

SKIN

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VOLUME 2 NUMBER 6

THE HARDON MAGAZINE

2ND ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL! 16 HARD COLOR PAGES!

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TODAY!
sizzling
words
& photos

exclusive
shots!
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REX'S
MINDBOGGLING
ARTWORK!

Harry
Chess'
creator
confesses!
A.JAY'S
COMIC
STRIPPING

J. BRIAN'S
'GOLDEN GUYS'

ADULTS ONLY

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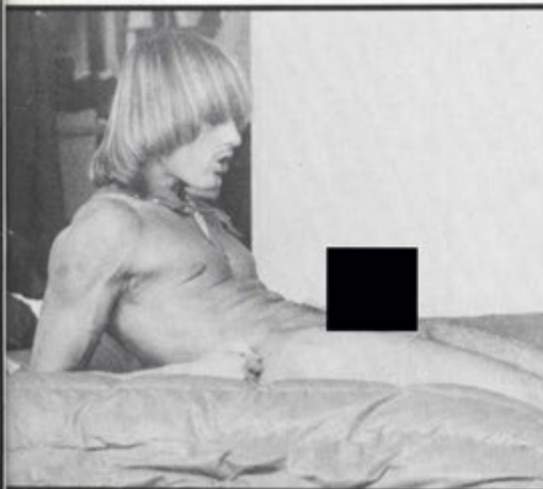
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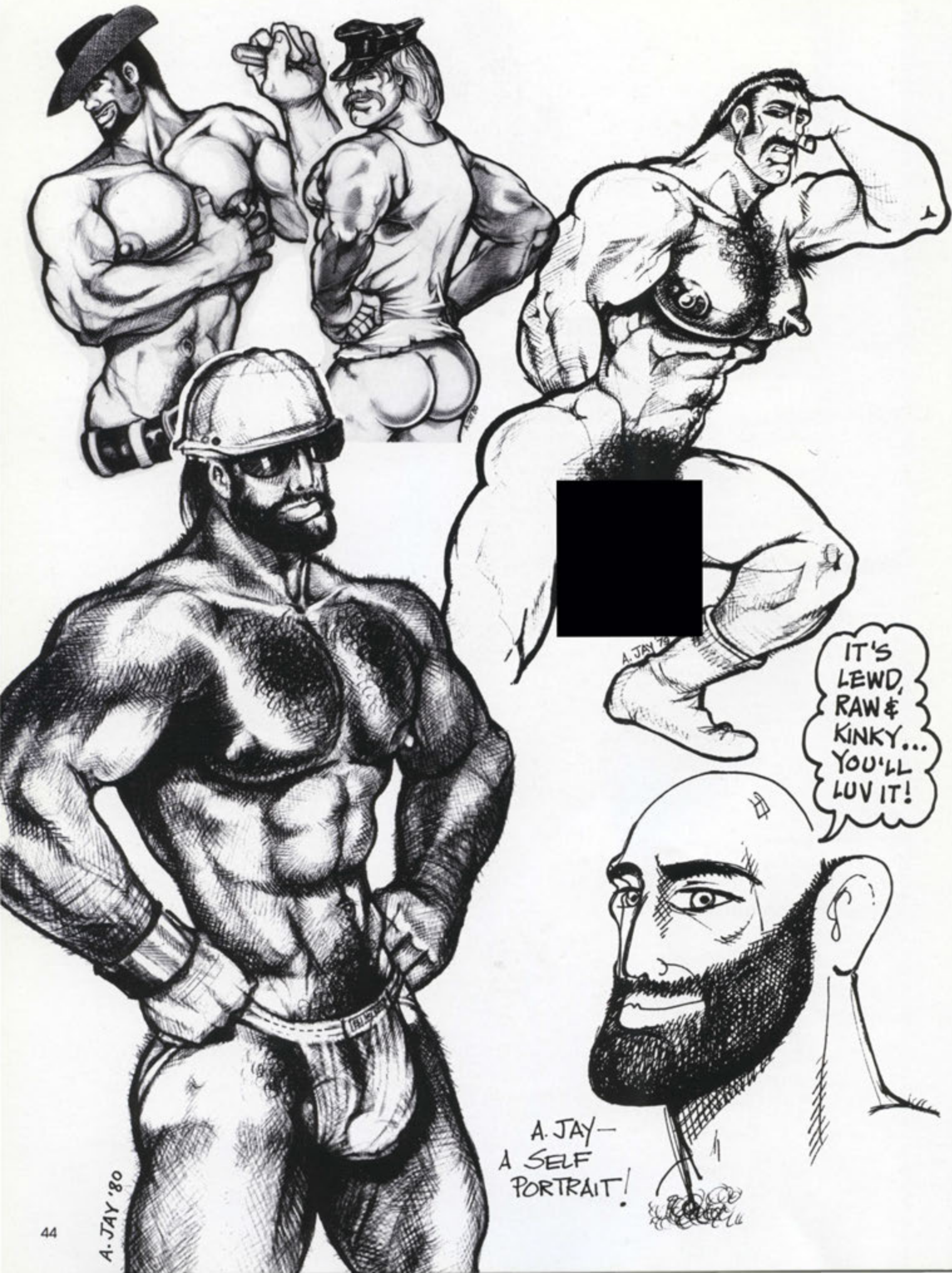
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COVER PHOTO:

He's a true legend in the skin biz, and from the cover shot and an exclusive color and black and white spread inside, veteran pornstar Peter Berlin proves he's just now getting into his prime! In an extremely rare interview, and pictures from his own private files, he shows why he remains the narcissistic idol of countless, breathless fans!

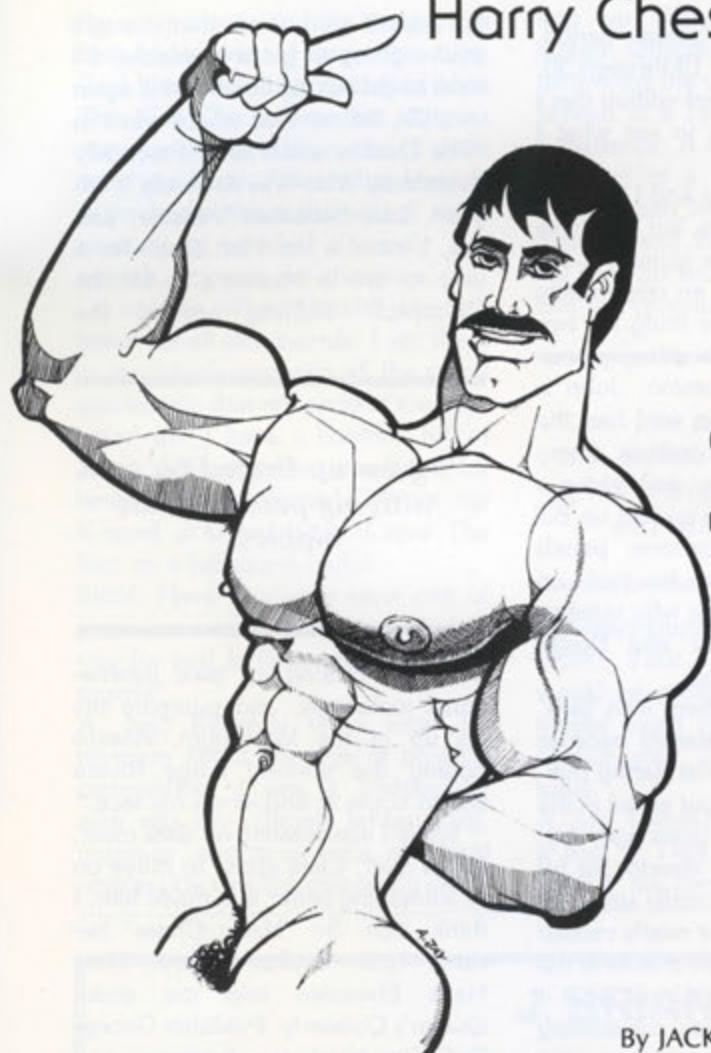


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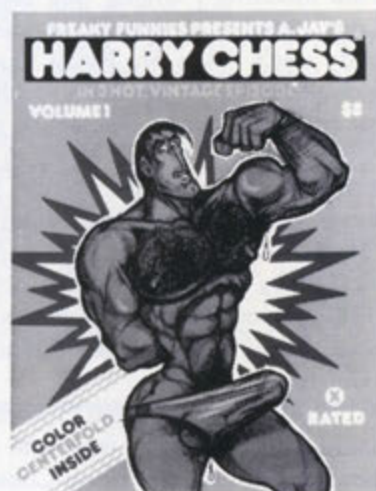
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A SELF
PORTRAIT!

A. JAY '80

Harry Chess' creator tells all!



A. JAY'S COMIC STRIPPING



By JACK FRITSCHER

A. Jay: You're only getting this interview because the *National Enquirer* hasn't called. That's always been my main fantasy: to see my name in *Enquirer* headlines six inches high. "A. JAY SCREAMS: LET ME KEEP MY BABY!"

SKIN: Or something equally sleazy.

A. Jay: *Harry Chess* coined, no, popularized the word "sleazy" for gays back in the Seventies. Now everybody, including fats, fems, and phonies, thinks "sleaze" is a new virtue. Harry should get the credit. Not me. Don't cry for me, San Francisco!

SKIN: Because of your erotic cartoon strip, "Harry Chess," you're an international art celebrity.

A. Jay: I'm just a poor East Coast boy, risen from the peasant classes of upstate New York, parlaying my exotic looks into a marriage with a leading West Coast Watersportsman,

who swears on his raunchy jockstrap that I will be practically beautified after my early death from cancer.

SKIN: I can name that musical in three notes.

A. Jay: Forgive me. When I was very young, I wanted to be a theatrical set designer. I moved to Manhattan, went to art school, and saw every show that opened on Broadway. My parents are still convinced that their allowance to me made David Merrick rich. Actually, New York in the Sixties was wonderful. I never felt any anti-gay pressure. Bars flourished, but I figured they only got raided when they were too stupid to pay off the cops.

SKIN: You had no problems with your sexual preference?

A. Jay: I was lucky. I was too dumb to have ever been in the closet. I always figured sex with men was as natural as wrestling jock-to-jock in

high school. Just more raunchy, smelly, oily, and sleazy! I grew up fixated on men with big pecs and fine nipples. New York is Tit City. Manhattan men don't shake your hand to take the measure of your fist to say "Hello" the way men do in San Francisco. New Yorkers immediately do a two-handed grab straight for your nipples. Responsive tits are a sign of sexual sophistication in New York. *Harry Chess* loves Tit Play. All my cartoon characters have voluptuous full-muscled, big-chested bodies, with a lot of hot tread on their big hot nipples.

SKIN: Your characters have names like Mickey Muscle, Pecs O'Toole, and Lats Lonigan. That's whimsy.

A. Jay: Like a lot of guys I came out on Stan Lee's Marvel Comics Group of Superheroes. My characters are man-to-man macho parodies, and

COMIC STRIPPING

sleazy paradigms, of the supercomic heroes. They travel in fuckbuddy pairs. Mickey Muscle is Harry Chess' sidekick. Like Batman's Robin or the Green Hornet's Cato.

Harry himself was sort of gee-whizzed out of Lil Abner. Some fans say they see the influence of *Playboy's* Little Annie Fanny. I created Harry right when James Bond hit it big.

SKIN: We're all a part of all that we've met.

A. Jay: Ain't that the truth. Poor Paul McCartney writing "My Sweet Lord" based unconsciously on somebody else's "He's My Kinda Guy." McCartney has to pay them royalties for accidentally using something just floating around in the airwaves of American pop culture. "He's My Kinda Guy" is merde compared to "My Sweet Lord." They ought to pay McCartney for improving their act.

SKIN: No one can dispute that your sexy, funny characters are distinctly your own.

A. Jay: To tell the truth, I identify more with my villains than with my heroes. Even though Harry Chess is my alter-ego. Villains are always more colorful. My villains are sort of a cross between myself, Telly Savalas, and Yul Brynner. With a sideswipe at Ming the Merciless.

SKIN: You worked for John Embry, publisher of *Drummer*, as his art director. He featured "Harry Chess". Why'd you split? That would have seemed like a perfect alliance.

A. Jay: At the time, it was. John Embry was an innovator. He started *Drummer*, the world's first leather/macho journal, years back when poppers were also starting to hit big, and the leather market was ripe for such a new publication, but unfortunately is now a Marie Antoinette of the gay slicks . . . it keeps feeding its loyal groupies the same tired leather cake. It's just too bad the publication hasn't maintained the creative masculine energy of the '70s that was pumped into it during

Drummer's golden (smile) period. Take a look at issues 19 through 30, and then the newsprint edition that's on the stands today to see what I mean.

Yeah, John Embry and I did lock horns numerous times, but I do have to give him credit for giving A. Jay great exposure, and an opportunity to do my art director thing for two years. I did uncover budding geniuses like Matt and Domino. John is also a cartoon fanatic, and had the good taste of recognizing Harry Chess' pulling power, and taking it on. Incidentally, John picked up Bill Ward's wonderful cartoon panels "DRUM" long before he took on H.C. But then, anyone who remembers Benita Granville and Buster Crabbe can't be all bad.

I'm used to publishers with balls. "Harry Chess" got started because one of the world's most daring publishers, Clark Polak, put an ad in the *New York Times* 16 years ago, saying he needed an art director for his gay magazine. He actually used the word *gay* in the ad! He nearly caused a couple hundred heart attacks at the *Times* when they found out what it meant. Anyway, I was considering drawing a gay comic strip then, so I proposed "Harry Chess" to him.

SKIN: The rest is gay pop history.

A. Jay: Back in those closeted days, Clark dared to put in a special slip-sheet mailed to his subscribers. Frontal nudes. No sucking and fucking. Men who bought his mag, called *Drum*, on the newsstands missed out on that hot stuff. How times have changed! I did "Harry" in *Drum* for five or six years. One episode a month. Clark reprinted the whole thing once as a pocketbook.

SKIN: That would have been *The Original Adventures of Harry Chess*. It's now out of print. A collector's item, right?

A. Jay: I wish I had a couple dozen copies. Don't you love researching the dirt of gay popular-culture history?

SKIN: Only when it's not just hormones bitchifying.

A. Jay: If you think that, tonight you're going to get a headache. I'll have to get out my voodoo doll again . . . Uh, let me see, where was I in "The Decline and Fall of Practically Everybody Who Was Anybody"? Oh yeah. Like Sebastian Venable, you see, I travel a lot. I left *Drum* for a year to live in Mexico City for the Olympics. Sniffing around the

"I grew up fixated on men with big pecs and fine nipples."

wrestlers, picking up used international jockstraps, and pumping my tits up at the local gym. Always hoping the yummy Jorge Rivera would come in and sit on my face.

While I was feasting on dark meat, *Drum* died. Clark chose to move on to something better that made him, I think, rich. So "Harry Chase" became Little Orphan Harry. Then Hans Ebensten told me about *Queen's Quarterly*. Publisher George DeSantis hired me freelance and Harry had a new home. I talked George into changing his title to *QQ* to try to butch it up. I could tell sissies were on the way out and sleaze-macho was on its way in. DeSantis then started two more mags: *Body* and *Ciao*. DeSantis was a great publisher. A kind man. I learned a great deal from him about magazine production.

SKIN: Jockstraps, wrestling, water-sports, tits are all very big in "Harry Chess." Lately Harry's gotten quite anal. Harry seems perversatile in a "Perils of Pauline" way. Yet behind the storyboard runs a satirical consciousness. You took on the whole Watergate crowd. Especially in your character Rancid Agnew. You despised Tricia Nixon. Now you seem to have a bead on Ron Reagan Jr.

A. Jay: My social consciousness is minimal. Strictly for laughs. Mainly,

I'm a sex-creature of the night. I'm a bath-house-man. I love the tubs. God bless The Everhard! God bless The Slot! The society that intrigues me comes out after sunset. I draw from my head. From what I see at night under the influence of some recreational smoke. I rarely use models. Poppers are cheaper.

I confess. When I jerkoff, my fantasies are all storyboards. I see them in my mind's eye with all the sweat and muscle that my cartoon men are based on. I have a bootbox full of about 500 possible storylines for fantasy mag projects. All from my X-rated J/O headtrips. I love The Slot on a full-moon night!

SKIN: Have you ever seen one of your cartoon creations appear before you for real in flesh and blood and muscle?

A. Jay: Recently on a local TV program about the joys of physical competition, I saw a bodybuilder who was my ultimate fantasy: big, muscular, enormous pecs, and hard nipples. He was like one of my draw-

ings up there pumping iron on screen. Omigod! So there I was experiencing the ultimate 20th Century version of a Technological Religious Experience: A Grown Man Kneeling in Front of a Cathode Ray Tube, Playing with My Own Tits, Sniffing Popper, and Beating My Dick with My Face Six Inches from the Screen. See this glorious complexion ruined

"... I'm a sex creature of the night . . . The society that intrigues me comes out after sunset."

by Video-Burn?

SKIN: Your "Harry Chess" style would be great as animation. You maybe ought to consider video-producing your own "Harry" adventures.

A. Jay: Too expensive. But the same is true of Tom of Finland. He'd be killer if his men were animated. Is

there out there for us some angel flying too close to the ground? The future of gay erotic art is in video. Funny, that most erotic artists are rotten businessmen. Tom of Finland is finally getting exhibited—and paid—after being pirated for years.

SKIN: What about other erotic artists? Any particular favorite?

A. Jay: Astaire never tells who his favorite dancer is. All I'll say is that I get off on erotic drawings. By other guys. When I put pencil to paper to draw out the fantasy that turned me on, I lose my personal hardon for my own work. That's probably true of all artists. I get too critical about technique and all that stuff.

Truthfully, I marvel at Rex's technical aplomb and his sleazy male content. I like the work of Zak, and the fabulous Harry Bush. I think Jim French is a double genius: first as a pencil-artist, second as a photographer; French, who is Colt, would be the first to admit he's influenced by the Petty Girl style. Those who can't handle his masculinizing of that

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COMIC STRIPPING

ideal don't need to buy him, but they can't deny his talent. I think French's images of masculinity are the most beautiful and erotic I've ever seen: drawings and photographs. In the same breath, I have to credit Lou Thomas, who is Target; he's of the same caliber as French, with a strong macho-poetic eye. After I saw French's early work, I went immediately back to art school at night. He inspired me to keep on learning.

Of the gay cartoonists, I really enjoy Bill Ward. I also like The Hun, whose exaggerated big-nipple style is similar to mine. And I'm continually amazed at the ingenuity of Etienne who can turn out a well-executed storybook faster than most guys can jerk off.

SKIN: As a native New Yorker, you don't find San Francisco difficult for you as a producing artist?

A. Jay: I love SF. I was told, when I gave up Manhattan for the Water-sportsman I loved, that San Francisco was a backwater fishing village, narrowminded, and too laidback. Not true. It's stimulating to live here: one shoe in Pacific Heights and one boot South of Market.

East Coast artists have the advantage of more gay galleries: Lou Weingarden's Stompers, Robert Samuels, the Rob Gallery, and the Lohman Gallery. Chicago has the Brown Bag Gallery. Since Eons folded, LA has no gallery I know of. San Francisco, of course, lost a major creative force, and arts patron, when Robert Opal was shot to death by a couple of polyester cowboys in his Fey Way Gallery.

SKIN: Robert Opal was the most naked man in the whole wide world. Everyone remembers him as the man who streaked Liz Taylor on the Academy Awards. Live. On satellite. Millions saw his performance-art that night.

A. Jay: Robert was the most innovative creator on the West Coast as far as nurturing artists was concerned.

His death was a great esthetic tragedy. There's a used tool company now in his former Fey Way Gallery. Robert would like that irony as a following act. I've thought someone should open a San Francisco gallery and name it after Robert Opal. His spirit should live on.

SKIN: So what about you and Harry, and the future?

A. Jay: Harry and I are going to run off together and take a cottage by the sea. Seriously, "The New Adventure of Harry Chess" is selling well. Harry and I will never be rich and famous, just sleazy and infamous. What more could a man ask for? I am planning a new series featuring Pecs O'Toole and his sidekick, Lats Lonigan.

I also plan to start a movement to make The Slot a National Shrine. I hope that Ronnie's Nancy will help me back that. Then I'm going to

***"I rarely use models.
Poppers are cheaper."***

change the couple hundred photos and drawings that are pushpinned above my drawing board. I currently work for the gay publisher/distributor, Le Salon.

SKIN: What does your lover think of all your notoriety?

A. Jay: He's never forgiven me for sending him the photo of myself that I mailed in answer to his *Advocate* ad that brought us together. I was covered with oil and dripping with chains. He thought I was ten feet tall. I guess that's just my perspective in the way I see life. So how can I help but push that angle in my art? I love big exaggeration that draws attention to little fetishes. I can't help myself. I excuse myself as being the male version of that scandalous movie of my childhood: "The Girl Can't Help It!" So tell me why the hell the *National Enquirer* never calls?