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Autor: Bishop, Donald
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The Bull Market in America

You find the handsome young male peacocks on the street corners of every large city in the United States—preening themselves self-consciously, fingering their duck's-ass hair-dos or standing scowling in their skin-tight levis with legs apart and thumbs hooked into their broad leather belts, wearing their leather jackets; or even sitting in their funny little Ivy League suits in fashionable bars. They swagger along the sidewalks always alert for the «eye» from a passing queer, their own eyes darting right and left under narrowed lids, much as do the eternally questing glances of the genuine homosexual. For these are the new «hustlers», the boys who sell their bodies during the prime-time of their life, when their muscles are stronger, their hips smaller, and their complexions fresher—and they have discovered that these assets are marketable, at least for a while.

New, we say? The male whore is not new. It is just that at present, with more persons aware of homosexuality as an actuality rather than as the subject for a nightclub joke, the hustler is increasing more rapidly in numbers, techniques, and prices. It used to be, in the days when a homosexual had to be obviously effeminate in order to make a pick-up, that the occasional hustler was referred to as being «out for pennies», or sometimes «rough trade» if a beating accompanied his request for money; or—worst of all—if only the preludes of sex had been accomplished before the knuckles hit the jaw and the rough hands found the wallet, he was simply a «jack-roller».

Today, much of this has changed. Large numbers of young men are making either a partial living—and some an entire one—by selling themselves. The professional hustler of today is really a small businessman in a sense: he has his regular clientele, and visits them weekly or every other week, as their inclinations and pocketbooks allow. The part-time ones perhaps do not have regular customers—the young hoodlums, the sailors, the weightlifters, the boys who experimentally have dipped into this seemingly inexhaustible source of wealth, but have not yet decided to devote their entire energies to the business. But the full-time hustlers—and there are many—have well-set in their heads their memorized lists of phone numbers, days of the week to call, how often, and the fee expected, just the way a competent professional call-girl does. The best ones never write anything down.

The types of hustlers in London have been discussed by Simon Raven in a recent publication¹). Though his classifications, as he says, tend to melt into each other, there is no essential difference between his groupings and those in America. There is the part-time soldier or sailor who uses his extra money to buy stockings for his girl; the true homosexuals with «refined» jobs like those of hair-dresser or ribbon clerk; the dull quasi-moron who feels the world owes him a living, and that but for his bad luck he would be as well off as any other; the small criminal, given to any shady enterprise as long as it brings in money; and the intelligent, witty, and urbane full-time male whore who is completely homosexual, and moves in the best circles.

The American hustler is usually more business-like than any of his British fellows, save perhaps the last-named type. He lives by a code. The main tenet of it is: Silence. He never talks about his clients, save to give a friendly fellow-

¹) Simon Raven, «Boys Will Be Boys», *Encounter* (November, 1960, number 86), pp. 19—24.

hustler the name and phone number of a new mark—but he does this only when a customer has asked him to furnish a new body for the old bed; he never talks unless his client wants someone new. The second tenet is: Have the financial arrangement clearly understood before you go with the customer; settle for two or five or ten dollars, and then stick to it. Again, never steal anything from a customer—for the hustler realizes well enough that the homosexual world is a kind of large and formless Mafia; word of a theft or jack-rolling would be flashed as if by magic everywhere. And then—no more clients! And finally, the grade-A hustler never blackmails, nor makes any suggestion of it—again, for the reason that to do so would reduce his clientele. And why kill the goose that lays those lovely eggs?

America is greatly different from Britain. We are, if possible, even more hypocritical; we have not yet even reached the stage of having a Wolfenden committee. It is only with the greatest anguish that American authorities can bring themselves to recognize homosexuality officially, and this despite all of Kinsey's efforts at education. Only recently has the Post Office taken note of the «painful fact» of homosexuality, and begun to censor body-building magazines and photographs, instead of merely delivering the mail as it is supposed to do. Many police officials are aware of the problem of homosexuality in America—especially prison officials—but most of them prefer to minimize the prevalence of the male whore. In the United States, where the vital force has decayed to the extent of endangering the country as a republic, where one loudly preaches freedom in principle and yet hypocritically denies it to citizens in actual practice, and where the basic puritanism has turned every bigot into a self-appointed professional reformer, it is only to be expected that (to a heterosexual) such a loathsome practice as a young man whoring with men for pay is so against the «normal healthy American way of life» that he will do his damndest to refuse to recognize its existence at all.

But the major point is this: there would be no hustlers unless there were a demand for them. And the demand is growing. It is a bull market in more ways than one, for the prices are steadily rising. Ten years ago, you could buy a «heterosexual» boy for two or three dollars; at present the going price is five, or more likely ten. Approximately half of these boys are still just «trade»—that is, they submit to manual or oral sex passively; but after a few years' experience with hustling, plus the attractiveness of higher fees for more cooperation, many of them will—at first tentatively, and then with growing frequency, ease, and even pleasure—take a more active role, until finally they are doing «anything» if their customers pay them well. It is only the naive and beginning hustler who sets his price extremely high and remains untouchable or uncooperative. A little experience brings his prices down, and makes him take a hand in things himself, and generally become less finicky in his choice of clients and the limitation of his actions.

There are currently so many hustlers in America that we can say also of the bull market that it has become a buyers' market as well; there are hardly enough clients to go around. But there would be no hustlers here, as we have said, unless there were people to purchase their services. And these clients—what of them?

They seem to fall into three classes, two of which overlap. The first is made up of the older ones, who can no longer have love without paying for it. Though these may retain some bloom of youth far beyond the age at which the hetero-

sexual, with his family worries, can keep his, there must come a day when it grows obvious that he is no longer attractive to anyone under his own age. Pity the poor soul, thus aging, who retains his passion for young men in their twenties! There are three possibilities for him: the fruitless evenings making the rounds of the bars, and going home alone; or the questionable miasmatic shadows of the Turkish bath with its slimy floors; or the hiring of a hustler, and grasping with a feeble clutch at a pretense of happiness. For no matter how ancient and toothless and bald the client, the only face the hustler sees on him is that of Lincoln or Hamilton; and the only wrinkles are those that pocket-wear in a wallet has put into the money that pays him.

The second—and perhaps the largest group of clients, overlapping the first—is that composed of the homosexuals who must, by reason of their professional status, keep their homosexuality secret. What is such a one to do? If he is a doctor or dentist, for example, he cannot afford in America to let his inclinations become known. He turns to the hustlers to answer the howl within him. You will find in the hustler's mental lists the names of bankers, doctors, lawyers, a judge or even a couple of legislators, dentists, school teachers, university professors, ministers, musicians, corporation executives, movie stars, newspaper men—you name the profession and you will find some member of it, somewhere, listed in a hustler's head, some «Andy» or «Frank» or «Pete». Not every hustler knows an impressive array of professional persons, of course, but you can wager that every calling is represented somewhere.

The third group is small, but growing. Its members are those homosexuals who have lived hard and fast. Though still comparatively young, in their late twenties or thirties, they have become so jaded with the succession of thighs thrashing under or above them that they turn to the hustlers for new thrills. With homosexual activity in America reaching new highs, and the average homosexual having hundreds of «contacts» before he is thirty, it is small wonder that many of this group (especially if they like one-night-stands) increase their number of conquests by means of hustlers. This same group often tires of the endless hours it is necessary to spend in cruising, or in bars trying to find a bed partner for the evening, and turns to hustlers simply to keep from wasting time.

Thousands of goodhearted dull Americans would be inexpressibly shocked to learn that such a thing as the male whore exists in their midst. Their immediate reaction, were they to learn of it, would be «Make a law against it! Wipe them out!»

Dear J. Edgar, dear governor of every state, dear city commissioner of every police force, dear dull square Americans—you can't stop it, and you never will. The law of supply and demand is incontrovertible. You can never be in every bar, on every street corner, in every bus and movie house, to keep these sweet little arrangements from being made. You have legislated against the homosexual, harried him and hounded him with a persecution more virulent and unending than that against the Jews, permitted him by your laws and repressions to be blackmailed, sterilized him, laughed at him, kicked him, beaten him—but you cannot change his inclinations, and chances are he would not let you if you could. Is it any wonder that you have made him defiant, and made him sneer at your attempted restrictions? If he wants to buy the pleasure of a hustler's company for an evening, or ten minutes, how can you stop him?

Go to the ruins of Pompei, dear reformer. Find your way to the house of the Vetti brothers. Pay the guard a few lira and ask him to show you the

small shuttered painting in the outer vestibule. It is of a stalwart young man, exposed, standing next to a pair of scales, and resting a part of himself in one of the balances, whilst in the other—outweighed—stands a pot of gold. You cannot but realize that for many hundreds of years a high value has been put upon such things, whether by men or women. You will also realize that such things have been marketable for a long time.

And can anyone in America, by city ordinance or state law, undo a world tradition that is centuries old?

—Donald Bishop

Geld oder Gelegenheit

One hears a great deal nowadays about the increasing commercialism of homosexuality, both in Europe and in America, about how many youths of the freed fraternity are seeking, not romance, but money or opportunity. Your veteran observer of the third sex is not prepared to dispute the contention that there is an increase in hustling, at least in Europe, of over-night or week-end arrangements made strictly on a cash basis in Paris, in Amsterdam, in Copenhagen and other fashionable watering places of male encounter; but he is prepared to dispute the contention that there are many either cold-blooded or warm-blooded young men who wish to make a more permanent association with another man based on the search for gold or the main chance.

The reasons for this reluctance are not entirely idealistic. There are other elements involved. In Helmut Käutner's excellent film version of Thomas Mann's «Felix Krull», the delectable Horst Buchholz in the title part rejected the offer of permanent protection made him by a Scottish nobleman with a line cleverly transposed into English as «I do not wish to deviate from my chosen path.» In this case the nobleman was approaching a youth, then a bellhop, who was some 45 years his junior, and a youth not—as yet—liberated from the octopus clutches of the Eternal Feminine (Das Ewig Weibliche); yet had he made the same offer to a bellhop who did have a glad eye for men only he might equally well have been snubbed, and, for a subtler reason. The Scotch nobleman could indeed have been only 15 or 20 years the boy's senior and still been turned down, and the boy would most likely have told friends of his own age that the reason *was* the discrepancy of ages.

Yet there is another factor which weighs more heavily than an age differential with our young gazelles today, weighs even when there is no age differential. To move from a lower status in the world into an upper one, to rise to a higher, richer, securer level of society may appear to be a desideratum and many youths in Spain may say they are looking for «Un caballo blanco» (a white horse) or in America a Sugar Daddy; yet when they are actually faced with such a proposition, they reject it. Is this *solely* because youth calls to youth more strongly than money and luxury call to youth? One thinks not.

When a decorative young man of no particular background or education or social grace contemplates such a step, he realizes with alarm that a great deal more is ultimately going to be demanded of him than his beautiful body. He is inevitably going to have to pass muster with the mature gentleman's cultivated friends. He is going to find himself in a situation where he cannot loaf