiasms are those of a participant back from an adventure. All adventurers, back from the sporting event or the sex hunt, enjoy sharing their thrills (cheap and otherwise) with their friends. If a reviewer says a film is a "10," you may, on that basis, go see that movie. Afterwards, you may judge the film a "6." The point is that a man must always be his own best critic, judging for himself what works for him.

In that spirit, this gonzo journalism piece, written specifically for the adventurers who read *Drummer*, offers one man's insight into his experience. Take it for what it is worth. Any endorsement you sense here is personal, not commercial. (If the Academy sucked, I wouldn't have written anything at all, because if I can't say something good.... If the Academy were just OK, I'd have so described it.) What we have here is an opinion, as subjective as judging in a bar who is hot and who is not. But don't you prefer a buddy who points out a manly number you might otherwise have overlooked?

Neither *Drummer*, which is completely independent of the Academy, nor the Academy itself, either one pressured me to write this participatory journalism. This frankly enthusiastic feature article is, as a matter of fact, toned down from what I would tell you were we to talk face to face. No, I haven't taken est, and, no, I haven't found Jeesuz. I just had a fuckin' good time with some good ol' boys!

If you can identify with what *Drummer* offers you, in its response to your requests for more REALITY-BASED EXPERIENCES, you can leap from these pages to the real adventure of the Academy

At your own risk, Bucko, bag yourself some Big Game!

Gonzo that I am, I've "gone undercover" and written investigative journalism for *Drummer* for everything from the Catacombs (*Drummer* 23) to San Quentin (*Drummer* 21) to inside Bodybuilding (*Drummer* 124). An inquiring mind is a terrible thing to waste especially when the libido is so eager to grab the gusto of a real experience. Believe me. I'm talking the REALITY of opportunity here! A weekend at the Academy, far from being trendy, and far more than I fantasized, was a most invigorating experience in a life lived on the leather-SM cutting

edge of psychodrama intensity.

I jetted into Lambert Field, St. Louis, with instructions to meet two other men also flying in for the Academy experience. That September Friday afternoon I killed time in the airport, standing near the USO lounge, directly opposite the shoeshine stand where hundreds of soldiers, three at a time, sat uniformed, groomed, and knees spread wide apart while bootblacks snapped their spit and polish. As a cameraman with *video verite* balls, I was tempted to shoot several of the Recruiting-Poster handsome soldiers who had marched from camp to the airport, shaved, shorn, tough, young, and buffed up for their weekend leave. (*Drummer/Zeus's* exciting new video series "USSM" would have a casting director's field day!)

But my camera stayed in its case. Friday afternoon outside the USO may be the place to be, but my psyche was on an even more focused trip. Those handsome, homebound soldiers, attractive as they were, could not divert my own high-tension adventure: I was Academy bound. My mind and guts commanded I keep my head on straight for the Academy Experience. I sweat, in the humid St. Louis air terminal, with a highly charged mix of excitement, anxiety, and real fear.

Within hours, the other two men, also both sentenced by consensual agreement to a 72-hour incarceration, arrived. I was glad to see that their apprehension at surrendering total control in an unknown situation equaled mine. Both were in their early 30's with medium experience. One, whom I'll call "Mike," was a police dispatcher who worked 911, saving hundreds of lives and millions of dollars of property. Working daily with cops, his reality tipped over to excited curiosity. He admitted that psychologically he was on the edge, after so long witnessing and participating in police procedure. In our tense conversation, he admitted he was on the verge of asking the police officers he worked with to give him a taste of what the other side of the law was like.

"But I can't walk up to the motor cops I really like and say, 'Could you arrest, cuff, book me, and toss me in a cell for the weekend so I can see what it's like?'"

The other man, whom I'll call "Opie," was less sure of what he wanted. He figured he'd endure the unpredictable Academy experience in order to define his generic incarceration, restraint, and bondage fantasies.

We were a cross-section of ordinary guys, heading in my rental car, westward on the expressway, leaving St. Louis behind, driving into the falling red disc of sunset, driving out into the *Deliverance*-thick, forested counties to the west.

Inside the car, we were about as relaxed as a movie-audience during the shower scene in *Psycho*. We were sentenced men ordered to follow a mysterious route to the general area of the Academy to serve our time. No matter the fantasies we had, the reality of submitting to the total control and training of the center swept like waves of roller-coaster panic through the our tan Ford Escort. All we knew was that after sundown a real police unit with two real cops would pull us over. Every headlight appearing in the rearview mirror might be THEM! I gunned the car through the darkness. We three were speeding faster on adrenaline.

"This should be a story in *Drummer*," Opie said.

I grinned a shining Nicholson grin. Neither man knew I was undercover for *Drummer*. When the cops were fucking all our heads, and we were alone, I could fuck theirs!

The Academy is not a fantasy. It is real. According to the Controller "men with serious interest can experience physical training, cell confinement, and immobilization in a realistic military or correctional atmosphere...safe, sane, discreet, and monitored....The psycho-drama situations can be as *varied* as jail incarceration, police interrogation, boot camp, stockade, POW, asylum, and sensory deprivation in exotic bondage."

We believed him.

Our imaginations ran wild.

The skeptic in me, the gonzo journalist, was cynical enough to figure that the Academy might be a lot less than promised. Fantasy and anticipation can so inflate expectation that the reality often falls short. Any man into serial tricking knows that truth.

"So what," I said, "if it's not all we expect. If a man gets off on photos and text in *Drummer*, say, 10 or 20 times, his dick is telling him something. If the pictures and stories are

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fiction, you can't follow them up. They stay erotic fantasies. But when the pix and words are real and end with an 800 number and a PO box, if your head doesn't have the courage to follow your hardon, then you're wimping in the wind if you don't make the reality contact offered. You can remain a jerkoff at home or you can set up the adventure of a masculine lifetime."

Personally, I feel that if an advertisement promises hyper-real experiences with real cops in a real jail, and those cops are muscular, good-looking, and true psychodrama sports players, I could not in my masculinist conscience *not* dial 1-800. When a gift is offered, why not JUST SAY YES! How often in this uptight world, if ever, is serious, *very serious* realization of fantasy offered?

A man, living actively true to his inner erotic desires, cannot avoid directing his own history if he is to be true to himself physically, psychologically, and spiritually. After two years of beating off to the *Drummer* articles and classified ad of the training center Academy, I could no longer live my life without seeing for myself if what was offered could be actualized. Who wants to grow up and regret not what he did, but what he didn't do? Life is too short. "The saddest words of tongue and pen are only these: *It might have been.*"

Exiting the Missouri expressway at the commanded off ramp, pulling onto the dark country road, I asked, "Either of you guys want out here? Last chance." The three of us laughed nervously and drove off into the dark and winding woods, on a two-lane blacktop, jumping like startled deer whenever headlights approached us from the rear. "We're being tailed." Paranoia strikes deep. When the following cars passed, relief swept like a reprieve. Three times we stopped alongside the deserted road for nervous leaks streaming golden in our headlights.

We passed through small towns on the Daniel Boone historic trail. Small burgs from a bye-gone age slept quiet, except for the one bar with patrons standing, bottles in hand, in the neon-beer-sign light. The September night was warm, humid, close. Car windows down, we heard the crackling voice-box of a CB radio. With every minute we got closer to reality. Was it THEM? In the next block, the radio came from a local tow truck surrounded by three grease jockeys. We mind-fucked ourselves. "When we're arrested, the cops will need a tow truck for our car." Our heads worked overtime. Were the tow-men point-men for the cops? Were they relaying our position?

"I've seen movies that started like this," I said. "Three outsiders driving slowly through the southern night, passing through redneck towns, sighted, followed out to deserted country roads." Were we Schwerner, Cheney, and Goodman in *Mississippi Burning*? Panic erupted. What if this turned into the *Missouri Chainsaw Massacre*? Three-way freak-out! Terror was the point. We tried to keep real. After all, the Academy experience was supposed to be fun, safe fun. Nevertheless, we creamed with the kind of primal terror boys experience at night at camp when horror stories are told around a campfire. I kind of liked it. The situation was juicy. My terror was a hardon, the kind of long-forgotten terror you feel when you're first coming out and chucking all the warnings your parents gave you about taking rides with strangers. I liked that restoration of virginal fear: "dangerous" sports man-to-man. I hadn't felt such deliciously sweet anxiety in years.

Whatever the Academy was going to do to us was already happening. *Control yourself*, I thought. *The other two are terrified enough.* I tried to stare at the winding, hilly road, but my eyes darted constantly into the rearview mirror. My passengers studied the possibility of ambush from the thick Midwestern woods along the road. We were in the fucking dark in the middle of fucking nowhere practically pissing in our fucking pants not knowing when the fucking real cops would make their move.

"I saw them," Mike said. "I saw a police unit and a guy in uniform standing next to it. Back there in the bushes."

I upped our speed 5 mph. "Are you sure?" The headlights in the bushes popped on and swept slowly out onto the road behind us. "Shit!" I said. "It's them. They'll probably take us back here where it's all woods."

Wrong!

The car tailed us. I sped up. It sped up. I slowed down. It slowed down. Its headlights bounced in my rearview mirror. How anybody lives a life of crime is beyond my tension

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capacity! “Maybe we should play them,” I said. “Maybe we should speed up and give them a chase.”

“No!” Opie said from the backseat. “They might be real cops and not the cops from the Academy.”

“The Academy cops *are* the real cops,” Mike said.

“Yikes!” We fell into the story board of the Academy “movie” and started talking in excited cartoon balloons of benday dots.

Finally, on a very public stretch of country road, with lots of traffic, our car suddenly lit up inside like Ground Zero Hiroshima. The police cruiser lights in my rearview mirror blinded me. All my citizen programming about a roadside “cop pull-over” clicked in. I had this big deal scenario how I was to play the long-bearded tough-guy outlaw/dealer/cop killer in black leather jeans, vest, boots, gloves, with a red snot-rag tied in a sweatband around my forehead. That was all costume. Inside, I fought back all the polite cassettes inserted into my head as a middle-class altar boy. Mike and Opie were in a cold panic.

This was IT!

Two cops exited the unit. When the Lieutenant walked up to my window, I rolled it down, hating myself for shaking in the driver’s seat. I had agreed as part of my psychodrama to dress as an outlaw. The other two dressed as their usual selves. The cop was uniformed meticulously real. He had his drill down perfect. I stuttered, but managed to sass out my psychodrama role. One by one, each of us Tough Customers was ordered from the car, marched to the back trunk, cuffed, and made to stand side by side in the zillion-watt police lights as cars whizzed by us in the dark.

People stared.

One by one, we were shoved by leather-gloved hands, side-by-side, into the backseat of the unit and taken for a ride to the Academy. The heavily smoked windows and the plexiglass between the front seat and the back was blind confinement. We were three men handcuffed in a tight space. The police radio staticked communications. The partner who assisted in the arrest radioed in: “Coming in. Three Caucasian males picked up.”

The two muscular officers—I’m talking 440 pounds of cop here, in full uniform, with real unit and radio, were so professional that we three gulped an adrenaline rush, still ambivalent whether we had been stopped by the real police acting as real police or by the real policy on duty for the Academy. (The Academy personnel and procedure are so real they mind-fuck where reality ends and consensual psychodrama begins!)

That was the start.

That was when our willing suspension of disbelief fell into circumstances where fantasy fell away and a reality, more real than reality, set in. These men were not only real cops, they were real rogue cops. They made it quite clear in the rough arrest that we were in for some real deep shit.

We couldn’t use that old line: “You can stop arresting me now. I’ve cum.”

Certain discretion here draws a curtain over specific narrative of what happened to us in the next adventurous 72 hours. I’ve always despised writers who in their reviews take away the delight and surprise of a film by revealing the plot. Besides, what happened to us was a specific psychodrama scripted for us particularly. Other clients do, will, and have experienced other completely different scenarios of their own fantasy choosing. Our particular scenario became instantly real. Once arrested, booked, questioned, bound, and jailed, we were under the total control of the dozen personnel of the Academy.

To be quite clear, if you’re considering the Academy adventure, you tell the Controller where your head is, and what your experience level is, before arrival. What you get is a jazz riff on your fantasy that in its total ambience of good-looking instructors and hardass detail of confinement is escalated, elongated, and creatively amplified beyond fantasy.

The Academy, I warn you, is real!

The cops are real!

The Instructors are real!

The action is real!

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The Academy is a model for the psycho-erotic style of the 90's. It's safe because it ain't sex. It's safe because the personnel escalate and monitor all activities sensually and sensitively. The Academy is an *evolved* operation! It leaves leather-bar fantasies in 1950's dust.

By the end of our three-day incarceration, all three of us were fucked-up, raw-nerve prisoners, quivering with bridled lust and unbridled ecstasy! This is no exaggeration. This article is a True Men's Adventure Feature. Talking true, all I can say is that, like you, I have waited all my life for someone, on a man-to-man level, to call my aggressive male bluff. AWESOME! Those cops and Instructors stacked the deck, upped the *ante*, and called it! In spades! With Wild Cards! And no Joker! For three days and nights, I was not sitting in a theater seat watching a cheap-thrills-movie.

At the Academy, the movie is real and you are the main character.

For once you don't have to identify with a fictional adventure hero on screen. You are a real person to whom real cops and real Academy Instructors, recruited from prison guards to military police, do real procedure *by the book*, and, if you push it, asshole, *beyond!*

(Check out the *professional* State Prison Guard in *Drummer* 109, pp. 40-44! No matter what your age, parental guidance is suggested!)

You are in bondage in a cell in prison. You are under CONTROL! Plus, if you prefer to mix your cell confinement with exotic interrogation bondage, which can include breath control (gas masks, nooses, etc.) with or without cigars (which are much in use by the Instructors and cops), or if you want a three-on-one man-to-man confrontation, the Academy is staffed by men who know professionally from their law-enforcement training how to bounce you around the interrogation room. They know the moves. They have the equipment. They perform what they are: REAL!

SEX, be well-advised, *IS NOT OFFERED* as part of any psychodrama program at the Academy. Guys, fixated on genital sex, might sophisticate their act and evolve to an understanding that a man's main sex organ is between his ears. You want fucked over? Put your cock on hold. Let your other bodily senses and your brain harvest the abundance of the Academy experience.

The Academy is not about genital sexuality. It is about man-to-man masculinity. Sexual preference is not an issue. The Academy is, in concept, a male-to-male sports encounter.

Before actually attending the Academy, I had more than 50 sex-fantasy encounters with its *Drummer* spreads. I stored them away in the back of my head and proceeded with the given reality. While incarcerated, the last thing I needed, or wanted, as I pushed the limits and resisted the cops, was a rod on. (Not that I didn't have one the same as Mike and Opie; we just ignored it, storing up its energy for later jerkoff.) Sex, which we can have all the time, would have demeaned this extraordinary experience to the ordinary. Sex would have made it *gay*.

Life is more than the received experience of living a totally gay ghetto lifestyle. We are human males who happen to be gay. There is nothing, repeat NOTHING, politically incorrect, in setting our gayness aside—that is not denial!—so that it does not get in the way of our being human males who happen to possess other qualities alternative to our all-to-often addictively demanding sexual preference. This also does not mean that straight is better than gay. The point is that a non-sexual-preference experience such as the Academy frees a man to a fresh encounter with other men who are fun, good-looking guys out for a good time that doesn't include sex.

Hyper-urban gay males sometimes forget that it's maybe years since we had a real encounter with nongay men who are willing to play psychodrama. Such an adventure is—the word for the 90's—*FRESH!* Such an adventure is eye-opening! Here's straight cops who like to play and play hard! Now that's a revelation that flies straight in the face of "liberated" Oprah/Phil/Jesse/Geraldo who spend afternoons with audiences full of shameless women gathered together for TV orgies of male-bashing.

Inquiring minds want to know how the other half lives. I see nongay guys, like —mmm—the NY Fire Department, having a good time and I want to get into it to experience their masculine style. One of the reasons I went to the Academy was that I asked myself when was the last time I dropped my stereotype about straight males and actually talked to, and interacted, on a rough-and-tumble level with men whose masculinity, and interaction with men, is as valid as my

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sexual masculinity and interaction. (Not since college wrestling!)

Many gay men are terrified of straight men. Get over it. Have some fun! Haven't we all chased after straight men to get them to have gay sex? Why not engage some for a weekend of psychodrama sports? If they're attractive enough to suck off, why not widen their attractiveness to play games with them in masculine encounters where sex-preference is not an issue for them, or for us, if we're sophisticated enough to realize that straight guys play SM games among themselves: from boot camp all the way through to professional sports?

Re-wiring our heads to what is humanly correct on a non-preference masculine level, Mike and Opie agreed, our whole bodies, minds, and energy fields became, despite the subtraction of genital sex, one speeding hardon. Without diddling, without nudity, clad in our orange prison uniforms, we rode an emotional, psychological, physical roller coaster that spread specific genital sexual-preference throughout our whole bodies in generic, hot, hyper-male sensuality.

Ten hours into the Academy you begin to understand why Patty Hearst cooperated with the SLA. The Control Experience is first, physical, and, second, as psychological as you want to make it. My advice? Go for broke! You can trust the sensitivity of the Academy personnel. Your incarceration, first of all, is supposed to be fun for you. The Academy is a unique experience to act out the content of the nonsexual parts of all your brig, cop, POW fantasies. So intense is the Academy experience of reality that it, for 72 hours, outweighs, and enriches, solo gay fantasies and fiction.

Now there's a real value! And you can only get it for real when you are confident enough in your own sexuality to step outside it, gain some perspective on what the whole cross-section of masculine toughness and ritual is about, and return, still gay, with an angle on manhood that does not deny your soul, but gives it hot, new material. I, for one, could not help but perceive the cops would have to be really strange not to know that some of the clients are homosexual. They're so confidently heterosexual, and so at peace with themselves, they could care less who you prefer to fuck.

Preference, with these cool cops, is a non-issue.

And talk about getting your money's worth! What a surprising relief not to have to be politically correct all the time! Why should we be? Try this analogy. Do any but the most radical of groups spend their entire lives running around being politically correct about their group? Sometimes you want to break free of the bondage of the ghetto, self-imposed or not. Sometimes you just want to have fun. You just want to be *you*, a human male enjoying headstuff as a rip-roaring alternative to dickstuff. Ghetto-escape experiences such as the Academy can help guys LIGHTEN UP! Inquiring minds are always interested in how "the other half lives."

Think about it.

This is radical.

When real cops are working you over under interrogation, literal sex would seem like a stupid "time out" for the same-ol'/same-ol' genital cliches of friction fiction. Fantasies are great, but reality delivers. I mean here's *real* cops working you over. Such reality, toughness under control, is virtually impossible to find. WHO ELSE, WHERE ELSE, but the Academy offers you such reality? Their talk, their moves, their attitude, their intensity are all as real as their fucking uniforms, badges, guns, and professional Attitude.

Figure this. If you had sex with these cops, you'd pull them into the gay gestalt.

Consider this. The Ultimate Top is the straight cop who says *no* to sex and works you over anyway.

You can have sex with almost anybody. The perverse turn-on here for us twisted homomale men is precisely that you can't have sex, and, in fact, don't want to, because it would no longer extraordinarily transcend the ordinary SM games we play!

God! Our kind is nothing if not PERVERSATILE!

Seize the opportunity to enrich your fantasy by foraying out into mancountry. Again, be advised. You can't find this Academy psychodrama realized anywhere else on earth. Grab it! The Academy reality will overwhelm you. And that's how a smart client uses the experience of reality to incarnate his fantasy.

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Fantasy is what you have before you experience something which you probably can't experience anyway because it's not usually available. Memory is what you have after you experience a real encounter. Memory, trust me, is hotter fuel for solitary hardon alone-time than magazine or video fantasy—unless you're the kind of guy who cruises fantasy bars waiting forever for your fantasy man who's so much an impersonation of a real cop, you have to say, "Please don't get make-up on me, Mister."

OK. So my tongue's a bit in my cheeky chic cheek. Lighten up. The point is real. Besides fiction/photo fantasy, *Drummer* offers you Tough Customers the alternative of Reality Encounters. The Academy, which is not affiliated with *Drummer*, is real, is there, for those who want an intense self-actualizing experience. *Drummer* surveys reveal that you guys write in requesting "more reality and less fantasy" in *Drummer* pages. So here it is. This is not to imply in any way that a man who prefers fantasy to reality is any less a functional Sex Dude. Some guys lead abstract lives. They don't want to meet their fantasy. That's cool. Some guys, like you guys writing and reading *Drummer* "Classifieds" so you can make your fantasies real, are more hands-on. You want to meet your real fantasies so you can do the Vulcan Mind Meld and become one with them. Everything's okay. To each his own!

The point is that the Academy is not for every man at every period in his life. It is for men evolved enough, free enough, to let go, even temporarily of genital sexuality. Some men have a very personal agenda to pursue excellence and extremity to enrich their sex lives as much as test their courage in manhood rituals. The Academy is an academy where a man can sign up to check out his ballsiness. Believe it or not, the Academy has aided a lot of guys who want to work through some weird personal shit, all the while having fun: claustrophobia, fear of guns, live burial....

Are you having REAL fun yet?

The Controller, cops, and Instructors at the Academy are not barbarians (unless you want them to be). They are sensitive men skilled in reading how you're doing and how far they can take you into your psychodrama trip. Sex-pervert that I am, I found their underlying niceness a disarming turnon. These are real, straight cops who, unspoiled by hyper-urban attitude, take at face value that men fly in from all around the world to experience arrest, incarceration, bondage, and rugged interrogation for all kinds of psychological reasons that underlie the physical fun.

These cops are real uncomplicated and hands-on. That's why the Academy is in the Midwest. It is precisely for this unspoiled Midwestern character that the Academy is located in Missouri. It takes a certain kind of mind-set and "Look" to be a real cop who moonlights at the Academy. They are professionals unspoiled by Big City, hyper-urban cynicism. They are genuine without a trace of hustler mentality. They are not cynical. They respect clients and nothing seems to please them more than showing a righteous dude what the COPNESS OF BEING A COP is all about, and then some!

Frankly, my initial skepticism was that, okay, at least one of these cops will be a dog. WRONG! Central Casting must be in Missouri. Faces! Muscles! Power! Attitude! All three of us clients fell in love with our favorite cop. One of them, whom I'll call "Officer Karate," is a drop-dead handsome, 220 pounds of moustached, uniformed muscle. He's a national karate-judo takedown champion with a specialty in pressure-pointing guys resisting arrest. His Lieutenant, also perfectly cast, is a southern cop with a mouth that can burn you down.

The Lieutenant said of Officer Karate: "He does this because he likes to practice his restraint moves. I do it because I like to mess people up."

Be still my foolish heart!

I wondered about their own personal psychology. I mean, what must really be going on in their heads? It's as uncomplicated as they are. To them, their Academy watch is no more than a contact sport with interesting strangers flown in for a weekend of fun. To them, it isn't sexual. To them, it isn't erotic, although it's extremely erotic to be bounced around a padded room by an athlete gifted with the grace of a Nureyev. Their moves were so professional that I always felt safe even during the most intense sporting-interrogation encounters.

They're tough.

In the authentic comic book sense, I saw stars.

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Among other stuff the cops may think, the answer is fairly obvious. They enjoy the extra moonlighting pay, but they're not doing it just for the money. To them, acting out police psychodrama at the Academy is a power-amusement, a second job, to polish their police skills working out with men who want an arresting experience. They're smart, but straight-from-the-shoulder no-nonsense. What is, is. And they do what they do. Expertly. They like honing their skills. In fact, Officer Karate said, later in debriefing, that in peace-officer training academies, the main problem is getting the recruits, uptight about their macho, to play the "assailant/victim" in the psychodramas they all must play. He jokingly (I think) asked if I'd like to be hired in for a couple days of recruit training classes so I could mouth off and resist the arresting officers. (Because he's offering two days of my resisting, sassing, fighting, and being subdued by cops, he should offer to pay me?)

Who doesn't want MORE?

If you hear of guys saying they didn't get all they wanted out of the Academy experience, I will attest that those guys did not signal back to the cops and Instructors that they wanted more, or wanted some police action to take a different turn. Academy action is a lot like dancing. You have to signal your partners where you are, how you're doing, where you want to go, and how far. If you don't get what you want, when you've set yourself up in a control situation, it's because of your own failure to communicate.

Indulge a side note here. This is not a putdown of anyone's gaystyle. It's something to be considered because the Academy is not a gay bordello offering gaystyle games. Camp Queens and guys who consider themselves "critics of absolutely everything" just because they take it up the ass will probably not have a good time unless they can control their legitimate, but in this context, inappropriate, sense of gay humor. The last thing I'd want to share a cell at the Academy with is a bevy of Zza-Zza's! [In the 80's, the camp actress Zza Zza Gabor famously slapped an LA motorcop and was arrested with much publicity.] Talk about breaking the mood! Such humor, in the midst of such great masculine fun, would be—you remember—as distracting as those guys at the baths who, while you and your partner were hot in heat, started to loudly camp about Sister Mary So-and So!

The Academy is a perfect movie set. It is about control. Theirs over you. You over yourself. It is not about campy attitude. When the cops have you strip, you get into the role you're starring in the movie, and you leave your "social" persona on the cold floor with your clothes. You're supposed to play along. This is participatory theater. You are a client, paying a fee, for the experience. They want to give you the psychodrama *you* want as *intensely* as *you* want it. It's their job, and, heh heh, their pleasure. But, for me, I wanted more than minimalist specialists in both the real cops and Instructors. I fought and bad-mouthed them, escalating the scene, twisting it, turning it, managing what they put out, and signaling for more. Once inside the ominous precinct building of the Academy I knew these people meant business. I knew that they would play minor or major league ball and I let them know I was a hard-ball player. Repressed eroticism aside, like everyone else in America, I wanted my money's worth, so I got totally into it. (Note: I got value far beyond my money's worth.)

Having entered in character as a bad ass, big-bearded, long-haired dealer cop killer, I knew what I was doing. I pushed their buttons. Wonderful! Even escalating, they remained in control. Yet I could feel, me, the cop killer-longhair they on-duty have so much contempt for, provided them a chance to act out in heavy psychodrama all the pent-up passion all cops have for the type. When Officer Karate judo-flipped me at the end of a long interrogation, his 220 muscle-packed athletic pounds picked me up bodily by my long beard, carried me down the corridor, and, like lightning, before he threw me into the cell, said, up close and fiercely personal, "You do any of that again and I'll rip your beard off your face!"

That explosive moment is a freeze-frame forever in my head.

That's what I mean about memory of reality being better erotic fuel than fantasy that has never happened.

I pimped a real cop so deep that he was releasing personal stuff quite professionally. (Later in the debriefing, he said he liked that. After all, he's a player too. And, never once, was an anti-gay word uttered for all the cussing that cops and cons gave each other!) I wanted it to be fun

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for the cops and Instructors, because I suspected that would make more fun for me.

Mike and Opie were more passive, almost to the point of absolute silence, which left both the cops and the Instructors guessing, in their real sensitivity about how they were doing what, and did the guys like it or not, and did they want less or more? They play best off feedback.

Haven't we all in a SM scene wondered whether our Bottom was enjoying it or not because he was silent and unresponsive as dead meat. It takes two to tango. Incidentally, the Academy is not about SM tops and bottoms. *Top* and *bottom* do not apply in a psychodrama structured totally different than the traditional black-leather-dungeon/sex-toys scenario.

What happens physically in confinement, heavy bondage, and/or interrogation roughhouse is simply literal launchpad for whatever psychological agenda you may want to work through. Your trip is your trip.

Straight clients come to the Academy which has received much media attention in the press and on TV. The Academy video, by the way, is a professionally produced *Soloflex*-style docu-drama of what the Academy offers. As a video critic who finds nonsexual police/prisoner bondage and confinement erotic, I rate the Academy video 4 stars. If you "get" the video, you'll "get" the Academy. (Some guys "get" stuff; some don't.)

If you're hung up on tit clamps and sexplay as a necessary part of your scene (as we all are), wait till your intellectual-erotic response matures, evolves, and cycles around beyond J/O before turning yourself in. No way do I mean to slap at raunchy sexual SM, which I dearly love. All I'm witnessing here is that the Academy offers a drugless—you don't need poppers to turn Godzilla into God—and sexfree alternative in tough man-to-man encounters of escalating intensity during the length of your incarceration.

The Academy is not sexual. It is not homosexual. It is not heterosexual. Sex is not an issue. As stated, many clients are straight. One federal judge sought out the Academy after seeing it featured on a TV news magazine. He said, much the same as Mike, the police-and-fire 911 staffer, that he had sentenced so many people to confinement that he felt he ought to experience the other side of the bench.

Another client, not particularly interested in cops—as you need not be—was more interested in prolonged, intense bondage. His is a famous name and face and his trip is honorable. He is a professional football player whose desire is to be fully taped, padded, and suited up in his pro-football gear and then tied into totally restrictive bondage for two days. (Wouldn't you like to be incarcerated the weekend he's there! However, if you saw him, you wouldn't recognize him with the protective tape masking his face inside his football helmet.)

The point is that a whole range of international men engage the Academy for intense fun as well as for personal, private, psychological reasons. Opie worked through his incarceration. In debriefing, he said he'd found some courage he didn't know he had, figuring he'd be better prepared to handle a real arrest if it ever happened. Mike, the cop-911 dispatcher, said he also found a reserve of courage and endurance he wasn't sure was in him; he, like the judge, was most happy for having explored being on the outlaw side of justice.

For me, ever the analytical sensualist adventuring off to push the limits, I came to terms with some very private stuff while enjoying to the max the rough arrest and booking, the cell confinement, some jailhouse bondage restraint—which was used less on me than on the more passive other two who didn't psycho-dramatize back. I like to fight. I enjoyed especially the roughhouse interrogation by real straight cops. I gave them so much action they carried me up side down in their huge arms and dunked me a swirlie. Finally, the last scene, the last night, a big redneck burly-boy sheriff took out a .357 Magnum and shot me—big surprise—in the chest. They immediately put their huge arms around me, and fell on top my body, dropping me in their hot bulk on the floor. (It wasn't sex—to them.) We could have all won Oscars for our performances. Oooh, baby! Call me sick, but call me often.

If I have any tip, it's this. I stood up against everything they put out. Every time they provided an escape clause, I turned it down. Challenging them I challenged myself. They had to go to the next plateau. I vowed I would not cave in. I could not have lived with myself if I had put an end to the real scene. For the rest of my life, I would have wondered how far out it would have gone. If I had stopped it, instead of playing it as it lay, I would have controlled the finale.

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Resisting them, I forced them into heavier action. I forced them to invent a conclusion and end it with the kind of logic that cops finish things. Forcefully. Beyond imagination. Beyond fantasy. Until they took final control. I've sort of told you what happened. But I don't tell the complete end of movies. But, many months after the fact, I'm still jerking off to the finale those two cops, who brought in a third, executed in that cellblock interrogation room, after the .357 Magnum.

In fine, all this action, which may not at all be like the action you wish for your psychodrama, was hyper-believable because of the Academy facility itself. The Controller has engineered (notice, on purpose I didn't say *designed*), inside and out, an environment that is accurately credible. Every door is keyed. The cement block and steel-bar cells are real. The bunks are real. The elaborate *mondo-beyondo* bondage gear is real. The uniforms, badges, sticks, and guns are real. Every detail, even to the most critical eye, supports the credibility and the authenticity of hard time in a rough place.

The Academy is not a "play room." Texture, color, lighting, enhanced-audio, safety and security monitoring are all institutionally professional. The Controller is artist, genius, and wizard. His masterpiece, the new quarters of the Academy, complete with real cops, is an E ticket ride.

Plus! The Academy master plan is inaugurating even as you read new and more devastating additions and scenarios! So. You wanna go or wh-u-a-t? This is no commercial plug. This is straight from the shoulder of a man who has experienced the belly of the beast. My only advice is that if you have found the *Drummer* fantasy of the Academy's control and training center a turn-on, be advised that this feature article is fact. Book yourself as soon as you feel you can handle a very intense confinement trip that can be as panoramic in scope as you want it. The Academy fee is nominal considering what luxurious handling and inter-personal custodial care you receive. (Luxury hotels can't hold a candle to the "service" you get at the Academy.)

If you want to indulge yourself, and you know you deserve it, do it!

I did it for this very specific reason. The Academy was the one and only facility ever to offer in an advertisement the opportunity to *interact*, and, to my wonderful surprise after the action, *bond* with *straight cops* who were *professional players*. Their ad is totally truth in advertising.

So, play your wild cards. Dare yourself. Double-dare them. Besides indoor Academy scenes, you can order up scenarios that are psycho-dramatized outside in public with more than a dozen cops and Instructors. The Controller is a producer of psycho-drama without peer, so take your life into your hands and use it while you and the Academy, now in its tenth year, co-exist.

One recent caller, the Controller told me during my journalistic interview with him after my "residency," got huffy about there being no sex, about the small fee for the brochure, and about the cost of the video. "I'll just call around," the caller bristled, "and see what your competition is offering."

Fat chance. There is no commercial competition for the one and only Academy with its good-looking personnel, real cops, bondage-restraint gear, severe facilities, and psycho-dramatic capabilities.

Even privately, with all the wonderful leather trips available, no one is likely to have pulled together even the highest-tech traditional SM dungeon with such real infrastructure. The Academy has more special effects than George Lucas. Your fee, depending on how complex you want your psychodrama, varies. We do, after all, live in an *ala carte* world.

Would I return to the Academy? Does the Pope shit in the woods? Yes. [Actually, I returned a year later to help on the film *Atlanta Knights*.] But only after I have absorbed and processed the wild ride, and have built myself up to, God knows, whatever comes next! In a quixotic way, cycling through homomasculine life, I find the need to transcend the rituals and symbols of leather SM for a taste of a real encounter, for a psychological speed trip into hyper-awareness of self-actualizing, where disbelief is willingly, gladly, suspended without sex or drugs.

I have appetite for intensity.

I experienced SM ritual turn hyper-real at the Academy, and turn again, in nuclear fusion, into fraternal bonding. Suddenly I was faced with MORE. I quantum-ed up from the fresh, real

reality of the Academy to a new, higher level. I saw a farther far-out frontier of hyper-real masculine ritual based on new, enriched body-and-mind games. Rocketing up in real stages, I found launchpad and springboard to expand my libidinous fantasy life which, thank you, always must be actualized.

My interest in men has long been fueled by penetrating deep into as many closed fraternities as possible, from the cliques of bodybuilding to the inner circle of copness.

This is my history which I cannot avoid.

I must pursue it.

So when a control institution, such as the Academy, offers its disciplinary services, I would be a foolish man not to confront my history, past and future, in the present, proffered psychodrama.

Sing "I Am Who I Am." Sing it for yourself. Sing "To Dream the Impossible Dream." Sing it for yourself and mean it. Be *The Man of La Mancha* when all around you are playing *Auntie Mame*. Go to Missouri, the *Show Me State*, and say, "Show me." The Academy, even though necessarily commercial to hire its law enforcement staff and support its facility, has a value beyond cost. The Academy is a sensitive trip for men who are active players. You give energy. You get energy. Your homophysicality, your homopsyche, your homospirituality will be enriched. That's the surprise of the Academy experience. You get more than you bargained for, and certainly more than you pay for, when they play you like the action/adventure hero in your own movie.

That's good.

I share these intimate details with you, not to circumscribe your trip with expectations, but to free you to the originality of asking for, and acting out, *The Thing(s) You Most Want!* As I "own" my trip, you "own" yours. The Academy, like life, is what you make it. Let yourself go. You deserve it. Have fun. This is how big boys play once they discover there is life outside of bars.

If you "get" It, and some guys "get" It, and, again, some guys never will because not every trip is for everybody, you are paroled from the Academy richer than when you were arrested. That's the way close masculine encounters should be. "An expected gift," John Updike wrote, "is not worth giving." At The Academy if you play, at whatever level you wish, *novice to sophisticate*, in whatever role you wish, you will be surprised at the unexpected gift of self-actualizing given you through a rite of passage you will find nowhere else on this man's earth.

You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. "You can lead a girl to Vasser, but you can't make her think." But you! You can read these words, and you can be your own best critic and counselor of what you want: everything all the time.

What man can resist the thrust of his own history?

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