

## CHAPTER 6

### DUTCH TREAT WHO'S DRIVING *DRUMMER*?

- **Post-Homophobic Stress Disorder (PHSD) and Reparations to Gay Folk**
- **The McCarren Act (1950) Legalizing USA Censorship and American Concentration Camps Has Never Been Repealed**
- ***Drummer*: “The American Review of Gay Popular Culture” and Other Tag Lines**
- **Wickie Stamps, the Second Female editor of *Drummer***
- **Robert Davolt: The Last Editor of *Drummer***
- **Embry’s Unsustainable *Drummer*: The Cancer of Two Lovers, an Office Full of Fistfuckers, and One Colostomy**
- **The *Drummer* Personal Ads Were the “Facebook” of Their Time**

“Sometimes it almost seems as if the universe  
was designed by the Marquis de Sade.”

—Tennessee Williams, *The Night of the Iguana*

Following almost a year of ailments, John Embry had cancer surgery March 16, 1979. If illness can be caused psychosomatically, or even if it is simply symbolic, was the cancer eating Embry’s guts during the Summer-Fall of 1978 and the Winter-Spring of 1979 caused by the LAPD? By that I mean to indict American homophobia as a direct cause of cradle-to-grave gay mental anxiety, physical illness, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The psychosomatic template around Embry’s personal disease foreshadowed the intersection of government denial and medical neglect of the physical suffering and societal tensions around AIDS which was a homophobe’s dream disease.

In the free-love 1970s, we were young and callow enough to meet up

in the crowded waiting room of the San Francisco Health Department and joke, like Stephen Sondheim's "Gee, Officer Krupke," about penicillin and our social diseases which somehow mystically bonded us. In the uptight 1980s, the joke was on us when homophobic AIDS hysteria reminded us that in 1950 Congress had passed the McCarran Act allowing restrictions of civil liberties and free speech, as well as the rounding up of undesirable Americans for detention in existing federal "concentration" camps that continue to be used for illegal immigrants. That McCarran Act has never been repealed. Its threat continues to smoulder perilously under gay culture.

Because of the centuries of abuse queer people have been forced to endure as children, teens, adults, and seniors, we gay Americans might follow Native Americans and American Blacks and demand an apology and financial reparation from the American government for physical, psychological, and civil rights' damage dating back to the first execution of sexual deviants by American Christians in colonial New England, as reported by Puritan William Bradford in his diary *Of Plymouth Plantation 1642-1650*. The Protestant Christian torture and murder that landed on Plymouth Rock with the Pilgrims on the *Mayflower*, including the beheading by Miles Standish of an Indian Chief two years after the first Thanksgiving, could be the premise for a BDSM sex story in *Drummer*.

William Bradford ...legally detailed the crime and punishment of a list of sins common among the colonists: bacchanalian drunkenness, witchcraft, homosexual sodomy, and buggery, as in the case of the young Thomas Granger who for "buggering a mare, a cow, two goats, diverse sheep, two calves, and a turkey" was hanged on September 8, 1642, but only after the mare, the cow, the goats, the sheep, the calves, and the turkey were killed before his eyes.... The score at the Salem witch trials of women and men was 144 accused, 54 confessed, and 19 hanged. —Fritscher, *Popular Witchcraft*, University of Wisconsin Press, pages 43-44

Who knows what caused Embry's colon cancer? But if his were a fictional story, it would dramatize possible cause and effect. In reality, the very large-boned man Embry seemed unstoppable except for illness. That twist of his bad luck was an ill wind that blew some good luck. As editor-in-chief, I had to take charge of *Drummer* even as he cycled through months of failing health, diagnosis, surgery, treatment, and recovery. In 1975, only four years earlier, Embry confessed he had been psychologically "traumatized" when his then lover, a blond from whom he was separated, was hospitalized

with cancer, and refused, for whatever reason, to see him. The profile of his emotional health appeared in his autobiographical *Epilogue* in *Drummer 2*, page 46; in an *Epilogue* revision in *Drummer 6*, page 15; in *The Best and the Worst of Drummer*, page 64; and in *Drummer 188*, page 23.

Embry wrote about “the Angel of Death,” and how “the Big ‘C,’” which was how he termed cancer, was “the bogey man” who had come for his lover Don, and how he had “wished I could exchange places with him,” and how the last time he saw him “was the day that the first copy of the first issue of *Drummer* was first unleashed on an unsuspecting public....The first *Drummer* came off the press on June 23, 1975, Don’s and my second anniversary. The magazine was bound by hand...and delivered with two roses in a gold box to Don’s hospital room.” (*Drummer 188*, page 23)

Jeanne Barney, who was their go-between at the hospital, revealed to me: “The particular lover was an alcoholic who left John when he got sober. It had nothing to do with his leukemia.”

In 1970, Erich Segal’s romantic tear-jerker novel and hit movie, *Love Story*, swept through popular culture a dozen years before its archetypal story would be retold as an AIDS movie. Segal’s plot featured a young college co-ed dying of cancer in the arms of her boyfriend. In tune with Segal, Embry’s romantic telling of his own “love story” differed in what seems a harsh rejection which left him reeling. During the many months when he simultaneously fled LA, fled the LAPD, and fled his unrequited lover, our San Francisco *Drummer* staff had to cope with his bruised psyche.

In health and love, Embry’s human anguish, which touched one’s heart, was a hidden anxiety that stood like the First Elephant in the Room at our *Drummer* office on Divisadero Street. Illness seized him, and isolated him, years before illness, seizing us all, brought us together. Turning fifty, he was a generation older than we who in the 1960s had marched with protest signs saying, “Don’t trust anyone over thirty.” Even with his second choice, his non-blond lover, Mario Simon, to comfort him, Embry, who said he preferred “Nordic blonds,” seemed a lover who carried a torch of “unrequited love” made worse by the fact that the ex-lover, romantically portrayed as doomed, did not die, and continued to live in LA, estranged and out of touch.

I only observed his “love story” from the outside in, but as Embry himself grew privately aware that he too was becoming ill as had his partner, he became, in his public mood swings, increasingly unavailable to *Drummer* for quite some time even before his long ordeal of disability from cancer and stress from court appearances stemming from his arrest at the Slave Auction. On fate’s wheel of fortune, I felt no *Schadenfreude* that his bad year

from Summer 1978 to Summer 1979 was the best year I had working for *Drummer*. The staff had dismissed his biting temperament as simply “very LA” until the night in Autumn 1978 when he sat us all down so charmingly, so disarmingly, and, smiling through, revealed what was happening to him, and how he wanted us to carry on whether he lived or died. He said he had confidence in all of us. He shook my hand. I believed him.

When he returned full-time, Al Shapiro and I were driving *Drummer* in a new direction of an American masculinity wider than the simple leather identity of the “Leather Fraternity.” Dumping Embry’s obsession with Puritan LA cops and local LA bars, Al and I wrote gonzo sex articles about actual guys having real erotic experiences in real sex venues in San Francisco and New York where gay liberation was in full swing. Our switch to a national point of view was noticed by readers and by Embry. We both wrote our New Journalism from insights and experience gained in the erotic life we were living among thousands of leathermen who, the mornings after the nights before, exchanged sexploits over braggadocio brunches at cafes such as the Norse Cove across the street from the Castro Theater. Because I had been one of the founding members of the American Popular Culture Association in 1968, and was one of the speakers at the follow-up American Studies Association conference on October 31, 1969, I was motivated to add an inclusive “tag line” to *Drummer* to brand the our new content and direction on the masthead beginning with *Drummer* 25: “The American Review of Gay Popular Culture.”

## MILLENNIAL EDITOR WICKIE STAMPS

In the 1990s, against all odds, Wickie Stamps became the “editorial manager” and then the “editorial director” of *Drummer* when what staff remained turned to her for help, and she stepped up to keep *Drummer* on life support from *Drummer* 183 (March 1995) to *Drummer* 208 August 1997. Like every other person who ever worked for *Drummer*, she was caught in a web that was bigger than any one of us. Examining the monthly issues Stamps produced under the most difficult circumstances, I have the greatest empathy and sympathy toward her efforts, and toward her who is so talented. She told me that as a woman, she would not herself have applied for the job, but she stepped up when the staff of five, fearful for their own jobs, asked her to deal with the new publisher Martijn Bakker who, she said, quickly subverted her authority as editor. Among that staff, she was the only person involved in BDSM.

Seeking content, she found the archival filing cabinets were in disarray,

and that most of the previous contributors *Drummer* relied on were dead. She could not recruit new writers and photographers because *Drummer* was deep in debt. In a corporate outsourcing move, Bakker hired a designer named Sam Sanchez who, she said, had “minimal if any exposure to the men’s leather scene.” Nevertheless, this outside consultant was Bakker’s choice to pull the final version of each issue together. “Sam had to get almost all of the photo shoots for free from porn companies,” Stamps said. He “... did an amazing job getting what he could for free as well as doing a great deal of writing as well as design work. For herself, Stamps underscored, “I had a great deal of responsibility but virtually no influence.”

With Stamps backed into a corner, queer historians may note that in *Drummer* 188 (September 1995), she penned a minimalist, and, therefore, revisionist, introduction to “The *Drummer* Twentieth Anniversary Issue.” Her editorial set out to track the changing marketing “tag lines” on *Drummer* mastheads, such as “The Mag for Macho Males” and “The American Review of Gay Popular Culture.” However, as she told me, she did not have time to dig through all the jumbled in-house archives or the 187 existing issues. Nevertheless, someone on staff might well have taken a quick peek at the nineteen previous *Drummer* anniversary issues to assess what was standard “anniversary” content. Or what was quirky. For instance, in “The Fifth Anniversary Issue,” *Drummer* 38 (June 1980), ventriloquist Embry conducted a coy conversation with himself, using bodybuilder Greg Strom as his “interviewer,” so he could pen his own personal “parthenogenesis” origin story of *Drummer*, its pre-history, and, to Stamps’ point, its tag lines. She, however, counted down the timeline of her tag lines from *Drummer* 187 to *Drummer* 63, bypassing all the original tag lines in issues 1 to 62. This decision made all that earlier marketing work by all the *Drummer* forebears invisible, even as she and her staff soldiered on in an office surrounded by rifled file drawers spilling over with the institutional history of *Drummer*. Robert Davolt explained the irony of this office turmoil when he wrote in notes he gave to me that *Drummer* had “The greatest photo and art collection in SM/leather history (or at least everything that had survived 25 years of looting by former employees) was sitting in boxes—unsorted, unusable and decaying rapidly.”

Stamps, never fully titled as “editor,” approached a leather-history signature moment for *Drummer* and for herself that evaporated when she produced “The Twentieth Anniversary Issue” which should have been published on time three months earlier in June. The tardiness was not hers. During the nearly three years I was editor-in-chief, I had no control over how Embry managed almost monthly to fail to find funds to pay the printer so that my

issues could maintain their schedule. Knowing some of the ancestral history of *Drummer*, Stamps, who was always of good will, was percipient in inviting survivors such as Joseph Bean, John Embry, and me to write our own eyewitness histories of *Drummer* for her anniversary issue.

However, it was disappointing that circumstances caused her to excerpt my bespoke text without consultation. That, I admit, is an editor's professional prerogative. What author and editor always see eye-to-eye? But it was the first time in twenty years that anyone at *Drummer* edited my writing simply to cut costs, and to fit the page, in an issue cluttered with what amounted to "filler." It was an opportunity lost to leather history that fewer than twenty-five of the anniversary issue's eighty-two pages (32 percent) covered *Drummer* history. Even with Bean, Embry, and me attached to the issue, it seemed de rigueur that an editor who was not disabled by the publisher would have also included eyewitness histories from two of the several founders of and original contributors to *Drummer*: Jeanne Barney and Larry Townsend.

Judging that decaffeinated anniversary issue, a journalism student grading it might ding Stamps' editorial choices which seem cornered by Bakker as much as Sanchez's advertising choices seem driven by Bakker. In the ratio of the few pages of low-budget editorial content to the dozens of high-income pages of video advertising, what could have been a splendid anniversary issue missed its historical purpose within the leather community. That issue flopped because it gave little to the *Drummer* faithful and never became a popular-culture success and was never coveted as a collectible. Anniversary issues existed to excite readers' continuity of loyalty, and to drum up subscriptions. Had Stamps not been hobbled, and had the good-natured Sanchez any instinct for BDSM design heat, she might have helped sustain *Drummer* by making what could have been a rich and glamorous anniversary issue one for the ages. Historically, that was what Embry tried to do with *Drummer* 50. It was what DeBlase intended when he published *Drummer* 100. It's not as if *Drummer* had no autobiographical tradition in writing about itself in special issues dedicated to preserving its institutional memory.

Stamps worked against the odds to fill pages inexpensively, but was a picture really worth a thousand words? A larger-than-necessary reprint of the famous Robert Mapplethorpe cover of *Drummer* 24 failed to give any editorial mention of the historical importance of *Drummer* to Mapplethorpe or his importance to *Drummer*. The photos were a slight to monthly subscribers always demanding new porno. Most likely not aware that the graphics assigned to him had been previously published, Sanchez recycled

juiceless pictures and reruns of large Bill Ward drawings that ate up the pages, squeezing out seminal *Drummer* photographers such as David Hurles (Old Reliable), Mikal Bales (Zeus), and Lou Thomas (Target), as well as ignoring key artists such as Tom of Finland, Rex, the Hun, and A. Jay (Al Shapiro). Was it a ringer of gay culture's feminist bias that the reprinted fiction included several pages by Anne Rice who never wrote for *Drummer*? The rest of the writing was banal bits of "filler." Where one page would have been too much, there were five pages of cliched photographs of two porn stars, Rick Bolton, and the atypical *Drummer* model, the boy-chick Scott O'Hara who once was favored by Embry on page and screen but was so unpopular he was lucky he could suck himself off.

The charge "filler" applied also to the wobbly two pages of the "Drum Media" feature, reviewing books and videos, written by the amateurish "Dyrk" who reviewed himself having his own problems with "new media" when he might better have written a conceptual column of the rich history within *Drummer* of reviewing the arts, including the New York Arts special issue *Son of Drummer* featuring Rex and Mapplethorpe, or even the publishing of early performable BDSM leather plays such as George Birimisa's *Pogey Bait* (*Drummer* 12 and 13), David Hurles' *Scott Smith: Heavy Rap with a Solitary Ex-Con* (*Drummer* 21), and my *Corporal in Charge of Taking Care of Captain O'Malley* (*Drummer* 22 and 23). Was it feminist privilege that injected that interesting, but gratuitous, excerpt from Anne Rice's *Beauty's Punishment* into a leathermen's erotic magazine? Why was the polished Rice served up with a sticky non-erotic drawing that, taking up two-thirds of page 36, was repeated exactly full page on page 39? The three unexceptional and limp "Sex Art 4" photos, having no connection to *Drummer* history on pages 40 and 41, show how Bakker's budget squandered the space in this anniversary issue. Where was a collage of the reader-reflective selfie photos that, since 1978, actual *Drummer* readers sent in as "Tough Customers" to inject into the magazine its grass-roots identity, its street cred, and its face? Jeanne Barney, wrote in "The First Anniversary Issue," *Drummer* 7 (June 1976), that "...an Anniversary Issue [should] be initiative," which means that the issue should look to the future as well as to the past. But that mix was off balance in *Drummer* 188 which failed to respond to its rich history of 187 previous issues.

Further editorial space was nibbled up by the scattershot design whose specifications wasted many column inches and pages. In addition, the *Drummer* "Style Guide" must have gone missing because the proofreader did not bother to italicize the word *Drummer* or other titles in most instances. The failure of form and content in this anniversary issue, which is typical of



most all the other issues of the 1990s, proved that editing *Drummer* required as much respect, expertise, and professionalism as any straight magazine.

Stamps had the distinction of being the *fin de siècle* managing editor. Driving that rising millennial perspective, she might have looked into the rear-view mirror to animate what she could in the soul of each of her new issues of *Drummer*. She had only to look at issues produced by *Drummer* editors such as Jeanne Barney, Tim Barrus, JimEd Thompson, and Joseph W. Bean, or browse through our 1970s San Francisco issues, 18-30, that helped set the bar for leather publishing during that first decade of gay liberation when we were inventing the vocabulary, and the qualitative criteria, with which we wanted to represent ourselves as we uncloseted our leather culture in American media.

Because editors and owners change, I kept my allegiance true to *Drummer* itself where in the 1990s I was not paid in cash but in trade. For the last dozen years of the magazine's run, it cost *Drummer* nothing to exchange my writing and photography for a quarter-page display ad for my Palm Drive Video in each issue. When in 1998, Mark Henry and I met in the *Drummer* office with Davolt, an obviously non-S&M accountant swished in and told me I owed *Drummer* six-hundred Dutch guilders—I mean dollars—for my one little Palm Drive display ad because stories and fiction were worth only sixty dollars. After I politely offered him a new asshole, and explained the ancient *Drummer* trade agreements to him, he ran away in his wooden shoes. That ended that conversation. Stamps, no matter what she tried, faced the same European devaluation of her work. During this time of chaos at *Drummer*, I debated why I even bothered to have anything to do with the Dutch *Drummer* where all the power and decisions and taste were far away in Amsterdam.

Nevertheless, Stamps and I continued to work together. She published nineteen of my newly stylish “frame grab” photographs of Colt model Dave Gold starring in my Palm Drive Video feature *Dave Gold's Gym Workout* as an interior photo spread along with my story “Hustler Bars” in *Drummer* 204 (June 1997). On June 12, 1997, at the suggestion of Stamps' friend, the poet Chris Hewitt, I faxed Stamps an assortment of five of my new and seasoned leather and fetish performance poems which Hewitt liked but whose receipt Stamps never acknowledged: “The Young Turks Dream of Derek Jarman,” “Foot Loose” from *Drummer* 29 (May 1979), “The Real Cowboy” from *Man2Man Quarterly*, “Tomorrow on TV Talk: Adults Who Wear Leather,” and “Rough Trade: Chico Is the Man” from *Son of Drummer* (September 1978) which had won two poetry awards. In 1998, I gave Stamps four of my color photographs of Palm Drive's Mickey Squires, the Colt model, which



I offered for publication in *Drummer* itself, but somehow they jumped into the *Drummer* spin-off magazine *Tough Customers* 12 (1999) where they were shifted from editorial content and turned into a two-page commercial ad selling that magazine.

Did my photos travel from *Drummer* to *Tough Customers* in someone's carry-on luggage? Or was it the accountant's revenge in that underhanded gay way we dismantle each other? Whatever the twist in the case, it seemed forgotten that the "Tough Customers" concept, column, and title were my invention, and legally belonged to me because, as a freelance contributor, I owned the copyright to all my writing and photography in *Drummer* as did Larry Townsend and all the other contributors.

Defense of copyright is a lifelong task that continues after death for the length of the copyright. On page 41, in *The Advocate*, July 16, 1975, the West Coast Townsend began defending his copyright from East Coast publishers printing knock-offs of his writing. In 2008, he died while suing one specific publisher for reprinting his books—and fifty bookstores nationwide, named as co-defendants, for selling those counterfeits. As a widowed elder on a fixed income, he reacted to this alleged abuse of his business and his writing which was his identity. He panicked in his self-defense and created so much havoc among bookstores who had no way to tell an authorized book from a fake, that Deacon Maccubbin, founder of the Lambda Book store, the *Lambda Book Report*, and the Lambda Literary Awards, asked me in an exchange of emails beginning on June 19, 2008, to intervene and calm Townsend down. Maccubbin used the term "scorched-earth lawsuit." On July 2, Townsend finally surrendered and told me, "If you'll tell me which bookstores you have heard from specifically, I'll make sure...[the attorney]... drops them." Eleven days later, Larry fell into a coma July 13, and died July 29.

My column "Tough Customers" was in the same copyright category as my other feature articles. The only "work for hire" that I did as a paid employee was as editor-in-chief, not as a writer and photographer, and even then, Embry fell far short of paying the editing fees owed. In the whole absurdist comedy as *Drummer* died, I kept my silence because none of the new people, innocent of the messy past, really seemed authorized to be in charge of anything. What ancient agreements I had with Embry and DeBlase were unknown, and of no concern, to the third owner and his staff, and that was the core to how "old" *Drummer* business was dismissed by the Dutch *Drummer* that distanced itself from everything Embry and DeBlase had done. My copyright claim to "Tough Customers" would have fallen on deaf ears that had no money to pay me royalties anyway. I chalked it up to

experience, and let it go for the love of the game, and love of the Platonic Ideal of *Drummer*.

Stamps, under stress and duress in the madhouse that was the *Drummer* office, accidentally also violated my copyright by requesting my previously published *Drummer* story “Foreskin Prison Blues” and then, without permission, cutting its 5,000 words down to three columns of text (*Drummer* 186, July 1995) while splurging a half-page on my drawing by the artist Skipper that I had commissioned for that story.

#### MILLENNIAL EDITOR ROBERT DAVOLT

The blond and bearded Robert Davolt, whose life and talents were about much more than *Drummer*, arrived fully formed in San Francisco in 1996. His name first appeared on the masthead of *Drummer* 202 (February 1997) making him the last *Drummer* “operations manager” while Stamps was “editorial director.” To his many friends and fans, Davolt was a hale fellow well met who, despite some vagaries, I truly respected even as the death of *Drummer* consumed him. In a sad coincidence, he himself, like Embry, became ill with cancer. Stamps told me, “I believe Robert was pretty challenged by his drinking which affected his professionalism, but boy did he work hard and when we had conflicts, he worked to flesh them out. I appreciated that.” Mister Marcus who wrote his leather “gossip column” for thirty-eight years in the *Bay Area Reporter* took his own measure of Davolt at *Drummer* and labeled him in print as “Robert Revolting.” In Marcus’ obituary for *Drummer*, he wrote that “Martijn Bakker, the Dutchman was the sole killer of *Drummer* and all it stood for.” This is the turmoil in which Wickie Stamps was trying to work.

Davolt’s “operations manager” title on the masthead of *Drummer* 201 (January 1997) expanded fifteen months later to “publisher and editor” in *Drummer* 209 (April 1998). Between 1998 and 1999, Davolt produced only six issues of the “monthly” *Drummer*, ending when *Drummer* ceased publication with *Drummer* 214 (April 1999), and the business closed on Folsom Fair weekend in September 1999.

On January 6, 2001, Davolt, over lunch with Mark Hemry and me at the Café Flore, personally handed me his “Outline” for his proposed history about the “fall of *Drummer* magazine” which he had, quoting Wagner and straining to be clever, provisionally titled *Götterdämmerung: Twilight of the Odds*. “That title’s a mouthful and too obscure,” I said, “It’s too camp. Make it a high-concept title telling exactly what it is. Sort of what I’m doing on the manuscript I’m writing, *The Rise and Fall of Drummer*.”

Davolt had charmed Embry who fell for his blondness. Embry flattered Davolt in his new publications by listing him as associate editor and by publishing his article, “Guide to Painfully Correct Leather Bar Behavior,” in *Super MR*, January 2000, just ninety days after the death of *Drummer*. He figured he could use Davolt to get his hands on even more archival material from the *Drummer* stash of files that he could recycle in his *Super MR* magazine in which he was regularly recycling my writing with my permission from 1970s *Drummer*. Davolt, however, was too bright to be exploited. Seeking my *imprimatur*, Davolt wanted to run his generational eyewitness past my generational eyewitness and collect my endorsement because he vested me, as he had Embry and his credentials, with a certain authority and continuity insofar as I was so often listed on the masthead as a contributing writer, and, more significantly, Embry had told him I had been a paid consultant to DeBlase. Even so, he and Stamps on their masthead misspelled “Fritscher” as “Fristcher” [*sic*]. Nevertheless, “over the cups, the marmalade, the tea” at Café Flore, I wanted to give Davolt what he wanted for his specific passion project while I protected the more inclusive institutional memory of *Drummer*.

From the first issue in 1975 to the last in 1999, civil war raged inside *Drummer*. Stamps, with her evolving titles, was replaced in *Drummer* 209 by Davolt himself who in his notes for his *Drummer* history explained about Stamps:

As a woman, she felt uncomfortable being the primary moving spirit behind an infamous men’s magazine, and she was unconnected to the local Leatherati. [She had no *Drummer* Salon.] She did not have the required commanding personality...nor did she have the sort of obsession that other editors had. Even as editor, she worked only part time.

Few of the employees were on speaking terms with each other.

Davolt, who claimed himself the champion of diversity in *Drummer*, erred. Being a woman had not hurt Stamps. Unwittingly, she was yet one more textbook picture of the kind of well-intentioned, guileless, and inexperienced persons of all genders for whom, during the Great Dying of the 1980s and 1990s, it was a step up the old career ladder to walk into a legendary gay male publication depleted by the suffering and death of staff and contributors.

With respect to many of the other women pro-active for years in leather culture and literature, Davolt’s reductive gender-profiling of Stamps revised reality so that leather history was fed his fable that she suffered because of

gender issues rather than that she was, as she admitted, not really qualified professionally to handle the editorship nor the office politics. Wickie Stamps would be the first person to admit she was no Jeanne Barney when it came to creating leather culture and leather politics, but her fortitude showed that diversity in leather culture was a general asset and not a problem.

In 1983, I wrote a thought voiced by the narrator in *Some Dance to Remember*, pages 180-181:

[Pat] Califia [before FTM transformation]...and [Camille] O'Grady...held an almost enshrined place in his Catholic heart. They seemed all the more fully women for having transcended radical feminism with the feminist humanism of their art. They were women who had performed the impossible the way Mary became a Madonna through virgin birth. Now that was the first truly, and maybe world's only, feminist act.

While she was editor, Stamps' issues were so argued about by *Drummer* fans that it seemed timely and cheeky and punk-like to satirize her tenure with an unforgivable pun when I wrote in a history of *Drummer* for *Checkmate* magazine (issues 19 and 20, May and August 1997) that "*Drummer* had become a wickless stamp of its former self." Stamps, who is no weakling anymore than I am Dorothy Parker, sent me a typed note on *Drummer* letterhead emblazoned with the tag line "America's Original Leather Magazine"—which is an odd choice of self-identity coming from a Dutch-owned magazine. Writing on September 9, 1997, she zinged back: "Jack, Congratulations on your piece in *Checkmate*. Keep up the good work. Sincerely, Wickless Stamps."

If satiric awards were given for the "Worst Issue of *Drummer*," Editorial Director, Wickie Stamps, and Operations Manager, Robert Davolt, might be the unwitting winners for *Drummer* issue 201. Curious queer historians seeking internal evidence based on "form and content" might compare the arguably "Most Perfect Issue of *Drummer*," *Drummer* 21 (March 1978), with John Embry's reader-rejected *Drummer* 9 (October 1976) and Martijn Bakker's commercial sellout, *Drummer* 201 (January 1997), which are tied for the "Worst Issue of *Drummer*."

Differences of esthetic opinion aside, Wickie Stamps was a good sport, and a valuable eyewitness of what working at *Drummer* was on her watch. Her initial response when I queried her about an interview on Facebook, January 5, 2011: "Ask away. Glad you are documenting *Drummer*." We accomplished our professional accord when she and I conversed frankly by

email on January 20, 2011. Her stylized observations are her own subjective point of view and are quoted verbatim, all lower case, minus conventional italics.

#### WICKIE STAMPS' EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY ABOUT HERSELF, DAVOLT, AND THE DEATH OF *DRUMMER*

**FRITSCHER:** Wickie, Thank you for switching us from Facebook to personal email. As a gay historian, and as a journalist, as well as the eyewitness founding San Francisco editor-in-chief of *Drummer*, I wish to acknowledge all the other eyewitnesses of *Drummer*, of which you are a very valuable one. In this regard, may I ask you these questions, any one of which you may answer or not any way--or with any variable I don't know about that you feel tells the *Drummer* story during its final collapse.

I don't wish to impose on your time or your generosity in responding. Your answers may be brief sentences--or more, if you like. And you needn't answer all of my suggested questions. Pick what you like and feel you know about. I am most interested in your own point of view on specifics you remember as suitable for history.

Who hired you? And when did you begin to edit *Drummer* (begin and end dates and issue numbers of your tenure). Why did you personally and professionally want the job? Any professional credentials you care to mention? Were you a practitioner of BDSM? Had you published any BDSM fiction or features? At what age did you become editor? How did you feel editing a magazine that was in such transition between owners? Did the office staff feel it was heading toward collapse?

**STAMPS:** i was already working at drummer handling advertising. frank strona who i knew from gay community news in boston had suggested to the advertising person that he hire me. while working handling advertising, i walked in one day and there was a note on my desk from the then current editor marcus wonacott thanking me for being supportive of him as a writer. marcus had asked my opinion of his writing as i guess martijn had told him he couldn't write (not sure it was martijn but someone in authority). when i read the note i said to other staff "oh, that's nice." they said "you don't understand, the editor came in and cleared out his desk during the night." i was then asked into the front office and met with mark (can't remember his last name). he was the administrator of drummer working directly with martijn (forgive the spelling). mark who knew i was a published writer (although i did not write for drummer) asked me if i would be

willing to be the managing editor (i think that was the title). i said yes. and there you have it.

by the time i was hired at drummer, i was deeply involved in the united states' dyke bdsm scene. i'd also written extensively on sm and radical sexuality including a sm column for *The Guide to the Gay Northeast*. i was both a journalist and a non-fiction writer and extensively published. i knew mark thompson and john preston personally and had written pieces for some of their anthologies.

**FRITSCHER:** In a feminist era, if a man edited a women's magazine, there would be a certain outcry—even though twenty years before you my pal Jeanne Barney was a great editor-in-chief of *Drummer*. What was your feeling and intellectual take (and/or difficulties) as a female editing a famously male magazine? What might you judge to be your greatest difficulty at *Drummer*? Or your greatest contribution to *Drummer*? Or the best/worst/hardest thing about editing *Drummer*?

**STAMPS:** i knew that drummer had had female editors before. most recently albeit briefly pat califia who was the editor before marcus wonacott. i had been the one that had informed pat of an opening at drummer. personally, i would not have applied for the job because i was a woman. but when mark asked me i knew that drummer was in a lurch. plus as a writer and editor i love text. when i was editor it was in tandem with an outside consultant that martijn hired on sam sanchez. the staff had shrunk from around 11 to about 5. sam was the first outside consultant/designer at drummer. he was a latino gay man who had minimal if any exposure to the men's leather scene. he was a designer and wrote text and basically pulled the final product together. sam and i had many conversations about how to restructure my role or his role but he did not want to be editor. unlike anyone else at the time at drummer i was the only person involved in the sm scene. i saw my role as one of identifying the key photographers, writers, filmmakers and illustrators already involved in drummer and maintaining the magazine's vision. i did not see myself as a figurehead nor setting a new direction. quite honestly, i had very little if any authority as editor. martijn had the final say on everything. i had a great deal of responsibility but virtually no influence. it was a messy situation with lots of vagueness. it seemed that drummer had disconnected from the leather men's scene before i arrived. perhaps it had already run its course. many of the original writers, photographers and illustrators were dead from aids-as was a massive portion of the men's leather scene. the wild abandon including the photos that were

shot in bars capturing real sex had ended. the archives at drummer were in complete disarray. the magazine with in deep debt. there was no money to pay for much of anything. sam had to get almost all of the photo shoots for free from porn companies. the internet was exploding perhaps replacing print publishing. sam did an amazing job getting what he could for free as well as doing a great deal of writing as well as design work.

what was most difficult about my working at drummer was the position i was in - one where i had all of the responsibility but none of the authority. i really liked mark, martijn and sam as well as many other men. but it was incredibly stressful to be in an environment where there was so much anger and resentment against martijn by people at drummer as well as the community.

**FRITSCHER:** Regarding “The 20th Anniversary Issue” of *Drummer*: What was your take on Larry Townsend, John Preston, and Anne Rice in regards to *Drummer*? Did you have any contact with any of them personally?

**STAMPS:** through my own writing i knew john preston personally and considered him a personal mentor. he had died by the time i became editor of drummer. i met larry via drummer. he stayed in touch with me via cards many years after drummer. anne rice. i did not know her. i negotiated with her agent to re-run some of her work that had previously appeared in drummer.

**FRITSCHER:** How did Robert Davolt involve you, help you, not help you, or, what are your thoughts on Davolt? Have you read his own history of *Drummer*?

**STAMPS:** i have not read davolt’s history of drummer. although i found robert a very difficult personality to work with and for. i cannot say that i was always at my best. i felt that he was a man who was deeply connected to the united states’ men’s leather scene—something that had been missing from drummer. we were both close and conflicted. he did his best to work with me. i did my best to work with him. sam who i had been close too became persona non grata at drummer. that ruined our relationship. robert was very devoted to drummer as well as to the men’s leather scene. i think robert helped to try and get drummer back on track. i think he was an editor in the old school way—totally devoted to the vision of the magazine and its role in the men’s leather scene. i believe robert was pretty challenged by his drinking which affected his professionalism. but boy did he work hard



and when we had conflicts, he worked to flesh them out. i appreciated that.

**FRITSCHER:** What is your main feeling about John Embry at the end of the 1990s? Had you any relationship to him? What is the main thing you remember about Davolt's relationship to Embry?

**STAMPS:** i was probably more connected to and friendly with john than anyone else at drummer. i can't remember if he called me or vice versa. i'd visit him often in his offices on 18th street. he seemed to wish he still could be involved at drummer. i liked john a lot. in fact after drummer i consulted on i think it was manifest reader. through john, i learned a great deal about the history of drummer. *i introduced robert to john. i think there were conversations between robert and john about somehow involving john back in drummer.* [Italics added.] i think robert liked john perhaps admired him for starting drummer.

**FRITSCHER:** In the last days of *Drummer*, what happened to the files at *Drummer*? That is, the fiction and article manuscripts, the art work, the photography? Did Davolt give or sell everything to Embry who always wanted to buy *Drummer* back?

**STAMPS:** i was laid off from drummer and robert continued on. so i wasn't around when it closed and don't know what happened to everything.

**FRITSCHER:** Is there anything else that you might relate regarding Martijn Bakker or Robert Davolt or Tony Deblase or John Embry, or anyone else, or anything else? Is there any one thing or two things, besides the Internet, that you think caused *Drummer* to shut its doors?

**STAMPS:** no i think i've covered everything.

**FRITSCHER:** Who took over the editorship when you left? How did you feel about *Drummer* and all the cast of characters when you left? In fact, why did you leave? Were you not paid, etc.?

**STAMPS:** robert was the last person left at drummer. like my relationship with sam, robert's and my roles was very unclear. he finally became what i think he wanted all along—to be the editor of drummer.

**FRITSCHER:** In one word, what was it like to edit *Drummer*?

**STAMPS:** an honor.

Signed: Wickie Stamps, former editor of *Drummer*, author and head of Monstre Sacré, creative coaching and consulting at monstresacre.net

**FRITSCHER:** Thank you for your consideration of these questions. I appreciate all the input you have as an eyewitness on the history of the last days of *Drummer*.

Cheers, Jack

Fed up with all the shenanigans, Davolt revealed the tone of his association with *Drummer* in his collection of essays in *Painfully Obvious: An Irreverent and Unauthorized Manual for Leather/SM* (2003). The unfortunate title reviewed itself: the book was both painful and obvious social twitter about teacups and leather perhaps best suited to the drag issue of *Drummer* 9. The revealing quote he wrote for his book's back cover said: Davolt "... has earned a *paycheck* [italics added] producing *goods* [italics added] for the leather community." But what about producing art and writing? *Ars gratia artis*? Significantly, Davolt mysteriously made no mention of his connection with *Drummer* on the covers of his book, although he specifically named his associations with other periodicals.

Perhaps he intuited that *Drummer* was played out. By the end of the twentieth century, we leathermen came to realize that a once-specific leather culture of S&M had become something even more specific with the advent of kink and fetish categories of BDSM. Perhaps he felt justified felt that as an editor with no budget he could stuff almost anything into the ninety pages of *Drummer* 210 with its dozens of pages of corporate video ads; dozens of pages of tired and stolen photos credited blithely as "From the *Drummer* archives"; irrelevant "twinkie porn" video reviews; and very little editorial material that was not a reprint dumped in as filler between ads. Once upon a moment, Davolt mentioned that under his aegis *Drummer* could not afford to pay good authors and photographers for their work, even as *Drummer* funded him with travel perks. His observation confirmed my experience. *Drummer* had famously never paid the talent. Yet new material from unsuspecting writers and artists and photographers, ripe for ripoff, continually poured in through the mail slot. Back in the day, DeBlase himself had written a "Letter to the Editor" titled "Raw Deal for US Writers," lamenting the historically poor pay for writing erotica in *Drummer* 189, page 6.

Davolt may have lacked that certain *je ne sais quoi*, that gumption, and that enterprise which are the defining stuff of editors aggressively developing

creative material while stroking the talent in the *Drummer* Salon. Playing at being a romantic bohemian and abandoned artist among the Leatherati, he often projected presumptions about *Drummer* loyalty that were not true. Rescue was, in fact, there for his asking from empathetic writers and artists and photographers, but he did not ask, because he himself so figured *Drummer* was about money, and earning a living off art, that he couldn't fathom that payment was not an issue with seasoned *Drummer* veterans and Salonistas who, almost as a leather "community service," created specifically for *Drummer* because they loved the leather heritage of *Drummer*. Truth be told: even at the end of the 1990s, most writers and photographers with a bucket list would have paid Davolt to have their work published in *Drummer* because it was the *sine qua non* pedigree of "Who's Who in Leather Heritage, Literature, Culture, and Art."

As one of many eternal supporters of *Drummer*, I was pro-active in congratulating Davolt to support him in person, on the phone, and in letters. In 1999, *Drummer* was in an embarrassing nose dive and because Davolt was in a tailspin, I wrote him offering encouragement as well as photos, features, and fiction. The letter was dated March 2, 1999, six months before *Drummer* closed shop.

Robert Davolt  
 Publisher, Editor, *Drummer*  
 PO Box 410390  
 San Francisco CA 94141-0390

Dear Robert,

Of all people, having done once virtually alone for early *Drummer* what you are now accomplishing virtually alone, I can understand your one-man battle to keep the pages hot while fighting censorship inside the gay world and outside in the world of distribution. Keep up the good work.

Enclosed is a new video (very *Drummer*) which I shot: *Party Animal Raw*. The ruff-sex themes are included on the cassette box itself. Several photos are included. If you'd like to write up a paragraph or two about the video, please feel free to use the photos all on one page or over a couple-page layout.

Please credit photos on each page: "Tom Howard, *Party Animal Raw*," © Jack Fritscher/Palm Drive Video.

If you would like some feature articles or fiction from me, or more photos, I'd be glad to do a trade for a Palm Drive Video ad

which we can supply you.

Also, on your current masthead, it's fine if you want to continue to list my name, because it links you to early *Drummer*. Could you have your copy editor please correct the spelling of my name. Thanks.

Call if you wish to chat.

Regards,

Jack Fritscher (Phone/Fax Numbers)

If Davolt needed material, he should have queried the huge national leather community he claimed to know through his contest-circuit travels and his blogs, but then he could not have held *Drummer* and its Mr. Drummer Contest possessively close to his chest for reasons of blond ambition known only to him.

He did not want to share *Drummer*.

He wanted to be Mr. *Drummer*.

With less hubris, with telecommunications, and with less of his own so-called "*Drummer* travel" funded from *Drummer*'s cash so he could party nationwide, Davolt could have evolved and driven *Drummer* from the printed page onto the Internet screen featuring text, photos, drawings, social media personals, and videos, and become the biggest hero in *Drummer* history. It was Davolt's millennial chance in the generational change at *Drummer*, and he blew it. So why blame the Dutch? If I was able against all odds to produce *Drummer* under John Embry, Davolt should not have been stopped by the lesser of two evils, Martijn Bakker.

When Stamps met Davolt, their biggest misstep was their imitation of Embry in reprinting old material, and not developing original articles, erotic stories, media reviews, and reader-reflecting photography specifically for the new 1990s *Drummer* audience, whether funded by Bakker or not. All great underground mags, especially in a *fin de siècle* characterized by punchy little "zines," were art created on a shoestring. In the 1970s, we artists who were writers, designers, and photographers created the golden age of *Drummer*, which had begun in 1972 as a trial-balloon zine, produced on a budget of thin air, talent, sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll.

Even the front cover of *Drummer* 201 was a corporate sell-out. It was a commercial photo from Falcon Video that was nothing more than a corporate ad. Was there a kick-back for such product placement? Traditionally, previous *Drummer* covers featuring a film, such as *Sextool* or *Born to Raise Hell* or *Pec Stud in Black Rubber*, were sourced not from corporate entities but from grass-roots artists with boutique studios. With no editor funded to

acquire and vet genuine leather content, this cover suffered a disconnect in featuring Falcon's model "Max," one of the least authentic actors in 1990s corporate porn.

Among the eyewitnesses to this decline and fall was the artist Rex whose raunchy fine art was gorgeously "corrupt beyond innocence" even before he drew the very early cover of *Drummer* 10 (December 1976). In 2014, this pioneer artist, profiled in *Son of Drummer* (1978), and so important to the radical outlaw identity of *Drummer*, recalled how 1990s *Drummer* destroyed its own heritage under Bakker, Stamps, and Davolt. For the opening of his exhibit, "Rex Uncensored," at the CNCPT13 Art Gallery in Amsterdam, he talked candidly to Dutch journalist Hans Hafkamp who wrote:

The [publishing history of] the second half of the 1980s, however, is mostly about the havoc caused by AIDS, and the new prudishness that enveloped the gay world. Rex's work did not fit this new image. When *Drummer* in the 1990s tried to clean up its image by no longer depicting piss sex, sweat, and men touching each other, or smoking, Rex let out a loud "Fuck You" when it was suggested that he should focus on smooth, *clean*, single-figure drawings of wholesome youths between the ages of 18 and 32, preferably wearing the latest male lingerie. In 2011, he was so disgusted with the politically correct animosity toward sex that is prevalent in most of his country of origin that he jumped at the opportunity of moving to Amsterdam. —Hans Hafkamp, "Rex Uncensored, Rex Ongecensureerd, *Gay News*, issue 272, April 2014, page 60

#### *DRIVING DRUMMER FORWARD:*

#### VIDEO PRODUCTION AND THE MILLENNIUM

As editor-in-chief in 1979, I wanted to lift the *Drummer* esthetic from page to screen to harvest some box-office profits that could help fund the magazine. Having shot 8mm films since the 1950s, I pitched a plan to Embry to launch, direct, and shoot an X-rated line of brand-name *Drummer* films in Super-8. *Drummer* contributor David Hurles of Old Reliable had been selling Super-8 sex films since 1974. Embry warmed to my idea, but he could not match it with a believable, equitable, and guaranteed business plan. Once again we agreed to disagree. Three years later in 1982 when consumer video cameras began to be sold, Mark Hemry and I founded Palm Drive Video, and Embry founded his Wings video. Casting and technical problems plagued him as a producer. He soon enough changed his producer's

hat for a distributor's cap because he could make more money with less effort selling other videographers' features through his mail-order business located South of Market where he had moved the *Drummer* office after my departure from the Divisadero Street office.

The back rooms of that new Natoma Street office became the back lot for his Wings studio where he hired cast and crew for several misbegotten S&M scenarios such as *Slaves for Sale* and *Slaves for Sale II* starring Scott O'Hara, one of the blonds Embry said he preferred in his *Epilogue*. As "director Robert Payne," Embry was certainly no Hitchcock filming blonds in peril and most certainly no Warhol filming hot young superstars in his *avant garde* Factory in Manhattan. Conflating the *Drummer* brand, he stepped on his print-magazine *Drummer* to launch his onscreen "video magazine" by naming it with the exact same title as an earlier special print issue of *Drummer: The Best and the Worst of Drummer*. Touting his plastic VHS cassette as a "rare" and "limited-edition" "video magazine," he trumpeted in *Manifest Reader* #17, page 69, "We can only sell 500 of these!" He should have been so lucky. And why only five hundred when video copying costing pennies is an endless resource?

Finding video production a struggle of great technical, legal, and emotional difficulties, Embry saw the wisdom of turning a quicker buck by switching from production to distribution. At Palm Drive Video, I gave him a fifty-percent discount at his newly named "Wings Distributing" where I dealt only with his manager, Frank Hatfield aka *Drummer* advertising director and author, "Frank O'Rourke," the self-professed bank robber and ex-convict, who wrote "Prison Punk" and ran the kind of slippery postal operation that gives mail-order a bad name. Hatfield, who lived in a rental owned by Embry at the Russian River, was attacked there on Canyon One Road by wilding dogs who tore his chest open at the armpit, and he soon after died.

Romancing his erratic video career as Embry/Payne with no irony, Embry wrote about the "Robert Payne Production" of *The Great Slave Video Adventure* in his Wings Catalog inside *Manifest Reader* 17 (1992), page 58. Trying to sound as glamorous as a director from the Hollywood he left behind in Los Angeles, he revealed his daydream and his inexperience when he failed to recognize that no director can simply turn his cast loose any more than a zookeeper might expect a group of monkeys with keyboards to type out *Hamlet*. Ten hours of tape for a sixty-minute feature can create a tangle few editors can cut.

Many of us have, at one time or another, envisioned being involved

in the making of this sort of a video. To those of us in the leather mode, the prospect of putting it together as a director, a producer, a cameraman or maybe especially a performer...is the stuff of which daydreams are made. Robert Payne explores such a dream, then turns his cast loose....The camera rolled through ten hours worth of tape.

By 1990, no magazine could support itself without its own video production company. Tony DeBlase, to save post-quake *Drummer*, teamed up with Mikal Bales' Zeus Studios in LA to star in and create the perfectly titled *USSM*. In 1995, the four-part series documenting gay pop-culture S&M activities ran into trouble with the LAPD, and became immediately censored and unavailable.

As editor-in-chief in the late 1970s, I was pushing *Drummer* forward to the 1980s the way Stamps and Davolt might have pushed it to the Millennium. Besides pitching the idea of film production, I set out to upgrade our leather literary fiction (rooted in my university years teaching journalism and creative writing); and to mix in some leather ritual and spirituality (after the experience gained from a lifetime of Catholic S&M asceticism, and from experiences researching my witchcraft book); and to add practical how-to features (from our communal night games) similar to the articles I had already developed about the Society of Janus (*Drummer* 27, February 1979) and the "Dr. Dick" health column I wrote, beginning in *Drummer* 21, March 1978), from my ongoing interviews with the amiable Dr. Richard Hamilton (1945-1989) who was, with Dr. Earl Baxter, one of the two practicing San Francisco doctors involved with our *Drummer* Salon.

For example, in 1980, Dick Hamilton saved the life of my longtime friend, Hank Diethelm, a post-war immigrant from Germany, who was suffering from an accidental drug overdose that caused him to hallucinate for weeks that he was still a fourteen-year-old member of the Hitler Youth fleeing to the West to escape the Nazis before he was rescued by American troops in Spring 1945. Having dived into the gay American melting pot, Diethelm founded the legendary Brig bar in 1979 on the 1347 Folsom Street site of the earlier No Name bar and the later Powerhouse bar. Like Tom of Finland, Diethelm as a boy was sexually attracted by Nazi style and sexually terrified by Nazi cruelty. Tom transposed his fears into drawings, and Diethelm deflected his PTSD paranoia by using S&M games as sensual counterphobic rituals. In May of 1970, the Denver leather priest Jim Kane introduced me to Diethelm who had invited Kane, David Sparrow, and me to crash with him for a month at his 708 Waller Street home. Three days



later I shot eyewitness evidence of Hank's concentration camp fantasies in my Super-8 color film of him suspended, naked and spreadeagle upside down, so that "erotic Nazi torture" could jolt his balls to orgasm with the wicked *snap* of a rubber ring triggered by castration pliers. In another bondage scene at his next home at 226 Bemis Street, Hank Diethelm was murdered, and set on fire allegedly by a trick from the Brig, in what may have been an assisted suicide, on April 10, 1983.

## TWO ABSENT PUBLISHERS, ANOTHER ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM, AND THE *DRUMMER* WORKERS' REVOLUTION

In sum, I had great empathy with Wickie Stamps and Robert Davolt. Their experience with the absent third *Drummer* publisher was a cracked-mirror of my experience with the first absent publisher.

In the late 1970s, Embry was torn between his joy at the sudden new success of *Drummer* and his patriarchal envy that we younger leathemen who were bringing that success were more *avant garde* than he with his dated camp humor from the 1950s. In *Manifest Reader* 26, page 53, he looked back at his first four years at *Drummer* and, still challenging the staff who saved him twenty years before, insisted that in 1976 he was the one "feeling *avant garde*" despite the retrograde fact that he often plagiarized his writing from straight men's pulp adventure magazines like *Argosy*. He forgot that back then, suffering psychosomatically from the homophobia of the LAPD, he was not a well man emotionally or physically. Unlike his arch-rival David Goodstein who would die of a similar bowel cancer in 1985, he was a cancer survivor inconveniently disabled with a colostomy in an office staffed with ironic ass-fuckers and joking fistfuckers who treated his ambiguously once-and/or-future bag like the Second Elephant in the Room.

In recovery during the summer of 1979, Embry returned to the 1730 Divisadero office from his constant round trips to what was left of his support circle of friends and lawyers and backup doctors he had in LA. He had a new lease on life. He was full of piss and vinegar, roaring with mood swings of pent-up anger over his illness and his endless legal problems with the LAPD. Upon his arrival, we unsuspecting staff stood, grinning like leather footmen, holding what we intended as a surprise gift to welcome him back: the new San Francisco *Drummer*.

Hoping to make him better, we made *Drummer* better. During his ordeal, we, with instinct and impulse and subtlety, had driven the magazine forward from his unsustainable fixation on LA politics, camp humor, frenemy feuds, and mail-order gimmicks to the participatory New Journalism

and emerging gender joys of the bold new homomale identity and *avant garde* leather scene. It was what national and international readers in the late 1970s came to expect in editorial content. The *Drummer* personal ads were the Facebook of their time. They reveal everything about the hearts and minds of the readers we reflected monthly. The readers drove *Drummer*. In those “Leather Fraternity” personals, the most frequently chosen words of “search” and “self-identification” were *masculine* and *masculinity*.

Embry was a rich corporate LA businessman who misread our editorial evolution as a workers’ revolution. *Drummer* was being created by its hired office staff and by the writers, artists, and photographers who handmade it, and not by the estranged publisher who paid for it.

He realized he had in his hands the hit he had always wanted.

That good deed did not go unpunished.