

DRUMMER EDITORIAL

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GETTING OFF

Bitch bites butch, and vice versa...

BUTCH ENOUGH? *Drummer* Presents Some “Found” Prose from the Red Queen, Arthur Evans by Jack Fritscher

- This entire editorial "Butch Enough?" is also available in Acrobat pdf.
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AUTHOR'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT INTRODUCTION

Produced September 1978, and published in *Drummer* 25, December 1978. This piece is about Gay Civil War in the Titanic '70s. For all its entertainment value, *Drummer* was a timely test-bed for purposeful versions and visions of the gay-liberation dream unfolding. Some misunderstand homomascularity as if it were an absolute. When I coined the term in 1972, I meant not masculinity as a power tool of male privilege or male entitlement, but rather a masculinity whose identity was in traditionally masculine goodness in the Latin sense of virtue, which comes from the Latin word *vir*, meaning man, causing virtue to be the quality of a man, and that was quintessence I sought to define in my coinage.

I published this article written by the Red Queen, Arthur Evans, for a reason of political “authenticity” just as I recommend the “authentic” political analysis of unfolding gender ambiguities made by David Van Leer in his benchmark book of the years between World War II and Stonewall, *The Queening of America: Gay Culture in a Straight Society*. In the gay civil wars of the '70s, I respected Arthur Evans' representing one kind of “authentic” queening and queering. In *Drummer*, I chose to give his voice free publicity.

To me, tub-thumping an emergent and defining theme of a populist homomascularity “authenticity”—that actually existed among *Drummer* readers—was the key ingredient leading to *Drummer*'s success. By “authenticity” I mean something Platonic like: a gay man in a police uniform, with his fetish act together and his head together, may be more authentic than an actual, real, straight cop, because the gay man has the feeling and soul to plunge to the heart of, and understand and act out the quintessence of copness which the cop may not understand because to him it's just a

paycheck.

By “authenticity” I mean the heart of the archetypal best that males do, not the stereotypical worst. Perhaps that should be repeated for the blind-and-deaf politically correct. Flannery O’Connor wrote something like: “To the almost blind you have to write in very large letters. To the almost deaf you have to shout.” Critics should not misread *Drummer* which they are only reading in their rear-view mirror. *Drummer* was about archetypes, not stereotypes.

I was coincidentally predisposed to a sibling kinship to Arthur Evans who was interestingly rather diametrically opposite *Drummer*. Early on, we both were graduate students majoring in philosophy, and working toward our doctorates: Arthur Evans at Columbia University and I at Loyola University, Chicago. Arthur Evans’ dissertation was not approved for apparently anti-gay reasons, and he withdrew from his doctoral program. My dissertation, *Love and Death in Tennessee Williams*, about ritual, race, and gender, was published in 1968 when I received my doctorate. From the early ’60s, we were both activists in black civil rights, the peace movement, and then as gay activists theorizing on the nature of homosexuality. Evans was one of the founders of the Gay Activists Alliance, 1969; representing gay interests, I was one of the founders of the American Popular Culture Association, 1968.

Evans was helping invent the Radical Gay Faery Movement and working toward writing his nonfiction book, based on his doctoral work, *Critique of Patriarchal Reason*, while I was championing masculine-identified queers in *Drummer* and writing my reflexive fiction book *Some Dance to Remember* which, while dramatizing the immense disaster of masculinist patriarchy, eschews both patriarchy (masculinism) and matriarchy (feminism) for something grander—humanism—which is also Arthur Evans’ goal. In some weird way, *Patriarchal Reason* and *Some Dance to Remember* are complementary reading. At the same time, in the mid-’70s while Arthur Evans was working with the magazine *Fag Rag*, I was editing/writing *Drummer*. Both magazines should be studied together. We both wrote about magic and wicca, ritual and culture, in two books. At the same time as I published him in *Drummer* 25, Arthur Evans published his *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture*. His book immediately caught my attention, coming, in 1978, six years after the publication of my own book, *Popular Witchcraft: Straight from the Witch’s Mouth* (1972).

No scholar has yet written a cohesive literary analysis of the gay books written during the 1970s, particularly those written outside the New York axis. These books—as defined objects floating to the surface after the Titanic ’70s hit the iceberg of AIDS—are particularly valuable, because like *Drummer* itself, they are intellectual and esthetic time capsules, authentically in and of the time when gay culture first came queening, queering, butching, and bitching out of the closet. They show modern gay culture self-consciously inventing itself. These books’ texts are not inauthentic revisionist and condescending looks back at the ’70s. In such a literary and historical project lies, perhaps, a grant, and certainly, a PhD dissertation of value.

People mouth the word “Stonewall” like a magic pebble on their tongue, but the invocation of Stonewall is meaningless if analysts, critics, and historians dismiss the ’70s literature and culture as ten years of *gay juvenalia* based on *gay bacchanalia*.

If the Stonewall model is real, then serious scholars cannot pretend—like anti-’70s bigots—that worthwhile gay culture and gay literature only began after the advent of HIV in 1982 when actual gay publishers of gay books first appeared. (Magazines came first in gay publishing.) I mention this because, as a retired university professor who is a veteran

pioneer of gay liberation, I have traveled across the globe to visit places that are the cradles of civilization and culture. In the dolmans of Ireland and the catacombs of Paris and the caves of New Mexico, I have seen stonewalls of early civilizations. Reading our Stonewall Decade should be no less valued and valuable. People should never ignore their own infancy and childhood.

Because some of these thumbnail introductions may be read out of continuity, there will be some repetition, which I hope will be forgiven, because these were written over many years. To illustrate how magazine publishing in gay culture led to book publishing, consider that while editor-in-chief of *Drummer*, I was writing the novel *Some Dance to Remember*. In fact, so integral was the creative experience of the magazine genre evolving into the book genre that many passages in *Some Dance* appeared first in the pages of *Drummer*.

Reporting gay culture as it happened, I assayed the battles of the Gay Civil War that fractured the Golden Age of Liberation in the 1970s. Several reviewers, including gay-culture critic Michael Bronski, actually caught the trope of how I plugged the struggles of gay lib into the pop cultural mainstream of American literature. One of my main influences was John Dos Passos' *USA Trilogy* with his *avant garde* sweep through American history by means of a collage and pastiche of newsreels and headlines and popular culture. Sam Steward/Phil Andros wrote about *Some Dance*, "My God, what a book!... it will be looked on as that period's Great American Novel." The *Advocate* called *Some Dance* "the gay *Gone with the Wind*." And if any publication recognized that gay society was torn by civil war, it was the *Advocate*, which over the years, with different editors, took sides in the civil war—most often the queenly and politically correct.

In truth, *Some Dance* is a romantic homage to *Gone With The Wind* in its sweeping themes and content, in its specific characters and real events, and even in its epic page count because I love novels one can sink into for a week. The protagonist's name is Ryan O'Hara who, like Margaret Mitchell's tempestuous Scarlett O'Hara, is impossibly in love with his own hyper-masculine Rhett Butler, Kick Sorensen All around Ryan and Kick a Civil War rages between the North and the South of "capitalist gay lib" versus "Marxist gay politics," of "sissy identity" versus "butch identity," as well of a dozen other archetypal-stereotypical polarities in the war between "women and men"—and "men and men."

Some of these complexities, which grow integrally from actual history, have been misunderstood by some who presume that *Some Dance* is my autobiography and that what the characters think or do—and what the decade dictated—are politically incorrect things I dreamed up or that are endorsed by me personally which is like beating the messenger, because as an artist who is a writer I am only channeling characters and plots and settings.

Mine is not an ingenuous statement, because it is my declarative manifesto of *ars gratia art is/art for art's sake* as well as of the alpha and delta consciousness I fall into when I write, or the theta consciousness in which I sleep and compose the next day's writing. One of the reasons I have always faulted the politically correct attitude is its lack of talent for, and education to, literary interpretation, and art interpretation.

As Exhibit A, I suggest a look at all the censorship my bicoastal lover Robert Mapplethorpe suffered at the hands of the ignorant in the United States Senate.

Even in the lesbian community which has never understood or accepted Robert Mapplethorpe, I had to beg the *Advocate* on the telephone to get them to put Robert on

the cover as Person of the Year, because he was the most famous and influential gay lightning rod at that time. In a compromise worthy of Solomon, the Advocate divided the cover in half: the left side for Urya Vashit ??? and the right side for Mapplethorpe—not in his signature leather gear, but in, of course, mascara drag.

Whatever. The Advocate is only slightly offensive when compared to the ruffian, unwashed gangs of the politically correct whose unforgivable damage to the art and humanism of gay culture I will till my dying day equate to Stalin and Pol Pot and Nixon. Those far-left Marxist queers are the same fundamentalist Taliban as the far right of religious politicians in their destruction of humanist art, metaphor, symbol, and personal identity. (Let me tell you how I really feel!)

Anyway, Ryan and Kick's tumultuous gay love story explodes with the destruction of their society. As the '70s climax, the Folsom Street Fire, signaling the doom of sex, equals the burning of Atlanta. Quoting *Gone With The Wind* in its film version with the famous rising boom shot of a railway yard strewn with wounded and dying men, I laid out the shocking body count of the first deaths from AIDS. Ryan O'Hara, who thinks of himself as the gay grandson of Scarlett O'Hara, is also called "Miss Scarlett" behind his back by effeminate queens because of his worship of a masculine man and for his writing his "Masculinist Manifesto" in a magazine called *Leather Man*, which is, actually, a parallax *Drummer*, reflecting the exact culture of *Drummer*.

This back-story thumbnail introducing the Red Queen eventually leads back to the emblematic Arthur Evans. He was typical of the chorus I aimed to reflect in *Drummer* which I wanted wide open to all gay voices so *Drummer* could serve the times. I've mentioned how pressed *Drummer* was for reflexive material, so I gladly pulled the Red Queen's "protest poster" off a telephone pole during the Castro Street Fair and slammed it into *Drummer*. This "found" poster satirized the uncivil "civil wars" in gay culture. So many were those civil wars, I have often wondered why academic queer-culture theorists have never yet called the strife in the '70s gay community a "civil war" in gay culture. In 1982, I used the words "civil war" for the first time. For the very focused back jacket of *Some Dance to Remember*, I wrote copy, purposely referencing the opening of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, to orient the reader to what the novel was about. Because we were all movie-goers then, I wrote the copy to read like a movie poster in a theater lobby:

The Cosmos. The Solar System. The Earth.
North America. California.. San Francisco.
18th and Castro. South of Market.
The Golden Age 1970-1982
A Drop-dead Blond Bodybuilder.
A Madcap Gonzo Writer.
An Erotic Video Mogul.
A Penthouse Full of Hustlers.
A Famous Cabaret Chanteuse Fatale.
A Hollywood Bitch TV Producer.
A Vietnam Veteran.
An Epic Liberation Movement.
A Civil War Between Women and Men and Men.
A Time of Sex, Drugs, and Rock 'n' Roll.
A Murder.
A City.
A Plague.
A Lost Civilization.
A Love Story.

The operative line here is, of course: “A Civil War Between Women and Men” and then the purposeful break in rhythm: “and men.” “Between women and men,” it was still the same old battle of the sexes. The new spin was the battle of “men versus men,” specifically of “gay men” versus “gay men” fighting to control gay “becoming” and gay “being.” In short, it was a civil war to define and control the new gay word, *lifestyle*.

This civil war included the very nasty bitch fight between two “corporations”: the Advocate and *Drummer*. I mean specifically the struggle between Los Angeles’ David Goodstein, publisher of the Advocate, and Los Angeles’ John Embry, publisher of the Alternate and *Drummer*, to take over and define the emerging new gay lifestyle. Both moved their battlefield to San Francisco at about the same time in 1975.

The rivalry between the Advocate and *Drummer* created a gay apartheid of artists that exists to this day.

Their rivalry to control and own gay culture divided gay culture and its artists and readers.

Their rivalry, I think, destroyed the very unitive notion of Stonewall.

The two of them, both villains in my opinion, caused rifts in gay American culture that will take generations to heal.

The fighting publishers divided artists by demanding fierce loyalty: if you work for him, you’ll never work for me.

In San Francisco, I walked into *Drummer* not knowing of this Los Angeles quarrel, until John Embry, finding that I had turned *Drummer* into a success, asked me to take on editing his second magazine, which he always felt was his first magazine, the Alternate. The very name, Alternate—like John Embry’s calling his publishing company, Alternate Publishing—was to confuse the brand name of the Advocate.

I refused, because editing *Drummer* was a full-time effort, and I had no more feel for John Embry’s Alternate than I had for David Goodstein’s Advocate, which to most readers in the ’70s was of interest only for its Personal Sex Ads in what the Advocate called its “Pink Section.” The truth at the time was that everyone read the Pink Section” and threw the rest of the Advocate away, while they jerked off to *Drummer*. Even here, I am not taking sides on which corporation, the Advocate “corporation,” or the Alternate “corporation,” was then, or is now, correct.

Some would say the Advocate won the war because the Advocate survived commercially, and is, I think, now a conglomerate owned by a corporate dotcom. *Drummer*, renamed International *Drummer*, was bought by a Dutch businessman in Amsterdam where the terminally ill can be put down, and that’s more or less what happened to the ailing print magazine *Drummer* in 1999.

Twenty minutes in the future from now, all gay art and gay publishing and gay film will be owned by a conglomerate corporation like Disney—which is why I’ve always guarded my copyright on my intellectual property, both in writing and in video, because some day there will be a gay channel hungry—as is every channel—for material to fill its programming. The principle is that everything that is pornographic and avant garde becomes acceptable twenty years later.

The Advocate identified itself with gay culture’s Freudian Super-ego of lickety-

lickety morality. *Drummer* identified with gay culture's sex-driving Id. So actually, Goodstein and Embry were fighting over making a buck off polarities of human existence. Goodstein, so the word went the word on the street of the '70s forced all his employees to undergo "The Advocate Experience." Red Queen Arthur Evans satirized this as "The Avocado Experience." I published his satire with John Embry's blessing, because all of San Francisco was laughing at the "victims" of "The Advocate Experience" which was a kind of "gay sensitivity training" spun out of the movement called *est* founded by Werner Erhard who eventually took a hike amid reports of tax fraud.

Running a gay profile on the so-called graduates of "The Advocate Experience," I offer my own analysis that Goodstein's Advocate Experience, mixed with Marxist-Leninist politics from Berkeley, created the fascistic monster-machine of the politically correct.

Drummer wanted tie-you-up and tie-you-down erotica.

The Advocate wanted to know your, uh, feelings about S&M.

Drummer was alpha-dog, aggro-lit celebrating rough sex with working-class bravado.

The Advocate was soignee sweater essays ranging from timid to outright negative about S&M. In 19XX, I wrote a letter to the Advocate editor, my friend, Mark Thompson, concerning a totally ignorant article about the leather-and-S&M lifestyle written by_____. The tacit aggression between the two magazines, between the two lifestyles, was such that Mark Thompson's partner, the priest, Malcolm Boyd, was given a mixed review in *Drummer* by Ed Franklin of Los Angeles.

I'm not going to detail this civil war between corporate publishers. Let some young student, with a grant, decipher the battle for control of the official gay lifestyle. This apartheid in gay arts and culture, fought out between the Advocate and *Drummer*, requires its own book studied out of research, internal evidence in both magazines, as well as from feedback from discussion panels at gay literary conferences and gay studies seminars. And it is important that someone speak up about this apartheid in gay culture pinioned on Goodstein's Advocate and Embry's *Drummer*.

Drummer, like leather culture itself, stayed below the radar, rather non-commercial, and never acceptable to middle-class homosexuality. The apartheid of talent, from artists to writers, carried from the '70s into the '80s and continues to this day. The East Coast literary establishment, famous for endless sensitive coming-out novels reviewed by the Advocate, wins awards from the East Coast Lammies corporately sponsored by the Los Angeles Advocate which publishes Alyson Books.

Drummer is symbolic of the West Coast literary establishment of erotica, and therefore, of worldwide leather erotica. One needs to follow the DNA of the incest in gay literature to see who's fucking/publishing/reviewing/awarding whom and who's jerking each other off. I can be analyst and historian and artist writing primary literary texts, but someone more objective needs to see why even back in the '70s, the Red Queen Arthur Evans, who after founding the Gay Activists Alliance and forming the Faery Circle, so disliked the Advocate, and had probably little use for *Drummer* as well. Eventually, however, the Red Queen wrote for the Advocate.

Anyway, I introduced this "Butch Enough" poster with a thumbnail about the mysterious Red Queen in 1978. The satire needs to be translated like this. The Zombie

Works is the gym The Muscle Works; All-American Clone is the popular clothing store, All-American Boy, which was at that time considered both a sexy and political thing to be; the Avocado Experience is, of course, the way over the top, expensive *est* experience that Advocate publisher David Goodstein (David Goodsteal) pushed on all Advocate employees to increase their sensitivity, which, of course, turned into political correctness. The Advocate Experience was a joke in San Francisco from the first day any of us heard about it. *Drummer* publisher, John Embry, had created Alternate Publications, and the Alternate magazine, to compete with David Goodstein whom Embry could not abide. As a result of this rivalry, the middle-class Advocate for years has pretty much hated leather and manliness and Mapplethorpe. In 19XX, X wrote as nasty an article about leather as that hideous expose, "S&M: The Dark Side of Gay Liberation," written by Richard Goldstein in The Village Voice, July 7, 1975. Like the Life article about the Tool Box, no gay studies scholar has mentioned the Goldstein article before my mention of it here. It has long been in my collection, because it was published the month after *Drummer* was first published in June 1975, and shows how misunderstood BDSM was in New York by Goldstein, about the same time as BDSM was being misunderstood in San Francisco by Goodstein.

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BUTCH ENOUGH? *Drummer* Presents Some "Found" Prose from the Red Queen, Arthur Evans by Jack Fritscher

Drummer, THE MAGAZINE OF GAY POPULAR CULTURE, has tracked "The Red Queen" in his/her rapier-like dissection of gay rip-off stereotyping. *Drummer* strives to be the authentic chronicle of gay fantasies, realities, attitudes, fads, postures, and politics. We wanted to send this letter from Mecca out to the national and international gay community of men. Whoever is the writer of this anonymous insight, incite-fully pasted up on Castro walls and lamp-posts in the dead of night, deservedly wins our "Golden Drumsticks Award—even if *Drummer* turns out to be next on the (s)hit list! Remember: Just because a guy is gay doesn't mean you can trust him like a brother.

AFRAID YOU'RE NOT BUTCH ENOUGH?

Those who join now will get a *free* enrollment in the HUNGRY PROJECT, a humanitarian program designed to eliminate world hunger by the year 7,000. The HUNGRY PROJECT is based on the brilliant insight that mass starvation is not caused by the greed of the rich but by fuzzy thinking among the poor. As a member of the HUNGRY PROJECT, all you have to do is sign a statement saying you're opposed to

hunger. That's it! Elegantly simple! You get to take a strong moral stand *and* keep all your middle-class privileges.

Worried that the "soft" half of your personality might be showing through? Then join the ZOMBIE WORKS! [The Muscle Works Gym] With our scientifically designed devices, you can make your body look just like a 1950's stereotype of the butch straight male. These wonderful machines were designed by government scientists in Germany during the 1930's. They'll make you look straighter than the straights!

After just a few weeks at the ZOMBIE WORKS, you'll look just like everyone else on Castro Street. No more anxiety over being an individual! Now you'll blend in and look like you came from the same mould as everybody else. Only \$250 a month (or \$200 a month if you work out before 5 AM).

Once you get your ZOMBIE body, you'll want to complete your image with a new wardrobe from the ALL-AMERICAN CLONE [All-American Boy, clothes shop on Castro]. Here you can get a wide assortment of Alligator Shirts specially preserved in formaldehyde since the 1950's and tailored with that tasteful David Eisenhower look.

In addition, you can get blue jeans in six different hues of blue, as well as a fine collection of vinyl visors (in white, red, or green, to match your mood).

This week only, the CLONE is featuring Hong-Kong-Made Naugahyde baseball caps at a special reduced rate of only \$45.00 each. When you shop at the ALL-AMERICAN CLONE, you never have to worry about being a big hit on Castro Street. We know that conformity makes sex appeal.

With your ZOMBIE body and CLONE clothes, all that remains is to build up your middle-class values. For this, we offer "The AVOCADO EXPERIENCE," ["The *Advocate* Experience"], a marathon six-day encounter-group bonanza sponsored by David Goodsteal, [David Goodstein], the multi-millionaire publisher of *The AVOCADO* newspaper [*The Advocate*]. Through 108 uninterrupted hours of intense mutual sharing (at only \$650 a head!), you'll learn that whatever happens to you in life is solely your own responsibility and nobody else's.

-The Red Queen

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