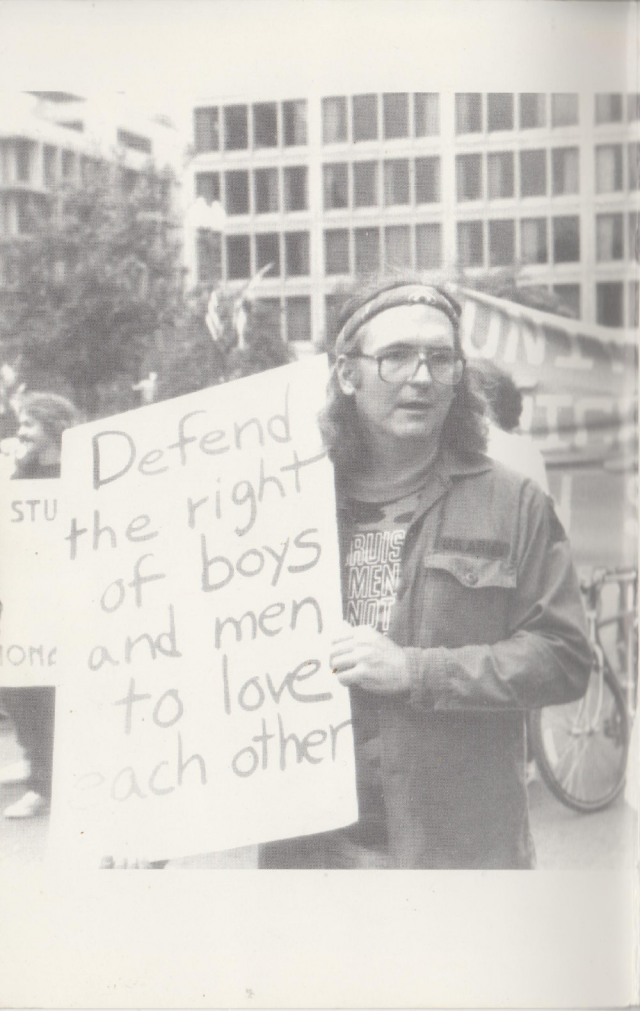


A Way

Forward 





Defend
the right
of boys
and men
to love
each other

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A Way Forward ~

**Selections from the NAMBLA
Bulletin & NAMBLA Journal,
1983 - 1987**

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David Thorstad, Jim Kepner, "Jessie" (aged 16), Morris Kight, and Harry Hay discuss ageism in the gay community at a NAMBLA conference — San Francisco, 1984

Preface

The effort of emancipation... is reduced to facilitating the recognition of what is going on, to developing the concepts that comprehend reality. More than ever, the proposition holds true that progress in freedom demands progress in the consciousness of freedom.

— Herbert Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance,"
an essay in *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*

The 1970's celebrated an era of social freedom in America. Diverse minorities, with traditions of survival, had begun to taste freedoms of a new kind. Confronted with a backlash campaign of hypocrisy, scapegoating, and oppression focused on man/boy love, a courageous group of men and boys formed The North American Man/Boy Love Association in Boston in 1978. NAMBLA's founders brought experience, tactics, and connections from the successful Free Speech, Civil Rights, Anti-War, Women's Liberation, Black Power, and Gay Liberation movements. We organized, forged coalitions, and spoke out in defense of a new era of fair play and equal justice.

NAMBLA's early successes were soon met with salvos from the F.B.I., police, and other agencies, who had attacked and disrupted other popular movements for freedom. But NAMBLA deflected their attacks with a flourish, established credibility as a principled, progressive organization, and emerged at the forefront of the movement for the liberation of man/boy love.

There had been other such efforts before NAMBLA. Some acceptance had been gained in Western Europe, where lesbians and gays had played a prominent role in the defeat of Hitler's fascism. Building on a socially diverse constituency, the Dutch had lowered their "age of consent;" and scapegoating by the Dutch was at a minimum. But no previous defense of man/boy love was rooted in democratic American traditions and sparked by the progressive politics and egalitarian values of NAMBLA's founders. NAMBLA launched a daring campaign aimed at rolling back new anti-sex laws introduced by the *Model Penal Code* in the late 1960's and early 1970's as stand-ins for the old laws against homosexuality. Bold initiative brought NAMBLA a wide membership — and more important, a wide, and sometimes international, audience.

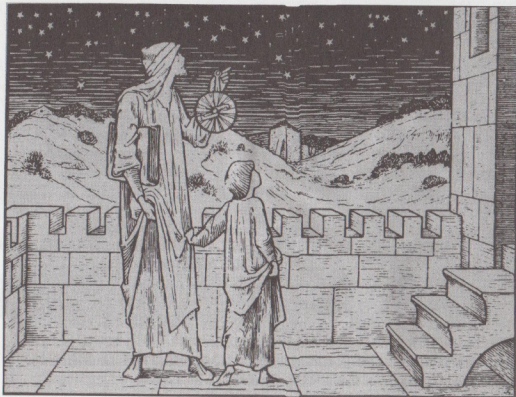
With this, members realized, came a responsibility to show not only how man/boy relationships can be handled humanely, but also how this reconciles with the common interests of societies and the need of all people to be dealt with humanely. A key to NAMBLA's work had been the tradition of the public, community forum — an essential element of democratic governance and stable community life, and a key to developing a principled program with broad appeal. This tradition was continued throughout the 1980's. In 1981, Mel Boozer, a Democratic

Party star, and Frank Kameny, organizer of the world's first gay rights pickets in Washington D.C., spoke at a NAMBLA membership conference in Baltimore. In 1982, Frank Kilhefner, co-founder and director of the Gay Community Center in Los Angeles, spoke at a NAMBLA meeting there. In time, virtually all of the pioneers who now serve as icons of the lesbian and gay rights movement spoke at NAMBLA-sponsored forums. Often, these men and women shared the stage with boys speaking about ageism and in defense of youth rights as well as eros — and what from their point of view was simple common sense.

As NAMBLA grew, more and more voices joined in the discussion. Our forums included the vital critical perspectives of women, people of color, and people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, and from a range of religious, professional and political points of view.

NAMBLA's publications developed and refined vital ideas which emerged in the many conferences, forums, and open chapter meetings. We continued to feature news of current events as well as excellent analysis. We presented some of the best art and political and cultural analysis the ascending movement produced. If NAMBLA's first five years was a time of activism, the second five years was a time of planning for the future. This second volume of selections from our publications chronicles our progress as a movement, forging a program of broad appeal — a way forward.

David Miller & Arnold Schoen
San Francisco, August 20, 1997



Vision & Values

A Call for Social Justice

by Fri Beslut
and the San Francisco *Journal* Collective

JOINING NAMBLA was a significant step in my evolution from isolation to self acceptance. I was exposed for the first time to others with sexual feelings similar to mine; as heinous as my thoughts and feelings about boys might have seemed to me there were others in this world who had similar leanings.

The first NAMBLA meeting I attended surprised me because not only were there others like me, they were as diverse as those of any single-purpose group could be. There was a range of social, ethnic and political representations. There were people I respected: men and women who were honest with themselves and others, who saw the need for examining the issues surrounding the love between children and adults from broad social, political, legal and personal perspectives and whom I considered to have personal integrity. My association with these people has helped me increase my self-respect tremendously.

As my "perversion" became less perverse, I started looking outward for sources of my feelings of inadequacy related to my attraction to boys. The more I examined my life, the more obvious it became to me that my feelings were not necessarily bad. What was bad were the repressive measures inflicted upon children who chose to love an adult completely and upon those adults who chose to so love a child. Through this exploration, I came to see my repression as but one facet of a much larger pattern of social and political oppression.

There is potential for political stagnation in NAMBLA if we lose sight of this broader context, stagnation which can occur in spite of the willingness of some members to put their reputations, jobs and lives on the line to confront the legal system about cross-generational love and

sex. The system arrayed against us is strong, hence the need for sophisticated political awareness and wider political support.

When viewed in a purely sexual context, the subject of child-adult sex can be quite limited. But it is very difficult to view it solely in that context. Hard upon the heels of the question of the legitimacy of children engaging in sex with adults or other children comes the more important issue of the right of children to have control of and consent in all areas of their lives, non-sexual as well as sexual. With the dependency which we adults have fostered in young people, it would be unrealistic to expect them to assume the full responsibilities attendant with complete social liberation immediately. But if adults would admit to prior mistakes in child rearing and undertake it instead as a process for inculcating self-sufficiency and self respect, then such a time would be hastened in coming.

There are reasons for the reluctance of our political and social institutions to accept the liberation of children. Principal among these is the concept of children as chattel, that is, movable property. Legally, children are not owned by their parents, but nonetheless are completely subject to their parent's domination and consequently, have the status of slaves.

Children have no rights. If black people were barred from the streets after 10:00 PM, if women were prohibited from frequenting video arcades except on weekends, if 30 year olds were banned from having consensual sex with 40 year olds, there would be a vehement outcry against the obvious discrimination. But in their supposed wisdom, adults have decided what is right, safe or harmful for young people. Status offenses (crimes such as truancy, curfew violations, running away from home and others so defined based solely on the age of the perpetrator) are by definition discriminatory.

A logical part of man/boy love should be an acceptance by the boy-lover of children's liberation as opposed to externally imposed "children's rights." Children, for example, have the right in this country not to be treated as an adult in the juvenile justice system but forfeit as a consequence any and all of the legal rights adult citizens may possess. Children have a right not to work at arduous or dangerous jobs (though many do) but have been denied the right to earn a living and to live independently except at the convenience and behest of adults. Those rights granted to young people currently are those which when given still allow for easy maintenance of children as second class citizens.

From an acceptance of the concept of children's liberation it is not a large step to the acceptance of the idea of general social liberation for all people. When special cases of discrimination against children are examined, the specialness of the examples diminishes. The discrimina-

tion against children is similar to that experienced by all socially oppressed and disadvantaged groups in this country such as women, the aged, lesbians, the poor, the mentally retarded, gay men, and the physically disadvantaged.

Ultimately, though, it is not classes or groups that are oppressed; it is individuals. It is each of us, as it is each and every child, who is being kept in her or his place, made to toe the line, to power the economic juggernaut, to fuel the military machine, to obey the self-serving rules of the oligarchy.

The liberation of the individual from control by the oligarchy is the only sure way to the liberation of children. If boys are to be free to love men in any manner the boy wishes, then we as members and friends of NAMBLA must be willing to assume active roles in the struggle for individual liberation in all of its manifestations.

Our first role would be to become active and open advocates of freedom for all people. We must become vociferous supporters of women's liberation, economic self-determination for people of color, nuclear disarmament (nuclear war being the most sweeping violation of individual liberties) and other issues seemingly not directly related to man/boy love.

Second, we should eschew adherence to political rectitude but in its stead question all authority including our own intentions in our political activities. We should promote discussion and argument on important social issues. This may seem to contradict the first point, but it does not. Unquestioned acceptance of dogma or a party line in areas with which one is politically sympathetic does not provide the environment necessary for growth and needed new perspectives.

Third, special groups should be allowed their own rights of decision and self-expression. For instance, a woman I know took umbrage at a gay man's insistence that homosexual women should be called "gay." Her comment was that all of the homosexual women she knew, herself included, considered themselves and called themselves "lesbian." This is not a minor point but reflects the overall issue of self-determination and self-expression. Identities, names or designations imposed from without are an indication of the attempted imposition of external control.

The need to become aware and involved politically is particularly acute at this time. The involvement of the FBI, postal inspectors and police in trying to entrap us is an example of our government's willingness to restrict and deny personal freedom in the name of what it claims to be the general welfare. These tactics are historically-based. There were, for instance, the internment of the Japanese in the Second World War and the quasi-legal and illegal tactics used to infiltrate, discredit or destroy anti-war and social activist groups in the 60's and 70's, including our

government's destruction of the Black Panther Party using violence and killing. This was strikingly similar to the response to the earlier civil rights movement.

Issues concerning children cry out for political action. When will we insist that the government end its policy of attempted domination of poor, unaligned and "colored" countries with its attendant hideous massacres of children? How long will we permit the continued erosion of social programs whose marginal beneficiaries are those least able to exert political power: the poor, women, the handicapped—and children? We have imposed upon our children a nightmare of nuclear destruction because the proliferation and production of nuclear weapons are good for business: when will we make this planet safe for our children? When will we allow children the right to do with their bodies what they please: to love as they wish, to play as they wish, simply, to live?

We claim to love children. What price are we willing to pay to prove it?

Most of the members of NAMBLA I have known are white, middle-class men and thus relatively isolated from the socioeconomic repression felt by large numbers of people on this planet. We have a responsibility because of our relative freedom of action to the ideal we espouse of complete liberation for children. It cannot come about in a society where short term economic considerations take overwhelming precedence over social concerns. There are many ways of working for a socially responsible society. Minimally, we can wear buttons or use bumper stickers to urge for social change, and we can defend the positions they express. More effective and involved techniques include, but are not limited to, the use of the political system and the ballot box as weapons for change, involvement in local political organizations and contributions of money and time to organizations whose goals are the liberation of all peoples. Extra-legal activities such as tax resistance or support of draft resisters (perhaps by the establishment of "safe houses" or underground railways) are more dangerous but still effective ways of combating a political and social system which is becoming increasingly repressive. Whatever we do, we must begin by articulating the links between a boy's right to determine what he does with his body, young people's rights to greater self-determination, and all individuals' rights to freedom.

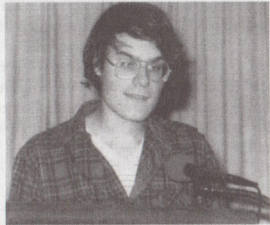
But we must act. Failure to act now only signs the death warrant for individual liberties and guarantees our ultimate enslavement.

Liberation: Participation, Not Passivity

by Bill Andriette

MY HIGH SCHOOL has a Parent-Teacher-Student Association. It is similar in purpose to the PTA in the primary schools, except that for some obscure reason, it was decided to nominally include students. There are no students in it, nor teachers for that matter. It is an organization of mothers, well-intentioned but more or less ineffectual, who worry that their children will smoke pot or have sex or somehow fail to become what children from middle class, suburban communities are supposed to.

The mundane world of parent associations and public schools may seem an odd point of departure for a discussion of youth liberation. To some would-be emancipators of kinderfolk, schools and nuclear families and sometimes human nature are but unfortunate encumbrances to the realization of a liberated, un-lumpen class of consciousness-raised youths.



If through sleight of hand the institutions that stunt children could disappear, then better ones could be built anew. But the bad ones are with us now. An approach to youth liberation ought to at least grudgingly assume the presence of the institutions and work for their improvement, not merely their dissolution. Such an approach would be more pragmatic than doctrinaire. It would offer guidance on how to treat young people without condescension, but without assuming that they are selfless seraphim.

That a need exists for such guidance should be obvious. In case it is not, let us return to the PTSA which, at a recent school board meeting, had its representative speak glowingly about the prospect of its "parent networking project." The PTSA hopes to raise parental awareness about drugs and alcohol and arm adults with the knowledge necessary to detect their use by high school-age children. Planners hope that the concerned mom will not only keep a sharp eye on her own youngsters for the telltale unstable gait and dilated pupils, but that each parent will keep watch over every other's child. And since the group believes education is the key to prevention, it is lobbying for an elementary school program to hit students with the evils of drugs and strong brew at a time when they still might believe what is taught in the classroom.

Seeing no need to involve the students directly in solving the problem, the PTSA seeks not to establish rapport but to assert parental authority over the child. They cannot view the drug problem as anything but a lapse in adult control that can be corrected by dictums passed down from above. By employing well-timed propaganda, they hope to solve a problem with roots deep in our society. The chemical manipulation of the mind is bound to have broad appeal in a culture that encourages escape from problems and views technology as the key to their solution. It is assumed that young people cannot sense this, for their perspective is not given any credence.

Tactics like these underscore the basic problems adults have in dealing with children. Youth, many feel, need to be policed and guided to become human. Much like the colonized, they are assumed to be the passive products of adult rules, which justifies the absence of student participation. More than that, children are an extension of the parent, not individuals but adult chattel. The relationship is not consciously viewed so starkly. There are perceived to be significant areas of concordance between parent and child. But, tellingly, the PTSA sees youths as adversaries who will emerge from high school sober only if cajoled, lied to and watched.



The impotence of children mirrors the powerlessness of society itself *vis-à-vis* the giants that have sprung up within it. We have not created the massive government and corporate structures of our time, so much as we have been created by them. They mold even our self-perception. We are sooner to think of ourselves as consumers than citizens. We know who we are, not by searching within but by gazing at what we have.

Lest we be unsure of our identity, we are bombarded with economic indices and public opinion polls that tell us. Even public opinion is a commodity; no less banal an institution than the television ad has become the prime marketer of both deodorant and politics.

Is it any wonder, then, that adults view children as they do? Locked into a system they cannot control, parents and schools teach the apathy required to function within that system. Childhood is the period of socialization, after all. If schools did not teach the inflexibility of bureaucracy along with chemistry and the Civil War, they would be failures. Parents do not want children with egalitarian zeal any more than corporations do.

Society is generally successful in producing the children it wants. Even the children of the '60s seem to have sowed their wild oats and followed Jerry Rubin into the Wall Street investment house. The students in my high school are not especially alarmed by the PTSA's shenanigans, for they are accustomed to adults working in the students' name without their consent. The school administration may not earn their respect, but it almost always wins their acquiescence, leaving the principal and superintendent to attend to the truly important tasks of placating angry parents and pleasing the school board. Administrators strive for a conflict-free school, a frictionless machine that produces well-adjusted graduates who neither think nor feel too acutely.

In its quest for smooth functioning, the school does not begrudge its more ambitious students avenues to diffuse their political interest. There are student councils and class officerships and even *ad hoc* committees of teachers and administrators to which students are invited. But youth participation is perceived as a generous frill, not a necessity. If a student speaks out in a meaningful way, he or she is probably ignored. More likely, however, the student will toe the administrative line, grateful for having been selected to represent his or her classmates.

It cannot be assumed that by cutting the chains of ageism a force inherent in youth will be liberated—a force that can render administrators useless, transform children into democratic citizens and make drug abuse a thing of the past. Ageism is but one manifestation of the sickness in our society.

Youth liberation, in a comprehensive sense, is impossible in a materialistic, apolitical society which creeps ever closer to nuclear self-destruction. As we fight for sexual freedom, children's rights or women's liberation, it is crucial that we remember the war of which our battle is just one part. The gay and lesbian rights movement, for example, nurtured a spirited debate of sexual mores. But now that the examination of convention has brought the sexuality of children out of the closet, many gay men and lesbians want to thrust it back in. Sad paradoxes arise when we forget that the ultimate aim of our endeavors is a more humane society. The changes we seek are broad and far-reaching, and they will be realized, if at all, by the work of diverse movements with a basic ideological sympathy. The outlook is not hopeless. Who would have thought 15 years ago that a group like NAMBLA could ever exist?

A liberation movement demands rights for the oppressed groups it represents. Implicit is the assumption that oppressed and oppressor are basically alike, regardless of superficial differences. But in the case of children and adults, the differences are more than skin-deep. Merely granting children all the rights and responsibilities of adults would be a profoundly poor way of handling the problem. For there is little to object to in the concept of childhood, only in the way it is realized in our society. Obviously, we need some sort of gradual path into adulthood; we cannot reinvent civilization every generation.

If childhood is the period of socialization, then it ought to employ those techniques that will result in the most responsible adult citizens. People tend to treat others as they themselves are treated. A compassionate citizenry cannot be created from children who are beaten when they break the rules. Hate cannot be a means to love, nor irresponsibility a means to responsibility. Yet our society denies children any chance to be socially useful, gives them little experience in democratically-run institutions, and withholds from them power even over their own bodies, expecting all the while to produce industrious, democratic, responsible adults.

Pragmatism is not the only justification for liberating children. As human beings, children deserve basic human rights which, fundamentally, include the rights to food, shelter, education and medical care. The West has the resources to provide materially for its youth. It needs to concentrate on other areas as well.

Children cannot be excluded from society's social, economic or political life. They must have consequence as more than just consumers; they must be respected as individuals and ought to be expected to respect others in return. They have a right to satisfy their emotional needs in structures other than the nuclear family, to control their sexual lives, and to be free from circumcisions, clitoridectomies and other bodily mutila-

tion imposed without consent. Children have a right to read what they wish, to speak out and be heard. They have a right to schools that do not withhold political experience or encourage racism and sexism. Most of all, children have a right to grow into responsible adults.

An age-blind society is not the goal; one in which a person's age does not radically affect the way he or she is treated is. The differences between a seven-year-old and a 37-year-old are too great not to be articulated in social policy. Age restrictions on motor vehicle operations or voting rights should be tolerated. To let drivers be of any age would expose people to a probable danger. To leave voting unrestricted would be putting forth a woefully attenuated definition of citizenship in which the voter's duties could be carried out without even the guidance of much experience.

But society has erred on the side of restriction in its dealing with youth. A view of children as something less than human has been the backdrop to a host of oppressive measures that have showed neither young people nor adults at their best. Any improvement demands not just the humanization of childhood, but a shift toward a rational and just society.

NAMBLA JOURNAL SIX (1983), Pgs. 6-7.



Educating Ourselves: Toward A Feminist Position for Boy Lovers*

by Camilla

ACCORDING TO David Finkelhor of the University of New Hampshire's Family Violence Research Program, it is now thought that 10% of all American girls are molested by male family members, about one percent by fathers or stepfathers.¹ (My own experience in talking with women convinces me that the incidence of rape by the fathers/stepfathers is far higher than that. It should be noted that in these incest situations molestation most frequently includes sexual intercourse.) Over half of these cases involve physical force as well as verbal coercion. In 40% of all cases, rape is repeated rather than a single event, typically starting when the child is 10 or 11 years old. Outside the home, another 10% of all girls are also sexually attacked or harassed in various ways, from exhibitionism to rape. But the majority of men who rape girls do so at home. Most of these assailants are not pedophiles. Their behavior is based upon accessibility rather than sexual preference. The home thus becomes a trap where daughters are regarded as a sexual preserve, sometimes one daughter after another being utilized as older ones escape by running away or marrying.

What does it mean that one-fifth of all American women had unwanted, unpleasant sexual contact as children? Rape is only one easily identifiable extreme of a basic approach to women and to sex. It is important to grasp that even exhibitionism, to take another form of nonconsensual sexual involvement, can be traumatic, because exhibitionists (not all, of course) perform in a very hostile, aggressive manner, sometimes to such an extent that it is impossible to distinguish between

***Editor's Note:** Although some feminist researchers have found that the statistics quoted in the first paragraphs of this article are highly inflated and factually misleading, the essentials of the article are not in dispute. Some excellent studies of girls' experiences are: Allie C. Kilpatrick, *Long-range Effects of Child and Adolescent Sexual Experiences: Myths, Mores, and Menaces* (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1992); John Gagnon, "Female Child Victims of Sexual Offenses," *Social Problems*, 13 (1965), pp.176-192; and Michael C. Baurmann, *Sexualität, Gewalt und Folgen* (Wiesbaden, Bundeskriminalamt, 1983), which includes a summary in English at pages 523-534. Baurmann's summary is also available at <<http://www.nambla.org/baurmann.htm>>.

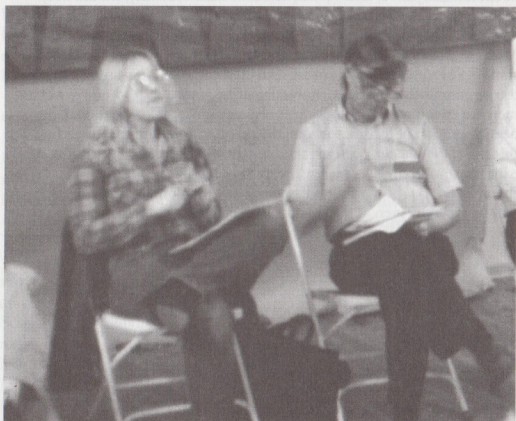
exhibitionism and an intent to attack except by context, e.g., an isolated location versus the very public locations many exhibitionists prefer. It's easy to dismiss such experiences if they've never happened to you, especially with the widespread acceptance of the myth of these men's passivity. They may be "passive" compared to rapists, but that still leaves room for a lot of threatening, abusive behavior. Half the women I know had at least one experience like this as a child or teenager; few reported it at the time, out of embarrassment. Few would define it as "molestation," but many experienced it as very frightening, an unexpected attack by an adult upon a child. While a single such experience is unlikely to damage a child's personality, it will undoubtedly contribute to that child's perception of men as dangerous and irrational, a deeply rooted perception in almost all women.

Male Smugness on Sex

It is not a perception that comes out of thin air. Having lived a lifetime as a woman, I become extremely impatient with instances of male smugness about sex issues. In the Summer, 1980 *Semiotext(e)*, NAMBLA spokesperson David Thorstad said, "Women who know nothing at all about man/boy love, and very little about male sexuality, should keep quiet and learn from those of us who do know what we're talking about. The erect cock is not a weapon of torture, but an instrument of pleasure." Much as Thorstad has contributed to the general good and the understanding of some areas of human sexuality, this remark is unfortunately all too representative of the entirely subjective approach to their sex acts men are encouraged to adopt. It is also nonsense. The erect cock has been a weapon of torture to women, and often to children, throughout history. This is a perspective men bluntly reject as beside the point, an exaggeration, the view of a few fanatics, because it is not the way men see themselves. But in a "civilized" society in which one out of three women will be raped by men at some point in their lives, and in which the threat of attack is a perpetual burden and limitation on all women, such a statement is not merely untrue, but downright bizarre. Rapists don't rape with their elbows, they use their cocks. And rapists are average guys. Nothing psychologically abnormal can be found in most of them because in a patriarchy, *rape is an act that fits in with the average guy's psyche just fine*. Even leaving a generous margin for the repeater, and the genuinely deviant "sex maniac" of song and story, it seems logical to suppose that if one-third of all American women get raped, at least one-fifth of all American men have raped women. How many men understand this depressingly basic aspect of "male sexuality"—that is to say, male acculturation? Very few, judged by the indignant protestations when it is suggested that male sexual behavior is not all that it should be.

Women definitely do not know all there is to know about male sexuality, but neither do men. Telling women to just shut up about what

we know is certainly one ancient and respected way of dealing with male image problems. But it is not good enough for me and not for NAMBLA. Women should listen to boy-lovers. And boy-lovers should listen to women. One of the most important things a man can learn about his society is that his experience is only half the story. Women's lives are totally different from men's. We live with the knowledge that at any moment any male stranger (or worse, acquaintance) may assert his culture-given rights over all women by harassment or physical aggression. A city woman counts herself lucky if the day passes without some form of street hassle. This is a way of life men cannot even conceive of unless they themselves are targets for street abuse, for example if they are black or obviously gay. Even then men may be left alone out of fear of retaliation, and men have retreats—ghettos—where they can expect to walk around largely unmolested by whites or straights. There are no female ghettos. We live our whole lives in occupied territory. The effect on women's self-image, world view and behavior is profound; and so is the effect on men, accustomed to a universe in which over half the adult population is wary and comparatively deferential in their presence.



Pat Califia and Tom Reeves dialog on issues of gender, age, and sexuality at a NAMBLA conference, New York, 1987.

A Wide Cultural Gap

It's hard to know where one should start in trying to communicate a cultural gap most of us acknowledge superficially without any real concept of its depth or breadth. Remember how it felt to be dependent as a child — imagine what it would be feel like to be told and trained that that dependence was to be your natural life-long state; that you could do nothing for yourself, ever, but must wait for a real adult — *i.e.*, a man — to do it for you, and pass the proceeds of his work, the largesse of his approval, on to you second-hand. Imagine learning to say “no” effectively when you have been told all your life in a thousand ways that your will is meaningless, and expressing it *the* cardinal sin; imagine learning, for that matter, to say “yes.” Many children learn that they must please adults first and foremost; but imagine being taught that this is your life work. You will never grow up; your job will be to please the grown-up in your life, who will make the decisions about where you will live and how, whether you may take a job in addition to your household chores for room and board, even what kind of food you will eat. And women are, of course, encouraged to look as young as possible, and may be called “girl” to their dying day. It shouldn't be surprising if feminists and other women identify strongly with children, distrust “the grown-ups”—men—and disbelieve sudden stories of children being capable of making their own decisions. This certainly isn't the story they've gotten all their lives from the patriarchy, and due to the almost inconceivably deep cultural split between males and females, it definitely is not their experience of childhood, especially of childhood interactions with men. I can't think how to get across to men how utterly helpless and victimized girls are *taught* to be, even though some rebel. It's in your “girl” costume: useless for anything but sitting still. It's in all your role models: they constantly act placatory and the most frequent activity they undertake on TV is to scream while being attacked. It's in your school: girls are “counseled” persistently into the least demanding (read least prestigious) careers possible. Things are beginning to change, but slowly. Most girls are still raised to feel guilty at the slightest expression of self-will.

And most boys are still raised to think that's good and proper, to step right into the role of grown-up (child molester?) in a relationship with a woman. The policing that women help perform with regard to man/boy love is only a shadow of the policing of women's lives still automatically performed by the high percentage of violent, abusive, or merely contemptuous or condescending men produced by patriarchy. It is this experience of men from which women attempt to protect children. The female cultural view of vast unequal power, remember, is not just a childhood attitude women stick to from docility or convention; it is reinforced throughout our lives upon our individual persons by individual

males. No social sanctions such as those against women can be maintained without force: formal, as in police violence against the early suffragettes and modern-day lesbians, poor women and prostitutes in the U.S., and legal death penalties for female extramarital sex throughout the Middle East today, but even more importantly, informal and institutionalized, accepted as in the day-to-day bullying of women. It is not so much that sanctions against women are more subtle than those against boy-lovers, but rather that they are so accepted and common as to attract no notice, and that in America they are now enforced more by vigilantes than by the courts.

Pedophilia vs. Sexual Abuse

It is this "normal, everyday, standard" *accepted* position of women, *not* pedophilia, which is the root and cause of sexual abuse of girls, and this should be of crucial importance to NAMBLA's analysis. Pedophilia is rare. Sexual abuse of girls is appallingly common. In the abuse scenario, the man simply sees the girl as a smaller, less powerful version of the woman he has been brought up to expect access to and power over. He is not sexually drawn to her because she is a child; she is simply a female within his reach who cannot reject him. The pedophile, on the other hand, is sexually and romantically attracted to children. One would expect, given these two dynamics, very different approaches to relations with children. The abusive adult would care very little about the child's feelings towards him. The pedophile, though, would be as anxious as age-peer lovers are not to arouse disgust, anger, fear, or any other negative feeling. It would be an interesting distinction to apply in whatever research is going on. Even allowing for the obvious cases of overlap in the two categories various degrees of caring incest, for instance, and those adults who are decidedly pedophilic, yet who coerce, injure, or murder children, analogous to heterosexual men who attack women) I suspect that a clearly dichotomous pattern would emerge. Due to the extreme penalties that attach to active pedophile relations in the U.S., research that would include representative members of good relationships (necessarily secret) probably cannot be done here, so results will invariably be skewed toward bizarre or harmful behavior.

One way to correct for this skew might be to approach a research project with the child's point of view in mind. Under categories of incestuous and non-incestuous events, cases should be divided into two further categories, depending on whether the child's feelings about the relations were primarily negative or primarily positive. In this way some clarity might emerge on two divergent types of child-adult sex, even though the actual numbers of examples would still be heavily weighted, toward the police-psychiatric axis, what might be called the intervention bias. Complaints by children are a major initiating step in bringing child-

adult sex to the attention of authorities, though police and laws tend more and more toward harassment of non-complaining sexually active youths. But while intervention mechanisms such as police entrapment bring to light some consensual relationships, it must be assumed that the majority of relationships that the child finds pleasurable and rewarding go unrecorded. Clarence Osborne's arrest and immediate suicide at age 61 brought to light carefully kept records of relations with 2,500 boys, not one of whom ever complained. All of his partners who were later interviewed as adults are said to have spoken of him with affection.² While the number of his relationships is unusual, it does give some indication of how likely it is for pleasant child-adult sex to go unnoticed by a society that forces it to remain secretive. From research available today, I predict that another dichotomous pattern would also emerge, showing boys having a far higher percentage of pleasant sex than girls. Correctly analyzing the interrelationship of these two dichotomies is one contribution an educated NAMBLA might make to the understanding of sexual dynamics.

Man-Boy and Man-Girl Relations

One particularly knotty aspect of pedophile-child relations is the undeniable fact that in some cases sexual approaches or activity perceived by the pedophile as caring and good are perceived by the child as abusive or unpleasant. Some of this discrepancy is the result of the insensitivity to others men are allowed to grow up with. Due to their position at the top of the power hierarchy, men as a class are not able to relate well to feelings of severe powerlessness and to the indirect means of the communication the powerless often employ to avoid that direct assertion of will for which they have been routinely punished. Men feel relatively powerful in society and so tend to suppose that children share that feeling. The truth lies in the middle, with boys tending to feel much more powerful than women suppose, but girls tending to feel much more powerless than men suppose. This is also generally true of eagerness for sex, due to the differing results of sexual activity and intimacy for boys and girls, and the key role of assertiveness in good sex. Thus man/girl sex relations present the greatest possibilities for misunderstanding that would lead to unintentional power abuse. These relationships are also at a disadvantage in that men are carefully taught to discount female statements of all types. The relevant archetype here has to be Freud, who, rather than accept the threat of damage to his male complacency from case after case of young girls who reported being assaulted by men, developed the ingenious ideas of female hysteria, penis envy, and the female desire to be raped. Such a pathological level of denial, prevalent as it is in half the population, cannot but have severe effects on all human communication and especially on sexual expectations. Boy-

lovers are not immune; confronted with the blatant case of the kidnaping of Steven Stayner, NAMBLA printed an article which, to my mind, attempted to present an unflattering view of Stayner's character.³

Then too, many men remain ignorant of basic physiological facts and believe that any genital contact must be physically pleasurable to anyone. In addition, sensations prior to orgasm can be so tender and loving that it is difficult to remember that they are purely *subjective* — that is, there is an illusion that such strong feelings must be shared by the partner, when in fact the partner may be having an entirely different experience. Men are certainly not alone in failure to distinguish between their own feelings those of others, but their upbringing has left them particularly ill-equipped to recognize and respond to signals of discomfort from others. Men have not generally been brought up to take care of other people's feelings.

Another factor in child-adult relations is that most children have not yet had a chance to reject the sex-negative training they have been subjected to, which leaves any sexual topic or activity laden with guilt and fear. However, since no one expects an overnight rearrangement of our sexual mores, and since a child's perception of a sexual contact must be the bottom line if anyone is to take seriously the avowed benign intent of pedophile activity, pedophiles must accept an extra-ordinary responsibility for educating themselves about children, knowing each individual, and understanding the dynamics of both positive *and* negative child-adult sex experiences.

Learning: From Oneself and Others

To this end, men must become aware of their own history. They must fill in those profound gaps in their understanding of the world which arises from the master/slave relationships they have maintained toward women and children since the beginning of recorded history. This is not a simple task but neither is it impossible, particularly with the wealth of information available to men today. If it is hard to accept the view of one's own oppressive behavior as seen from beneath, it is also a million times more rewarding to open up to another universe of perceptions than to close down one's own sensibilities in order to remain "comfortable." And in any case the result of this latter strategy is never comfort but only a slow stifling. Risk is vital to human growth; there is no expansion without openness, no openness without vulnerability. As long as men close up like mimosa leaves at the first hint of criticism or unpleasantness, vast realms of knowledge and experience, love, pleasure and understanding will also be closed — not closed *to* them, but closed *out by* them. Male pedophiles have valuable knowledge that is unthinkingly rejected by society. They must grasp the concept of similar, and even greater, bodies of knowledge they themselves reject. If bonding with other

freedom fighters is essential to NAMBLA's survival as a group, it is also essential on a personal level—the level at which political change really occurs.

A very little homework would go far toward cementing impressions of NAMBLA as a group conscious of parallel struggles and in solidarity with them. Child molestation is an issue crucial to NAMBLA, yet how many members bother to inform themselves on it? It is no more a myth than any other forms of child abuse epidemic in America, but there is a tendency in NAMBLA to suggest that most child molestation figures are explained by police agency misrepresentation of consensual relationships. This is flatly not the case. Nor is it sufficient to keep repeating that most molestation is heterosexual, as if that automatically rendered it irrelevant to NAMBLA.

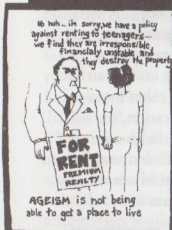
To understand any man's position in this society it is essential to look at and understand the position of women and girls. It is inescapable that what some women are saying about NAMBLA is simply what the patriarchy has taught them: not only its false lessons about the feebleness and mindlessness of children and the harmful nature of sex per se (though make no mistake, sex is arranged to be harmful to women under this system), but its true lessons of *experience* of the violence, selfishness and callousness—the excess of willfulness—inculcated by it in men. The woman-hating culture does not pass over men who love boys. Ninety-nine male boy-lovers out of a hundred can read *The Asbestos Diary* and simply *not notice* its misogyny—a fear on a par with not noticing a brontosaurus in your back yard. This is what growing up under patriarchy does to *all* men's perceptions. Male boy-lovers, just like other men, participate in preferential employment, promotion, education, the emotional security of belonging to a superior caste, and the thousand little advantages (clothes not specifically designed to self-destruct, for instance) given them in the male-oriented culture. Men who want to disclaim responsibility for the system that benefits them so materially cannot do so through peevish claims of innocence that sound all too like the protests of millions of WWII Germans who never personally harmed a Jew. The only way to be innocent of this



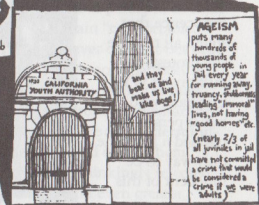
system is to disavow it; to declare open hostility to a concept of human property, the emotional traffic in women and girls that continues in all our minds, in all our crass or subtle actions and attitudes. "But what," asks the eternal liberal, "can we do? Sexism isn't NAMBLA's issue; we don't have enough resources to include anything so vast in our central area of interest." Perfectly true. But within our limited scope several very undemanding courses of action could be implemented. Some can be actions of forbearance, requiring no investment beyond a bit of teeth-grinding.

For example I would like to hear a lot less bitching about "the feminists" and see evidence of a lot more listening. I would also like to see a lot more acknowledgment — without that unfortunate note of extolling the good niggers as opposed to "those awful feminists" — of the many prominent feminist women who publicly support boy-lovers (I can think of half a dozen without even trying — can you?) There is an upsurge of interest in child sexual abuse issues within NAMBLA which I would like to see fostered; it is much easier to show you are not doing something if you know what that thing actually is, and the average

AGEISM IS:



AGEISM is not having the power to determine the course of our lives. AGEISM denies us the rights and respect of full human beings.



Joel Andreas, in the defunct FPS, a magazine of young people liberation.

NAMBLA member's *tabula rasa* state on the subject of abuse makes us vulnerable to ludicrous errors and non-comprehension of major points when we try to debate it. I would like to think boy-lovers could pick up from NAMBLA at least the rudiments of improved attitudes toward women to share with their younger friends. Above all, I would like to see a constant awareness that when feminists distrust NAMBLA they do so not out of some arbitrary, causeless "man-hating" fixation,⁴ but out of a long and bitter history of experience with men's treatment of female children and female adults. Until this distrust is seen as reasonable and valid it cannot be met in a radical manner.

I want to see, in short, an end to the system's success in pitting one abused group against another, a success measured every bit as much in NAMBLA's hostility to "the feminists" as in some feminists' hostility to NAMBLA. When we see prisoners beating up other prisoners at the instigation of authorities, we know who to blame. When we see women, feminists, gays hastening to help batter NAMBLA with legal sanctions and media assault, we must be equally alert to the actual power behind the attack, never losing sight of the one crucial fact: that the government and media are still firmly in the control of rich straight men. And that they love to look down and see us skirmishing with each other around the base of their monolithic structure. If we throw our emotional dynamite in their direction for a change, we just might bring the whole damn thing crashing down—or at least take a few healthy chips out of its foundations. To engage in any "she hit me first" dilly-dallying in this process is only to mimic the anti-disarmament tactics we all know and love on the global level. And if we're going to stop *that* one, we have no time to trail along in their footsteps. We are on the side of life against the forces of death, and all our combined knowledge and good will are going to be needed to come out of this struggle alive.

Notes:

¹ Leonard H. Gross, ed., *The Parents' Guide to Teenagers* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1981).

² "As a Community, We Are Terrified of Paedophilia": An Interview with Author Paul Wilson," *Gay Community News* (Melbourne, Australia), Vol. 3, No. 7 (September, 1981); and John Edgar, "Paedophilia: Where to from Here?" *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (February, 1982).

³ *NAMBLA News*, No. 4 (Dec. 1980/Jan. 1981), p. 14.

⁴ Gene D., "Nuances," *NAMBLA Bulletin*, Vol. 3, No. 8 (October, 1982), p. 6.

FORUM

We reprint below a section of the Libertarian Party platform which concerns the rights of young people.

Children's Rights

Children are human beings and, as such, have all the rights of human beings.

We oppose all laws that empower government officials to seize children and make them "wards of the state" or, by means of child labor laws and compulsory education, to infringe on their freedom to work or learn as they choose. We oppose all legally created or sanctioned discrimination against (or in favor of) children, just as we oppose government discrimination directed at any other artificially defined sub-category of human beings. Specifically we oppose ordinances that outlaw adults-only apartments.

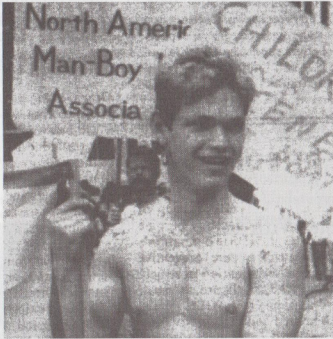
We also support the repeal of all laws establishing any category of crimes applicable to children for which adults would not be similarly answerable, such as curfew, smoking, and alcoholic beverage laws, and other status offenses. Similarly, we favor the repeal of "stubborn child" laws and laws establishing the category of "persons in need of supervision." We call for an end to the practice in many states of jailing children not accused of any crime. We seek the repeal of all "children's codes" of statutes which abridge due process protections for young people. We further favor the abolition of the juvenile court system, so that juveniles will be held fully responsible for their crimes.

Whenever parents or other guardians are unable or unwilling to care for their children, those guardians have the right to seek other persons who are willing to assume guardianship, and children have the right to seek other guardians who place a higher value on their lives. Accordingly, we oppose all laws that impede these processes, notably those restricting private adoption services or those forcing children to remain in the custody of their parents against their will.

Children should always have the right to establish their maturity by assuming the administration and protection of their own rights, ending dependency upon their parents or other guardians and assuming all the responsibilities of adulthood.

The NAMBLA Bulletin, Vol. 7, No. 5 (June, 1986), Pg. 10.

Oppression & Struggle



CSW vs. NAMBLA: The Rage Of Consent

by Scott O'Hara

Reprinted from *Gay Community News* (Boston, MA)
July 20, 1986.

I am a gay male, 25 years old. From age 12, I actively sought out contact with gay men, especially for sex. Although I did fantasize about my peers, it was always older gay men who taught me — not only about sex, but about being proud of myself, being socially aware and compassionate — in short all the things that my conservative, deeply religious (and loving) parents could not teach me. These men, throughout my teen years, ranged from 28 to 58 — and I am grateful to

each of them for taking a risk with me. I don't think I understood at the time how severe the risk was; I'm starting to learn. It wasn't limited to legal risk. They risked being shunned and called "scum" and "child molester" by other gay men and lesbians. I know; I've now marched in the Gay/Lesbian Freedom Day Parades with NAMBLA, and both times have been hissed and booed by men and women who should have known better.

Were none of these people ever teenaged, gays and alone? Am I the only gay person to have learned a sense of identity from a 50-year-old man — who just happened to be great sex as well?

Does the gay community have collective amnesia? From the reactions of Christopher St. West, one would think so. Intergenerational love "is not a gay issue?" Think again, CSW. Or more accurately, think. Think about your own pasts, and the lonely present of our future generation. Think about how much love a gay youth needs, so that he does not grow up hating himself. And think about learning a little more about love.

The NAMBLA Bulletin, Vol. 7, No. 7 (Sept., 1986), Pg. 10.

The Trouble With Harry

by John Fish

LOS ANGELES - On June 22, mounted police surrounded pioneer gay activist Harry Hay, responding to the complaint of a group that objected to a sign Hay wore on his back that expressed support for the rights of a gay group.

Where did this occur? It happened in West Hollywood, widely hailed as America's first "gay city." It was West Hollywood police that surrounded Hay.

What kind of group would have done this to the founder of the Mattachine Society and the Radical Faeries, one of the major subjects of the motion picture "Word Is Out" and Grand Marshall of this year's gay pride parade in Long Beach, California?

No, it wasn't the moral majority, or the followers of Lyndon LaRouche. The group that called the police on Harry Hay for the "crime" of wearing a sign supportive of the rights of gay people was Christopher Street West, the pride-for-profit organization that stages the most over-commercialized



Hay Speaks at a NAMBLA-Sponsored Forum in Southern California, 1986

and exploitative commemoration of the Stonewall Riots anywhere.

What did the sign say that prompted CSW to call in those armed, billyclub toting police on the 78-year-old Hay? It read, "NAMBLA WALKS WITH ME."

Hay was protesting CSW's exclusion of NAMBLA (the North American Man Boy Love Association) from the Los Angeles parade. Acting in the spirit of German pastor Martin Niemoller, who fought the rise to power of Nazism, Hay knew that if CSW excluded NAMBLA and he did not speak out, there might not be anyone left to speak out for Hay's groups when CSW tried to exclude them. He did not know how soon that attempt would come.

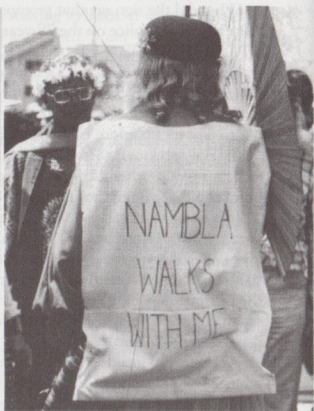
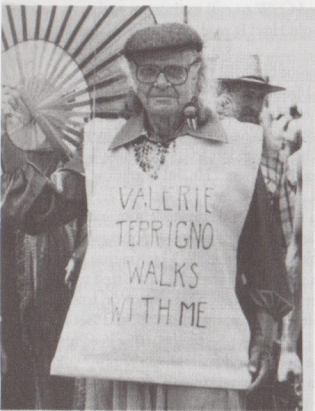
In a letter to a local gay newspaper, CSW president Sam Haws and Parade Chairperson Pat Underwood defended their police action against Hay as necessary because Hay had broken a rule of CSW's by wearing the sign. CSW's rules state that every sign in "their" parade be submitted to the censorship panel for approval prior to the parade. They went on to say that allowing Hay in the parade with an unapproved sign would "set a dangerous precedent."

At the board meeting following the parade and festival, CSW announced their intention to send Hay a "letter of reprimand" for engaging in political activity during a gay pride parade. According to CSW's attorney Tracy Jordan, in a July 9 interview with Update reporter Stuart Timmons, "...it upset me when people used this event for those kind of political purposes."

On August 2, a dozen women and men gathered outside the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, site of CSW's annual awards dinner, to protest CSW's policies and actions. Inside the hotel, CSW President Sam Haws gave News editor Sandy Dwyer his group's view of their treatment of Hay and exclusion of NAMBLA. "We don't see it as a gay issue."

While most gay media in Southern California have given some coverage to this event, none has given it the front page, banner headline treatment it would receive had the offending group been outside the gay community. In *Frontiers*, a gay publication owned by CSW board Member Bob Craig, the event received no mention whatsoever.

The NAMBLA Bulletin, Vol. 7, No. 7 (Sept., 1986), Pg. 11.



Hay: A Man of Principle



Protesters Defend Free Speech and Gay Solidarity

Runaway Children and the Right to Choose

from the *New York Times* editorial page, March 29, 1986

In the name of protecting young people from exploitation, a Justice Department advisory panel recommends secure detention as the answer to the runaway problem. That answer was abandoned over a decade ago, and for excellent reasons, all of which still hold true. That we should even consider a return to this strategy is a measure of the strength of the frequently misguided "missing children movement" and its grip on the American public.

Jailing runaways benefits no one. It occupies valuable space in facilities made for adult criminals. It is expensive — more than twice the cost of housing a youth in a runaway shelter. It is also, at best, only a temporary solution to the immediate problem — unless the state plans to detain runaways until adulthood, at which point they will presumably be free from the danger of the street.

More importantly, secure detention fails to address the problems that cause kids to run away. What the recommendation ignores is that most runaways are running from serious family problems, including sexual abuse, physical violence and alcoholism. Locking them up for their "protection" will only foster contempt for the justice system's indifference to their needs, as well as an unconscious dependency upon that system to resolve crises (welfare, etc.).

A runaway episode will not be resolved until the runaway has been empowered with an effective strategy for coping with his home life.

The popular concern for "missing children" has been preoccupied with protecting children from nameless dangers outside the home. Safety programs concentrate on identifying "strangers," as though this were the most likely source of abduction and sexual abuse. Research shows that the overwhelming majority of child abductions are perpetrated by noncustodial parents, and child sexual abuse is most commonly performed by a trusted friend or relative of the victim,

While there was never a good reason for linking the problems of abducted children and runaways, the vague and misused term "missing children" has come to include both. Consequently, the concern over our stranger-endangered children has been translated into a belief that runaways are being unreasonably and irresistibly drawn into the dangers of street life, and that the only way to protect them is to lock them up.

This is not protection, it is punishment, and will do nothing constructive toward the goal of preventing future runaways. Runaways and their families need more than an enforced reunion. They need help resolving the problems that caused a child to take the drastic step of leaving home in the first place.

The NAMBLA Bulletin, Vol. 7, No. 6 (July/August, 1986), Pg. 4.

Children: The Missing and the Gay

from the *Bay Area Reporter*, May 15, 1986

Children are now being fingerprinted in shopping malls and being told in school that they must be aware of lurking strangers who might kidnap them. Your utility bill and milk cartons are showing photographs of missing children. One public bus advertisement depicts a man driving by a school, peering at a child on a street corner.

Who are these lurking strangers? Not "normal" people. The implication is clear that they could be somehow weird. Out of their ignorance, some perceive that gay men — thought to be instinctively "child molesters" — are the lurking strangers. In Miami, Anita Bryant told the public that it must "save our children" from the homosexual who preys on youth. A public lacking any intelligent sex education believed it — although our well-researched facts stressed that 90 percent of the adult-child sex contacts are between heterosexual relatives and friends.

Last week the *Wall Street Journal*, not exactly a radical publication, had the courage to try to make sense out of the latest campaign to save our children. It editorialized that the current "missing children" campaign distorts the facts and creates hysteria. It accused the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children of itself exploiting children by placing the emphasis on the lurking stranger.

When young Adam Walsh was abducted from a Florida shopping mall in 1980, his relatives united to launch a campaign to find him, similar to a campaign launched here to find Kevin Collins. This nucleus blossomed into a giant operation with a toll free telephone number. In order to raise funds, the center pleaded that 50,000 children were missing each year. They recently dropped that blown-up estimate to a more realistic 4,000. That is still a very small figure when one considers how many millions of children there are in this country.

The *Journal* reveals that only 1/100th of one percent of the missing children are abducted by strangers, less than the number who are hit by moving vehicles.

The truth is that 90 percent of the "missing children" are runaways, children fleeing the mental and physical abuse of the all-American nuclear family. One wonders how many of them were leaving situations where their lesbian and gay leanings were unacceptable.

One of the saddest aspects of the crusade is that 750 dairies and over 100 utility companies have made themselves look good by displaying the faces of missing children and advertising companies are giving free space to the effort. Insurance companies have even jumped on the bandwagon,

offering "missing children" insurance, fully aware that the chance of an abduction is less than the odds on a child being hit by a car.

Dr. Benjamin Spock believes the new children crusade damages children themselves. He vigorously opposes the displays and instructions in schools about lurking strangers, complete with fingerprinting. The *Journal* agrees: "Children are pretty robust and put up with a lot of things, including milk-carton pictures, but at the same time they have enough troubles of their own without constant reminders of a danger as remote as it is tragic. Experts say that the remote threat of child abduction does not justify the potential danger to young children's psyches posed by the present hysteria."

Gay people are not immune from this "missing children" hysteria. The lack of sex education in this country and the confusion about homosexuality are more universal than the experience with Anita Bryant in Miami. The vicious attempts to close down the operation of the North American Man/Boy [Love] Association illustrate how deep the hysteria has become. Which brings us to a related subject — the neglected gay child, who sometimes runs away out of desperation.

The gay movement offers no solace to the gay child, The movement continues to live in fear of identifying with gay children or to offer them funding, counseling or even compassion. We continue to repeat the cycle of neglect that damaged our own early lives. In order to maintain respectability and stay in City Hall we have chosen to shun gay youth. The only group that relates to gay youth (NAMBLA) has been illegally and unjustly attacked by government authorities. It finds no support from our movement.

Parents and the gay movement are still afraid of the sexuality of children although the psychologist will tell you that children are sexual from birth. Our overall fear, beyond the rejection of speaking out, is a denial of sex itself, that somehow it is wrong, immoral, impure. Yes, sexual guilt is still with us.

Children are of their own world. And they will become runaways if they must do so to retain their self-respect and independence. How many of us have forgotten that we once wished our parents had followed a philosophy of Kahlil Gibran set forth so beautifully:

"Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself. They come through you but not from you. And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you."

The NAMBLA Bulletin, Vol. 7, No. 6 (July/August, 1986), Pg. 4.

From "The Prophet"

by **Kahlil Gibran**

And a woman who held a babe against her
bosom said, Speak to us of Children.

And he said:

Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life's
longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you,

And though they are with you yet they belong
not to you.

You may give them your love but not your
thoughts,

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not
to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with
yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as
living arrows are sent forth.

— Kahlil Gibran.

The NAMBLA Bulletin, Vol. 6, No. 4 (May, 1985), Pg. 12.

Reflections



Sex Tours: Why Sex Isn't the Issue

by Roger Moody

A country only interests me if numerous occasions to fornicate present themselves.

IS THIS SOME UNSCRUPULOUS PEDERAST speaking, clasping a hot ticket to the Philippines in his hand?

No. It is a Nobel laureate, a sexual radical, and a fervent anti-colonialist. André Gide made the remark at the beginning of his *Egyptian Notebooks*, first published in the 40's in French, but never translated into English.

Gide was among the first to expose his country's outrageous treatment of native peoples in the Congo and Chad, and he condemned French imperialism in North Africa in no uncertain terms. Does he manage to reconcile this sensitivity to Third World exploitation with his passion for boys?

Perhaps he does. After all, he only took kids to bed, didn't he? (Or to judge from his intimate writings, he only took the "elfin, sweet" 12-year-old male to bed while he was in Africa; the Arab youngsters of Egypt he touched up in a hotel garden and on the banks of the Nile.) Certainly he never beat them, bartered them as slaves, or separated them from their parents. And didn't they really want it anyway? Why, they were "as importunate as flies" on the outskirts of Cairo.¹ They vied with each other to carry his bags into the sand dunes overlooking Biskra.

I have a problem writing off Gide's "touro-pedophilia" as easily as that. As several of his biographers have pointed out, his boy-loving really was different abroad than it was at home. The psychiatrist Jean Delay is certainly wrong to assume Gide could only have sex with brown-skinned boys, reserving his passion for bourgeois children of the cold North.² But the one non-Caucasian he seems to have really loved, and the only one he wanted to bring back to France — Ahmed of the early days — appears to have played no sexual role in his life. All the others were casual acquaintances: they picked him up, got paid in pennies, and he rarely saw them again.

Should Gide have brought them back to his country home in Cuverville? Should he have "adopted" them throughout his foreign stays? Since they were, after all, a good part of his reason for writing, should he have given them part of the rights in his books?

Or, quite simply, should he have stayed away altogether?

These questions are of burning relevance at the present time. The Sri Lanka government has tried to banish boy-lovers, at least from hotels and guest houses. The Filipino government has put up a cosmetic front against pederasts, but otherwise ignored them and gone for the kids. There have been major studies of boy prostitution in Colombia and Morocco, albeit colloquial rather than rigidly sociological.³ And there has of course been Tim Bond, hawking his horror stories of child abuse around Europe and the United Nations, and provoking major anti-pedophile campaigns from the Swiss *Terre des Hommes* and the British Minority Rights Group.

In response, the French gay newspaper *Gai Pied* has taken up the cause of boy-lovers. Switzerland's SAP (Schweizerische Arbeitsgemeinschaft Padophilie — Swiss Pedophile Workgroup) debated the issue with *Terre des Hommes* in the press. Both the British Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) and Dutch *Jeugdemancipatie*

workgroup's journal NIKS dealt with the topic at length.

In the middle of the controversy has been PAN/Spartacus, the Netherlands-based publishing company which produces both the *Spartacus Gay Guide* and PAN magazine. More than a year ago, Spartacus founder John Stamford railed against the "ugly" boy-lovers who had turned Oriental paradises into dens of vice and exploitation. His attack both fed, and deftly preempted, the child protection lobbies' arguments. Now the *Spartacus Gay Guide* no longer points its readers to poverty-stricken beauty spots, where youngsters will drop their trousers for a rupee or a pack of cigarettes. But as critics have pointed out, this is hardly necessary, considering the extent to which Stamford himself opened up these vistas in the first place.

I think I have read almost all there is from the boy-lovers' side on the subject, and can make only one moderately surprising conclusion: there is no "boy-lover's" case as such, either for or against hustling in the Third World. Instead, there are virtually as many perspectives as there are pedophiles who have been abroad. These range from the thoroughly conceited views of Guido Franco in his scurrilous *Desert Patrol*,⁴ through the frankly hedonistic recollections of a U.S. GI in South-East Asia,⁵ to the *nolo tangere* ("hands off at any cost") of radical Dutch pedophiles, and the tortuous ambiguities of Tony Duvert.

Duvert is worth more than a passing mention, if only because he is the most important "practicing" boy-lover writing today. A copious series of his, called "L'Amour en visite" ("Love on a visit") recently ended in *Gai Pied*.⁶ In it, he succeeded in castigating not only Tim Bond and French TV, but those boy-lovers who go overseas for cheap thrills—and those who don't, for suspect reasons. As he points out, the rejection of clammy, disease-ridden, "underdeveloped" lands, with their teeming, hapless, snotty-nosed juvenile masses, can be distinctly racist.

On the other hand, Duvert writes: "All my life I never thought that the lovers of young boys could treat them with contempt, with off-handedness ... I believed that pedophile love was *different* and I'd seen for myself that it could transform the most mischievous of men. I was wrong. I see dirty skunks who blandly tuck into kids and who come away quite proud of having purchased their asshole, cock, or having had them at a low price, like a carpet, a copper plate."

What angers him most is the extent to which Western adult males — clinging to the false image of the unattainable, perfect blond child at home — transfer their egocentric yearnings abroad. The dusty kids of Baghdad, or the dusky youths of Sri Lanka, can never measure up to that internalized picture of the perfect child which inhibits relationships with boys in Europe. Therefore they are either treated with disdain — ("You know what's so awful? I'm going to touch up one of these scoundrels who only think of the cash. It relieves me, and then I go back to my

hotel and re-read Roger Peyrefitte!")—or have false expectations projected upon them.

If only, says Duvert, the pedophile would recognize that boys in the tropics “among the light and the dust of real lives” are not “children” but young men, seeking recognition and respect: “This lad, this Martian, who tells you with all his being, ‘I am not a child. I am myself.’”

While Duvert, as a tourist himself, clearly believes such recognition is possible even on short trips overseas, this seems belied by his own logic and observations. Unless you speak the language, are sensitive to culture and mores, are prepared to live at street-level eating local food, risking local (but often European-induced) disease, how can you possibly perceive the “light and dust of real lives?”

Unfortunately, most who argue either the pros or cons of boy-love or hustling “overseas”—itself a wildly ethnocentric term — fail to examine the myths of tourism *per se*. Tourism does not contribute to a developing nation’s economy. At best it increases its holdings of foreign exchange — cash which is used, more often than not, to import consumer goods at vastly inflated prices which have been made from the raw materials ripped-off from indigenous communities in the first place. All tourists benefit from the residues of imperialist thinking or neo-colonialist power. This stretches from the bowing and scraping of hotel porters—whose very livelihood may depend on not offending the *sahib* or *le monsieur* — through amused deference for “eccentric foreigners,” to actually supplying the venal needs of the overseas visitor, in exchange for coveted goods or services.

How far does the pedophile escape this reality? Quite frankly, not at all. Whether he likes it or not, he is continually protected by the police in most situations—a direct consequence of his “superior” nationality. It’s true that the boy-loving subcultures in countries like the Philippines, Thailand and Sri Lanka lack the potential to take over and damage a whole Third World economy, in the way that the “cheap sex tours” for Scandinavian and German heterophiles have blighted the Gambia. It is, however, a whopping great myth that kids in North Africa and South-East Asia have rejected their own culture and heritage in the sense that many Western youngsters have theirs, and are therefore abstracted, as some kind of revolutionary force, from society at large.

The question of paying or not paying such kids for sex appears to be a crucial issue. In fact, it is simply a reflection of the false equation made by the child protection lobbies, between kids’ survival as self-respecting human beings and the survival of the peasant farm. Kids who come to the cities to sell their bodies do so because they cannot, or don’t want to, survive at home, at least for the time being. Whether they live for a few years—their most attractive years—as houseboys, shoe-shiners, kept

lovers, or hustlers, they will at least survive. The fundamental question surely is not what happens to these children when they're still young, but what happens to them when they've outgrown their puppy years, and what happens to the millions of other kids who do not hustle?

In this respect, the pedophile is as bad as, but no worse than, any other tourist. He takes away from the communities he visits far more than he ever gives. He reinforces the lie that the white man will come to the rescue yet again, that cultural boundaries can miraculously disappear; or else that the final solution to the decay and poverty of third world societies is to yank the youngster out of his corrupt environment and cocoon him in the sanitized West.

Is it any wonder that the largest boy-love "beauty spots" are firmly controlled by militarist, if not fascistic, regimes? Or that those regimes could only survive with massive U.S. and CIA support (e.g. the Philippines, Thailand, and the Dominican Republic)?

What have boy-lovers visiting these countries actually done to enable the youth to resist, or circumvent at the very least, such despotism? Only, so far as I can see, to get up and leave when their holiday cash runs out. Small mercies indeed!

Is the only alternative, as Duvert implies, to live in such countries, come what may, and throw in your lot with the natives? Judging by those who have—Paul Bowles, Angus Stewart and Jan Hanlo in Morocco, Michael Davidson in various places over his umpteen years as a foreign correspondent, François Augieras in Algeria, Erskine Lane in Guatemala, Tobias Schneebaum in the jungles of South America—the outcome is far from certain. Bowles has long been accepted as a Moroccan resident, but



woe betide him if he slanders King Hassan! (Angus Stewart at the conclusion of his novel *Snows in Harvest* did accuse the Moroccan regime of using young street kids as human mine detonators on the Algerian border during the 60's. He once confessed to me he was scared the government would read it and ban him from returning to Tangiers.) Michael Davidson agonized continually over having to leave places where he'd been accepted, without taking the lovers he'd cultivated with him. Erskine Lane's writings teeter on the brink of a real commitment to native Guatemalans in their horrendous struggle for survival in the face of the most repugnant regime in the world today; he never quite makes it.

Tobias Schneebaum did cut himself off completely from the artistic hothouses of New York, walk up a jungle path and was soon not only making love to young boys and men who'd never touched a white body before but being accepted, so he says, as a complete member of the tribe. However, he left the jungle not to return, at least for a long time.

Only Augieras, out of the men I've mentioned, has so far lived and died among the people he loved. Perhaps this is partly why he's virtually unknown outside Algeria and intellectuals in France. Perhaps equally, this is why he rarely had sex with the boys. His *solicitude* for his young companions, his total involvement in their lives and all that impinged on them, seemed to preclude much specific sexuality, as if the eroticism which permeated his whole environment, particularly when a boy was present, would somehow be denatured, reduced, if expressed by a fuck.

To some readers this will sound extraordinary, perhaps reactionary. Lawrence of Arabia seems to have remained celibate, despite his enormous love for young Arab men, in order more charismatically to "fight the good fight" (certainly it wasn't for lack of opportunity). Similarly, Gordon of Khartoum stifled his pedophile desires in order to remain true to his Christian "morality." These were hardly radical standard bearers either for sexuality or social reform.

However, similar considerations are to be found among more liberated pedophiles. Jan Hanlo had sex only once with the 13-year-old street boy he adopted in Tangiers; the rest of his nights are spent, usually fruitlessly, trying to stop him "doing fak-fak" with the tourists. Hanlo is sure Mohammed deserves a better deal. Alain Blottière's powerful first novel *Saad* is a marvelous evocation of the body of a very young child whose life is shared between his lover-painter and his family and desert friends. I came to the end almost with relief that the hero and his boy friend hadn't made love together, as if that would have spoiled the symmetry between them.

When I spent three years (with periods back home) on the Indian subcontinent nine or ten years ago, I found neither the desire nor

the imperative to have sex with the 13-year-old with whom I fell in love, and whose life, friends and family I shared for several gratifying months. I first noticed him sitting just behind me, as we watched his school games: it was the first such display in his country since a horrendous war which had cost three million starved and tortured lives. Two smooth firm, brilliantly brown legs stretched out towards me from their skimpy white covering. I glanced towards him several times, but each time he looked away. Although he accompanied some other kids in their visits to my room in the local Catholic mission, he stood at the back, said little, only weakly smiled. I forgot how we eventually got talking—perhaps he'd been sent to do an errand for the "English relief workers" and I was at the receiving end—but within days we became inseparable friends. His home became my home. After a few Weeks, he joined my relief team and we all took off for a break by the coast. Each evening he solicitously made up "our" bed under the mosquito net, worried lest I choose to spend the night with an adult. On one occasion, it was only his wit and wisdom which saved a Land Rover from being lost at sea.

I once asked him why he had taken so long in coming around to visit me, while the other kids clambered through my door at every opportunity; why he avoided my glance that afternoon on the terrace. His reply was prompt and tinged with disdain. "All the other boys run after a handsome white man!" he exclaimed. "I am different."

Indeed he was. He was different because he didn't want baksheesh or hasty fondling, and because he rejected the assumption that the adult white male was a fitting object to follow and to fawn upon. Later I found his reflection in two fictional characters from recent English novels.⁷ Neither of those boys had sex with their adult lovers; their friendship was both too passionate and uncompromising.

Am I then saying that the boy-lover should never travel abroad to poorer (more exploited) countries to indulge his desires? Or, if he does, that he should never sexually gratify them?

No, what I am saying is less rigid and more complex. While I reject "sex tourism" of whatever variety, and believe organizations like NAMBLA should do so unequivocally too, I accept that pedophiles like other human beings will leave their own countries for short or long periods, will fall in love, and will respond to the greater lovingness of less neurotic peoples. Some boy-lovers will not conform to the stereotypes erected by Tim Bond; they will themselves be black, maybe even relatively poor. Others won't even need to encounter the "Third World" at the end of an intercontinental flight: it will be too obviously on their own doorstep.⁸

All that can be said with any certainty is that the boy-lover is no different from any other adult who packs his needs into a suitcase and

transports them across social and cultural borders. The fundamental question is not whether he has sex with kids, with other adults, with fellow expatriates, or with anyone else.

The real question is whether his presence is enhancing, or reducing the lives of those he is visiting. In this respect, a celibate U.S. Agency for International Development worker buttressing the regime in El Salvador is manifestly corrupting, whereas a pedophile working for justice among displaced Palestinians—no matter if he sleeps with a hundred boys—is potentially liberating. As always, the sexual question becomes a political one. It's our responsibility to make sure that this is where the artificial debate about "Third World sex tourism" really starts.

Notes:

¹ André Gide, *Carnets d'Égypte*, in *Oeuvres* ([Paris]: Éditions Gallimard, "Bibliothèque de la Pléiade" edition, 1954); excerpted in English translation in *The André Gide Reader*, ed. David Littlejohn (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971).

² Jean Delay, *La Jeunesse d'André Gide*, 2 vols. ([Paris]: Éditions Gallimard, 1956/1957).

³ See Guy Hervé and Thierry Kerrest, *Les Enfants de Fez* (Paris: Éditions Libres-Hallier, 1980) and Jacques Meunier, *Les Gamins de Bogota* (Paris: Éditions J. C. Lattès, 1977).

⁴ "G.F." (Guido Franco), *Desert Patrol* (Paris: Éditions de la Jungle, 1980).

⁵ See *Gay Sunshine*, San Francisco (Spring, 1979).

⁶ *Gai Pied*, Paris (1981-1982).

⁷ Kester Berwick, *Head of Orpheus Singing* ([London]: Angus and Robertson, [1973]) and Leslie Paul, *The Hungarian Horse* (London: Cassel Books, 1979).

⁸ For example, see the study of boy prostitution among Maghrebian youngsters by Guy Hervé, *Garçons de passe* (Paris, 1980).

Other Recommended Reading:

Augieras, François. *Le Viellard et l'enfant*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1954.

— — — *Le Voyage des morts*. Montpellier: Éditions Fata Morgana, 1953.

— — — *Un Voyage au Mont Athos*. Paris: Librairie Flammarion et C^{ie}, 1970.

Blottière, Alain. *Saad, Ou le portrait de David à Tadjourah*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1980.

Davidson, Michael. *The World, the Flesh and Myself*. London: Guild Press, 1962.

— — — *Some Boys*. Kingston, New York: Oliver Layton Press, 1969. (This is the unexpurgated edition.)

Duvert, Tony. *Journal d'un innocent*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1976. (Duvert's erotic experiences with young Spanish/Moroccan boys.)

Green, G. F. *The Power of Sergeant Streeter*. London and New York: Macmillan and Company, 1969. (A novel based in colonized Ceylon; for my money, Green is the best English novelist who has written specifically on the theme of boy love.)

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Hopkins, John. *Tangier Buzzless Flies*. London: Allison Press, 1970.

Matzneff, Gabriel. *Ivre du vin perdu*. Paris: Editions de La Table Ronde, 1981.

Maugham, Robin. *The Boy From Beirut*. San Francisco: Gay Sunshine Press, 1982.

— — — *The Wrong People*. London: Heinemann, 1970.

Mrabet, Mohammed. *Love With a Few Hairs*. Trans. by Paul Bowles. London: Peter Owen, Ltd., 1968.

Schneebaum, Tobias. *Keep the River on Your Right*. New York: Grove Press, 1969. (Currently in print in paperback, also from Grove Press.)

Stewart, Angus. *Snow in Harvest*. London: Hutchinson, 1969.

— — — *A Writer's Notebook*. London: Hutchinson, 1977. (Partly autobiographical.)

NAMBLA JOURNAL SIX (1983), Pgs. 13-16.



Poem

The child comes down with fever
 eyes bright, cheeks flushed
 forehead pale, lips wet & red
 as from sucking winedrops
 body warm as a body
 which is making love
 wants to be held & talk nonsense
 cough & sniff & be caressed
 since the early stages of fever
 are soft and luxurious.
 After such a visit, take pills
 or pay for that one kiss
 with three days in bed.

— hakim bey

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Straight Boy/Straight Boy-Lover

by David Sonenschein

MY CURRENT affair has raised a number of questions for me I haven't had to deal with before. My partner, an 11-year-old boy, looks like he is coming out straight. Many other boy-lovers I've talked with have had this experience, but I don't know any who are straight-identified, as I am.

My friend is not the first boy I have had sex with, as he knows, but he is the first one to raise questions about homosexuality, heterosexuality, women, masculinity and how they are all related. These concerns are particularly important to me because, like any of us in the Childhood Sensuality Circle, I am committed to children's liberation, specifically the issues of how kids can become empowered to lead their own sex lives with whom they want and when they want, free from force, fear and ignorance. I am trying to avoid with my friend the easy answers and neat categories that float throughout our society. To respond and relate to him on those terms would do nothing but continue the deceit and fraud of the dominant culture. His school, his family and the social work industry deny children's sexuality altogether, narrow adult sexuality to heterosexual reproduction, and project morbid images of pedophiles.

Let me share with you some of the questioning that has come up in the last few months of our affair. I don't mean to imply that my answers are the best. I would like to hear from others who have been in similar situations.

It was no surprise when one day he asked me, "Are you queer?" I knew he had been hearing talk about sex from schoolmates, and I knew he was becoming more sensitive, to what the Experts like to call "peer pressure." I asked him what he meant, wanting to hear his idea of "queer." It turns out that, at 11, queer is "not what men do" — it is weirdness, weakness and effeminacy; there is a definite knowledge that sex is involved somehow, but only a slight suspicion of what it might be.

The concern about sex was upper most in his mind because we had been having it. Although we have known each other for a number of years, he had recently begun to be friendly with me in a comfortable way and to actually tell me he wanted to spend time with me. It has only been in the last few months that we had infrequent sex: timid at first, lustily after a while, and now somewhat more cautiously (but also more affectionately).

My replies have avoided labels. I've talked with him about what we had actually felt and done without using convenient catchwords. We knew and reaffirmed that we had had fun, that our sex was very enjoyable and exciting. We knew that we cared for each other. I told him my feelings were not likely to change. I told him too that I know of others who are like us; they like to have sex and they know, as we do, that it can be good with all sorts of different people. Any of us can try a variety of sexual things with each other. I repeated what I had said when our own sex began: "You know you don't have to do anything you don't want to— and just the same for the other person." He knew that for a fact because we have practiced it. He knows what it means and how it works.

His unasked question of course was whether *he* was queer. He has told no one about our affair, so there have been no direct accusations from the schoolyard. But he was clearly getting the message that queer was bad and, as far as he could tell, what he and I had been doing was queer. Like any sort of homophobia, the talk at school among the ten and 11-year-olds tried to condemn and isolate people who had sex with others of their own gender. I told him about my own experience: as a boy I had sex whenever I could, mostly with other boys and a few girls, from age seven to 14, and that that sort of thing is pretty common. He in turn was able to tell me of a few boys who had fooled around with each other sexually. He revealed that he had had sex with a friend who came to spend the night.

As a result of our discussions he knows that whether you try it once, a few times, or prefer it, you can not condemn same-gender sex. It is simply a very natural thing to do. He knows that the choice to follow his

preferences has been his at several important points. And whatever his feelings, he understands that he is not alone with them. His anxieties about homosexuality, or his being in some way homosexual, have been lessened by knowing there exist people who have done and do both kinds of sex. The categories others may use to try to terrorize him have become less frightening because they have become less absolute, less real and of less value. We are both learning that the classifications and the attempt to separate mean much less than the ways in which people come together.

Ironically, our solidarity has been strengthened by the emergence of his sexual interest in girls. He knows I share this interest, and he has begun to express his views and feelings, asking questions and seeking advice. Because of our sex, he knows there are more ways than one to stimulate and be stimulated, and he knows that sex is better when the other—or others—enjoy it too. I've told him there is nothing wrong with expressing a sexual interest in someone, and that he should not deny his sexuality, just as he should not deny someone else's. He knows that what's important is *how* sexual interest is expressed. He is also beginning to see the variety of ways people can be sexual.

One of the difficulties with his new relationship to girls is that, like many boys, he has had a history of generally hostile and antagonistic relations with them. He will say things like "girls cry all the time" or "girls are always making trouble." All I can do is deal with these as they



come up, to deny, qualify or verify them in the immediate situation and from my own experience and knowledge. Feeling a general contempt for a class of people that arouses your desire makes for defensive and belligerent sex; if your sexuality sees them as the only outlet, it adds a dimension of desperation, something my friend has not shown.

I haven't made our affair a continual lecture. I do not see it as a chance to play guru; I am interested in enjoyable sex with people I like and can spend time with. The sexual aspect of our relationship is just beginning, and it's hard to say what will happen and how it will be handled. I'm to see him again this weekend.

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The Movies:

STAND BY ME

by John Fish

Intentionally or unintentionally, every so often Hollywood comes up with a movie about a man/boy type relationship. "A Thousand Clowns" was one such film. "E.T." was another. The latest film in this category is the new Rob Reiner film, "Stand By Me."

When I say a man/boy type relationship, I do not mean all relationships involving a man and a boy, or that both a man and a boy are actively involved. In "E.T." the "man" is actually an extra-terrestrial, who no one but the boy could appreciate or understand. In "Stand By Me" the "man" is a semi-delinquent 12 year old who is the only one able to appreciate or understand his best friend.

If you have not yet seen this film, you should put down your copy of the *Bulletin*, consult the movie guide in your local paper, and run — do not walk — to the next available screening. It is that good.

The film is well written, well directed, well cast, and the performances of the actors are outstanding. This is especially true of Wil Wheaton ("The Buddy System") and River Phoenix ("Explorers"), who play the film's main characters.

According to a story by Bruce Chanler in the New York Daily News, River Phoenix began his acting career at the age of 10 thinking it would be "a medium in which I could tell people of the world's troubles." He is concerned that American adults do not take the threat of nuclear weapons seriously enough. His first role was in the TV series "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers." He also appeared in "Family Ties," as a gifted young tutor. His future film credits will include "Mosquito Coast," in

which he co-stars with Harrison Ford, and “Jimmy Reardon,” a comedy aimed at teenage audiences.

In “Stand By Me” Phoenix delivers a strong and moving performance as the semi-delinquent Chris Chambers, one that could easily win an Academy Award, were it not for the fact that he is a 15 year old actor in an industry that tends not to take the performances of young actors seriously.

The script is adapted from “The Body,” one of the four novellas that make up the book, *Different Seasons*, by Stephen King. It is not the kind of chilling horror story for which King is best known. This is the story of four 12 year old boys who, at the end of the summer between sixth grade and junior high, make a long journey on foot to look for the dead body of a missing boy their own age. It is not an easy journey, and in the process of searching for and finding the body, they discover and reveal a great deal about themselves and one another.

The fact that the story is told as a flashback to an earlier time (1959) and a simpler place (a small town) makes it more digestible for the adult audiences at whom the film is aimed. (The movie is rated “R” — for “strong language.” Hollywood doesn’t want anyone under the age of 18 to hear how everyone talks at the age of 12.) Since we are not looking at the youth of today, but the young people we once were (and still long to be), it is easier to accept the cigarette smoking, the four letter words, and all the other things young people often say and do when there are no authority figures around. And the music is not the music of today’s youth, but of our own.

Chris is the leader of the four boys and exhibits all the compassion, sensitivity, wisdom and understanding that most boy lovers aspire to. He is also the kind of boy that many lonely and insecure boy lovers would benefit from knowing. One of those people everyone benefits from knowing, whether they realize it at the time or not.

Gordie Lachance (Wil Wheaton) is the boy that Chris “stands by.” He is a boy with a special gift for creating stories, that no one but Chris understands or appreciates. To make matters worse, Gordie has a recently deceased older brother — a former high school star athlete — that everyone understands and appreciates.

At one point, Chris tries to inspire Gordie by telling him. “It’s like God gave you something, all those stories you can make up, and He said: ‘This is what we got for you kid, Try not to lose it.’ But kids lose everything unless somebody looks out for them and if your folks are too fucked up to do it, then maybe I ought to.”

It is largely due to the efforts of Chris that Gordie grows up to become a famous and financially successful novelist that no one ever recognizes wherever he goes without his American Express card. (“The Body” is thought by most to be autobiographical, but when Reiner asked King if

the story had any basis in fact, King would only say, "Well, to be honest with you, I'm a pathological liar and I don't know what is and what isn't true, but if it isn't true, it should be.")

In an interview with David Hunter in the *Orange County Review*, Wheaton described Gordie as a "challenging, very, very complex person to get into." In preparing for the role Wheaton says he read the original story by King and talked to relatives who were growing up during the fifties to find out "what was in, what was out — how the kids acted." A year younger than Phoenix, Wheaton is sometimes overpowered by him in the film's earlier scenes. By the end of the film, however, Wheaton's screen presence is every bit as powerful as that of River Phoenix.

In addition to "Stand By Me," Wheaton has also appeared in "Hambone and Willie" and "The Buddy System," and in several television productions, including "A Long Way Home," "The Shooting" and "The Defiant Ones". In "The Buddy System," Wheaton is the friend of a character played by Richard Dreyfuss. In "Stand By Me," Dreyfuss makes a brief appearance as the adult version of Wheaton's character.

Like Phoenix, Wheaton gives a performance worthy of at least an Academy Award nomination, if not the Award itself. In reality, director Rob Reiner will probably be the only one in the film honored by the Academy, for "getting a bunch of kids to give such great performances." But no one ever said life was fair (except, of course, Ronald Reagan, who, like King, is a pathological liar).

The other two boys in the gang of four, Teddy Duchamp (Corey Feldman) and Vern Tassio (Jerry O'Connell), are not as quick-witted as Chris and Gordie, and serve the story more as a source of comic relief than anything else. Both Feldman and O'Connell do an excellent job, and all four young actors play well off one another.

Kiefer Sutherland also adds to the film's credibility as the menacing "Ace" Merrill, leader of a gang of teen-age toughs whose greatest pleasure in life comes from tormenting others, especially 12 year old boys.

At times the film slips into a condescending romanticism of "youth's idyllic simplicity," and there is one scene that sends the message that a gun is the solution to young people's oppression. Aside from this I enjoyed the movie thoroughly.

River Phoenix, in his *Daily News* interview, said, "'Stand By Me' is the first film I totally liked working in." It is easy to see why. The film is outstanding. Don't miss it.

The NAMBLA Bulletin, Vol. 7, No. 8 (October, 1986), Pg. 8.

the eroticism of banal architecture

off the Jersey Turnpike we pull into a roadside gas & refreshment palazzo named not after Howard Johnson but queer Walt Whitman himself one of NJ's sacred city poets - - - first balsamy day of Spring the parking lot tricked in flowering cherry and apple - - - a place that's in between, tucked in a topological interstice, a place that could be superimposed on 1000 other places & therefore is no-place

aswarm with Amurrican families; dads whose faces seem to have the consistency of TV screens, moms in powder blue pant-wits bulging with hyperrealist flab

their kids: lolitae in pink halters, ankle sox decorated with little pink balls of yarn - - - clothes of the color of toy marbles or koolade

inside the rotunda, perfume of hamburgers music of video games - - - a skinny ten-year-old with mop of brown hair & cut-off jeans heading for the mens room - - - like a disembodied observer I take up position next to him gaping as he stands well back from the urinal & pulls down his pants - - - his penis looks half-erect, big as my little finger & thick as my thumb, extended even further by a sweet brown nib of uncut flesh that quivers and jumps as liquid spurts out clear clean & white as chablis into the porcelain

horney as a toad I step out into the sun again - - - a plastic utopia restaurant outside the normal flow of time just as it lies outside the flow of traffic - - - its atemporality defined by the apparent meaninglessness of its durationless arrivals and departures.

hakim bey

Love & Liberation



Feedback: Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

When I was 14 years old I was into puberty and very alone. My parents were abusive and Hitler-like. There was no love from them, only yelling, belittling, and beatings. I met an older man at church whom I fell in love with. He provided friendship and later, affection, love and sex. But sex was totally started by me. I never was forced into anything with him.

I have always preferred older men like the first man. I know that society says I'm supposed to have been taken advantage of, but that is simply not true. If it weren't for that man coming into my life and giving me what my own family wouldn't give me, I would have committed suicide long ago. My life hasn't been the same since then. I know I am not the only person who has had this experience and I wish to let you know that I am in support of all men who society has unjustly imprisoned for loving a boy who needed it. This is supposed to be the 20th century (nearly the 21st), and yet our society's morals and thinking are back to the middle ages. I wish they would wake up and realize these people are not criminals but are just loving and caring human beings who are in effect doing the job that parents should be doing. I want to let it be known that I am very proud of my relationship with an older man, and I would do it again.

— Maryland

The NAMBLA Bulletin, Vol. 7, No. 3 (April, 1986), Pg. 3.

It's A New World

Anonymous

The rain spattered lightly on the windshield and just as lightly the wiper blades pushed the drops aside as I drove through the now gray woods. Also light was the breathing of the sleeping boy whose head, covered with thick black hair, lay in my lap. The rest of his body crumpled up between me and the door. Looking down at him, I dropped my hand from the wheel and pushed the hair back from his forehead. It flopped back and I repeated the action several times. Best keep your eyes and mind on the road, Beau. The cargo you carry is irreplaceable and precious beyond words. Beautiful black haired Kyle in the front with me and the two brothers, Jason and Jamie, also asleep in the back, were entrusted to me last Friday after school and now on Sunday, our weekend over, I will deliver them back to their homes safe and sound.

Their homes were an hour or so ahead of us down in the valley. Our road had led up last Friday. Up to the gentle mountains that surrounded our small town. The weather had been our friend all the way to the cabin, throughout our wandering and fooling around in the hidden meadows on Saturday, only to turn its shoulder on us with a thunderstorm on Saturday night. I have to laugh, thinking back on that night. Kyle and I were already sawing logs when the first boom brought two wide eyed

boys, (with equally wide grins), flying into our bed. I didn't mind the extra passengers as much as Kyle. He was pooped and wanted to sleep. As he often said, in the coy manner I liked so well, "Beau, I need my beauty rest." And just as often I straight-eyed him and said, "Kyle, you don't need any beauty rest. You are just as beautiful as you need to be."

As the storm continued we slowly wiggled our four bodies into comfortable positions and one by one had come to drift off into the dream world of sleep.

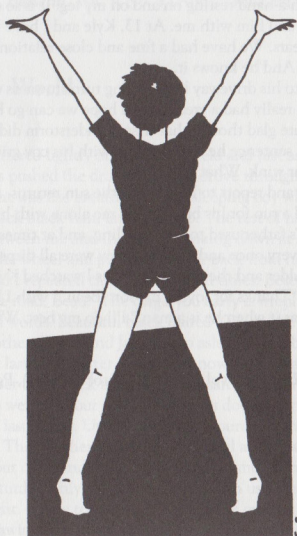
Morning had come early — too early as the result of too many bodies and too little bed. First one moves, then another. Then two, then three, and all at once, laughter and squeals and hands and feet and legs and arms and knees and elbows everywhere. Then just as quick Jason and Kyle are on the back porch watering the grass that was already wet.

Rain continues as we approach our home. Our first stop drops Jamie and Jason, but not before a kiss and a hug, and a brief report to mom that we are on our way. I look forward to the same arms and boy-scented breath tomorrow after school. Kyle sits next to me, chatting away as he usually does, with a hand resting on and off my leg. It is so easy to be casual with him, and him with me. At 13, Kyle and I have known each other for three years. We have had a fine and close relationship. I feel for him very deeply. And he knows it.

As we pull into his driveway his chatting turns towards us. "Thanks, Beau. I really had a great time. I hope we can go back next weekend. I am sure glad though that that thunderstorm didn't start any sooner." The last sentence he accompanies with his coy grin, cooked head and million dollar wink. What a boy.

As we unload and report to his parents the sun returns. A third boy hug and kiss, and a run for his bike, leaves me alone with his dad. Being alone with a boy's father used to be unsettling, and at times old feelings still creep back every once and a while. They were all dispelled by the hand on my shoulder and the voice saying, as I watched Kyle ride off down the street, "Thanks for loving my son. Beau. I wish I had the gift. I sure hope Kyle has it when he is a man." I'll do my best. What a boy. How sweet it is.

The NAMBLA Bulletin, Vol. 7, No. 8 (October, 1986), Pg. 14.



Donnie and the Black Hole of Santa Monica

Anonymous

Jimmy was only 47 when he died of a heart attack. At the funeral, Donnie, after their marriage of almost 20 years, still looked like an innocent little boy though he must have been in his mid-thirties. During the service I remembered the story of how they had met. When I got back home I decided, third party though I was, that it was one of the best such stories I'd ever heard. It's not my story and I don't take credit. It was Jim and Donnie's.

Some battle-weary vets, getting their GI money, went into such things as gas stations or hamburger joints. With us it was interior decorating. We had met in the Army, not in Anzio or on the beaches of Guam, but in a bar called Mutti's in Bavaria. I was the toothpaste rationer for Company K, Jerry was the fastest typist in the CO's office and Guy was the butch one of the mob. He drove a motorcycle and delivered important messages, many of them to flouncy-looking town houses in Munich.

I had lived in Santa Monica before the war and it seemed natural to return. Besides, everyone we knew was heading for one coast or another. So we pooled our resources and opened La Maison d'Trois. I knew about interiors, Jerry was an artist and Guy handled all the ordering, shipping and moving. As I said, he was butch, kind of. Believe it or not, we actually prospered. Guy was getting fed up with being the business end and he was a great outdoorser, so he suggested that we start giving our clients landscaping service. Without my paying much attention, he made arrangements with a local greenhouse to supply us with plants, or whatever they supply you with. When the first rosebushes arrived, so did Donnie.

I said "Wow!" Jerry mumbled "Mercy!" and Guy roared "Jesus Christ!!", which is a fair indication of how Donnie went over. For his 15 years he had grown in all the right directions. He muscled the rosebush off the truck and asked, "This for you guys?" Jerry said, "Heavens yes!" and Guy went over and heaved it inside the door, saying "Let a man handle it, sonny!" I didn't say much of anything. Later on that afternoon, when I was trying to concoct a Louis XIV interior, I kept seeing Donnie's hard little rear in those overly-tight work pants when I should have been seeing scalloped chair backs. Two days later, when the truck came back with more bushes, Donnie saw a sign Jerry had made for the loading door at the rear of the shop: THROUGH THESE DOORS PASS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL ROSEBUSHES IN THE WORLD. "You guys dig roses?" he asked me. I gulped and explained that it was a decorator's fetish.

Little by little we got to know Donnie better. Guy would show him handstands and such athletic stuff and Jerry would explain the aesthetics of matching wallpaper and drapes. I didn't do much except look. He had been shipped out to his aunt in Santa Monica after his parents' divorce because they thought the climate would be "good for him." They had ditched him and he knew it. His aunt was well enough off, but his father insisted he work, so he had gotten the job of helping a neighbor who ran a greenhouse. He was a brash kid, all quips and sass, but I sensed he was a bit on the overly-sensitive side and covered it up with his disarming smile and sharp tongue.

He was rather envious of us, being in the war and all, and used to ask embarrassing questions about fighting the Germans. I gave him a story about lobbing toothpaste tubes at them when the ammunition ran out. Guy had actually monitored messages near the front and used to tell hair-raising tales of fighting off pockets of resisters. Donnie would look at him with big eyes and then ask, "All those Germans wear khaki underwear, too?" He wasn't a dumb kid by any means, which should have told me something.

Now I'm no saint. I have been accused of being slightly dull, but there were some moments that I did go a bit wild. Wild enough so that when an occasion arose I even visited the Black Hole of Santa Monica. The Black Hole was a concrete block john on the beach, so named because it had no electricity and after dark it was a black hole in more ways than one. Anything went, or came, if you prefer, after sunset. Occasionally I got the urge to go down there, if for nothing else than the sound of the surf, or whatever it was, incessantly lapping.

I never played the game fairly. I always lit a match to see if I were going to be lowering my standards too much. I had a traumatic experience once, being matchless, when I discovered that my only-too-willing partner had been — Jerry! I took so much ribbing around the Maison that I erased the Black Hole from my mind for a long time.

My natural reticence seemed constantly in the way of my ever making out much. Possibly I was a masochist, because I enjoyed watching the moon (or Donnie, if you won't accept my metaphor) as it passed through our sky every two or three days. I had been pretty carefully inculcated with the idea that when a birth certificate says "under 18" you either leave it alone or pack your diddles for a nice long stay in the pokey. Guy liked them small and weak and about his own age. Jerry, while having less of a conscience than stupid me, was so passive that the other fellow did all, or most, of the work. Since both were my junior by a few years and much more cruise-bait than I, I was the one that always seemed to like movies or listening to the radio. Since we had taken over the Heavenly Landscaping (as Jerry called it) and Guy was busy planting and selling, I had given up some of my free time to do the bookkeeping. I really didn't care.

There had been a fabulous German named Johann in Bavaria that had me reeling, but when we were shipped home, I knew that might be the last real thing for me for quite a spell.

Guy's affinity with Donnie didn't help much, though I had long grown used to Guy plucking the tender leaves from the top of the tree. Donnie wasn't an athlete, but he had a springy build and was interested in surfing and tumbling, which were right in Guy's repertoire of Impressive Stunts. They were constantly disappearing with their balsa boards in the direction of the beach for an afternoon. It was preferable to having them play Jumping Bean in our warehouse, with Donnie in a pair of tight white gym shorts. At such times I tried to hide myself in the midst of Chippendale and Fyffe, but it seemed that whatever I wanted was always in the warehouse. It was like Dante unaccompanied by Virgil to go through there then.

The suspense was terrible. Jerry and I kept wondering when-where-how Guy would Make It. But Guy was strangely noncommittal about his progress, and after a few weeks of bouncing about on both dry land and water, I had to ask him point blank.

"It's the funniest game I ever played," Guy told me. "Sometimes I think it's just at the point of getting there, when it freezes solid. I think he knows the score and is just playing me along for a sucker. If he were a few years older I'd like to toss him in the back seat some night and strong-arm him." Knowing Guy, I knew he might. Despite this, the surfing and backroom antics kept going on. It finally got to the point where I went to the Hole a couple of times without my matches.

As I've said, Maison d'Trois was making money. Guy's little greenery experiment proved a great success, too. So when the year came to an end, I took my nice fat bonus and went out and put it on a new Caddy convert. Middle-class as hell, but what else did I have to spend it on?

The day they delivered it, I didn't feel like I should have, especially having never thought I'd get within a block of buying a car like that. I drove it around, admired it, jammed the pedal to the floor and put the top up and down, but it was all just horseplay and didn't really give me a lift. I guess I was depressed, not having anyone to impress with it. Guy had taken Donnie to the beach, and the Fyffe chairs didn't appreciate the gleaming paint job or the horsepower. I was in a stinking mood, considering I'd just saddled myself with 24 payments.

That night I motored down to the beach and sat looking at the Black Hole for a few minutes. Two people came out, rather hastily, and then it looked dead. Finally, in the dim moonlight, I saw someone who didn't look like he was a fat old Auntie go in. I opened the door of the Caddy, groped for my matches, and went in too.

Trying to find a black cat in a coal bin at midnight was about the sensation. I felt the rough surface of the cinder blocks slide past my hand;

my hard-soled shoes made sounds like Dracula. Whoever was in there couldn't help but know he had a visitor. By that time my imagination and my pent-up glands had set me on edge. I was ready to jump anybody, even if it turned out to be Sidney Greenstreet. I stood for a moment at one of the little slots and could hear someone breathing nervously beside me. I struck a match. If it were Jerry again...

"WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING HERE!?" I yelled at the top of my lungs, not knowing what kind of an answer I wanted to hear. I dropped the match to the floor as Donnie threw his arms around me and glued his mouth to mine.

I could go through all that old bit about pinwheels and skyrockets and rides to the moon and the rest, but why bother?... I took him out to the car and kept tight hold of him. Both of us were shaking.

"Man! What a bus!" Donnie said when he got into the Caddy. I opened the other door, slid in, and wheeled it out toward Malibu. Donnie was purring over the chrome and gadgets.

"All right, young man," I said sternly, "what were you doing in that place?"

Donnie smiled his hundred-watter and replied slyly, "Well, what were YOU doing in there?"

"I know what I was doing in there. Now tell me your side of the story." He loosened up and it all came out. He had been having little soirees downtown and getting himself done and paid, mostly by people he wouldn't want to have known in the daytime. He'd heard about the Hole and wondered if he could meet anyone he liked.

"How about Guy?" I said fearfully. "You know he's been chasing you for weeks now."

"That big side of beef!" he laughed good-naturedly. "He doesn't want a love affair, he wants a wrestling contract. Besides, it was fun to keep anyone that hunky on the string for a while."

We went home and we went to bed and it was everything that the years of war and toothpaste had prepared me for. All the way to the house I kept thinking of how they'd give me ten years for every one that Donnie had been around, but it was no use. I was on the San Quentin Quail Express. It didn't let you off when you pulled any of the available things to pull. The topper came early in the morning when I rolled over and said in a voice akin to terror, "My God! It's three o'clock! What about your aunt?" I had visions of a stern California dowager leading a whole pack of vice-squadders to my door.

"Relax!" Donnie said sleepily, as he curled closer to me. "She's in L.A. getting soused at a party, or something like that. She won't be home for at least another day-and-a-half. Besides..." he said tantalizingly.

"Besides... what?"

"Besides, I don't want to leave."

"Why not?"

"Because I'm in love with you, that's why!" The hole in my chest that had been there was suddenly filled by something that could have been Donnie's clenched fist.

Needless to say, I got to the office the next day about eleven. I must have had a shit-eating grin written all over my puss, because when I sat down at the desk both Jerry and Guy were standing there, looking at me quizzically.

"Well, what is the trouble with you today, Mary?" Jerry exclaimed. "That new car of yours must have come better equipped than the salesman said it did!"

"Let's have it, buster!" Guy demanded. For his sake I really didn't want to say anything, but I managed to blurt out the pertinent details, omitting the business about the wrestling contract.

"Why that little son-of-a-bitch!" Guy roared. "All that time surfing and doing all that stupid tumbling jazz!" He was fit to be tied. "Day after day of getting waterlogged with that brat, so that you could go out to the Hole and take him home!" Then he stopped and put his hand on my shoulder. "The best of everything," he said quietly, "and lots more in the future."

"I'll need it," I told them. "He isn't exactly the easiest boy to make mind, and I have a feeling that sooner or later that aunt of his is going to wonder where her nice, innocent, jailbait nephew is spending his time.



The worst of it is, I haven't got the willpower to keep him away."

At work that day, I began to have doubts. What if Donnie were just teasing me? What if I had dreamed it all? What if... well, you know how many ridiculous things you can think up about a person who's 12 years younger than you are. Finally, about four in the afternoon, I asked Guy as casually as I could if any orders would be coming in from the greenhouse that day.

"He'll be here. He called about an hour ago to tell you he wants to stay with you again tonight."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"Because I was too waterlogged to remember," he muttered, and went back to work.

Along with the rosebushes came all I needed to make me forget how dull I was. "If you go back there and start tumbling today with those white shorts on," I told Donnie, "I'm going to drag you into the office and rip them off. You understand?"

"I sure do," he crooned. "Come back in about half-an-hour when I'm good and sweaty; they'll be easier to get off then." We just fell on one another, right there in front of God and the rosebushes, and I didn't give more than half-a-second's thought to his aunt.

I guess the longer you go the more luck you think you have. Whenever I'd get edgy about the aunt he'd simply bite my ear or... something... and tell me not to get all het up about her. And so gradually I pushed away the image of my being led off with all concerned weeping, and abandoned myself to the only real warmth I had ever felt, the only thing that I didn't have to imagine but could just reach out and touch. By the time we had put 40,000 miles on the Caddy it was just as natural as lighting a match. Donnie would spend at least three wonderful nights a week with me, and the only knocking on my door at those hours was Guy and Jerry, coming to inspect my domesticity with Donnie. Then the odometer turned over to 41,000 and things came to a halt.

I went home early on Wednesdays, usually. Donnie didn't have afternoon classes, so he opened up with his key and had a late lunch fixed for the two of us. That particular Wednesday it was raining, which in California should have warned me. The dark thunderclouds had made driving slow and slippery. When I got home there was the usual light in the kitchen. I went into the unlit vestibule and fell flat on my face. When I got up I was surrounded by 17 pieces of matched luggage and a tennis racquet. Donnie waltzed out of the kitchen with an apron on. I was so confused that I didn't notice he had nothing else on, which shows you how confused I was.

"I'm fixing a celebration!" he said, flipping the apron at me.

"Ouch, what?" I replied, feeling my skinned knee.

"It's ME!" he laughed. I tried to laugh too, but somehow I cried instead.

"You what? It looks like everything you own."

"It is," he said cheerfully. "Now you're going to have to make an honest man out of me!"

"What do you mean?" I asked, knowing damn well what he meant.

"It just isn't practical for me to live someplace else and try to be your lover," he said with painstaking care. "That makes good sense, doesn't it?"

"Sure," I replied, feeling my throat go dry as a Fyffe chamber pot.

"Sure, it makes sense to me. And you. How much sense will it make to your aunt when she drags me off to prison? Jesus, how soon do you think she'll find out? Maybe we've got time to get this all back to your place before she knows!"

"Oh, I've told her all about it!"

"ALL about it?" I said, wondering how I'd like a number instead of a name.

"ALL about it. Why lie?"

"Why? Why, I don't know... don't know anything... at all," I mumbled. How long would it take to get into Mexico?

"I've got to finish fixing the soup," Donnie said as he turned around, trooping back into the kitchen, giving me the last view of my most cherished possession.

"Stir it carefully, honey, I'm in it right up to my neck." I sat down on one of the 17 pieces of matched luggage.

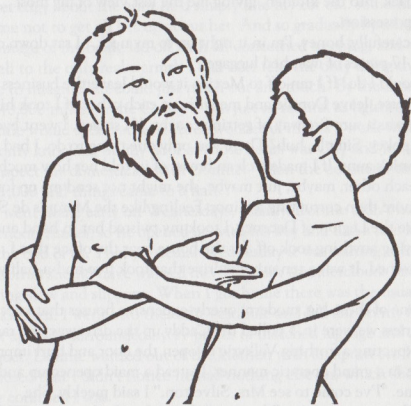
What could I do? If I ran off to Mexico it would leave the business to ruin, and worse, leave Donnie and me without each other. If I took him with me, it was a sure-fire way of getting caught. If I stayed, I went bye-bye to the pokey. Simple, huh? There was only one thing to do. I had to go see Donnie's aunt. If I made a clean breast of it, told her how much we meant to each other, maybe, just maybe, she might not send me up for anything more than corrupting a minor. Feeling like the Marquis de Sade going before the Legion of Decency, I took my twisted hat in hand and without saying anything took off for the house near the office that I knew she owned. It was a ten minute drive that took five-and-a-half years off my life.

It was one of those big, modern, overly-expensive houses that kept us in the business we were in. I pulled the Caddy up the driveway and rang the bell, expecting a frothing Valkyrie to open the door and hurl imprecations at me in a grand operatic manner. Instead a maid opened up and smiled at me. "I've come to see Mrs. Silverton," I said meekly. She giggled. "Oh, you mean Miss Silverton," she said as she let me in. Well, at least there would be only one to face. I followed the maid into the house

that had obviously been decorated much more expensively than our firm could ever manage. "Just a minute," she said.

During that minute I had an hour to think, but I didn't. I was scared out of my mind. I could feel myself composing dozens of different ways to begin telling the aunt how much I loved him and how much he loved me, but somehow all of them either made me out to be a lecher or just inarticulate. Finally the maid came back. "Miss Silverton will see you in the study," she chimed. She led me to the doorway of a large, oak-paneled room filled with books. I was surprised that no three-headed dog barked at me as I tiptoed in, my hat in hand.

The first thing I remember was the lighted end of a cigarette. No, come to think of it, the first thing was a foot. It was bare. It protruded from the leg of the tightest pair of yellow lounging pajamas that I think I've ever seen. The color of her long hair almost matched the pajamas, or as nearly as any bottle could make it. The aforementioned cigarette glowed from a long ebony holder which was clamped between frighteningly reddened lips. Two massacred eyes gazed at me pitilessly. I was too scared to speak. The aunt remained silent. I sweated. Then she smiled, malevolently. My hat was now in a square knot. Still she said nothing. I swallowed. I had to say something! I did.



"You see, Miss Silverton, it's like this about Donnie. He isn't just a kid, you know, and well we decided that sometimes you just can't help yourself when it comes to falling in love, and believe me we really do feel that way about one another and there really isn't anything bad about it as we both think we know what we're doing and besides I hope you understand that I had no intention of him ever really leaving home at all or I would have done something to have stopped him though God knows I really do love him enough to feel that maybe he knows what he's doing despite the fact that he's only 15 and God Miss Silverton it never occurred to me that he was actually that young when he started telling me how much he loved me you know I would do just about anything for him including sending him back home here to you where I'm sure he belongs and would be much better off while he had to go to school every day and... you see... I do really do care for him... he's too young... but he knows... what he's doing... I'll send him back... if... only... you won't... some drastic action... the police... everyone will suffer for..."

She looked at me.

"Please, Miss Silverton!" I implored. A moment of dreadful silence.

"You really love him?"

Startled, I said, "Oh God, yes!" trying to keep the lust out of my voice.

"Well, for Christ's sake, keep the little fruit!" she roared at me.

So what could I do?

I kept the little fruit!

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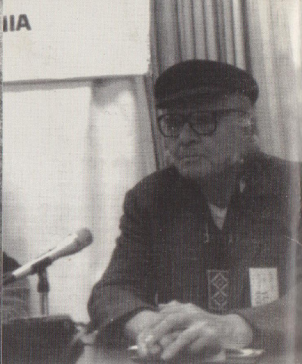
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