

## CHAPTER 13

### ANNUS MIRABILIS 1979 (THE WONDERFUL YEAR 1979)

#### *My Drummer* Desk Calendar Personal Annotations and Bibliography My 1979 Life Editing *Drummer* in Real Time

- 1978-1979 Eyewitness *Drummer* Timeline: Fulsome Details of Folsom Street
- 2 Guns: Harvey Milk Assassination (27 November 1978) plus Robert Opel Murder (July 8, 1979) Both Impact *Drummer*; Fritscher Turns Down Job as Deputy Sheriff of San Francisco
- Fritscher Desk Calendar: Editing *Drummer*; Dating Robert Mapplethorpe and Introducing His Photography into Leather Culture; Colt Models Chuck Romanski and Dan Pace; Bodybuilder Champ Jim Enger; the Artist Domino; Meeting Mark Hemry at Harvey Milk's Birthday Party, and Outing Gay Cowboys with Randy Shilts
- December 31, 1979: Fritscher Exits *Drummer* having edited *Drummer* issues from 18 to 33

“A career in the arts can make anyone crazy...”  
—Christopher Bram, *Eminent Outlaws:  
The Gay Writers Who Changed America*

*My Wonderful Year*, my action-packed *Annus Mirabilis*, was 1979. I had the good fortune to be the young editor-in-chief of the hottest gay magazine on the planet. Everyone was having carefree, simultaneous, and epic polyamorous affairs. Besides romancing the troops on the streets and at the baths, I was having fun playing at being Joe Orton's “Mr. Sloane,” entertaining my intimate significant others: Robert Mapplethorpe, Jim Enger, David Sparrow, Tony Tavarossi, and Mark Hemry.

My “Annotated 1978-1979 *Drummer* Eyewitness Timeline” grew from my editorial desk calendar. In 1979, San Francisco and *Drummer* were both freaking out over assassination, riot, murder, lust, cancer, hysteria, cash, and creativity. As editor-in-chief, I exited *Drummer* officially as New Year’s Eve, 1979, flipped into the 1980s with its transformative threesome of Ronald Reagan, the VCR, and AIDS.

Because timelines are *Roshomon* and inevitably repeat narrative text, some items in this fact-checked rear-view mirror offer different provident angles on calendar and character. For all the bliss of writing, the creating of a *Drummer* issue took a prodigious amount of work. During the wild 1970s with all the sex and fun and love affairs we all enjoyed, I kept focus, and edited solo fifteen issues of *Drummer* (18 to 33), more than anyone else at that time, and contributed 147 pieces of writing and 266 photographs (including covers and centerfolds) before the end of 1979. During this splendid time, I had edited more than half of the *Drummer* issues in existence. As my desk calendar changed to the new decade, I continued contributing much more writing and many more photographs to many issues of *Drummer* after the second publisher, Anthony Deblase, ended first publisher John Embry’s Blacklist in 1986.

Each issue of *Drummer* averaged about 100 large-format pages which, folded, would equal a 400-page trade paperback book. I edited exactly 942 pages of *Drummer*, issues 18 to 33, or the equivalent of a 3,778-page book. When I withdrew my editing, writing, and photography during late 1979 because I wanted to be paid for all this work, Embry was forced to shorten each issue by the nearly twenty percent I had contributed “free” each issue. “Minus me minus my paycheck,” he had to pare my beefy 96-page average issue down to a slim 80 pages in *Drummer* 28 and *Drummer* 29. In 2010, he died, one of the one percent, having never paid me—one of the ninety-nine percent of unpaid *Drummer* contributors—for this work completed thirty years before. Never one to make the huge mistake of trying to live off gay art and writing, I have always had a university teaching job or a corporate writing job in the real world, even during the very years I worked for *Drummer*. Nevertheless, money was never the point. This 1979 log, growing out of the context of 1978 and into the swim of 1980, covers that year’s *Drummer* issues 23 to 33.

MY *DRUMMER* DESK CALENDAR  
SOME TIMELINE ANNOTATIONS  
April 1978 - October 1980

John Embry's health problems caused a pivotal change in his physical and psychological demeanor in mid-to-late 1978 even as the quiet onset of his unseeable colon cancer took its toll before being diagnosed and treated with surgery on March 16, 1979. Autocratic as a publisher before his surgery, and then dodging death, he felt so entitled to "live life large" that during his long recuperation, he became so increasingly difficult to work with that the staff was glad he was mostly AWOL from the office for five whole months during Spring and Summer.

When he finally returned to work, he sputtered and fumed with faint praise because his ego was somehow wounded to find that *Drummer* had become new and improved with an inflected editorial change, and a huge rise in subscriptions during the long production time he was out of the picture. No good deed goes unpunished. He was jealous of his own staff who had protected his business and erotic interests and changed *Drummer* from a local LA publication into a San Francisco magazine with international appeal. He had a literal "gut reaction" reflected in his rhetoric in his writing. He combined metaphors of bondage and illness. He revealed his own physical and psychological state, as well as inadvertently his bad behavior, only six months after his colon cancer surgery on his knotted-up guts. Safely disembodied in the hollow voice of his alter-ego 'Robert Payne,' Embry editorialized, preaching without irony, about psychosomatic illness and karma in the "In Passing" column in *Drummer Rides Again* (November 1979). In his exact words:

Being "all tied up"...can refer to various parts of the body and psyche. A stomach "all tied up" in knots can denote nervousness, apprehension, or just indigestion. Being "tied up" can keep one from dinner, or coming to the phone, or missing an appointment [or showing up at the *Drummer* office]. But the being "tied up" we are dealing with at this moment, Gentle Reader, is an internal constipation [*sic*] that all of us suffer from....We get what we give. And usually deserve what we get. Next time you are "all tied up," let it be literally, not emotionally. (Page 62)

Peddling this advice to others, Embry explained how and why his treatment of the *Drummer* staff and the business had escalated so hysterically. His cancer may have been caused by the homophobia of the LAPD. Under tremendous stress from the 1976 *Drummer* Slave Auction arrests that led to years of court dates and costs, he was forced to flee LA, the city he loved, and to set up shop in San Francisco where he tried to "tie up" us *Drummer* workers

and make us his whipping boys. Over Embry's eleven years of "Plantation Boss" behavior, hundreds were hired, and hundreds quit. Is it at all revelatory that his personal favorite movie covered multiple times in *Drummer* was the plantation and slavery pot-boiler *Mandingo*. His favorite author was Kyle Onstott who, mixing race, slavery, and S&M, had written both the novel *Mandingo* and its sequel—titled what else?—*Drum*.

September 1978: Publication of *Drummer* 24, the famous Mapplethorpe cover. Embry was turned on by the fresh "takes" of Robert Mapplethorpe's work. In an envious plagiarism, he tried to restage and shoot Mapplethorpe-like photos to fill future issues without having to pay royalties. Jealous, he took to a fatuous denouncing of Mapplethorpe who had, during Halloween 1977, arrived very sweetly at the *Drummer* office to introduce himself to me on his enterprising trip to San Francisco. The start of his trip on "Saturday, October 16, 1977" was documented by petite British author and resident of the Chelsea Hotel, Victor Bokris, in his book, *Beat Punks* (1998). Bokris also wrote *Patti Smith: An Unauthorized Biography* (1999). Embry was miffed at the personal Mapplethorpe-Fritscher bicostal affair which lasted passionately—nearly the whole time I edited *Drummer*—from October 1977 to its sweet evaporation over health-and-hygiene issues during spring 1980. Robert, the New Yorker, was frequently sick intestinally and I, the San Franciscan, was not, and I had to back away to protect my health.

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Footnote #1: Inside the Timeline  
Mapplethorpe, the Mainstream, and *Drummer*

Here, inside this timeline, it is appropriate to show how influential *Drummer* was, and how *Drummer*, properly written and properly edited, could transcend itself with a readership far sleeker than critics might guess, and certainly smarter and more sophisticated than scoffers thought it to be.

The zero-degrees model to illustrate this is Robert Mapplethorpe, and how he was featured in *Drummer* in the years from 1978, when I introduced him, to 1989 when I wrote his obituary..

*Drummer* connected me by one degree of separation to Patricia Morrisroe as informant for her biography, *Mapplethorpe* (1995). My own insider gay-verite book, in progress since 1978, *Mapplethorpe: Assault with a Deadly Camera*, was published in 1994, the year before Ms. Morrisroe's outsider book. While doing interviews and writing her book, she may have suffered, I alleged, a "gay panic" attack about the rough subject matter of homomale culture ranging across racism, promiscuity, drugs, S&M, and dirty sex. Or,

at least, so it seemed to me as I reviewed the internal evidence of her attitude and voice in her “straight” biography of the gay artist. Seventeen years later, critic Christopher Bram in *Eminent Outlaws* thoroughly documented the “gay panic” typical of the mid-century New York literary establishment who trashed gay artists such as Tennessee Williams, Gore Vidal, James Baldwin, and Christopher Isherwood. Critic Richard Labonte wrote at his site, Books to Watch Out For (btwof.com), “Of the two biographies of Mapplethorpe, Fritscher’s was the first and is still the best.”

After Mapplethorpe died, March 9, 1989, I championed him in *Drummer* where Paul Taylor, an understanding *New York Times* art critic, noticed my “*Pentimento* for Mapplethorpe,” *Drummer* 133 (September 1989). Taylor wrote the following letter dated October 11, 1989:

Dear Mr. Fritscher, I am a former friend of Robert Mapplethorpe and an art critic (*New York Times* and various magazines), and I was pleased and interested to read your article about Robert in *Drummer*. In fact, I have brought it to the attention of Patricia Morrisroe, a journalist for *New York* magazine (with no special credentials regarding art) who is writing a biography of our friend for Random House publishers. I hope she will be in touch with you if she hasn’t already.  
---Yours sincerely, Paul Taylor.

A week before I received Taylor’s letter, Patricia Morrisroe, straight and Catholic, contacted me for an interview for her book funded by Random House. With both of us recording, I talked to her on the telephone for nearly five hours. Days later, on October 10, 1989, she wrote me a thank-you note from her Riverside Drive address in Manhattan. Quoted briefly from her copyrighted letter, she was very sweet: “Dear Jack. Thanks so much...even though I’ve interviewed over 120 people at this point, I haven’t spoken to anyone who is as articulate on the subject of Mapplethorpe as you are. Your piece [in *Drummer*] was really well-written.” Noting she was having a “hard time” building a timeline for Robert because he kept no notes, she inquired about his letters to me, saying she would appreciate my help, and she signed off: “Thanks for the help you’ve already given me. Best, Patricia Morrisroe.”

#### FOUR POINTS: *DRUMMER* AND MAPPLETHORPE

1. My “*Pentimento*: Mapplethorpe” article was the apogee of *Drummer* magazine assaying a political cause celebre.

2. In the midst of the culture war over art and homosexuality in America, the 1989 “Pentimento” rose like a flare over the memory of the sinking Titanic 1970s.

3. Its publication in *Drummer* 133 (September 1989) completed the eleven-year “circle of life” I had begun by reporting on Mapplethorpe in *Drummer* 24 and *Son of Drummer* (both September 1978).

4. On May 9, 1990, Mark Thompson, who was collecting authors for his landmark anthology, *Leatherfolk: Radical Sex, People, Politics, and Practice*, wrote:

Dear Jack, Thank you for the...[article] on Robert Mapplethorpe. I sat down and read the essay last night and was completely overwhelmed by the power and the beautiful writing of the piece. You’ve caught something extremely important. So, a thought occurs: What would you think about including the “Arnett” [an article I’d written on artist, Chuck Arnett, in *Drummer* 134 (October 1989)] and “Mapplethorpe” pieces together, back to back, in the leather anthology? Both are very personal pieces about two important artists, from different decades and coasts, yet who had immense influence over the culture of the time. Furthermore, each man liberated the leather image, advanced its meaning, each in his own particular way....Having both pieces of your articles together would also express an historical continuity as well....

—Warmly, Mark Thompson

If Embry had still owned *Drummer* in 1989 his Blacklist would not, in my opinion, have allowed any obituary of his nemesis Mapplethorpe to darken the pages of *Drummer*, much less one written by me, his “rogue” editor. The consequence of Embry’s “embryonic 180 degrees of separation from the evolving soul of *Drummer*” would have segregated *Drummer* into a marginal ghetto of sex fantasies, with one less connection to the real world of erotic art and politics.

When Embry’s hired gun of a book critic, John F. Karr, reviewed *Leatherfolk* in *Manifest Reader* 16 (1992), page 88, Karr extended himself into liking the book of essays even though he could not resist one flick of his vanilla wrist: “At times this collection makes S/M sound like a civic duty.” Nevertheless he listed ten of the twenty-five contributors, mostly *Drummer* authors, by name: John Preston, Pat Califia, Scott Tucker, Jack Fritscher, Sam Steward, Dorothy Allison, Arnie Kantrowitz, Joseph Bean, Geoff Mains, and Mark Thompson.

In the same *Manifest Reader* 16, Karr seemed to hew to Embry's Blacklist agenda in his review of the 1992 Lammy Award Winner, *Gay Roots: Twenty Years of Gay Sunshine, An Anthology of Gay History, Sex, Politics & Culture*, edited by Winston Leyland. Karr correctly mentioned some contributors such as Jean Genet, the Malcolms Boyd and McDonald, Walt Whitman, and Yukio Mishima. However, journalist Karr failed to anchor the local-color "hook" of his review in the glories of Embry's salad days as the publisher of *Drummer* insofar as the only gay drama included in *Gay Roots* was also the only selection that was published originally in *Drummer: Corporal in Charge of Taking Care of Captain O'Malley*. As editor-in-chief, I had written and published that erotic play in *Drummer* 21 and *Drummer* 22. *Corporal in Charge* was, as well, the title of one of my anthologies of my fiction that had appeared originally in *Drummer*. In fact, *Corporal in Charge and Other Stories* was the first book collection of *Drummer* writing.

If Karr had connected *Drummer* to the Lambda Literary Award winner *Gay Roots*, Embry could have basked in the credit of having been the publisher who debuted that drama made canonical by inclusion in *Gay Roots*. In the Grudge Match that was his publishing life in San Francisco, Embry never really understood the esthetic, intellectual, and spiritual gestalt and power of *Drummer* which he thought of as a little more than a campy leather magazine using sex pictures to sell dildos through his main business: mail-order.

The whole of *Drummer* was greater than the sum of its parts. Or, in Kurt Koffka's phrase, "The whole is other than the sum of its parts." That "whole," which readers loved, eluded Embry, but was understood by *Drummer* columnists such as Guy Baldwin and Larry Townsend, editors Tim Barrus and Joseph W. Bean, and publisher Anthony DeBlase.

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### HOW THE *DRUMMER* SALON REPRODUCED

November 1977: In the erotic mosh pit of the 1977 CMC Carnival, I met bodybuilder Dan Dufort from LA. In *Drummer* (May 1978), on pages 8 and 14, I published two of my photos of Dufort for "Cigar Blues."

On August 25, 1978, Dufort played matchmaker at his home at 7560 Willoughby, Los Angeles. He introduced me to his friend, the blond LA bodybuilder, Jim Enger, who, like Mapplethorpe, had asked specifically to meet the editor of *Drummer*. During the torrid thirty-one-month Enger-Fritscher affair, the professional instantly became personal. And the personal became public. In gay popular culture, the coupling of the famous

bodybuilder and the editor of *Drummer* grabbed the attention of muscle-queens and leathermen. Enger was so much better looking than almost anybody that wags figured that to have bagged the beauty I must have been hung huge or been the best S&M top on the planet. Actually, we were a Vulcan Mind Meld of transcendent mutuality, muscle-sex, and homomascularity. Well-managed affairs in the free-love 1970s tended to be non-possessive, and my liaison with Enger ran parallel to my affair with Mapplethorpe so I was able to bring them together for a creative photo session. What happens in sex shapes the world. Both Enger and Mapplethorpe helped me shape the homomasculine look of *Drummer*.

In my special *Drummer* issue, *Son of Drummer* (September 1978), pages 6 and 7, I published a drawing of Dan Dufort by Los Angeles artist Ralph Richter. When Dufort introduced me to Richter at Richter's LA apartment, I was admiring Richter's framed work hanging on the wall when, astonished, I saw that one of the drawings was of me, taken, Richter said, from my face and pose in one of Walt Jebe's photographs for *Whipcrack* magazine (1970). The moment of discovery was so hilarious that Richter immediately gifted me with his pencil drawing.

On August 15, 1986, Dufort became the second-place winner of the Physique Contest at Gay Games II, San Francisco. A year later, Dufort starred in my video feature of his fetish, *Gut Punchers* (1987). Historically, it is the first video on gut punching which quickly became its own pop-culture genre. Two more of my photographs of Dufort appeared in *Drummer* 115 (April 1988), page 40. These same photographs were published by author Brian Pronger in his book, the *Drummer*-influenced *The Arena of Masculinity: Sports, Homosexuality, and the Meaning of Sex* (1990). *Drummer* anticipated Pronger by twelve years with my "Gay Jock Sports" feature article in *Drummer* 20 (January 1978).

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Footnote #2: Inside the Timeline:  
Colt Models, the Platonic Ideal, and *Drummer*

Jim Enger was a masculine-identified uniform man—a man's man, in the best sense, who was also a blond bodybuilder champion. Viewed as a kind of Platonic Ideal, Enger became for me Emerson's "representative man" incarnating the homomasculine identity emerging in *Drummer*. Enger was virtually the quintessential Mr. Drummer.

Outside of *Drummer*, I spun our real-time meeting in Dufort's apartment into my fictitious fantasy with no personal connection to Enger other than basic muscle-sex choreography in *Some Dance*



to *Remember*, Reel 1, Scene 10. Two muscle-sex scenes from *Some Dance* were excerpted pre-book publication in *Drummer* 124 (December 1988) with a review of the book by Paul Martin in *Drummer* 141 (August 1990).

Four months later at Christmas, 1978, Enger moved into my San Francisco home, ending his domestic relationship, but not his friendship, with Colt model, Clint Lockner. These men were objective correlative of the kind of homomasculine beauty in my life in the 1970s. Clint Lockner was Chuck Romanski. One man: two hot names. Both sounded porno. In real life, Charles (Chuck) Romanski was the LAPD police officer who shocked the LAPD by appearing in photographs and films shot by Rip Colt aka Jim French for Colt Studio. The thirty-five-year-old Romanski had served in both the Army and Marine Corps and at the time of the shoot had been an LAPD officer for eight years.

The handsome Romanski took gay popular culture by storm in magazine photographs and in the Super-8 Colt films we worshipers projected on the roll-down silent screens hanging in our bedrooms before the invention of the VCR. Rip Colt created the entire issue of *Colt Men* 7 (1980) to showcase Chuck on the cover and in the contents: including gun, nightstick, and boot fetish photos that became templates for Mapplethorpe who from the 1960s had cruised 42<sup>nd</sup> Street dirty book stalls to study leather photography in magazines for inspiration. In the zero degrees of *Colt Men* 7, Romanski interacted on several pages with Colt model Mickey Squires who was also my Palm Drive Video model. Colt/French also shot Enger privately.

Looking up from my bed of roses, I figured *Drummer* had come full circle from the LAPD “Slave Auction” arrest in 1976 to the retired LAPD officer and Colt icon, Romanski, in 1978.

Enger and Romanski were such an archetypal muscle-uniform “power couple” in 1970s LA that Tom of Finland, attracted by their high-profile beauty which seemed born out of his own homomasculine Platonic Ideal, insisted on drawing them together in uniform. Tom’s Enger-Romanski drawing was very popular, appearing on the cover and on page 47 of *Olympus*, A Colt Studio Publication (1982); inside *Drummer* 79 (December 1984), page 10; in the book, *Tom of Finland*, Taschen, 1992, page 62; and on the cover of the German translation of the Samuel Steward aka Phil Andros novel *The Boys in Blue*, *Bullenhochzeit* (1994).

I arranged for another *Drummer* artist, Domino (Don Merrick), to draw Jim Enger in our bedroom on March 26, 1979, and for Mapplethorpe to photograph Enger in a condo near Twin Peaks on March 25, 1980. (See my *Domino Video Gallery*, Palm Drive Video, as well as the “Interview with Domino” by Shapiro and Fritscher in

*Drummer* 29, May 1979). Domino and Mapplethorpe, both gritty New Yorkers walking on the wild side, were drawn to Enger's blond California brightness. Their dark East Coast interpretations of Enger's universal appeal were contrapuntal and useful because Enger, so publicly in bloom in 1970s California, was more in the sun-kissed tradition favored by straight and gay photographers besotted with him in San Francisco and LA. A star on the straight physique contest circuit where he was often invited as the Guest Poser, Enger was simultaneously the most ogled and desired man on the streets of San Francisco and in the beach-and-gym cliques in LA where on Sunday afternoons at a certain steroid doctor's Hollywood Hills palazzo the bodybuilders stood on one side of the pool and the check-books stood on the other.

One Sunday, walking south with Enger on Castro Street in front of the Spaghetti Factory restaurant, I watched as Rudolf Nureyev and his party walked north toward us. As we passed, Enger, as always, kept the custody of his eyes straight ahead. I, however, couldn't resist turning around to glimpse Nureyev from the rear, and what I saw was Rudy turning around, in slow full 360-degree pivot, to take one more look at Enger which he confirmed with a direct look, a big grin, and a thumbs-up to me! Then Rudy sailed on to the north, and Enger and I to the south leaving no ripple. As for my own artistic interpretation, Enger, as symbol, influenced my various homomale articles such as "Fucking with Authentic Men" (*Drummer* 24).

Enger, who honestly enjoyed exhibiting himself in public, never allowed his photographs to be published in *Drummer* or any other gay venues. When I arranged for Robert Mapplethorpe to photograph Enger in the unforgettable star-feud shoot on March 25, 1980, Enger, as it turned out, would not sign a release as he had not for Jim French at Colt. He was a physique celebrity, and, not unreasonably, he wanted to approve the photographs that he felt we were co-creating with Robert. But Mapplethorpe, always wily and thinking ahead, had shot several frames of Enger's torso pictured from the neck down. One of those headless torso shots of Enger was produced by Mapplethorpe as a color greeting card sold in museum gift shops; and it was reproduced by Tony Deblase with my Mapplethorpe obituary in *Drummer* 133 (September 1989), page 14. Earlier in 1979, a Castro photographer, one of the street paparazzi who loved Enger, had snapped the two of us, Enger and me, hooked together at the hip, and holding court "in our spot," leaning against the sunny west wall of Donuts and Things, one Sunday afternoon at 18<sup>th</sup> and Castro. Every weekend the sidewalks were jammed with thousands of cruising immigrants and sex tourists strolling in concentric circles in a kind

of *gay paseo* around the intersection. When that photo was turned into a postcard sold at shops on Castro, Enger politely confronted our appropriation by the photographer, but, of course, we were a public couple lensed in public. So we were fair game. Nevertheless, Enger charmed the photographer into withdrawing the card.

I photographed Enger dozens of sessions in stills and color Super-8 films, at home, alone in popular gyms after midnight, at his physique contests, and most beautifully out on the rugged rocky top of Corona Heights overlooking all of San Francisco and Castro in particular. (Corona Heights is romanticized as the gay Wuthering Heights in *Some Dance to Remember*, Reel 5, Scene 13.) Enger, as a public personality on the streets and on the bodybuilding stages, where his abs had a terrific ripple effect, gladly supported and appeared on the cover of my first issue of *Man2Man Quarterly* (January 1980), as well as in the article that I wrote about him, "Jim Enger: On the Way Up," in the straight physique magazine, *Dan Lurie's Muscle Training Illustrated*, Number 80, December 1979; also in *Iron Man*, July 1979, page 42.

I must clarify to anyone inserting autobiography into my fiction, that the character of Kick Sorenson in *Some Dance to Remember*, even as excerpted in *Drummer* 124, pages 20-25, and "Bodybuilding" (*Drummer* 124, pages 7-9), is not based on Enger. Although beautiful, he did not have what Sam Steward wrote in *Chapters from an Autobiography*, "the disease of beauty, which in its progression rots the soul and destroys the will." Enger's playful *modus operandi* was nothing like the diseased beauty of Kick Sorenson. However, our experience together in competitive bodybuilding allowed him to win trophies and me to write the insider psycho-erotic observations made in *Some Dance*. In *Les Liaisons Dangereuse* and *La Ronde* around *Drummer*, I always tried, as a gentleman in the sexually liberated 1970s, to make my fictitious writing be dynamically fueled by real-life sex, and to remain friends with the many lovers and tricks who inspired that writing, and to whom I remain forever grateful.

For instance, in remaining friends with Lockner/Romanski, I wrote on August 12, 1979, while I was editor-in-chief of *Drummer*, a feature article reviewing Romanski's leathersex-uniform act with Dan Pace (legally, Daniel Pacella) who, as a Zeus Studio model, was the centerfold of my *Drummer* 27 (February 1979). That summer, "Lockner and Pace" toured, performing for one-hand-clapping audiences in sold-out porn theaters nationwide, beginning in Alex de Renzy's Screening Room theater at 220 Jones Street in San Francisco. Because I was exiting *Drummer*, Embry dropped my review, "In These Last Days of the American Empire: Dan Pace & Clint Lockner Together." It was quickly published as part of my

“Virtual *Drummer*” collection in the premiere issue of *Skinflicks*, Volume 1, Number 1, January 1980.

In November 1979, Daniel D. Pacella, who had also starred in the Gage Brothers’ *LA Tool and Die*, wrote from his Orange Drive address in LA:

Jack, A thousand thanks from Chuck and me for your... review. We loved it. We enjoyed it. We even got off on it...We were glad you wrote about our effort as more than just a sex show....Sorry to hear there’s so much trouble at *Drummer*, but use the photos included with the review wherever you get this published....We look forward to sharing once again with you a joint and a jug of wine.

—Dan & Chuck

With aching nostalgia for the 1970s, I recall, like Chaucer’s vigorous Wife of Bath joyously counting her grand slams, that while I was editing *Drummer*,

- the Enger-Fritscher affair ran (September 1978-January 1981) parallel with
- the Mapplethorpe-Fritscher affair (Halloween 1977-Spring 1980) which ran parallel to
- the Sparrow-Fritscher gay marriage (1969-1979) running in step with
- the Tavarossi-Fritscher affair (1971-1981), and coincidental with
- the Henry-Fritscher union beginning May 22, 1979, and continuing to the present.

Like all of us in that Titanic decade, I lived the 1970s to the hilt, but I did have some limits.

When the drop-dead handsome Romanski, who had the biggest cock in porn, but not as big as Enger’s, wined and dined and courted me, and played the piano (which he did beautifully), I politely declined his gorgeous advances because it seemed incestuous to ball my hairy blond lover’s ex who seemed overly curious about what he had heard my conjure-energy was like sexually. My refusal in the free love of the 1970s was probably foolish, because Enger joked, “You don’t know what you missed.”

Maybe I do: Chuck Romanski died of AIDS June 17, 1993.

During that same summer, in August, 1993, I saw Dan Dufort for the last time when the hills around LA were on fire, and security for the visiting Nelson Mandela had slowed all traffic to a crawl. He was desperate: his mother had died some months before, and his

lover and *Gut Punchers* co-star, “Gino Deddino,” had recently died from an overdose. Dan had come home to find his lover’s dead body moved around the apartment by “roommates” who stole what few belongings the two had not squandered in trade for drugs. Deeply depressed, Dan was soon fired as “hairstylist for the wigs” in the LA road show of *Phantom of the Opera*. He was a long way from his stardom at the Gay Games II when I had videotaped him posing fully oiled and nearly naked at high noon on the steps of City Hall while tourists walked around him staring and applauding. When I last kissed Dan goodbye, the gaunt physique winner was working part-time as a night porter at a West Hollywood motel and living in an abandoned store front, literally one step up from the sidewalk, at 1057 N. Curson and Hollywood Blvd. With no family, and no one to notify, my sweet buddy sadly, simply disappeared...

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April 24, 1978 (Monday): The maniacal Zodiac Killer sent his twenty-first letter to the media warning San Francisco he was back to serial killing which affected gay safety and attitudes in bars whose doors opened to the lurking dark of cruise streets South of Market. Several leathermen, such as my friend Tom Gloster, exited Folsom Street bars and were never seen alive again. At the same time, my friend, Larry Hunt, who posed famously in lace-up boots for Mapplethorpe, left an LA bar and disappeared until his jawbone was found in Griffith Park two years later.

July 1978: Publication of *Drummer* 23. As editor-in-chief, I gathered and shaped the content of the 96-page issue, contributing twelve pieces of my own writing and twelve of my photographs. My writing included “Gay Pop Culture in *Drummer*,” “The Catacombs,” the poem “Redneck Biker,” “Astrologic,” Act Two of my play *Corporal in Charge of Taking Care of Captain O’Malley*, “Target Men: Target Studio,” and “Reviewing Straight Magazines,” as well as the start up of ongoing publication for my humor column “Tough Shit.”

August 25, 1978 (Friday): On this date, my life changed forever, and I began actively inserting a personally experienced “Platonic Ideal of Homomascularity” into *Drummer*. Having flown PSA to Hollywood-Burbank, I met Jim Enger through Dan Dufort who thought we, his two friends, were meant for each other. The Enger-Fritscher affair began immediately that day in August 1978 and lasted until January 1981, through almost the entirety of my editing *Drummer*.

Autumn 1978: Panic over the Zodiac Killer became specific as another serial killer stalked gay men on Folsom Street until bartender David Likens, not the Zodiac Killer, was charged with the alleged mutilation murder of three men, including my friend Tom Gloster. Separately abducted, the gay men's bodies were discovered along roadsides north of the Golden Gate Bridge. See February 6, 1979, entry below. See also the sibling to *Drummer*, *The Alternate* 8 (January 1979), as well as my editorial, "Cruising: The Most Dangerous Game in the Whole Wide World," in *Drummer* 29 (May 1979). Eros and death in specific relation to Tom Gloster is narrated in *Some Dance to Remember*, Reel 4, Scene 2.

September 1978: Publication of *Drummer* 24, "The Mapplethorpe Cover." While editing the 94-page issue, I contributed nine pieces of my writing and forty-nine of my photographs. Among the features I wrote were: "Authentic Men," "Bondage Interview," "Castro Street Blues," "Part One, In Hot Blood: Ex-Cons: We Abuse Fags," "The Quarters," "Farewell to Larry's Bar," and "Tough Shit." The coup for the million-dollar cover of *Drummer* 24 was that I was able to give the not-yet-famous Robert Mapplethorpe his first magazine cover.

September 15, 1978 (Friday): Publication of *Son of Drummer*, a special *Drummer* publication. For my 64-page *Son of Drummer*, I edited what I thought of as my "New York Art" issue. Featuring my first writing about Robert Mapplethorpe, which was his first coverage in the gay press, I contributed eight pieces of my writing and forty-three of my photographs. Among my features were: the illustrated "Robert Mapplethorpe Gallery (Censored)," "Arab Death," "Turkish Delight (Wrestling)," "The New York Artist Rex Revisited," the poem "Chico Is the Man," and the serialized first chapter of my novel *I Am Curious (Leather)* aka *Leather Blues*. My photographic essays were "Ass-Sets," "Filmstrips: Candle Power," and "Filmstrips: Rude Rubbers."

November 18, 1978 (Saturday): While Embry's onset pains of cancer upset happiness at *Drummer*, San Francisco, suffering its own urban nervous breakdown, was a tumult of political upheaval and danger. People's Temple guru Jim Jones, active in city government since 1971 and supported by Harvey Milk and George Moscone, shocked San Franciscans and the world with the mass suicide of nearly 1,000 people in Jonestown, Guyana, the largest death toll of American civilians in a single disaster before 9/11. Also killed by Jones on their fact-finding expedition were five of his political

visitors, including San Francisco Democratic Congressman Leo Ryan. Jackie Speier, Ryan's congressional staff person, was shot five times and left bleeding on the tarmac for twenty-two hours. The gay-ally Speier later became California state senator. The People's Temple on Geary Boulevard was only a few blocks around the corner from the *Drummer* office on Divisadero.

November 28, 1978 (Tuesday): Ten days after the Jonestown Massacre, Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone were assassinated by Golden Gloves boxer Dan White who was not a fan of the People's Temple or of gays. (For details, see "Dan White" in *Some Dance to Remember*, Reel 1, Scene 16, and Reel 3, Scene 1.) Assassination made Dianne Feinstein mayor. My lover, *Drummer* photographer David Sparrow, was in City Hall at the time of the shootings and witnessed the two bodies being wheeled out. As editor, I regretted that the SFPD had confiscated his film from his camera the way the LAPD had confiscated all the *Drummer* photographs shot at the Slave Auction two years earlier. At the moment of the murders, the latest issue of *Drummer* was almost out the door to the printer. Despite the tragedy, I had always wanted to shout, "Stop the presses!" I told Embry I needed a couple hours to write a new last-page editorial eulogy for *Drummer* 26 (January 1979): "Harvey Milk and Gay Courage."

December 1978: Mapplethorpe and I, loving New York nightlife, commiserated that Studio 54 was being raided eighteen months after opening April 26, 1977. Mafia lawyer Roy Cohn was the attorney for Studio 54 owners, Steve Rubell and Ian Schrager. The ever-shrewd Mapplethorpe photographed all three gay men in separate portraits.

December 1978: Publication of *Drummer* 25, "The Christmas Issue." Editing this entire 104-page issue celebrating the holidays, I contributed seventeen pieces of writing and thirty-four photographs, including the 35mm color cover shot of Mike Glassman, the future Colt Model "Ed Dinakos"—who took direction nicely—with a big smile on his face, and a rimmy tip of tongue provocatively extended. Among my features and fiction were "Sleep in Heavenly Peace," "Afraid You're Not Butch Enough," "Looking for Mr. Drummer," "*Drummer* Gift Guide," "Astrologic," "Fetishes: Horses," "Horsemaster: Come to the Stable," "Part 2, In Hot Blood: Ex-Cons: We Abuse Fags," film review of *The Norsemen*, "Scottish Games: Men in Kilts," "Dr. Dick: Amoebiasis, Your Ass Is Falling Out," and the debut, the first installment, of my ongoing column "Tough Customers."

December 8 and 9, 1978 (Friday and Saturday): Enger and I traveled to Oceanside, California, where he, standing at 5-7, stuffed his sculpted 178 pounds into a two-ounce posing brief cantilevered with his best nine inches. He won “First Place” and “Best Poser” trophies at this, the first, physique contest he entered, the AAU Junior Mr. Ironman contest, judged by bodybuilder Rod Koontz, and produced by Roger Metz. The handsome AMG model and bodybuilder John Tristram, an LA friend of Enger’s, asked me how I felt during the loud cheering Enger received in the hall full of Marines from Camp Pendleton. “I feel,” I said, “like Jack Kennedy who quipped about himself: ‘I’m the man who accompanied Jacqueline Kennedy to Paris.’”

January 1979: Publication of *Drummer* 26. Having edited the 96-page issue, I contributed eleven pieces of my writing and twenty-eight of my photographs. Among the major features I wrote were: “Grand National Rodeo Blues,” “High Performance: Sex without a Net,” “Astrologic,” “The Battered Lex Barker,” “CMC Carnival,” “Tough Customers,” “Tough Shit,” and, as a tribute obituary, “Harvey Milk and Gay Courage.”

January 13, 1979 (Saturday): Jim Enger and I drove his maroon Corvette to the Mr. West Coast physique contest in San Jose where Enger won “Second Place” and the “Best Legs” trophy. I shot Super-8 film and 35mm color transparencies.

January 16, 1979 (Tuesday): Jim Enger and I joined gay film director Wakefield Poole and New York television producer Helen Whitney for supper to discuss Whitney’s San Francisco pre-production casting for her upcoming documentary *Homosexuals* which finally aired nationally on *ABC Closeup* (1982). The Oscar-nominated Whitney liked Enger’s look, because, I think, of his homomascularity and wanted us to appear as a couple in her footage. In *Some Dance to Remember*, I based the character of the television producer “January Guggenheim” on the attractive Helen Whitney, a Woodrow Wilson scholar, who, of course, was nothing like the fictional January who made the fictional TV documentary, *The New Homosexuals*.

January 18, 1979 (Thursday): Arrival in San Francisco of New Yorkers Elliot Siegal and his lover “John.” I had cast my frequent New York sex partner Elliot to be photographed by Mapplethorpe for the cover of *Drummer* 24 (September 1978), and Mapplethorpe then shot Elliot and John together for several other of his photographs in his book *Ten by Ten* (1988). On this



date, Siegal, who was the manager of the St. Mark's Baths in Greenwich Village, came to San Francisco, from his apartment at 58 Charles Street, to play S&M games with friends I set him up with in the *Drummer* Salon through Sunday, January 28.

January 27, 1979 (Saturday): Jim Enger and I drove again, this time by popular request, from my home in San Francisco to Oceanside, South of Los Angeles, where he was the featured guest poser for, again, an auditorium full of Marines. Even though in 1980 "our song" was Olivia Newton-John's "Magic," we had choreographed his posing routine to "The Love Theme from *Superman*." We both got off on the hot fact, with no irony, of a hall full of straight and closeted Marines cheering on a masculine gay man wearing only a suntan-brown pair of nylon posing briefs and a big cock ring.

February 1979: Publication of *Drummer* 27. While editing the 94-page issue, I contributed ten pieces of writing and four of my photographs. Among the features I wrote were: "Basic Plumbing Unplugged," "Dirty Poole: Interview with Film Director Wakefield Poole," "S&M: The Last Taboo, The Society of Janus," film reviews of *Movie Movie* and *Superman*, "Tough Customers," and "Tough Shit."

February 6, 1979 (Tuesday): Jim Enger's father died unexpectedly. Embry's *Drummer* venture, The Quarters, located in the half-basement of an old building South of Market, was broken into by us "leather vigilantes" forming our own gay search party for missing leatherman Tom Gloster. A week later, his bound body was discovered shot to death in notoriously redneck Tehama County, north of San Francisco, and his memorial service was February 17, 1979. I wrote about him in my editorial in *Drummer* 29 (May 1979), and again in *Some Dance to Remember*.

February 9, 1979 (Friday): Lab work and chest x-ray with San Francisco society doctor Fred Hudson for my cough. Doctor Hudson gave me gamma globulin shots every six weeks throughout the 1970s as protection, he said, against nightly exposure to disease. Was he the reason I never contracted HIV?

February 20, 1979 (Tuesday): Lunch with *Drummer* circulation manager Bill Cushing and some of the *Drummer* Salon including Al Shapiro and Frank Hatfield who billed himself as a former bank robber and ex-con who served time at San Quentin. Hatfield ran Embry's mail-order business

for years and, under the name “Frank O’Rourke,” frequently wrote his own *Drummer* fiction, including his serial “Prison Punk.” In the 1990s, while working Embry’s mail-order at one of Embry’s Russian River properties in Rio Nido, he was savagely attacked on a forested street by a stray dog, and, coincidentally, soon after died.

February 23, 1979 (Friday): Writing freelance outside *Drummer*, I wrote the article, “Jim Enger: On the Way Up,” for Roger Metz, owner of the Ironman Gym in Oceanside; the article was published in *Dan Lurie’s Muscle Training Illustrated*, issue 80 (December 1979). Unlike Embry, Dan Lurie paid me the going freelance rate of fifteen bucks.

February 26, 1979 (Monday): Ending our ten-year marriage, David Sparrow and I slept together one last time on the eve of his receiving a cash award from a lingering court case. Money and food always made David Sparrow amorous, and I knew how to twist his tits into an ecstasy he bot-tomed to even when we love-hated each other and continued to fuck after our divorce.

March 1979: Trouble in the Bubble. No *Drummer* issue released because of Embry’s illness and censorship problems with the printer. The staff con-tinued working daily to prepare upcoming issues.

March 3, 1979: The “First Anniversary” exhibit and party for Fey-Way Studio was its first and last anniversary. The pioneer gallery was founded and owned by *Drummer* writer and photographer, Robert Opel, showcas-ing leather S&M artists and photographers, bringing egos of art and leather personalities to a boil South of Market: Mapplethorpe, Rex, the Hun, A. Jay, Jim Stewart, Lionel Biron, Lou Rudolph, Larry Hunt, Tom Hinde, Robert Opel, and the un-billed artist and drug addict Chuck Arnett who, I reported in *Drummer* 133 (September 1989), “introduced the needle to Folsom Street.” Arnett’s invitation for the “Christmas Fix” party at “Fey-Way, Midnight, December 30, 1978,” featured a drawing of a Santa inject-ing his forearm with a hypodermic whose previous tracks spell out *NOEL*. My eyewitness intuition from the 1970s is that the sharing of needles, more than unsafe sex, was what wiped out the speed-driven A-List leather play-ers—both the disco bunnies shooting up at Probe and Trocadero, as well as the muscle guys injecting steroids, the most popular and secret drug used by gays in the 1970s when, without pecs, you were dead.

March 5, 1979 (Monday): Diary entry - "I can't handle the situation at *Drummer* anymore." Spent two hours last night on a *Drummer* photo shoot.

March 6, 1979 (Tuesday): I spent several hours this day and dozens of other days editing chapters from *Mister Benson* (as originally titled inside *Drummer* before shortened to *Mr. Benson*) for its East Coast author John Preston who, dangling his ten-chapter novel for serialization, had hustled Embry into publishing him in *Drummer*.

March 8, 1979 (Thursday): Jim Enger flew into Santa Rosa airport in a small plane to surprise me at my home in Sonoma County. "Omigod! He can fly!" said David Sparrow who was visiting me trying to fend off the man he thought was his competition. Nevertheless, I spent several hours working on the *Drummer* swim meet photographs David and I shot, including sitting down to write the poem "Wet Stough" to caption the photos for *Drummer* 28 (April 1979). On this date, outside the Gay Ghetto, but reflecting my professional design and production involvement with *Drummer*, I won two first-place awards in two categories from the Bay Area Society of Technical Communicators for brochures I wrote and produced during my concurrent day job as Manager of Publications at Kaiser Engineers in Oakland.

March 13, 1979 (Tuesday): *Drummer* publisher John Embry told me he had cancer. His growing "dis-ease" the last few months now had a name. What turmoil. "It's a full moon tonight." As editor-in-chief faced with producing *Drummer* without the publisher, I sat down and outlined the next three issues of *Drummer*, continuing its metamorphosis in style and content. I wrote: "Embry might die. Will *Drummer*?"

March 14, 1979 (Wednesday): Embry checked into the hospital for surgery. The new issue of *Drummer* appeared—six weeks late: *Drummer* 27 (February 1979).

March 16, 1979 (Friday): Embry had cancer surgery.

March 17, 1979 (Saturday, Saint Patrick's Day): David Sparrow and I officially divorce. Having met in Chuck Renslow's Gold Coast Bar, July 4, 1969, and having been married in Manhattan by S&M priest, Jim Kane, on May 7, 1972, we formally and amicably ended our ten-year domestic affair, but continued to share our home, and to photograph together for *Drummer*. David took possession of our cameras. I took possession of our

negatives and transparencies and their copyright. David, knowing the risks of living with an author, signed a contract that freed me to write about him in fiction and nonfiction. And I thanked him for assigning me his share of our copyright by forgiving the sizeable financial debt to me he had run up during the previous ten years.

March 19, 1979 (Monday): As editor-in-chief of *Drummer*, and standing in for publisher Embry in hospital, I met with author John Preston for three hours at the second-floor restaurant bar called “Caracole” on the northwest corner of Market Street and Noe Street across from Café Flore. Calling himself “Jack Preston,” Preston looked at my edited pages of the first chapters of his raw manuscript for his novel *Mr. Benson* which Embry had bought unfinished because he loved serializing stories to fill future hungry issues. He also had a lech for getting into Preston’s pants.

Preston was a good enough writer that he didn’t have to flirt or put out. He did, however, require heavy editing. During my *Drummer* time with him, when he was young and sorely stressed out with anxiety having just been fired as editor by *The Advocate*, he was a bit touchy about anyone, not just me, editing his draft manuscripts, even though the publisher had made it a condition for publication. (I was six years older than Preston, and when we met, I had already logged twenty years of magazine editing experience.) Later in his career, as he burned transparent with HIV, he owned up to his friend and sometime editor, Lars Eighner, the author of *Travels with Lizbeth*, that he knew he had always required a great deal of editing.

During the previous months as Embry’s health deteriorated, Embry was desperate to secure for *Drummer* serialized material that was easy to produce. With his haunted vampyr eyes, Preston behaved as if he might have been on some kind of drug, or was it his masochistic attitude that made him an eerie and scary young man. “So you’re the star of *Drummer*,” he snapped. I joked back: “Yeah, I guess I’ve become identified as the *Drummer* ‘Jack.’ How about you using your real name, John.” He, with competition from Rowberry, had little or no chance of Embry ever hiring him as editor of *Drummer*, but he had envious Iago’s sharp elbows. Still creating his porn identity, he was billing himself in *Drummer* bylines as both “Jack Preston” and “Jack Prescott.” At Embry’s order, I had edited every chapter of *Mr. Benson*, whether Preston gave attitude or not, so that it could be published. Editors don’t fear writers as much as writers fear editors. It was the first and last time I ever met with the young Preston which was more than *Drummer* staff usually met with most authors who most often mailed in their writing from distant zip codes.

March 20, 1979 (Tuesday): With Embry ill, I heard that my pal Ron Clute, who led a romantic double-life with a career in the Financial District and as a bartender at the Leatherneck and at the Black and Blue, had been killed by the drug PCP. Surrounded by our real life in the 1970s, I assessed some of the dangers of euphoric gay life and wrote my editorial “The Most Dangerous Game in the Whole Wide World” for *Drummer* 29 (May 1979), page 6. A photograph by Jim Stewart illustrated the obituary for Ron Clute, page 56. At the same time, health issues also figured into my 1979 story “Caro Ricardo” aka “Caro Roberto” which was a fictional telling of difficulties I was witnessing in the style of “dirty gay sex” as practiced by many leathermen like Mapplethorpe. Eventually Robert and I split amicably because of my “Irish hypochondria.” I like things clean. A year earlier, in *Drummer* 21 (March 1978), well aware of the shocking gay men’s health crisis, I had inaugurated my cautionary column “Dr. Dick, *Drummer* Goes to the Doctor” with the essay “PCP: Short Cut to Suicide,” p. 77. I wrote my monthly columns based on my telephone interviews with Dr. Richard Hamilton.

March 21, 1979 (Wednesday): I visited Embry in hospital and brought him a goldfish in a small bowl for an amusement. Later at my house, the 180-pound David Sparrow (divorced a total of four days, and high) entered and threw the 150-pound me to the floor, throwing water on my manuscripts, shouting about my not being able to make Embry pay him, as well as about my affairs with Enger and Mapplethorpe.

March 24, 1979 (Saturday): Enger and I, with others from the *Drummer* Salon, attended the opening for the artist Domino hosted by Robert Opel and Camille O’Grady at Fey-Way Studio.

March 26, 1979 (Monday): I set up my bedroom so that Jim Enger, who had posed for Tom of Finland, could pose seated on a chair for the artist Domino during the afternoon to create a drawing that became iconic Domino.

April 1979: Publication of *Drummer* 28. Editing the 80-page issue, I contributed six pieces of writing and ten of my photographs. Among my features were the poem “Wet Stough,” “Bare-Ass Wrestling,” the review of *The Deer Hunter*, “Tough Customers,” and “Tough Shit.”

April 8, 1979 (Thursday): On the phone, I talked to Embry who was feeling better. He told me details of his colostomy which he hoped was temporary.

April 13, 1979 (Friday): After I pleaded with my pal Al Schaaf at San Francisco Municipal Railway, he gave the perpetually unemployed David Sparrow a job as an analyst so he could finally move out of my 25<sup>th</sup> Street home. If David had not had a college degree, Al said he could not have hired him. I was flat out pleased that after I had motivated David in 1969 by telling him that education was essential if we were to have a middle-class life together, and, after I paid his four years of tuition at Western Michigan University, he actually graduated so he could take care of himself.

April 17, 1979 (Tuesday, 7:30 PM): As a journalist for *Drummer*, I interviewed poet Camille O'Grady with Robert Opel at Fey-Way Studio beginning at 7:30 PM. My audiotape was Opel's last interview, and the photos, shot by David Sparrow and me, were among the last of Opel and O'Grady pictured together before Opel's assassination, July 7, 1979.

April 20, 1979 (Friday): Jim Enger and I drove his Corvette to Salinas. We took a room at a Quality Inn where I shaved the upholstery of his hairy blond chest, torso, arms, and legs for the Mr. Western California physique contest.

April 21, 1979 (Saturday): Jim Enger and I drove into Carmel for the 9 AM check-in for Mr. Western California. The senior division morning pre-judging alone took nearly three hours. At the evening contest, Enger won "First Place" as "Mr. Western California" as well as three more trophies for "Best Abs," "Best Legs," and "Most Muscular." The four trophies were so many and so tall that they hardly fit into the Corvette. Documenting Enger live on stage performing for the audience, I shot three roles of 35mm transparencies and black-and-white stills, one of which Enger later chose as his favorite photograph: full face in a side "double-arm shot," both arms extended to his right, his eagle-eye piercing straight into my camera over the blond brush of his moustache. The photograph is extremely intimate considering that I shot it from forty feet away with a telephoto lens. It would have made a wonderful *Drummer* cover or centerfold. Later, in May, 1980, I had fun with that vigorous Enger photo when I made bold to enter it with its hot, burning, masculine appeal into a very staid "employee photo show" exhibited in the lobby of the very Republican Kaiser Engineers. The punch line to my joke? It won "Best in Show"!

April 28, 1979 (Saturday): Jim Enger and I drove to Oceanside where Enger won first place in the Mr. Physique USA contest. After sleeping all night at a Marine-friendly motel in Oceanside, on Sunday we walked

shirtless and in shorts on the strand while in San Francisco David Sparrow began his final move out of my house.

April 30, 1979 (Monday): Jim Enger and I traveled on to the Muscle Beach outdoor iron pit in Venice, and then to the Nichols Canyon Road home he built with Chuck Romanski, the Colt model Clint Lockner, who greeted us with his new lover, the model and bodybuilder, Dan Pace about whom I wrote several times for pictorials in *Drummer*. “Dreams do come true,” I wrote in my *Journal*. “Me with three bodybuilders shot by Colt.” Discretion draws the shades.

May 1979: Publication of *Drummer* 29. While editing the 80-page issue, I contributed nine pieces of my writing and three of my photographs, and published “Chapter One” of my edit and serialization of John Preston’s *Mr. Benson*. Among the features I wrote were “Cruising: The Most Dangerous Game,” “Drawings by Domino,” the poem “Foot Loose,” “Noodles Romanoff and the Golden Gloves,” “On Target: The New American Masculinity,” “Tough Customers,” and “Tough Shit.”

May 7, 1979 (Monday): David Sparrow and I dined out for supper to celebrate his thirty-third birthday, and despite our divorce had each other for dessert. Our sex was always hot, but his drug and alcohol addictions got in the way of any kind of sustainable domestic life.

May 12, 1979 (Saturday): On Castro Street, a riot broke out, caused by tensions in the on-going trial of assassin Dan White.

May 16, 1979 (Wednesday): David Sparrow invited me to lunch. “Don’t you ever,” he said, “speak to me again.” And he waved before me the settlement he received that morning in his court case ending the matter of his motorcycle accident: \$3,186.00. He told me I could keep all our camera equipment (which I had bought) and shove it. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That evening I kept my dinner date with the gay author and photographer John Trojanski whom I had hired on my writing staff at Kaiser Engineers and whom I convinced to write several articles for *Drummer* including “The Whip Creaming of Cincinnati” because we both had Catholic seminary experience in common.

May 20, 1979 (Sunday): I shot 35mm photos of Val Martin and Bob Hyslop for my upcoming *Drummer* 31 (September 1979) on location at Ed

Linotti's ancient barn on Pleasant Hill Road outside Sebastopol in Sonoma County.

May 21, 1979 (Monday): Mixing business with pleasure, I spent the afternoon balling with a man named Kurt Baron playing with his rack, hoists, and sling as a fun preparation to use his dungeon for a *Drummer* photo shoot. At twilight the White Night Riot erupted. Ten years after the Stonewall rebellion in New York, angry gays attacked San Francisco City Hall, and set twelve SFPD squad cars on fire protesting assassin Dan White's light sentence based on his junk-food "Twinkie Defense." In retaliation, the SFPD charged into the heart of the Castro clubbing their way down Castro Street, and beating gay and straight patrons inside the Elephant Walk bar at 18<sup>th</sup> and Castro. See my "Tough Shit" entry "Bloody 'Marys' at Elephant Walk" in *Drummer* 30 (June 1979), page 72. On May 23, 2005, *The New Yorker*, page 38, named 18<sup>th</sup> and Castro "perhaps the gayest address in the world." Once again, the East Coast failed to understand the West Coast with too little too late. Even before 1990, 18<sup>th</sup> and Castro had turned into the postmodern, dirty, ugly debris field of the colorful "Titanic 1970s." By Saint Valentine's night, February 14, 2007, 18<sup>th</sup> and Castro had become its own private Bangkok diversified with attractive bar-hopping young Asian sex tourists trailing laughter and cologne and cigarette smoke, and with homeless Caucasian beggars—some of them ghosts of the "70s Past"—the last of an extinct species crying out its bird call for "Spare Change."

"To me this part of the city always seemed joyful/but now is just horror and nothing more." —Pier Paolo Pasolini, "The Search for a Home," *Roman Poems*

When did the changing Castro neighborhood become the Fourth World? The Fourth World is the entropy that comes after the fall of the First World, the Second World, and the Third World.

May 22, 1979 (Tuesday): The 6 PM Castro Street party, originally announced to celebrate the birthday of Harvey Milk—then dead for six months, turned into a peaceful protest against the SFPD. Under the marquee of the Castro Theater, I, age 39, met Mark Hemry, 29, for the first time. In the year 2000, after twenty-one years together, we two marriage activists were joined in a civil union in Vermont. In 2003, we married in Canada. In 2004, we married on the grand staircase of San Francisco City Hall on Valentine's weekend during Mayor Gavin Newsom's "Winter of Love" named after San Francisco's legendary 1967 "Summer of Love." On June 20, 2008, we were one of the 18,000 couples married legally in California before



Proposition 8 halted gay marriage until the State Supreme Court approved marriage equality within the state on June 26, 2013.

May 31, 1979 (Thursday): Our *Drummer* office was raided by the post-riot and still angry San Francisco Police Department: cops stopped in, messed us about, and left. It was frightening. With Embry gone, I was in charge. No one was arrested. I told the SFPD right away that I was the editor-in-chief and, desperately seeking some fraternal bond with them, I freaked and mentioned that I had placed at number 11 on the San Francisco Deputy Sheriff Civil Service exam—to which they said *Hmmph!* So I personally felt empathy with what John Embry and Jeanne Barney had felt when the LAPD harassed them during the difficult first year of *Drummer* (1975-1976) when cop arrests nearly killed *Drummer* in its crib. It led me to empathy as well for all the anti-gay stress they suffered during the three years (1976-1979) of attorney meetings and court hearings in LA which continued to bedevil Embry, and distract him from the work at hand.

June 1979: Publication of *Drummer* 30, “The Fourth Anniversary Issue.” While editing the contents of the entire 96-page issue, I contributed eight pieces of my writing as well as the arm-wrestling (coded: fisting) “Cover Photograph of Val Martin and Bob Hyslop,” and published “Chapter Two” of my edit and serialization of John Preston’s *Mr. Benson*. Among the features I wrote were: “Tit Torture Blues,” “Meditations on Photographer Arthur Tress,” “Zeus Men in Bondage: Introducing a New Studio,” “The Brothel Hotel,” “Tough Customers,” and “Tough Shit.”

June 2, 1979 (Saturday): *Drummer* art director Al Shapiro and his partner Dick Kriegmont hosted a water sports party at their apartment for the *Drummer* Salon—and fifty other *Drummer* subscribers and fans.

June 4, 1979 (Monday): My single calendar entry copied off the toilet wall of the Without Reservation restaurant on Castro: “Madness takes its toll because sanity has lost its appeal.”

June 6, 1979 (Wednesday): David Sparrow stopped by my house and asked me for a loan so he could buy a new motorcycle. While we were arguing, he slapped me flat across the face. I fell to the floor. Shocked. I had only seen that in movies. Amazed, I wrote: “I never believed you couldn’t see it coming. That’s it. Nobody hits me.”

June 20, 1979 (Wednesday): I turned forty. *Drummer* turned four.

June 24, 1979 (Sunday): Fifty feet west of 18<sup>th</sup> Street on Castro Street, Jim Enger and I were cruised by Paul Gerrior and his lover, Craig Caswell, whom we cruised back. Ten minutes later, our foursome was at my home. (The handsome actor Paul Gerrior was the original Colt model Ledermeister. I had been lusting after him since 1968.) I saved the sweaty designer sheets from that Sunday afternoon, and will always treasure those souvenirs, still archived, with their long shelf life.

June 25, 1979 (Monday): “*Drummer*: The Fourth Anniversary Issue.” *Drummer* was golden, hot, and *haute* because it was created out of our ten-year reality of liberated, joyous sex performed as a high-wire act without a net. Trying to keep his enemies close, David Sparrow propositioned Jim Enger who put him off by saying “Not now.”

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Footnote #3: Inside the Timeline  
Ledermeister: Homomascuine Archetype  
of the Leather Archetribе

Here is an eyewitness-participant “oral history” told in the present tense. It is mentioned because it is typical of the erotic spontaneous combustion available to all in the Titanic 1970s. A chance meeting on one of those cruisy, mobbed summer Sunday afternoons (June 24, 1979) at 18<sup>th</sup> and Castro throws Enger and me together into an epic four-way at my home with legendary sex icon, Ledermeister, the 1960s Colt super-model, who was walking with his own friend, Craig Caswell. Enger, who caused traffic to rear-end on Castro, and who stopped the legendary Ledermeister in his tracks, stalled the guests in the living room while I excused myself to take Ledermeister’s framed photo down from the bedroom wall. The homomascuine fantasy Enger and I had wished for had arrived in the gorgeous flesh.

Here the curtain discreetly draws, but the beige designer sheets, like a *madeleine* from Proust, have been saved as holy relics which to this day have never been washed. Those sheets are among my souvenirs with a lock of David Sparrow’s strawberry-roan hair, a small chunk of cement from the Berlin Wall, a fragment of bone from the leg of Saint Isidore, the suntan-brown posing briefs of Jim Enger, a tiny Titian, the key to Mapplethorpe’s 24 Bond Street loft, my personal ticket and program treasured since August 7, 1961,

when Ethel Merman opened in *Gypsy* at the Curran Theater in San Francisco...all the photographs and papers that fill my archives.

I dance to remember and to think.

This is done because my friend, Sam Steward had tutored me early on with his good example. Sam had saved pubic hair he had stealthily clipped from Valentino while blowing him, potpourri from roses in Gertrude Stein's garden, Alice Toklas's hand-written hash-brownie recipe, a ceramic rose chipped off Oscar Wilde's tomb in Pere-Lachaise, sailors' caps, and police patches which I helped him collect.

To remember, when we are old, and to think, Sam wrote,

We need all the inner resources, or at the very least a treasury of memory to sustain us. Since our emotional lives are fragmented, we should have a vast stock of tangible things to invest our love in: mementos, memorabilia, photographs, an old blue cloak..., a water glass his lips had touched, anything which can stimulate us, can make us remember.

(*Chapters from an Autobiography*, page 141.)

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July 1979: No *Drummer* issue released because of Embry's illness and censorship problems with the printer. With my staff working daily, Al Shapiro and I used this months-long hiatus to re-conceptualize *Drummer* even more by bringing up from the sexual underground never-before-published homomale S&M themes for future issues. Separately and together, Al and I set out actively seeking new angles on the new sex styles, and recruiting new BDSM writers, artists, and photographers who had not yet dared come out of the 1960s closet enough to be published and publicized in 1970s *Drummer*.

July 7, 1979 (Saturday): Art, Civil Rights, and Murder. Almost exactly ten years after Stonewall (June 27-28, 1969), late in the evening of July 7, 1979, Robert Opel was shot to death in his Fey-Way Studio gallery. His partner Camille O'Grady, unharmed physically, survived, and disappeared underground in the City and then in LA. Urban legend whispered that Opel had been set up by the SFPD, because of his anti-cop performance art, "The Shooting of Dan White by Gay Justice," which, with a handgun he had borrowed from *Drummer* photographer Jim Stewart, he had acted out "live in Civic Center Plaza" at the Gay Parade on June 24 before he was murdered thirteen days later.

July 24, 1979 (Tuesday): Seeing *Drummer* in hysterical turmoil, and figuring *Drummer* could go out of business, I did not want our exciting new gay publishing world to lose its foothold because of Embry's malfeasance. On this date I filed a "Fictitious Business Name Statement" with the County Clerk, San Francisco, for my alternative to *Drummer* which I named *Man2Man Quarterly*. I followed the example of *Drummer* art director Al Shapiro who had filed his own "Fictitious Business" statement for his "Powerhouse Productions" on May 25, 1978. On November 28, 1979: Al Shapiro's name appeared on the masthead of *Man2Man* as the hyphenated "man-aging editor."

July 25, 1979 (Monday): Before and after lunch with Leonard Matlovich, I spent most of day talking to Golden Gate Distributors because *Drummer*, with its "porn" content in the new and escalating right-wing culture war started by Anita Bryant, could not find a cheap, liberal printer for the next issue. Making occasional deals with Bay Area printers of religious magazines eager for a quick buck, Embry often got *Drummer* printed after midnight by Christian hypocrites whose presses were otherwise silent from dusk to dawn.

August 1979: No *Drummer* issue released because of Embry's absence and censorship problems with the printer. With lead-times slipping, Al Shapiro and I continued our talent search for contributors while planning the contents and layout of the next two or three issues refining the new grass-roots point-of-view of *Drummer*.

August 3, 1979 (Friday): I asked Embry to pay me nearly \$4000 in back pay and fees. I also asked him to pay my former lover, David Sparrow, \$2000 for the photographs David and I shot partnered together as "Sparrow Photography" on film stock I had purchased and processed with my cash, not *Drummer* cash. When Embry exploded about the money and his illness and the difficulties with printers and censors as well as with the LA judge and lawyers still screwing him over the Slave Auction, I gave him notice that he could pay me and David, or I would be leaving *Drummer*, effective on or before December 31. I would no longer be his editor-in-chief. I would no longer contribute my writing and photography. I did not want to strand an ailing man or mess up *Drummer*. So I gave him ample lead time to prepare for my exit. In the next weeks, I gave him all my edited materials and, because I was a cockeyed optimist, some of my future writing and photos to be published up through *Drummer* 33, which was to be my last issue created as editor-in-chief. During the stretch from August to Christmas 1979 and

to the finish of *Drummer* 33, I was in and out of the office—when Embry was absent—in order to make a smooth transition.

I didn't care so much about the ailing shyster Embry as I did about the ailing innocent *Drummer*.

At the same time, Embry was cherry-picking my incoming editorial work, articles and photos, and removing some of my bylines—which only became known when the issues finally appeared on the news stands. Immediately after my conversation asking Embry to pay or else, Mark Hemry and I drove to Reno to photograph the Gay Rodeo which, suddenly, I had decided I was no longer covering for *Drummer* as I had originally planned.

August 5, 1979 (Sunday): Outing “gay cowboys” twenty years before *Brokeback Mountain*, Randy Shilts and I, as reporter and photographer, covered the Gay Rodeo in Reno, with Mark Hemry assisting me on our first publishing venture together, even as he gambled life and limb, and our future matrimonial bliss, as a bull-rider. The Associated Press (AP Wire Service) published Shilts' article and my several “gay cowboy” photographs nationwide in newspapers on August 6, 1979. The Shilts-Fritscher piece was the first introduction into mainstream media culture of the concept of “gay cowboys.”

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Footnote #4: Inside the Timeline:  
Randy Shilts, Reno Rodeo, Queering the Cowboy Myth

On August 7, 1979 (Tuesday), the day after the AP coverage of the Reno Gay Rodeo, Dave Wilson, the working cowboy I photographed, was fired from his ranch job. When he signed his photo release, I asked him if he was sure about coming out so publicly. He said he was willing to risk that ride. He was handsome and blond, and his sunny open face can be seen smiling in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 6, first section, page 3, column 1.

Because of the tensions within *Drummer*, I withheld my gay rodeo photos from Embry. His distemper was *Drummer's* loss because Dave Wilson would have been one of the hottest *Drummer* covers ever.

I saved all my Reno cowboy photos for my coffee-table photo book, *American Men*, and for the cover of the fiction anthology, *Rainbow County and Other Stories*, as well as the zero-degrees cover of the British edition of the novel, *Narrow Rooms*, by my friend James Purdy who was also the

close friend of *Drummer* author, Sam Steward.

Six months previously, in *Drummer* 26 (January 1979), intent on “queering the cowboy myth,” and on co-opting the sex-appeal of the world-famous Marlboro Man, I had written “Grand National Rodeo Blues: Comes a Horseman.” It was the first gay feature article panting about straight cowboys *Drummer* wished were gay, including cowboy *paparazzi* photos shot by Fritscher-Sparrow at the Grand National Rodeo, inside the Cow Palace, San Francisco, Halloween weekend, 1978.

August 6, 1979 (Monday): In a letter addressed to Al Shapiro at *Drummer*, the scatological graffiti artist Martin of Holland (died 2011) wrote of international rumors about the murder of Robert Opel:

“Martin Van De Logt  
P. O. Box 66g  
2501 CR Den Haag/Holland

Dear Allen, Thanks for your letter. It was sad to hear about Robert Opel’s death. A few days earlier, I heard another version of the shooting. They said it involved the Mafia.... —Martin”

August 23, 1979 (Thursday): Mark Hemry and I began going out socially as a couple, seeing Patty Lupone and Mandy Patinkin appearing in *Evita* previewing at the Orpheum Theater before heading to Broadway. Embry’s thirty-something lover, the immigrant from Spain, Mario Simon aka “Mrs *Drummer*,” whose bejeweled hand was always in the *Drummer* cashbox and our paychecks, was, according to Embry, a disco singer “famous in Spain,” but not in the Bay Area despite the *Drummer* money Embry spent producing 45-rpm records sold through *Drummer*, because, Embry told discomusic.com on May 20, 2010, “of Mario’s heavy accent.” Mario was hardly competition for his San Francisco contemporary, Sylvester James, the African-American “Queen of Disco” (1947-1988) who was a popular recording star, and an iconic member of the Cockettes,

Embry referenced his conflicted feelings for Mario in his editorial in *Drummer Rides Again*: “The rare great love affairs of my life have been with guys who were not my type. The ones who were my type (Roberts: Redford, Conrad, and Mitchum) turned out frequently,” said Robert Payne, “to be hardly worth knowing.”

While Embry paid many of the staff on the cheap under the table, he paid Mario as if he were staff, so that, in one gesture of monkey business, Mario could show an income and earn social security while at the same time the pair of them could take home more pay from *Drummer*. It was their business and their cash, but it caused resentment, and a bit of scandal, among both the actual workers whose pay was so famously small, and the contributors who were so frequently unpaid. Besides the cash, Mario got credit where credit was not due. Even though English was his second language, and even though he was not a writer, nor a photographer, nor an artist, nor even interested in any business other than his career, Embry began crediting him as “General Manager” (issues 58-66) and as “Co-Publisher” (issues 67-98, their last issue before the sale to Anthony DeBlase).

The ambitious Mario spurned San Francisco because, living “La Dolce Evita (Loca),” he figured LA was better for his music career. He was one of the main reasons that Embry, who was also permanently angry about them both being “deported” out of LA, never quite adjusted to living in San Francisco where they both ended up because of their *Drummer* publishing venture which had found its first, best, and only success in San Francisco, and because of their real estate holdings which they had bought during their, to them, endless exile in the Bay Area. Neither one of them was able to make it in LA, or even back to LA.

Frequently absent from *Drummer*, but never missed, Mario took extended trips to LA well into 1990 when he appeared in Oxnard, fifty-six miles from stardom in Hollywood, in a local production of *Evita*. Swimming laps in his cologne, he was typecast with no irony as the sleazy Lothario “Magaldi,” the over-the-top tango singer who gives Evita her first “leg up” singing “On This Night of a Thousand Stars.” The *Los Angeles Times* wrote, July 19, 1990: “As the first rung on Evita’s ladder to the top, nightclub singer and romantic idol Augustin Magaldi, [Mario] Simon is a pompous, vain popinjay—sort of a Wayne Newton of the pampas.” For someone who was always acting, Mario Simon (1942-1993) just couldn’t act.

August 30, 1979 (Thursday): I drove to Berkeley to visit Sam Steward in his home and to drive him to lunch at his favorite blue-collar steam-table cafeteria several blocks away.

September 1979: Publication of *Drummer* 31. While managing the work of incoming writers, artists, and photographers for this and future issues, I edited the contents of this 88-page issue to which I contributed eight pieces of my writing as well as forty of my photographs, and published

“Chapter Three” of my edit and serialization of John Preston’s *Mr. Benson*. Among the features I wrote were: “An Interview with Martin of Holland,” co-written with Al Shapiro; the first feature article ever written about IML, “The First International IML Contest”; “Spit, Sweat, and Piss Centerfold with Val Martin and Bob Hyslop”; “The Macho Images of Photographer Tony Plewik”; “Men’s Bar Scene: Pure Trash”; “Tough Customers”; and “Tough Shit.” Because I was exiting *Drummer*, publisher Embry, returning to the office, removed my name as editor-in-chief on this issue, and credited the editing to his pseudonym, “Robert Payne.”

Summer-Fall 1979: A debate, which greatly affected me and my attitudes toward the evolution of *Drummer*, raged in the mainstream press and vanilla gay magazines about the controversial and changing nature of both S&M as a legitimate practice, and masculinity as a legitimate gender. It also raged in the streets, where during summer 1979, New York vanilla gays, without seeing a single finished frame, picketed with prejudice the leather-themed S&M thriller, *Cruising*, being shot by William (The Boys in the Band) Friedkin on location on Greenwich Village streets around the piers, the trucks, and the Mineshaft. Six years later, on February 22, 1985, a high-profile S&M murder shocked Manhattan when the male fashion model Eigil Vesti was killed in a torture slaying that touched the Mineshaft and the New York Hellfire Club. The rumors that Mapplethorpe was involved were false and typical of even gay popular culture’s fear of his visionary art. For details, check elsewhere within *Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer*. Also see *Drummer* 126 (March 1988), page 53, for the Bruce Marcus article, “The Crispo Case, Consent, and S&M Reality,” and the David France book, *Bag of Toys: Sex, Scandal, and the Death Mask Murder*, 1992.

October 1979: Publication of *Drummer* 32. Continuing to work on *Drummer* from my home more than in the Divisadero Street office, in order to keep moving forward creatively and responsibly on new issues while Embry and I kept our distance from each other, I edited the contents of this 88-page issue to which I contributed five pieces of my writing, and published “Chapter Four” of my edit and serialization of John Preston’s *Mr. Benson*. Among the titles I wrote: “A Confidential *Drummer* Dossier,” “The Men: From the Writing of Robert Opel,” “Conrap,” “Tough Customers,” and “Tough Shit.” As he had first done in *Drummer* 31, Embry deleted my name as editor-in-chief on this issue, and credited the editing to “Robert Payne.” In a kind of vengeance for my leaving him after my changing *Drummer* to “new leather” with overt gender themes that he had little feel for, he also



deleted my credit lines on my articles, but he failed to notice I outfoxed him by coding my “A Confidential *Drummer* Dossier” with my birth-date numbers published at the top of the feature.

October 3, 1979 (Wednesday): I sent Robert Mapplethorpe a draft manuscript for the book of entertainment we planned to do together: his photos, my text—most of it from *Drummer*. Our proposed title was *Rimshots: Inside the Fetish Factor*. Originally conceived to be excerpted in text and photos in *Drummer*, it went unpublished, but can be synthesized insofar as it was very like a combination of the anthology, *Corporal in Charge and Other [Drummer] Stories*, fore-shortened, with fifty Mapplethorpe leather and S&M photos. Our original manuscript became part of the permanent Mapplethorpe Archive at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles.

November 1979: *Drummer* 33—meant to be the November issue—was stopped because Embry, without my active input recruiting contributors and without my offering my own writing as “filler” he had come to rely on, did not have enough finished material in his files to fill it. Instead, November’s stalled issue merged into what materials he had for the December issue which, in combination, became the Christmas issue, *Drummer* 33. Faking it as Embry was, he was at the same time also trying to turn a fast buck by creating another special extra issue, insisting on ending 1979 with both a Christmas issue of *Drummer* as well as the special extra issue which I had titled *Drummer Rides Again* as a follow-up to my special extra issue *Son of Drummer* (September 1978). Deleting my completed and intended feature articles and fiction, Embry replaced my texts in *Drummer Rides Again* with the easy in-fill of drawings and photographs, many reprinted from earlier *Drummer* issues. What literary value and heat *Drummer Rides Again* had in text came from stories by T. R. Witomski, G. B. Misa (George Birimisa), and John Preston masked as “Jack Prescott.” What graphic bump it had came with the centerfold art by Bill Ward and the drawings by Cavelo, plus five photos by Mikal Bales for Zeus Studio captioned by my text with the byline removed, and with seventeen of my photos on six pages (pp. 45, 52-56) credited by Embry not to me but to the more “anonymous” Sparrow Photography run by David Sparrow and me. Embry’s bootleg reprint of Mapplethorpe’s photograph of a tied cock and balls to illustrate his “In Passing” editorial did not, needless to say, make Robert and his attorney happy.

November 6, 1979 (Tuesday): With the 1970s ending, I was actively considering how *Drummer* should develop in the 1980s. What imaginative

forces might we draw in for the second decade of post-Stonewall liberation? Always auditioning new people for possible articles for *Drummer*, I took professional time to have supper with an apparently rich man who alleged his name was “Dick Biezevelt” at the Café du Nord on Market Street. “Biezevelt” was an idealistic fifty-something gentleman who, dismayed by the new gay hippie leather culture, wanted to institute a kind of Old School gentleman’s military culture based on the stiff Prussian model predating Nazism that would train young gay men on Castro and Folsom to behave like proper gentlemen. Having seen Embry’s ads for Nazis, men with such right-wing “esthetics” often courted me because I was editor of the megaphone that was *Drummer*. “Biezevelt” gave me an envelope full of copious notes about psychological discipline and physical training. However, I was soon to exit *Drummer*, and did not write an article about him and his uniform fantasies around hazing young men into being polite to older gents.

The newly liberated 1970s was very much a world of closets and mirrors and alias sex identities. In fact-checking the past to connect the dots of who was actually who, I searched for the man known to me as “Dick Biezevelt” of Marin. I found he may possibly have been a *doppelganger* for Nicolass “Nick” Biezeveld, the Marin inventor (1926-1997). This aka “Nick Biezeveld,” forced to live in drag as a teenage girl in the Haag in order to escape being drafted into Hitler’s army in Nazi-occupied Holland, came to America and in 1962 invented the first call-screening device for telephones. “Nick’s” online obituary mentioned specifically that his experience during wartime caused him to “have a special place in his heart for the Marines that would last his entire life.” If “Dick Biezevelt” was not “Nick Biezeveld,” apologies to them both, but I know how gay identities peel themselves to amazing transparencies. Coincidence or not, GLBT history is all the better for adding in “drag” inventor, Nicolaas Biezeveld, who, living with a taste for USMC discipline, most likely read *Drummer*.

November 12, 1979 (Friday Night): At the Barracks Baths, I met with leather-players Peter Fiske, Dan Folkers, and a man named “Mike.” Illustrating how I experienced real night games and bath sex, and then wrote the S&M athletics up as erotic New Journalism “reality reporting” for *Drummer*, I took the very *Drummer*-like ritual of that Barracks night, and whipped it up into a “true experiences” article for *Drummer*, even though Embry continued to refuse payment for grass-roots reportage he himself could never ever have written because he never went out to play night sports. My ability to experience what the readers were actually experiencing and then to report that sexual reality back in *Drummer* to

reflect readers' actual lives was my basic concept that changed *Drummer* from Embry's static LA "Stand and Model (S&M)" rag into a dynamic reader-reflexive jerk-off magazine where the wild sex that men were actually inflicting on each other started in the head and worked its way down in hot column inches. Instead, that sacred scene of sexual purification and discipline through bondage and whipping at the Barracks fit appropriately into one of the historical reportage scenarios in *Some Dance to Remember*, Reel 2, Scene 11.

November 20, 1979 (Tuesday): Jim Enger and I attended the victory dinner for Dianne Feinstein who a week earlier was elected mayor of San Francisco on her own merits having become mayor by a bullet a year earlier. The Sunday before, I had stood on the northwest corner of 18<sup>th</sup> and Castro, in front of the Star Pharmacy, holding up a big blue "Feinstein for Mayor" poster, because not all gays liked her.

November 28, 1979 (Wednesday): *Drummer* art director Al Shapiro (A. Jay) and I designed the letterhead and masthead for the new magazine I intended to publish with Mark Hemry, *Man2Man Quarterly*. A. Jay, who was also anklng his way fast out of *Drummer* because of money and copyright issues about his cartoon strips, was listed on the *Man2Man* masthead beginning with the first issue which featured a gray impressionist photograph of Jim Enger on the cover.

December 1979: Special Extra Issue, *Drummer Rides Again*. Having edited the entirety of this special issue, I watched the tempest-tossed Embry gut it. In order not to list me as editor, he went against all journalism principles and dropped everyone's masthead credits, just as he had in the first issues of *Drummer*. In one line buried at the bottom of the credits page, he named "Robert Payne" as editor. In addition, cutting and pasting, he changed our long-planned features and fiction and substituted whatever was in the *Drummer* "archives." Ultimately, my contributions surviving in the 64-page issue were one piece of writing and seventeen photographs, plus the production work behind the entire issue. The article was "Bound and Gagged: Zeus Studios"; and my "Sparrow Photography" images were shot at Embry's "Quarters," his failed attempt to start a commercial playroom in a basement South of Market to rival the 21<sup>st</sup> Street Catacombs. I also edited and produced the two graphic features Embry included about the LA artist Cavelo and the San Francisco photographer Rink.

December 1979: Publication of *Drummer* 33, Holiday Issue. Two months before I finally waltzed out the door of *Drummer* on New Year's Eve 1979, I edited the first draft of the entire contents of this 88-page issue which I had planned as our "Great Big Finish for the 1970s." While grooming contributors, I also penned nearly a dozen pieces of writing which were reduced by Embry to five pieces of writing and two photographs, including "Chapter Five" of my edit and serialization of John Preston's ten-chapter *Mr. Benson*. My little written bits that Embry did not delete were "The *Drummer* Christmas Gift Guide," and the two columns I had invented which he came to rely on: "Tough Customers," and "Tough Shit." On the masthead, Embry credited "Robert Payne," as editor. I was the last of only two "editors-in-chief" of *Drummer*. After Jeanne Barney and me, everyone else was simply "editor."

December 4, 1979 (Tuesday): For "the *Drummer* novel," *Some Dance to Remember*, written in my journals during the 1970s, I invoked the romanticism of *Wuthering Heights* with my "Corona Heights" scene of transcendental masturbation on the rocky mountain outcropping that overlooks the Castro: Reel 5, Scene 13. Part of character Ryan O'Hara's "Garden of Gethsemane" anguish reflected my sadness at having to part ways with a magazine I loved owned by a publisher I found impossible. Also, that December 1979, after the shocking trial of Dan White, everyone was feeling instant nostalgia for the decade that had surprised everyone with its wild-child sex, drugs, and rock and roll. With only days till New Year's Eve, the glorious 1970s were about to be lost in the *auld lang syne*. That December was worrisome. It was mere days before the unknown new decade of the 1980s. It was eleven months before the election of Ronald Reagan as president. And too many guys were getting sick and heading back home where they came from never to be heard of again. It was less than eighteen months before anyone read the headline of "Gay Cancer."

**The Titanic 1970s: 1970-1982**  
**From the Harakiri of Yukio Mishima**  
**to the Folsom Fire at the Barracks Bath**  
**and the Advent of AIDS**

The 1970s actually lasted until 1981. The Leather Decade that began with the famous harakiri of S&M leather-muscle author Yukio Mishima on November 25, 1970, ended with the Folsom Fire when the legendary Barracks baths burned down on July 10, 1981. And the dying began. The

charred ruins of the Barracks, which I described in *Some Dance to Remember*, were erotically interpreted in a photograph by Mark I. Chester in *Drummer* 137, February 1990, page 17. Hit with hard luck, Chester, burned out of his apartment next to the Barracks, was burned out a second time on February 2, 1991; the fund-raiser for him was reported in *Drummer* 147, March 1991, page 61.) When artist Chester published his handsome photo book, *Diary of a Thought Criminal*, he sweetly inscribed on the title page, “For Jack, Who knows me longer than almost anyone else in San Francisco, Mark I. Chester, 9/20/96.”

Two days after the Barracks fire, leather pioneer, Tony Tavarossi, died of unknown causes in the ICU of San Francisco General Hospital. He was my longtime friend. I kissed him goodbye. “What’s the matter with him?” I had asked the ICU doctor two days before. “We don’t know,” she said, “We’ve never seen a patient so distressed.” (See details of the Folsom Fire and the burning of the Barracks and the death of Tony Tavarossi in *Some Dance to Remember*, Reel 4, Scene 3 and Scene 4.)

December 13, 1979 (Thursday): For the second of three times, I waived my option to become a San Francisco deputy sheriff. I also telephoned Don Embinder, the Florida publisher of *Blueboy*, to discuss his bid for my services. Embinder and *Blueboy* were mutual enemies with Embry and *Drummer*. I figured I might as well sleep with the enemy as long as he had a magazine and a checkbook. But Florida? At that time the raging home of Anita Bryant?

August-December 1979: The end of 1979 was a perfect storm in purgatory. During my last five months with Embry, as if coping with a family feuding and divorcing, Al Shapiro and I managed to create the contents and design layouts of *Drummer* 30-33.

After the July murder of our *Drummer* contributor and friend, Robert Opel, hysteria and high anxiety began to destroy the salon around *Drummer*. With Embry’s slow and fractious “fits and starts” of re-entry, things fell apart. Born recalcitrant, the LA publisher could not get up to speed with the pace of the new consciousness we had created in the new San Francisco iteration of *Drummer*. He’d come into the office by night, and, playing a leather Penelope, he’d undo the editorial work we had done by day. Like children caught in a divorce, junior staff fled his unpredictable autocracy, and resigned, mostly unpaid, because, as editor, I had no control over Embry’s purse strings.

Besides the specific grief Embry caused, there was a kind of generic and existential “gay grief” that impeded working conditions and deadlines. If

within seven months, gay activists Milk and Opel could be shot to death, was the gay press the next target of some bullet or ballot? Or could we expect yet another raid on our *Drummer* office by the SFPD who on May 21, 1979, charged down Castro Street, pounding the pavement with their billy clubs, pumping themselves up before invading the Elephant Walk Bar, at the ground-zero “rainbow corner” of 18<sup>th</sup> and Castro, where they blocked the doors and beat the patrons crawling under tables and scrambling for safety into the small toilet crammed with nearly twenty terrified gay men and lesbians, all of an age old enough to remember primal fears of pre-Stonewall violence being resurrected as they were being attacked in the new culture war spearheaded by onward-marching Christian soldiers led by Anita Bryant.

Once again sex and death combined. It was open season on gays. It was suddenly the wrong autumn for Embry to come barging in on the offensive after his spring and summer absence dealing with his own cancer.

December 31, 1979: After a Sisyphean two years and ten months (March 1977 to December 1979), I resigned officially as founding San Francisco editor-in-chief of *Drummer*, and continued on for years in my day job as manager of my staff of a dozen writers at Kaiser Engineers, Inc.

February 9, 1980 (Saturday): Five weeks after exiting *Drummer*, I was hired for two jobs by straight publisher Michael Redman. He asked me to write “lesbian-themed” fiction for the straight male readers of his *San Francisco Pleasure Guide*, and to be the founding editor of his new gay tabloid venture, the *California Action Guide*, whose first monthly issue appeared July, 1982, featuring the debut of a dozen feature articles I had written originally for, but never published in, Embry’s *Drummer*. My “lesbian” fiction, played for fun, followed the tradition of pop-culture camp in Andy Warhol’s underground films like *Chelsea Girls* (1966), Russ Meyer’s movie of Roger Ebert’s *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* (1970), and Wakefield Poole’s *The Bible* which I featured on the cover of *Drummer* 27 (February 1979). Ebert, the international film critic, was an ardent devotee of Meyer’s raunchy comedies, and he gave—at that time in our new sex revolution—a certain cachet to the pop art of “sexploitation writing” as practiced in Warhol’s *Interview*, *Drummer*, and in my *San Francisco Pleasure Guide* stories with my titillating news stand titles like: “Nurses Who Play Doctor,” “Fit to Be Tied,” “Goddess Worship Love Temples,” and “Pussy Pussy Bang Bang.” As penance, I later wrote a proper, and well-reviewed, lesbian literary novel, *The Geography of Women: A Romantic Comedy*.

March 25, 1980 (Tuesday): Trying to connect brilliant talents, I arranged a photo shoot between my two lovers, Robert Mapplethorpe and Jim Enger. One was the star photographer and the other was the star bodybuilder. As I guided the two, who separately were wonderful, through the shoot in a rented condo on Diamond Heights Boulevard, they both began to simmer silently—one against the other—with gay attitude. But, by God, by cooing, and by soothing, I did with them what I couldn't do with Embry. I made sure, despite egos, that we produced the drop-dead gorgeous pictures I had insisted we try to make. Both men, geniuses of the camera and body sculpture, managed to be polite and civil, although at the end of the session, Enger, a knowledgeable trophy-winning Best Poser, did a Southern aw-shucks stall on signing his release until after he could see the proof sheets. Mapplethorpe, ever “cool,” did not press the issue because he knew his camera was full of wonderful trophy shots of an artist who was an extraordinary bodybuilder. He figured his printed photos would eventually seduce the esthetically minded Enger into signing.

Despite the dust-up, that same evening, our on-rolling *Drummer* Salon of Enger and Mapplethorpe joined Mapplethorpe's friend and model, the bodybuilder Lisa Lyon for supper at Without Reservation on Castro. Later, at 7:30, Mapplethorpe, Enger, Lisa Lyon, and I swanned in together to appear at Edward Brooks DeCelle's Lawson-DeCelle Gallery, 3237, Sacramento Street, where photographs of the entourage were shot by noted San Francisco paparazzo Rink. The famous Lawson-DeCelle photograph of the four of us, standing with photographer Greg Day (Enger's college roommate) was published in my book *Mapplethorpe: Assault with a Deadly Camera* (1994). The back cover of the same book featured a two-shot of Mapplethorpe and me, also lensed that night by Rink who was known for capturing spontaneous historical moments.

One of Mapplethorpe's torso-only shots of Enger from that afternoon on Diamond Heights was published in *Drummer* 133 (September 1989), page 14, to illustrate my feature obituary of Robert, “Pentimento for Robert Mapplethorpe: Fetishes, Faces, and Flowers of Evil.”

March 27, 1980 (Thursday): My friend, Jim Singleton, the African-American psychiatric nurse at Langley-Porter Hospital, and member of the *Drummer* Salon, died of a lingering and mysterious illness. His funeral was Monday, March 31. A gay funeral was something new. Singleton's funeral, whose ritual we rather much invented out of whole cloth, was attended by friends Hank Diethelm, owner of the Brig bar; Peter Fiske of the 15 Association; Castro Street entrepreneur George Benedict; and a hundred

other leathermen. I first wrote about the shock of “gay death” in my editorial, “Cruising: The Most Dangerous Game in the Whole Wide World,” in *Drummer* 29 (May 1979), two years before the advent of AIDS.

April 3, 1980 (Thursday): I cooked an oven supper at my home for Jim Enger, Robert Mapplethorpe, and Mark Hemry all sitting at my white oak kitchen table. Eenie, Meenie, Miney, Mo.

April 8, 1980 (Tuesday:) Supper with Robert Mapplethorpe at Hamburger Mary’s on Folsom Street; then to the Ambush bar on Harrison where Robert, to whom fetish was everything, instantly felt uncomfortable wearing his cool New York leather in a laid-back flannel-shirt bar. He asked me to drive him to my home where he could change into one of my shirts and jean jackets, and adjust his sex vibe, before we headed back to the Ambush where we hung out that evening with poet Thom Gunn and the artist Lou Rudolph who often sat in the Ambush, like Otto Dix in the Weimar cabarets of Berlin, sketching the customers.

April 29, 1980 (Tuesday): At his home at 36 Camp Street, I met with male-madam and film producer J. Brian, who procured hustlers for Rock Hudson, to collaborate on his screenplay *J. Brian’s Flashbacks*, as well as to write a novelization of his film for publication as a serial in three issues of *Honcho* (April, May, June, 1982) and six issues of the *California Action Guide* (June-December 1982).

May 27, 1980 (Tuesday): Jim Enger thanked me for letting him read an excerpt from the manuscript in progress of *Some Dance to Remember*.

May 28, 1980 (Wednesday): Robert Mapplethorpe called me to please ask Jim Enger about using Enger’s name on one of the headless torso photographs.

June 1, 1980 (Sunday): After a year as lovers, Mark Hemry moved into my home on 25<sup>th</sup> Street.

June 10, 1980 (Tuesday): I received word that my model and playmate Leonard Sylvestri died, allegedly, of hepatitis about three weeks earlier. A well-built man with a beard, Sylvestri was one of the San Franciscans whose photographs I published in *Drummer* to ground it in a reality of local, handsome, muscular men. His Italian surname translated suitably to *wild*.



October 1, 1980: Nine months after my exiting *Drummer*, Mark Hemry and I, as publisher and editor, released the first issue of *Man2Man Quarterly*, which, as our “Virtual *Drummer*,” featured a cover photograph of Jim Enger who, in January 1981, without signing a release for a single “perfect moment” frame of the Mapplethorpe shoot, moved out of San Francisco.



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