

CHAPTER 3

LEATHER PERVERSATILITY

What Makes Redneck Cops Erotic?

The LAPD Busts the Drummer Slave Auction

Anita Bryant, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and the Culture War

- **Counter-phobic Lust: How Gay Men Sexualize “Bully Cops” as “Fetish Tops” from the LAPD to the Academy Training Center**
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Los Angeles in the leather-*noir* 1970s was a mysteriously conservative city. Think of the LA politics, danger, and corruption in the 1974 film, *Chinatown*, directed by Roman Polanski who learned plenty about the LAPD after the Manson Family murdered his wife, Sharon Tate, and six others in 1969. The Manson-Tate killings made LA's conservative police chief Ed Davis nationally infamous over night. Conscious of his media image as a star “technical advisor” to popular television shows glamorizing right-wing cops such as *Dragnet* (1967-1970) and *Adam-12* (1968-1975), he was dedicated to preserving the values of “Old Los Angeles” even as he was driven, in the “New Los Angeles” of the 1970s, to set straight the twisted press his LAPD had earned over his handling of the Manson-Tate bloodbath executed by Charles Manson's Family of sex slaves whom he and the media confused with BDSM leather behavior.

In March 1977, the same month that John Embry hired me to edit *Drummer* at the moment the magazine was fleeing from LA to San Francisco, Polanski learned even more when arrested by the LAPD and charged with

the drugging and raping of a minor female at the home of Jack Nicholson. Polanski fled LA and the United States forever.

All during 1974, with Davis (popularly derided as “Crazy Ed”) chasing the glamorous and elusive high-society fugitive, Patty Hearst, around LA, the LAPD called in its public relations team with camera and a helicopter to cover the LAPD’s furious gun battle and fiery attack on the mixed-race Symbionese Liberation Army which had kidnaped and radicalized their white “sex slave,” San Francisco heiress Patty Hearst, who, after prison and pardon, went on to camp stardom in John Waters’ films, *Cry-Baby* and *Serial Mom*.

The brutal LAPD attack on the SLA terrorists on May 17, 1974, forecasted exactly the way Davis alerted the media and brought in the guns and troops, and two buses to haul his quota of queers, and to get TV cameras rolling for his staged media attack on the Drummer Slave Auction, April 10, 1976. Davis had stalked the easy prey of the three-person *Drummer* staff for months harassing them with gumshoe detectives tailing cars, home phone taps, and surprise visits to the tiny office. Like a Hollywood mogul manufacturing publicity, he planned the arrest of the *Drummer* leather queers. He could not arrest them for simply being gay. So he doubled down and dug deep, like the fundamentalist he was, to resurrect the ancient charge of practicing “slavery” which had been abolished by the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1865. Davis set up the raid as a photo opportunity to prove during that decade of great social change, and drugs and gangs and politics, that he was a true blue cop fighting vice in the good old City of Angels. The *Orange County Register* headline crowed: “Police Free Gay Slaves.” Davis, who went on to be elected a California State Senator, had the nerve to say that he had used extreme force because he and his men were being bullied by queers, declaring that for years the LAPD had been “cowed by being too lenient with the most powerful lobby in the city, the homosexual community.”

The institutional homophobia of the LAPD was traditional, voter-approved, and sick. The long-term psychological effects on LA gay people being debased and brutalized in a second-class life of entrapment and harassment, and on leathersmen being abused down to a third-class lifestyle, are revealed in John Embry’s brazen reaction to gay persecution in which he purposed *Drummer* as a very risky political assault weapon against the LAPD.

Was the often violent and always intimidating Police Chief Ed Davis, who was no stranger to the choke hold, the ideal “Bully Top” of Embry’s personal BDSM dreams? Counter-phobic behavior is a precise “survival

response” to anxiety that gay men use to turn the bullies they fear into the gods they worship. BDSM provides both metaphor and mechanism for this kind of erotic transubstantiation. In *Drummer*, where Embry insistently poked fun at Davis in years of monthly issues, nearly every story and article centered on some insecure “daredevil” bottom seeking out and eroticising the man and behavior he fears enough to obey. This counter-phobic BDSM attitude is endlessly perverse in twirling pain into pleasure. In *Brideshead Revisited*, when Anthony Blanche is threatened with a dunking by bullies of the kind who tossed Cecil Beaton into a river at one of Stephen Tennant’s famous parties, Blanche, as articulated by Evelyn Waugh, said: “Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to be manhandled by you meaty boys. It would be ecstasy of the naughtiest kind.”

A core concept to examine is how erotic the LAPD Slave Auction bust was to the heart of the magazine’s psyche and autobiography. Embry, arrested by the LAPD in 1976, may have suffered from “Stockholm Syndrome,” wherein the arrested or captured person develops a strong emotional connection to the captor, in the way that Patty Hearst, rescued from the Symbionese Liberation Front in 1975, had her life shaped by her oppressors. From the night he was arrested in 1976 until his death in 2010, John Embry could not quit Ed Davis with whom he was obsessed, and on whom he wasted so many pages in *Drummer*.

In *Drummer* 6, pages 12-14, *Drummer* 7, page 68, and *Drummer* 11, page 76, and *Super MR #5* (2000), pages 34-39, Embry, greasing up the inherent eroticism, wrote virtual porno S&M details of how on that Slave Auction night forty-two leatherfolk were arrested, bound in handcuffs, hauled off in full leather—and in one dress—on two police busses, locked in crowded cells, and forced to soil and wet their leather pants during the long transport and the longer time they spent on the crowded floor of the booking center cells.

The “Slave Auction Arrest” story is an archetypal *Drummer* tale of capture wherein, through magical thinking, the pushy bottom sets himself up erotically to be bullied and bound in service to fetishized alpha males in authority.

An observer doesn’t need to juggle the archetypes of Joseph Campbell’s *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* to recognize that the Slave Auction bust also doubles as a kind of hero’s journey into the sort of S&M counter-phobic jerkoff fantasy that *Drummer* and its personals ads specialized in. In fact, the following archetypal “Services” ad with a photo of a straight dominant cop ran for years in *Drummer* personals. This was probably the most popular classified ad in *Drummer* history. It offered an ultimate *Drummer* fantasy: a

real weekend with real straight cops. Many *Drummer* readers took out their charge cards and booked their vacations at the Academy Training Center. Secretly aided and abetted by my longtime friend and Training Center founder Chip Weichelt (1952-2003), and cheered on by publisher Tony DeBlase, I went undercover at the Academy as an eyewitness reporter for *Drummer*. In fact, I was the first and only editor or writer of *Drummer* to go under deep cover to get a *Drummer* exclusive. In *Drummer* 145 (December 1990), editor Joseph W. Bean published my upbeat gonzo feature on straight cops role-playing rough but consensual BDSM games with gay men behind bars: “Incarceration for Pleasure: The Academy Training Center.”

This is Chip Weichelt’s monthly ad as it appeared in *Drummer* 123 (September 1988):

The [Academy] Training Center, Inc, now a full-time staffed facility [first in Washington, Missouri, and then in Alpharetta outside Atlanta], continues to offer men with a serious interest a unique alternative service. TC 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 a realistic correctional or military atmosphere. Cell confinement, immobilization, isolation, interrogation, sensory control, and endurance situations are all offered in a safe, sane, discreet [that is, no sex with the straight cops; shaming words like *gay* and *faggot* were never uttered in a Training Center scene] and monitored environment. All TC programs are administered by professionally trained military, corrections, and LE [law enforcement] personnel. Written inquiries should include a phone number for contact, or call (314) 281-4345. Reservation and deposit are required. References available worldwide. TC cannot offer sexual situations as part of their programs. Training Center, PO Box 672, Bridgeton MO 63044. Special programs for guest instructors now available.

The counter-phobic stretch from the negative psychology of the LAPD arrests (1976) to the positive Academy Training Center experience (1988) is a way for queer historians to measure how erotic archetypes of dominance and submission in gay liberation evolved forward inside leather culture. This delicious fatal attraction led to the publication ten years earlier of my feature, “Prison Blues: Confessions of a Prison Tour Junkie,” in *Drummer* 21 (March 1978), as well as Frank O’Rourke’s “Prison Punk,” serialized in many issues

of *Drummer*. Embry's personal "take" on being topped by real cops was typical of a pivotal universal drama within mid-century gay liberation in which the hero struggles on his journey as the ancient procreation myths of tribal eros evolve into new modern kinds of complicated personal sexualities that replace procreation with recreation.

In those twelve years, attitudes changed 180 degrees.

Before that evolution, however, Embry suffered from the conservative fascism in the LA scene that Larry Townsend had fought in founding the Homophile Effort for Legal Protection (H.E.L.P.) in 1968 to assist gays entrapped by cops. After the Slave Auction bust, Embry, beaten but unbowed, acknowledged the opening of the culture war, a year before Anita Bryant came down with Full-Blown Crazy Syndrome, in *Drummer* 11 (December 1976), page 76: "Chief Edward M. Davis is at war with the gay community. He is basing many of his political aspirations on the battle." Yet, faced with the dangerous Ed Davis who had the usual political ambitions of a fundamentalist conservative, Embry seemed, in some expiatory act of self-immolation, to have been asking for trouble by publishing wild articles, seductive stories, and feel-good coverage of very risky topics. Was it to goad Davis? Or to harass the LAPD? Was it Embry's masochistic hubris? Was it radical sex journalism? What was Embry's motive?

The mechanics of the *Drummer* Slave Auction arrest can be explained simply: Embry tried to stage an event to increase business and publicity for his "Leather Fraternity" mail-order scheme, and when the LAPD took notice, Embry—to make himself appear a gay victim—claimed, post factum, that his commercial party which was for his own business gain was, in his telling, a charity benefit for the gay community. But was it a private event, or was it open to the public? In short, when caught, Embry lied his way to an alibi, redundantly casting Ed Davis as the villain. Embry, thinking fast on his feet, hoped to link the Slave Auction raid to the legendary Stonewall arrests in New York. But, even in LA, he could not gin up the kind of sympathetic traction that the Black Pipe bar defendants received after two LAPD raids in 1967 and 1972. A year before the Slave Auction, Embry prefigured his motivation and his model for grabbing his fifteen minutes of fame when in *Drummer* 3, page 37, he salivated over the almost "Stonewall-level" headlines *The Advocate* had screamed when connecting the Black Pipe raid to LAPD excess: "Biggest Raid in LA Since Prohibition." Even though the *Drummer* essay, "Triumph of the Black Pipe," was Embry at his most cogent, the reach of rhetoric he sought was impossible in 1976 because in 1975 *The Advocate* was sold by its progressive founders who had covered the Black Pipe in liberal ways the uptight new owner would never

cover the Slave Auction. Embry found an enemy as shameless as himself in David Goodstein, the new and very conservative publisher of *The Advocate*, who was passive-aggressively sucking up to the LAPD by condemning in print the same “outrageous” gay leather behavior hated by Ed Davis. In his editorials, Goodstein dismissed Embry and the leather community. He did not buy Embry’s self-serving “spin” as witnessed in several articles, beginning immediately after the Slave Auction, with *The Advocate*, issue 190, May 19, 1976. As an unintended side effect of Goodstein profiling leathersmen as bad-boy outlaws, sales of *Drummer* took off, and Embry banged the drum of the Slave Auction bust as if he were setting the beat for a gay Pride parade.

In *Out for Good: The Struggle to Build a Gay Rights Movement in America*, authors Dudley Clendinen and Adam Nagourney noted the conservative righteousness of David Goodstein trying to social engineer gay culture by denouncing a diversity of gay identities in *The Advocate*, issue 243, June 14, 1978. In his editorial, David Goodstein addressed “Proposition 6: The Briggs Initiative” which was on the upcoming California ballot for November 7, 1978, banning homosexuals from teaching in schools. It was spawned by singer Anita Bryant’s “Save the Children” campaign in Dade County, Florida, that had nationally ignited the Culture Wars in 1977 by repealing an ordinance banning discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Goodstein wrote:

This is one of those times when the truth we have to report is very unpleasant. The bottom line is that it is most unlikely that the Briggs initiative can be defeated in the November election....We may lose even in San Francisco. We can expect a multi-million-dollar media campaign of lies and hate directed at us. Some gay people will likely commit suicide under this onslaught of hate.

In their analysis, Clendinen and Nagourney commented:

Goodstein proceeded to offer his by now familiar prescription to minimize the damage. The “gay exterminists” and “hedonists”—the drag queens, the advocates of man-boy sex, the feminist-separatists, the *leather enthusiasts* [italics added], the sexual liberationists, the Marxists—must keep out of sight and leave it to the professionals [Goodstein] to salvage the campaign. Straight people are put off by homosexuals, Goodstein said, so “almost all gay people [Really, All?] could help best by maintaining very low profiles.” [Closets in

1978?)]... The “gay media freaks’ had to ‘get off the television and let our [straight] friends and allies speak to the non-gay issues.”

Goodstein’s editorial promoting gay self-hate concluded:

Constructively, we should assist in registering gay voters, stuffing envelopes in the campaign headquarters, and keeping out of sight of non-gay voters, except for persuading straight friends and relatives. Destructively, we can do a lot to assist John Briggs [Brigg’s political victory] by being *visible* and in any way *stereotypical*. [Italics added]

Bitter rivals Embry and Goodstein both exploited the axiom: “The freedom of the press belongs to those who own one.” Embry wanted gays to act up and Goodstein wanted gays to shut up. The wild political times turned both *The Advocate* and *Drummer* into important eyewitnesses as each rival magazine published in each issue its own first draft of the epic gay history exploding all around in that exciting first decade of gay liberation from Stonewall in 1969 to Harvey Milk’s murder in 1978 to the first cases of AIDS in 1981. Not to be dismissed as dated ephemera of gay pop culture, both magazines are immense repositories of descriptive and prescriptive grammars and primers of gay history told first hand by eyewitness writers, artists, and photographers.

CONTROVERSY IS FREE PUBLICITY

Embry, having read his First Amendment rights, seemed politically masochistically self-destructive in his constant pushing of forbidden erotica to taunt the cops. Two months before he offered me to become, in his flattering words, “the founding San Francisco editor of *Drummer*,” he wrote in *Drummer* 12 (January 1977), an ill-advised full-page ad for the upcoming extra issue, *The Best and the Worst of Drummer* (January 1977), bragging that the post-arrest issue would contain pages of writing, images, and “items we felt were too much even for *Drummer*.” To the relief of the LAPD desk sergeant assigned to read *Drummer*, the extra issue contained little that was new. As was Embry’s unpopular custom of selling the same text and pictures twice or thrice, nearly everything in *The Best and the Worst of Drummer* was a reprint of previous *Drummer* features. Readers so disliked re-runs, and wrote so many “Letters to the Editor” about Embry’s recycling, that I changed the course of *Drummer* by including only all-new materials in my first issues beginning with *Drummer* 19, including my special New York

arts issue, *Son of Drummer* (September 1978), showcasing the artist Rex and Robert Mapplethorpe in his *Drummer* debut.

Eleven months after the Slave Auction arrests, Embry used his “In Passing” editorial column in *Drummer* 13 (March 1977) to protest too much the arrest of straight publisher, Larry Flynt, whose *Hustler* magazine had just been busted for pornography in Cincinnati, the most puritan city in American fundamentalism. Stretching to identify with Flynt on page 76, and claiming permission from the *L. A. Free Press*, Embry reprinted novelist Harold Robbins’ article defining the censorship of *Hustler* as “another example of fascism in America.”

When Mapplethorpe died eleven years after *Son of Drummer*, I updated this American Fascist censorship battle with my obituary feature article, “Pentimento for Robert Mapplethorpe: Faces, Fetishes, and Flowers of Evil,” in *Drummer* 133 (September 1989). It was in censorious Cincinnati where seven of leatherman Robert Mapplethorpe’s *Drummer*-style photographs were put on trial in 1990 as dramatized in the feature film, *Dirty Pictures* (2000), a docudrama focused on museum director Dennis Barrie and his attempt to exhibit Mapplethorpe’s photographs at the local Contemporary Arts Center. Although the jury ruled in favor of Barrie, the Mapplethorpe case had a nationwide impact debating the role of government in supporting the arts. After censoring the recently deceased Mapplethorpe on the floor of the U. S. Senate, Culture War conservatives slashed almost all the government funding for the National Endowment for the Arts. Conversely, as soon as a New York editor read the *Drummer* obituary, I was contracted to turn the essay into the book, *Mapplethorpe: Assault with a Deadly Camera* (1994), which was followed by my entry, “Mapplethorpe,” in *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia* (2001). I also contributed photographs, personal letters to me from Robert, and onscreen eyewitness testimony for Fenton Bailey and Randy Barbato’s HBO documentary, *Mapplethorpe: Look at the Pictures* (2016).

Censorship from the outside plagued *Drummer* as much as did insider complaints from passionate subscribers. In that same *Drummer* 133, a disgruntled reader wrote to publisher Anthony DeBlase accusing *Drummer* of politically correct self-censorship on the one hand and the glorification of drugs on the other:

...sorry to see so much has become a no-no in your fiction. You claim your distributors threaten you to be sweet and clean and pure like *Family Circle* magazine or *Reader’s Digest*. However, it seems that you still promote the use of drugs in your safe-sex vanilla

fiction. Many of the characters (maybe the authors?) can't function in sex...unless they are stoned blind? —HM, Bridgeport CT

Drummer assistant editor Paul Martin, an eyewitness bear who defined himself in *Drummer* 143, page 59, responded that only four stories depicted drug use. One was an excerpt from my pal Geoff Mains' *Gentle Warrior*, and another was an excerpt from my own *Some Dance to Remember: A Memoir-Novel of San Francisco 1970-1982*. As for *Drummer* self-censoring and turning "vanilla," Martin wrote: "I don't call the for-real POW torture in 'Shadow Soldiers' [*Drummer* 127] by Jack Fritscher 'vanilla.'" Indeed, the landmark *Drummer* 100 also dared publish my non-consensual S&M story "The Lords of Leather" which was later included in the anthology *Rainbow County and Other Stories* (1999) and subsequently optioned by *The Advocate* through its Alyson Publishing. Alyson's book editor, however, freaked out over the sex-torture of American soldiers and censored the "men's adventure magazine" story by asking to drop it in favor of one of my consensual stories. After that judgmental snip, writer Simon Sheppard dignified "The Shadow Soldiers" in his canonical anthology *Homosex: 60 Years of Gay Erotica* (2007).

Regarding the "Great Slave Auction," Embry must have felt he had won the free-publicity lottery when *The National Enquirer* ran a two-page spread titled "The Real Hollywood—Wild, Wicked, & Wide Open." The authors were Barbara Stemigin and Malcolm Boyes whose name is similar to venerable gay author, Malcolm Boyd, the partner of then *Advocate* editor, Mark Thompson. Malcolm Boyes was the British journalist who, after working for the *Enquirer*, became the producer of television "tabloid gossip" programs such as *Inside Edition* and *Extra*.

Embry so relished the *Enquirer* Slave Auction details and photos that he photostated its two-page coverage and reprinted its copyrighted material without permission in *Drummer* 18 (August 1977), page 6. He even feigned indignation in his introductory essay about the very existence of the *Enquirer* feature, but was he bragging or complaining? It was a major counter-phobic *coup* to be covered by the scandal-sucking tabloid, *The National Enquirer*, that was published in Florida where Anita Bryant, second runner-up to Miss America, had revved her Christianist self up with a 1969 "Rally for Decency" in which she had protested Jim Morrison's exposing his rock-star penis on stage before launching her culture-changing Dade County Children's Crusade in 1977. As sure as karma can be a pie in the face, Bryant's homophobia ended her singing career and her commercial endorsements; her straight marriage split into divorce amidst gay rumors imagining

her first husband was gay—he wasn't; and she later declared bankruptcy which the straight former husband allegedly blamed on gay people not playing "fair."

Years later in its longtime alliance with the Republican Party, *The Enquirer* allegedly created a deal with the onward-marching Arnold Schwarzenegger not to publish trash journalism about him during 2003 when he was campaigning for the governorship of California. Just four days before the election, eBay, the corporation headed by Republican Meg Whitman, "censored" my "performance-art auction" of my Schwarzenegger and Mapplethorpe photographs and memorabilia on the very same weekend that several women were suddenly coming forward at the last minute accusing Schwarzenegger of pushing his unwelcome sexual advances on them. The eBay "bust" of my "Schwarzenegger Shrine" auction, with its Mapplethorpe connection, made headlines around the globe, exposing yet one more way how anti-gay and anti-women corporations and publications protect politicians.

After he was elected the following Tuesday, the hateful Schwarzenegger, who, as a young bodybuilder, had been photographed by Mapplethorpe, became the one and only person standing between gays and gay marriage in California. He alone twice refused to sign his name to the done deal of Assemblyman Mark Leno's gay marriage bill passed by the California legislature. Schwarzenegger was a duplicitous Republican hypocrite defending the sanctity of straight marriage. At the very moments he vetoed gay marriage, he was an active adulterer. While famously married to the Kennedy family's Maria Shriver, and father to four children with her, Schwarzenegger impregnated the family's Hispanic maid who lived inside the action "hero's" family with the illegitimate child the maid and he were rearing without Shriver's knowledge of paternity.

The Advocate, October 7, 2003
eBay Shuts Down "Schwarzenegger Shrine"

Artist Jack Fritscher wanted to "start a dialogue" with fellow Californians about actor Arnold Schwarzenegger's views on gay rights, censorship, and government funding of art, so he gathered nine items from his pop culture collection and auctioned them on eBay.

The 64-year-old author of erotic fiction and San Francisco gay history launched his "Schwarzenegger Shrine" in late September with an opening bid of \$24,000. The menagerie, dedicated to the

front-runner in California's October 7 gubernatorial recall election, included a postcard of Schwarzenegger's torso that was photographed and signed by the late Robert Mapplethorpe. The controversial photographer used the postcard to invite friends to a "Hot Dirty Man" party in New York in 1979.

More than 61,000 people visited Fritscher's auction. But on Thursday afternoon, with two days left in the bidding, eBay shuttered the site and took away all references to it in its search engines. The San Jose, Calif.-based auction giant still hasn't offered Fritscher any explanation. "It was taken down because it's gay-themed, period," Fritscher said Friday. "It's censorship of what's gay. There's no nudity or politics here. There might be a political question asked, but it's only because the piece for sale is curious and I was trying to distinguish it from the other Schwarzenegger items for sale."...

"I was the bicoastal lover of the notoriously gay Robert Mapplethorpe, who photographed Arnold Schwarzenegger," Fritscher's listing began. "In a national scandal in 1989 to 1990, Sen. Jesse Helms denounced Mapplethorpe on the floor of the U.S. Senate and took away government funding of art.... Considering Arnold's posing for Mapplethorpe, one wonders what is the Schwarzenegger position on government taxes paying for uncensored art?"

...Fritscher, a longtime pop culture enthusiast who has listed his novels on eBay, said the site has evolved into a social phenomenon beyond a simple catalog of goods for sale. It is a platform for people to market not only products but the values that accompany them, he said. "eBay is a public forum," Fritscher said. "If Fox can take a political spin, why can't a seller on eBay pitch political materials any way they want to?"

DRUMMER

the leather fraternity



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THE ONE PUBLICATION DEDICATED TO THE LEATHER LIFESTYLE

**Cover Photograph
by Fred Halsted**

250