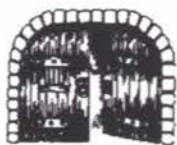


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Checkmate 19



INCORPORATING

DungeonMaster

May 1997

**Animal
Training**

**Building a
Bondage Board**

**Memoirs of
Jack Fritscher**

Ball Play

Scenes by Phil

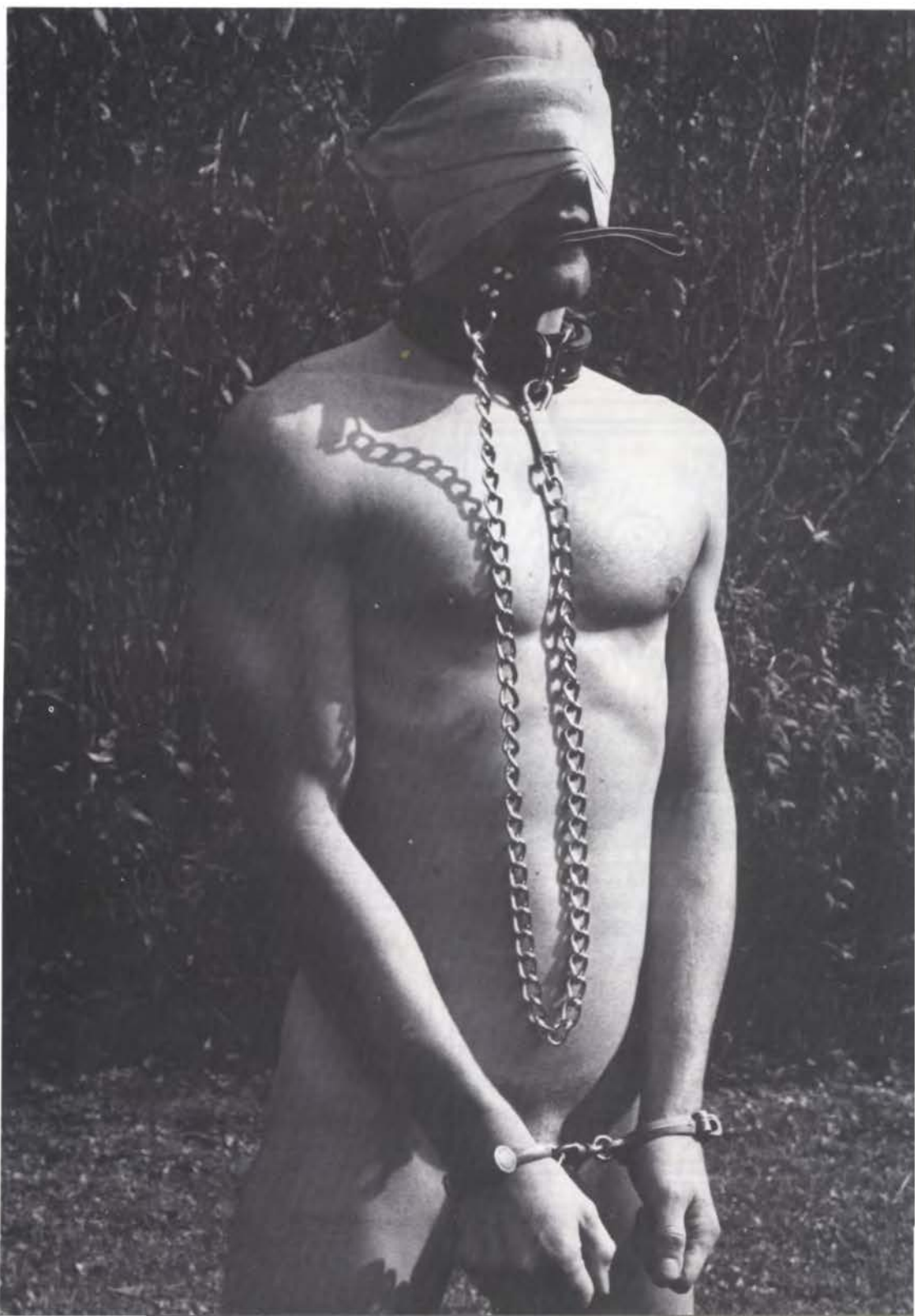
**Terry's
Book &
Video
Reviews**

BBS List

Websites

Spanner

**SALES
TO MINORS
PROHIBITED**



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Missing Something?

From time to time we have received word that *Checkmate* subscribers have not received their magazines. For the most part, these problems have been traced to subscribers forgetting to tell us that they have moved.

Please note that your magazine will not be automatically forwarded to you! The post office will send us an address correction and trash the magazine. We then have to send another copy to your new address.

We require your help by telling us when your copy doesn't arrive and providing a change of address when you move.

We will provide replacement copies.

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Cover Picture: "Don't Bark with your Mouth Full." © 1997, by Morgan

Caution

Every decision a person makes has some degree of risk associated with it. We strongly believe that each competent adult must set for themselves the level of risk that he or she is willing to accept. However, to intelligently confront and accept risk, a person must understand the dangers. *Checkmate* hopes to educate its readers on a wide variety of topics. We will emphasize safe sex with respect to contagious diseases, and safe and sane behavior with respect to all activities, and will try to point out all activities which deviate from generally recognized safe sex and safe-and-sane activities. However, *Checkmate*, Telecentral Electronics, the editor and staff of *Checkmate*, columnists, authors, artists and other contributors to this publication cannot be held responsible for accidents, injuries or other misfortunes that result from proper or improper application of information imparted, or ideas generated by materials in *Checkmate*.

In an attempt to offer guidelines, articles that comment on techniques or equipment will refer to the following classification system.

G: General Readership

This is generally a safe procedure for a novice using good sense and basic intelligence.

TG: Top's Guidance

An experienced Top's guidance is recommended for at least some of the techniques included.

R: Restricted

Novices should be supervised closely by an experienced Top.

X: Highly Restricted

This procedure should be attempted only by an experienced Top.

XXX: Avoid

Do not try this under any circumstances.

We at *Checkmate* do not condone the use of alcohol or any other drug that can alter the Top's sense of judgment, the bottom's sense of feeling, or normal reactions during an S/M encounter.

CM/DM 20 will be published
in July 1997

Drum and Drummer

Memoirs of the Beginnings

by Jack Fritscher

This historical essay was written June 1995 for the twentieth-anniversary issue of Drummer Magazine upon special request of its then-current editor. While a short excerpt was published, the entire document has never before been published. The original was revised in January, 1997 and posted to the author's internet site. In keeping with Checkmate's intent to publish articles relating to our history and culture, I have arranged with Dr. Fritscher to publish this important memoir by a pioneer in the development of our modern gay leather culture. The second part will appear in CM 20. HEC

As the oldest living *Drummer* editor, and as a 20-year-witness, O Baby, I personally here dub that first decade of *Drummer* during the Golden Age of Sex as THE TITANIC 70'S. As more than a mere

survivor, I testify that everything then was very grand, indeed. Everyone on board was a star. We sailed a sea of sex and art, like gods, until the iceberg of a cold plague ripped through the immune systems of nearly everyone who was anyone. Some of us were left rowing in a lifeboat: a small band of survivors. Even before the mid-70's beginnings of *Drummer* and to the present, I have—driven by the scholarship of pop-culture—kept notes and tapes and have served as a purposeful historian of *Drummer* as well as of male-identified gay culture.

As *Drummer's* founding San Francisco editor-in-chief, I added a pointed tag line to the masthead of *Drummer* in 1977: "The Magazine of Gay Popular Culture." As *Drummer's* long list of publishers, owners, editors, talent, and staff came and went, I remained faithful to the concept of the absolute Drummerness of *Drummer* being *Drummer*. Through the years, *Drummer* itself has endured stronger

than any one person and stronger than any attack of censorship or virus.

Where's the New Issue?

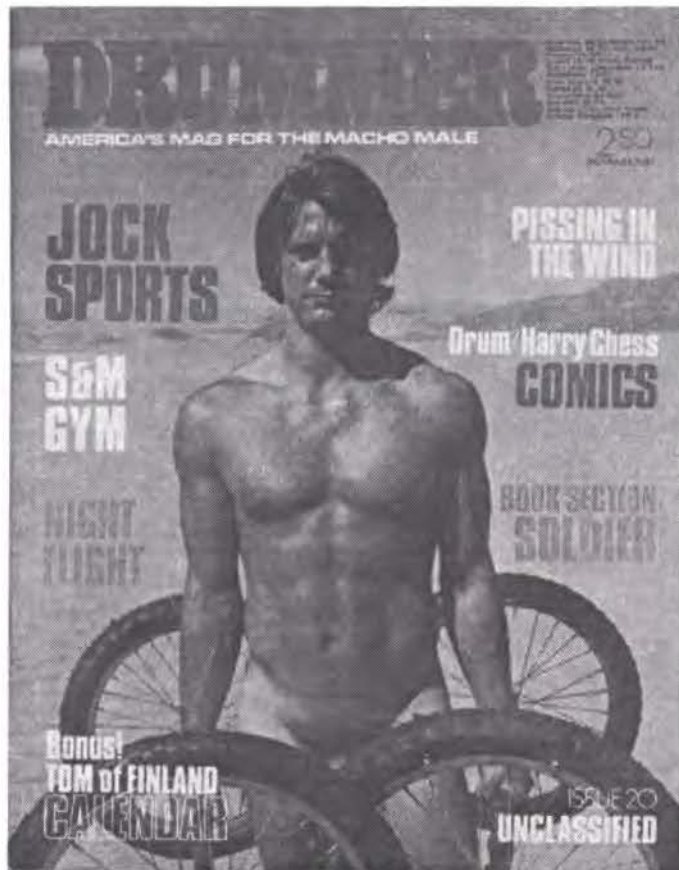
Readers in general and fans of *Drummer* in particular have no idea of how immensely difficult it is to pull together even one issue of a magazine with all its elements of writing, drawing, photography, design, editing, advertising, and subscriptions. In my journals, files, experience, mind, and heart, the publishers and editors and writers—all the vast talents—all sit stored and storied like Indians in the C u p b o a r d . *Drummer's* original art director, the art-

ist A. Jay, more than once called me—with his famous great irony—the Original Mr. Drummer—and then he laughed and laughed because he saw the cultural foolishness of trying to be a lifebuoy for a masculine-identified magazine in a gay world identified with Bette and Barbra.

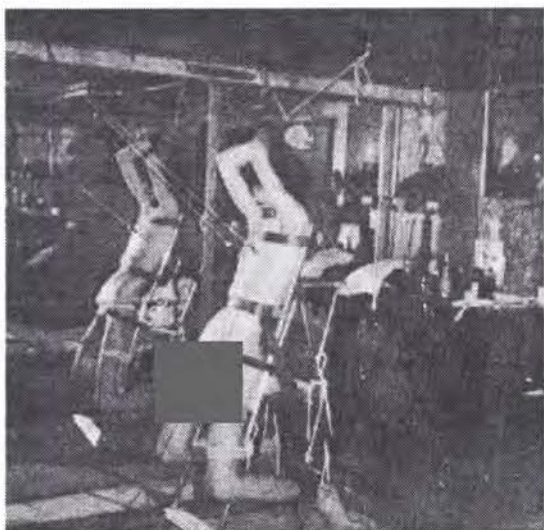
An editor is to a magazine what a director is to a movie. Editor-in-chief is a wonderfully terrible job. At its best, it's collaborative dysfunction—just like opera and pro-baseball. In publishing as in the real world, strong editors who are "nice" are often dismissed as weak, and editors who say "no" are considered to be shits. Publishing *Drummer* ain't never been for sissies. Actually, all persons who have contributed anything to the actual pages of *Drummer* during the first 20 years deserve a small trophy naming them "Mr. Drummer," because Drummerness is more than a leather sash. For instance, *Drummer's* premiere artist, A. Jay was, himself, a celebrity when we took up the new-born baby *Drummer* in 1977, spanked it, and made it cry out with a voice. A. Jay was the author of the first important gay comic strip, "Harry Chess," which he brought to *Drummer's* pages when he left his job of art direction at *Queen's Quarterly* magazine in Manhattan to direct the art and design of *Drummer*.

Drummer's Collective Voice

An army of talent—literally hundreds of people: men and women—have contributed to the best of the 20,000 pages which have been published by *Drummer*. In the first days in San Francisco in the 70's, publisher John Embry gave me a free hand with the infant magazine he had brought as a refugee from LA's fascist police. Surrounded by lisping gay mags, I tried to create a ballsy voice for *Drummer* in both style and content. Embry embraced the tone and themes meant to appeal to masculine men who prefer erotic literature with leather, SM, and punctuation. In 1978, inviting reader participation, I invented "Tough Customers" as a *Drummer* column in order to showcase actual *Drummer* readers as inter-active sex stars whose celebrity shined in dungeons, bars, and bike clubs. I actively solicited their faces and voices,



Drummer 20 was the first issue listing Jack Fritscher as editor.



The current publisher of Checkmate was one of the earliest "Tough Customers." His interests and durability have undergone little change over the intervening 18 years.

but, at the first, I couldn't even get them to show their faces in their own photographs! That attitude changed and "Tough Customers" became its own magazine.

In the story of *Drummer*, my job was to discover and mentor other artists and writers. Besides editing more than 1,200 *Drummer* pages, my own work, as thematic thread reflects the similar careers of other progressive editors like Joseph Bean. But while beating the bushes for talent, I have written approximately 400 full pages of *Drummer* (fiction, feature articles, personality interviews, erotic reviews, and leather history columns such as this "Rear View Mirror"), and have tallied another nearly 100 pages in photographs including many centerfolds and covers. For nearly three years, as editor-in-chief, my resume was married to *Drummer* (in sickness and in health, including the many dark months of publisher Embry's illness when A. Jay and I took the reins of *Drummer* and made it what it was by 1979, so we could give a fully realized magazine back to a happily recovered John Embry).

Drummer's Chicago Roots

Drummer was, once, in 1975, a young magazine that was only TV Guide-size when erotic 'zines themselves were hardly newer than 1969's new laws allowing frontal nudity. The actual forbearers of *Drummer* were Bob Mizer's masculine Physique Pictorial out of his Athletic Model Guild in Los Angeles, and Chuck Renslow's leather-and-muscle-themed

'zines Mars and Triumph which Renslow created out of his Kris Studio in Chicago with the artist Etienne/Stephen. The stylized leather drawings of Etienne (whose name was Dom Orejudos) appeared early and often in *Drummer*. In 1965, the Janus Society of Philadelphia published a nude 'zine titled *Drum*, which suggested *Drummer's* more active name a decade later. Even so, with all this lineage, *Drummer*, at its founding, was so avant garde it was only the third large-format gay magazine founded after Stonewall, and the very first devoted to masculine men who march to Henry David Thoreau's different drummer. What made *Drummer* different was that it was masculine-iden-

tified and supposedly "queen-free," plus its attitude was imported from the values of the American Heartland.

Beginning in 1965 I lived in both Chicago and San Francisco. In Chicago in the mid 60's, I was a graduate student and then a tenured university professor. Chicago gave me two educations. The first was in American literature, but the more important tutorial was coming out into full-blown Chicago Leather in 1967 courtesy of Chuck Renslow, who is one of masculinity's most important leather forefathers. Renslow's Kris Studio, always celebrating more mature rugged models, and his classic leather bar, The Gold Coast, fed my taste for masculine men. So, Chicago-influenced, I fully understood the very early masculinist tradition that was already in San Francisco when *Drummer* was invented in the very

Continued on page 10



Drum and Drummer

Continued from page 9

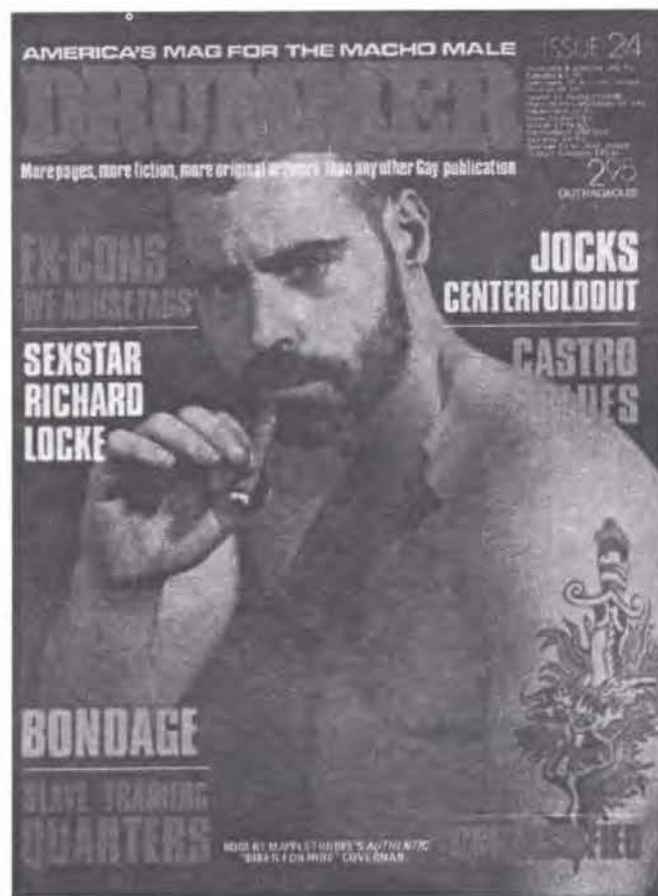
different world of Los Angeles leather. (Need proof of these mid-west roots? To this day, the only contest that rivals Mr. Drummer is Chuck Renslow's annual International Mr. Leather.) So with both literature and leather in my repertoire, I thought John Embry quite clever to quote Thoreau who as poet and activist was as important to American culture as he was to American literature. Embry's nod to Thoreau, like Renslow's leathery biker masculinity, was my cue in 1977 to develop men's erotic writing in *Drummer's* still tentative pages. As a genre, "Leather Lit" (so later named by editor Tim Barrus) began in *Drummer*. So, symbolically, Thoreau was the patron saint whom *Drummer* celebrated in what became a flood of gay talent, male and female, including the great poet who wrote so early and so well on leather, Thom Gunn.

SOME DANCE TO REMEMBER

Who knew that so many of the gifted—so brilliant and dynamic—were doomed to die from guns, drugs, and viruses? Had I known that the Titanic ship *Drummer* would draw on board such talent, I would have kept even more extensive journal entries, recorded more audio tape interviews, shot more photographs. I mean, really, who knew? (To a very surprised, and very, very young man who once demanded I show him the video footage of the Stonewall Riot, I gave the reminder that there was no video available to ordinary people before 1981!) My advice to any twentysomething is the same advice *Drummer*-friendly British film director and activist Derek Jarman would give: record your life and the life of your friends who can't or won't take notes on their own adventures the way my one-time lover, Robert Mapplethorpe (whose first ever magazine cover was in fact *Drummer* #24) left nothing but his glorious photographs and me with the promise to him to write about his life as we lived it when *Drummer* was a baby.

As I had made *Drummer*-like fiction of the Titanic 70s of all of us who had been friends and enemies and lovers and artists together in the *Drummer*-born 1990 novel *Some Dance to Remember*, so I tried to make accurate memoir of the 70's in the 1994 nonfiction book titled, *Mapplethorpe: Assault with a Deadly Camera*. Publisher Tony DeBlase, whose reputation hangs on his healthy respect

The first ever magazine cover photographed by Robert Mapplethorpe, then Jack Fritscher's lover, appeared on *Drummer* 24



for non-revisionist leather history, featured parts of both books in the nurturing pages of *Drummer*. I used my Mapplethorpe book even more than I used *Some Dance* to record gay history not just about Mapplethorpe or *Drummer*, but to mention in addition—very purposefully to get their names between two hard covers—the names of some of the *Drummer*-allied artists, photographers, writers, gallery owners, sex stars, and creators of gay male pop culture who might otherwise fall through the cracks of history. The men who founded the leather bars, baths, and clubs whom we often reviewed in *Drummer* were also the advertisers whose dollars supported *Drummer*. The guys who created The Tool Box, The Mineshaft, The Ambush, The Brig, Man's Country, St. Mark's Baths, The Catacombs, and the huge variety of bike clubs and fetish clubs are in their own way as much the celebrity stars of *Drummer* as the writers and photographers, because leather is a lifestyle that is even greater than the magazine that reflects it best.

My *Drummer*-driven purpose has always been to insure some remembrance for these wonderful evanescent people who kept no record of themselves but

their work which was larger than they were at the time (like Wakefield Poole's films and parties which are chronicled in early *Drummer*). In the 70's, most gay men lived for the day with no thought of tomorrow. They were all such innocents that most of them had no idea they'd father a new and younger gay generation. That's maybe the way between parent and child: the child automatically rejects the parent's values the way the 90's decade keeps trying to rewrite, reject, and reconstruct the 70's. Now is now; but then! Then! Then there was the hot tempo of the Titanic Decade, when we partied on Sexual Liberation's Maiden Voyage and boogied in the main salons, the main saloons, the ship's gallery, its gyms, cruising on its decks from upper class to lower class, with the heaviest sex happening down in the elbow-grease of the ship's hold where muscular men, stripped to nothing but jockstraps and boots worn with grey socks (with a red ring and a green ring around the calf) shoveled coal into the hot furnaces below...Ah! But that's another story for another issue! ■

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