

***DRUMMER* INTERVIEW**

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**THE PASSING OF ONE OF DRUMMER'S FIRST DADDIES...
"MY LIFE WAS
A DRAWING ROOM COMEDY."**

AL SHAPIRO, A. JAY, & HARRY CHESS: CONFESSIONS OF A COMIC STRIPPER

by Jack Fritscher

- This entire interview "[Al Shapiro](#)" is also available in Acrobat pdf.
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**Feature interview/article obituary written June 20, 1987, and published in
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**AUTHOR'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT INTRODUCTION
written April 6, 2000**

A. Jay, Al Shapiro, was the best of my pals and friends. He left New York and took his job as art director of *Drummer* on the condition that I be hired as editor in chief. In his last days, as he went blind, he drew one final drawing, a face, which he gave to me for all that had bonded us together for years. He was my friend in the trenches. Together we stayed sane and created something new in the madness that was on us all at that time. I miss him always. –Jack Fritscher, April 6, 2000

**The interview as published in
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**AL SHAPIRO, A. JAY,
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CONFESSIONS OF A COMIC
STRIPPER**

by Jack Fritscher

Nothing stirs the memory like death. Nothing dries tears like laughter. Al Shapiro, the artist who was “A. Jay,” was one of the Original *Drummer* Daddies. He died 21 days ago. He was the founding San Francisco art director who designed the fledgling *Drummer*’s basic graphic look. I know. He dragged me along in that transplanted, insistent New Yorker way he had, and I played editor-in-chief to his art director when *Drummer* was re-invented in San Francisco, after its escape from LA.

“The publisher’s given birth to a baby,” A. Jay said, “but he forgot to spank its bottom.”

That was our job: spanking the infant *Drummer*’s butt, and teaching the LA rag how to become very San Francisco, which, because San Francisco is the gay Mecca, made the mag’s rising awareness very national, and very international.

And it worked. Many people call those 1970s issues (19-30), “The Golden Age of *Drummer*.” Maybe. Maybe not. As a scholar of gay pop-culture, I’d like to think they were, but as *Drummer*’s chief writer at that time when I was also the editor, I have the interest that a parent has in a child who has grown up. Something Al and I did in those 70s issues put *Drummer* on the map. After that Golden Age of the 70s, what staff changes followed in *Drummer*’s stormy, tempest-tossed office could best be charted by the National Weather Service. Eventually, half of San Francisco was “editor” of *Drummer*, and every reader was either a *Drummer* daddy or a *Drummer* boy, or, god help us, Mr. *Drummer*. Nevertheless, *Drummer* was a force of nature.

Now [1987], under new ownership, *Drummer*’s course is back on course, and *Drummer* enters its Second Golden Age. This is a renaissance, a “new” *Drummer*; but in remembering Al Shapiro, a man’s got to recall that during those first stormy, very embryonic years [a punning homage to John Embry, the publisher], A. Jay was the one calming, creative influence who kept *Drummer* afloat with diplomacy, laughter, and love. He believed, as they say in Hollywood, “in the project.”

DON’T CRY FOR ME, SAN FRANCISCO

Truth is the best eulogy. Talk about positive attitude. Six months before he died of AIDS, A. Jay, the artist, who was intensely visual in sex scenes as well as in his art, went blind. He had just finished what would be his last drawing, incidentally, for a story I was writing. [I have the drawing to this day, 2002. –JF] We often worked in tandem, discussing a particular concept, then each going off individually, one to the typewriter and one to the drawing boards. The night he finished our drawing, he told his lover of eleven years, Dick Kriegmont, that he was truly at last losing his sight. When sometime

later a friend came sympathetically to his bedside and said, “I’m so sorry you’re blind,” Al said, “I’m not blind. I can still see white light.”

ROUGH TRADE IN THE FINE ARTS

Before A. Jay’s physical health failed completely, he let me twist his once-robust arm, and, in the name of gossip and gay pop art history, he agreed to discuss something of the personal and professional comedy behind the mystery of the unassuming artist who was to nearly everyone the very incarnation of his own hot tits-n-pecs cartoons signed “A. Jay.”

That sleazoid incarnation was always comic and usually self-satirizing. Allen J. Shapiro’s tongue was always planted firmly in his, or someone else’s, cheek. If wrestlers and South-of-Market leathermen were his gods, the Slot was his sanctuary, the tits and piss-soaked jocks of the Cauldron were his heaven—and his degree was from Pratt. Let’s remember him in his drawings. Let’s remember him in his own words.

HOW HARRY CHESS GOT A. JAY HIS JOB THROUGH THE *NEW YORK TIMES*

A. Jay: You’re only getting this interview because the *National Enquirer* hasn’t called. That’s always been my main fantasy: to see my name in *Enquirer* headlines six-inches high. “A. JAY SCREAMS INTO PISS-SOAKED JOCKSTRAP: LET ME KEEP MY ALIEN BABY!”

Jack Fritscher: Sounds sleazy enough.

A. Jay: My real baby, *Harry Chess*, coined, no, popularized the word *sleazy* for gays back in the 70s. [A. Jay’s comic-strip super-hero, “Harry Chess,” was also his autobiographical alter-ego.] There was so much we did at *Drummer* that caught on. You and your cigar fetish and your daddy thing...what was it?

Jack: I called it “In Praise of Older Men,” spinning it off a Spanish film, *In Praise of Older Women*, because I knew we were all going to get older, and then—what were we going to do? So, I figured let’s glamorize decades of life other than one’s twenties, which is where gay consciousness has always been stalled.

A. Jay: Then you left *Drummer*, and “*Drummer Daddies*” took off. Funny. Sleaze was once such a virtue. The sleazier you were, the hotter you were. (Check out A. Jay’s “Harry Chess” article on NY bars and baths, “Pigging It in NY,” *Drummer* 23.) These days if you even mention you went to the Slot [Hotel/bath on Folsom] in 1975, no one will exchange precious bodily fluids with you. I can’t blame them.

Jack: Your cartoon strip, *Harry Chess*, long ago, at New York’s *Queen’s Quarterly* magazine made you a cult figure if not an international art celebrity.

A. Jay: Robert Mapplethorpe I’m not. (Robert Mapplethorpe shot *Drummer*’s toughest, hottest cover, the pop collectible “Biker-for-Hire with Cigar,” *Drummer* 24.) Robert Opel I’m not. [Robert Opel streaked the 1974 Oscars, and was later murdered South of Market.]

Jack: You’re not even Robert Oplethorpe (an in-joke character we had created because so many San Franciscans confused the two Roberts to the chagrin of both).

A. Jay: [Channeling Evita Peron] I’m just a poor East Coast boy, risen from the peasant

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classes of upstate New York, parlaying my exotic looks into a marriage with a leading West Coast Water Sportsman, who swears on his raunchy jockstrap that I will be practically beatified after my premature death. [Ironically, this comment about death at an early age was made long before AIDS. Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Evita*, Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music*, and Michael Bennet's *A Chorus Line* were the three most influential musical plays in the 70s including also Jay Presson Allen's film starring Liza Minnelli, *Cabaret*.]

Jack: I can name that Broadway musical in three notes.

A. Jay: *Evita*, forgive me. When I was very young, I wanted to be a theatrical set designer. In the 60s, I moved to Manhattan, went to art school at Pratt [where Mapplethorpe and Patti Smith also attended, but A. Jay did not know them then], and saw every show that opened on Broadway. My parents were convinced that their allowance to me made David Merrick rich. [Merrick was the leading Broadway producer at the time.]

I would have been a set designer too, and maybe never have pursued porn, if a certain older set designer who was in charge of all the hiring at the time had not insisted I sleep with him. I wanted the job on terms of art not lust. He probably did me a favor. I probably wouldn't have cared for set design. Instead, I turned from the stage to the page. I worked illustrating children's books.

Actually, New York in the 60s was wonderful. I never felt any anti-gay pressure. Bars flourished, but I figured they only got raided when they were too stupid to pay off the cops. Stonewall probably happened for no more reason than because some bartender forgot to slip the pigs their roll of bills. Then the gay activists seized the chance to make that night symbolic, thank God.

Jack: You had no personal, family problems with your sexual preference?

A. Jay: I was lucky. I was too dumb to have ever been in the closet. Even when I was in the Army, stationed in Korea as an ingenue-soldier after the war, I always figured sex with men was as natural as wrestling jock-to-jock in high school. Just more raunchy, smelly, oily, and sleazy! I grew up as a wrestler, totally fixated on men with big pecs and fine nipples.

New York has always been Tit City. Manhattan men, and I'm talking back about the Good Old Days of Sex, didn't shake your hand to take the measure of your fist to say "Hello," the way men did in San Francisco. New Yorkers immediately did a two-handed grab straight for your nipples. You wrote it. Responsive tits are a sign of sexual sophistication. First in New York. Now, everywhere.

"Harry Chess" loves Tit Play. All my characters have voluptuous, full-muscled, big-chested bodies, with a lot of chapped tread on their big hot nipples. So naturally, of course, I'm a big fan of bodybuilders and physique contests. I've got a hundred bodybuilding movies that I freeze-frame on the pec shots. That's my artistic and sexual inspiration. Sex and art are one.

Jack: Your comic strip characters have names like "Mickey Muscle," "Pecs O'Toole," and "Lats Lonigan." That's almost like the pro-wrestling whimsey of "Hulk Hogan."

A. Jay: Like a lot of guys, I came out on Stan Lee's Marvel Comics Group of Super Heroes. My characters are man-to-man macho parodies, and sleazy paradigms, of the super-comic heroes. They travel in fuckbuddy pairs. Mickey Muscle is Harry Chess's sidekick, like Batman's Robin or the Green Hornet's Cato. Harry himself I sort of gee-whizzed out of *Li'l Abner* [the cartoon strip]. Some fans say they see the influence of *Playboy's* cartoon strip, *Little Annie Fanny*. I created Harry right when James Bond hit it

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big in 1964 when *Dr. No* and *From Russia with Love* became key events in the 60s culture.

Jack: Artists always appropriate one another. Whole schools of painting, for instance. And photography.

A. Jay: Ain't that the truth. Poor Paul McCartney, or was it George Harrison, writing "My Sweet Lord" based unconsciously on somebody else's "He's My Kinda Guy." Harrison has to pay them royalties for accidentally using something just floating around in the airwaves of American pop culture. "He's My Kinda Guy" is *merde* compared to "My Sweet Lord." They ought to pay Harrison for improving their act.

Jack: No one can dispute that you made your sexy, funny characters distinctly your own. You had a creative life before, during, and after *Drummer*.

A. Jay: To tell the truth, I identify more with my villains than with my heroes—even though Harry Chess is my alter-ego. Villains are always more colorful. S&M, after all, is chiefly about villainous tops working over bottoms. Anyway, my villains are sort of a cross between my Id, Telly Savalas, and Yul Brynner, with a sideswipe at Ming the Merciless.

Jack: Speaking of Ming the Merciless, you worked for John Embry, founding publisher—along with Jeanne Barney—of *Drummer*, as his first San Francisco art director. He picked you up from *Queen's Quarterly* precisely so he could feature you and *Harry Chess*. So why'd you split *Drummer*? That would have seemed like a perfect alliance: a publisher who was in love with your work.

A. Jay: Don't get me started on gay publishers. Embry hired me right after his whole leather circus fled from LA to San Francisco because of police harassment. Let's just say he likes cartooning. But with all due respect, he thought *Drummer's* readers were 1950s leather queens. Check out all the hot S&M/bondage photo spreads in the early issues that were marred by his insistent insert of cartoon-balloon dialog that made fun of leather. True eroticism and jokes cancel each other out. You can jerk off forever to a photo of a guy in bondage, but not if a dialog balloon pasted next to his face has him saying, "O Dorothy!"

Jack: Maybe Embry liked your cartoon strip of "Harry Chess" so much that he was trying to emulate you and how you basically invented "the gay cartoon strip." He loved typesetting those cartoon balloons he wrote and pasted down on the dirty photographs.

A. Jay: And you! Every issue pulling the dialog balloons off the photos. Embry would say paste them in; you'd say pull them off.

Jack: True. We stuck you in the middle.

A. Jay: Some leather people, in front of vanilla gay people, are embarrassed that they like leather sex.

Jack: So you're saying maybe Embry figured leather was too far out in those pioneer days and needed some humor to snag readers who were slightly embarrassed by something so underground being brought to light.

A. Jay: Stop trying to be kind. *Drummer* was the first magazine for masculine gay men, not for embarrassed leather queens. You thought that concept up. Is John going to kill me for repeating this? I once heard John Embry called the "Marie Antoinette of Gay

Publishing.” He didn’t really have much respect for the intelligence of the readers. Let them eat cake. The same pictures and models, especially the beloved Val Martin, the same tired beefcake recycled monthly for the public to eat. I don’t really agree with all that theory, but I am used to publishers with balls.

At the beginning, John Embry was an innovator. *Drummer* started back after poppers his big [actually poppers in mesh capsules hit around 1966, nine years before *Drummer*] and the leather market was ripe for its own publication, and not just for another underground bike club monthly newsletter. Embry and I did lock horns numerous times, but I do give him credit for giving me, as A. Jay, great exposure, and an opportunity to do my art-director thing for two years. I did uncover budding genius artists like Matt and Domino. [Domino’s first West Coast show opened March 24, 1979. –JF] Embry, as the cartoon fanatic he is, had the good taste of recognizing the pulling power of my “Harry Chess” and taking it on. Also Embry picked up Bill Ward’s wonderful cartoon panels, *Drum*, before he took on “Harry Chess.” So as a fan of gay cartoons, he did some real good.

Jack: How did you launch “Harry Chess”?

A. Jay: *Harry Chess* got started because one of the world’s most daring publishers, Clark Polak, put an ad in the *New York Times* 25 years ago, saying he needed an art director for his gay magazine. He actually used the word *gay* in the ad! He nearly caused a couple hundred heart attacks at the *Times* when they found out what it meant. Anyway, I was considering drawing a gay comic strip then, so I proposed *Harry Chess* to him.

Jack: The rest is gay pop history.

A. Jay: Back in those closeted days, Clark dared to put in a special slipsheet mailed *only* to his subscribers. Frontal nudes. No sucking and fucking. Men who bought his mag—called: guess what, guys, *DRUM*—on the news stand missed out on that hot stuff. How times have changed! I did *Harry* in *Drum* for five or six years. One episode a month. Clark reprinted the whole thing once as a pocket book.

Jack: That would have been *The Original Adventures of Harry Chess*. It’s now out of print. A collector’s item, right?

A. Jay: I wish I had a couple dozen copies. Don’t you love researching the dirt of gay popular-culture history?

Jack: Only when it’s not bitchy or revisionist.

A. Jay: If you think that, tonight you’re not going to get a hardon. I’ll have to get out my voodoo teddy bear again....Uh, let me see, where was I in *The Decline and Fall of Practically Everybody Who Was Anybody*? Oh yeah. Like Sebastian Venable, you see, I traveled a lot. I left *Drum* for a year to live in Mexico City for the 1968 Olympics. Sniffing around the wrestlers, picking up used international jockstraps, and pumping my tits up at the local gym. Always hoping the yummy bodybuilder and movie star, Jorge Rivera, the Mexican Steve Reeves, would come in and sit on my face.

While I was feasting on dark meat, *Drum* magazine died. Clark chose to move on to something better that made him, I think, rich. So *Harry Chess* became “Little Orphan Harry.” Then Hans Ebensten told me about *Queen’s Quarterly*. Can you imagine a mag being called that in 1987? Back then you could. Anyway, publisher George DeSantis hired me freelance and *Harry* had a new home.

I talked George into changing his title to *QQ* to try to butch it up. I could tell sissies were on the way out and sleaze-macho was on its way in.

DeSantis then started two more mags: *Body* and *Ciao*. DeSantis was a great

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publisher. A kind man. I learned a great deal from him about magazine production, which prepared me, really, to take over the art direction of *Drummer*.

Jack: Jockstraps, wrestling, watersports, tits, bondage, and, lately, anal action, are all very big in *Harry Chess*; yet behind the storyboard runs a satirical political consciousness. You took on the whole Watergate crowd, especially in your character, Rancid Agnew. [Randy Agnew] You despised Tricia Nixon. And you closed down tight on Ron Reagan, Jr.

A. Jay: Someone had to. Actually, my social consciousness is minimal. Strictly for laughs. Mainly, I was a sex-creature of the night, a Bath-House Man. I loved the Tubs. God bless the Everard! God bless the Slot! May they rest in peace. The society that intrigues me comes out after sunset. I drew from my head. From what I saw at night under the influence of some recreational smoke. I rarely used models. Poppers were cheaper. I confess. When I jerkoff, my fantasies are all storyboards. I see them in my mind's eye with all the sweat and muscle that my cartoon men are based on. I have a boot-box full of about 500 possible storylines for fantasy mag projects. All from my X-rated J/O headtrips. God! I loved the Slot on a full-moon night!

Jack: Have you ever seen one of your cartoon creations appear before you for real in flesh and blood and muscle?

A. Jay: Recently on a local TV news magazine about the joys of physique competition, I saw a bodybuilder who was my ultimate fantasy: handsome, big, muscular, enormous pecs, and hard nipples. He was like one of my drawings up there pumping iron on screen. Omigod! So there I was, even in my [HIV] condition, experiencing the Ultimate 20th-Century Version of a High-Tech Religious Experience. Me, a grown man, kneeling in front of a Video Screen, playing with my own tits, and beating my dick with my face six inches from the tube. See this glorious complexion ruined by video-burn? Video cassettes. Now there's safe sex.

Jack: Your *Harry Chess* style would be great as animation. You maybe should have considered video-producing your own *Harry* adventures.

A. Jay: Too expensive. But the same is true of Tom of Finland.

Jack: Remember what fun we had that supper with him telling us how he started drawing bondage-and-piss pictures of cops when he was five years old?

A. Jay: He'd be killer if his men were animated. The future of Gay Erotic Art is in video.

Jack: Someone has already made an underground video of the drawings of Martin of Holland, zooming in for close-up detail, pulling back for the whole picture. Hot!

A. Jay: Rex should produce a video of his drawings. You should film it. The world needs it. [Later I did direct and film *The Rex Video Gallery: Corrupt Beyond Innocence*. -JF] It's funny that most erotic artists are rotten businessmen. Tom of Finland is finally getting exhibited—and paid—after being pirated all these years.

Jack: What about other erotic artists? Any particular favorite?

A. Jay: Astaire never tells who his favorite partner is. All I'll say is that I get off on erotic drawings—by other guys. When I put pencil to paper to draw out the fantasy that turned me on, I lose my personal hardon for my own work. That's probably true of all artists. I get too critical about technique and all that jazz.

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Truthfully, I marvel at Rex's patient, technical aplomb and his sleazy hyper-male content. I like the work of Zak, Neal Bate, and the fabulous Harry Bush. I think Jim French is a double genius: first as a pencil artist, second as a photographer. French, who is Colt Studio, would be the first to admit he's influenced by the Vargas and Petty Girl style.

[Alberto Vargas and George Petty, two distinct artists, working from the 30s and into the 50s, each in his own way created the image of the great American Pin-Up Girl by inventing a perspective that combined the best elements of several models, mainly by shrinking the head and lengthening the torso and legs to increase the sex appeal. Vargas became associated with *Playboy* and the Petty Girl was for twenty years a fixture in *Esquire*. As a result, much of the most accomplished and popular gay drawing—including Tom of Finland—was influenced by these pin-ups of idealized feminine females that led the way to idealized masculine males. In my own photography of men, I use a low camera-angle to shoot up and bulk up the body and shrink the head to glorify the model, because that perspective is statuesque, idealized, Platonic, and because voyeurs looking at images are usually worshipers who want the image to be more powerful than they are.—JF, 2002]

Those who can't handle Colt's masculinizing of that super-gorgeous American Ideal don't need to buy him, but they can't deny his talent. I think French's images of masculinity are the most beautiful and erotic I've ever seen: drawings *and* photographs. In the same breath, I have to credit Lou Thomas. Back in New York, Lou was French's partner in the first incarnation of Colt Studio. I used to stuff envelopes for them back in Manhattan before they had that big fight when Lou wanted to stay on in New York and Jim wanted to move to Los Angeles to be closer to Muscle Beach. Jim took Colt to California and Lou started Target Studios in Manhattan.

Lou Thomas is of the same caliber as Jim French, with a strong, macho-poetic eye. After I saw French's early work, his drawings as Rip Colt, I went immediately back to Pratt Institute at night. He inspired me to keep on learning.

Of the gay cartoonists, I really enjoy the sophistication of Bill Ward who appears in *Drummer*. I also like the Hun whose exaggerated big-nipple style is raw, sleazy, and similar to mine.

Jack: Ward and the Hun are two staples of my J/O rides as well. [*The Hun Video Gallery 1: Rainy Night in Georgia*, and *The Hun Video Gallery 2: Chain-Gang Gang Bang*]

A. Jay: I'm continually amazed at the ingenuity of Etienne (*aka* Stephen) who can turn out a well-executed cartoon storybook faster than most guys can jerk off. How well I remember the double show we shared together at Robert Opel's Fey Way Gallery.

Jack: As a native New Yorker, you haven't found San Francisco difficult for you as a producing artist?

A. Jay: I love San Francisco. I was told, when I gave up Manhattan to migrate to SF for the Water Sports Man I loved, that San Francisco was a backwater fishing village with an opera, narrow-minded, and too laidback. Not true. It's been stimulating to live here, Dick and I together: one shoe in Pacific Heights and one boot South of Market. Once upon a time, East Coast artists had the advantage of more galleries for more shows: Lou Weingarten's Stompers, Robert Samuels, the Rob Gallery, and the Leslie-Loman Gallery. LA has lost Eons. Chicago has the Brown Bag Gallery. San Francisco, for all the galleries going now, lost a major creative force, and arts patron, when Robert Opel, who contributed so much to *Drummer*, was shot to death by a couple of polyester cowboys in his Fey Way Gallery South of Market.

Jack: Robert Opel was the most naked man in the whole wide world. Everyone

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remembers him as the guy who streaked Liz Taylor on the Academy Awards. Live. On satellite. A billion people saw his cock and tits and ass that night. Over a billion served. He should have golden arches over his grave.

A. Jay: He got his fifteen minutes of fame. That was his performance art. That was his life. Robert was the most innovative creator on the West Coast as far as nurturing artists was concerned. His death was a great esthetic tragedy.

Jack: There's a Used Tool Company now in his former Fey Way Gallery. Robert would like that irony as a following act. I've thought someone should open a San Francisco gallery and name it after Robert Opel. His spirit should live on.

A. Jay: With the golden arches.

Jack: So how do you feel about you and *Harry*, and the future?

A. Jay: Harry and I are going to run off together and take a cottage by the sea. Actually, *Harry*, I hope, will live forever. *The New Adventures of Harry Chess* is selling well. Harry and I will never be rich and famous, just sleazy and infamous. What more could a man ask for from life? I am Harry and Harry is me and we are all together.

I am planning a new cartoon strip featuring Pecs O'Toole and his sidekick, Lats Lonigan. I also plan to start a movement to make the Slot a national shrine. Then I'm going to get really inspired by the couple hundred photos and drawings that are push-pinned above my drawing board. I currently work, as you know, designing magazines and these new video boxes for the gay publisher and distributor, Le Salon on Polkstrasse. You now, "The Dirty Old Frenchman" ad campaign. That's my work.

Jack: What does your lover [Dick Kriegmont] think of your notoriety after these eleven years of partnership?

A. Jay: He's never forgiven me for sending him the photo of myself that I mailed in answer to his *Advocate* ad that brought us together. I was covered in oil and dripping with chains. He thought I was ten feet tall.

I guess that's just my perspective on the way I see life. So how can I help but push that angle in my art? I love big exaggeration that draws attention to little fetishes. I can't help myself.

I excuse myself as being the male version of that scandalous Jayne Mansfield movie of my youth: *The Girl Can't Help It!* She exited life too young, too soon, too....

So tell me why the hell the *National Enquirer* never calls!

Deep in his heart, Al Shapiro, for all his brave flippancy, doubted his work as A. Jay would be remembered. He had that kind of manly modesty. Friends and fans were everywhere. There wasn't much time for surprises left.

"Al, the new book I have coming out in the fall, *Stand by Your Man and Other Stories*, I'm dedicating to you."

"Read me the inscription," he said.

"For Al Shapiro, the artist A. Jay, creator of Harry Chess and Pecs O'Toole, who first led my words to the infant *Drummer*."

It's short," he said, "but true."

"There's a preface page."

"Does it hold out hope?"

"It holds out hope."

"Read it for me."

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I read it for us all.

“...with so much death this side of Venice, the world gives little safe access anymore to unbridled Desire, but Desire’s memory burns in my heart and mind. I know, I swear I know, despite the growing rolls of the dead, the world has not heard the end of us. If and when the last one of us lies dying in some cold fluorescent hospital, I guarantee, I do, I do affirm, the last sound he will hear, echoing from down the long corridor, the sound that will cheer his ears and his valiant heart, will be the first cry of a brand-spanking neonate, a new little baby boy born as were we, gifted innately with our special ways of love, and in him, in that boy child, our kind will find a new Adam and begin the beguine all over again.” * * * *Peacefully, with his mind crystal clear to the moment of sleep, Allen J. Shapiro—with his lover, Dick Kriegmont, at his side, died at home, at 5:29, departing on the white light of the rising dawn, Saturday, May 30, 1987. © 1987, 2003 Jack Fritscher

Drummer Editor’s Note: The artist Rex has announced that a retrospective show of the works of A. Jay will be presented by Randy West at his gallery in San Francisco, September-October 1987.

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A. JAY POST SCRIPT: *RAW MEAT*

There is insight offered when a graphic artist writes words about his work, and how he perceives its reception. In the fourth anniversary issue, *Drummer* 30, June 1979, page 63, A. Jay dropped in a full-column ad he wrote to sell his drawings by mail-order through his Powerhouse Productions.

“A. JAY, illustrator/cartoonist...creator of “HARRY CHESS,” the world’s first gay cartoon strip, now appearing in *Drummer*, announces the publication of “RAW MEAT.” This limited edition portfolio of six solo drawings is beautifully detailed and printed on 8.5 x 11 quality stock. Very suitable for framing. If you are into big guys with big pecs, big nipples, and big equipment—this hot set of drawings is for you! A definite must for collectors, connoisseurs, and erotic fantasizers! \$9.00 for the set. Price includes First Class postage and handling. Send check or money order to: POWERHOUSE PRODUCTIONS, Box 11007 Dept D, San Francisco CA 94101. Allow 2-3 weeks for delivery. These drawings are intended for adults. All orders *must* have your signature stating you are over 21 years of age.”

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