

CHAPTER 5

SEX, RACE, AND GENDER

Publisher John Embry

versus

Los Angeles Police Chief Ed Davis

25 Subversive Ways *Drummer* Angered
Law, Morality, Gay Nazis, and the LAPD

- *Drummer* Tests Community Standards: Sex, Race, and Gender; Fisting; Coprophagia; the Gay Nazi Party That Sued *Drummer*; and the Effeminitists
- Oscar-Streaker Robert Opel, Photographer and Writer for *Drummer*, Is Murdered
- The S&M Murder Mystery and S&M Sex Rings: LA Serial Killer Outwits LAPD Chief Ed Davis Who Confuses the Manson Family Sex Slaves and the Symbionese Liberation Front with Emerging Gay Leather Biker Culture
- Censorship and Forbidden BDSM Films: Fred Halsted's *Sextool*, Roger Earl and Terry LeGrand's *Born to Raise Hell* (1974), and Steve Toushin's Videos Defended by *Drummer*
- *Bound for Europe*: Reality-TV Video Series of Extreme BDSM
- Arthur Evans and the Politically Correct Begin to Notice the Pioneering Uncloseting of "Masculinities" and "Homomascularity" in the Masculine-Identified *Drummer*

 HE SAID/HE SAID

1

“I enjoy inflicting homosexuality on them [straight men].”
 —“Male Rape,” *Drummer* 12 (January 1977)

2

Folks, one of many “elephants in the room” of politically incorrect topics that most people dare not discuss in debating homosexuality is that—for self-described “gay” men—homosexuality is a masculinity [gender] crisis...The converse is also true: lesbianism is a femininity crisis....You cannot be a masculine nation and support homosexuality....[Consider]... the pitiable homosexual “leathermen,” with their “overkill” attempt at being “macho men,”—even as they engage in the most degrading (and unmanly) sexual perversions known to the human race—not the least of which is male-to-male anal sodomy. —“Fake Masculinity of Homosexuality,” Peter LaBarbera, President of Americans For Truth about Homosexuality (AFTAH), June 5, 2014 Americansfortruth.com

In principle, no one can condemn Embry’s own eyewitness testimony concerning his corporate publishing choices based on Freedom of Speech which is not absolute in any nation on Earth. My historical purpose is to analyze the way some of *Drummer*’s “youthful indiscretions” pissed off the LAPD who perceived the emerging tribe of 1970s leathermen as a suspicious cult not unlike the Manson Family sex slaves (1969) or a gang not unlike the Symbionese Liberation Army (1973-1975) who kidnaped and raped San Francisco heiress Patty Hearst. Both sex-driven outlaw groups provoked media coverage on television and in newspapers that framed the LAPD as inept at a time when they could not catch two prolific serial-killer-rapists who had been terrorizing LA for years. Embarrassed while policing clueless, and desperate to appear pro-active to the media, the LAPD responded by searching for suspect killers in sadomasochistic sex bars like the Black Pipe. When Police Chief Ed Davis first saw *Drummer*, he figured he’d found the secret text of an outlaw leather cult that would help him get ahead of sex crimes he had not gotten ahead of with Manson and the SLA. Upon reading the first free-speech issues of *Drummer* in 1975, Davis ordered surveillance

of the magazine staff, and in a great display of helicopters and cameras raided the *Drummer* Slave Auction in April 1976, arresting forty-two people including John Embry and editor-in-chief Jeanne Barney.

Los Angeles Magazine
June 1976

In addition to Embry's personal baiting of Ed Davis inside *Drummer*, the 1970s "...string of unsolved murders was the real reason for Ed Davis' raid of that gay Slave Auction, *according to LAPD insiders*. [Italics added] Police believe a local S-M ring may be responsible for savagely...."

In terms of free speech, my erotic writing was once censored by Embry in *Drummer* which was itself banned in uptight towns across the nation. My novel *Leather Blues*, introduced in *Drummer*, was confiscated by Canadian customs. And my frontal photographs from my *Drummer*-inflected photo book *American Men* were censored by British puritans as reported in Edward Lucie-Smith's article in the *Index on Censorship for Free Expression* (Volume 28, No. 6 Nov/Dec 1999, Issue 191). As an eyewitness activist experienced in the intersection of censorship, art, and politics, especially around Robert Mapplethorpe, I wrote about collisions in that intersection in several books, *Television Today*, *Popular Witchcraft*, and *Mapplethorpe: Assault with a Deadly Camera*, as well as in my essay "Mapplethorpe: Censored" in *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia* (2002). My stand on the relativity of freedom of the press is different from Embry touting absolutely, inside Los Angeles *Drummer*, the following twenty-five risky and often illegal topics which were all more dangerous in Davis' Fascist Los Angeles than in liberated San Francisco.

Embry and Davis were like two antagonistic Hollywood monsters meeting their match in one another. In their relationship lies a major motion picture, a moody crime thriller about the LA sex wars in the 1970s, shot in the neo-noir tradition of *Chinatown* which was about the LA water wars of the 1930s.

In all cases, I have tried to substantiate my analysis with suitable internal evidence directly from the pages of *Drummer* itself.

1. PEDOPHILIA WITH AND WITHOUT WHITE SLAVERY

Embry allowed publication of advice, names, and addresses of magazines

featuring minors, including younger children (*Drummer* 2); poem, “Boys” (*Drummer* 5); 17-year-old boy in Scott Masters’ serial-book, *Five in the Training Room* (*Drummer* 6); and “Robert Payne” ad for Embry’s own novel, *The Story of Q*, with its “Love for Sale” pitch about minors: “Sold into slavery at 16...”; plus a half-page under-age chicken ad (*Drummer* 9); then, twice in *Drummer* 18, page 74, and *Drummer* 19, Embry published a quarter-page ad titled “Photos of Male High School Students” sold mail-order by Leland Wiegert, Jr., which he would not let me delete from my first full issue (*Drummer* 19), but which, after I had insistent words with Embry, was never published again.

Some things keep reoccurring. In *Drummer* 123 (September 1988), publisher Anthony DeBlase published a letter from the ACLU on page 4, and then, in a first-person confession titled “Thinking,” allowed a writer named “Spunk” to rant on about performing forbidden sex “as a fantasy, as a thought” with “women, kids, dogs, horses; killing sex; hanging, castration, fucking to death....Hey, it’s FANTASY.” Analysis of both the writing and the photographs of this avowed “self-sucking sex performer” convinced me that the writer “Spunk” and the “model” were one and the same: the head-strong blond porn actor Scott O’Hara, a *Drummer* slave model famous for auto-fellatio, who in the 1980s in his *Steam* magazine singlehandedly ruined tearoom sex in the United States by publishing, for all law enforcement to see as Ed Davis had seen in *Drummer*, a list of the best spots for public gay sex; in what appear to be his fingerprints in an “ad in trade,” O’Hara was pictured in *Drummer* 123, page, 63, demonstrating a penis pump available through mail order. O’Hara’s *Steam* appeared in a display ad in *Drummer* 166, page 29.

2. NECROPHILIA

Sex with the dead is one of those things one doesn’t notice right away on Quaaludes, especially the original Rorer 714 edition. Nevertheless, Embry (who as far as I know never took a Quaalude) published the feature article “Fetish: Necrophilia” by the sensationalist writer William Wulfwine checking out a dead blond surfer, with Embry editorializing dangerously with camp irony Davis could not comprehend on page 9, that “The active partner can, and often does, carve up his [dead] subject...and he need not relate at all. He doesn’t even have to say, ‘I love you.’” (*Drummer* 4); the snuff poem of freelance *Advocate* writer, John Rowberry (*Drummer* 5); and Satan sexing it up in a graveyard in Bill Ward’s graphic novel, *King* (*Drummer* 9).

3. BESTIALITY

“Man’s Best Friend: Bestiality” (*Drummer* 9) reprinted as “Bestiality” (in *The Best and the Worst of Drummer*) featuring 14-and-16-year-old farm boys; plus the pop culture of San Francisco’s famous “Lion Pub” man-and-beast posters which are featured on two pages, 54 and 55, in *The Best and the Worst of Drummer* as well as in many pages throughout early *Drummer*. Embry fully acknowledged controversy and censorship over animal sex: “A couple of the [Lion Pub] drawings were rejected by some [other] publications.... Here they are, intact.”

4. PISS

“Golden Shower Festival” (*Drummer* 2, pages 8-9); photo, cock pissing in mouth (*Drummer* 3); Orlando Paris’ “Water King”: enema, piss, scat; the homomasculine *Kansas City Trucking Company* (*Drummer* 10), a film by the Gage Brothers, Sam and Joe Gage aka Sam Christensen and Tim Kincaid.

5. SCAT

Lead feature, “Scat Anyone?” with drawing (*Drummer* 5); two “Letters to the Editor,” almost too coincidentally seeming to share the tone of other letters, praising earlier scatology article in *Drummer* 5 (“Hooray for Scat” *Drummer* 8; *Drummer* 10). Did Embry himself write or ask “Robert Payne” or staff to pen letters to the editor to make a point or sell a product? (Yes. He did. Repeatedly.) Positive review (*Drummer* 6, page 36) of the scatological graphic novel, *Timmy*, RFM Productions, 1976, 40 pages, fully illustrated. *Timmy* was “full of the most graphic scenes of shit and piss.... there is something to offend anyone (unless you are an atheist) [Later, Embry would not be so flip about theology.]....It’s so bizarre that, like the Master DeSade himself, it is utterly fascinating.”

6. EDGE PLAY

The then shockingly new *avant garde* of tit piercing and blood licking in Halsted’s 1975 film, *Sextool* (*Drummer* 1, *Drummer* 3), starring Val Martin in which Halsted pierces twinkie-blond Joey Yale’s nipple. The LA Halsted “quotes” New Yorker Sandy Daley’s film, *Robert Gets His Nipple Pierced* (1970), shot at the Chelsea Hotel, and featuring my soon-to-be lover, Robert Mapplethorpe, the scourge of US government censorship,

with his then-partner punk rocker, Patti Smith, splicing on the soundtrack; “Branding, Piercing, Tattooing” (*Drummer* 6).

7. SATANISM

Hints of sulphur in Bill Ward’s homomale cartoon strip, *King*, with its “Satan’s Boy” (*Drummer* 6); leather-bar festivities with occult and Satanic-themed names like “Full-Moon Party” and “Leather Sabbat(h)” (*Drummer* 9, page 44) made worse by being pasted above the ad for the Scandinavian “chicken magazine” titled *Boy* sent mail order from Denmark.¹

8. HALSTED, FRED

Age and consent problems in “Rape,” a narrative of a “young blond twinkie in bondage” (over 21, of course) written by notorious LA sex-scofflaw and filmmaker, Fred Halsted (*Drummer* 4, page 48) who was cover photographer for *Drummer* 2, featuring his controversial film, *Sextool* (1975), which opened in New York and San Francisco, but was forbidden to open in LA, during the same June 1975 that *Drummer* debuted its first issue. *Variety* reviewed Halsted as “the Ken Russell of S&M homoerotic.” In 1969, the outrageous British director Ken Russell had startled mainstream filmgoers with his sensuous *Women in Love*, based on the novel by D. H. Lawrence from a script by gay activist Larry Kramer; the taboo-busting film became famous for its iconic nude scene of two homomale men, Oliver Reed and Alan Bates, wrestling in front of a blazing fireplace.

When Halsted and Embry fell out after they were both arrested in the Slave Auction raid, Halsted turned competitor and immediately founded his own magazine called *Package* (1977) to replace in Los Angeles what *Drummer* had been to local LA leather before *Drummer* went national in San Francisco. Halsted, along with Academy Awards Oscar Streaker Robert Opel, continued Embry’s mistake of challenging Ed Davis in the pages of *Package* which was quickly driven out of business after only six issues.

Because of Davis, *Package* died the way *Drummer* would have died in its infancy if it had not exited LA to be reborn in San Francisco.

Eighteen months later, Opel died mysteriously, shot in the head

1 For more insider eyewitness information about 1960s and 1970s black-leather culture, Folsom Street phallic worship, S&M ritual, Goth sex, Satanism, wicca, and witchcraft, see *Popular Witchcraft: Straight from the Witch’s Mouth* written by *Drummer* editor-in-chief, Jack Fritscher, in late 1960s and early 1970s, and published 1972, three years before *Drummer* debuted; new edition, 2005.

execution-style in his new Fey-Way art gallery in San Francisco.

9. MALE RAPE

Lead feature article introduces the scary concept of gay sex used as an assault weapon against straight men; it's a revenge fantasy against straight bullies, titled "Male Rape" with the kind of aggressively provocative and shocking sentence that puts real *phobia* into *homophobia*: gays no longer take abuse, and they rape and recruit. The challenging fantasy sentence that drove Davis wild is "I enjoy inflicting homosexuality on them." (*Drummer* 12) Consider also the "Rape" drawing by Rex (*Drummer* 12, page 8); cops who know prisons fear this rape taboo because straight guys in their vanity often fantasize and flatter themselves that they are irresistible to gay men, especially the scary new-breed of masculine leather bikers straddling Harley hogs, who desire them and will attack them sexually.

10. FISTING

Fisting was considered illegal in LA; Halsted's fist-suggestive cover photograph of butts, hankies, and rough sex was from his fisting film, *Sextool* (*Drummer* 2); the lead feature article, "FF of A," coopted the wholesome "Future Farmers of America" initials into the decadent "Fist Fuckers of America" (*Drummer* 3).

11. HOMOMASCULINITY IN FICTION, FEATURES, AND PERSONAL ADS

"Leather Fraternity" personals profiled the emerging identity of the new homosexual not as a sissy but as a masculine man resisting bullies and thus threatening straight masculinity; by my sweeping survey inside the texts of the 214 issues of *Drummer*, the keyword most used from the first issue of *Drummer* to the last is *masculine* (including *masculinity*). *Drummer* 12 (January 1977), pages 70 and 73, trumpeted the Eagle bar in Boston with the tag line *If You're Man Enough*. That slogan in Boston had appeared much earlier in San Francisco as written by artist/dancer/junkie Chuck Arnett, founder of the Tool Box, in his poster for the Red Star Saloon at the Barracks bath on Folsom Street. That classic Red Star poster was printed several times in *Drummer* with Arnett spelling *you're* as *your*. In that same *Drummer* 12, page 74, the legendary One Way bar in LA advertised itself simply as "A Man's Bar."

As soon as Anthony DeBlase bought *Drummer*, his second editorial confirmed this explicit homomascularity in *Drummer* 99 (page 5) when he wrote:

What kind of man reads *Drummer*? Leathermen is one obvious answer...but it does not go far enough...Not everyone is into leather. The only common denominator among *Drummer*men is a cock-hardening interest in masculine men, masculine images, masculine fantasy, and masculine reality.

Joseph W. Bean wrote in the 20th Anniversary Issue, *Drummer* 188, page 18, that “The move toward masculinity by gay magazines happened more because of *Drummer* than any other publication....The very existence of *Drummer* magazine...began to undermine the monopoly of inexperienced, shiny smooth, and tiresomely youthful models.”

The original tag line for *Drummer* was “America’s Mag for the Macho Male.” Also to be interpreted: Opel’s historic obituary for the homomascularity “Tool Box” (*Drummer* 2); Bernie Prock’s and Toby Bailey’s very-XYX-chromosome “Leather Journal” column (*Drummer* 6) which is the exact kind of “Masculinist Manifesto” I fictionalized in *Some Dance to Remember* to chronicle this theme of homomascularity in *Drummer*. In addition, some of the Prock-Bailey topics confirmed LAPD suspicions about “Compulsive Public Sex.” The centerfold with Durk Parker aka Durk Dehner was titled “Studies in Masculinity,” *Drummer* 15, page 39. (Canadian Durk Dehner early on worked in advertising with *The Advocate* and then in 1984 as founder of the Tom of Finland Foundation; see photograph of Dehner with “homomascularity art pioneer Tom of Finland,” *Drummer* 137, page 35.)

Years later in *Drummer* 131 (July 1989), a letter to the editor, page 5, complained that the twenty-one-year-old “Mr. *Drummer* 1988” Ron Zehel was too soft and too young to represent “all around masculinity” which was the purported aim of the Mr. *Drummer* contest. I was one of the Mr. *Drummer* judges who voted for Ohioan Zehel because he seemed something new and healthy on the leather scene. On the surface, he was handsome and minted off the Eagles’ *Hotel California* album—he was the “New Kid in Town” and he seemed to the judges to be what *Drummer* marketing needed to keep its demographic fresh for its so-called “old guard” readership.

What a dismissive term. *Drummer* loyalists never used it. There never was an “old guard.” Leather is always “avant garde.”

Unfortunately, the leather community assessment of Zehel was that he turned out to be rather much a leather mirage during the AIDS plague

of wishful hope. Even though he advertised his photos and services in “Models Nationwide” in *Drummer* 125, he seemed too shy and immature, even though his modeling ad promised to give a portion of his profits “to fight AIDS,” to shoulder the public relations responsibilities of a proper Mr. Drummer on the order of the glorious Michael Pereya, winner of the 1988 International Mr. Leather title. At the 1987 Mr. Drummer contest at the Warfield Theater on Market Street, Michael Pereya in a leather raincoat walked up to me during rehearsals and flashed me, standing in the orchestra pit, in a total grinning “reveal” of his torso and leather codpiece that to me was like a thousand paparazzi bulbs shooting off unforgettably in my wondrous eyes. Pereya had the zeal and razzle that Zehel’s dazzle lacked.

Drummer editor, Joseph Bean, concurred when he wrote about the “publishing wars” in *Drummer* 188 (May 1989), the 20th Anniversary Issue:

The newly bold gay mags of the mid-1970s scared distributors, retailers, and buyers who were a little nervous about them. Many of the mags were “macho” gay, a phrase that was no longer oxymoronic [as in the 1950s and 1960s] and not yet humorous.

The humor came later, in 1977, when the Village People debuted their first hit, “San Francisco.” The Village People “leatherman,” Glenn Hughes, often partied with our *Drummer* Salon in San Francisco and in our summer retreat in Sonoma County. I published a photograph of David Hodo, the construction worker from the Village People, in *Drummer* 30 (June 1979), page 7; the caption reading “One David Hodo pic, cuming up! —Editor” illustrates that my style guide for *Drummer* spelled *cuming* with one *u* and one *m*, and not as *coming*, or *cumming*. After rising triumphant as *cum* in large point in *Drummer* 121, page 34, the spelling of *cum* and *cuming* slipped to *cumming* and then under the Dutch owner *Drummer* returned to the distinctive *cuming* as in *Drummer* 186, page 6. In the language-shaping world of advertising, nearly all video companies whose money is made on *cum* shots have adopted the sexier, raunchier spellings, *cum* and *cuming*, as have many “wink-wink” leather bar ads inviting customers to “Cum to our beer bust.”

The use of language in *Drummer* is addressed in the *Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer* article: “Homomascularity: Framing Keywords of Queer Popular Culture in *Drummer* Magazine” from the Queer Keyword Conference, University College Dublin, Ireland, April 2005. In the culture war over emerging gay vocabulary, it may be worth noting that I headlined a “prison punk” feature on the cover of my *Drummer* 24 (September 1978) with the defiant word *fag* as in “We Abuse Fags!” *Vis-a-vis* the S&M

keywords words *slave* and *boy*, confer *Drummer* 174, page 5, for the editorial, “The Slavery of Words,” by Graylin Thornton who happened to be both Mr. Drummer 1993 and African-American, as well as the actor-producer of the film *Foucault Who* (2002) directed by Wickie Stamps who was the editor of *Drummer* in the mid-1990s.

In 1984 when Embry was secretly looking to sell *Drummer*, he tried to up its capital value by cashing in on the popularity of masculinity as an emerging gender identity. He published *Drummer* 82 with the monetizing tag line printed with big red letters: “Manhood Rituals Issue.” The subhead read: “This Issue Is Devoted to the Ordeals of Becoming a Man!” The issue featured a lead article, “Manhood Rituals”; an anti-Fascist screed, “Naked Threats,” written by the tempestuous video director T. R. Witomski against the radical feminist censor, Andrea Dworkin; and page after page of prose in praise of male secondary sex characteristics that are the basis of sex appeal. Working that theme, he also included masculine-fetish news about a shaving newsletter out of Reno titled *Stubble*; and he repeated my early homomale concept, “*Drummer* Daddies,” which he tagged with my original line: “In Praise of Older Men.” In his opening editorial, he wrote ingenuously: “This issue of *Drummer* is devoted to ‘Manhood Rituals,’ a subject dear to my heart....”

In fact, at this time, he was already preparing and expanding his publishing empire to create some career to retreat to after he dumped *Drummer* on some unsuspecting buyer, as he did eighteen months later, in 1986, when he sold it to Anthony DeBlase. There was a seeding purpose inside that “Manhood Ritual” theme of *Drummer* 82 that was another one of his business schemes. Like a Trojan Horse inside *Drummer*, he was introducing the names of his new clones of *Drummer* which were, *quelle surprise*, the magazines, *Manhood Rituals* and *Manifest Reader*, which he combined into a third title, *Super MR Magazine*. In those post-*Drummer* doppelgängers he frequently published features and stories using my coinage, *homomale*. Most often the articles were written by his longtime Alternate Publishing staffer, Rick Leathers aka Dane Leathers aka Mike Leathers who, despite openly loathing Embry, understood him and kept his office enterprises afloat for eleven years so he could collect a regular paycheck. See Rick Leathers’s essay in *Manifest Reader* 23, “Bullwhips, Bullshit, & Ballot Boxes.”

From the first issue of *Drummer* to the last, such considerations of masculinity and gender freaked out LAPD Chief Ed Davis who till then thought gay men were sissies who wanted to be women, not authentic men who enjoyed being male, and not just male, but macho and rugged as a way to italicize their natural-born masculine identity.

12. GENDER-FUCK

The Cycle Sluts gender-fuck cover photo (*Drummer* 9) and interviews of leathermen gussied up in glitter like *The Rocky Horror Show*, included my colleague in the *Drummer* Salon, Mikal Bales (1939-2011), who soon after reinvented himself as “Daddy Zeus,” founding owner and director of the masculine Zeus Studio, whose steamy underground videos fleshed out the kind of man-on-man whipping, bondage, and torture scenes Hollywood action movies only dared suggest. Robert Opel’s campy, but unsuitable, “Cycle Sluts” photo is winner of the “Worst *Drummer* Cover Ever” because it missed the marching beat of *Drummer*. Its “drag queen camp” is 180 degrees from readers’ personals ads seeking that keyword *masculinity*, emphatically followed by a repeated separatist mantra of “no fats, no fems, no phonies.” A personal classified in *Drummer* 1, page 14, threw down the gauntlet of authentic gender identification: “No fags playing butch.”

Because *Drummer* was at that time the only magazine aimed at masculine men, readers became justifiably anxious about any invasion by privileged drag queens favored by and featured in all the other vanilla magazines that excluded leathermen. In the “Letters to the Editor,” after the Cycle Sluts’ gooey “thank-you” note, there was a letter complaining:

The Cycle Sluts cover picture and the associated article you used in your latest issue, *Drummer* 9, disgusted me beyond words. I thought when you started out, that this was to be a unique magazine—for men—not for campy bar queens. I was wrong. The Cycle Sluts have no place in my lifestyle or that of my friends. If I want to read that kind of trash, I will subscribe to *After Dark* or *The Advocate*.... — Bruce, Seattle (*Drummer* 11).

That tell-tale reader response rang true enough to be reprinted *con brio* and in full in *Drummer* 188 (June 1995), the 20th Anniversary Issue, page 6. In 1997, twenty-one years after the dragazine of *Drummer* 9, Embry dedicated the “Parting Shot” page (98) in his *Manifest Reader* 33 to a frontal nude photograph of the bearded transman Loren Cameron. Embry being Embry announced this portrait on his Contents page with his reductive gender-insensitive line: “Loren Cameron. A bodybuilder complete with pussy? Who says it can’t be done.” His photo caption read: “Loren Cameron, author/photographer of *Body Alchemy* shows off his/her accomplished male physique and fully female attributes.”

13. ROBERT OPEL: OSCAR STREAKER, LEATHER ICON, PHOTOGRAPHER

Multiple photos were shot and articles written by frequent *Drummer* contributor, Robert Opel. If ever any one person should have been the editor-in-chief of *Drummer*, although he lacked the endurance and long-view oversight needed, it was the creative, inventive Robert Opel who had bigger fish than *Drummer* to fry in the performance art that was his life and ultimately his death.

Former LA school teacher, Opel, was a 1960s gay radical who was Police Chief Ed Davis' *bete noir*, famous for stripping naked at City Council meetings and showing his cock to Ed Davis (photo of Opel and Davis: *Drummer* 26, page 19) and even more famously streaking a billion viewers during the 1974 Academy Awards when David Niven and Elizabeth Taylor were on camera (*Drummer* 3); and finally famous for being shot to death Sunday evening, July 8, 1979, by—according to the intuitive gay grapevine of allegations—vengeful cops, pals of Dan White, in his SOMA gallery Fey-Way (*Drummer* 31, *Drummer* 32). Opel's murder is dramatized in *Some Dance to Remember*, Reel 3, Scene 1 and Scene 9. Embry also published ads for Opel's own LA magazine venture titled *Finger* (*Drummer* 7, page 3) with satiric "endorsements" by Embry's nemeses, "E. Davis" and "D. Goodstein."

In 1977, Opel asked me to write on spec for his next new magazine whose title was too perfect for its own good. He never got to publish his *National Pornographic* because of objections from *National Geographic*. If his story were not true, by now some other porn publisher would have used that title. There is an interview of the amazing Robert Opel that should have appeared in *Drummer*; instead it appeared in the "Virtual *Drummer*" of Fred Halsted's *Package* magazine. Stopping his contributions to *Drummer*, Halsted competed with Embry to steal *Drummer*'s thunder in the publishing wars. He released *Package* 1, July 1976. Confer author, Bill Arseneaux, "Bob Opel: An Interview," *Package* 6, January 1977. Is *Arseneaux* ("arse nose") another camp pen name? Was it a pseudonym for entrepreneur Opel, the perfect publicist, who, with the esthetic introspection of a Modernist, interviewed himself?

Separation is not six degrees. In August, 2001, working as an associate producer with Andy Perrott to create a television documentary on Robert Opel for the LA cable series, *Fame for 15*, I set up on-camera interviews with Opel's pals, Durk Dehner of the Tom of Finland Foundation and with Mark Thompson. Former *Advocate* editor Thompson had previously interviewed me for a book he was writing on the glamorously notorious life of Robert Opel whom I interviewed at Fey-Way Gallery with Patti Smith's avowed

rival, Camille O’Grady—who was Opel’s lover—just three weeks before his murder. In 2008, Thompson invited me to collaborate on his screenplay about Robert Opel that he was writing with Andy Perrott. In 2009, Robert Opel’s young nephew, Robert Opper (the family spelling), interviewed O’Grady, Thompson, and me for his documentary film, *Uncle Bob*, which in 2010, was featured by the Frameline San Francisco International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival. In 2014, thirty-five years after our first interview, O’Grady once again sat down with me for a long chat in my studio as I filmed her intimately spelling out her own eyewitness details of that night of horror in Fey-Way when she was held at gunpoint and saw her boyfriend Opel terminated.

14. “THE GREAT ‘S/M’ MURDER MYSTERY”

This loudly touted “cover” essay, serialized in three issues (*Drummer* 9, *Drummer* 10, *Drummer* 11) was an expose of the S&M murders in LA that the LAPD could not solve. Embury published it as “Murder in California, The Golden State’s Gay Victims: The Great ‘S/M’ Murder Mystery?!” Jeanne Barney told me in 2006 that she and John Rowberry, who spent the next fifteen years in a sine wave of loving her and trashing her, had interviewed people from West Los Angeles to San Diego who were “99 percent certain of the identity of the murderer.”

It was, according to *Los Angeles Magazine* (June 1976), that “...string of unsolved murders [that] was the real reason for Ed Davis’ raid of that gay [*Drummer*] Slave Auction, according to LAPD insiders. Police believe a local S-M ring may be responsible for savagely....”

15. RACE WRITING; THE “N” WORD

The provocative use of the word, *nigger*, to describe a convict “top man” who is threatening to defecate on a prison punk’s face—not a good idea in itchy-twitchy LA where cops, since the 1965 Watts Riots, were under pressure to keep the peace in prisons and in the streets, as well as in the Pantages Theater on trashy, draggy, funky Hollywood Boulevard where *Mandingo* (1975) was screening to throngs of charged-up audiences of Blacks and the whites who love them; photographs of the beautiful boxer Ken Norton from *Mandingo* appear repeatedly as a main theme in early *Drummer* (*Drummer* 1, “Whips, Paddles, Pitchforks, Pain Dominate *Mandingo*”; *Drummer* 6, “*Mandingo*: Revisiting Falconhurst”). See photographer Roy Dean’s color photograph of a Black “Mr. *Drummer*” in *The Best and the Worst of Drummer*, page 41.

Dean's "Mr. USA" could be one of Emerson's "Representative Men." The statuesque photo is about the sweet-looking man's nonchalant masculinity. He is nude but for his brown boots and a drum strategically hanging against his groin. The sides of the round drum are pasted up with a series of three *Drummer* front covers: *Drummer 2*, *Drummer 5*, and *Drummer 9*. By the date of the latest cover, the photo was likely shot in 1976. It is good commercial art meme because the use of the literal drum idealizes the brand name. The photo prefigures the first Mr. *Drummer* contest by three years.

16. INTER-RACIAL SEX ADS

Classified ads promoting inter-racial sex with Blacks as tops and whites as bottoms eroticised the urban legend behind straight white fears about the alleged omni-sexuality of predatory Black men who rape both women and men—which in the never-politically-correct *Drummer* is considered "dinner and dancing." (*Drummer 1*, and "Leather Fraternity" personals)

Swabbing the DNA of popular culture, I figured serial author Embry in his youth wanted to be Kyle Onstott, the author of the Falconhurst trilogy of novels which included *Mandingo* (1957), *Drum* (1962), and *Master of Falconhurst* (1964). In *Drummer 2*, Embry proclaimed in the "Coming Up" column on the contents page, "Falconhurst: The 'Mandingo' Series of American Slavery." In "Revisiting Falconhurst" in *Drummer 6*, across pages 10 and 11, he reviewed and showcased his alter-ego with nine photos from the movie, *Mandingo*, plus eleven photos of Onstott's book covers. *Mandingo* sold ten million copies even before adaptation into a 1961 Broadway play and a 1975 Hollywood movie. The influence of *Drum* on the name *Drummer* is obvious. Onstott was the master of best-selling campy potboilers of race, sex, and violence. And, well, the entire text of *Drummer* was always sex, race, gender, and "violence."

Onstott, with Lance Horner, also authored the story of a young gay Roman who would become emperor. The novel, *Child of the Sun*, appeared in 1972 with advertising cashing in on the new fad of gay liberation. Literary scholars might ask one-time *Drummer* employee and esteemed author, Steven Saylor, if Onstott was of any influence on his entertaining series of detective novels set in ancient Rome.

17. FORBIDDEN FILMS IN LA: BAD BUSINESS—HOW GAY MOVIES AND VIDEO SHAPED DRUMMER

Reviews, covers, and pictorials razzing the LAPD about *Born to Raise Hell*

while tub-thumping that S&M film so specifically forbidden in LA that producer, Terry LeGrand, and director, Roger Earl, had to premiere it one morning in Summer 1974 for a specially invited leather audience of us San Franciscans at the Powell Theater on Powell Street at the Market Street cable-car turnaround (*Drummer 3*). Thereafter the film screened for over a year at the San Francisco Century Theater. There was also Embry's publication of a *Drummer* "extra" book of stills from *Born to Raise Hell* which, again, fails to print masthead credits for the responsible publisher or the filmmakers, LeGrand and Earl; the cover of *Drummer 3* leads to two pages of six movie stills including piss flowing from a dick into a mouth, sex torture in bondage, and two men raping a third with a police baton. In Embry's first issue of his "Virtual *Drummer*," *Mach 1* (1980), pages 54-56, he published a photo spread titled "*Born to Raise Hell* Revisited." He camped it up with his cartoon balloons pasted on the sex photographs from the film; and in his introduction, he aired his endless digs at Davis: "*Born to Raise Hell* played everywhere except Los Angeles, then finally after three years in release, opening and closing in Hollywood in one night, the LAPD being what it is."

Historically, the LAPD went gunning for the film because Legrand and Earl went very *cinema verite* and dared shoot on location in bars that were already under heavy scrutiny from the vice squad who figured gay bars were inherently dens of iniquity. To use bars to shoot porn films went way beyond the pale of community standards for right-wing LAPD Captain Edward M. Davis whose hobby was raiding gay bars and gay movie theaters. Roger Earl told me, "We shot most of the interiors in a bar in the Valley called 'The Truck Stop.' We also shot at a bar on La Brea Avenue in Los Angeles called 'The Falcon's Lair,' but the scene in the bedroom was shot in my bedroom." When I first saw that bedroom in 1989, the industrial-strength wooden four-poster that Roger used for his own fun and games looked as rugged and ready as it did in the film. Roger added, "We also used a straight dungeon on Cahuenga Boulevard called 'The House of Dominance.' The Mistresses who worked there were all crazy about Val."

As an eyewitness then, I remained an eyewitness. Eighteen years later, much to *Drummer's* delight and DeBlase's hunger for photos, Mark Henry and I, as Palm Drive Video for hire, traveled in the summer of 1989 through Holland and Germany with LeGrand and Earl giving them their first "two-camera shoot" on the six new videos we lensed for their Marathon Films under the omnibus title, *Bound for Europe*.

Our June-July 1989 European video shoot turned into a treasure trove of articles, photographs, and advertising for American *Drummer* faltering for

editorial material after the September 17, 1989, earthquake that destroyed the *Drummer* office and panicked publisher DeBlase into selling *Drummer* in what would amount to a “fire sale.”

In 1990, DeBlase’s post-earthquake *Drummer* began featuring, reviewing, advertising, and selling the six “sex-education” films with enthusiasm. These S&M video features were not fiction. They were “Reality TV.” Each of the six was an American *verite* documentary of real European leathermen exhibiting themselves in real Art Brut scenes. That kind of intercontinental blood transfusion in an age of AIDS enlivened the shaken, ailing *Drummer*. DeBlase chose one of the color photographs I shot for LeGrand and Earl in the iconic Argos Bar, Amsterdam, for the cover of the “*Drummer* Super Publication,” *Mach* 20, April 1990. Ten other of my Argos photos appeared on pages 41-45.

Bound for Europe

The Six “Reality TV” Video Series of Extreme BDSM

Directed by Roger Earl, Produced by Terry LeGrand of Marathon Films

Cinematography by Jack Fritscher and Mark Hemry of

Palm Drive Video

Production Date: June-July 1989

Released serially: 1990-1994

1. *Argos: The Sessions* shot in Amsterdam
2. *Fit to Be Tied* shot in Hamburg
3. *Marks of Pleasure* shot in Dusseldorf
4. *The Knast* shot in West Berlin
5. *The Berlin Connection* shot in West Berlin
6. *Loose Ends of the Rope* shot in Hamburg, Dusseldorf, and West Berlin

After Amsterdam, the British painter, David Pearce, had to be called in to become our translator and still photographer because Mark Hemry and I told LeGrand and Earl that it was too much to expect us two to do three things at once: shoot the two High-8 video cameras as well as the 35mm still camera for publicity photographs. When LeGrand introduced us three, Pearce’s first words were his unforgettable pick-up line: “Are you two the gentlemen I was expecting?” David Pearce became our intimate pal while shooting together in dungeons in Hamburg, Dusseldorf, and West Berlin. Six months later, in 1990, he flew from London to San Francisco because he wanted to capture the anxiety and risk he saw around me as an author,

made naked to the world, he said, by the first publication of *Some Dance to Remember: A Memoir-Novel of San Francisco 1970-1982*. He decided to paint me nude, bearded like a mountainman, and standing with elbows upright alongside my head as in the statues and paintings of “The Flaying of Marsyas.” Beside me, he painted Mark Henry, fully clothed in buckskins, his long blond “Buffalo Bill” hair flowing, seated with his black-powder rifle on his lap: the warrior-lover protecting the author going naked in public with so much historical information. The painting was very *Drummer*.

Drummer was too down on its luck and was suffering with too much post-traumatic stress by that time to bother with the very erotic and real journal I had written of the making of the *Bound for Europe* films that Mark Henry and I dubbed *Trouble in the Rubble*. We had traveled Europe inside a gonzo leather fantasy, shooting *verite* S&M sex scenes with the most *verite* leathermen in the most *verite* locations in legendary leather bars, the cellars of bars, and high-tech dungeons.

In fact, in the early months of the epic AIDS year of 1989, I had a choice of shooting porn, or defending porn, when Tony DeBlase, for whom I was an editorial consultant, queried me about my availability for testifying for the trial of pioneer Steve Toushin who had been arrested in 1988 on Federal obscenity charges for producing and distributing S&M videos, including films *Drummer* loved like the perfect fisting film *Erotic Hands*. I had first encountered Toushin’s work in the 1960s during my graduate school nights cruising Chicago’s Old Town where he managed the Aardvark Theater and screened underground movies like Jack Smith’s *Flaming Creatures*, and Kenneth Anger’s *Scorpio Rising*—despite the censorious six police widows, mothers and grandmothers, who ran the Chicago Film Board out of police headquarters at 11th and State Street until public resistance killed it in the mid-1970s.

In the *mise en scene* of grief in 1989, a person could not be involved in every issue and had to choose. My former sweetheart, Robert Mapplethorpe, died of AIDS in March, and by June, the censorious United States Senator Jesse Helms, was launching his government attack on what he called Mapplethorpe’s pornographic photographs. I countered grief with extra busy-ness. I was proofing the final galleys for *Some Dance to Remember* which Knights Press was publishing, and was also in pre-production for several video projects. I told DeBlase that having six video features to shoot on location in Europe for Roger Earl at Marathon Films, and twelve features to lens for my Palm Drive Video, I had no time to testify, but that I would be pleased to address censorship alternatively by writing a feature obituary about Robert Mapplethorpe, the most famous, and most censored,

leather photographer in history. DeBlase published that “Pentimento for Robert Mapplethorpe: Fetishes, Faces, and Flowers of Evil” in *Drummer* 133 (September 1989) which was one month before the disastrous 6.9 Loma Prieta Earthquake on October 17.

Eleven days earlier, on October 6, the SFPD added to San Francisco’s AIDS misery of that year, and that decade, with a police riot that swept the Castro, beating anyone marching among ACT UP signs reading “Living with AIDS & Fighting Back.” Bullhorns announced the “news” that the street and sidewalks from Market Street to 18th Street were suddenly an illegal assembly area, and the cop attack, worthy of Fascists worldwide, began. Fighting back, marchers switched the chant from demanding AIDS funding to the hail-and-call Jody chants resisting the cops’ brutal street censorship of free speech: “First Amendment under attack!/What do we do?!Act up!/Fight back!”

Nevertheless, in a fine moment in leather history, *Drummer* rode to the defense of Toughin in the persons who did testify: *Drummer* publisher DeBlase and his partner and co-publisher, the psychiatrist, Dr. Andrew Charles; *Drummer* columnist and psychotherapist, Guy Baldwin; *Drummer* editor, John Rowberry; *Drummer* writer and biochemist, Dr. Geoff Mains (author of *Urban Aborigines* who died of AIDS June 21, 1989); as well as *Drummer* contributor and anthropologist, Dr. Gayle Rubin, and Jim Ward, founder of the Gauntlet piercing company featured in *Drummer*, and Barry Douglas from the Gay Men’s S&M Association (GMSMA).

That August 1989, Toughin was sentenced to five-years’ probation and fined \$500,000. The *Adult Video News* awards immediately bestowed on him the “Reuben Sturman Award for Legal Battles on Behalf of the Adult Industry” at the same moment the legendary Sturman, a true pioneer of the adult industry who died in prison, was convicted of tax evasion as the government’s way to censor his porn empire. Sturman, who had Mafia connections, became connected to *Drummer* in 1980 when John Embry bought the back-alley property at 15 Harriett Street to house *Drummer* and then, very quickly because of his shaky finances, rented extra office and storage space to *Stars Magazine* and its publisher Glenn Turner who was funded by Sturman.

That emotion-packed year of AIDS, earthquake, and censorship battles in court and on the streets made the idea of escaping to shoot erotic films on location in Europe all the more attractive.

That beautiful summer of 1989 was remarkable. The population of West Berlin was locked down by the Russians: no American could enter unless one American exited. As uptight as it was, no one sensed it was to

be the last summer that West Berlin existed. No one knew the Berlin Wall would come down ninety days later. Casting severe, real-life German sadists and masochists in West Berlin that summer was easy and hot because sadistic sex and masochistic endurance was one way gay West Berliners felt distressed and free even while completely surrounded on their West Berlin “island” by Communists with guns. Our star from East Berlin, Christian Dreesen, had twice been caught escaping across the Wall and had twice done time in a gruesome Stasi prison cell. His third try he reached freedom, and the silver screen.

While filming on location in Der Knast bar and the newly opened Connection bar, both on Fuggerstrasse, we passed though Checkpoint Charlie, which still gives me chills, to scout the ruins of East Berlin for additional location shooting we decided not to do because of the political danger. On our last night in West Berlin, we were taken to the underside of the bridge where, to release their Weimar tension, Liza Minnelli and Michael York, on location for *Cabaret*, had screamed with the train roaring overhead. So, of course, we waited, and waited, and laughed, and waited, and finally with a train rushing overhead and our backs pressed against the stone wall, we screamed our own primal scream releasing our tension about porn, plague, and politics.

Drummer, however, having perforce become politically correct in its fantasies by 1989, could not scream out its lust. It was past its journalistic zenith of 1970s activism and realism. It sought refuge from the horror of AIDS and sexual politics by retreating into self-help advice, fantasy fiction, and leather contest reports. In *Drummer* 21 (March 1978), the magazine published the true New Journalism feature article about San Quentin, “Prison Blues.” But by the 1990s, when bought by the Dutch, *Drummer* could not handle the true story of how the handsome Christian Dreesen’s homomale sex appeal, obvious even to resentful homophobes, had itself made more intense the brutal sex abuse he suffered at the hands of East German and Russian jailers fueled by the jealous passions of Cold War politics against gay decadence.

Expressing the zero degrees of our creative salon life around *Drummer*, the blue-eyed Teuton, Christian Dreesen, whom Mark Hemry and I shot for a Palm Drive Video in West Berlin, shared the cover of *Drummer* 147 (March 1991) with my other Palm Drive Video model, Glenn Marsh aka Blue Blake, one of the stars of my “twincest” feature, *The Blake Twins Raw*. Both actors appeared in my British coffee-table photo book edited by Edward Lucie-Smith, *American Men*: Christian Dreesen, who was “Mr. Germany Drummer,” page 36, and Blue Blake, who was “Mr. UK Drummer,” page 61.

18. POLICE HARASSMENT

Taunting the cops were the many articles riding the LAPD about their harassment (*Drummer* 6, pages 4, 12-14, *Drummer* 7, page 68; *Drummer* 11, page 76) and their arch stupidity for raiding the gay play, *What Do You Say to a Naked Waiter?* The LAPD rushed on stage and arrested the cast, who each took campy bows to much audience applause, while the pissed-off cops roused them off the stage and down the theater aisles in real handcuffs (*Drummer* 4).

19. LAPD RAID ON LEATHER BAR, THE BLACK PIPE

To summarize the previously analyzed LAPD bust of the Black Pipe, the *Drummer* feature rather much characterized the police raid as a kind of Keystone Cops' invasion of the clowns (*Drummer* 3); perhaps this verbal provocation was the "beyond which not" for the LAPD that caused Ed Davis to retaliate by busting the April 10, 1976, Slave Auction as if to show the antagonizing Embry how a garden-variety gay raid could be escalated to operatic proportions that would cause regret and trauma and bankruptcy. Embry's column "In Passing" continued to exorcise his dudgeon at Ed Davis and the LAPD, *Drummer* 7 (July 1976), page 68. Also in *Drummer* 7, page 13, Embry published an unflattering photo of Ed Davis in a hell-fire preacher's God-Has-Spoken pose shot by Bob Selan of the *L. A. Free Press*, and wrote the caption: "...in Los Angeles, EDWARD M. DAVIS [*sic*] is seldom challenged at all, by anyone." Were Davis and Embry two peas in a pod who could not countenance one another? In the brawl around the Slave Auction, Embry's imperial character and hubris emerged. Embry would brook no one telling him what to do whether it was the LAPD or his *Drummer* staff. I could not have morphed LA *Drummer* into San Francisco *Drummer* if Embry had not been distracted by his legal problems and had not been absent from the office for months before, during, and after his onset of cancer.

20. LAPD IN THE CLOSET: GAY VICE COP

In huge "red type" on a "yellow band" on the "dark cover" of *Drummer* 13 appeared the screaming gay banner "Interview with a Gay Vice Cop," a fiction (I think) published as a "true confession" to bedevil the LAPD by making them seem internally gay and corrupt. Embry's passive-aggressive cover design was a red flag that kept the bulls angry.

21. KEYWORDS OF S&M & HOMO-LEXICOLOGY: THE NEED TO CREATE LEATHER VOCABULARY IN ORDER TO WRITE ABOUT THE NEW WAYS TO HAVE SEX

Gay vocabulary is more than Polari or S&M code. *Drummer* tried to formulate its own “Leather Style Guide” of gay vocabulary because gay people, and their subset of leatherfolk, speak a second language that is always changing because of previously unheard-of ways to have sex, and to talk and write about sex. Jeanne Barney updated leather readers with the latest linguistics and semiotics in “The ABC’s of S&M,” but the feature alarmed the LAPD who were challenged by continuously evolving new gay code words (like *boy* and *slave*) and hanky codes that seemed like gang colors (*Drummer* 1, page 31).

When *Drummer* staff were not skirmishing with each other, it is interesting to see them reporting the new keywords of leather culture in order to write about uncloseted topics never before named by the love that dare not speak even its own name. Barney had learned the “sex alphabet” at *The Advocate* whose “Pink Section” personal classifieds was written in gay shorthand: GWM seeks CBT, TT, WS, FF, & VA. (Decoded, that means “Gay White Male seeks Cock and Ball Torture, Tit Torture, Water Sports, Fist Fucking, and Verbal Abuse.) In *Drummer* 1, she composed a leather dictionary, “The ABC’s of S&M Sex.” Crossing Alfred Kinsey and Margaret Mead, pop-culturist Barney interviewed players in the scene and sorted the new semiotics. She told me, “I did not make this shit up as I went along.”

At the Stonewall dawn of leather culture, the character of kinky folk changed.

Out of silent closets came the need for new codes. There was the colorful semaphore of the hanky code. There was a mini-civil war over the meaning of wearing keys, hankies, and chains worn on the *left* or *right*. There was debate over the significance of “dressing” left or right: that is, the “meaning” of displaying one’s cock and balls tucked down the left leg or right through tight Levi’s. For a long while at the dawn of leather when distinctive signals for *top* and *bottom* needed invention and negotiation, *left* meant one thing on the East Coast and the reverse on the West Coast.

In Barney’s “ABC’s of S&M Sex,” at that time “TT” meant “toilet training.” Soon it meant “tit torture” as in CBT which was shorthand for “cock-ball-and-tit torture.” Seventeen issues later, “The Official Handkerchief Color Code” was sorted by Gary Barnhill, and published in *Drummer* 18 (August 1977), page 80.

When leather came out of the closet in the 1960s, it required an entrance exam to insure fluency. Sucking and fucking were not enough. For the first

time, gay men were writing openly about gay men. There was a reading list for incoming students.

In 1968, San Francisco author Bill Carney's psychological novel, *The Real Thing*, educated beginners in S&M language, codes, rituals, and relationships in an elegant way that 1993 MacArthur Genius and leather poet Thom Gunn termed "brilliant" because Carney modeled his book on Pierre Choderlos de Laclos' *Dangerous Liaisons* (1782).

Beginners and Old Hands both, in 1972, immediately bonded with Larry Townsend's leather primer and catechism, *The Leatherman's Handbook*, the best-seller that educated leatherfolk for thirty years. "Old Hand," as in "I'm an Old Hand who is experienced," was a perfectly affectionate term to show how one generation can gently nurture another with out either being *en garde*. It is very different from the hard new term "Old Guard" which implies uptight old leather warhorses demanding new leather dudes genuflect to the old ways.

In the 1970s, Sam Steward (1909-1993), who was the *Drummer* author Phil Andros, also weighed in to teach beginners about our leather roots in his nostalgia for the simpler 1930s and 1940s of sexual outlaws like himself, and like Jean Genet (1910-1986) who created a whole new sadomasochistic language around sex. Identifying some roots of pre-Stonewall leather, Sam pined for bygone values and times, all lost, all gone with the winds of change, in his *Chapters from an Autobiography*, page 101:

[This was] ...long before [1960s and 1970s] leather mania had codified and ritualized itself into leather-drag posturings, studied gestures, codes of dress and behavior that Genet had partially described and analyzed earlier in *Querelle de Brest*.

Fred Halsted claimed in *Drummer* to have invented the gay keyword, *twink*, to describe his "twinkie blond" slave, Joey Yale, who was the business brains behind Halsted's ventures in publishing *Package* magazine and opening his short-lived LA bar called "Halsted's." *Twink*, from the name of the "Twinkie" brand cupcake, gained a second gay meaning when assassin Dan White plied his "Twinkie Defense," claiming too much junk food had caused him to kill Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone.

As editor-in-chief, I tried to create a *Drummer* "style guide" for punctuation, grammar, and spelling, sort of an X-rated version of Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*, but a bit more descriptive than prescriptive. Is an erection a *hard on* or a *hardon*? Is ejaculate *jism* or *jizm*? I wanted a word like *come* to be spelled consistently the hot and dirty looking way as *cum*. Later,

DeBlase honored that spelling of *cum* which is also favored by the Internet. A *cum rag* is so much hotter than a *come rag*.

I am no Eleanor come from the Aquitaine to Henry's court to clean up ballsy Anglo-Saxon with polite French circumlocutions, but I have spent a career designing sex words that connect with the reader's Id. Erotic spelling might best be based on the grass-roots spellings on toilet walls that are primal art galleries and dictionaries of gay linguistics.

On Halloween, October 31, 1988, I wrote a letter to DeBlase and his editorial assistant, Ken Lackey, regarding formalizing the *Drummer* and "Desmodus Style Guide" with spelling, punctuation, picture-credit format, etc., to help remedy consistency errors caused by the constant turn-over of inexperienced staff trying to copyedit, typeset, proof, and create layout. In the temperamental gypsy world of gay publishing, the average length of employment for dissatisfied office help at *Drummer* was six minutes to six months. What style-guide standards were set in the 1970s became scrambled in the Dark Ages of the 1980s when death by AIDS caused a generation gap that caused a consistency gap, as a new breed of leatherfolk emerged with New Media sensibilities that didn't give a fig about old-school publishing standards or the kind of spelling consistency on which Internet searches depend. As a result, few noticed in the 1990s that *Drummer* slipped from literacy and became a photo magazine and video catalog. Its literary model was no longer the *Evergreen Review* that founding editor-in-chief Jeanne Barney had envisioned in 1975.²

22. ACLU

With ads for the American Civil Liberties Union, Embry took a liberal stance during the beginning of the American culture war begun by Holy Bully Right-Wing Fundamentalists ignited by Florida Orange Juice Queen Anita Bryant, and fueled by the hate-monger Jerry Falwell who founded his Moral Majority in 1979, the first year of the national peak of *Drummer* popularity. The *Drummer* ACLU ads angered the LAPD as much as did the National Socialist League ads (*Drummer* 6, page 18; *Drummer* 9).

23. GAY NAZI PARTY

Ads for the gay National Socialist League, with the Nazi insignia (the first

² For expanded detail on leather linguistics: "Homomascularity: Framing Keywords of Queer Popular Culture in *Drummer* Magazine" in *Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer* (2008).

issue, *Drummer* 1, page 26; *Drummer* 2, page 43; *Drummer* 3, page 38) featuring a “camp” line spun off the 1972 anti-Nazi film, *Cabaret*. The song “Tomorrow Belongs to Me” became the Nazi tag line “Tomorrow Belongs to You!”

Jeanne Barney told me:

John ran the first ad without my knowledge. I loudly protested running the ad in *Drummer* 3, but John told me that it had been prepaid. I told him to refund their money. He removed the ad, sneaking it back in after I’d read the flats and before they went to the printer.

Finally, with Jeanne Barney and with “Letters to the Editor” protesting the gay Nazi ad (*Drummer* 3, *Drummer* 5, *Drummer* 9), Embry bowed to reader pressure and stopped running it. As a result, the National Socialist League sued Embry who claimed he lost the case (*Drummer* 13, page 4). Hemorrhaging cash for legal fees from this suit and his Slave Auction court hearings, Embry grouched that somehow the LAPD was behind this second expensive lawsuit brought by the “Gay Nazis” (whom he couldn’t afford to fight), writing “you can’t do business with Hitler.” It seemed he also included LAPD Chief Ed Davis in the “Hitler” epithet he threw. Twenty issues later, in *Drummer* 33 (December 1979), page 6, the fight over whether *Drummer*—as a champion of free speech—could print the Nazi advertisement continued in a letter to the editor from F. K. L. Meir, a subscriber in Germany who thought Embry needed to be “less right wing.” Embry responded with the courtroom lessons he had learned which had cost the *Drummer* development fund so much cash:

Drummer does not accept advertising from any political organization that bases its philosophy on fascism. A long and bitter court case resulted from our [Embry’s] past attitude that anyone had the right to believe in whatever they wish; and that *Drummer* could not act as a censor. We no longer feel that way.”

In 1981 in *Drummer* 49, professional man-hater and scold, Arthur Evans, who made a career sucking joy out of homomale leather culture, wrote to Embry: “In issue 47, you try to justify your recent Nazi sex fantasy [story] on the ground that was a joke, and not meant to be taken seriously.... What kind of people think Nazis are funny, anyway?” The answer: Bars full of gay men watching Charlie Chaplin in *The Great Dictator* and Mel

Brooks in the original *The Producers*. At 1970s film nights at the Ramrod on Folsom Street, the clip repeatedly screened precisely for Nazi “camp” was “Springtime for Hitler.” The myopic Evans, born minus a humor gene, obviously missed other pop-culture entertainments such as the camp exploitation film, *Ilsa: She-Wolf of the SS* (1974), or the sexual seductiveness of Oscar-nominated director Lina Wertmüller’s *Seven Beauties* (1975), or Liliana Cavani’s sexually transgressive BDSM classic *The Night Porter* (1974).

All of these very popular, controversial, and libido-lifting films, two directed by famous women, mirror exactly the *Drummer* fetish for and obsession with forbidden Nazis, no more and no less, because nearly all the men in 1970s bars had been young American boys traumatized and fascinated by Nazi terror during the Second World War in the same way that the young Tom of Finland, in clutched erotic anxiety, in the 1930s and 1940s had feared and fetishized Nazis in his glamorous uniform drawings.

Regarding the erotic temper of the mid-1970s, these smartly reviewed Nazi-lust films all debuted at the same moment that the first issue of *Drummer* hit the stands in 1975. In the Christmas issue, *Drummer* 25 (December 1978), to peg the shrill Evans, I had published one of his typical flaming tirades, “Afraid You’re Not Butch Enough?,” written under his pseudonym, the “Red Queen.” During that same year, Evans interested me because following my 1972 book on women and gays and the occult, *Popular Witchcraft*, he published in 1978 his anti-male book *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture*.

Earlier in *Drummer* 20 (January 1978), I wrote a feature about Pier Paolo Pasolini’s film *Salo*, explaining to pitchfork-and-torch villagers like Evans the erotic appeal of the forbidden, as well as the social good that esthetic analysis can do with art about Fascists and Nazis, especially when erotic desire itself is stridently politically incorrect. Evans committed the very social sins he complained about. He was trapped in binaries. He used the historic persecution of women and gays by straight men, including the Inquisition and Nazis, to justify his politically correct attacks on sadomasochism and innocent masculine-identified gay men he and the Effeminists mistook for the enemy. Everything is of a piece in the puzzlement of this universe. Later writing about “The Cult of Masculinity” in the *White Crane Journal* #58, he remained not unlike Richard Goldstein who wrote a seminal attack screed, “S&M: The Dark Side of Gay Liberation,” in *The Village Voice*, July 7, 1975, seventeen days after the publication of the first issue of *Drummer*.

In 1973, *The Effeminist Manifesto*, published in *Double-F: A Magazine of Effeminism*, was written by self-described “gynarchists” Steven Dansky,

John Knoebel, and Kenneth Pitchford who were also the publishers of *Double-F*. It raised more red flags than a bullfight because, earlier, in 1968, two months after the hit Broadway premiere of the dissident sexualities in *The Boys in the Band*, radical lesbian separatist Valerie Solanas had published her *SCUM Manifesto* for her “Society for Cutting Up Men,” and had then shot two famous gay men, Andy Warhol and Mario Amaya, two days before Robert Kennedy was assassinated in Los Angeles, and twelve months before Stonewall.

“Masculinist” Police Chief Ed Davis, self-defined as the protector of red-blooded American masculinity, was no more a fan of gay identities proclaimed by Dansky and the Gay Liberation Front than he was of macho “leather-cult” bars or, worse, the “menacing” gay-identity publications, *The Advocate* or *Drummer*, founded in “his” Los Angeles in 1969 and 1975. Both agitated Davis’ Gay Panic Disorder.

That *Effeminist Manifesto*, censoring masculinity, did not need an anti-Fascist film like *Salo* to expose its aggressive Fort Sumter fireworks at the startup of the post-Stonewall civil war over gender that was so outrageously biased against all men, straight and gay, that it awakened a genuine gay-male need for “self defense” that called out for the necessary invention of the kind of practical “masculine manifesto” that *Drummer* effectively became despite Embry’s first issues promoting gay Nazis (*Drummer* 1), leather weddings (*Drummer* 7) and “inflicting homosexuality” on straight men (*Drummer* 12).

To lampoon *The Scum Manifesto* and *The Effeminist Manifesto* outside of *Drummer*, I responded fictively to manifestos everywhere when the protagonist of my novel, *Some Dance to Remember*, wrote a spiraling “Masculinist Manifesto” that was the character’s brisk opinion, not mine, inside the storyline.

Of the radical Effeminists’ “quintessential Thirteen Principles,” two of their statutes, revealing their anti-BDSM and anti-male disdain, were “Sado-Masculinity: Role Playing and Objectification” and “Masculinism” which they did not understand as a reciprocal term with “Feminism,” the way the word *mother* cannot be understood without the reciprocal term of *child*. Did the men who were the Effeminists realize that they had internalized the aggressive hatred of males that radical lesbian feminism was championing to the ruin of GLBT harmony in the civil war that turned the joys of 1970s gay liberation into the struggles of 1980s gay politics?

Long lives can be blessed with change. By 2013, Steven Dansky re-configured his position as a gay pioneer by producing, directing, and shooting his brilliant video series, *Outspoken: Oral Histories from LGBTQ*

Pioneers, which he opened up to every possible diverse political voice. In 2014, he conducted a two-hour interview in San Francisco about my work at *Drummer*; and nearly a year later, we took supper together in Santa Rosa with Mark Hemry, and Steven mentioned in his dignified and soft-spoken voice, that, without losing his larger humanist principles, he had evolved inclusively, away from the hot topics of the primal separatism of his early days as a pioneer member of the Gay Liberation Front in 1969 and a founder of Effeminism in 1973. Such philosophical conversations between friends who can differ and evolve without personal animosity is one of the reasons being an inclusive humanist seems existentially more open than being either a feminist or a masculinist.

In *Drummer* 115 (April 1988), Anthony DeBlase continued Mel Brooks' anti-Nazi camp when he published a full-page ad picturing a uniformed German with riding crop and tall boots disciplining a floored *Drummer* reader. Soliciting subscriptions, the tag line read with the stereotypic comedy accent, "You Vill [*sic*] Read *Drummer*."

A classified ad on page 53 in *Drummer* 123 (September 1988) revealed how one man, among many, eroticized history that may have frightened him as a child: "Leather Nazi, 38, 5' 8," seeks same or redneck cop type. Heavy-duty Nazi conversation. Fucking around. Relationship....Concord CA."

In *Drummer* 147 (March 1991), two of the worst-written "Nazi S&M stories" in the history of the world were published by DeBlase: "Hot Poker" by Jeff Kincaid illustrated with a Nazi drawing by the All-American Etienne, and "Dance Master" by DeBlase himself writing as Fledermaus.

Drummer 169 (November 1993) featured Nazi uniforms and concentration-camp still photographs from Falcon's *The Abduction Series*.

In *Manifest Reader* 15 (1991), Embry, continuing to merchandise the underground S&M lust around Nazi uniforms and dominance, featured a Nazi on the dramatic cover. The color photograph of two blond men, one wearing a Nazi uniform, was from the gay video, *The Abduction*. Embry's reviewer John F. Karr, even while fluttering over the eroticism of Aryan beefcake, tried to make his dick stand politically correct, writing on page 89: "MR [*Manifest Reader*] is sure to hear from some who believe its *Abduction* cover is peopled by Nazis. The uniforms are more in the tradition of *The Student Prince*."

And the Brown Shirts are more in the tradition of the Boy Scouts.

Tom of Finland told me on his first visit to the United States that, despite his teenage conscience, he was so fascinated by Nazis that he could not stop drawing them because, he said, "They had the sexiest uniforms." Romancing them with his pencil in single frames and storyboards, he

introduced dominant Nazi attitude, sex, and style directly into the erotic iconography of gay leather art and culture.

Hitler's politically correct Nazi party founded at the Furstenfelder Hof pub in Munich on January 5, 1919, was centered around beer halls, homosexuals, camaraderie, uniforms, and short leather pants—just like *Drummer*.

24. GAY MARRIAGE, LEATHER WEDDING

Gay marriage was the *piece de resistance* that drove conservatives like Ed Davis crazy. A cover and photo feature, by Robert Opel, pictured a gay marriage in Los Angeles: a leather wedding with a minister (*Drummer* 7, pages 8-11; reprinted in *The Best and the Worst of Drummer*). In our gay roots history, gay marriage in the 1970s was such a rising threat and controversial topic that in 1977 the California State legislature outlawed it by defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman. At the same moment, the gay-evolving Dianne Feinstein married two lesbians in the garden of her Pacific Heights mansion.

The more we make ourselves similar or equal to heterosexuals the more they freak about their own identity, and the more they falsify their invented victimization by us who “force” government workers, who happen to be conveniently Christian, to do their civil job and issue state documents registering same-sex marriages. We reveal their lesser angels. It's the same psychology as the plot of *Forbidden Planet* (1956) wherein the audience learns the monster is inside themselves. To heterosexuals with a defensive “Ego” and a moralistic “Superego,” homosexuals play the forbidden “Id.” Homosexuality represents everything “natural” they deny about their “normal” heterosexualized selves. It's easier to censor in others what it is hard to repress in oneself.

As Truman Capote said, “I'd rather be natural than normal.”

In *Popular Witchcraft*, I wrote on page 111:

Again comes the unavoidable theme, and the horror-inducing existential twist, that the Devil rises from inside humans. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's little classic, *Forbidden Planet*, a camp retelling of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, offered the ultimate horror to the Freudian mindscape: the amok monster, unbridled of Superego, turned out to be the Id of one of the space travelers. Sold to television, *Forbidden Planet* is sometimes titled *Id: The Creature from the Unknown*, a spoiler title that divulges the entire plot.

25. ON THE OFFENSIVE (TWICE): THE PRINCE OF REPRINTS

In case the LAPD missed a word, Embry, the “Prince of Reprints,” blew hard and reprinted his most offending articles almost immediately in *The Best and the Worst of Drummer*. In that issue, he also outed readers’ complaints when he wrote, page 64: “We were even accused by a couple of readers of repeating ourselves, when the first chapter of *Epilogue* [a “memoir” by Robert Payne aka Embry] was published in our Book Section.” (Page 64)

In *Drummer* 100, page 4, new publisher DeBlase vowed not to rerun contents the way Embry famously recycled writing and graphics. “A common complaint about *Drummer* in recent years,” DeBlase wrote, “from myself as well as from others, was about the frequent reuse of material.” Unlike Embry’s passive-aggressive style, DeBlase was not dismissive of readers. He was pro-actively solicitous of feedback from *Drummer* fans. He actually read the “Letters to the Editor” and frequently sought comments in person. In an act of smart marketing seeking to avoid blowback, he published a mail-in form, “The *Drummer* Questionnaire: Twenty Questions for Readers,” in *Drummer* 125, pages 97-98.

Through sins of commission and omission against *Drummer* contributors, Embry was a scofflaw regarding reprints that disrespected the rights and intellectual property of individual authors, artists, and photographers. He also misled the readers. For instance, in *Drummer* 41 (December 1980), page 63, Embry and Rowberry pirated my “Astrologic” column from *Drummer* 21 (March 1978), page 30. Not only did the two of them collude in this direct violation of my copyright for which I was not paid, they falsely assigned my by-line to “Aristide,” and, most deceitfully, set out to deceive the *Drummer* readership by rearranging the line items within my “Astrologic” original 1978 “Aries” so that they could recycle and resell what would appear as if written for 1980 “Sagittarius.” In that same *Drummer* 41, pages 43 and 44, they also reprinted without permission two photographs shot by David Sparrow and me doing business together as “David Sparrow.”

In *Drummer* 117 (June 1988), page 55, DeBlase wrote a notice alleging that Embry in his *Manifest Reader* was re-doing material formerly published exclusively in *Drummer*.

This marked a new overt battle in the corporate civil war between Embry’s Alternate Publishing, Inc., and DeBlase’s Desmodus, Inc.

DeBlase thought Embry emotionally unable to let go of *Drummer*. I remember that in *Drummer*’s first few months, Embry exposed his separation issues over his lover who had dumped him in 1975 at the high moment when the first issue of *Drummer* was at the printer. He felt that

1980s *Drummer*, which had outgrown him, also dumped him, and, immediately after he sold it, his separation anxieties re-emerged as seller's remorse. Actually, Embry in his vanity boasted that without him *Drummer* would immediately go out of business. DeBlase tried to keep his distance and forge ahead with his new *Drummer*. He was no fool. But at the point of sale, he had unwittingly insulted Embry, where no offense was meant, when he had asked Embry to sign a non-competition promise not to create, for five years, any new magazine that could impact original-recipe *Drummer*. At least, that is what DeBlase told me during the years he made me his consultant.

In 1998, Embry, the King of Schadenfreude, took a cheap shot at the unfortunate DeBlase who had by then lost *Drummer*. He emblazoned the front cover of his *Drummer* doppelganger, *Manhood Rituals 2*, with the bold challenge: "With the Excitement of the First 100 *Drummers* by Its Originators."

Sometimes the full moon restores the virginity of the Gypsy's daughter, and sometimes it doesn't.

ONE-HIT WONDER

Units of Measure in John Embry's Virtual *Drummer* Magazines:
Embry Had One Vision
in His Magazine Cartel of Cloned Replicants

If a young reader sat down at a table spread with open copies of any and every old magazine title and issue published by Embry, the reader would not be able to tell one magazine from the other without looking at the exact title on the covers. Layout, graphics, font, paper, photos, drawings, writing, and content are interchangeable from 1975-2003. Embry was a One-Hit Wonder. He purposely confused his later magazines to make them all seem like special issues of his only success, *Drummer*. In 1968 when Andy Warhol wrote his conceptual novel titled simply, *A*, he said he wanted the reader to throw the unbound pages up in the air, pick them up, and read them in whatever order came from the shuffle. The toss is the same with Embry's magazines. Each one was cloned in form, content, and style from *Drummer*. Every *Mach*, *Alternate*, *Manifest Reader*, and *Super MR* was a virtual *Drummer*.

"Everything that came after *Drummer*," Jeanne Barney wrote to me on September 6, 2006, "was his obvious attempt to duplicate the earlier magazine and early success."