

## CHAPTER 12

### ***DRUMMER* ROOTS IN THE SWINGING SIXTIES: CREATING AN EYEWITNESS LEATHER TIMELINE**

**The Cultural Revolution of 1968  
Ignites Stonewall Rebellion (June 1969)  
and the Golden Age of Leather (1970-1982)**

- **The Prague Spring 1968: Student Protests against Vietnam War Sweep World**
- **1968 Shootings: Martin Luther King Jr. (April 4); Andy Warhol (June 3); Robert Kennedy (June 5)**
- **Feminist Separatist Valerie Solanas Shoots Warhol and Leatherman Mario Amaya; Reaction to Solanas's "Society for Cutting Up Men" and Her *SCUM Manifesto* Brings Masculine-Identified Men Out of the Closet, and Ignites "Gay Civil War" over Gender(s), Introducing Concept of "Homomascularity"**
- **August 1968: Chicago Police Riot at Democratic Convention: Citizens Fight Brutal Cops, Igniting the Fuse on the Stonewall Rebellion Ten Months Later**
- **John Embry Trashes DeBlase's "Leather Timeline" and DeBlase's Pet Project: the Leather Archives & Museum, Chicago**
- **Guide to Photographs of Some Staff in *Drummer***

Allen Ginsberg's "Gay Succession"  
or, "69 Degrees of Gay Separation"

Walt Whitman Slept with Edward Carpenter.  
Edward Carpenter Slept with Gavin Arthur.  
Gavin Arthur Slept with Dean Moriarty.  
Dean Moriarty Slept with Allen Ginsberg.

Allen Ginsberg Slept with Thom Gunn.  
 Thom Gunn Slept with Jack Fritscher.  
 Jack Fritscher Slept with Robert Mapplethorpe.  
 Robert Mapplethorpe Slept with...

To keep this oral history transparent, I must fold open my “Lap Map to Leather Heritage,” and disclose my own whereabouts within the GPS of this “Eyewitness Leather Timeline” showing how American civil rights culture, Stonewall, and leather liberation built up to *Drummer*.

Many years before there was a John Embry or a *Drummer*, from 1968-1975, I carried on an S&M affair with my longtime friend, Lou Thomas, who photographed me with a 42<sup>nd</sup> Street hustler for Target Studio (1968), and published my writing in his *Target* magazine as late as *Target* 3, Winter, 1982. Leather priest Jim Kane, who was a fan of my manuscript *I Am Curious (Leather)*, introduced me to Lou who had publishing experience in New York. He started Colt Studio with Jim French before launching his own Target Studio. Lou, who was thirty-five, and I, who was twenty-nine, began corresponding in the early autumn of 1968, with Lou’s letter to me, dated September 20, 1968, discussing *I Am Curious (Leather)*, and scheduling our first sex meeting at his studio in New York, which I confirmed in a letter dated September 22, 1968. Because October in Manhattan is unspeakably beautiful, I had long made a habit to fly in for the Fall.

That year, Lou Thomas and I met and played together for the first of many times on Thursday, October 20, the night of the day I arrived at JFK on a flight made memorable when, circling low over the towers of Manhattan, the captain came on the intercom and announced to us psychedelic jet-setters that Jackie Kennedy had just married Aristotle Onassis. Everyone gasped in shock. The captain added that the flight crew would be serving complimentary champagne.

In the American soap opera that was the Swinging Sixties, Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy reinvented herself as “Jackie O” less than five years after Jack Kennedy’s assassination in Dallas (November 22, 1963), nine months after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. (April 4, 1968), and less than four months after Bobby Kennedy’s assassination in Los Angeles (June 5, 1968). The iconic Jackie Kennedy Onassis was escorted by gay men not only to Studio 54 but also to the leather bar, the Anvil. The gay urban legend of “Jackie at the Anvil” was confirmed by her escort, Jerry Torre, in *The New Yorker*, March 6, 2006, page 30.

Earlier, during that thrilling revolutionary Spring season of worldwide student revolution, with the Vietnam war at fever pitch, on June 3, 1968, two days before Bobby Kennedy was shot, Andy Warhol and my friend, leather player, museum curator, and art critic, Mario Amaya, were shot by Valerie Solanas, founder of SCUM, the “Society for Cutting Up Men.”

Solanas was the author of the very real *SCUM Manifesto*. That gave my protagonist “Ryan O’Hara” in *Some Dance to Remember* the impetus to pen the fictitious *Masculinist Manifesto* which, as written in that book, was his character’s opinion and not the opinion of the author who wrote all the characters. (Amaya died June 29, 1986; Warhol died February 22, 1987; Solanas died April 26, 1988.)

Jim Kane, who had introduced me to Mario Amaya, wrote on June 21, 1971:

Dear Jack— ...While playing with Mario [in an S&M scene], I noticed two dime-sized scars beside his spine.... “Oh, those are my souvenirs from the shooting at Andy Warhol’s.” He says that the scene [at the time of the shooting] was so bad [traumatic] that he and Andy shy away from each other...seems the jerks at the hospital didn’t know who Andy was and were going to let him bleed to death until Mario started raising absolute hell about “one of America’s greatest contemporary artists, etc.” That Warhol is alive may be Mario’s (fault) [*sic*]... —l&k, jhk [Love and kisses, James H. Kane]

#### CHICAGO POLICE RIOT (1968)

#### INSPIRES STONEWALL RIOT (1969)

During August 26-29, 1968, not far from Chuck Renslow’s Gold Coast bar, the Chicago Police rioted with Gestapo tactics for four bloody days at the Democratic National Convention, attacking with batons our huge anti-war crowd chanting to the television cameras, “The whole world is watching.” Having been a social worker on the South Side of Chicago in 1962 and 1963, and a recent doctoral graduate from Loyola University (1967), I gladly marched back into the streets because we gay folk knew in our hearts that every protest for black civil rights and international peace was an archetype of our own struggle for gay human rights and cultural peace. Those four days of televised police brutality beating protestors in the streets, and roughing up TV reporters like Dan Rather of CBS inside the convention hall, shocked the nation on television in much the same way as had the television coverage of the vicious police brutality against five-hundred civil rights

marchers on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, on Bloody Sunday, March 7, 1965, a watershed moment so important to gay rights that I mentioned it on the opening page of *Some Dance to Remember*.

In this particular battle in the culture war, however, the main difference was that while Bloody Sunday made the American public a bit more liberal, the Chicago Police Riot turned Americans so conservative that in reaction they elected Richard Nixon as the next president beginning January 20, 1969, six months before Stonewall.

Increasing the degree of difficulty in gay liberation, the uptight Richard Nixon regency (1969-1974) book-ended the 1970s which ended with the advent of the vile Ronald Reagan regency (1981-1989). From Nixon and Stonewall (1969) to Reagan and AIDS (1981), that first decade of modern gay lib, found its only brief relief in Jimmy Carter's timid presidency (1977-1981) which emboldened fundamentalist Florida Orange Juice queen, pop singer Anita Bryant, to use her Christian celebrity to light the fuse nationwide on the homophobic culture war against gay human rights in her "Save the Children Campaign" (1977).

Fleeing the Chicago cops with crowds of fellow demonstrators, including Abbie Hoffman and Tom Hayden, we retreated from the violence downtown in the Chicago Loop to Lincoln Park where I remember my excitement seeing film director, Haskell Wexler, catching in his camera the bullhorn blasts and running fury of the excited crowds of college students, psychedelic hippies, and activist Yippies. As a university professor teaching film, I respected Wexler for his lensing of gay playwright Edward Albee's 1966 play-into-film, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, for which he won the Academy Award for best cinematography; and for his shooting of *In the Heat of the Night* (1967 Oscar winner Best Picture) in which he invented a revolutionary lighting scheme that finally allowed Hollywood studios to color-balance African-American skin tones properly so that movies about blacks no longer needed to be shot, as said back then, only in black and white.

In Lincoln Park, Chicagoan Wexler, acting on his premonition that there would be trouble at the Convention, dumped his tripod and used a shoulder-mounted camera that allowed him, his crew, and his actors to move virtually unnoticed through the surging crowd who all became his cast of thousands. He wanted precisely such eyewitness realism for the climax of his film, *Medium Cool* (1969) which contains the famous reality-check line yelled by one of his crew screaming in the midst of the ricocheting riot about the violence: "Look out, Haskell. It's real!" After Stonewall, Wexler's roving eyewitness *cinema verite* style quickly became the gonzo gay style for the first Gay Pride parades shot on Super-8 film, years before video cameras arrived in late 1981.

When Abbie Hoffman and six other radicals were arrested for inciting a riot at the Convention, the whole country followed the trial of “The Chicago Seven” which ran, parallel with the rising post-Stonewall effect, from September 1969 to February 1970. As detailed in *Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer*, I responded with an essay titled “The Chicago Seven: Art, Politics, and Revolution” for my monthly column in *Dateline Colorado* (March 1970), the diocesan newspaper edited by my intimate friend, the Catholic priest and leatherman, Jim Kane. Seventy days later, only eleven months after the police attack at Stonewall, as the 1960s revolution entered 1970s liberation, the National Guard fired their army rifles into a student anti-war demonstration at Kent State University, killing four and wounding nine.

I mention this background to suggest a revolutionary context for what soon would emerge as *Drummer*: That wild 1968 was a formative year because our youth culture of open-mindedness, sex, protest, drugs, and freedom inspired the 1969 uprising at Stonewall and the 1970s Golden Age of Leather.

Wanting to play in the international sex and revolution scene, I took off for Europe, May 1, 1969, International Workers Day, and the Celtic feast of Beltane.

Six weeks later, drag queens fueled by bootstrap feminism, outed their “don’t-fuck-with-me selves” at Stonewall. Leathermen also acted up in those running battles those hot nights around Stonewall, declaring their own “don’t-fuck-with-me masculine identity” to be valid.

In the leather bars of the 1960s and 1970s, it was as if a “new gender” for men was emerging within the gay culture previously dominated by sissy archetypes that, while legitimate in themselves, needed diversifying. As drag queens needed to out their identity to be their type of feminine, so did masculine-identified gay men need to come out of the closet for their own right to identify as their kind of masculine.

This was the gender polarity as the 1960s became the 1970s. I referenced this exciting tension in my effeminate fiction, “Stonewall, June 27, 11 PM, 1969,” the lead story in *Harrington Gay Men’s Literary Quarterly*, Volume 8, Issue 1, 2007, edited by Thomas Lawrence Long, Ph.D., with the theme, “Nature Is a Continual Drag Show.” The story was also published in the Stonewall Rebellion fortieth-anniversary anthology, *Stonewall: Stories of Gay Liberation*.

While the famous Kinsey Scale accepts the entire range of all heterosexual and homosexual identities, why do some feminist gay males for their own reasons despise masculinity, even in themselves, which seems to others

a gender self-hatred more primordial than hating oneself for being gay?

Hatred of masculinity causes hatred of the symbols and metaphors of masculinity, such as leather.

Some fundamentalist, conservative, and Marxist gays in their feminism, and others in their separatist masculinism, have turned against the tradition of liberated humanism in homosexuality. Their solipsistic agenda of jaded dismissal can be crushing to genuine human identity. Their radical gender politics becomes their total identity. Their politically correct rhetoric has become entrenched social bigotry not just in their heterophobia against straight men, but also their homophobia against masculine-identified gay men whom they exclude, vilify, and bully with their sad, discriminatory, separatist epithet, *cisgender*, and wrongly blame as scapegoats—born this way—for the mistakes of straight men. Reducing a man to his dick is as sick, vulgar, and immoral as reducing a woman to her parts.

The *Drummer* I edited and wrote in San Francisco strove to echo Walt Whitman singing words celebrating homomasculine men without trashing other genders. In modern gay history, *Drummer* was the first mass-media magazine to report empathetically on gay male behavior and desires. This was true in the editorial copy of fiction and feature articles, as well as in the grass-roots voices in the personals ads where “men seeking men” statistically used the word *masculine* more than any other word. In *Drummer*, leather pilgrims sought the holy grail of a masculinity that straights denied them, and a homomascularity that politically correct gays trashed as oppressive.

In the leatherpage.com interview (2000) when Robert Davolt claimed he wanted to focus his late 1990s *Drummer* on gender diversity rather than on leathersmen, he was a revisionist revising his own leather history. He defied *Drummer* columnist, Guy Baldwin, who bravely championed the premise that erotica is not politically correct nor inclusive. Growing desperate to be “beloved” in the GLBT community, Davolt bragged he was doing something “diverse” even if the buzzword meant internally betraying the *Drummer* demographic who paid his salary. When he wrote he intended “radical changes within the magazine and within the contest” at [www.leatherweb.com/hitdrum.htm](http://www.leatherweb.com/hitdrum.htm), he ignited yet another battle in the gay civil war over gender.

That civil war, first fictionalized in *Some Dance to Remember: A Memoir-Novel of San Francisco 1970-1982*, has been fought inside leather-heritage groups as varied as Chuck Renslow’s International Mr. Leather Contest (which was won in an historic first by female-to-male transman Tyler McCormick in 2010); as well as Peter Fiske’s The 15 Association; Harold Cox’s Delta Run; and Inferno’s annual raucous caucus.

*Et tu*, Davolt?

Trying to be all things to all men, he wrote:

The judging panel [for Mr. Drummer] is another radical change. *Drummer* was the first international contest to include a leather woman as judge. In 1997, I invited the first transgendered leatherman to judge an international men's contest. When you think about it, few men have to face and wrestle with issues of gender and masculinity... [He was wrong. *Most* gay men, from boyhood, have to fight for their masculinity to escape the heterosexual "bully box" which dismisses all gays as "sissies who want to be women." Outing gay masculine identity was, of course, one of the essential purposes driving *Drummer*.]...to the extent that female and transgendered members of our community have, so I welcomed their opinion on the panel along with a majority of leathermen. I was refocusing *Drummer* as a men's magazine for leathermen [*sic!*], but this was one opportunity to include the rest of our community and actually sharpen that focus.

Davolt in his dashed-off internet writing-style miss-wrote what he clarified elsewhere. He lacked the finesse of Mark Thompson who, ten years before, had gathered all genders together in his anthology inclusively titled, *Leatherfolk: Radical Sex, People, Politics, and Practice* (1990).

He also lacked the business sense of Embry who, instead of diluting the sexual identity of *Drummer* as did Davolt, would have jumped at the chance to clone yet another sibling magazine, perhaps titled *Leatherwoman* or *Leathergender* or even *Leatherfolk*. In fact, if Davolt had done his homework by studying the contents of all the issues of *Drummer*, he would have discovered that—while he was still a teenage undergraduate at the University of Missouri—Tony Deblase bought *Drummer* and immediately invited leatherfolk of all genders into the pages of *Drummer* during his six-year ownership from 1986 to 1992.

To me as a *Drummer* editor, and as a person who sat next to Davolt more than once listening to him talk in private and in public about his messianic mission, his last sentence more accurately reflects his intent when edited this way:

I was refocusing *Drummer* from being a men's magazine for leathermen, and this was one opportunity to include the rest of the community of leatherfolk and change *Drummer's* focus.



Fatefully, before it had a politically correct forced sex-change, *Drummer* was dead on its feet, if not buried.

Like any corporate publisher responding to the special-interest markets of emerging genders, Davolt said what he needed to say to keep up the subscriptions, and fluff the good will of the leather community which, like the pool of *Drummer* talent and readers, had been shrinking with the AIDS deaths of men, and growing with the gender diversities of feminist subscribers. Who can blame him for pushing his own agenda? Time was never on his side. Not only did skin cancer cut his talented life short, he was late for the 1970s party he idolized when he finally arrived in San Francisco in 1996 when the twenty-one-year-old *Drummer* had only three more years to live.

During all that terminal turmoil around *Drummer*, he was a good guy, with his own good intentions, who crafted his legacy by writing his own obituary as was often the custom during AIDS. (Reported by Joe Gallagher, leatherpage.com, retrieved <http://truetales.org/writings/peterson0506davolttributes.htm>)

Contextually, in 1972, when Davolt was fourteen, three years before the founding of *Drummer*, Charles Aznavour captured the “gender despair” of queer lives before gay liberation with his existential chanson, “Comme ils disent” (“What Makes a Man a Man”), a narrative short-story sung by an Old School drag queen who has seen every fit of gender, and goes home alone singing the lyric, “I change my sex [gender] before their eyes.”

Aznavour might well have written that movie-like song for his longtime friend, Liza Minnelli, who that year won the Academy Award for *Cabaret*, and went on to sing “Comme ils disent” to adoring fans at the Palais Des Congrès in Paris during the academic rise of queer theory around gender in 1992.

In 1975, as the first issue of *Drummer* hit the stands, that 1970s fascination with the new “out” masculinity was one of the many identity themes that made writers James Kirkwood and Nicholas Dante’s *A Chorus Line* the gay Broadway hit of the decade:

Paul: I always knew I was gay, but that didn’t bother me. What bothered me was that I didn’t know how to be a boy. See...what I was... trying to find out who I was and how to be a man. You know, there are a lot of people in this world who don’t know how to be men.

Who knew that issues of gender and homomascularity were stirred into Broadway musical comedy? Or into a leather magazine that was more than pornographic?



In my analysis, *Drummer* was the first gay magazine to drop gay “youth” and “prettiness”—and *Queen’s Quarterly* attitude—and head toward the fresh “de-forming” queer edge where “leather” breaks the forms of “gay being” and “gay thinking” with its progressive ritual, discipline, and metaphor. This “de-forming” leatherphobia has long caused the queenstream to disrespect and fear the cultural sensitivities of the leatherstream. That’s my sixty-year impression from reading, editing, and writing for gay media where the rather paranoid agenda of trashing masculinity is as shamefully common as gay media’s page after page of screaming heterophobia.

Valerie Solanas’ *SCUM Manifesto* and her gunshots, fired into the leather-friendly Warhol and the leatherman Amaya, caused me in my journal notes to draft the kind of “Masculinist Manifesto” inherent in my every issue of *Drummer* 19-33 and in my contributions post-Embry. It also figured in the fictive subplot of gay civil wars over gender fascism among all genders as dramatized in *Some Dance to Remember*.

Truly, it is disrespectful to see Lou Thomas’s homomasculine Target Studio photos reprinted anonymously and labeled “From the *Drummer* Archives” as if those four words canceled his ownership of his own intellectual property by some overriding gay eminent domain. What that means is the editors and publisher in the End Days of 1990s *Drummer* failed professionally in their responsibility to assign credit and copyright, and to return materials. Their appropriations certainly exceeded “fair use.”

At our 1730 Divisadero Street office, the *Drummer* closets upstairs in that old Victorian where I worked were jammed floor to ceiling with art work and photos. When I asked Embry about hiring someone part-time to mail back the original goods to contributors, he used a couple phrases like “no return postage” and “no return addresses.”

Where did all that treasure trove go with Embry’s move to Harriet Street, and every move of office thereafter?

Ending up with mice and Davolt?

And then sold privately, secretly, to Embry?

## EMBRY’S GRUDGE AGAINST DEBLASE AND DEBLASE’S LEATHER ARCHIVES & MUSEUM

In the 1990s, Embry often scorned the Leather Archives & Museum because he hated any competition in collecting the art objects and ephemera of leather history for which he figured he had first dibs by right of his one-time ownership of *Drummer*. He was always jealous of the older, wiser entrepreneur Chuck Renslow who, with his pioneer magazines, bars, and

museum, outsmarted him at every turn.

Making matters worse, Embry's nemesis, Deblase, named Renslow as the spearhead founder of the LA&M in his open letter to the leather community, "The Leather Archives & Museum" (*Drummer* 157 (August 1992) page 32. A second official announcement of the establishment of the Leather Archives & Museum appeared in *Drummer* 159 (December 1992), page 24 with the headline: "Leather Community Announces Establishment of Leather Archives & Museum."

The LA&M was seed-funded by Chuck Renslow's International Mr. Leather organization whose money-making IML Contest rivaled Embry's unintentionally non-profit Mr. Drummer Contest. Was Embry bewitched, bothered, and begrudging? Was he suddenly seeing competition for the spoils? Was his fantasy of hoarding a leather archive of endlessly republishable free art and writing suddenly impeded? Ultimately, Deblase outfoxed Embry. Despite Embry's entitled tactics, the LA&M created its own gravitas as an organized, professional repository of gay leather heritage. Always trashing his Blacklist enemies, Embry revealed his own private land grab of the estate treasures of quick and dead leatherfolks. He was a ventriloquist who put words into the mouth of the great British artist Bill Ward, who was no puppet, when he outrageously tried to anger subscribers into protesting Deblase starting up the "leather archives" in his *Manifest Reader* 26, page 98:

We asked Bill Ward to come up with something above and beyond for this issue. Bill is currently desperately trying to get fifteen years of his artwork originals back from the Desmodus group [owned by Deblase] which has appropriated them *to start its leather archives* [italics added] and has refused to release the originals even for publication of his *The World of Bill Ward*. Losing fifteen years of his work is quite a blow.... We wish the very best to Bill, who is hampered in his retrieval efforts by residing far away in England. Bill Ward asks that comments on his behalf be directed directly to Andrew Charles/Anthony DeBlase dba "Leather Archives," 8948 S. W. Barbour Blvd, Portland OR 97219.

Behind Embry's attack lies the fact that his own Alternate Publishing had published the first book of Ward's homomale drawings in the large-format magazine, *Drummer Presents the Erotic Art of Bill Ward*. Embry's seventy-page edition mysteriously had no masthead, no publishing information, no date, and no copyright notices to protect Ward; but it did have a self-promotion ad for *Drummer* mail order. Based on internal evidence

in that mail-order form, page 70, I can date this *Bill Ward* first edition as 1979, after my *Son of Drummer* (September 1978) which the ad pictured for sale, and before Embry's move of office in mid-1980 from Divisadero Street which is listed as the address for the *Drummer* mail order.

In what was a campaign of disinformation done with fun-house mirrors, Embry wrote about himself in the third person using doublespeak in *Manifest Reader* 27 (1995), page 79. His special "news" box interview is datelined as if reported from "London":

British artist Bill Ward admits to a couple of problems. His former publisher [DeBlase and Charles] won't turn loose of his popular comic strip, *Drum*, a feature in [Embry's] *Drummer* magazine since 1978. And his new/old book publisher [Embry's Alternate Publishing] has signed an agreement to republish much of it in a third [large, magazine-like format] book, *The Fantastic Art of Bill Ward*, but [Embry] can't because someone else [Deblase-Charles] has physical possession of the originals. Ward...regularly shipped his originals to *Drummer's* originators, [Embry himself at] Alternate Publishing. When Andrew Charles and Anthony DeBlase, dba Desmodus, Inc., purchased the *Drummer* title, they were given access to the Ward work. Now, both Desmodus and *Drummer* have been sold to new owners, ROB of Amsterdam, who also can't shake the 450 *Drum* and *Beau* panels loose from Messers. Charles and DeBlase.... At the time Desmodus, Inc. was sold to Martin [sic] Bakker of Robb [sic] of Amsterdam, Charles and DeBlase allegedly removed the originals and took the entire collection with them.

As eyewitness editor-in-chief of *Drummer*, I can swear again that in the 1970s at 1730 Divisadero, Embry did indeed keep a closet, just to the left of Al Shapiro's drafting table, and that closet was a "trash heap" of discarded artwork, including dozens of three-by-four-foot cardstock boards, all original "Bill Wards," each pasted up by Bill Ward himself with page after page of his erotic cartoon art for his continuing feature, *Drum*. Over the years, as people pass on, two of those panels have come into my possession. Historically, the majority of Bill Ward's work that was not sent to *Drummer* was saved, upon his death, from a shed in England by his friend Guy Burch who wrote to me about the difficulties of saving Ward's art work as well as finding the copyright owners for other deceased gay artists on November 10, 2013. Burch's scholarly essay on Bill Ward, AIDS, and copyright can be read at <http://www.guyburch.co.uk/?p=2662>.

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Editors's Note:

ROGUES' GALLERY:  
Photos of Some Editors and Publishers in *Drummer*  
and a Gay Defense of Sowing Wild Oats

As a sidebar, here's a brief list of photographs of the pioneer cast of characters who created *Drummer*: An LA photo of John Rowberry appeared with his poem, "White Death," in *Drummer* 5, page 36. There is another leather-cult photograph of Rowberry crawling up stair steps wearing a dog collar at the end of a leash. It was given to Fritscher in 1983 by Al Shapiro, and was published in Fritscher's Gay *San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer* (2008).

There are two great photos of Jeanne Barney: Robert Opel's shot in *Drummer* 9, page 7; and in a mini-dress at the Hawks' 1976 Leather Sabbath where Rob Clayton photographed her receiving the Hawks Humanitarian of the Year Award in *Drummer* 11, page 25.

Gene Weber took the photo of a just-becoming-editor Fritscher that appeared in *Drummer* 17, July 1977, page 11 top, along with, in the same issue, Weber photos of Society of Janus leather priest, Jim Kane, with Ike Barnes, page 9. Weber also pictured Fritscher in his scuba photos of fisting underwater in *Drummer* 20, page 17, and *Drummer* 25, page 91. A second photo, a set piece shot by David Sparrow, shows Fritscher in a jockstrap at the CMC Carnival in *Drummer* 20, page 76, because editor-in-chief Fritscher, pressed by the necessity of invention, anticipated on location how his CMC photo layout should look in the next issue, and acted out what other leather players were still reticent to do in public on camera at that time. This *ad hoc* "improvisation on location" is similar to the photos of Fritscher, after the model did not show, in "Bondage" in *Drummer* 24, pages 17, 18, 20. A photograph of Fritscher appeared in Embry's Tenth Anniversary Issue, *Drummer* 85, page 85, with Fritscher's text, "Smut Is Where You Find It," page 86.

Fritscher published one of B. Moritz's several photographs of the naked streaker Robert Opel confronting LAPD Chief Ed Davis in the Harvey Milk obituary issue of *Drummer* 26 in January 1979. The Moritz photo appeared previously with a second, even more dramatic, Moritz photo of Opel's lovely body striding though the crowd toward Chief Davis in Fred Halsted's *Package* 6, pages 22-23, January 1977. LAPD Police Chief Ed Davis also appeared in *Drummer* 6, page 13.

In a casual photo, Embry appears with his face turned ninety degrees away from the camera in *Drummer* 25, December 1978, page 91. "Why did he turn?" Fritscher asked. "Was it his 1950s reflex of self-defense against being photographed at a gay event? Was it the LAPD arrest? Why

did we publish his faceless photo?”

Fritscher added: “In a priceless photo true to their characters, DeBlase and Charles pose with my sex-playmate, ‘Mr. Drummer 1987, Mark Alexander,’ in *Drummer* 108 (September 1987), page 52. DeBlase also appears with whip, wearing maharaja jodhpurs, in *Drummer* 142, page 69.”

Regarding critical thinking about composing gay history, including his own personal kiss-and-tell revelations such as in this list, Fritscher observed: “Too often when authors writing memoir books, or talking in video documentaries speak of history, they cover their asses and take out personal policies of slut-shaming insurance so they don’t incriminate themselves with youthful indiscretions. They feign a pearl-clutching distance between the false ‘purity’ of their miss-remembered historical selves and their eyewitness memory of, and participation in, operatic, legendary sex that they sniff was, well, tawdry; or, my dear, the cause of AIDS; or never happened—at least to them. They never sowed the wild oats all young men must? That’s the mendacity Tennessee Williams condemned in his drama about the closet, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. That’s the lie that talking heads tell when they deny their own history and shove the true sexual past of their youth into the closet where conservative, angry, old gay men go to rant and die. When reading such writing, or watching such video documentaries, people who are critical thinkers might assess how history is being distorted by the agenda of some fact-changing puritan looking in the rear-view mirror. When watching or reading any documentary about the gay past, including even Joseph F. Lovett’s interesting documentary video, *Gay Sex in the Seventies* (2005), or Larry Kramer’s cherry-picking documentary novel, *The American People* (2015), the viewer or reader cannot help but judge that some documentaries on screen and page are less devoted to honest first-person history than to the second-hand pleasures of voyeurism.

“That censorious denial within ‘politically corrected’ attitude is the basis of most of history’s wrong-minded appraisals about the life and work of Robert Mapplethorpe. I lived the roller-coaster reality of 1970s sex with that bold boy, and with the wild staff and wilder subscribers of *Drummer*, and I was honest about how wild we were in the HBO documentary, *Mapplethorpe: Look at the Pictures* (2016). I am not into any conservative kind of senior citizen’s denial of the most fun we homosexuals ever had. Why shrink from our own history? Why not embrace the true sexual exploits of our youth the way we love the pop music of our teenage past. I sing with the sainted bisexual Edith Piaf, ‘Non, Je ne regrette rien (I regret nothing).’ In my eyewitness experience of the ongoing sex salon around *Drummer*, my *menage a trois* dates of ‘dinner and dancing’ with the likes of Colt Studio star Mark Alexander (*Drummer* 108 cover model) and his bodybuilder partner, Peter Morrison (Colt model “Joe Falco”), at

their home in Venice Beach were not shameful. Those two, like all the others, were worth kissing. They were worth telling. They were indeed some dance to remember.”

In his *History of Our Leather-S/M Fetish Sub-Culture and Communities*, leather historian David Stein, a founder of Gay Male S/M Activists (GMSMA), adroitly sussed out that the unabashed salon around *Drummer* was a hyper-active hive of esthetic, social, and sexual connections: “Fritscher, one of the great *Drummer* editors, seems to have been everywhere and done everyone during the ‘good old days’ of leather.”

