

# MANDATE

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OF ENTERTAINMENT AND EROS

JUNE 1981

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COVER: COLT'S  
MARCUS COBB

BOOK EXCERPT:  
***ALIENATED  
AFFECTIONS***

INTERVIEW:  
MERYL STREEP

NUDES



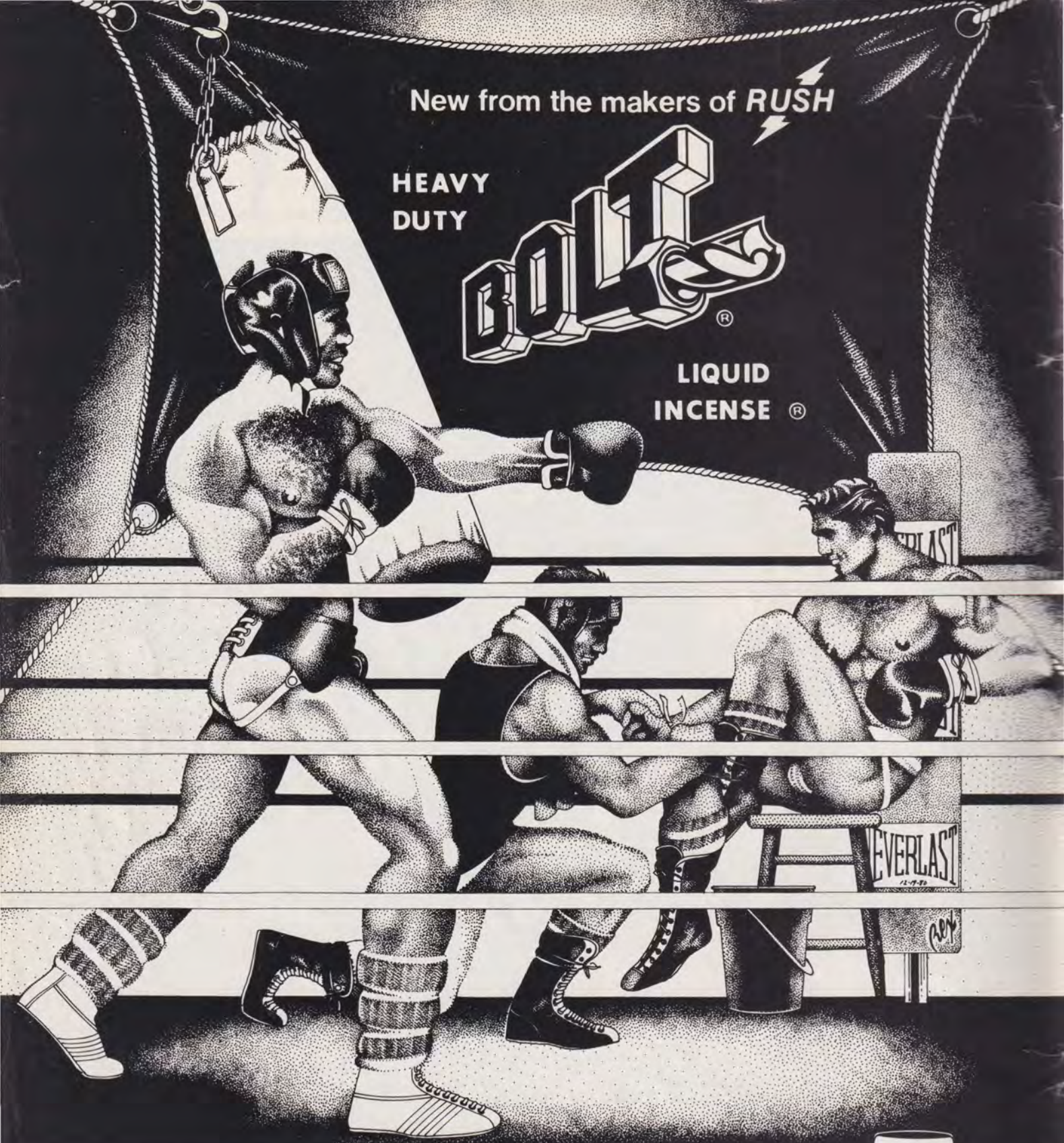


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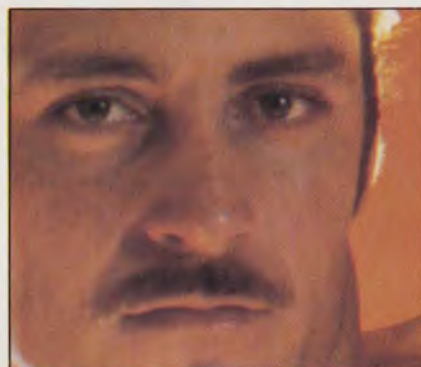
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## COVER

Hot and sultry, like the weather, coverman Marcus Cobb is definitely worth scanning. Just make sure you linger long enough to catch his aroma. Cover photograph by Colt Studios.



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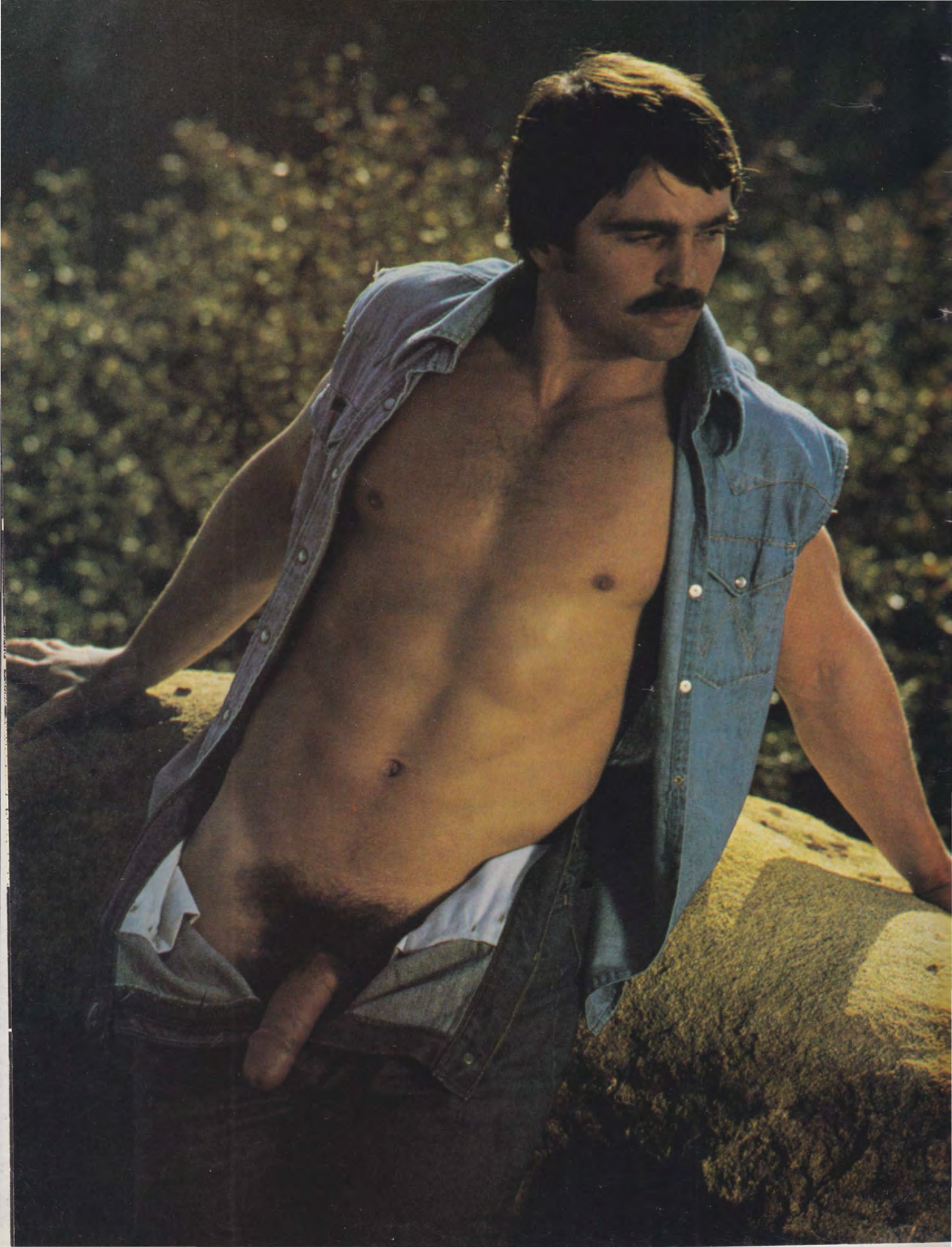
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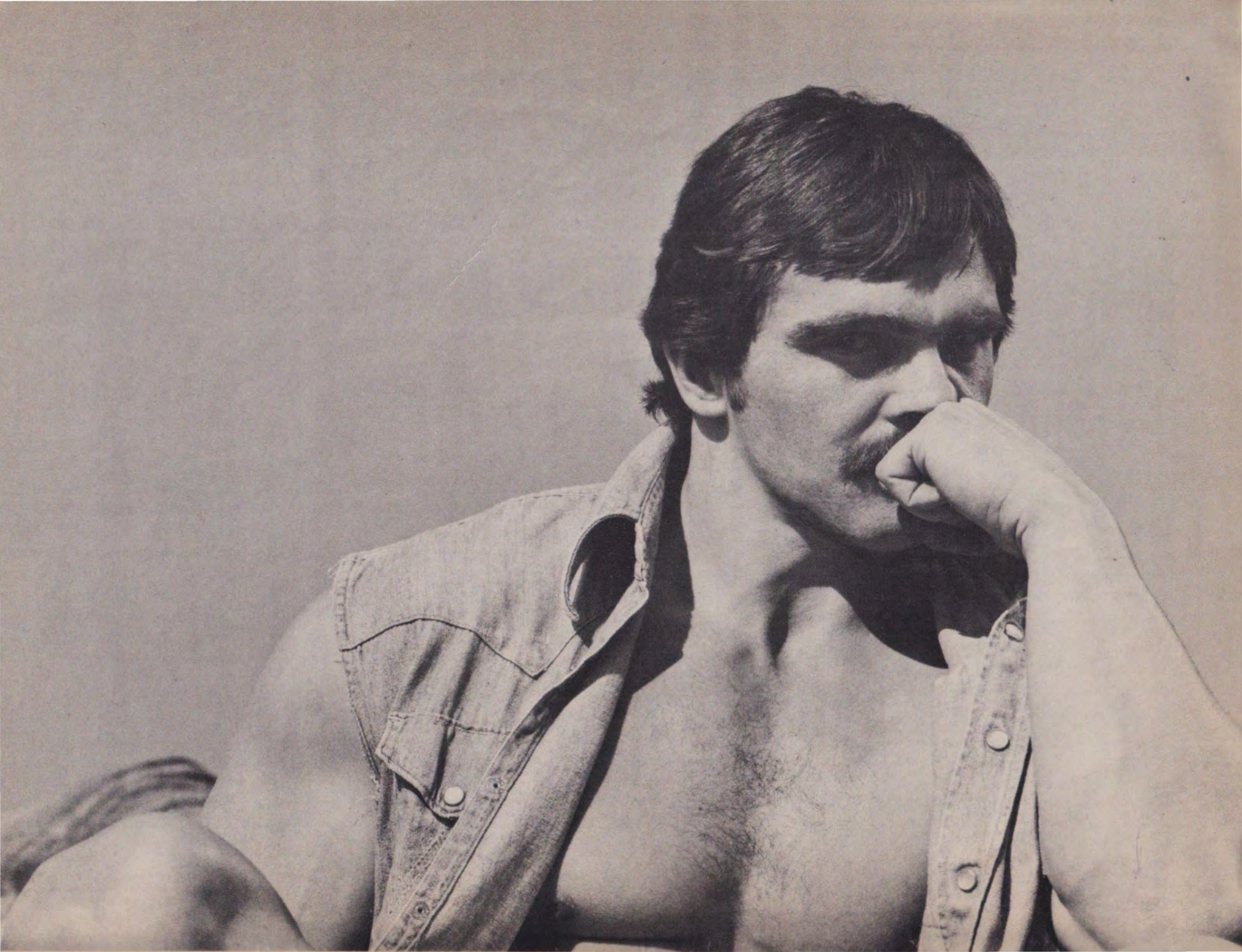
# COLT:DENIM

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**MANDATE**

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# ALIENATED AFFECTION

By Seymour Kleinberg

Ten years ago at Fire Island Pines, Ethan, one of the men I shared a house with, began to experiment with fist-fucking. Ten years ago, in the waterfront bars, gay men began to adopt a sinister allure with the trapping and toys of leather, the look of Hell's Angels. Ten years ago, the riots at the Stonewall Bar also inaugurated gay liberation. These events are not coincidental; in fact, the experience of political liberation has been translated into sexual terms, stimulating new explorations of perversity among homosexuals. It is too simple to call it a precocious backlash, but the first significant steps gays have taken toward the political and social control of their lives have been shadowed by experiments transforming fantasies of power and powerlessness into new sensual experiences, ones in which the need to feel utterly passive and thus without moral or psychological responsibility have acquired unprecedented erotic interest.

Sadomasochism has been a seductive subject for psychologists and intellectuals since the eighteenth century. Fist-fucking, known affectionately as fisting, hand-balling, or punching, has emerged as a variety of sexual pleasure only in the last dec-

***"The masochist is guilty by his own sexual admission; desire condemns him. But he is also defiant, unsure this verdict is just. To make punishment the condition of pleasure makes authority a sham, a meaningless inhibition. The masochist is sustained in his discomfort and pain by both the foretaste and the foreknowledge that the conquest of authority is finally his."***



# BOOK EXCERPT

# ED

# IONS

ade. The existence of wall paintings in the ruins of Pompeii that show figures engaged in fisting is rumored among the men who practice it, though I have never seen Pompeii or such illustrations. They would not surprise me. Rome probably exceeded even our own culture in its fascination with mixing pain and pleasure, violence and eroticism, sexual boredom and outrageous sexual variety. One of the moralists of Augustus' reign, the Golden Age, remarked with distaste on the practice of some wealthy matrons of keeping a resident flogger among the household.

Psychologists like Freud and Theodor Reik have been interested in sadomasochism because they regard it as so widely practiced, the most prevalent heterosexual perversity, and because the literature—beginning with the work of de Sade—is so ample, they have been able to discourse upon it in a context that is historical and cultural; long before psychology claimed to be a science, sadomasochism was a well-documented perversion. Recently, intellectuals like George Bataille, Gilles Deleuze, and Michel Foucault have seen in the subject meanings more central to the history

of sexuality and the relationship of sexuality to culture than have been speculated on before. The ideas are indeed provocative, central to our notions of emotional well-being and sexual freedom and fulfillment: ideas of passivity and dominance, sexual boredom and sexual anxiety, the unpredictability of erotic excitement, the need for fantasy that dwells on the taboo, the need to liberate the self from guilt and anomie.

I am concerned with the subject because of its growing prominence in gay culture, emerging from its closetry in every major gay ghetto, and because it relates to the idea of sexual freedom that is the central issue of gay history. I am not really interested in moralistic judgments about the perverse, but I am interested in clarifying how aggressiveness signifies for gay men, how fantasies of dominion and helplessness, erotic visions of power, are mirrors and dreams of their sense of powerlessness in the larger world. In their desire for and fear of power, their relationship to passivity and to self-control, and their ambivalence about responsibility for their own lives, gay men enact many of the motifs of sadomasochism.

1

The subject is sensational and it is hard to write about with genuine detachment. Of all the topics I am exploring, it is the most confusing, the most difficult to make sense of. But it is also the one that contrasts most dramatically the fantasy of powerlessness and the fact of it in gay life. Diana Trilling, reviewing J.R. Ackerly's *My Father and Myself* ("Our Uncomplaining Homosexuals" *We Must March My Darlings*, 1978), praised the book highly for its simplicity and lack of sensationalism in depicting what it is like to be a homosexual. She added, "Presumably, if we are honest about our sexual selves, we cannot be false to any man or woman and we are on the way to saying something useful about the general life of feeling, perhaps even about the general life of mankind."

The dictionary is a lot clearer about perversion than psychology texts; it says, "an aberrant sexual practice habitually preferred to normal coitus." Unfortunately, it has nothing to say about normal coitus. By such a definition, perversion is hardly a static con-

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**"For fisters, the rituals of hygiene may sound overwhelming, yet there is a delight in piggishness, in rolling in 'a sea of grease.' The pig is rolling in 'a sea of F.F.A.; pig power its motto. Miss Piggy is the Judy Garland of this scene. 'We're pigs. A true pig is hot, a number who knows what he's doing.'"**

dition. Any variety of sexual play including most foreplay, if it did not lead to heterosexual male orgasm, might be perverse. The best synonyms Merriam-Webster supplies are "incorrect, improper, obstinate in opposing what is right, reasonable, or accepted." What is right is a matter for philosophers; what is reasonable or accepted is something most adults are fully qualified to judge. This obstinate opposition to reasonableness and conventionality is what intellectuals find so fascinating about the subject, particularly about the life and work of de Sade. This opposition as erotic rebellion outrages most people because it aspires to experience sexuality as taboo, to transgress violently what is interdicted.

In *Story of the Eye* by Georges Bataille, the narrator champions indecency as necessary to sharpen perception: "To others, the universe seems decent, because decent people have gelded eyes." Peter Brooks, reviewing the book (*The New York Times*, February 12, 1978), finds it a serious examination of eroticism as "an encounter with death and evil, to the realization of man's most liberating and frightening capacities." Simone de Beauvoir, in her essay *Must We Burn de Sade?* also sees his life, even more than his work, as an example of these capacities. Michel Foucault in *Madness and Civilization* and his more recent *History of Sexuality*, Volume I: An Introduction is also interested in these capacities.

At the moment, Foucault is probably the most influential writer on the history of sexuality, and some of his ideas are very provocative. In *Madness and Civilization*, he insists that sadism appeared precisely at the end of the eighteenth century with the man whose name created the word. In sadism, which infers masochism—except for Deleuze—Foucault finds a transformation in the imagination of Western civilization, one in which love and death enter "an insane dialogue... (on) the limitless presumption of appetite." It is almost as if the paradoxes of Christianity and the glorification of suffering were to be finally understood exclusively in sensual terms.

Freud is less flamboyant, but he also finds masochism and its lesser counterpart, sadism, rooted in the struggle between love and death, Eros and Thanatos, in a theater where the two most profound human instincts are embattled. Freud is very precise

about masochism as simply passive sadism, normal aggression turned violently against the self. For a moment these two psychic forces cooperate in sexual obsession: the sadistic energy as part of the life force, the masochistic passivity the emblem of non-being, of death. Freud's view, which I shall return to shortly, would disagree in an important respect with Foucault's: if this erotic conflict is instinctual, it was not born with the life of de Sade.

Foucault is interested in sexual repression and sexual freedom which he finds modern society meaninglessly preoccupied with. In *The History of Sexuality*, he tries to account for the repressiveness by two changes in the culture relating to ideas of procreation and sin. First, religious authority eroded and the sense of the power of sin weakened; second, the attitudes toward procreation in Western society have changed. Both have led to replacing the idea of the soul with the idea of the body. In the Renaissance and the seventeenth century, the soul dwelt as a guest in the house of the body, and often it was a strange dwelling. In modern times, the body simply has become the soul.

Carnal behavior and emotional health become linked in a new way, with a new importance that leads to new authorities—the psychiatric, the medical, the legal—on sexual issues. Finally, Foucault adds, the modern need to "know," to have sexual knowledge, makes us even more dependent on authority than before to interpret the meaning of our sexuality: "Understanding about us what we do not understand ourselves they gain the right to show us how to behave." Psychoanalysis replaces religious confession, sexuality becomes subject to classification and arrangement, quantitative and material data are taken for truth. Foucault sees this as the antithesis of freedom. Scientific knowledge tells us nothing about sensuality, what has been called the aestheticism of the erotic: knowing how to make love does not replace knowing how to love. Foucault, opposed to Freud, aims to discredit our belief in a fixed human nature, particularly regarding the nature of sexual desire.

Freudians presume a fixed nature for sexuality which determines the nature of mankind. They are more interested in masochism than in sadism since it is even more removed from normality, which acknowledges that human nature is to some degree sadistic. It



begins with the child's perception of sexual intercourse as sadistic, a primal scene in which the woman is mistreated or humiliated; sexual writhing is understood as the response to assault ("Of the Sexual Theories of Children," 1908). In 1920, Freud formulated his concept of the death instinct in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*; the wish to revert to an earlier state of being, ultimately non-being, is thwarted by Eros, the sexual instinct that needs to procreate. These two opposing forces in the mind have equal "validity and status," and their constant struggle paraphrases the human condition. What might have been a touch of the misanthropic in Freud's earlier work blooms into a full pessimism that becomes the final tragic vision of humanity in *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

Freud sought to "classify" masochism; his three types were erotic, moral (by which he meant social), and feminine. In "The Economic Problem of Masochism," he offered the idea of the feminine as basically masochistic, since women have been enjoyed by society, and "by other constitutions," to repress rage and aggression and replace them with the wish for romantic bliss, for merging and union in ecstatic love. To be dominated, even beaten, is interpreted as being loved, and the essential purpose of such feminine love is to submerge one's whole personality in another's. The argument about the feminine that arises here is currently raging in every aspect of discussion about women's nature, role, and aspiration. While all feminists agree that society has indeed conditioned women to accept passivity as normal to femininity and to invest in dependence on others as the means of personal fulfillment, none agree that such conditioning has biological or constitutional support. I am interested in the formulation of passivity and masochism and, by contrast, aggression and an early perception of sexuality as sadistic that then becomes incorporated into the traditional or normal *gestalt* of masculinity.

Indeed, society has arranged matters between men and women so that what is traditional, passive-feminine, dominant-masculine, becomes the murky ideal of the normal and the natural. This then becomes the model for what psychologists as early as Krafft-Ebing (who coined the term "masochism" about 1900) see as the

predominant perversion of heterosexual men: the need to be "feminine" or masochistic. Out of their guilt and failure to be masculine is created the desire to mix pain and pleasure.

Psychologists and some of the polemicists agree that sadomasochism is more than "a special variety of sexual play," which is the description its apologists prefer; it is an aspect of personality rather than an isolated erotic technique. Perhaps the question is one of degree, but it is not disputable that sexual taste is expressive of personality, that those erotic skills we master tell much of character. S-M devices may be used in conventional sexuality to sustain sexual play, to postpone the final pleasure of orgasm, to experiment with the taboo as the most exciting kind of foreplay. But a taste of the perverse is not an appetite for banquets. For the masochist the postponement of pleasure by pain creates another kind of pleasure that is only his.

In his pessimism about humanity, Freud knew he was entering "the darkest and most inaccessible sphere of psychic life" in exploring sexuality, much of which was left speculative; he was less hesitant in his conviction that "man is a wolf to man... a savage beast to whom consideration of his own kind is something alien." Man's nature constantly threatens civilization with disintegration; to survive, all its institutions must lend their energies in the service of limiting man's aggressiveness. These efforts Freud called the claim of culture, the reality principle. Monogamous heterosexual love, restrictions upon the sexual life, perhaps most demanding of all, the ideal of Christian love, to love one's neighbor as oneself, are all part of culture's effort to contain aggression, though Freud added about brotherly love that "nothing else runs so strongly counter to the original nature of man."

On such premises, the life of de Sade is seen as heroic rebellion against the constraints of a civilization too corrupt to justify its own authority, and as de Beauvoir said, "He made of his sexuality an ethic." De Sade's sexuality was inseparable from his misanthropy; compared to the demands of culture, sexuality in any form was positive. All experience, life itself, became libidinous, an extension of the sexual; what de Sade sought to find were the limitations, if any, to sexuality; certainly, the distinction between pleasure and pain, the licit

and the taboo, heterosexual and homosexual, invited experimentation in order to violate such categorization and make it meaningless. By championing the outrageousness of abnormality, de Sade gave more clarity to what was called normality.

His early sexual adventures concerned flagellation. Those comparatively innocent spankings with prostitutes made him vulnerable to blackmail and finally to imprisonment on charges trumped up by his vindictive mother-in-law. But imprisonment triggered that passion for rebellion that would later make his name synonymous with "monstrous."

By 1792, de Sade was experimenting with homosexuality; he would whip and be whipped, bugger and be buggered (by his valet, Latour), sometimes simultaneously. These episodes in flagellation and buggery were the basis of what came to be called sadism. He and his valet were charged with sodomy, and *in absentia* they were sentenced to be executed, de Sade by decapitation and Latour by strangling. Since they had fled from the jurisdiction of the court, they were burned in effigy in Aix. While his ventures into whipping had made de Sade subject to blackmail, not until he voyaged into sodomy did he risk his life.

De Sade's explorations seem to be in the service of self-mastery rather than of surrender, mastery of the human capacity for violence and cruelty in the knowledge of them. Sensation and pleasure were primal laws, more legitimate because their authority was in biology, not the pieties of his society. But de Sade also insisted upon the futility of separating mastery and submission, power and helplessness, and that one could not be experienced or understood without knowledge of the other: in the end, the nature of pleasure could only be learnt in pain.

Simone de Beauvoir warned that "to sympathize with de Sade too readily is to betray him." Like romanticizing the satanic which misreads it, to see in de Sade a victim of anything but his own sensibility and his passionate willfulness is to sentimentalize his great achievement—to pioneer questions about sexual freedom that had not been heard, perhaps not thought of before. De Sade willed perversity to serve him; he was not to be its servant, a far cry from the perverse condition that is the "commonest," perhaps a commonplace, of male heterosexuality.



Erotic masochism is a closet drama, not a sexual epic. Everyone—its detractors, analysts, and defenders—agree that the penchant begins in childhood; what is acquired in maturity is a need to ritualize earlier experience that is either unresolved or conflicted or perhaps simply a given about sexual pleasure. Sexologists like Freud insist that every important physical process can contribute to sexual excitement, that the body is erogenous in ways and parts that are limited only to what the imagination can conceive. They also agree that provided pain and discomfort are not excessive, sexual excitement and function continue unimpaired. Theodor Reik in *Masochism and Modern Man*, still one of the most informative single works on the subject, makes a telling distinction between pain and discomfort. Pain can be perceived only by the tactile sense of touch, the sensitivity of skin and membranes. Discomfort concerns the tolerance for pain, which varies highly within and among individuals.

Reik is not sure that sadomasochism has instinctual connection, but he respects the theory. Whether it is instinct or partial instinct, a defense mechanism or a formation of the conscience, its complexities are not easily reduced. Reik is sure that the idea that the masochist reverses all the pleasure values and delights in pain is an illusion. The masochist pursues pleasure like anyone else, but he is detoured by pain because he cannot approach pleasure directly. What causes the detour is sexual anxiety capable of extraordinary intimidation. The masochist is in flight from a terrifying, torturous anxiety that all sexual excitement raises for him, and the pains he courts are lesser ones and manageable: he defends himself in punishment; first he atones, then he sins, as Reik puts it.

Pleasure is the reward after the labor of humiliation, the necessary price. It sounds somewhat like mere puritanical conscience: make yourself uncomfortable, then remove the discomfort and see how good it feels. Reik sees the plot as more complex than that small deception we all practice to enhance pleasure, saving the best for last, creating obstacles for the gratification of overcoming them, letting things get messier to restore and enjoy order. The masochist is guilty by his own sexual admission: desire

condemns him. But he is also defiant unsure this verdict is just. By voluntarily submitting to humiliation and suffering, he triumphs over his guilt and anxiety, which he has substantiated in the person of his tormentor, who is both the symbol of authority that forbids him pleasure and the actual instrument for the pleasure he seeks. By anticipating punishment in self-chastisement, he controls it and makes it ineffectual, a variety of play. Authority which he feels is denying him sexual gratification now becomes an ally, and the arm that whips him is disarmed by his consent. Punishment is now transformed into an enticement by which he seduces his aggressor. All that has inhibited him in culture fails, since the acquiescence is a pretense, a fantasy, while the spirit is stubbornly defiant. To make punishment the condition of pleasure makes authority a sham, a meaningless inhibition. The masochist is sustained in his discomfort and pain by both the foretaste and the foreknowledge that the conquest of authority is finally his.

Reik defines the masochist as one with a strongly sadistic disposition inhibited by his anxiety, in conflict with an urge for pleasure that is resolved by creating a manageable humiliation or shame. Sexual desire writhes in a mime of passivity that signals to the sadist what needs to be done. This performance is choreographed with precision. Writhing itself is active, full of momentous movement, the opposite of stillness and acquiescence. Even lust is so powerful it can hardly be called "passive."

This drama demands its own momentum and suspense, a studied development of tension vacillating between fear and excitement. It is sophisticated and civilized in the sense that it is entirely *contra natura*, postponing the natural impulse to discharge or climax and, in fact, making that a by-product of the action whose central concern is the conversion of anxiety into pleasure. Since part of the pleasure for the masochist has come from anticipating pain and preparing himself for it, the focus has partly shifted from action to expectation: "anxiety-ridden pleasure is transformed into pleasurable anxiety." Reik adds that this suspense is a fore-pleasure which is a "kind of sample orgasm," anticipating climax in small doses. The natural tension of sexuality is subverted because either orgasm or something associated with it is terrifying. The discomforts of pain

**"To break the taboo is always to experience shame and triumph. If one is homosexual and has heard all his life that he is already perverse, the inhibitions are lowered, the threshold to the experimental much easier to cross."**



or humiliation divert the masochist from the threat of climax. Punishment is "less essential than the fear of it," which increases if it appears to be unpredictable. The passive has become active, the future fears are the present ones, the anxieties created in fantasies are resolved in the ritual actions of scripted performance.

This is delicate psychic manipulation; such fantasy depends more on ritual than any other erotic deviation does. In a bland defense, *S-M: The Last Taboo* by Gerald and Caroline Greene, authors who are practitioners define the ritualization of these fantasies of helplessness and power. Accidental pain is regarded neither as erotic nor as pleasurable. The session begins with the masochist having allegedly done something; some unspecified guilt therefore merits punishment, which is always threatened verbally and suspensefully withheld. Havelock Ellis is cited to argue: "The sadist is merely servicing the masochist. The sadist must develop extraordinary perceptiveness to know when to continue, despite cries and protests, and when to cease." Ellis, like the Greenes, insists on a context of trusting intimacy where pain is only a token of love; a contest of civilized reenactments of combat courtships still observable in lower species. But unlike animal mating, this script transcends biology, uniting the imagination and senses artfully. Ellis defines the proper conditions for such an achievement: the masochist (Ellis uses the pronoun "she") must be absolutely sure of the man's love and have perfect confidence in his judgment; the pain must always be calculated and inflicted with kindness, never in anger; it must be "a tidy pain, not excessive enough to interfere with arousal, and finally she must be sure of her own influence over the man."

This is the healthy model of loving male dominance and female submissiveness only slightly sabotaged by the masochist's passive aggression.

Though the Greenes imply their own relationship is in this classic mold, they allow for the piquancy of role reversal. The dominatrix is a venerable part, rarer than her "natural" male counterpart and thus more in demand. However, the Greenes are leery of the professional, no matter how skillful she is. Commercialism is debasing for the usual reason: it is loveless. It is better than nothing, and they cite the useful work of Monique von Cleef, who ran a "torture house" first in

Staten Island and later in Newark. Von Cleef said, "They come to me to find what is missing in their lives. I think it's probably love. They feel on some level that to be beaten and humiliated is to be loved."

Ideally, sadomasochism is only handled properly by "those who exist in perfect confidence and love"; the Greenes are a bit self-congratulatory about the refinement of their emotional rapport but allow that in the quest for expressive sexual freedom, a polymorphous perversity is allowable; a fraternity of sexual plurality, "protean and transsexual," is possible—two women or two men or a man and woman reversing roles.

The Greenes and recent apologists follow similar lines of reasoning in a serious effort to help sadomasochism out of the closet into sexual respectability. It is really all about love; it is deeply sensitive, imaginative, and communicative; and, one notices, it is coupled. To the chagrin of gay liberationists, one of the justifications offered for the acceptance of sadomasochism is the measure of public response to homosexuality. There are interesting analogies: in homosexual culture, casual cruising demands that men regard themselves as sex objects. Some men devote themselves to such objectification, which corresponds to the basis for humiliation in sadomasochism where being held as a sexual object is meant to be deprecating and insulting, the foundation for humiliation. Gay liberation claims the right of sexual self-determination, the right to be free to explore even the fringes of the self, demanding that liberal society acknowledge the justice of its claims, and, as that support is given increasingly, other sexualities demand equal permissiveness.

It is also why conservative America focuses its anger on homosexuals, why its sexual anxieties are inflamed into murderous hatreds: we will not only destroy the family and seduce the children but also pioneer the corruption of all modesties, all restraints, and, most threatening, all privacies. We are speaking of the unspeakable; to do so is already to give it some quarter. To demand that society tolerate the display of sexual variety is to condone it.

The ritualized theatricality of S-M, with its toys and costumes, its careful scenario manipulating suspense, also needs to express what Reik called its "demonstrative" factor, its need for display, exhibition, publicity, exactly

like the demands for visibility and confrontation that gay liberationists insist upon.

Like the claims homosexuals once made about elitist sensibilities, sadomasochists insist on the superiority of their imaginations, more vivid and excitable than ordinary people's; de Beauvoir says, "The world of the masochist is a magical one, and that is why he is almost always a fetishist," supporting the idea of both the theatrical and the rarified. Like all deviance, it is ambivalent, linking biology and imagination, claiming an elitism in higher responsiveness that would prefer the bedroom to the barricade, but it also needs to proclaim itself, command an audience, demand justice.

Part of the publicity stems from its roots in rebelliousness, making a claim for legitimacy in a society where technology and violence increasingly question all civilized proprieties, and where both are amazing and unpredictable. An unknown assailant whose motive will never be comprehensible and whose violence is truly random shoves a lovely young flutist in front of a subway train which severs her hand; hours later, technology repairs the damage in miraculous microsurgery. We have yet to understand fully the intimate connection between those two events. Less mysterious is the vulgarization of hedonism, the consumerism that makes prurience profitable and therefore respectable. But sadomasochism inverts ideas of authority and aggression, defying the punitive father, paternalism, and patriarchal culture. Compared to commercial ordinary society which encourages everyone to treat his or her body as an object, in sadomasochism, the individual is claimed at least to be an object "of fascination."

It does not demand genital sex; it may even diffuse the frustrations that technocratic society has created whose commonest outlet is the unmotivated violence on every urban street. In its claims for imagination and intimacy, it seems, as the Greenes note, above the judgment of a whore civilization that turns every experience into a commercially exploitative commodity.

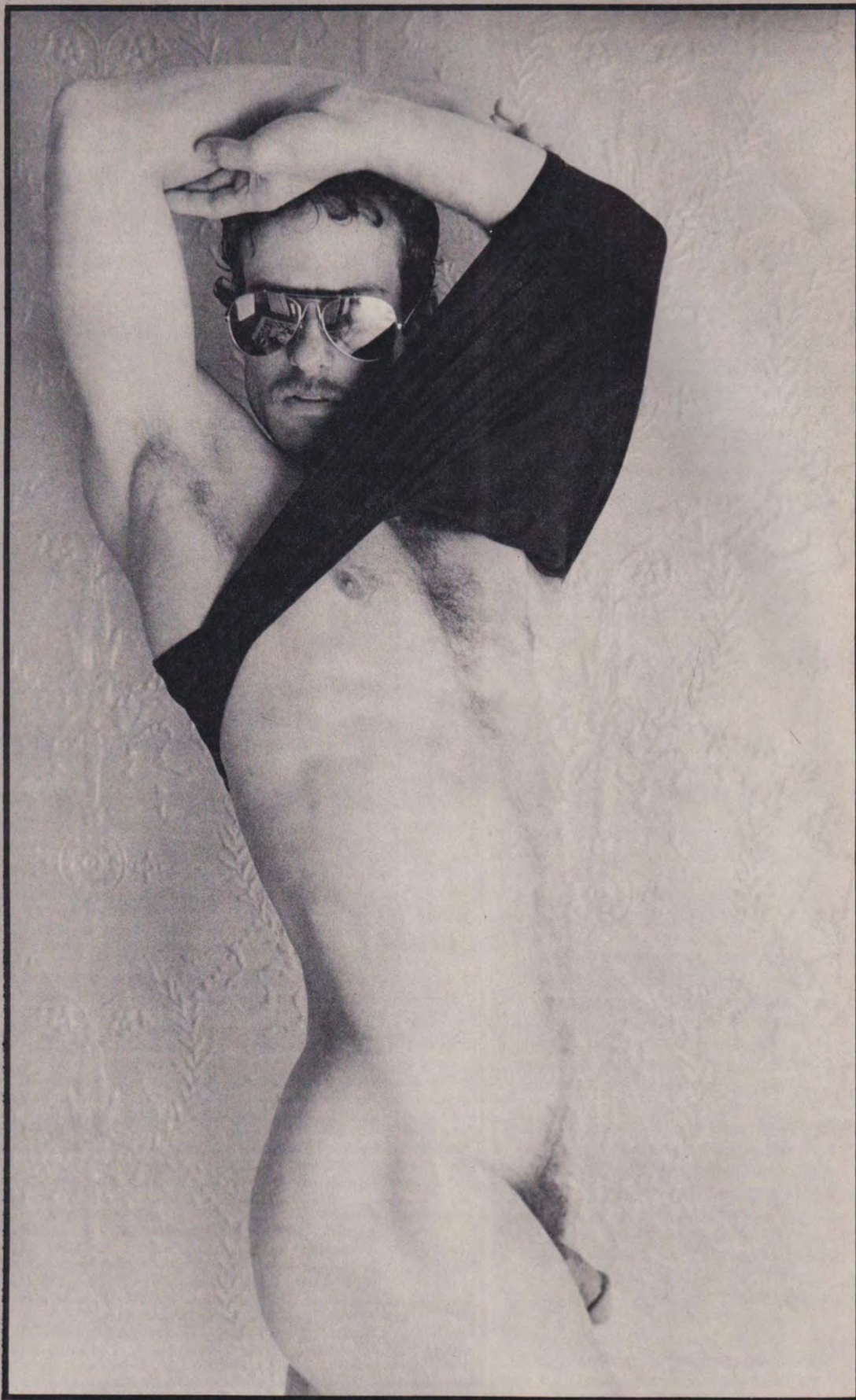
If sadomasochism is the commonest perversion among heterosexual men, impotence is the commonest complaint among normal ones. Not only is violence mindlessly eroticized and commercialized, but it



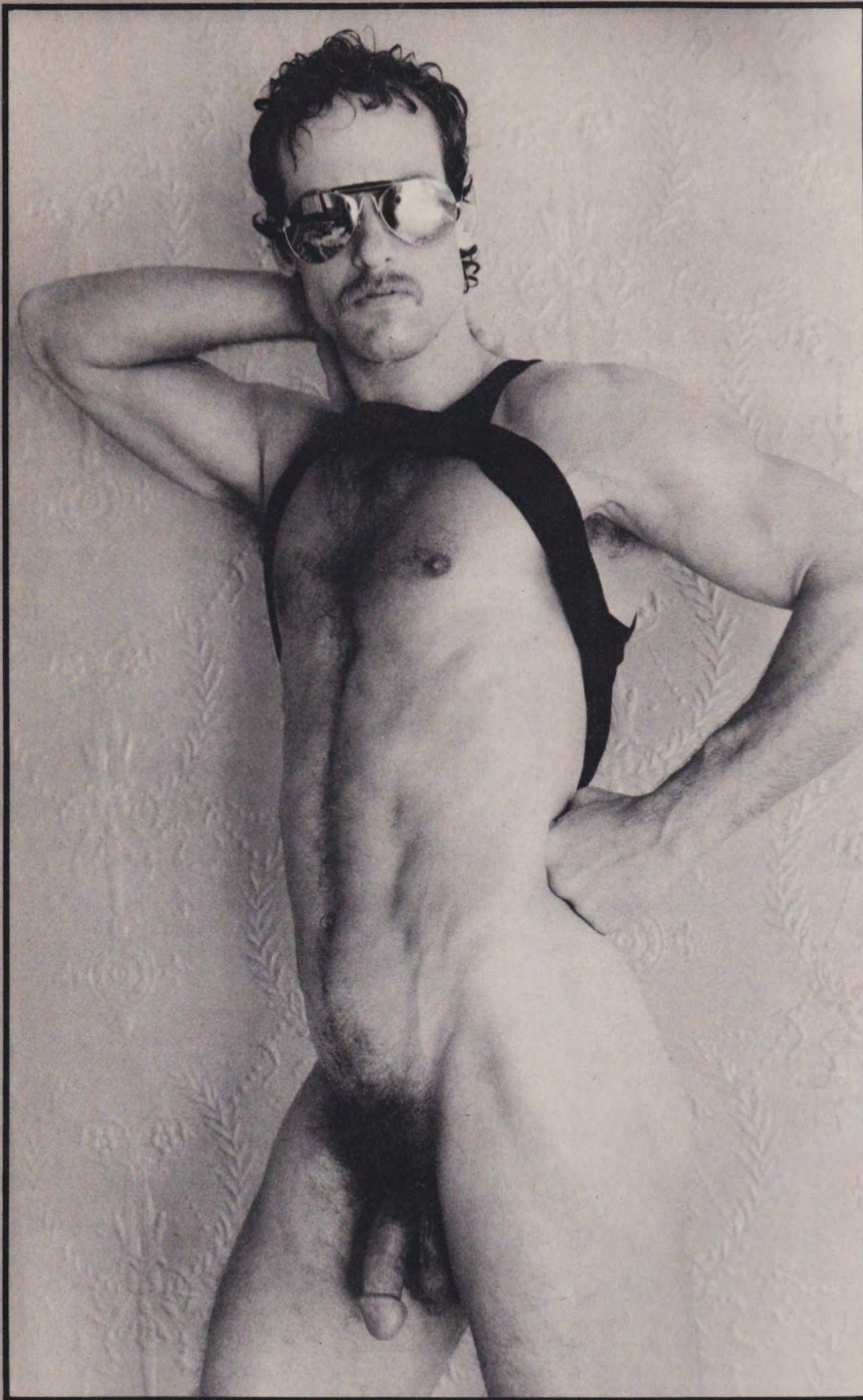
# FOLGER: SPECIAL BLEND

It's all a matter of sensually rich aroma when sweetly steeped passion is your order and *Mandate* is your host. So why not indulge yourself for a moment and enjoy a visual sip of freshly ground gorgeousness that we guarantee to be good to the last drop!

Photographs by  
Lobo Studios





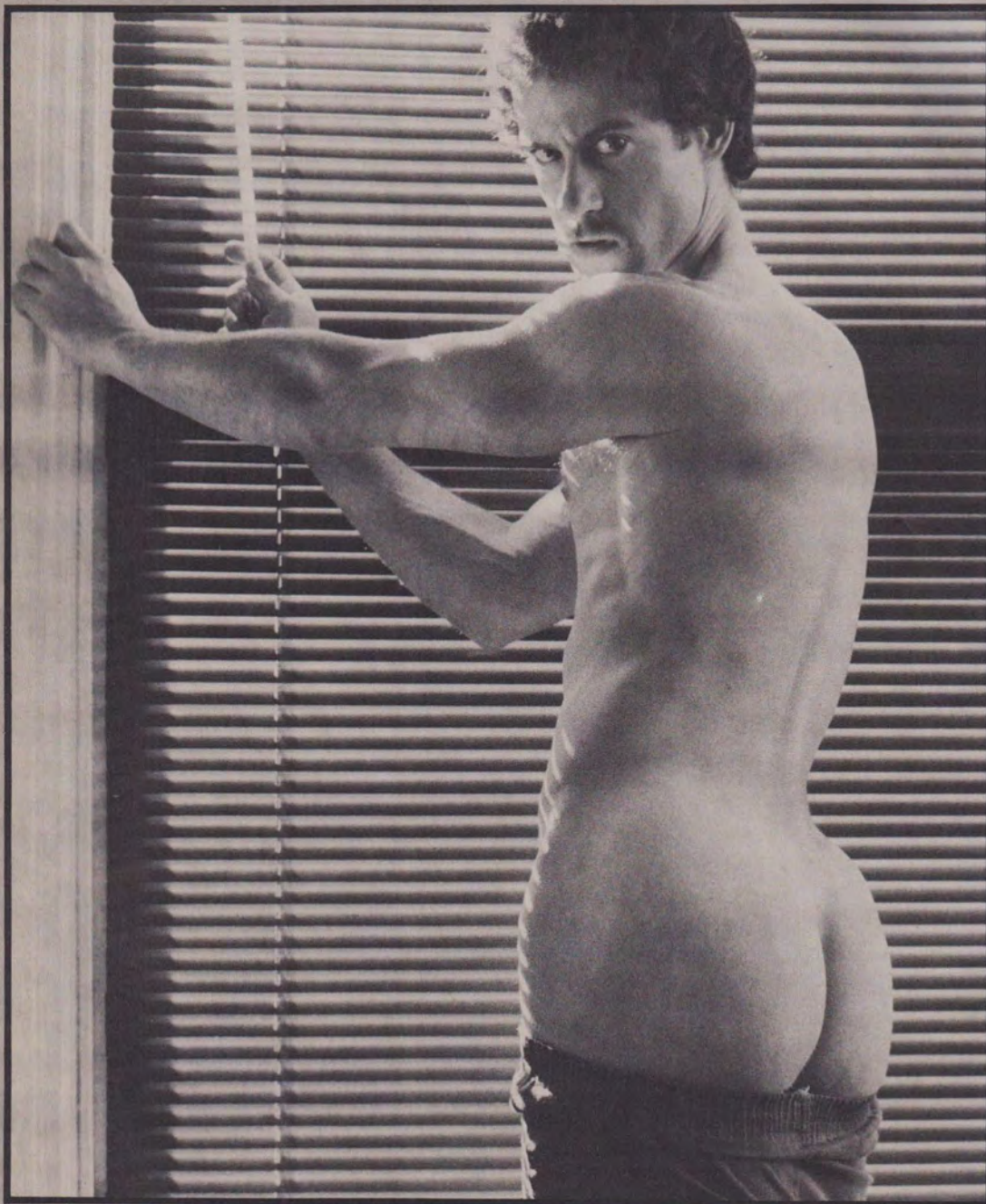




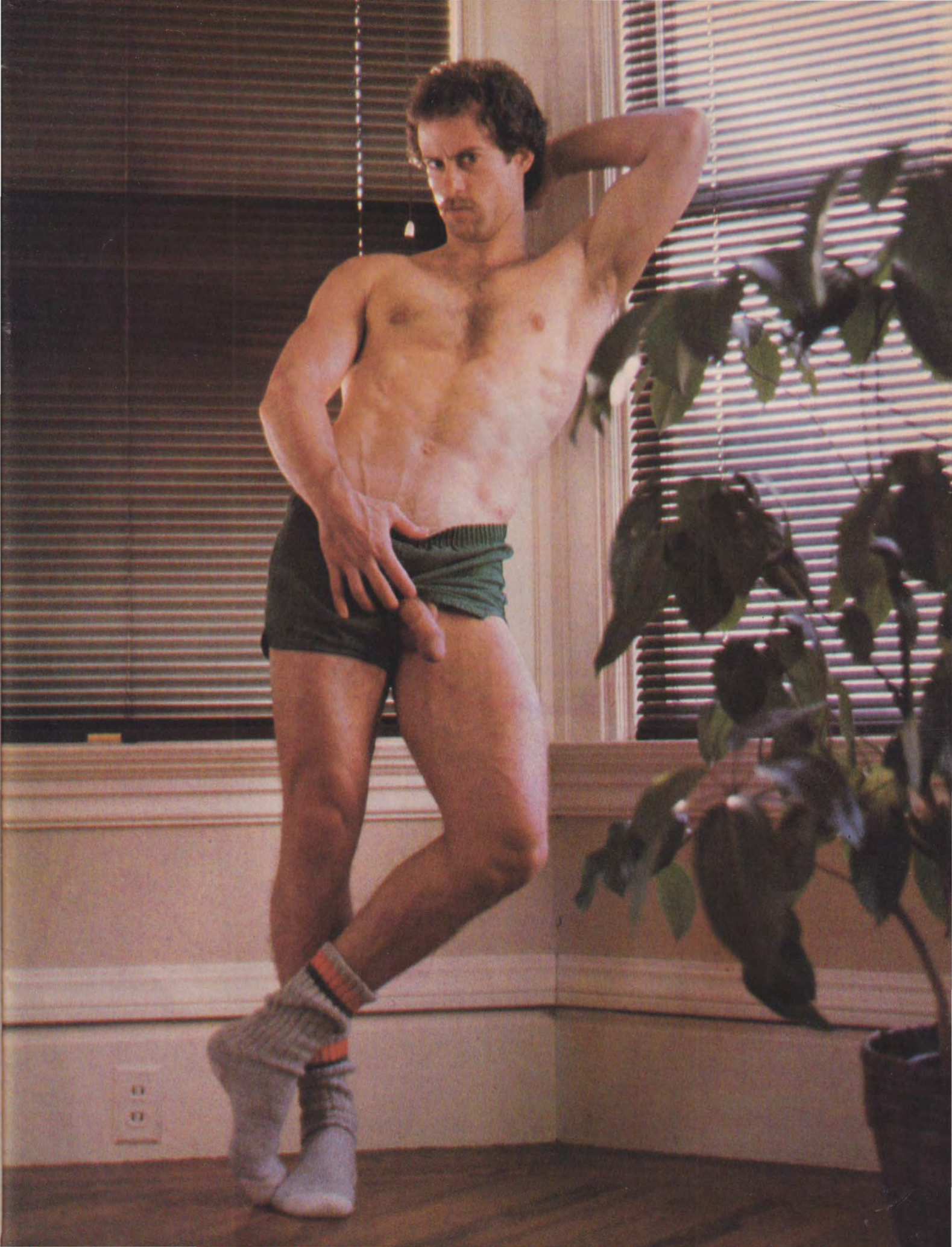
# FOLGER: SPECIAL BLEND

Wouldn't you love to glance through those Venetians for a peek, or sniff of that rich bouquet? In trunks or out, this addictive stimulant could really perk up your day. Too much sugar can spoil your appetite, but a little cream never hurt anyone. Rory's a special blend you really want to stir up. And we do mean up.

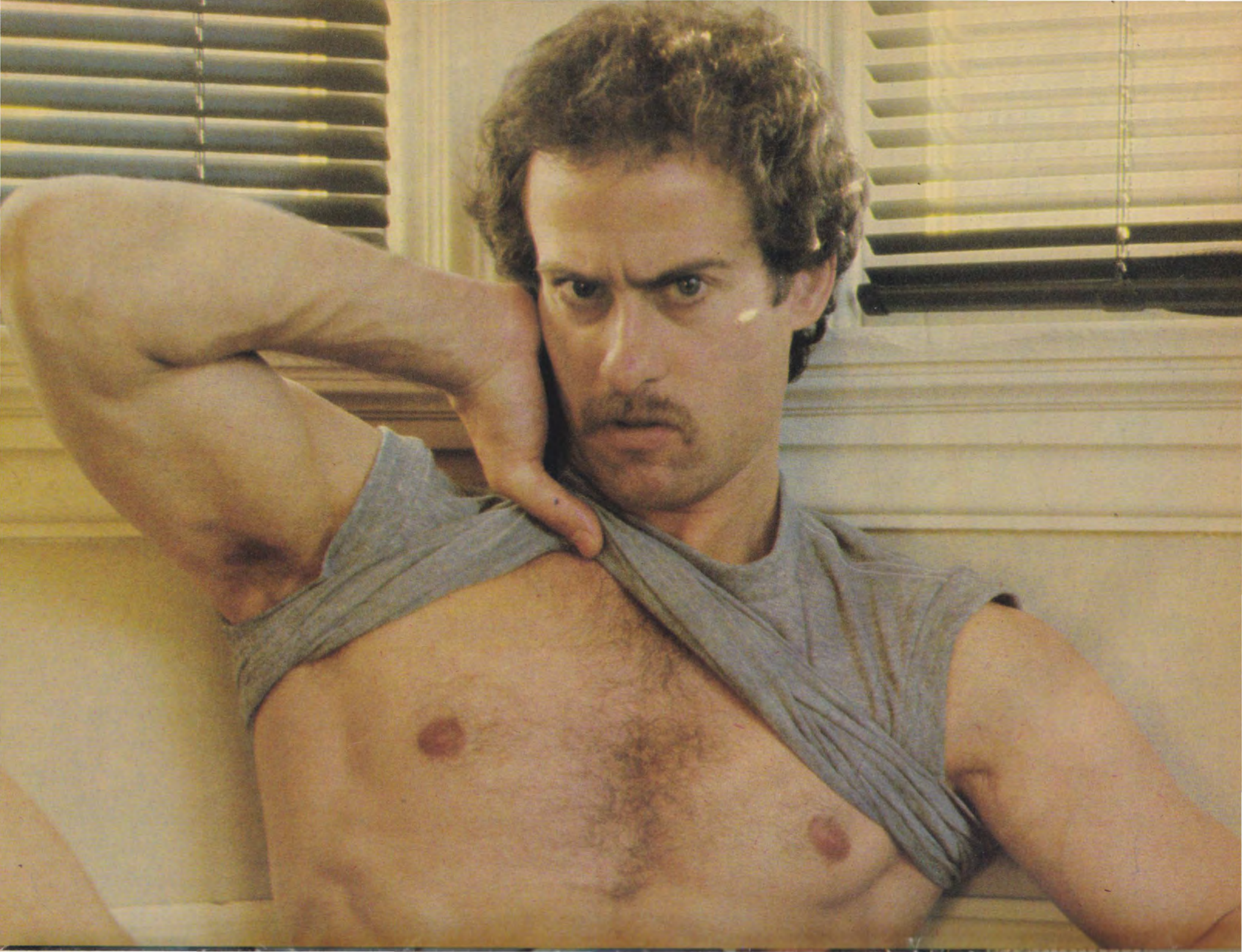
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**MANDATE**  
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# Sex Cycle

BY ROBERT GRAHAM

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN MACK

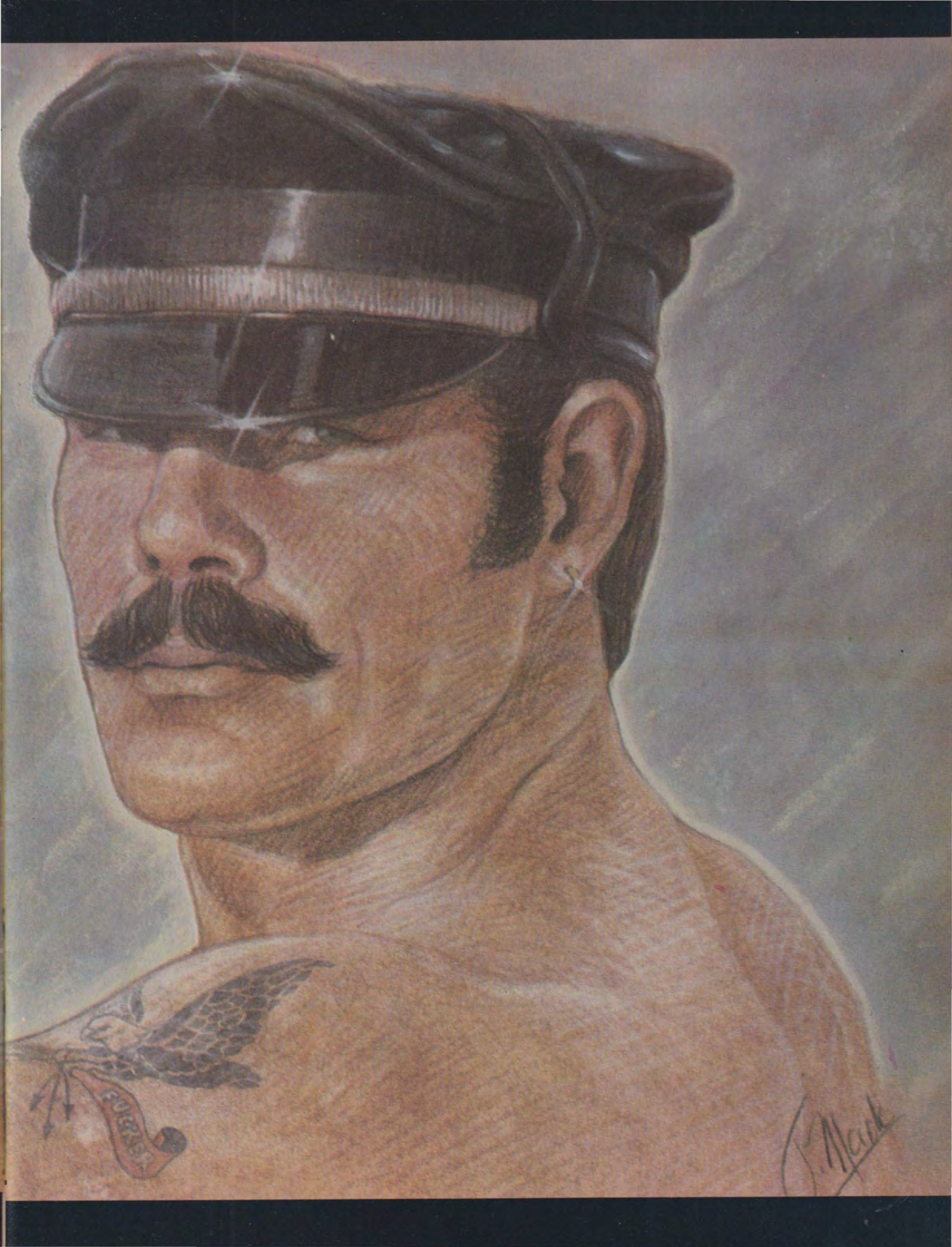
He sat motionless on his kawasaki 1000, watching the passing parade of cars. Someone had thoughtfully added a lattice to the support for the billboard—which made it well nigh impossible for a driver to spot him. His khaki uniform blended into the woodwork, and the only clues to his presence were glints of sunlight reflected off his sunglasses and the chrome on his motorcycle.

Highway Patrolman Dan Karel wasn't scouting for speeders. Everyone travelling this stretch of the freeway south of the City was speeding. He was interested in a particular kind of speeder—male, young, good-looking, and, most importantly, gay. Dan had developed a talent for picking them out. He focused on details of the driver's appearance: short hair, for example, plus a chinstrap beard or a tanktop. Once he sighted a likely prospect, all he had to do was tail the car long enough to get a fix on the speed and pull him over.

Continued to page 73

**“He was interested in a particular kind of speeder—male, young, goodlooking, and, most importantly, gay.”**











# A CLOSE SHAVE

BY JOSEPH ARSENAULT  
PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC PERKINS

**The morning ritual: Your face is splashed, lathered, scraped, manipulated, doused with chemicals and let loose on the world. What do you do when it rebels?**

The alarm rings. You get up, go to the bathroom, urinate, take a shower, shave. Shaving—that dreadful, morning drudgery where you scrape your gorgeous face with a razor blade. You're eager to get it over with. You splash on some water, slosh shaving cream from ear to ear, use a double-edge blade to scrape away the foamy lather and hair, towel dry and splash cologne if the spirit moves you. If you're like most men, you accomplish this series of tasks in fifteen minutes. Without thinking about it, each step is part of a morning habit that goes unnoticed until your razor burns your skin, or blemishes appear or black heads intrude. Then what? Let's face it—until very recently men were in the closet when it came to skin care. No longer. There is now a vast array of products to help you over minor or major skin ailments.

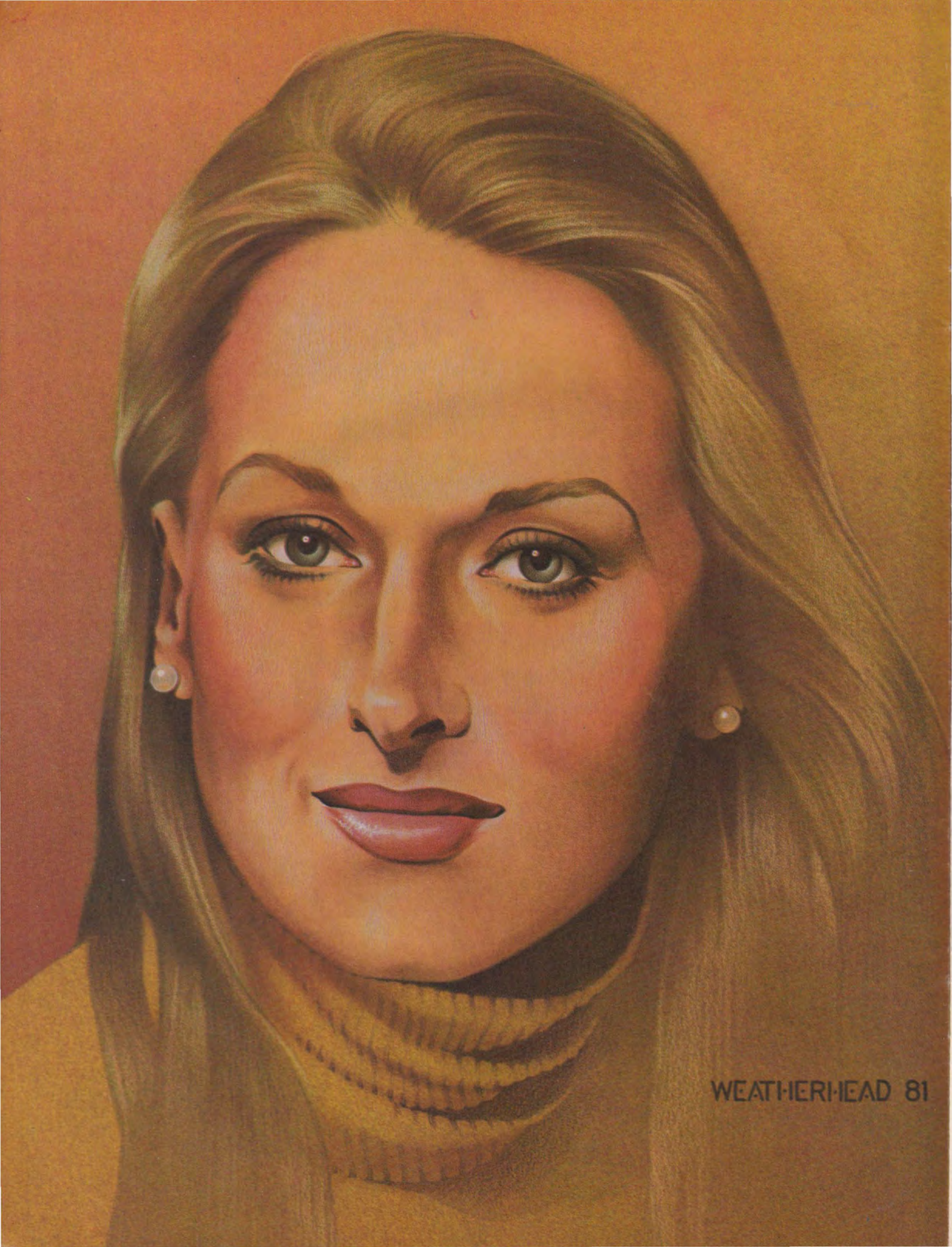
The face, like the rest of your skin,

absorbs the elements, responds to the environmental stresses you subject it to, and can always be counted on to react when necessary. The early morning shaving ritual is a rather dramatic awakening for your face. From being absolutely rested, your face is splashed, lathered, scraped, manipulated, doused with chemicals and let loose on the world. What do you do when it rebels?

Shaving irritation is the commonest complaint almost all men have. It is a sign that the blade should be changed to protect your fragile face. Many estheticians recommend that double-edged blades be discontinued altogether. The old-fashioned single-edged blade your father used is the best solution because it forces you to take your time which in itself is beneficial. Though time may be of the essence, a cleaner, softer, glowing skin is what you want.

*Continued to page 34*





WEATHERHEAD 81



# INTERVIEW

## MERYL

## STREEP

BY GEORGE HADDAD-GARCIA • ART BY MARK WEATHERHEAD

**"People can be much better than they are; one has to take what one's got to begin with, and really work on it and improve it. It means being the very best you can be, stretching yourself as often as you can."**

In five years she has made the transition from total unknown to superstar. She is being hailed as much, much more than a brand new superstar with a brilliant future in films; critics and public alike acknowledge her as one of America's best actresses ever. She has been variously called the *new* Jane Fonda, a latter-day Bette Davis, and that old cliché, the thinking man's sex symbol. Of these titles, the middle one seems most appropriate, for she has played, in movies, smallish roles—in *The Deer Hunter* and *Manhattan*, for example—that nevertheless fascinate audiences. Starting with *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *Sophie's Choice*, her next two projects after a year's hiatus, she will be playing full-sized roles, but she still does not think in terms of stardom and popularity.

"I'm an actress," Meryl Streep understates. "I'm not afraid of a mean part or of looking ugly in front of the camera. I think rotten people are the most interesting. I dislike them and mistrust them, but as an actress, knowing what makes them the way they are is the biggest challenge. An ordinary, well-adjusted housewife isn't as good a role as some grand dame, a bitch or a neurotic type. But I

also want to do comedy, lots more comedy."

Her porcelain skin, fine but bumpy nose, and flowing mane also make her ideal for costume pictures, and in fact, her big debut was in a costume or "period" play, *Trelawny of the Wells*, in 1975. It was her first part after leaving college (she had obtained a Master's in drama), but she became a local legend overnight and never again had to audition for a part—she was *that* good, that appreciated. In a single season, when work was hard to come by, she did seven different roles in as many plays.

"I saw her in different parts," recalls one critic, "and she was so different that I didn't recognize her. She has the facility of the very best English actors to transform herself, body and soul, into a new character. Whether or not she becomes a popular star, I hope and pray she remains foremost an actress."

That's likely, for Ms. Streep (the name is Dutch, and Meryl, by the way, is pronounced like Merrill) isn't that impressed with stardom or fame. "Doing a good job is what counts," she says. "You yourself know if you've been good." Praise from her peers counts with her, but she sometimes

brushes aside critics' more lavish compliments, including one headline that compared her favorably with Olivier. "That made me laugh, and I felt sorry for poor Mr. Olivier," she recalls.

One of Streep's first turns at movie acting was a bitchy bit role in *Julia*, where she shared two short scenes with Jane Fonda. At the time, America's *other* best actress said, "She is bursting with talent—she can do what I'm not able to do. She's just marvelous, and I love working with a talented woman." Jane also predicted future stardom for the blonde who was then unknown to Hollywood.

Her role as a hometown girl-next-door opposite Robert de Niro in *The Deer Hunter* was Oscar-nominated in the supporting category. She didn't win, and that didn't faze her; she never even picked up the Emmy which she won, playing the German wife of a Jew in *Holocaust*. "I don't think acting, an individual performance, should be taken out of context and compared to another performance in a completely different project," she feels strongly.

In 1979 and 1980 she appeared in *Kramer Vs. Kramer* (which won her several awards), *Manhattan* and *The Seduction of Joe Tynan* in largely sup-



# INTERVIEW

## MERYL

## STREEP

**"She has been called the new Jane Fonda, a latter-day Bette Davis, and that old cliché, the thinking man's sex symbol. As one critic noted, 'Whether or not she becomes a popular star, I hope and pray she remains foremost an actress.'"**

porting roles, but, given her gifts, no doubt a non-supporting Academy Award will be forthcoming in this decade. Each of her films has been a critical and financial hit, so besides her talent, Meryl has been very lucky. She acknowledges, "If you're in a flop, who notices?"

Despite her non-stop stellar rise, there have been grim, less wonderful moments in the life of this 30ish phenomenon. As a girl, she wore thick glasses and her nose was extremely prominent. "Don't think a kid doesn't notice acutely that she or he is different," she recalls somberly. "My appearance was just about the biggest, most self-conscious thing in my life." That state of affairs didn't change until she went to Vassar, and found it "wonderful being surrounded only by females. It meant that my appearance didn't matter anymore, and I could just settle down and be myself. That's when I really got into acting. As a result of my looks all those years, I had no hang-ups about appearing unattractive in a given role. It was very matter-of-fact to me, though many girls wouldn't stand for it, then or now."

At Vassar, her talent shone brightly, as it later did on Broadway and in films and TV. No, she will not abandon the stage for quick bucks and worldwide acclamation: "I'm going to be selective in what I do. In a play, you can afford a few mistakes, but a movie is a huge undertaking, and although it's unfortunate, if you do two or more movies in a row that don't click, you're no longer able to go do what you want and pick and choose."

But what if her films are critical hits but bombs at the box office? "That's difficult. I'm not going to worry about it too much. I mean, I don't think I'm going to do a lot of Shakespeare in Hollywood," she laughs warmly. She also refers to the career of Bette Davis, one of several "grand" women she ad-

mires; Davis had more than her share of flops on her way to becoming one of the queens of cinema. "I want to expand myself," offers Streep. "Everyone says it, but that is one of my goals, and I've been into it a long time."

Another low point in the new star's life was when her lover John Cazale, best remembered as Al Pacino's sidekick in *Dog Day Afternoon* and his brother in *The Godfather*, died of bone cancer. Meryl and John worked together on the stage and also in *The Deer Hunter*, and she was very close to him, according to insiders. "She took off several months just to be with him and comfort him," recalls a girlfriend. "The end was inevitable, everyone knew that. But Meryl wanted to lessen his pain and loneliness as much as possible."

Streep won't discuss this episode at length: "The sorrow of his death is still with me." Last year, she married—very unexpectedly, to her friends—sculptor Donald Gummer, by whom she had a baby son at Thanksgiving. The child's name is Henry, and he is supposedly named after Hank Aaron, the baseball player, for Streep is an avid sports nut.

Because of her marriage and the baby, she took a full year off, then sat and watched the acclaim pour in for her successive motion picture efforts. She feels ambiguous about awards: "I don't think these awards things are done in the right spirit very often, but of course the most meaningful thing is to be encouraged by your peers, by people who know what it is like to act for a living."

When praised about some of her work, Meryl may or may not accept the compliment, though she is invariably warm and gracious, and laughter is never far away (she has great humor about herself, too). Of her role as a feminist attorney who falls in love with Alan Alda in *The Seduction of Joe*



*Tynan*, she only murmurs, "I did that on automatic pilot." It was apparently no challenge, though she became a friend of the feminist actor and calls him "one of the nicest, most sincere and sweet guys you'll ever meet in or out of Hollywood."

Co-stars of Streep have nothing but paeans for her. Alda has said, "She is inspiring, to both women and men, actors and non-actors. What she does comes so naturally to her, but rather than envy her, one is glad for her. The world loves talent like that."

Dustin Hoffman declares, "She is so full of life and energy and positive thoughts. She's friendly and not egotistical, she treats everyone on the set fairly and never does the prima donna bit. But when she is working, she is all wrapped up in it, total concentration. She's so committed, and she wants everything to be as good as possible."

Even the reticent Woody Allen has noted, "Meryl is the kind of actress who's intimidatingly good, but nobody fears her talent, because she shares it. She makes everyone else look good, too."

This is how Meryl puts it when told she is an outstanding actress:

"Thank you, but acting is the one art that is, *has* to be, collaborative. A painter or a writer or sculptor does his thing alone, but an actor has to be part of an acting family. A soliloquy is not really acting; acting is mostly reacting. I can only be good if the people I'm acting with are also good. You know, it's like when someone says of a couple, 'He's a good husband,' but of course, he can only be a good husband if his spouse is good, too."

One inquires what it was like shooting *Holocaust*, which was mostly done in Austria. Surprisingly, she found it a rather distasteful experience. "The atmosphere was oppressive," she recalls. "Austria was so...Austrian. There's still a kind of a

feeling of militarism, of showing off old medals. Also, my character was so unrelentingly noble, and I don't know how true to life that would have been. The material was so grim. It was all an experience one wouldn't want to go back and repeat."

As for *Kramer Vs. Kramer*, she won the role after Kate Jackson was unable to get time off from *Charlie's Angels* to play opposite friend Dustin Hoffman. But for quite some time, it seemed as though Streep would not accept the coveted part:

"I couldn't possibly have accepted it the way it was written," she says of the misogynistic script of the anti-feminist novel. "It was too anti-female, too unfair, too black-and-white. It was a serious story and a topic of relevant concern, but the woman was painted as a wicked witch. So we changed it." Meryl wrote her own lines for the moving courtroom sequence. She is pleased with the final product, but not 100 percent. She points out that for years men by the thousands have left behind their wives and kids, yet Hollywood has not seen fit to make a movie about such a situation, and a woman left coping with a child and a job has never been made into a sympathetic heroine, with the possible exception of *An Unmarried Woman*.

In real life, the actress is a feminist and one of her pet causes at the present is a male contraceptive pill. "Why should women bear the brunt of that burden," she asks. She also wants better provisions made for childcare for working women, noting, "I'm lucky in that I can go into my dressing room or trailer and tend to my son and nurse him, but most women have to decide between a baby and having a job. The male-run establishment has not made it easy for working mothers."

No one in Meryl's family was an actor, and her relatives are both surprised and delighted with her acting

success. "There's this big old scrapbook they keep," she laughs, "full of every single review, photo and news item ever printed about me. I don't get into all that, myself, but they do, and it's touching, really."

Her retired father was a pharmaceutical executive and her mother ran her own graphics business at home. One of her two brothers is currently a modern dancer. As a girl, Streep didn't particularly excel in anything. "I was not an exceptional student," she says, although some articles have labeled her a straight-A stu. "I always got one C in my grades, and half the time it was because I didn't like the teacher, so I'd act up or cut up and sort of ruin it for myself. But I had fun doing it. My favorite part of school was the boys who sat in the back row. They were so funny! That is, unless we were seated by the teacher in alphabetical order."

"So much of what I know and can do about comedy comes from high school, which was both a painful and a very funny time. It's kind of a shame because some of those boys were like the funniest people in the world, and a few of them are now selling real estate in New Jersey." She pauses, then adds, significantly, "I was a very good audience before I ever thought of being a performer."

Compensating for her looking less than classically beautiful at the time, Meryl got onto the swim team, became a spunky cheerleader, polished her soprano and became a star in high school musicals and eventually, by strength of her personality, became homecoming queen. "The will is a very powerful thing," she asserts. "People can be much better than they are; one has to take what one's got to begin with, and really work on it and improve it. Improve oneself. That doesn't mean just smoking less, it means being the very best you can be, stretching yourself as often as you can." There is intensity in those

Continued to page 67



# SPOTLIGHT

BY JOSEPH ARSENAULT

## MACBETH

Unusual casting can easily make an audience rethink a classic and *Macbeth*, perhaps Shakespeare's most widely known play, can certainly stand reinterpretation; after all, there *must* be more to it than



Maureen Anderman and Philip Anglim incarnate the Lincoln Center Theater Company version of *Macbeth*, directed by Sarah Caldwell.

"vaulting ambition." There is, indeed, and Lincoln Center's *Macbeth* puts its probing finger on the play's pulse, explaining the perversely evil influence of Lady Macbeth on Macbeth. You guessed it: Sex. With sultry-voiced Maureen Anderman as Lady Macbeth, director Sarah Caldwell has created a lithe, catlike young conspirator whose ambition coupled with her sensuality kindles the play's darker fires. With respect to Macbeth, however, ambition should be made of sterner stuff than Philip Anglim, who's nondescript, amorphous, unmemorable. Director Caldwell, who heads Boston's prestigious opera company, has added much showy pomp and circumstance to the play, and it works. (The set looks like the left-over scaffolding from *Sweeney Todd*.) But this *Macbeth*, for all its subtle sexuality, still lacks some core of cohesion that would tie it all together.

—John Devere



Whether a hop, a skip or a jump, David Gordon finds new ways to dance up a storm at New York's Dance Theater Workshop.

## PICK UP

Current concern for works-in-progress probably means that choreographers are interested in process over finished presentation, in spontaneous generation of art rather than the belabored, polished show. It is perhaps not *what* dance is that animates young choreographers like Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs, Twyla Tharp, Andy de Groat or David Gordon; rather, it's *how* it comes about.

To say that a choreographer has a vocabulary of dance steps means that he has established a repertoire of moves and phrasings that are instantly recognizable as his own. David Gordon's material for his Pick Up Co. is always delightfully whimsical, utterly enchanting and loaded with psychic punch. He is one of the few choreographers who does not *need* music. Silence in dance *can* be deadly; yet Gordon combines witty, spoken dialogue with musical accompaniment expertly. His humor fills the dialogue, animates the choreography and gives the dancer a whole other dimension. In this hybrid form, dancer and actor merge to create a startling new art-form. Some vignettes like *Dorothy and Eileen*, where two



women discuss the troublesome, often quixotic relationships they have with their mothers while seemingly rehearsing the dance they are performing, or *Phone Call*, where Valda Setterfield receives a call from the company in unison, have more character and dramatic development than some plays on Broadway. For Gordon movement underscores and enriches the actor; dialogue extends the dancer. Keep your eye on David Gordon.

## FIFTH OF JULY

If Inge's *Picnic*, Williams' *Summer and Smoke* and Lanford Wilson's *Fifth of July* say anything, they underline the uneasy truce between summer's frivolity and troubled psyches. It should come as no surprise that *Fifth of July* has hit Broadway. The play belongs there. Christopher Reeve (Superman) and William Hurt (*Altered States*,

the original Kenneth Tally) have portrayed this important gay character to stunning acclaim. Kenneth Tally, gay paraplegic struggles to keep his dignity, the family house and his friends together. How wonderful it is to see a gay character depicted with such warmth and compassion. In fact, the Tally family accepts his homosexuality far better than his infirmity. Finally, gay characters needn't lurk menacingly in the shadows as figures of doom and perversion. Gay can be an aspect, a piece of the mosaic, not necessarily an open wound. *Fifth of July* is to be commended for managing this subtlety magnificently. Swoozie Kurtz plays feisty Gwen brilliantly. Her star shines bright; her humor infects contagiously. If you were involved in the Sixties at all, this play will resuscitate old memories touchingly.

## LAST SUMMER

Theater that involves gay characters in sit-com formats seems to be the wave of the present. *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove* at New York's Actor's Playhouse describes the lesbian experience with clarity, humor and a touch

*The late Jose Limon's dance company continues to stun audiences with the choreographer's major works in repertory. A recent New York season included Limon's paean to the American Indian, "The Unsung," featuring Stephen Pier.*

of wry sentimentality. Chambers' summerside melodrama touches gay men and women—ultimately everybody—by capturing a group of people who accept being "different," who turn marginal lifestyles into political and personal statements. Janet Sarno and Holly Barron bring depth and complexity to roles that could easily read as soap opera. They jar us with their frank self-acceptance and teach us valid lessons in courage and perseverance. The play has been touted as the lesbian equivalent of "Boys in the Band"; frankly, it's better.



**INCREDIBLE BULK:** Lee Canalito, below right, who played Sylvester Stallone's young wrestler brother in *Paradise Alley*, now tackles the role of Tarzan in *John Derek's* remake, starring Bo Derek as Jane and Richard Harris as Tarzan's father. We'd be glad to have this hunk swinging through our jungle anytime.







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## A CLOSE SHAVE

Continued from page 27

Dorit Baxter, an Israeli esthetician at Pierre Michael, 6 West 57th Street, New York City, recommends the following tips for problem skin. Each time your face is washed, dry it off with paper towels that are disposable after single use. (Reuse of a cloth towel can spread bacteria.) Always change pillow cases 3 or 4 times a week to reduce skin problems from night perspiration, especially in the summertime. Avoid such foods as chocolates, peanuts, peanut butter, shellfish, fried foods, coffee. For coffee users, substitute decaffeinated or herbal teas like Morning Thunder. Drink lots of water. Vitamin B complex has often been effective in the treatment of skin problems. When using moisturizers, dab only on areas where you feel excessive dryness and leave oily areas alone. And, once every six weeks, get a facial which involves elaborate steaming of the face, the use of a healing camphor masque and facial massage. This will help clean and freshen your face. A skin specialist will be able to pinpoint your problem, localize treatment and suggest dermatologists if such is needed. It didn't take Gloria Steinem to acknowledge that both men and women can suffer from problem skin.

Dorit Baxter's new Camphor Masque is the result of two years of research by this personable skin specialist. Her professional dedication enabled her to find a skin aphrodisiac that not only heals blemishes, but cleans pores, controls oily skin and keeps skin in a healthy balance. Noting the historic benefits of camphor, Dorit found that when she blended natural clays and calamine, the combination produced dazzling results. For more information, write Dorit Skinmetics, P.O. Box 364, Village Station, New York, NY 10014 or send \$10.00 plus \$1.50 postage for one 2 oz. jar of the Healing Camphor Masque. (Allow 3 weeks delivery.) With 30 applications, it should be the answer to your problems.

Like women, men can retard aging wrinkles by the correct use of moisturizers. Most skin conditions, though hereditary, are controllable. To avoid wrinkling around the eyes, never use astringents. When cleaning that area with soap, remember to be delicate. If excessive bags trouble you, Dorit suggests a solution of camomile tea, swabbed with cotton balls around the

eyes. Do this several times until each cotton swab dries (about 5 to 10 minutes). This should help alleviate bags.

Once a month, give yourself a facial steambath. Heat 2 or 3 cups of camomile tea, steam into the entire face for about 3-5 minutes. This will open pores, enabling you to clean out white- and blackheads manually. Always proceed gently with the utmost concern for sanitary conditions. Dirty fingernails or implements are an absolute no-no. Upon ridding yourself of these problems, apply the camphor mask to dry out the extra oily areas. Most people have combination skins (partly dry on cheeks and necks, oily on nose and foreheads). Use the mask where oiliness is most prevalent. After 15 minutes, remove the mask with soapy water or cotton cloth if desired and rub in just a little moisturizer over the entire face. Professional facials can cost up to \$30. Places like Georgette Klinger or Pierre Michel in New York have been giving them to men for years. It might be wise to have a professional facial once in order to learn how to do it right.

Finally, every evening before retiring, grime and pollution should be thoroughly dissolved and cleansed from the face with a cleansing lotion, followed by a mild astringent or skin lotion. The morning cleansing and all other cleansing during the day is quickly achieved by applying Dorit's Evacu-Wash I (\$8 a jar plus \$1.50 postage with 20 applications possible) to a wet face and massaging with fingertips in a rotating motion that follows the bone structures of the face. Follow this routine with cool or tepid water. In the morning, the same Evacu-Wash can be used as shaving cream to help shave.

The important thing to remember is that men and women have fundamentally similar skin. Women have always been ahead of men in caring for it, availing themselves of products that would protect and beautify their skin. Says Dorit, "Now, men are having their chance at it, too. What's more, it needn't cost an arm and a leg. Beautiful skin is not a prerogative of the rich only, it's available to everybody at reasonable cost." Consider creating new habits that will bring bright and healthy skin tone to that most special of body parts—the face. After all, that's what people see *first*. If what they see is appealing, perhaps the face won't be *all* they'll see...



# What's a gay sensibility?

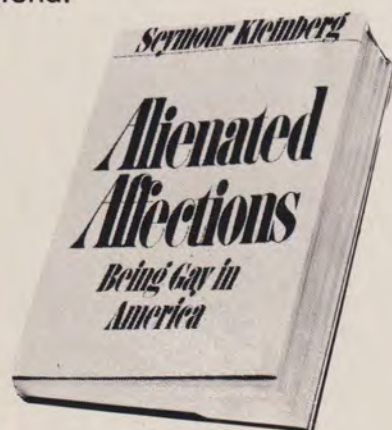
In this brilliant and provocative book, Seymour Kleinberg talks about the answer to this question and what it means to be gay. *Alienated Affections* is at times intense and highly personal. . . at others, witty and downright funny. But no matter what tone Kleinberg uses, he's always bent on countering the self-evasion and confused feelings that exist in the gay world—a world society says isn't supposed to exist. Kleinberg has a lot to say about:

**straight fears:** "For straights, it is visibility that is terrifying. To be openly gay without contrition or shame is to testify that there are viable alternative sexual styles."

**gay sex:** "Fisting is a daring flirtation with mortality, ignoring risk for promises of sexual intensity where the self is blissfully lost, surrendered into other hands."

**gay pride:** "So far gay pride has only been interested in assertion and not enough in what we are to be proud of."

Use the order form to order your copy of *Alienated Affections* on **trial examination** today. If you don't agree that Seymour Kleinberg is one of the most stimulating writers on emerging gay culture, you can return it for a full refund.



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PHOTOGRAPH BY LOBO STUDIOS













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**"Construction Man"**



## ALIENATED AFFECTIONS

Continued from page 16

male and female pursuers, though his treatment of women in the story of the nymph Echo is particularly unpleasant. Narcissus' first sexual discovery is also self-discovery. Sexual passion and sense of self become identified as the same thing. Objectively, he loves his own reflection; subjectively, he loves another. In his obsession, he becomes simultaneously asocial and antisocial, self-absorbed and self-defeating. Freud claims that everyone begins life in a state of primary narcissism, meaning that we discover that we can be in love with the self in just the same way we can love another, the object outside ourselves, like the parent. Our boredom arises from our inability to respond to others or things with genuine interest. When the boredom becomes constitutional, it is because only the self is interesting, and sometimes even that does not entice. A common compensation for narcissistic boredom is aggression, whose violence at least is not dull.


In "The Most Prevalent Form of Degradation in Erotic Life (*Contributions to the Psychology of Love*, 1912), Freud tells how tenderness and familiarity inhibit sensuality, how this is the condition of civilized sexuality for most people. In a healthy love, "two currents of feeling have to unite...the tender, affectionate feelings and the sensual feelings." When there is some psychic disorder, these strains of feeling separate, are dissociated from each other. In severe cases, they become exclusive: "The erotic life of such people remains dissociated, divided between two channels, the same two that are personified in art as heavenly and earthly (or animal) love. Where such men love they have no desire and where they desire they cannot love." The perverse is one attempt to resolve that separation, to break the sexual taboo surrounding the tender figure. What used to be the neurotic exceptional condition of fifty years ago has now become one of the commonplaces of urban adult life, the sexual expectations that are presumed now in marriage have created an intolerable burden on the institution. No coupled relationship of any sort, from heterosexual marriage to homosexual master-slave, seems to have solved

the problem of sustaining sexual excitement and nurturing that tender trust the textbooks speak of so glowingly. That is Narcissus' precocious intuition: only that exciting stranger who is beyond his grasp is truly interesting.

Perversity and promiscuity hold in common an intolerance for habitual boredom and a propensity for aggression and hostility. Among the perverse, the hostility is ritualized for the sadist and internalized for the masochist. Among the promiscuous, the hostility is in the game of sexual enticement and rebuff, the omnipresent teasing and shame. In homosexual life, there are few humiliations equal to the sexual rebuff in a scene where one has presented himself voluntarily as a sexual object. That scene, enacted in every gay bar and nearly every bath—places created to expedite sexual liaison and devoted to libertinism—that scene is the experience of nearly all gay men and women, and it is an experience they return to again and again. It is not surprising if someone is so beautiful or so sexual that he or she is immune to rebuff and finds such places congenial, but the majority of men who frequent bars complain: despite the pitch-black fuck room in the basement where anyone can score, up front the same tedious appraisals go on.

Shame is not limited to sexual rejection: one can experience it in any competitive defeat, when one is ridiculed or even socially slighted; a special kind of shame is felt when one's privacy is invaded, which illustrates the irrationality and difficulty of such response. People talk about how they feel after having discovered their apartments burglarized, as if "someone shit in the living room." Unlike guilt, which can be lived with and made gratifying, shame triggers rage. When a gay man enters such a situation forearmed with awareness, his rage often turns against himself in self-disgust. It is a miniature of the same process by which sadistic aggression is internalized and transformed into masochism.

Freud called it moral masochism, an unconscious tendency to seek pain or failure and enjoy it, a need to punish oneself, translated into the idea of being beaten by God or destiny or society. In short, the loser. To a degree, this experience is common to every civilized man, present in his response to his helplessness, powerlessness, or sense of guilt. Eric Fromm popu-



**"Pleasure is the reward after the labor of humiliation, the necessary price. It sounds somewhat like mere puritanical conscience: make yourself uncomfortable, then remove the discomfort and see how good it feels."**



larized the idea in books like *Escape from Freedom*; these strivings help us to evade the unbearable feeling of isolation and powerlessness. Unlike the erotic masochist who wants pleasure even at the cost of pain and who is obstinate in his pursuit, the moral masochist finds pleasure in his punishment, or in the self-pity that accompanies it.

If we accept the idea that perversion is an expression of character in general, what has traditionally been called the perverse is now becoming only the ordinary in *extremis*, eroticized in those people who by nature or conditioning express the deepest sense of self in sexuality.

Put in a context larger than the bedroom, it cannot be regarded merely as exotic foreplay, especially since sadomasochists increasingly demand both publicity and, if not approval, acknowledgement. Psychologists tend to see the masochist as either an intensely suffering victim, ultimately of his culture, or the opposite: blackmailing, coercive, or paranoid, someone who uses suffering to excuse himself from the responsibilities of his own life by manipulating others into taking care of him. The theories on character range from the placating and completely acquiescent, passively enslaved, to one that sees the individual as demanding, contentious, armed for a power struggle that he understands better than his antagonist, whom he has handicapped as his cruel but loving master. The sadist in turn is viewed as weak, with a crippled sense of self, intent on self-aggrandizement, exploiting others psychically to disembowel them. In both roles, the deception and illusion about dominance are central: the sadist's strength devolves on his feeling of mastery over someone else which depends on the volition of his subject.

What is then enacted is highly political in content. The sadistic figure of authority represents not only the father with the strap but patriarchy, Freud's civilization itself, which the masochist temporarily believes he controls. The real antagonist which is culture is represented by a player whose momentary credence is his script and costume. The mixture of renouncing autonomy but enjoying it by proxy is the common condition of political life and the life of orthodox religious communities. The cults of the seventies, most notoriously the Jim Jones cult, would seem to verify completely Freud's idea of moral

masochism.

Reik believes that the "more violent and brutal the ambition of the individual...deprived of the right of self-determination, the more pliant and resignedly will he surrender to the will of the autocrat or the leader who replaces him. The sadist becomes the executor of the suppressed yet not vanished brutality of the masochist." Therapists testify that, in treatment, when the patient begins to master his masochistic tendencies, what inevitably begin to emerge are sadistic fantasies. In such a reading, sadomasochism betrays its social history as subversion; instead, it is deeply conservative if not reactionary, surrendering to fantasies about power while suffering, psychically writhing, under the demands of omnipotent culture. The disillusionments of childhood are permanent legacies for withdrawal and clostrality. The bedroom becomes the playroom, and the outside world remains fearful, disagreeable, and unchangeable.

In a critical rather than clinical study, *Masochism: An Interpretation of Coldness and Cruelty*, Gilles Deleuze argues that sadomasochism is a syndrome where true sadism must be distinguished from a pretended one. He begins with an idea borrowed from Georges Bataille on de Sade's work: "It is a language which repudiates a relationship between speaker and audience." Deleuze then denies the idea of consent: the sadist is sometimes *coincidentally* involved with the masochist, but the real pleasure for the former is inflicting pain on "those who do not consent nor are persuaded." What is cruel and disgusting to others is the source of pleasure for the cold-blooded and libertine sadist. He is a "speculator" on death in a gothic world. He has no shame, remorse, or repressed desire for punishment. His world is cold; anti-emotional, for feelings compete with sensation, dissipating sexual energy. This hedonistic sadism must inflict pain, unlike Freud's perversion which is purely aggressive and only aims at domination. Deleuze contrasts the masochist's infantile world, the realm of the fairy tale: if the sadist controls by possession, the masochist does so by contract, which acts as law and creates order.

Deleuze's disputes with Freud are really minor; he subscribes entirely to the Oedipal construction of both sadism and masochism, and his discussion is quite orthodox. In masochism, "the father is totally expelled":

in sadism, "paternalism and patriarchy predominate." Sadism negates the mother, the maternal, and the feminine to exalt the father beyond all law, into something akin to what De Sade meant when he talked of "intelligent evil." Deleuze quotes Nietzsche: "If pain and suffering have any meaning, it must be that they are enjoyable to someone." That someone is God the Father as he is embodied in patriarchy. Deleuze concludes by itemizing in that meticulous French fashion the true differences between sadism and its false counterpart masochism: besides inflating the father who is abolished in the masochist's world, sadism gives fetishism and fantasy an entirely different significance; the sadist is hostile to all that — his experience is speculative. The list is much longer, but it adds up to a theory of eroticism based on the idea of transformation. Like all theory about sadomasochism, Deleuze's involves ideas of pain as pleasure, dominance and passivity that are transformations of ideas about gender, about the meaning of masculinity and femininity. In homosexual sadomasochism, what is psychically imitated are heterosexual conflicts about patriarchy.

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4

The moral outrage against sadomasochism from heterosexual and homosexual critics is often less than useful; it creates a desire to defend the underdog against dogma. To say that it is an eroticization of violence and powerlessness is no longer illuminating or critical in modern America. To say that it is allied to death and motivated by guilt, or a pederastic displacement in which an adult uses a consenting masochist as a surrogate for a child, is an interesting notion, but unclear as moral criticism. As to guilt, after Vietnam, what does that term mean morally? If one cites Freud's argument about instinct, can one then use it against the subject one has conceded is powerfully based in biology? To say it is a surrogate for pederasty is hardly to make it worse but seems to support the idea that S-M is a safety valve for forbidden, destructive impulses.

But there are more serious criticisms: first, consent is not choice, and no defender of this faith has touched on the compulsive nature of this sexuality. Second, in celebrating submission and slavery, sadomasochism may betray entirely the idea of sexual liberation.

Most of this discussion has made



little distinction between heterosexual and homosexual sadomasochism because it is a perversion where such differences are much less meaningful, when men and women who regard themselves as heterosexual will perform sexually with members of their own sex without later questioning their own identity. When stores like The Pleasure Chest first opened, their clientele was the gay leather crowd and a few tourists. Now the catalogue for the seven stores, "The Pleasure Chest Compendium of Amorous and Prurient Paraphernalia," is 192 pages long, fully illustrated, and ambisexual, as devoted to straight as to gay usage. Indeed, some of the more elaborate equipment indicates that someday technology may create autoerotic masochism. When I browsed through the Greenwich Village shop, there were two couples there: one appeared modishly straight Madison Avenue, and the other couple looked like your everyday liberated lesbians: sandaled, braless, sexily boyish, unself-conscious.

Sadomasochism truly seems to transcend the kind of categorization that has been so polarizing in sexual politics. It is also true that gay men are more extreme, more intrigued by danger and risk than their heterosexual and lesbian counterparts who tend to be coupled. And gay men are much more intense and insistent upon borrowing the trappings of Fascism for their rituals, finding the concentration camp and the Gestapo titillating setting and character for their variety of sexual play. And among gay men, the issue of potency and erection is more relevant than it is among others who claim the genital is not nearly as important as the anal.


Gay S-M is more intrigued with experimentations with urine and feces; scatology has its own organizations. For its brief moment, The Toilet, an S-M bar near the docks, lived up to its name and, from some of the gossip, exceeded anyone's expectations. Whether piss and shit are really substitutes for semen, part of a fetish about virility and ingestion, or whether they are part of the search for that exciting humiliation is unclear, though nothing prevents them from being both.

It is a standard observation that sadomasochism is particularly prevalent in "clean" countries like Sweden, Denmark, England, Switzerland, Germany, and of course America, where hygiene is a virtue. If maso-

chism is biologically rooted in destructive instinct, excrement is the closest thing to the principle of decay this side of death. Also, the anality of S-M is omnipresent. Psychologists relate its origins to toilet training. It is in that first difficult socialization of the child that punctuality, control, and cleanliness are united in an experience that demands the child bear discomfort temporarily in order to secure parental approval and love. Children think their feces are gifts to the parent, and babies, we are told, only wet those they love. The dabbling in the excremental is documented as early as de Sade; to my knowledge, it is the first recording in literature of heterosexual rimming (my familiarity with Latin erotic is limited). Anilingus has long been a homosexual variety of foreplay, particularly when it precedes intercourse. That it is also forbidden, dangerous to health, and held as disgusting by most of society does nothing to diminish its popularity.

In rimming, homosexual eroticism shares with sadomasochism the excitement of humiliation, precisely the experience of shame. What counters the shame of the performer is his invasion of the privacy of the body of his partner, which differs from anal intercourse in that it is so overwhelmingly tactile and intimate, and which bears no resemblance to heterosexual intercourse, to normal coitus. The privacy of the bowels opened to access is also a drama of submission and dominion where the roles are not clearly active or passive, where the one pursuing the shame is active, using his partner; as in masochism, the active performer controls the shame; as in sadism, he also gives the pleasure.

That gay men are exuberant in their practice is now verified in the epidemic proportion of amebiasis in recent years. What used to be a speciality of tropical medicine ("Did you drink the water in Mexico?") has now become a venereal disease in these temperate climes. What was once the unlucky tourist's hazard is now the average risk of promiscuous gay life. That it is widespread conveys not only its practice, since conventional venereal disease also indicates that, but also the fact that its popularity is recent. Only in the last decades has it entered the vernacular; I would venture that the attraction is partly that it is still taboo, that more than fucking or sucking which has heterosexual counterparts, anilingus is forbidden and therefore seductive. It



***"To see in Sade a victim of anything but his own sensibility and his passionate willfulness is to sentimentalize his great achievement—to pioneer questions about sexual freedom that had never been heard, perhaps not thought of before."***



is risky to health, but not nearly as serious as syphilis or the new resistant strains of gonorrhea which are so widespread that they are demanding national medical interest to research preventive vaccines. Of course that attention is largely the result of the epidemic among heterosexual adolescents.

To break the taboo is always to experience shame and triumph. What is taboo is set apart, too sacred or too profane. Among primitive people, it is charged with danger—supernatural power—or subject to supernatural reprisal. In homosexual culture, what is taboo is part of an entire life style that is set apart and regarded by society as already profane, dangerous, and subject to reprisal. To break the taboo among primitive and civilized peoples alike is to enter the perverse. If one is homosexual and has heard all his life that he is already perverse, the inhibitions are lowered, the threshold to the experimental much easier to cross.

In the last decade, a new threshold called fist-fucking or fisting has beckoned more and more gay men. The practice, like so much that is innovative and American, soon demanded an organization, and in the early seventies news of the F.F.A. (Fist Fuckers of America) centered in Philadelphia leaked into gay culture. Martin Duberman in his journals records meeting a man calling himself "Berlin" in January 1972; Berlin first told him of the practice and the new organization. When asked what the experience felt like, Berlin replied, "It's like the feeling your funny bone goes when it's hit, only it travels all over your body."

The early members of F.F.A. were men with some experience in sado-masochism, fond of leather and butchness, but who were now in their late forties and fifties, isolated by their age in gay culture. With the advent of handkerchief signaling, communication between fisters became much easier, and both the information and the experimentation spread quickly through the gay scene. That piece of red cotton in left (top man) or right (bottom) pocket was first a signal and soon a trigger, a fraternal sign inviting boldness.

From the men I interviewed who have been into fisting for some years, I learned much which was startling, not least of all about my own attitudes toward sexual innovation. While I explored the sado-masochism scene, I

checked my own impulse to judge or dismiss or disapprove by analogizing. Those impulses must be just what much of heterosexual America feels when confronted with garden-variety homosexuality. My fears of what I did not understand and was embarrassed by are probably very like the fears and disgust of homosexuality in conventional society.

5

I first met John and Pete in the summer of 1968 at Fire Island Pines. They had already been lovers for more than six years (they are now entering their eighteenth year together). They met in the army; John had had no significant gay experiences before, and Pete had had no gratifying ones. They became lovers in the service, and when I met them, they had developed an easy, familiar, monogamous relationship that seemed successful and attractive. They were both in their late twenties and beginning to explore their careers. John thought he might like to be a writer; Pete knew he would have something to do with the technical production of popular music. They had little money and not much direction, but they were optimistic and not overly ambitious. Pete was always cheerful and buoyant, cute and campy and extravagant about his enthusiasm for New York: for the opera and the theater, the bar life and the drugs.

The following summer, we were roommates in a house on the island that we rented for August. Their relationship had changed little even as I saw it more fully. John had given up the idea of writing and was working on Wall Street; Pete was part of a lighting and sound company. They were more ambitious for money, for clothes, and for every new record, more trippy about drugs, but easy companions, rarely quarrelsome or irritable, interested in good times. I also learned that their relationship was sexually fixed in ways it was not fixed socially, where the two men acted fairly spontaneously and unstereotypically. Sexually, John was always dominant because Pete insisted on being anally passive. Socially, they were flexible: John liked to cook and was quieter and more domestic than Pete, who made more money and was profligate with it. John managed the bills and the social calendar, but Pete made new friends more easily. Both were attractive, but nothing special at Fire Island Pines. Their appeal was boyishness; their style was gregarious and hedonistic. Pete never read anything,

not even the newspaper, but could not bear a room without music. He was a Californian, a native of Los Angeles, and seemed to have found in the East everything he wanted: a lover, the gay life, fast drugs and fast dancing, a profitable job, and endless amusement. John usually had his nose in a book; he came from working-class suburban Long Island; New York was nearly as new an experience for him.

In the last few years I saw them infrequently; we had drifted as people do so easily in the city. When I went to their parties, these were novelties of heavy drug taking, sexually charged dancing, camping, and booze, all diverting and exhausting. At their last party in Christmas week of 1978 I met a hunky Latin who danced me into a giddy state and invited me home. John had been watching us and came up to me as I began to look for my coat and forbade me to leave. Julio was definitely not for me: he was a sadistic fist-fucker who had already sent three men to the hospital, one of whom ended with a colostomy. When I asked why Julio was there, John said he had crashed the party. No one asked him any place anymore; he had even been thrown out of F.F.A., creating a precedent.

When I decided to write this chapter, I called John and Pete, who readily agreed to be interviewed; their enthusiasm and volubility filled three hours of tape. Pete did most of the talking; he has changed the most since they discovered F.F.A. He travels all over the country on his job, and in every city he has names of members; he rarely has to go to a gay bar. It is like a fraternal order; there is always a welcome arm for a buddy.

After ten monogamous years, both men had agreed that for them the sexual scene was with other people, but most of their experiences before F.F.A. were unsatisfying. Neither had much patience cruising the bars, and threesomes were less exciting than they had hoped. In 1976, Pete was fisted for the first time by someone he'd known for years and who specialized as a top man. From then on, Pete has been an enthusiast; he is involved with his new sexual discovery exclusively and, outside of his work, entirely. In 1978, he joined F.F.A., the first organization he has even been a member of. John was willing to oblige. After intimacy of such standing, he did not take long learning to be a good top man, but he was not satisfied. He demanded that if he were to



fist Pete, Pete at least should make a serious effort to fuck him, for John had never been successfully fucked. It took some months of patience, and after fourteen years, Pete succeeded, his first time as a fucker. From John's first experience being fucked to being fisted took less than six months. Now both are fully involved, and John's capacities are nearly as large as his lover's.

Fisting has decreased the amount of sexual time they spend alone with each other, but the quality of their sexual life is better now than it has been since the early years. They are now very open with each other, less jealous and competitive than before, and they talk to each other more. Neither foresees any risk of falling in love with someone else despite the hundreds of men they go through annually. They feel even more coupled, unthreatened by romantic infidelity, satisfied and assured that the friendship they feel is enduring. Oh, there are occasional crushes, but those infatuations are reserved for the orgies they habituate.

They find most of their old friends a bit boring now—"G.A.A. types, those politicians are so dull," they tell me with cheerful malice. John's social habits have changed as much as Pete's: "I never cook now; I've forgotten how. Besides, we don't eat on weekends, what with all the douching and the drugs; it's best to keep your stomach a little empty. You don't want to eat heavily anyway because of all the drugs you're taking. On a full stomach, you'd throw up. Maybe what I should do is write *The Fist-Fucker's Cook Book*—all omelettes and soup."

When they prepare for a sexual evening, say an orgy at The Loft starting promptly at twelve (the doors are locked for the night and everyone has checked his clothes by midnight), they begin hours before. Sometimes it starts the night before with their last solid meal. They then have no breakfast or dinner the day of the orgy. "Some people won't eat for two days, the whole weekend." Drugs depress their appetites, and the dieting keeps their weight down. Pete, who has an ulcer and colitis, has to eat some "light stuff."

Douching is the main topic of conversation among fisters. It takes two or three hours to ensure that the body is as empty as one can hope. Between sessions of douching, they begin their drugs. The douching is now expedited by an attachment to their shower, a


six-inch cylinder with six holes, at the end of a long flexible steel pipe. They each douche two or three times as the body relaxes more and more on the downers they take and the food in their systems descends lower into their intestines. Before a fisting party or orgy, they check each other out. Sometimes, Pete gets so excited during the hygiene inspection that he has an orgasm.

Each prefers his own cocktail. John likes a tab of mescaline and five milligrams of Valium to begin the night with: they can keep him hard for hours. During the orgy he will take some M.D.A., a form of speed, of course grass and poppers, and, if he is particularly heedless, a toke of Angel Dust. Both take Mydol, sold over the counter to relieve menstrual pain, which they say prevents intestinal cramps. However, both can be fisted on nothing more than grass, and Pete has been done sober. The poppers are used mostly when they are tops, to keep them excited. "But it's M.D.A. that's the fister's drug—that's what gives duration."

The Loft is their favorite orgy place, but it is not as far out as The Catacombs in San Francisco where straight S-M couples sometimes appear, and the gay men watch while a woman fists her husband or lover. I am surprised both at the mixture of straight and gay, of F-F and S-M, and at John's interest in such a scene. He confesses he never was interested before, but since fisting he now loves straight pornography and even has some bisexual fantasies. I ask them whether they think the man being fisted by a woman is straight just because he says so. Pete replies, "Well, to take a fist is a pretty macho thing." John tells me of a Latin American who likes his wife to fist him, but when he travels to the States, he goes with gay men; he won't do anything else: "Straight guys who have no desire to be fucked by a dick can get into fists."

They explain that most of the men regard fisting as macho: their epic fucking and heroic endurance are not for frail types; one has to be strong, patient, and usually silent to sustain the right mood. Pete adds, "I don't like nelly people—it's a turn-off. We went through that period, beads and French poodles. Now we can be like everyone else."

They are very opinionated about the proprieties. In contrast to ordinary or "straight" gay sex which they call "va-



**"Deleuze suggests that ideas about dominance and passivity, pain and pleasure are transformations of ideas about gender, the meaning of masculinity and femininity. In homosexual sadomasochism, what is psychically imitated are heterosexual conflicts about patriarchy."**



nilla," in fisting there is no rigid role playing. Every bottom man knows how to fist through some don't especially like to and some are not very good at it. The men they know and they themselves will not be fisted by anyone who has not already been on the bottom and knows what it's all about. There is foreplay, but is has little to do with kisses or whispered endearments. Instead, it is usual to begin to fist a man by rimming him first, "if you acquire a taste for Crisco," John adds, relaxing the sphincter with the tongue before exploring it with the fingers and the hand. Pete likes to have his nipples played with and tolerates a lot of discomfort which he finds exciting, but he draws a distinction between that and the actions of some of the masochists he has seen who have their nipples pierced with needles or clamped and weighted. There is also some theatricality, but it is partyish, not nearly as pretentious as the leather scene. Pete thinks it is groovy to see a guy in a cowboy hat, boots, and a jockstrap, or a black leather motorcycle cap and nothing else. "People who'd never look at you otherwise suddenly are interested if you're wearing a cowboy hat or a baseball cap." Despite this flair and a pleasure in exhibitionism which Pete once heedlessly expressed when he got fisted by all comers on the pool table at The Mine Shaft, sharing the limelight with a successful proctologist with the same fondness, they insist that theirs is the opposite of the S-M scene.

Fisting is anti-"scat"; the whole point of the douching is to be clean. "There are occasional mishaps. The tensest moment is with the first entry: are you clean or dirty?" Pete adds, "Enema queens, like scat queens, are really the scum of the earth." It is the opposite of bondage and discipline because it is action not fantasy that is central, and because the men are flexible in their roles.

"S-M is all in the head; it's artificial and kinky; they have to build their fantasy with so much mental preparation, it's sort of sick. Besides, sometimes I think they're not even into sex. Those motorcycle groups just parade around and get drunk. They don't have much sex—most of it's strut."

The distinctions they were emphasizing seem to be more telling than the similarities to sadomasochism. Fisting has moved sexuality into the center of their lives in an unprecedented way. They socialize almost exclusively with other men like themselves. Out-

side work and time they spend privately with each other, the rest of their energy is given to fisting. "Now life is sex and work. The sex and the social are merged completely. Our time is for sex and for ourselves alone." Even what is erotic has changed for them. Pete says, "In summer when I'm on the streets, I get turned on by guys in their sandals, with their tits showing through their T-shirts, and their hands, their arms—you can see everything that matters but their dicks—but who cares, the hand's always hard and doesn't get tired." John adds, "I've taken vanilla home, but when they see the leather sling in the bedroom, they freak out and make for the door. Sex is much hotter now. I've gotten rid of cruising. If we're horny, we use the phone. We have a hundred numbers to call. None of that posing shit in the bars—it's far more liberating psychologically now."

While the rituals of hygiene sound overwhelming, there is also a delight in piggishness, in rolling in "a sea of grease." The pig is the emblem of F.F.A.; pig power is the motto. Miss Piggy is the Judy Garland of this scene. "We're pigs. A true pig is hot, a number who knows what he's doing." Each man has discovered a sexual appetite he had never suspected, and a new sensuality that is more gratifying than anything in his prior erotic life. If Pete has no other sexual outlet, he masturbates while sitting on one of the enormous dildoes they keep in the bathroom tub, but it is a rare day without a sexual session. The orgies are reserved for the weekends: large ones twice a month, otherwise a party of six men or so: "Six is a nice combo; everybody can make it with each other." In the last few years, they have been to a hundred orgies. At first, they were a bit nervous, as if they were at a cocktail party, unsure of how to behave. Now they know the rules and no longer feel insecure. Peter says they are very "cocky." In a single night, he will have long sessions with each of ten or eleven men, most of whom he already knows; he prefers to have at least one or two new men in a long evening. John is nearly as prodigious. His maximum was nine men; usually he averages fewer. These sessions are of some duration, as long as an hour with a man, and it is always coupled, even amid fifty other couples. One does not join a pair or interfere or try to excite the top man by felling him or fucking him. That might be too dangerous to the man being fisted.

The fister must maintain a balance, controlling his excitement with alertness and skill. He must begin gently; no one rams it in. After his partner is relaxed he can be rough, but he must always be sensitive. "Fisting requires incredible control, but if you're into it, you get very good at it. I'm lucky, I have small hands; I've gotten into people further than anyone else can. People trust me because I'm patient, though John is even more patient than I. When you've got your arm up somebody's ass and they've got this blissful look, it's an entirely different thing than what happens when you fuck. It's kind of a temporary concentration of affection and lust that's a supreme sexual moment, intensely emotional as well as a sensual feeling." John agrees and adds that fisting may start as a head trip, but it gets less and less so. It does not stand for anything else; it's not "psychological"; there is no competition. "Very few bottoms control; they're really passive—that ass is yours, baby, do what you want." Pete interrupts: "Everything in my body has gone to my ass; I'm just a big asshole. They can do anything they want with me. It's *real* passivity."

Pete has become a skillful and popular top man, a marked change from his exclusive preference for being fucked. He still does not like to fuck. He explains, "I've got a six-inch dick; it's cute but nothing much. I never liked to fuck because I'd get shit out so easily. But with fist-fuckers it's different; their ass is so loose." The size of the penis is no longer important; many good tops are small. When I asked them whether they think there is some relationship between penis size and developing skill as a top man, they didn't think so, though Pete agreed that had been his case. In fact, phallicism is generally peripheral and sometimes irrelevant. Many top men perform without erection, and only a few have orgasm. They sustain excitement with poppers. John is one of the exceptions. He gets hard when he's topping, and he sometimes comes while he's fisting. He has even jerked himself off inside someone, an unusual feat even in his crowd. But neither erection nor orgasm are required in performance, and orgasm is often entirely absent in an evening.

John and Pete say it is difficult to generalize about coming. They agree there is less importance in this scene because people are less nervous, and because performance is based on manual skill. Pete says beginners

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# DISC SCENE

BY FREEMAN GUNTER

**I**f *Bi-Costal*, the title of Peter Allen's new album (A&M Sp-4825) means bi-sexual, he's not telling. And neither am I. Anyway, it's all in fun and Peter Allen is a guy who believes in giving them what they want. If what they want is a gorgeously performed album of superb songs, then here it is. "I Could Really Show You Around" is an irresistible invitation from a man of the world to the new kid just off the bus. Who could turn down Peter's offer of "Caviar and coke and a charge at Sak's/Breakfast in my bed when you wake up at noon/Trips to the island, trips to the moon..." For all of his slick appeal and his promise of fun and glossy good times, Peter Allen is a totally honest singer, whether he'd admit to that or not. His vulnerability ("Somebody's Angel") is always there, not on his sleeve, but just below that fabulous surface, giving his songs the larger, deeper meaning that makes them great and not just fun. In a song like ("I Think I'm Gonna) Pass This Time" he can wallow wonderfully in a self-pity that reminds me of chocolate: I know it is probably bad for my health but it feels so good. Peter Allen has come a long way since his cabaret days. To show how far, he has included "Simon," the first song he ever wrote. It is totally touching and totally unaffected. It is a brilliant song, an incredibly good first effort and it proves that Peter Allen has always had what it takes. The world is catching up with him at last. *Bi-Costal* is his best album yet.



**W**ith *Clouds Across the Sun* (Atlantic SD 16024) Firefall moves ever closer to the center of the winner's circle of ideal rock and roll groups. Their sound is strong but smooth with a sensual heavily rolling rhythm and convincing vocals by Rick Roberts and Jock Bartley who also contributes some standout guitar solos. Especially notable are original songs like "Be in Love Tonight," "I Don't Want to Hear It," and the title cut. Following his recent release with Judy Holliday, Gerry Mulligan has gathered his superb jazz band into the studio for a brilliant session of instrumentals now out on the ever-adventurous DRG label, *Walk On the Water* (SL 5194). Once again, the roll call of this great aggregation reads like a who's who of jazz and the songs range from fine Mulligan originals like "For an Unfinished Woman," "Song for Strayhorn," and "42nd and Broadway" to Duke Ellington's little-known "Across the Track Blues" and Ned Washington and George Bassman's imperishable standard, "Getting Sentimental Over You." An album of moody, exhilarating instrumentals in the classic jazz vein. As we go to press, Barbara Cook's new live-in-Carnegie-Hall album, *It's Better With a Band* (D-MMG-104) reaches us. In super realistic digital sound, it is one of the stunning live albums of all time and will be discussed in detail next month. Meanwhile, rush right out and buy a copy.

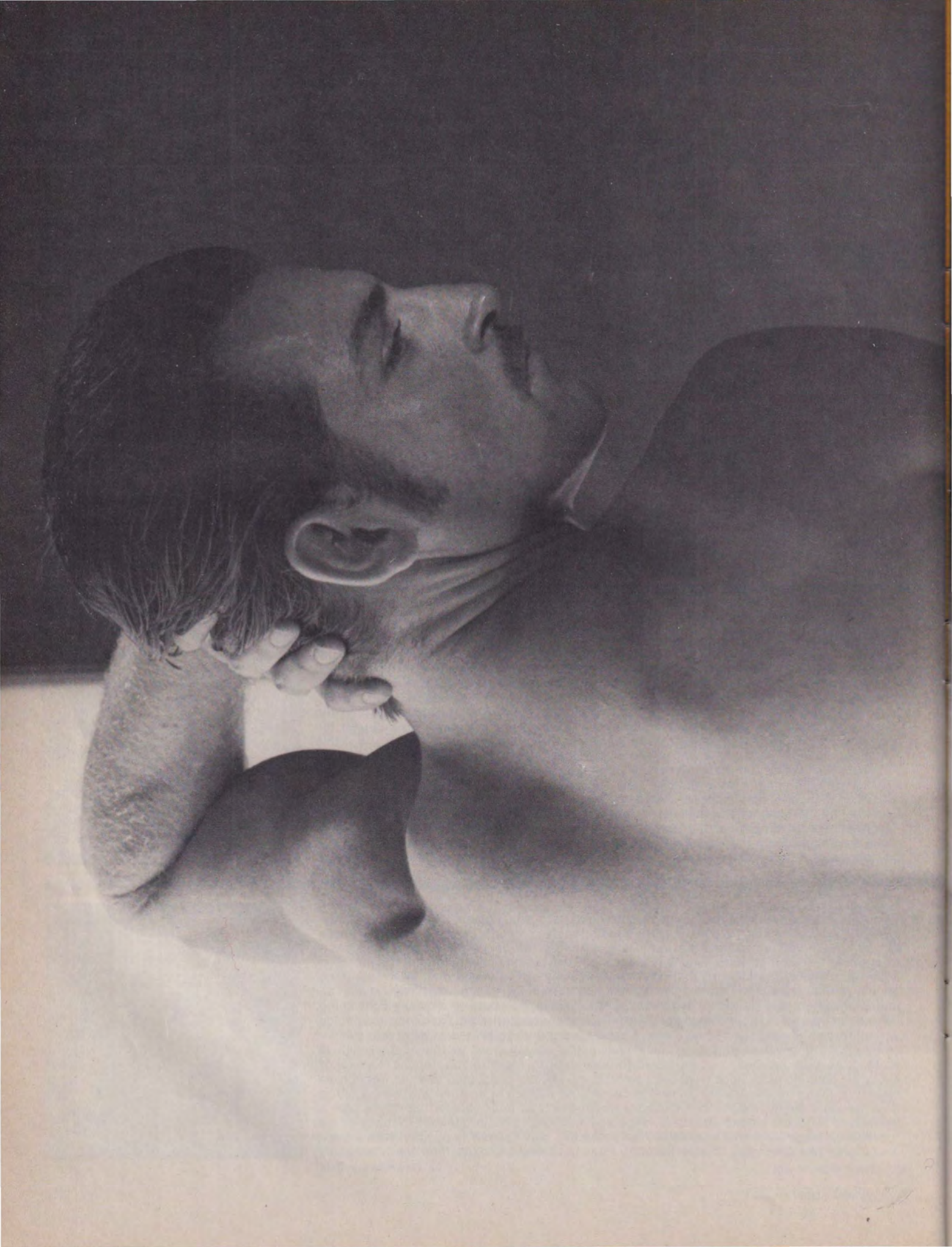


**H**erbert von Karajan's new Philips recording of Verdi's last opera, the great comic masterpiece, *Falstaff* (6769.060) is the conductor's first recording on the label, the label's first digital release and the first new recording of this opera in over ten years. It is a triumph, an unqualified success by any standard. From a technical standpoint the recorded sound is probably the most realistic and lifelike of any operatic recording ever made. The sound of the orchestra (the mighty Vienna Philharmonic) has perfect clarity and an imposing weight and profile in the climaxes. The voices are heard in a totally convincing balance as they would sound in an acoustically excellent opera house. Each individual voice and instrumental solo can be heard with a separate but unexaggerated relief which is especially effective because of the intricate and subtle construction of the opera which is molded, shaped, balanced and propelled to perfection by Maestro von Karajan. Several of his latest operatic recordings have been so idiosyncratically conducted that the works have been thrown out of balance and allowed to become ponderous or in some way less effective than we know them to be in other hands. Happily he has not confused an opera with a symphony this time around and he is, once again, in top form. In contrast to many of his recent recordings which have tended to be undercast, this *Falstaff* is peopled with experienced pros like Giuseppe Taddei, Rolando Panerai, Christa Ludwig, and the shamefully



Continued to page 67









# MARCUS COBB

THE PROFILE COULD BE JOHN BARRYMORE'S;  
THE BODYSCAPE IS ALL MARCUS COBB, COLT'S LATEST STALLION.  
HIRSUTE ANIMAL, THIS THOROUGHBRED PROMISES  
TO RIDE HIS WAY INTO YOUR HEART.

PHOTOGRAPH BY COLT

MANDATE/June 1981

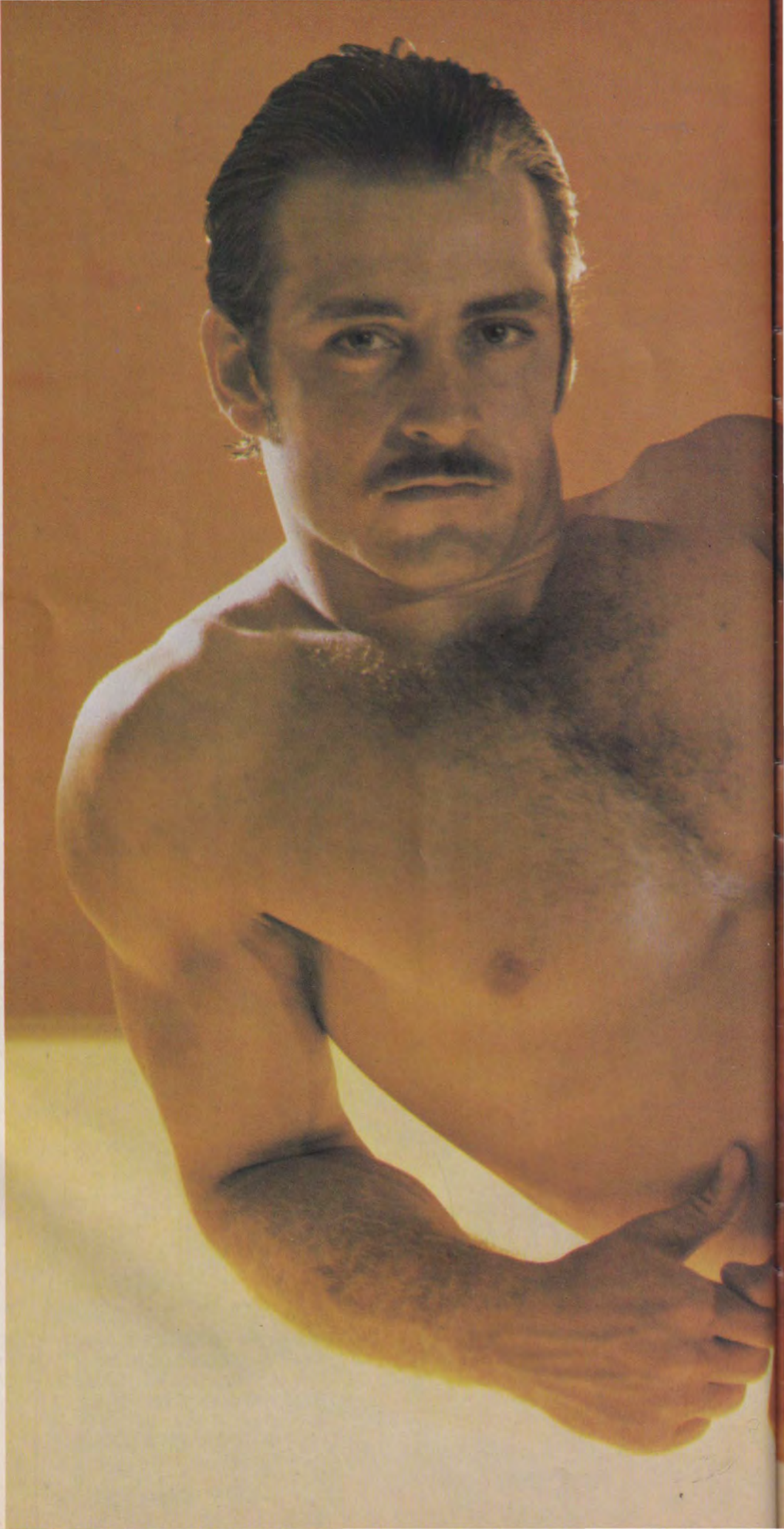


# MARCUS CORIE

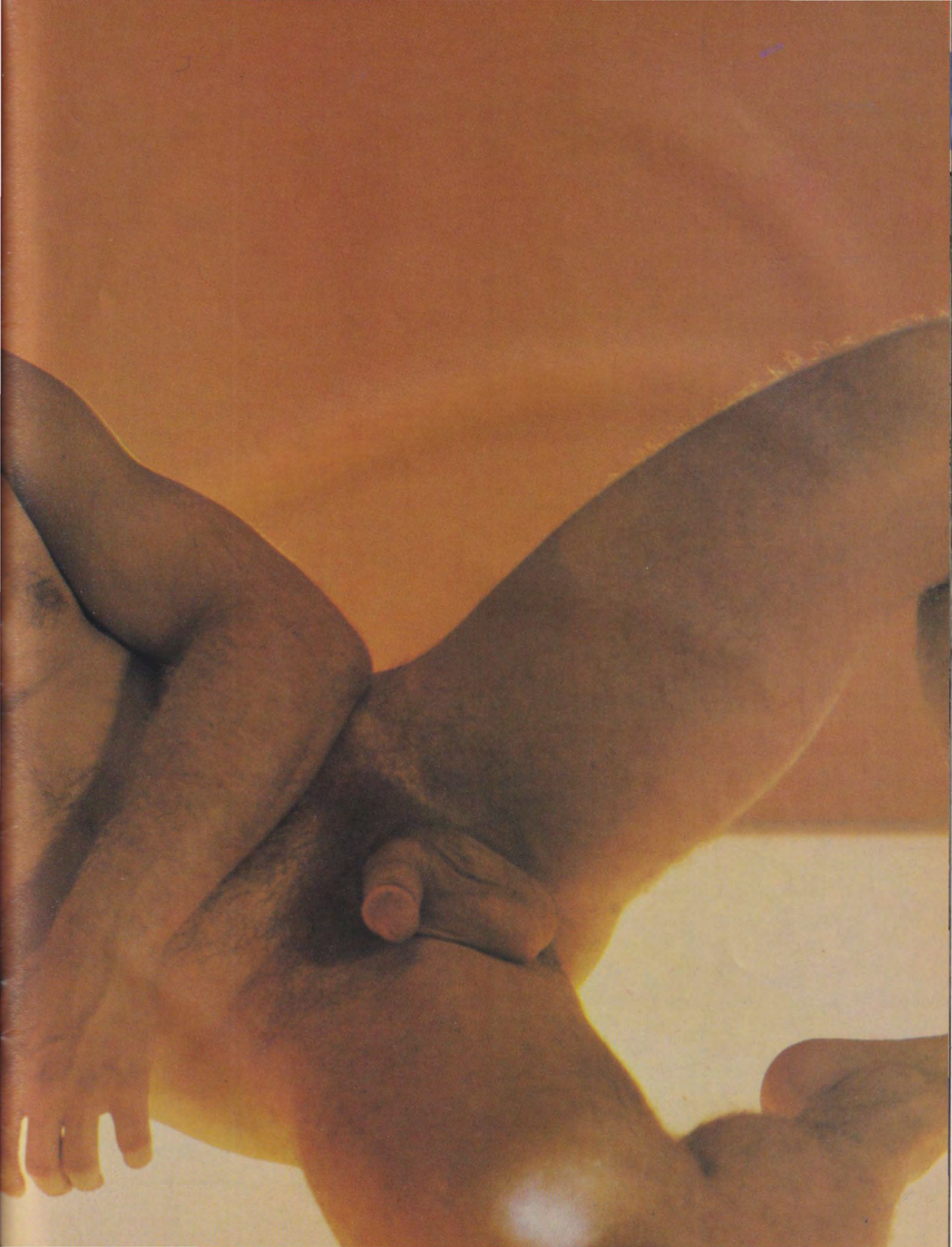
WITH HIS TAWNY HAIR SLICKED BACK, THIS COLT MAN'S HANDSOME FACE AND WELL-PROPORTIONED TORSO UNDERSCORE THE WEST COAST "LAID-BACK" SENSUALITY THAT WE'VE ALL HEARD ABOUT. BUT HE'S ANYTHING BUT PLACID. HE'S RATHER AN INVITATION, AN OPEN CALL TO A PERFECTLY ORCHESTRATED FANTASY STARRING YOU AND HIM. SOME MEN JUST LOOK AT YOU AND YOU'RE ALL WET.

THIS MAN QUALIFIES AS SUPERHUNK, ALL-MAN AND GLORIOUSLY AWARE OF IT.

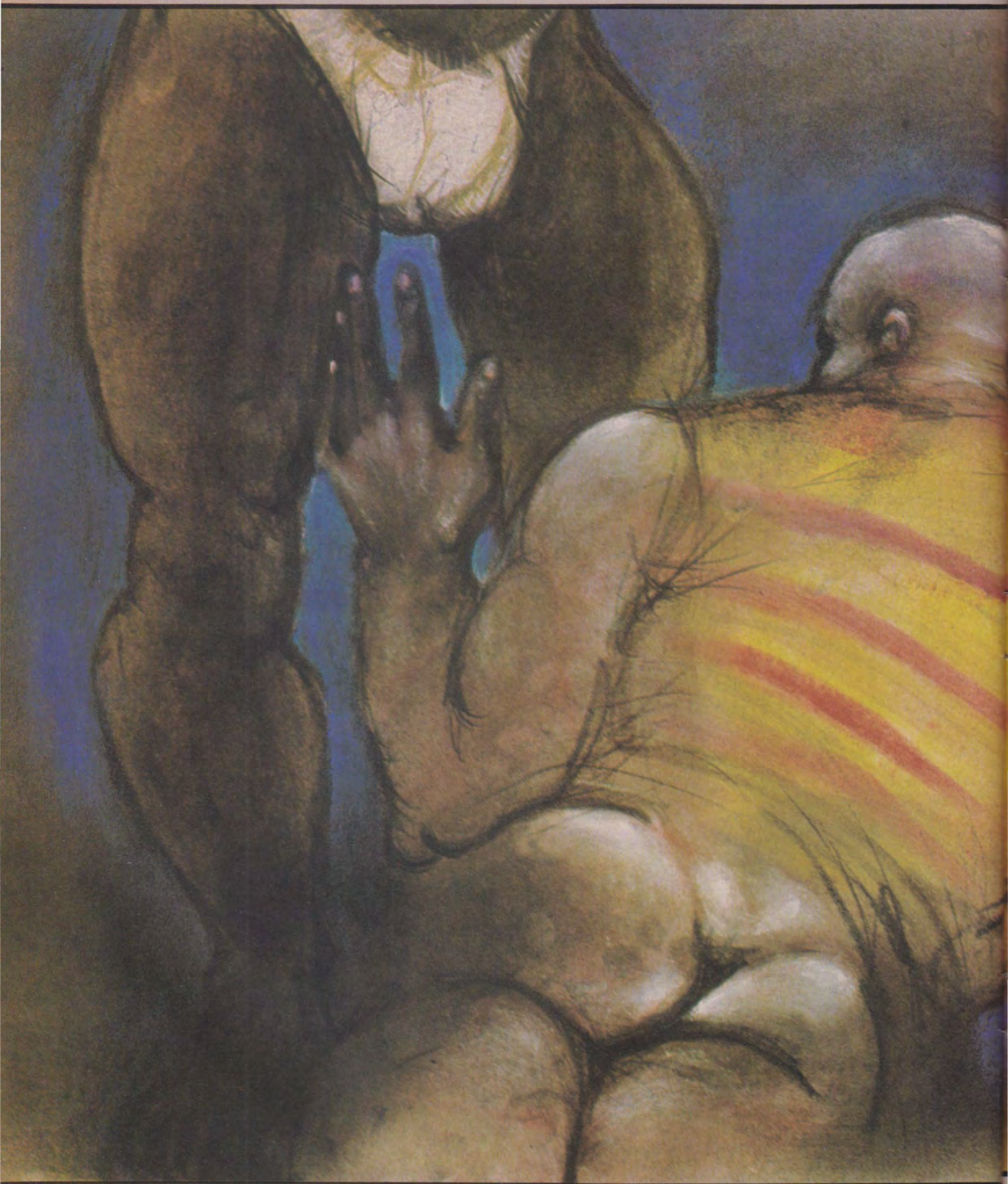
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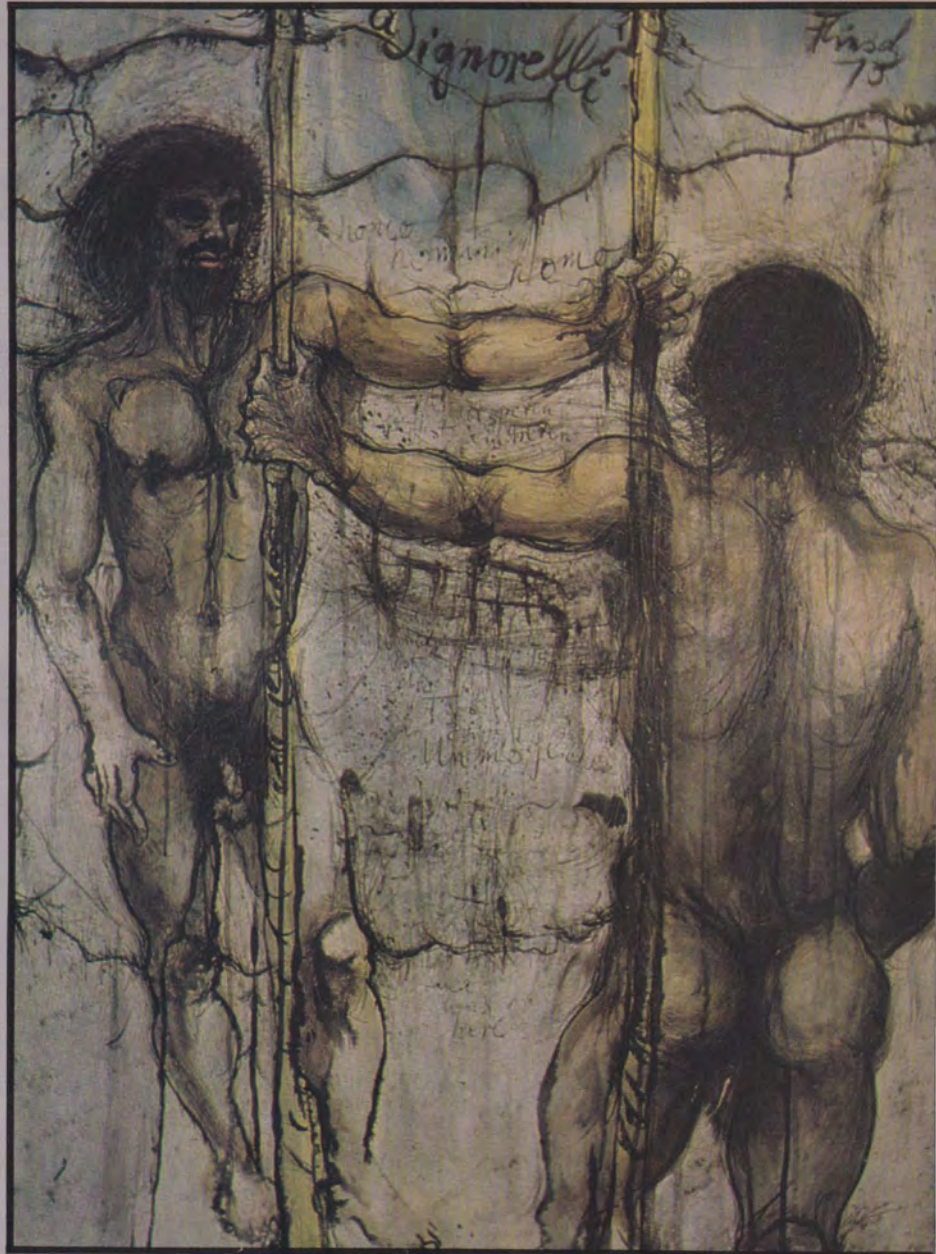
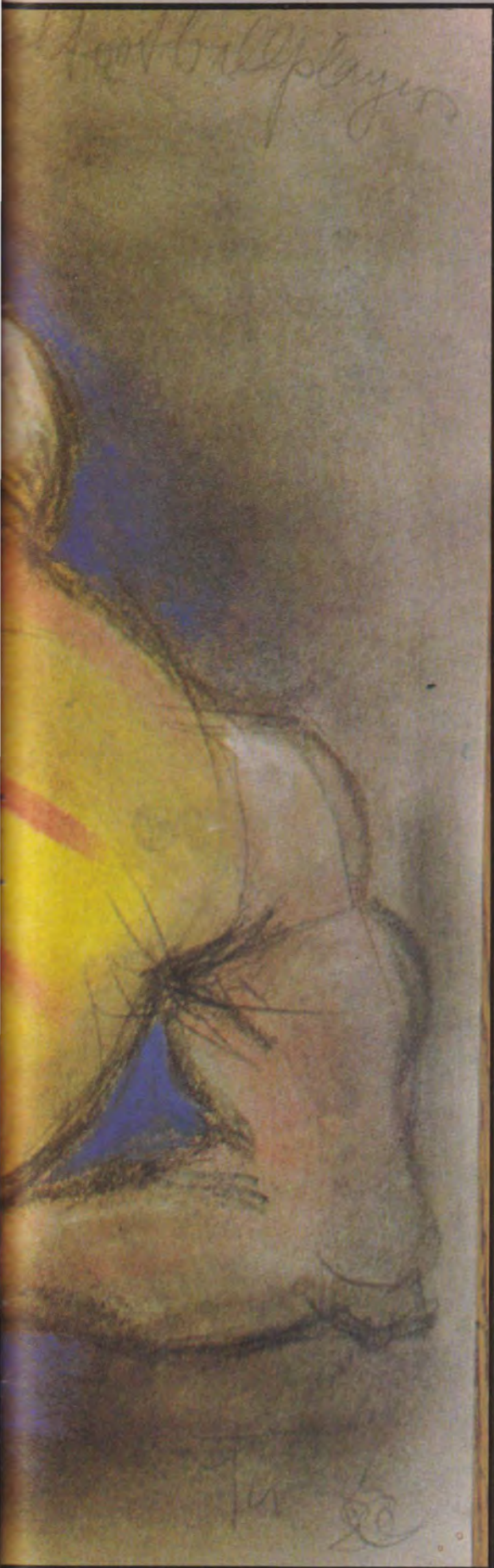








# ART:FLINSCH



An artist's choice of color and form is his signature. When German-born Montrealer Peter Flinsch paints his haunting, evocative male nudes with the eerie blues and pinks of his palette, he gives psychological overtones to pure form. Recently exhibited at New York's Leslie-Lohmann Gallery, Flinsch's startlingly powerful nudes exult in the power of the flesh, and stretch their manly physicality into new realms of artistic excellence.





**PHOTO OF  
THE MONTH**

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN PRESTON

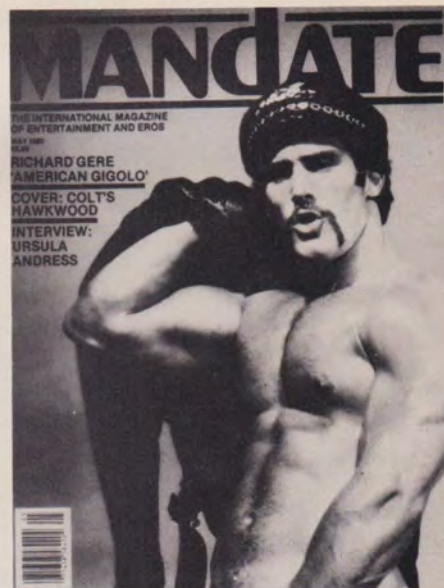
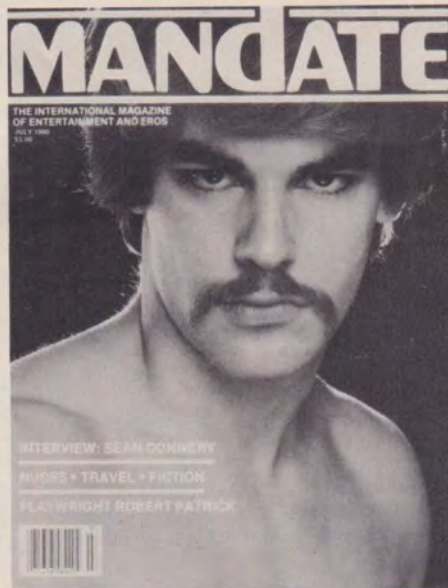
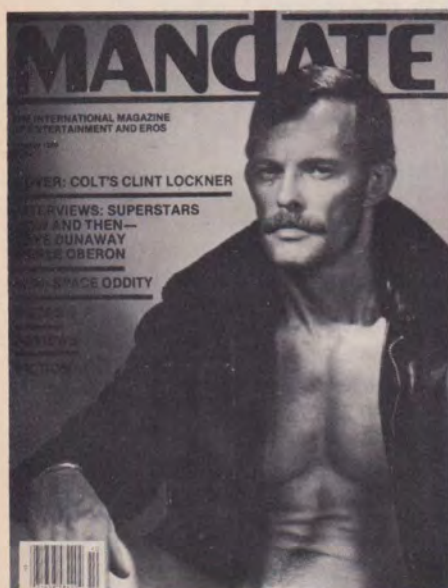






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should not even try for erection since the pressure in tumescence tightens all the muscles and makes getting fisted more difficult. There is also an investment in postponement, which is one of the reasons Pete does not like to be genitally fondled when he is dominant; it provokes orgasm too quickly which then tires him.

Orgasm is commoner for the bottom man who either can masturbate himself or let his partner do it. Both men prefer to be positioned on their backs, best of all in a sling designed for the purpose with leather cuffs that buckle around the ankles to support the legs. That is ideally comfortable for long sessions. They like to watch the men fisting them, and if there is a mirror above the sling, they also like to watch themselves. Pete says he recently came four times, though the last time was dry coming. When I ask him how he manages, he tells me that he doesn't ejaculate entirely. There is too much pressure inside him to release all his semen. The orgasms are partial, allowing him to continue without ending excitement. When an orgasm has been heavy and he wants to rest, it is different from straight gay sex where one partner's orgasm sometimes ends the session. Pete can go right from bottom to top; often after he's been fisted and come, he wants to fist his partner or someone else. The drugs and the images of the other men all around him are very sustaining.

But both men insist that orgasm is relatively unimportant, like penis size and even erection. Some of the men never come at all at the scene. It is the fisting that is central, and while the drama is all with the man on the bottom, he depends utterly on the skill of the one on top. The techniques vary. Some men just want the motion at the sphincter; some want depth; some want what the mood of the moment dictates. Pete says you try a little of this, a little of that, miming with his hands some of the snaky motions he uses. Usually, the prostate is so stimulated that the sexual tension never ends, building to an aching sensation that wants release at the same time that the heavy motion of the arm produces too much pressure for spontaneous ejaculation.


Pete is very advanced now on the bottom as well as skillful on top. He liked to be punched fucked and have his second "sphincter" handled. "It's like a double fuck. As the ass opens and you relax more and more, you can get your arm up to the second sphinc-

ter, the point where the large colon ends, and curve your hand into the opening. Then both sphincters and the colon are getting it." But best for him is to be punched. After the hand has explored him, massaged him till he is completely relaxed, he wants his partner literally to use his fist, to punch him like a pneumatic drill. The sensations deep inside his body which he cannot articulate are the most blissful he has ever known.

When I ask him about his fantasies, he says he doesn't have any when he's punched. "Maybe it's because I don't read," he laughs, "but I don't like talk, rough or any kind; I just sort of drift off, see colors, sometimes a fucking scene, sometimes a beefcake image." John always fantasizes when he is on the bottom, but not when he is on top; then, watching the man he is fisting is interesting enough. Lots of the men are into horses: that's the fist-fucker's dream: up behind the barn door with a stallion. They have heard of a man in northern California who claims to have tried it.

I try to generalize: the arm is then an enormous penis. They both deny it. "Fisters prefer fists to cocks; it's the hand and the arm I cruise these days when I see a red hanky sticking out the back pocket of a trick on the street, or when I go to the Ramrod, where I've already balled with thirty or forty of the men in the place. Lots of older numbers who are not lookers, a bit paunchy maybe, are fun to fuck with because they're good tops—I don't mean ugly, but who gives a shit about pretty? I mean by the end of the evening we all have little pot bellies from the fisting. Everything inside gets pushed around a little. It all settles down later."

It's not that fucking is entirely absent, but it is regarded as a kind of foreplay, or perhaps a postorgasmic stimulation between fucking sessions. To my surprise, John says being fucked after being fisted is terrific because everything is so sensitive that even a small penis can create an enormous sensation. I ask what happens to the sphincter and the colon after such sessions: is there any constriction, any of the grip that most gay men find desirable and necessary in anal sex? Both of them laugh at me: a tight ass is as admired in the fisting scene as a limp penis in any other. There is of course some contraction when the arm is removed, but the colon feels like "jello"; John says fucking that is wonderful, but it's an



***"Gay men have learned to behave differently, to appear powerful and controlled even amid the most ardent romantic pursuit. What they have not learned is to tolerate diversity, to respond to character rather than charisma, to regard personality as more valuable than person."***



acquired taste.

John and Pete have minimized the dangers of psychopaths or sadists like Julio. They do not perform now with men who are completely strange to them, or spontaneously at a place or a time when they are not prepared. They claim they are much more careful about their bodies now than they've been before, alert to danger signals, confident of what they can withstand physically, more knowledgeable about how much drugs they can tolerate. Like most of the men who are serious about fisting, not only do they douche routinely, but they manicure their nails meticulously since even a slight scratch will put someone out of commission. Like other promiscuous gay men, they accept with resignation venereal disease as a hazard, particularly amebiasis, which they come down with at least annually. Since they douche so frequently, they are never diarrhetic, nor are the other men; thus, they are asymptomatic, and some men are simply carriers. John jokes, "I'm glad when I get it; I need the break."

When the visit is nearly over, I ask them what's next. They say it's the high plateau of their sexual lives; there's nothing after it, and there's no going down. They are happy and fulfilled. They have explored their sensuality and their bodies as never before; sexuality has assumed an importance and given them a pleasure they had never before expected. They cannot imagine the adventure will lose its thrill. Pete adds, "I can do anything now: top, bottom, I'm good at both ends. I'm cocky now because I'm good at so many things. Of course, I don't suck cock; I never liked that."

6

Pete and John were always reckless about drugs and hedonistic about sexual pleasure. Their frankness is disarming; nothing they have said invites the patronization I have had to deal with exploring the literature of sado-masochism. First of all, I do not understand the psychology of this scene, nor am I sure that there is much to understand in the sense of "interpret." The fancy scenario of sado-masochism with its inversions and anxieties, its fragile ironies and denials, the escapism into a closet psychodrama about power and control, seem absent among fisters. Nor is there the need for pain. Instead, there is the incessant action in a setting free of some of the worst experiences that have best gay life: sexual

guilt and erotic humiliation, rigid role playing, the adoration of beauty and youth, the anxiety about performance, the coldness and hauteur of cruising, the worship of the penis.

There is also a profound surrender to passivity that is never clearly present in S-M, and an exploration of physicality and the body I have never heard of before, testimony about sensation and sensuality, intensities of pleasure I know nothing about.

When I come to interview Ethan, my friend who began to explore fist-fucking when it had hardly been named ten years ago, there is much I want to verify. We have known each other since graduate school, but our friendship has been sporadic. When he was younger, Ethan combined an unusual delicate beauty with a quiet persistent streak of self-destructiveness that was as arresting as his startling eyes. I had not seen him for some years since the break-up of a long affair with a lover I had come to dislike and since he had left academia for more engaging work. He was generous about talking to me; we had missed each other, and this was a chance to strengthen ties that were nearly gone.

When I arrived at his Village loft, I was stunned by his appearance. At forty-four, he is now one of the most beautiful of men; maturity has ripened what was delicate and somewhat evanescent. The boyishness is gone; an air of petulance has also passed away. What remains is serene and seductive, sweet and more than a little sad.

The loft is an entire floor, newly converted, deluxe, spacious of course, but somehow homey. David, his lover of four years, a young man of thirty-six, handsome in a conventional way, greeted me politely and then absented himself somewhere in the apartment.

Ethan and I chatted about old times, ex-lovers, old and new jobs, his new affluence, his new relationship. He is, plainly, "married." When his lover leaves for his monthly weekend out of town to see his children, Ethan uses the occasion to go to the Beacon Baths and be fisted; it is his exclusive infidelity, and it is never discussed between the men. What happens outside the relationship that might be hurtful to know about is left to silence. When they are together they are tightly coupled, with a small social life in the city and a narrower one in the country where they have a house they visit most weekends during the year.

The first thing Ethan verifies is that fisting is not orgasmic, not even phallic. He never comes at the baths and is rarely erect. There is no foreplay, no kissing or embracing for him. He also prefers to be positioned on his back so he can see his partner, but partly, it is to be protective: he can push a man off with his legs if he has to. That has rarely happened because Ethan says he is good at psyching out a prospect; his intuitions have been reliable. Not only is the man's appearance and demeanor evidence, but Ethan judges how much he can trust him by the touch, by the degrees of gentleness and firmness that signal the *gestalt* he needs.

Ethan has no interest in topping: "The top is boring; as the bottom, I'm the center." The heart of the experience is surrender, the passivity. He is also anally passive with his lover, but between them the lovemaking is varied, romantically full of passionate foreplay, and Ethan is as reactive in his own responsiveness as his lover. In the beginning of the relationship, David fisted him because Ethan wanted him to, but he soon sensed that David got little from it other than giving his lover pleasure. They have now dropped fisting from their sexual lives, and Ethan does not miss it. "I began to see it as an unfair demand," he explains, adding that his sexual life with his lover is completely satisfying.

Ethan claims that he is in control of the situation at the baths, that there is as much control by the passive party as there is in S-M, but he adds that obviously there is a great deal of self-deception, particularly since he always uses quaaludes when he is there, as well as grass and poppers: "But I feel I'm in control at any rate."

So far, that is the result of his luck. He has never been injured, has had no health problem more serious than a hemorrhoid, and has escaped amebiasis. Perhaps his luck has some relation to his foresight. He always has sex in a private room with one man at a time. He has no interest in group sex or exhibitionism. Like Pete's, his capacity is enormous, averaging six to eight men in an evening, long sessions using the entire night that end only when he is physically exhausted. "I'm anally erotic, which is not climactic—the night ends with exhaustion." At no time does he feel any phallic interest in himself or his partner. While Ethan has never been a joiner and would be embarrassed at F.F.A., the red hanky in a pocket is



still a trigger of fraternal recognition, reminding him of the place of that sexual pleasure in his life, and he feels toward that man "what I feel when there's just one other Jew in a room of gentiles." But he does not act on that trigger; he does not cruise the man, acknowledge the signal, or wear one himself. All he is interested in is his monthly excursion to the baths, and "finishing it there." He says the problems connected with fisting are the same psychological ones he has elsewhere in his life about anxiety and authority. Before his present relationship, with its domestic tranquility, he was out every night looking; sex was much more obtrusive, anxiety ridden, and provocative. Then, he felt his appetite controlled him.

I'm skeptical about his notion of control during a session. Even if he could push a man off with his strong legs, he could easily be torn during ejection, and how can he rely on his judgment or intuition when he is so stoned?

"I can do without drugs, but I prefer to be stoned, to be out of myself. My fantasy is to take as much as possible; my pleasure is in depth, in feeling someone deep inside me, the deeper the better. Drugs help me open up. I don't like to speed or trip because when it's over, I want to come down when I want to—I want to get home and go right to sleep. It's all over then."

Ethan laughs at Pete's notion that fisting is macho; he dismisses it as thoughtless if not silly. For him, this has little to do with ideas of gender. He never imagines the arm is a penis, no more than his anus is a vagina. It is another variety of sexuality, and at this time in his life, not especially significant. He concedes he has been lucky avoiding injury and pain, contrasting that with his early experiences getting fucked, which were painful for some years "till I acquired the taste."

With fisting, he began experimentally; he didn't know what he was doing or what was going to happen. He had not heard of fist-fucking before it happened to him; it was all inductive. He liked being played with and slowly discovered what was possible. His first full experience was at the baths. He now thinks it'll end sometime; it is already boring to wait between men for the next prospect; waiting takes half the time, and it is full of ennui. There are no fantasies he has not used up to occupy the time or sustain excitement. The pleasures are

in action; the anticipation is nothing. Ethan suspects that he has already peaked, perhaps some years ago. If fisting made trouble in his relationship with David, he would give it up. His life with his lover is the romantic center that sustains him in work and in the world.

Perhaps the only legacy from fisting that he now finds a necessary pleasure is the douching. As a procedure, he only discovered it relatively late, some four or five years ago. Since then he has douched as a preparation with his lover, and even when he is alone. It is the highest autoerotic excitement he knows, almost masturbatory, a deeply sensual experience. If he is stoned and uses a popper while he douches, fantasizing about being fisted, the experience is as intense as any with men.

7

Ethan and Pete and John are finding a sensuality that was unimagined before it was discovered and that seems now the furthest outreach of pleasure in homosexuality. Unlike sadomasochists, they are avid for the pleasure, "bliss" as distinct from fervent sexual excitement that can override pain. Like everyone's sexual life, theirs is colored by character: the conflicts of personality and the moods of temperament are present, as troublesome or supportive here as elsewhere in their lives.

There is a common ground with sadomasochism, but I suspect that on it are similarities to all sexual variety, all erotic play among those who are so experienced and so engaged in sexuality that change of some or even any sort is welcome, perhaps necessary. Once when I was in my twenties, I ended up somewhat drunk in bed with a stranger. He was very skillful, and I was soon lost in my excitement and myself, foggily congratulating myself on my luck, when suddenly he slapped me hard across the face, twice, fast. When I looked at him speechless in outrage and panic, he was smiling, a knowing sweet smile. The rest of the lovemaking was shadowed with fear and anticipation; I was off-balance, and while I cannot say the experience was more pleasurable than others, it was memorable. My own temperament is too cowardly, too intolerant of pain, too conflicted about control and surrender to dabble. My body is too much a stranger to me; its executors are my physicians upon whom I hostilely rely; they know it better than I do when it

***I'm skeptical about his notion of control. Even if he could push a man off with his strong legs, he could easily be torn during ejection. How can he rely on his judgment or intuition when he is so stoned?***



ails. But in its normal state, it is taken for granted, forgotten in a way that my appearance never is. I will abuse my health casually in ways that I am never as careless about with appearances.

Erotic sadomasochism seems much concerned with surfaces, skin-deep, and that skin is sometimes in glaze kid or butch leather. Fisting appears what it is: a daring flirtation with mortality, ignoring risk for promises of sensual intensity where the self is blissfully lost, surrendered into other hands. Fisting, with its intimacies that regard kissing and fondling and embracing as uninteresting, naive, is really fuelled by a more intense romanticism than conventional sexuality. If the mouth and the hand and the arms are used in new ways, they still refer to the earlier more innocent usage. What these men who fist delight in is that surrender, that momentary trust that fixes the body on another, that joins two people in a new image of coupling that has its only analogy in impalement: pain and death are indeed symbols of these lovers.

I leave it to the doctors and the moralists to sum up the degree of hazard and the long-term risks. Are those fisters who end up with colostomies proportionately higher in number than ordinary patients with such surgery from years of ulcerating their bodies with frustration and repression? When I first heard of fisting, I assumed that psychologically and physically it would be a point of no return, ending other kinds of sexuality, especially anal fucking. How could one go back after this voyage? But Ethan can go back and forth at will, and he is already a little bored with the journey. When he truly tires, he will head for safe harbor, not scuttle the ship.

Masochism is defined by negatives, consistent with Freud's negative concept of pleasure as the cessation of excitement, the sudden discharge in orgasm of pent-up tension. For many men, this has been what they seek: the pleasure that is the end of pleasure, the orgasm that is the finale after which there can be rest, and normal safe life may resume. Sensuality is entirely in the service of this end product. Orgasm becomes critically important, often the sole criterion of sexual success, and erection, potency, and phallicism are strict concerns; performance can be as much a labor as a delight.

One of the questions about masochism relates to the impact upon men

of ambivalent and prismatic images of women. The focus has usually been on the symbolic father who is always the figure of dominance no matter what gender the aggressive partner is. That sounded reasonable enough to Krafft-Ebing and Wilhelm Stekel; Freud and Reik thought they had sufficient answer when they classified masochism as feminine. But the question now is about the importance of passivity and feeling powerless, and how we respond to them in our lives.

The book by J.R. Ackerly that Diana Trilling found so simple and so moving is also the story of a life of unrelenting loneliness and unhappiness. Ackerly's idea of homosexuality was indeed simple: there are men who want women and men who want men. In Edwardian England, upper-class culture allowed and even encouraged such a choice for adolescent boys, even assumed that it was a free choice, that one could change sexual direction at will. Maturity would encourage heterosexuality and conventional life. That was how Ackerly saw his own father's life, one where it was possible to move from youthful homosexuality (and a hint of male prostitution) to adult heterosexuality, though Ackerly's father was bigamous.

But Ackerly had no such self-determination. His own sexual life was criminal by a number of standards. The laws of 1885 which sent Oscar Wilde to prison hung over every law-abiding homosexual, and Ackerly's own tastes were quite limited: for "young, clean, healthy boys as nearly heterosexual as possible." Searching for his ideal friend, for whom he expected to pay ready cash, cost more than money; as Trilling says, "life for Ackerly was in fact hell."

His sexuality was limited to mutual masturbation and hugging. He felt no desire for oral or anal experience. He attempted fellatio once with the young sailor whom he loved, but that provoked the youth's disgust and his prompt disappearance from Ackerly's life. He confesses he somewhat sympathized with that disgust. The rest of his sexual history was confined to male prostitutes, until premature ejaculation and finally complete impotence made even those encounters futile.

He found peace when he fell in love with his dog, an Alsatian he named Tulip and about whom he wrote a remarkable book in 1956. If Ackerly was stoic and uncomplaining, so admirable in the disposition of a writer

and so pleasant for his readers, those virtues had little to do with giving him pleasure or lessening his misery. He had intelligence, education, taste, and talent, and his life was hell. For some men, those gifts might balance the deprivations or inadequacies of their sexuality, but that was not Ackerly's case. The longing for affection and for sexual excitement did not abate until he found his strange deep tie to his pet, and then perhaps there was enough to make him resigned to sexual failure. His story illuminates many things about English culture and its odd tolerances about sexuality, the arrangements people make for their emotional well-being, the childhood with a bisexual and bigamous father, but it is also the story of sexual imprisonment, of powerlessness before one's own desires, and of desires so self-defeating that a guilt-ridden solitude seemed an inevitable relief.

The impoverishment and arrestment that Ackerly describes was common to men of his class and his time, though his is an extreme example. More and more, we are learning through biography how little freedom there has been in male homosexuality, even when it was consensual and when it was called a choice. In 1976, Howard Sturgis' *Bedchamber* was reissued by AMS Press. Written originally in 1904, it is a closeted novel of manners about sexual inhibition. Sturgis, a cousin of George Santayana, was famous for his effeminacy and for his witty deflations of pomposity. Wit was the only weapon for the anger of a man described as gentle, intuitive, vulnerable, and nervous, who hated violence and delighted in the arts, who cultivated feminine friendship, and whose work advocated a tolerance for human diversity of every kind. But he could not help praising and insulting in the same breath; the charm and the rage were so intermixed they were an entity. The anger is not difficult to understand: it is his outrage that in the entire erotic world, he had nothing that mattered. He was not even pleasing to other homosexuals as effeminate as he.

Gay men have learned to behave differently, to divorce appearance and proclivity, to appear powerful and controlled even amid the most ardent romantic pursuit. What they have not learned is to tolerate diversity despite their own experience and ostracism, to respond to character rather than charisma, to regard personality as more valuable than person. Liberationists call this the internalization of



oppression, and it is surely that. But no one is exonerated for his self-destructiveness, his moral masochism, not when he has access to privilege and opportunity to explore the self and its sexuality with more freedom than ever before.

In Paul Goodman's essay, "The Politics of Being Queer" (*Nature Heals: The Psychological Essays of Paul Goodman*, edited by Taylor Stoehr), Goodman says, "What we need is not defiant pride and self-consciousness, but social space to live and breathe." To live and breathe is no minor demand in a culture where life is cheap and what we breathe is nearly poisoned. He likes the political potential of the gay world because it is so profoundly democratizing, but he wonders whether that is really not an appalling superficiality. What is democratic and crosses lines of ethnicity, class, and race in the gay world is beauty; what is distributed equally among gay men is their powerlessness before their sexual obsessiveness and their helplessness to protect themselves from scorn and harm. Goodman adds, "For both bad and good, homosexual life retains some of the alarm and excitement of childish sexuality." Well, it is easy to see the good: the liberation from moral hypocrisy, the delight in variety, the courage or daring or madness to risk new experience in the search for pleasure which everyone is told is the modern architect of happiness. What is bad is the failure to make of the good something lasting, so that, unlike Ackerly or Sturgis, we can claim, despite all, that it has been a good life; freely chosen or not, it has sufficed.

For those who have accepted their homosexuality, there is no consent; perhaps choice is irrelevant now. But consent means awareness and responsibility. The growing need to deny the burden of helplessness is not consent. Sado-masochism is many things, among them is a flight from the anxiety of pleasure, an anxiety more powerful than hatred or rage.

I do not want to moralize about matters of hygiene and health in a nation that subsidizes the tobacco industry and turns its countryside carcinogenic. Perhaps the real standard of well-being is nothing more reliable than an intimate connection with one's own body. But fisters acknowledge in the thrill of passivity more than a preferred sexual posture. They tell of dispositions that are unresolved about aggression and acquies-

cence. To be thrilled by delicious punches deep in one's body is to find a bliss in sexual violence that no ordinary relationship can sustain. At least the passivity and the blows are real, and the pleasure not fantastic.

Ultimately, Freud's claims of culture must be confronted. If those claims are unjust, then it is reasonable and good to demand justice. To play with powerlessness is to deny it, and worse, to immune oneself from sympathy for those who are truly helpless prisoners, whether in the penal institutions our nation keeps building or in the solitary confinement of old age.

*Seymour Kleinberg is a professor of English at Long Island University, Brooklyn, New York, the editor of The Other Persuasion, An Anthology of Fiction about Gay Men and Women. His reviews and articles have appeared in The Nation, Christopher Street, Shenandoah, Body Politic and other publications.*

## MERYL STREEP

Continued from page 31

words, and clearly, Streep is to a large extent a self-made woman. Even had she not been blessed with prodigious talent, she would likely have been able to have become a star, eventually.

For all her easygoingness—friends say success agrees with Meryl—the super-actress once developed an ulcer at an early age. At Yale. Due to "the tension!" she nearly yells. "Every year there would be a coup d'etat. The new guy would come in with all the new people and say, 'Whatever you learned last year, don't worry about it. This is going to be a completely new approach.'"

"I would go and say, 'I can't do it anymore, I'm going to throw up from the pressure!' When I was in school, I hated the pressure of those plays, though I loved acting. I'd scream about pressure, and I'd be told, 'Pressure! What pressure? You think this is bad, wait until you get out of here, will you have problems!' But the minute I got out of school, I didn't have problems. For a long time, it's been smooth sailing."

She concludes, "Once I stayed overnight in New York the day before a big audition. Next morning I woke up, looked at the clock and went back to sleep. I never went. Back at the theatre, they must have been screaming, 'For God's sake, where's Meryl?! She's really fucked herself now.' And I thought, 'I'm finished.' But I guess I wasn't."

## DISC SCENE

Continued from page 51

neglected Raina Kabaivanska who operate as a finely tuned ensemble. No one is out to "win" or steal the show and there is not one weak link to be found in this perfectly formed chain. This is the *Falstaff* of dreams.

Also surprisingly fine (but lacking the superior audio impact of Phillips' definitive digital sound) is Karajan's new treatment of Verdi's *Aida* (Angel SZCX-3888). The light voices of Mirella Freni, Jose Carreras, Agnes Baltsa and Piero Cappuccilli are made to seem perfect for this music, which they really are not, giving the plights of the characters a vulnerable human appeal set against the enormous and implacable musical mis en scene of Verdi's ancient Egypt. Again, as in Phillips' *Falstaff*, the balance and clarity achieved by Karajan's knowing conducting (with, one suspects in this case, a powerful assist from the recording engineer) gives this often hackneyed opera a welcome freshness and a chamber-music type definition that makes this fascinating new *Aida* as worthy of recommendation as any of the many fine versions available.

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# LETTERS

## I'M WRITING AGAIN

Dear Sirs,

I've written you all before but I'm writing again. It's so good to see some black dudes in your magazines.

Mahogany is breathtaking. Here's hoping one day that I will pick up an issue of *Mandate* and see a heavy hung black dude in your centerfold.

A reader

## RIPPED OFF

Dear *Mandate*,

I sort of gave up on magazines—they are usually filled with dudes who were 'ripped-off' soon after they were born and I feel that if you see one 'altered' male, you seen them all. I was sitting in a bar out in Westport one weekend—that sells *Mandate*. Just a day or two before I had spoken to a jeweler out in Oregon who hand makes a tie tac and a pendant in an international sign that represents that the wearer is a dude 'who STILL has every-

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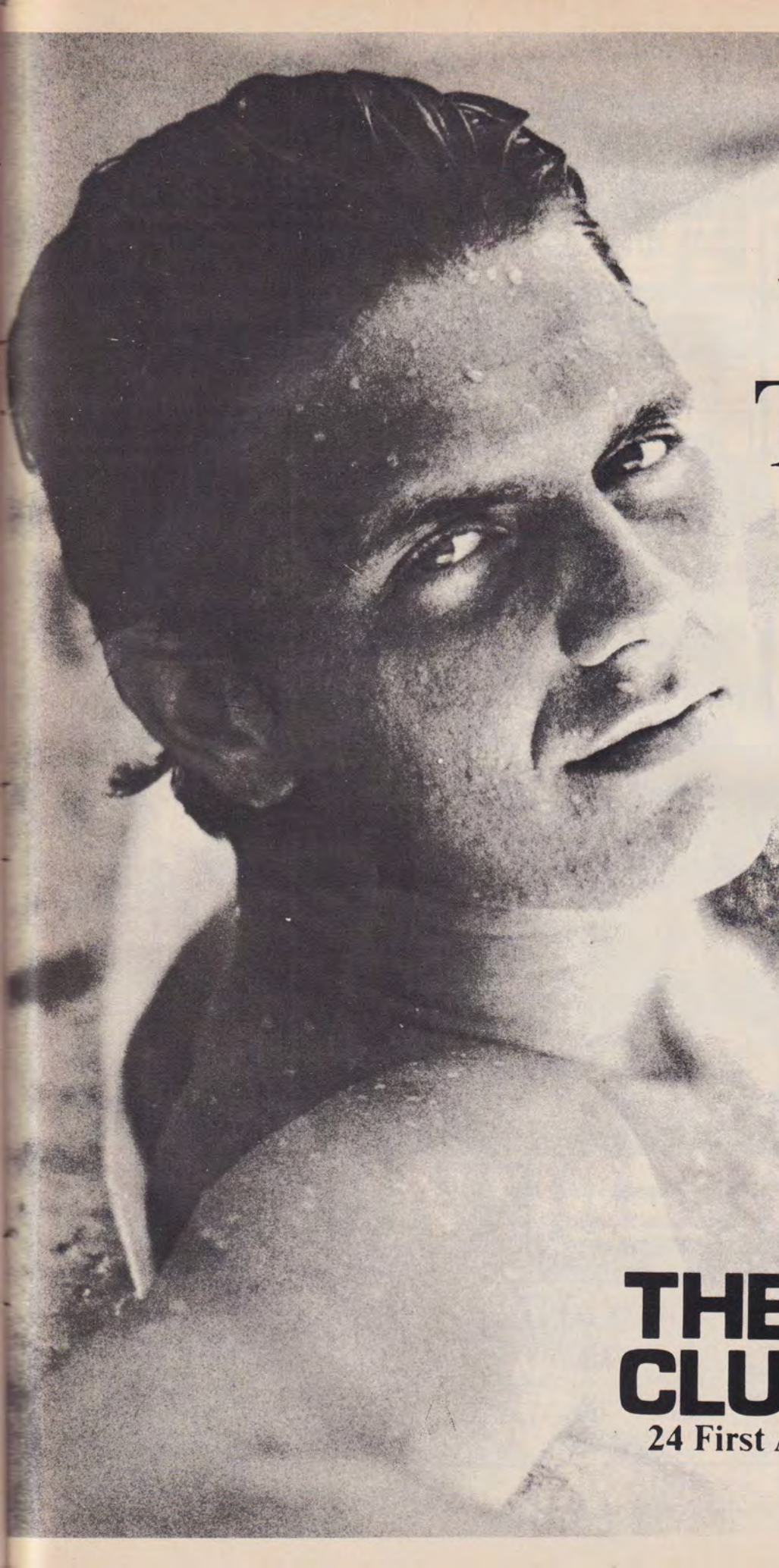
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thing' and he has ads in some magazines. I asked the bartender to let me glance through the magazine to see if it carried the ad. It didn't—but seeing Paul Seton's picture and reading the letters you printed from readers—I bought the magazine. I know I can easily buy the magazine each month, I'm not taking a chance on missing one, so—enclosing a check for the next 12 issues. Hope you keep printing pictures of dudes who are still 'natural'—there are plenty of them around. I enjoyed the letter a dude in Ottawa, Canada wrote (March issue) about circumcision—I've met a lot like him—they are 'cut' and really don't know why. In this country, the reason is obvious. Oct 6, 1980 *Chicago Tribune*—on the front page; The American medical profession made \$200,000,000 in the past year from mutilating baby boys—so you see it is good, if you're in that profession.

N.T.  
Bridgeport, Conn.

## HEART STOPPER

Dear Mandate—

Let me start with the obligatory statement: "This is the first time that I have ever written to a magazine of this nature." There, now that I have gotten that out of the way, on to the real reason for this letter.

Your March 1981 issue (Vol. 6, No. 70) was a real step in the right direction. I think that you have achieved a new level of excellence. And I can do nothing but applaud loudly and fervently. The source of this new feeling is the article that you so wisely chose to include in that issue. "Quaalude" by T.R. Witomski is the type of article that the gay public needs. Very well written, very informative and very much needed. He accomplished a great feat—namely, getting the message across without preaching or without condescending airs. I was especially pleased with his direct approach and not resulting to only scare tactics. Real truth is what is needed and we have finally gotten our deserved dosage.

You see, I am a pharmacist and this subject of drugs (legal or illegal) is really a touchy matter for me. I am put in a touch position sometimes. Many times I have to resort to lies about my profession or work to eliminate the hassles that result from being in the "drug" profession. To quote Mr. Witomski, "...Being gay doesn't mean being a fearless drug consumer." The best advice that I have read yet!!! For

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many of us, gay life is a high in and of itself.

Now, to compliment you for another excellent choice! When I finished that great article, the next pleasure was a STUPENDOUS pictorial (or should I say two): "Flex," featuring Tom Hartung, photographs by Len Tavares was a heart stopper. I still lose my breath each time I SLOWLY page through that issue. That was nine pages of 'cock-hard' joy. Each time I purchase your magazine I am more and more pleased with the way I use my money. I hope that the future holds even more for all of us that enjoy your magazine each month. PLEASE keep getting better—we need you!!

Just a few sour grapes! There are some places where you could improve and I guess I will save those for future letters. That way I will keep buying your magazine to keep you on your toes.

Sincerely,  
and with growing respect,  
D.A.T., R.Ph., B.Sc. Pharm.  
Birmingham, Mich.

## A WORTHWHILE ARTICLE

Dear *Mandate*:

I bought your recent issue (Mar 81) and, as usual read it cover to cover as soon as I got home. Again, as usual, it is excellent.

Colt model, Roy Stagg, is enough to melt all the winter ice and snow throughout the world. I wonder if he had anything to do with the current heat wave our country is experiencing now. I'd really like to see more of him.

I'd like to thank you for giving us not only excellent photos but some worthwhile articles. I am thinking especially of your article on alcoholism in the Feb. issue and the one on Quaaludes in the Mar. issue.

I have been through treatment for chemical dependency (specifically alcohol) and have enjoyed over 2 years of sobriety. During that time I have come to realize there is nothing good about tricking with someone who is drunk or stoned.

I'd really like to encourage our brothers (and sisters) to get help if they need it. AA is everywhere and practically every state has treatment facilities. Help is there for the asking. Many cities even have gay groups which make it even easier.

Again, thanks, and keep it up.

Sincerely,  
C.P.

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## SEX CYCLE

Continued from page 24

Red lifted his bobbing head off Dan's glistening cock momentarily to spit on the fingers of his right hand. Instantly, he renewed his attack on Dan's lance. At the same time, while Dan bucked, he slipped a spit-laden finger into Dan's ass-crack and probed his hole. Dan's head jerked as he felt the digit pressing through his anal sphincter. "No!" he shouted. But, just as the word burst from his lips, he felt the finger penetrate him right up to the knuckles. He bucked furiously, in an effort to escape the invader.

Red had moved his left hand to Dan's waist and was leaning on him. "Buddy, I'm going to fuck the shit out of you, like it or not," he observed levelly. "The hell you are!" Dan shot back, while he tried to stand.

Suddenly, the redhead had his entire weight on top of him, and a no-holds-barred wrestling match was in progress. Dan was in terrific shape; he worked out faithfully at the highway patrol gym. Red, however, was in equally good shape—and he had a thirty pound advantage on Dan. Twice Dan nearly made it to his feet, only to be dragged to the ground again by the powerful redhead. Red kept trying to flip Dan onto his stomach, but Dan resisted with all the strength he and his desperation could muster.

After several minutes of violent struggling, with both combatants sweating freely, Red finally maneuvered Dan's right arm into an armlock. Dan had suffered a shoulder separation in his hockey-playing days, and the armlock was sending a flood of excruciating pain through the shoulder. "Down," Red ordered, "or I'll break your fucking arm!" He pushed Dan's twisted arm to the nape of his neck to show he meant it. Dan almost fainted from the agony. He looked longingly at his .38 dangling from the tree ten feet away. Then, with a sob, he fell on his stomach. The redhead dropped on his back so hard, it knocked the wind out of him.

"Relax," Red advised, "you'll like it."

Dan heard Red spit again and felt the finger at the gateway to his anus. In a second, it was moving in and out of his shit-chute. "Relax, damn you! Or you're gonna get hurt!" Red barked. As the redhead shoved his right fist to

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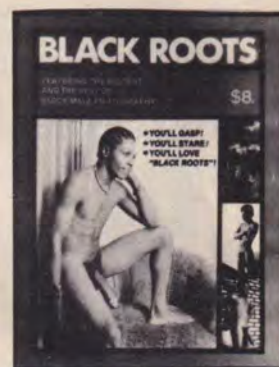
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the back of his head, Dan sighed and resigned himself to getting reamed. He decided to try to minimize the pain, so he concentrated on relaxing. The probing finger wasn't hurting, but it did feel damned uncomfortable. Then it was removed and replaced by what Dan could tell were two fingers. That did hurt, and Dan started to breathe deeply in an effort to relax. "That's better," Red whispered, as he nibbled on Dan's left earlobe. In a minute or so, the fingers were withdrawn and Dan heard Red spit for the third time.

He felt something enormous pressing against the entrance to his butt, and he knew exactly what it was. Although he was terrified by the thought of what the redhead's massive weapon was likely to do to him, he continued to focus on relaxing the muscles of his ass. With a shock, he was aware of the bludgeon moving up his anal channel. The entry was every bit as painful as he had feared, but he was determined not to cry out. He emitted a sharp grunt but that was it.

"Oh, baby, you're tight!" The redhead released Dan's arm and applied all of his weight to forcing the rest of his club up Dan's virgin bung-hole. "Uhhh!" Dan gasped. "For Christ's sake, take it easy!" Red said nothing but withdrew his engorged prick to within an inch of the tip and rammed it all the way into Dan's searing tunnel. "Ah, shit!" Dan muttered. He knew he could expect no gentleness from his redheaded attacker. Red started pummeling Dan's butt. Dan bit his tongue, trying to handle the pain without cries or tears. But, Jesus, every plunge was like hacking at an open wound.

"Baby, this is going to be a long ride," Red murmured, without breaking his rhythm.

After a few minutes, Dan noticed that the pain was subsiding.

At that moment, Highway Patrolman Vic Parrish was riding his cycle along the crossroad Dan and Red had taken earlier. He had pursued a Dodge pick-up truck about four miles down the road before the driver finally pulled over. After he'd effected the stop, he gave the trucker both a ticket and a stiff warning about resisting arrest.

As he approached the trail onto which Dan's chopper and the Rabbit had turned, Vic glimpsed what appeared to be a Kawasaki half-hidden by a tree. Suspicious, he pulled his cycle to the side of the road, dismounted, withdrew his gun and began walking, quietly, down the trail. He

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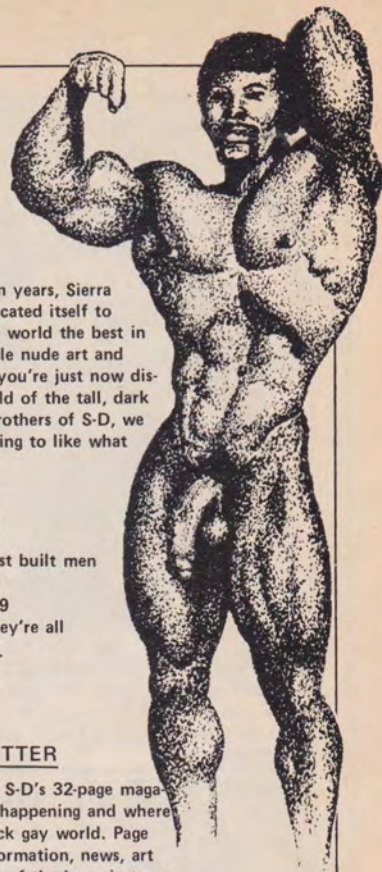
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crouched and approached the tree. Peering around it, he saw the highway patrol insignia on the Kawasaki gas tank. Still crouching, he crept to a tree about five feet beyond the Volkswagen parked beside the cycle. When he looked around it, he got the shock of his life.

There was Dan Karel, buck naked, on his hands and knees, being fucked in the ass by a redheaded giant. Vic, a green-eyed blond with a wrestler's build, had been entranced by the classically tall, dark and handsome Karel. He had dreamed of getting something going with Dan but had never dared approach him. Nothing would bring a quicker end to his career in law enforcement that a proposition to the wrong man.

As he watched the redhead's thrusts and withdrawals, Vic grew increasingly excited. He could hear Dan moaning softly, punctuated by grunts from the red giant. The redhead was jacking Dan's rigid prick as he fucked him, and both were clearly enjoying themselves. Vic's hand went to his own cock, which was jutting into his uniform pants. He unzipped his fly, freed his prick and began pumping. His other hand went to his left and squeezed. He sighed.

Dan heard the sigh, his head swivelled, and he saw, with a jolt, the chunky uniformed blond next to the tree. Then he noticed the sturdy prick Vic was pumping, and he relaxed. More than once he had surreptitiously eyed Vic's compact frame at the gym. Dan waved his head in an invitation to Vic to join the action.

Vic didn't need a lot of encouragement. He strode to the mounted patrolman, dropped to his knees and shoved his dick into Dan's open mouth. Dan's head began bobbing, as he sucked happily on the thick red lolipop. Red's eyes travelled down the blond's torso, then he leaned forward and pressed his lips to Vic's. Their tongues caressed inside Vic's mouth, as Red continued his steady plumbing of Dan's ass and Dan deep-throated Vic's seven plump inches. Dan had been thrilling to the battering Red's charger was giving to his prostate before Vic arrived. Now he felt his whole body vibrate as he was invaded by hot cock at both ends.

Red was consumed by the blazing sensations welling up from his groin as his mouth twisted against Vic's. He removed his hand from Dan's throbbing tool and grabbed the patrolman's hips. He pumped faster and faster into

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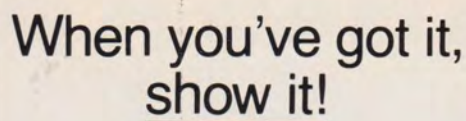
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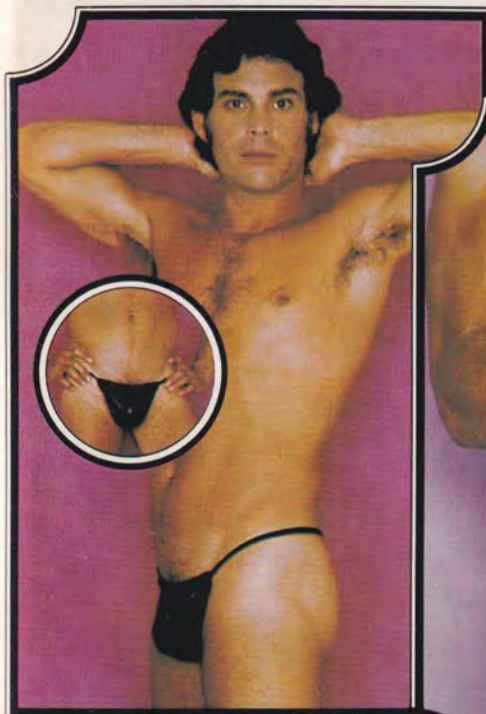
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Dan's clutching asshole. The peaks rose higher and higher, until, with a shout, he poured a river of seed into Dan's bowels. Vic, increasingly aroused by Red's surge to climax, seized Dan's head and pistoned his prick in and out of Dan's throat. Within seconds of Red's discharge, he sent his gism flying into Dan's gullet. At the same moment, Dan, whose cock was now nodding free, surrendered to an incredible spermal explosion. He had never felt so much of his body ignited by an orgasm.

Red toppled on top of Dan, who surged between Vic's knees. Vic fell on top of Red. Almost a minute passed, while the three lay in a heap. Then Vic kissed the pit of Red's solid back and struggled to his feet. Red twisted Dan's head around and kissed him—gently this time—on the mouth. Dan ran his tongue around Red's lips. Red's withered prick slid out of Dan's anus; he regretted the loss. Red pushed himself to his knees, then stood. He walked over to his clothes, picked up his jeans and wriggled into them. As Dan and Vic watched, he grabbed his shirt and boots, strode to the Rabbit, got in, gave them a salute, and drove off.

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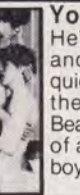
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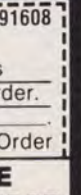
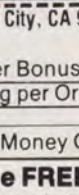
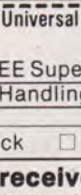
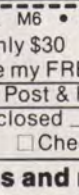
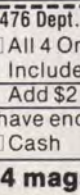
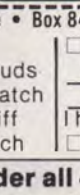
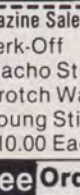
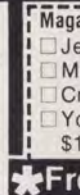
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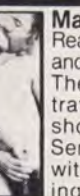
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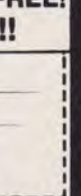
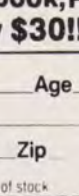
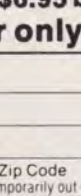
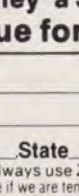
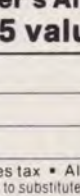
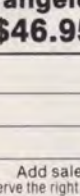
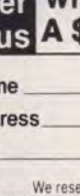
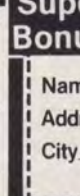
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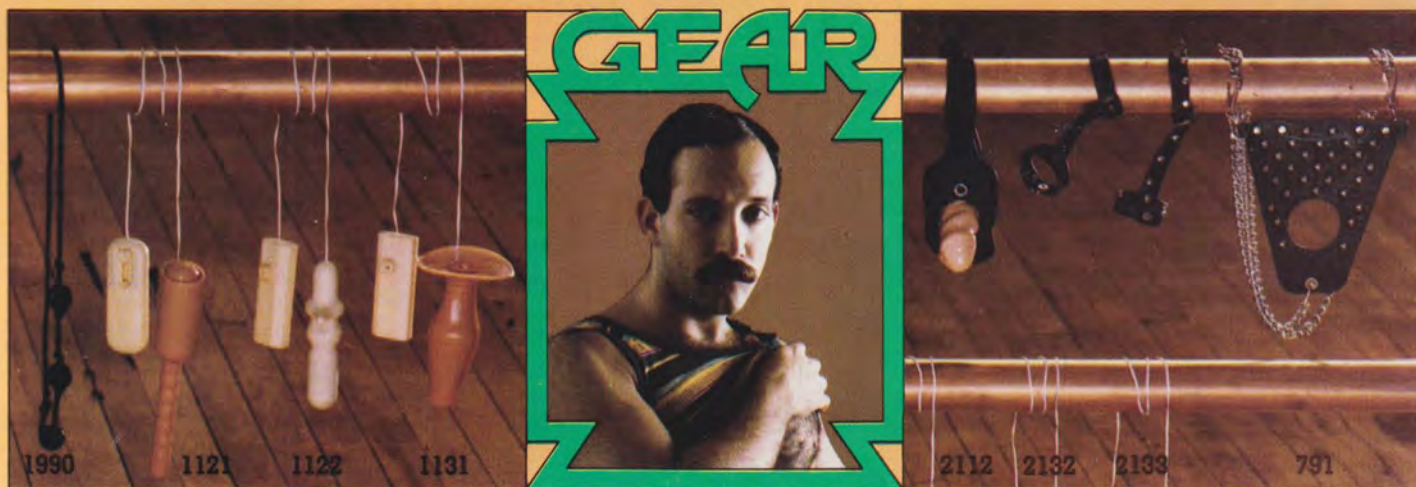
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