

DRUMMER FEATURE ARTICLE

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Acts, Facts, & Fantasy:

Why a Man Should Hire Models...

PUMPING ROGER: I DID!

by Jack Fritscher

- This entire feature article "Pumping Roger: I Did!" is available in Acrobat pdf.
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AUTHOR'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT INTRODUCTION



DRAFT VERSION



Written December 1, 1977, and published in *Drummer* 21, March 1978.

I wrote this picaresque Picasso-esque feature at a high point in the 70s Gay Lib Culture. Everything was coming up roses. It was a happy time. When Roger appeared on stage at the Nob Hill Theater, he seemed the Platonic Ideal. He was, in fact, one of the many guys I folded into the character, Kick, in my novel, *Some Dance to Remember*. (Roger appears in Reel One, Chapter 16.) This "Pumping Roger" article ran on pages 45, 46, and 68, in *Drummer* with five centerfold photographs of Roger shot by Wakefield Poole. I purposely backed the photos with an emblematic centerfold poster drawn by Jakal whose erotic exaggeration illustrated the esthetic exaggeration and celebration of my adoring "take" on Roger—and by association, filmmaker Wakefield Poole who directed Roger's Nob Hill Theater performance.

Everything in the 70s—even during the 70s—seemed like a huge exaggeration of reality that was nevertheless reality. Roger was Roger, but he was also the exaggeration of Roger, that is, the archetype of all the Rogerness in man-worship. As Desmond MacCarthy, a critic of archetype, wrote in the catalog of Roger Fry's sensational First Post-Impressionist Exhibition in London, 1910, "A good rocking horse has often more of the true horse about it than an instantaneous photograph of a Derby winner." This kind of "authenticity" is what I wrote about in my lead feature essay, "Homomascularity 1978: Let Us Now Praise Fucking with Authentic Men," in *Drummer* 24, September 1978. Roger Fry wrote: "Art is significant deformity." Roger was the perfect rocking horse. In *Some Dance to Remember*, a novel of collage and pastiche and conscious literary exaggeration, the character Kick is a modern antagonist much the same as Roger. They

both represent the unachievable lover, the “man that got away” who so tormented Judy Garland.

In my intent, *Drummer* was the first gay magazine to drop gay “prettiness” and head toward the fresh “de-forming” queer edge where leather breaks the forms of old ways of being and thinking with its progressive metaphor and discipline. This “de-forming” has long caused the gaystream to “fear” the leatherstream of queer culture. More a coincidence of the times and not through cause and effect, three weeks after the first issue of *Drummer* was published, Richard Goldstein, the original-recipe “Attack Queer,” wrote a very nasty take on leather culture titled “S&M: The Dark Side of Gay Liberation” in *The Village Voice*, July 7, 1975.

I kept that Goldstein column, along with the *Harper’s Magazine*, July 1975 article, “Masculinity: 60 Points of View,” thumb-tacked over my non-electric Smith-Corona portable typewriter on which I wrote all my *Drummer* pieces.

The *Harper’s* piece nails down the intense debate about masculinity in the 70s dedicated to feminism, and thus provided the muscle for my widening *Drummer* from the specifics of leather men to the celebration of homomale men, a move that later *Drummer* publisher, Anthony DeBlase, acknowledged for its greater inclusivity.

Goldstein’s prejudice typified everything in gay culture that opposed the homomale values of the leather lifestyle which *Drummer* was trying to liberate and promulgate. Contrarians like him made *Drummer* a necessity. On CSPAN, in 2002, Richard Goldstein continues spinning his almost *ad absurdum* debates about the nature of queer culture in his opposition to humanists Andrew Sullivan and Camille Paglia. As an analyst, and as a human, I land on the side of Sullivan-Paglia, but value the leftist drumbeat of Goldstein marching to his own different *Drummer*.

This civil war, this schism in gay and leather culture, between conservative and progressive, between femininity and masculinity, between separatism and assimilation leads to what I call “gay vertigo.” People forget that eros has no conscience the way a hard dick has no conscience. The minute, let’s say, you—an artist peddling erotica—start to think of lesbian politics and infighting, you fall off your bicycle.

My time line for the pivotal year 1975 is:
May 1975 Catacombs opens
June 1975 *Drummer* first issue
July 1975 Richard Goldstein anti-S&M essay in *Village Voice*
July 1975 *Harper’s Magazine*, “Masculinity: 60 Points of View”
August 1975 Janus Society founded

In terms of entertainment, I tried to reflect the hilarity of the time, because we all knew, and said, that nothing so good could last forever.

In terms of art, immediately before I became editor in chief invited into *Drummer’s* table, I had taught art courses in literature, creative writing, journalism, and film for twelve years at university as well as at an art institute. During my twenties in New York in the 1960s, I pursued personally and professionally the intellect and eros of both underground film and experimental theater, and published articles in academic journals such as *Modern Drama*, *The Bucknell Review*, and the *Journal of Popular Culture*—which were typical of the periodicals where homosexuals published our semi-coded and coming uncloseted culture before magazines such as *Drummer* and *The Advocate* were invented after Stonewall. In pop culture, I saw Andy Warhol glamorizing the gay sensibility in his art and films in a way that made Warhol a model of gay

crossover chic.

I was influenced as well by the *joie de gestalt* of my friend whom I met in 1968, the writer and art critic John Richardson, who while living a life in the upper reaches of the art world, was a human-scale friend and an upscale icon on the high-leather scene. We had met nine years before I met Robert Mapplethorpe. John Richardson, famously a personal friend of Picasso, is a writer for *Vanity Fair*, *The New Yorker*, and *House and Garden*, as well as many other magazines, which were and are direct adjuncts of the gay press. John Richardson is the author of the best-selling trilogy, *A Life of Picasso*, as well as of *Sacred Monsters*, *Sacred Masters: Beaton, Capote, Dali, Picasso, Warhol, Lucian Freud, Anais Nin* (2001). Once, actually, John Richardson and I—just for the fun of it, on one of his visits to my Kalamazoo studio—collaborated in the '60s—when underground films were the rage—on a Super-8 film short, *Blood of the Black Spider*.

In this circle, eleven years before Robert Opel was shot in his own Fey Way art gallery in San Francisco, Andy Warhol was shot in his studio by Valerie Solanas, founder of SCUM (Society to Cut Up Men) on June 4, 1968, the day before Bobby Kennedy was assassinated. My friend and playmate, the art critic Mario Amaya was also shot and wounded by Solanas. As editor of *Drummer*, I was always acutely aware that a media profile can be as dangerous as buying hustlers off the street; for that reason, I once wrote a *Drummer* editorial on death, *Drummer* ####, DATE.

All this free association does not make one an artist, but it does signify the self-conscious sex-and-art intensity with which we all lived in those “olden days” of the gay past long before politics became the second intensity, and AIDS became the third intensity.

I mention Richardson and Picasso and leather and art to connect the helix of what was in the air at the time and what talented people I tried to bring to *Drummer* which was a blank page open to anything.

After Stonewall—a symbolic event after which the image of queers changed—leather and art clicked. Opportunistically, all S&M leather culture instantly identified with art—from photography to performance—which created the climate for Mapplethorpe's fine art photographs of leather, as well as the context for thousands of leather photographers and artists eager to pronounce their emerging erotica as “art.”

So, in writing, which is art, I intended this very “modern” piece on Roger something like the exaggerated paintings by Picasso or Van Gogh or Matisse—not that I thought I or *Drummer* was all that—because their paintings were also once considered both pornographic and exaggerations. Also they did not cater to the “prettiness” of conventional art the way *Drummer* never catered to the “prettiness” of gay culture that so often—outside *Drummer* and leather and bear culture—tips dangerously back toward the chicken coop of underage pederasty. In the 1984, I told my colleague John W. Rowberry, who had been *Drummer*'s office boy and then, later, *Drummer* editor about his chicken-diet video reviews: “You like 'em so young that if sperm could act, you'd give it a good review.”

Roger was definitely a grown-up, and I was focusing *Drummer* sexually and esthetically on mature men and—in the best sense—the worship of masculinity, by which I mean the best of masculinity, rather much like “Zen and the Art of Masculine Maintenance.” At the same time, I added the tag line to the masthead of *Drummer*: “The American Review of Gay Popular Culture.” My intent was to make *Drummer* as emphatic esthetically as it was erotically. I went in pursuit of artists who were writers,

photographers, painters, and illustrators. Bringing in their personal visions made *Drummer* a personal magazine each issue, and not a corporate vehicle for generating advertising revenues. In this context, “Pumping Roger,” seeming to be one thing while really much more, shows the shape-shifting character of what I intended leather and homomascularity and art to effect in the quintessential *Drummer* in the cultural war of 1970s’ gay liberation.

Years passed.

In February 1994, I received a phone call from Roger’s manager who remembered me from this 1978 article and told me how the Roger story ended. My Journal entry from February 17, 1994, follows this feature.

That telephone call was one of the reasons that this enormous collection of writing from *Drummer*, with some notes, seemed a good thing to do. I see both the duty and the virtue of living a life in writing, and keeping excellent notes. I used my teenage journals to write the novel, *What They Did to the Kid*. I used my daily journals of the 70s to write the novel, *Some Dance to Remember*. I used my journals and correspondence and interview tapes to write the nonfiction memoir, *Mapplethorpe: Assault with a Deadly Camera*. Sooner or later every story comes full circle, every mystery is revealed, everybody comes to conclusion, even myself, eventually. –Jack Fritscher, April 26, 2002

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and published in *Drummer* 21, March 1978**

Acts, Facts, & Fantasy:

Why a Man Should Hire Models...

PUMPING ROGER: I DID! by Jack Fritscher

No two ways about it: I love, adore, and worship Roger. I would eat his shorts. I would sleep on Roger-printed sheets and pillowcases. I would hang Roger wallpaper inside and outside my house. On my deathbed, I’d settle for one last glimpse of his Charles-Bronson face and Botticelli body.

I’ve watched Roger at my gym.

He works out heavy, stripped to the waist, and barefoot. His grey sweatpants darken with triangular wet patches in the front, below his navel, and in the rear at the small of his back. A line of white jockstrap holds tight against his smooth skin as the sweatpants slip down from his waist toward his tight butt. He stops to hitch them up. He tightens the draw string. He wipes his hands dry on his thighs. He ignores the mirror. He spreads a clean white towel over the vinyl-covered bench. He crosses to the weight rack arranged in a neat row along the wall. He glances quickly into the mirror to gauge the pump of his workout. His hands wipe again down his thighs. He inhales. His chest rises. Each hand turns into an iron fist as he grips a pair of 85 pound weights. He walks back to the bench. The poundage he totes striates the muscles of his forearms and deltoids. He

looks neither to the right or left. He sits his ass down at the end of the bench, places a weight on the floor at each ankle, rests his forearms on his thighs, and breathes deep. His thick shoulders rise. His black hair falls soft across his forehead. He is deep in concentration.

DOLLY, ARNOLD, & ROGER;

The gym is at an off-hour. Only four or five guys are working out. From the office, a radio plays country-western music. On the office window, in a huge full-color poster of camp, hick-chic Dolly Parton poses in front of Arnold Schwarzenegger. Her hands rest on her black pant-suited hips. Her blonde wig piles high enough to hide most of Arnold's face. Out of her shoulders jut Arnold's huge arms in full biceps shot. Out of her hip shoots one of Arnold's enormous legs. Dolly is laughing. Arnold is smiling. They both know they are jokes.

On his towel-covered bench, Roger meditates in heavy concentration. Roger is no joke, no Parton put-on, no Schwarzenegger exaggeration. His well-muscled body remains natural enough to appeal to those who aren't into heavyweight bodybuilders, and super enough to turn on men who are. An aura of nobility surrounds him, protects his privacy from invasion. I can only look at him from a distance, through mirrors brightly, so as not to disturb his concentration.

His head raises. He throws himself an ok-let's-go look in the mirror. Each hand lifts a weight to each thigh. He lays back on the towel-covered bench. His arms bulge with the weights as he pulls the iron back to his pecs. He raises his bare feet from the floor and tucks his heels up against his ass. His toes curl over the bench edge—the way they curl down when he cums on film. The small of his back flattens out. The position allows him no cheating. He has concentrated his attention and arranged his body to isolate his upper torso for full workout. He begins the set, raising one 85-pound weight at a time. Left. Then right. A full set of eight reps for each arm and pec. He pumps the heavy weight at low reps to build the bulk that has changed the beach-n-bike centerfold body of two years ago into the full-blown man's body that thousands pay to see perform.

ROGER: ONCE IS NOT ENOUGH

In San Francisco, New York, Washington, and Los Angeles, Roger's SRO appearances cause lines to rival *Star Wars*. At New York's Jewel Theater, the crush of fans literally caved in the plate glass of the box-office. Any man who has seen Roger once will see Roger twice. Once is definitely not enough.

At the gym, as he works each set, the sweat glistens on Roger's body. It beads into rivulets, puddles on his abs, runs off his thick pecs and out of his armpits. If ever a Holy Grail were needed to catch the sacred run-off, now is the time. Every day for two hours and twenty minutes, Roger pumps, not some slick chromium machine, but heavy metal. He's pumped for four years now, since he was nineteen. In two years, he wants to have won a major physique contest title. In the meantime, at the right times, he leads a life as disciplined as his workouts. Roger isn't one of those professionally great gay bodies topped by a jaded acid face.

Roger is Mom's Apple Pie baked by Tom of Finland.

His face is the key: after the muscles, after the enormous cock, comes the surprise of that face. Altogether in the altogether, Roger is a very real package: body, face, energy, and aura. Privately he has his singular personality. But publicly, he is also the stuff of fantasy.

I know.

I made love to Roger and lived.

Only because our *fuck* was a close encounter of the second kind.

I mean I started out cynically. Roger-Schmoger. Just another gay beef-twinkie. Straight beefcake has always been preferable, even though that's almost a contradiction in terms, because all along the iron-grapevine rumors run rampant that most physique stars play the price is right. Even Arnold will pose, the gym-gossip goes, for a thousand bucks an hour. If that's true, more power to Arnold. He's earned the adulation. If he bothers to deny it, a fickle public will only think of the Shakespearean lady who doth protest, especially since, before the big San Jose Physique Show, Arnold stated flat out on TV that he knew no bodybuilders who used drugs, and then a year later when asked why he was glad he retired, he stated it was mainly he didn't want to take steroids anymore. Steroids are drugs, so is that a lie, or just another example of Germanic amnesia? Anyway, for a thousand bucks a session who is kinky enough to make love to a Panzer tank. Who needs a close encounter of the Third Reich?

ROGER: "I NEED A LOT OF LOVING."

Now with Roger something besides gay beef-twink comes through. After all, the yellow-brick roads of Christopher, Castro, and Melrose are paved with hunky physical specimens. Who wouldn't, in the words of *Boys in the Band*, trade his immortal soul for a lifetime of such skindeep transitory physical beauty? So I made a pact with the devil. I sold my soul for Roger—or at least spent a lot of cash following his career. In a year I watched him grow at the gym, in still photos at Wakefield Poole's studio, in movies with Jack Wrangler, on stage in live performance, and in a movie of my own.

Roger admits he needs a lot of loving, and rumor again has it that although Roger recently married straight, an evening's pleasure with the man runs around five hundred. Bucks hardly matter when spending time with Roger on-stage, on-screen, on me, on-whatever. When I pay my doctor for his time, I'm paying him for all the preparation he went through to present patients at any given moment with his skill. This is Roger's moment, and dollars detract nothing from him, if he trades off his energetic preparation. Besides, if for one minute I thought Roger would cruise into a bar and give it away, he would be like everybody else.

Of course, if I had five hundred bucks, I might consider a night with Roger, but maybe some fantasies are better left alone. Why destroy in the third kind, encounters that can only be perfect when kept as the second kind? Why lay something impossibly divine on a mortal? Roger, like Redford, can get to be too much of a good thing. Some men prefer only to stand opposite Roger to watch him flex while they jerk off. That is, after all, the voyeuristic essence of Roger's on-stage act.

Roger has come a long way from the Florida go-go boy he was when he was "discovered." He claims he'll still be in shape at fifty (2004 A.D.), so I hope he's bulking on workouts and proteins, not steroids, and that his manager smartly invests his money in real estate or whatever, so after Roger's comet flashes across the stages, screens, and skies, he will have something left at fifty—at least part of what Paul Newman has now at 53. Tennessee Williams has said about all us Rogers, "You can be young with money, but you can't be old without money." After what I've seen Roger give, I'd kill any motherfucker who abuses that boy and leaves him nothing.

ROGER: NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS, SUPER-8

To know Roger's face, to stare into his eyes, is to fuck his soul. I know: I shot him with telephoto Super-8 color Ektachrome, close-up from thirty feet away. I respect his space, but movie portraiture is my specialty: holding the camera on a man's face until the pose, the look, the mask, the attitude melts and the soul comes through. Similar footage got me Colt Superstar Ledermeister who, not so long ago was and still is in my book, one of the first and greatest gay Fantasy Men. On-duty straight cops also are easy prey for the telephoto lens that closes in tight for face shots that melt the celluloid: especially when the cop is getting just a little pissed that he's being photographed but can't do anything about it—that's when his public mask breaks down and he throws his look of utter contempt at the camera to establish his straight macho, because he knows deep down that some guy sometime will jerk off on the footage of his face. And he's right. Movie portraiture gets a shot more whole than a snap. A still photographer clicks a single frame, even with a Canon AE-1, and often captures only the subject's mask. A cinematographer breaks through that. What I shot at the gay parade and what Wakefield Poole shot of Daryl Roger Hanson's face and act is the same: Roger the Real. I like/love what I saw/see in Roger: what I encountered at the gym, what I have seen on-stage, and what Wake Poole discovered shooting the same Roger in multiple stills and even more revealingly on motion-picture film.

PUMPING ROGER: HENRY HIGGINS, ELIZA DOOLITTLE

Roger, like Ann-Margret, uses one name. Fans catch on quicker. Next to his manager, writer Charles Herschberg has probably provided more personal information on Daryl Roger Hanson than anyone. The Herschberg profile reveals Roger as a Detroit Capricorn, Libra rising, born 1954, youngest of three brothers, a health nut for vitamins, doesn't drink or smoke tobacco, posed nude for college art classes, in 1972 began a two-year Navy hitch, and gets his main high from sex. Sexually his movies reveal him to be a veritable one-man Kama Sutra.

Stars are not born; they are more often delivered by Caesarian calculation. Roger, like Elvis, had to be "created" the way Henry sophisticated Eliza. Roger's mentor is a former Florida marketing man: Jim Bacon. Bacon is aggressive, but he's not pushy. Back in Florida, he tried three times to get up the courage to go backstage and talk to the fabulous go-go boy. Finally, Bacon introduced himself to Hanson. They liked each other, talked business, took over 2,000 Polaroid pictures of Hanson in every erotic pose possible (Super-8 cinematography would have gotten them the same end result faster and cheaper), and in the straight-forward tradition of American entrepreneuring began the creation of ROGER.

Enter Herschberg. Herschberg is a good journalist with the good sense to talk to Daryl Roger Hanson and to let Daryl Roger Hanson talk. Most men cannot talk to Roger. His charisma leaves them speechless. (The same is true of Streisand and Redford: what would you say after you said "hello"?) So with the words that Herschberg has written, the act that Bacon has tutored, and the film that Poole has shot, Roger is available neatly packaged for anything your head, your hand, and your popper can imagine.

They are the Trinity behind the God.

ROGER'S ACT: DOCUMENTARY OF A NIGHT AT THE NOB HILL THEATER

No connoisseur of well-purveyed meat ever misses a Mr. Teenage This or Mr. America That contest. America has a horde of beefed-up, buffed-up, oiled-down, and iron-pumped meat flexing on posing platforms from dirty YMCA's through slick State

Fairs and big city auditoriums all the way to muscle exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art. So when a Roger comes along, it's like finding Prime Rib in among a bunch of ham sandwiches.

Roger ain't your ordinary lunch.

Bacon has seen to that.

When Roger's mixed-media live show is in town, the SRO audience sits patiently filling amyl bullets and arranging jackets in their laps. To the left and right of my front row center seat every lap had a jacket-tent and every tent had a pole. Waiting for Roger is nothing like waiting for Godot, because in this show God is gonna arrive.

The houselights dim. Real poppers, saved like vintage champagne for a special occasion, snap in the darkness: inhalation therapy. An overhead spotlight comes up slowly revealing Roger locked into a still-life pose on a raised platform. The light cascades down his tanned body. The audience sits in silent awe. Is he live or is he Memorex? Then the vision, omigod, *moves*. He glides from one classic physique pose to another. Hands start jacking off in the dark. Roger, alone lit by light, is all there is in the world. His face is energy. He hits a double biceps shot, holds it, pulls his thick arms slowly down, palms his ass, pushes his hips forward, and works his thighs, isolating the muscles in each leg, popping them into isolation isometrics, making them bulge out like huge cocks caught under his skin.

His breathing is heavy with the exertion. He seems unaware of the audience out in the darkness. He is a study in concentration as he flexes each body part, tightening his truly washboard belly, and then finally, raising his mighty arms slowly out from his broad shoulders; he hits again the double bicep shot, and then conjuring with all his might, sweat pouring off his face and dripping to his pecs tipped with dark hot nipples, he swings his full-flexed arms down, fists clenched, shoulders hunched, chest swelled and thickened, locking into the classic "crab" pose, the "Most Muscular" pose that always knocks 'em dead at physique contests. He tightens down harder, veins popping over the defined bulk of his whole body. He juts his chin out. For the first time, and with no narcissism, he seems finally to acknowledge the audience with a look that announces, "I am here."

For one brief shining moment, Roger freezes into presenting himself in his full body armor: a perfect living flesh sculpture. Shoulders, chest, arms, and belly all tighten down on top his narrow hips and ass and thickly tensed legs. His chin under his face, intense in its frame of dark hair and dark moustache, holds steady as his coal-dark eyes reach into the audience. He stands stock still and the ceiling spot fades down and out. *Roger is Man the way Man should ideally be.*

The theater goes crazy. Less of Roger is not more. To the left and right, jackets are tossed like inhibitions from laps. Rows of cocks come out. The audience shouts for more.

Hardly can a man applaud for Roger.

Applause takes two hands.

Rows of cock-pumping men chant, "ROGER! ROGER! ROGER!"

In response, slides of Roger flash on the screen: clothed and nude. His shaft is enormous. Suddenly, the live Roger steps into the projected images. He wears the white

headband and white see-through trousers of his centerfold beach pictures. His torso is naked and oiled. His hands rub across his own bare flesh.

See me. Feel me. Touch me.

He offers himself with great dignity and no egomania.

He dances to the disco music. His every move totally macho. And then, finally, he begins his slow strip, an agonizing shedding of white clothing from tanned skin, down to his big-pouched jockstrap. He runs his hands over his hardening basket. He turns and his hands smooth across his buns. Tiger-like he moves stage front and center, stands his nearly naked body still, moves his head slowly surveying the audience, locking eyes with individual men in the crowd. His bare feet are only a yard from me. Omigod: even those toes. Those calves, thighs...I hit the popper. On both sides of me, arms are pumping cock: the whole front row jacking off.

Look at me. I am willing Roger to look at me.

Roger turns slightly on the ball of his foot. His dark eyes look directly down at me. He towers eight feet over me front-row center. We are eyeball to eyeball. "Take it, you fucker," I'm saying under my breath. The music is louder. "Take from me as much energy as you're giving us." And I no kidding fucking shoot. I lose my load to that fucker's face. His timing is perfect. He breaks off our energy-stare and dances hard and furious, sweating himself down further in a strip so erotic that even with the loud music, the groans of cuming men roar in a low, heavy bass. Even the rows of seats tremble as the shockwaves of men cuming travel down the interlocked theater chairs.

The slides change to a movie of Roger jacking off. The live Roger lies back on the posing platform and in mirror image to the film, back, then side, to the audience, rubs his oiled pecs, his belly, his thighs, and finally his big meat. The film-Roger and the real-Roger mirror each other exactly. Two Rogers touching themselves.

Touched at last! Touched at last! Great God Almighty. Touched at last!

Roger's act climaxes. The lights fade out. Roger disappears. For this knight in white satin, the crowd calls out for more. The cry rises, becomes a chant, a plea, a prayer, a demand.

And in answer: very, very slowly the single overhead spot shines down, as in the beginning, with increasing hot intensity on The Total Roger. On the posing platform, he stands unmoving, imperious, naked as some ancient warrior-god, pumped arms folded across his massive pecs, legs spread, knee-length cock thick and ready, head held high and steady, staring straight as the Second Coming out over the cheering crowd. The rose-light haloes him somehow, burns his image graven forever into my eyes. Roger is a holy hero straight out of Franzetta. For him, standing stock still rises the audience pandemonium of worship, respect, and cheers.

ROGER: A FINAL FANTASY

Years from now, when I think of this, and I will think of this when I think of Life and of Death, I'll recognize them both from my close encounter with Roger. I'll be seated somewhere hot and bright, squinting through my ancient memories, painfully trying to clear my vision which as in a movie will have become all blurred about the edges, and I shall want to clear my sight to resume my sweating cool glass of Perrier Water, and I'll look up.

He will be there. Suddenly. Waiting. Turned in upon himself. Leaning against a white stucco wall. His body tanned, stripped to the waist, wearing those nylon long beach trousers that will cling again wet to his thighs, wet from his healthy seasweat, from a plunge in the sea I never saw him take. A white sweatband will coil his dark hair. His face will be turned down toward his white transparent crotch, the drawstring opening a vee-shaped whiter shade of pale above his cock which will be hard and held shielded in his right hand. His left hand will hold out the drawstrings to slow the slide of his clinging wet pants down his thighs. He is very muscular: arms, shoulders, and chest. He has a black moustache which with the curl of hair over the sweatband obscures his perfect dark face from my eyes. But I know him. I recognize that bicycle boy, who in the village is called Roger.

I know when he looks up, finally, from his crotched hand, across the distance to my eyes, that he will be beautiful, that he will lift my heart, sweet fucking savior, right out of me and carry me up into the brightness and light and heat of the sun, and my then-ancient eyes will pain no more. Life and Death are, after all, only the brightness and heat of noon burning in a young man's body. Will Death anymore than Life reveal any secret? Will Roger, hoisting me high by flap of his muscular wings, whisper secrets I know behind his body armor he conceals? Will the Brightness and Light become so light and bright that in a flash I will see what in spite of every careful observation in life I missed? In all that Light can a man finally see, finally transcend the sweet wrap of flesh? Rising with Roger, will he lift us higher and higher until Life passing through Death becomes life once again in a young man's body?

TUNE IN NEXT WEEK

Currently, Roger is scheduled for a European tour. Frankly, he ought to retour the U.S. first! Meanwhile, the best second encounters with Roger are available from Lew Thomas' Target Studios, as well as from Wakefield (*Boys in the Sand* and *Bijou*) Poole's Irving Studios. Irving has the most recent Roger: 200 feet of him in Super-8 color movie, color slides, and black-and-white prints. This is still not enough. I'm frankly waiting for movies like *Deep Roger*, *Roger in Bondage*, and *I Am Roger's Prostate*, because there's everything I want to know about Roger and I'm not afraid to ask.

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In April, 1978, within days of publication, as if in answer to my request for the input of actual readers, I received this letter, ironic and satirical, bursting with capitalization. – Jack Fritscher, April 26, 2002

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

ROGER, ROGER, ROGER

I bought issue 21 for one reason only: the *Pumping ROGER* article by Jack Fritscher. Fritscher almost has the right attitude about ROGER—but how dare him summarize the hardening of ROGER's magnificent Cock and the spurting of his glorious

Load with one sentence: “ROGER’s act climaxes.”

Who does Jack Fritscher think he is? He could have written an article ten times as long just about those few awe-inspiring moments. And nowhere does he mention the glory and beauty of ROGER’s Asshole or the absolute perfection of his Nuts. Jack Fritscher simply doesn’t appreciate ROGER as much as ROGER deserves.

You should devote every page of every issue from now on to photographs and articles on ROGER—articles with titles like ROGER’s Armpits, ROGER’s Teeth, ROGER’s Mouth, ROGER’s Hair, ROGER’s Eyes, ROGER’s Whole Face, ROGER’s Neck, ROGER’s Chest, ROGER’s Arms, ROGER’s Hands, ROGER’s Shoulders, ROGER’s Abdominals, ROGER’s Back, ROGER’s Buns, ROGER’s Thighs, ROGER’s Calves, ROGER’s Feet, ROGER’s Suntan, ROGER’s Pubic Hair, ROGER’s Right Nut, ROGER’s Left Nut, the Head of ROGER’s Cock, the Total Perfection and Magnificence of ROGER’s Cock, ROGER’s Cock Soft, ROGER Takes a Piss, ROGER’s Cock Hard, the Taste and Temperature and Force and Duration of ROGER’s Load, etc., etc., etc., etc.

ROGER is the greatest and deserves to be written about and photographed for what he really is. Jack Fritscher’s appreciation of ROGER just isn’t strong enough. Why doesn’t somebody start to give ROGER a little of the rapt, devoted attention, appreciation, praise, adoration, respect, homage admiration, recognition, love, glorification, adulation, and idolization that he so obviously more than deserves? –J. R.

Santa Monica, CA

(Roger and I are both most grateful for these understated words from J. R., whose face obviously seats five. —Ed.

[My suspicion then, as now, was that “J. R.” was actually *Drummer*’s then snotty little office-boy, John Rowberry, who later became one of a long line of editors of *Drummer*, and after a very fractious career there with John Embry, made a quick exit, and moved to L. A. to package magazines like *Inches* and *Skinflicks* for George Mavety’s Modernism conglomerate. Rowberry, as a packager, got over his kveeniness, and mended fences with me and David Hurler; he published hundreds of pages of my stories and Old Reliable’s photos, because he knew he could rely on us two to provide him what he needed to satisfy Modernismo. John W. Rowberry: September 1, 1948 - December 5, 1993]

Journal Entry, 17 February 1994,
Thursday 3:30 PM
(16 years after the “Pumping Roger” article)

On Palm Drive Video’s 800-736-6823 number, I just got a call out of the blue from a man named Jim Bacon who said he remembered my name from the 1970s. He was the discoverer, promoter, and lover of the famous porn actor Roger, whom I wrote about in an outrageous issue of *Drummer* after Roger had appeared live on-stage at the Nob Hill Theater in a show produced and directed by filmmaker Wakefield Poole, whom I also interviewed for *Drummer*.

Bacon, 65, an admitted 3-pack-a-day smoker and recovered heavy drinker, has heavy emphysema and must stay at his home in L. A. to take oxygen several times a day. Once I got him focused on the narrative behind his mentioning to me that he was Roger’s partner, he let the facts fly and finally asked if he could call me again on my personal number.

Bacon met Roger when Roger was 17 and dancing in a Daytona Beach nightclub

where he twisted with topless go-go girls in cages. A real joint. Sawdust. Rough. Jim followed Roger into the toilet and they stayed together for the next seven years. That was around 1972.

Roger was a stage name du porn. Roger was born Daryll Hanson and his mother's signature go him into the US Navy when he was sixteen. Within a year, the Navy discharged him because of his age and because of drugs. That's how he landed in a topless joint in Florida.

Jim Bacon took Roger under his wing. Bacon traveled in the Florida-Los Angeles set of sex, booze, boys, muscle, and photography. Bacon took Roger to the porn kingpin, Don Embinder, who was a power player when I took over *Drummer* in 1977. I always thought it odd that *Drummer's* publisher's name was Embry; and then there was Embinder. Behind all this is the music of *The Godfather*. Anyway, Embinder published Blue Boy magazine, on which the famous cover shot of Roger catapulted him to international fame. I had that issue of Blue Boy in my downstairs bedroom on 25th Street for years.

In fact, I wrote a short story for Bob Johnson in L. A. for one of the "Italian" porn magazines he packaged, published at Modernismo by George Mavety, who then employed John Rowberry to package mags for him after Bob Johnson totally crashed out on coke, after the god-awful weekend Mark and I spent trying to talk business with him while visiting David [Hurles/Old Reliable] in L. A. My Roger story, "A Beach Boy Named Desire," appeared first as the "Cabana Sands" sequence in Chapter 16 of *Some Dance to Remember*. Roger is woven into my mytho-poetic and sexual life as much for the Ideal he was, as well as for the affair. Actually, we worked out at the same gym, and I regularly lifted in a pattern that allowed me to follow him so I could lay my naked back down on the bench where his sweaty naked back had left imprints of his muscles like the Shroud of Turin. Wakefield gave me many pictures of Roger, which Wake had taken, and in 1982, Mark Hemry and I put the Incredible Roger on the cover of the San Francisco tabloid we edited and wrote called, The California Action Guide.

That character-based story was inspired by Roger. It starts out, I know from memory, "Death. I'll know Death." And I describe Roger on the cover of Blue Boy in his transparent wet beach pants with the white sweatband around his head. God, we were all gone for him.

Roger lived with Jim Bacon in Woodland Hills in Southern California where they had the wet bar that did them in. Jim Bacon had the need to confess, and I as a seminarian who was almost a priest, have the need to hear confessions. During that high-rolling period in the 70s, Bacon and Roger partied with the players in the gay photography and cinema set. Mr. America, Chris Dickerson, who is a black Adonis, was their close friend. Photographer Roy Dean, Bacon said, was as drunk as the rest of them, including multi-millionaire Jimmy Pendleton who was 70 in the 70s. "We all drank like fish," Bacon said. "Our bar had a marble floor and it was always sticky from the spilled drinks."

Lou Thomas was one of the founders of Lugar and Colt Studios, back in New York, and then founded his own Target Studios. [His partner Jim French himself became Colt. Lou Thomas shot three or four films with Roger. [Colt shot Roger in silent films now transferred to videon Bullet Videos 5 and 7. Lou Thomas shot me in his apartment in October 1969 with a 42nd Street hustler. Lou and I, introduced by the Catholic leather-priest Jim Kane, had an on-going leather affair from 1969-1975. As late as 1982, Lou was requesting and receiving from me stories he published in his magazine, The Target

Album. The stories were based on fictive versions of several 70s gods: the bodybuilder, Jim Enger, mixed with Roger and Colt's Frank Vickers whom I knew as Roger Koch. The stories, of course, do not reflect the real persons. Lou Thomas' letters to me are in Mark's files. Lou Thomas: 1933-1990, AIDS.]

Lou often visited Bacon and Roger. He'd bring his cameras, his lover, and two or three models, and he'd shoot his Target movies around the Woodland Hills pool. Bacon's mother lived with him, and she never said she knew what was going on, but she treated everyone as if they were members of her Sunday School class, Bacon said. He was really quite pleasant and funny on the phone.

Roger also shot two films for Hand in Hand Studios and several for Falcon. Bacon mentioned his fondness for director Jack Deveau, owner of Hand in Hand as well as of the Jewel Theater in New York that presented films and live performers like Roger. [Deveau shot Roger and Jack Wrangler in two 1977 films, Hot House and Sex Magic. In fact, Deveau's 1978 film, A Night at the Adonis, reflects the period-actuality of live performance venues, such as the Nob Hill, and the Park-Miller Theater and Eros Theater in Manhattan where Roger appeared. Deveau's *Wanted: Billy the Kid* (1976) always held interest to me, because in a non-sex sequence the actors suddenly break into a scene from Tennessee Williams' *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. -JF, 29 April 2002]

In their seven years together—which is 49 years of marriage in straight years, Bacon and Roger traveled to Europe, Japan, Singapore, sometimes performing, sometimes not. Roger put on a rip-roaring show in Singapore. Jim French of Colt, according to Bacon, didn't like Roger. French shot Roger for Colt, but held off publishing him, although Roger appeared in one or two Colt films. [I've heard Jim French himself did not shoot all his films, particularly in the later years. After the duo of Ed Dinakos and Jake Tanner starred in Colt's beautiful dreamscape *Muscle Ranch*, and then both died, French chose not to shoot anymore duo films. Ed Dinakos was the *Drummer* model simply called "Mike" whom David Sparrow and I shot many times.-JF, 29 April 2002] I think French, who also shot Jim Enger who would not let French publish the Enger photos, did not like Roger because Roger was not a Colt exclusive, which French has mostly demanded.

[Jim Enger, was the award-winning bodybuilder, and my paramour 1978-1980 whom I photographed extensively in stills and Super-8 while we both wished video would hurry up and arrive. Jim Enger described Jim French's shoot of him, but something did not click between them and Enger refused to do any frontal nudes, which to me indicated something drastic must have transpired, because when I introduced my lover Jim Enger to my bi-coastal lover Robert Mapplethorpe so that the bodybuilder star could be photographed by the photographer who was also a star, their "attitude" toward each other was so peckish that I was embarrassed for having brought them together, but I kept the shoot on track and Enger gave Mapplethorpe his best human subject ever, and Mapplethorpe gave Enger his best photos ever.

[I engineered the shoot because I wanted my two pals to work their mutual magic on each other, while at the same time creating some dynamite photographs I could publish in *Drummer*. Such publication never happened. The arm-wrestle between my two friends as to who was the star ended badly when Enger refused to sign a model release, and Mapplethorpe went on to turn one of his photos of Enger into a color greeting card—Enger's gorgeous torso minus Enger's head! Nevertheless, Robert was most generous to me, sending along large-format black-and-white prints via the gallery owner, Edward DeCelle.

[I chose to insert “asides” like this, because they spring to mind because of their relativity to the primary material. I think these back-stories behind the *Drummer* pieces gives a texture of the culture of the times. The attitude between Enger and Mapplethorpe, which I witnessed, illustrates the kinds of tension that often occurs between photographers like Jim French of Colt and models who are as temperamental as the photographers. Add in the temperament of artists, writers, and publishers, and it’s a miracle the gay press ever turns out a single issue. –Jack Fritscher, 29 April 2002]

Roger probably told Jim French that he had never been photographed by anyone else. A lie like that would rightly have miffed French. Anyway, Wakefield Poole shot Roger, and I published the pictures in *Drummer*, and French has long refused to be in *Drummer* because of a falling out with John Embry. [My friend, art director Armando Aguilar, who works for Liberation Publications which publishes the Advocate, tells interesting tales about his experiences working at Colt with Jim French who rightly is an ardent defender of his copyrights to his intellectual property of film, video, and still photography.]

Bacon started Roger dancing in a solo act, minus the go-go girls, and, Bacon said, “that was before the Chippendales, and Roger gave the Chippendales an image that allowed them to happen.”

My “Pumping Roger” article really is very accurate reportage of one night at the Nob Hill when Roger burned up the stage. Like Deveau’s A Night at the Adonis, It contains no exaggeration and no irony, because exaggeration and irony are suitable for stereotypes and not for ideal archetypes which Roger that night was. (In the 70s, irony was not the vogue.) That evening at the Nob Hill I was front-row center, and when Roger prowled out on stage I looked right and left to check the crowd reaction, and every man in the sold-out house was sitting in awe. I figured this wasn’t Ibsen or opera; Roger was naked and masturbating on stage, so I took my dick out. Everyone took their dicks out. Every man in the theater was beating off while Roger beat off live on stage and on the screen behind him in Wake’s footage.

If there was a theater in Sodom and Gomorrah, it was like the Nob Hill that night.

Roger was the toast of gay San Francisco, and went on to do other night-club acts, but after San Francisco, he rather much disappeared. Once you peak in San Francisco, you can’t top your act anyplace else. Before he left the City, Roger got even more into bodybuilding in SFO, that whole physique culture of the 70s where without pecs, you were dead. I thought he was on steroids because I remember at the gym his back had a few of those angry red boils. “Roger got very focused with bodybuilding,” Bacon said. “He cleaned up his act and didn’t do party drugs. He’d go to the gym by day and he’d come home at night. I always had a lot of leather and S&M around the house.”

Around 1980, Roger split from Bacon, his Henry Higgins, and headed for the even faster land in Las Vegas. There were boys. There were girls. He married a young woman who left him six months after the ceremony for reasons only she knows. Roger turned to speedy drugs and speedier company. In 1982, with two or three other people in the car, Roger was killed in a crash. He was 27. [Not all porn stars die of AIDS. Contemporaries of Roger, Leo Ford was killed when a truck hit his motorcycle; Dick Fisk, car crash; and Bob Blount of L. A Tool and Die, motorcycle.]

Jim Bacon plans on moving from California where he led the high life. “The smoking and drinking did me no good. I wish I hadn’t done it. But at least I’m alive with no diseases like there are today.” Bacon’s heading back to Florida, to Jacksonville, to

Daytona Beach...back to where he met the 17-year-old angel he delivered to us all. –Jack Fritscher, Journal entry, 17 February 1994

ILLUSTRATIONS

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