

***DRUMMER* POETRY**

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The Video Is Mud.

The Drawing Is by Skipper.

J.D. Slater Is Dirt! **by Jack Fritscher**

- This entire poem "J.D. Slater is Dirt!" is also available in Acrobat pdf.
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AUTHOR'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT INTRODUCTION



DRAFT VERSION



Written November 6, 1988, and published in *Drummer* 127, April 1989. I wrote this little “free verse” jerk-off piece to illustrate four of my photographs which *Drummer* requested and published. On October 27, 1988, I had shot a two-part video of porn superstar J. D. Slater. The first part was a short-film homage to Francis Ford Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now*. The video, titled *Mud! Apocalypse Again* was based on the texture of my short story, “The Shadow Soldiers,” published also in this same issue of *Drummer*, following its first publication in two parts in the “virtual *Drummer*” of the actual *Man2Man Quarterly* #4, June 1981, and *Man2Man Quarterly* #5, September 1981. For me, after twenty years, the publication of “The Shadow Soldiers” in *Drummer*, the magazine for which it had been written so many years before, was a satisfaction.

The Irish-American J. D. Slater, always a trooper, did not mind when I set him up inside a muddy wooden shed outside on a rugged coastal hill near the Pacific Ocean—and cornered him with my camera which I held on him like a gun. We both kept going until we thought we had edged into something new for the plastic gay video genre that bored us both. *Drummer*, of course, liked the idea of the porn star and the *Drummer* writer creating together on a video, but the real hook, of course, besides the obvious tie-in to publishing “The Shadow Soldiers” was *Drummer* was hungry for the nasty photographs taken during the video shoot.

As research for my ongoing “Rear-View Mirror” series, which also appears in this same *Drummer* issue, written at the request of *Drummer* publisher Anthony F. DeBlase, I had on several other occasions conducted intense audio and video interviews of J. D. Slater telling his tale of his history in gay culture. Those gay popular-culture tapes, in the Fritscher-Henry Estate Collection, are yet to be released.

J. D. Slater had previously starred in many videos including: Wakefield Poole’s,

One, Two, Three; _____ . –Jack Fritscher, January 24, 2000

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The Grunts called him “Dirt.”
Two tours in-country, he had Nam in his blood,
and his blood pumped through the heart of
darkness. He was a demolitions expert. A loner.
He had been a Tunnel Rat, blowing up VC
catacombs. He left Nam in ‘75, one of the last to
be choppered off the roof of the besieged
American Embassy. The polished Brass checked
him out wordlessly. He was silent. He was
bleeding from the eye. Mud caked the soles of
his boots. Mud caked the cleats of his soul.
“Dirt” had been out long, maybe too long.
But that was then. This is now. “Dirt” can’t shake
his need for the adrenaline rush of Nam. Hungry
to prolong his military action, he spends
weekends at various camps around the States
He’s a crack shot at the new sport, the new
national craze, “Paint Ball.”
You say you have a “Soldier of Fortune” fantasy?
Meet “Dirt.”
If you dare, if you have a taste for Mercenary
Military action, you might meet him, dressed like
you, in full camo gear, face painted the color of
jungle foliage and shit. These days, Paint Ball is a
weekend sport favored by nostalgic Viet Vets and
young gung-ho guys who regret they weren’t
old enough to have tasted
the fetid air and action of Nam.
Paint-Ball Weekend Warrior Camps exist.
Rugged men pay their weekend dues, sign up,
gear up, eat in mess halls, sleep in barracks, and
play Paint-Ball war games by day,
strung up with rope as prisoners by captors at night.
For them, hunting each other down, shooting
each other with Paint-Ball guns, splattering
paint across the guts and chests of the “enemy,”
counting their “kills,” is weekend sport.

Not for “Dirt.”
For him Paint Ball is beyond real.
What is sport for some is
F-L-A-S-H-B-A-C-K for him.
Captured, tied hand and foot, thrown into an
isolation hootch, “Dirt” timewarps from the
sport of the Paint-Ball camp to the Mekong
Delta of his heart where his blood, thick as
primal slime, runs to the horror, far beyond the
bright lights of Saigon, into the jungle where
men enter as soldiers and exit as manimals.

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