Sanitizing the Seventies
Pornography, Home Video, and the Editing of Sexual Memory

ABSTRACT  During the 1980s US feminist sex wars, pornography edited its own history, leaving a distorted record both less problematic and less queer than scholars have yet recognized. Academic inquiry into pornography coincided with home-video boom years, and research often took place in adult backrooms, necessarily because pornography was so poorly archived. Yet even as access has shifted from VHS to digital, the field has yet to reckon with how its interpretive frameworks were shaped by a material history in which the films that scholars watched were often altered from the versions patrons had seen in theaters. Gone from both straight and gay films were many transgressive sex acts that had frequently been staples of the genre, affecting the perceived oeuvre of nearly every hardcore filmmaker of the era. This article recovers the lost history of sexual media editing, arguing for a more carefully historicized interrogation of the commercial sources of our porn archives.

KEYWORDS  censorship, home video, new video studies, pornography, sex wars

At the height of the 1980s feminist sex wars, pornography edited its own history. Few noticed and no official archives recorded or preserved this change, but the interpretive stakes were, and remain, high. Scenes disappeared, and with them the social meanings of texts, resulting in a disconnect between embodied historical experiences and the later textual interpretations of those works. The pornography industry sanitized its 1970s iterations, leaving a distorted record that narrowed the scope of its erotic imaginary in ways that left it both less misogynistic and less expansive, a triumph of the banal and the genital that necessitates intervention, since the “porno chic” that scholars have inherited is in large part an industrial memory production of the 1980s and 1990s, as pornography’s history was quietly disciplined and revised over the course of its various platform adaptations.

Take The Private Afternoons of Pamela Mann (1974), the full-fledged hardcore debut of Radley Metzger (shooting as Henry Paris). Few hardcore pornographic feature films have been as celebrated as Metzger’s The Opening of Misty
Beethoven (1976), so it stands to reason that scholars of the genre would investigate his other work. An enterprising graduate student of the 1990s renting The Private Afternoons of Pamela Mann would have seen another lighthearted romp, a cheeky detective story marked by creative sexual interludes, witty repartee, and enthusiastic consent from its amorous heroine. The grim vision of anti-porn feminists would seem refuted by its spunky star, Barbara Bourbon. But twenty years earlier, had Andrea Dworkin watched it at the World Theater on New York’s Forty-Ninth Street, she would have seen a rather different film, one whose sunny efflorescence was ruptured midway through by a brutal rape scene, when Pamela is abducted by a man and a woman who force her at gunpoint into a series of violent sexual configurations ranging from forced penetrative sex to fellating a pistol.

Or take Fred Halsted’s gay-liberationist landmark LA Plays Itself (1972), a cause célèbre touted by everyone from major media outlets to Salvador Dalí, which culminated in a genuinely new sexual and visual spectacle, a lengthy fist-fucking scene. Surely part of the film’s visceral impact on its stunned audiences, the scene disappeared from its home video incarnations, resulting in a warped historical record for scholars. One entire book devoted largely to LA Plays Itself was written without access to the pivotal closing sequence, and when Halsted biographer William E. Jones attempted to reconstruct a complete cut, he needed to draw on excerpts from early VHS and Betamax copies of the gay porn documentary Erotikus (1973) to collate a bootleg version.

The editing of The Private Afternoons of Pamela Mann and LA Plays Itself constitute but two of the most obvious alterations of pornographic history undertaken during the transition from theatrical distribution to home video (fig. 1). Yet even as technologies of access have shifted from VHS to the digital realm, porn studies as a field has yet to recognize how its interpretive frameworks were shaped by a material history in which the films that scholars watched were often altered from the versions patrons saw in Times Square porn theaters or urban grindhouses. The titles were the same, but the advent of home video coincided with the rise of the feminist anti-pornography movement, the Reagan administration’s obscenity crackdowns, and the disciplinary effects of pornography’s rapid corporatization, which collectively sutured a preemptive (and often invisible) censorship into the very VHS tapes that constituted the new porn studies archive. Gone from both straight and gay films were not only rape scenes and allusions to incest and intergenerational sex but also water sports, fisting, and other transgressive sex acts, all of which had been staples of the genre. These changes affected nearly every hardcore filmmaker of the era.
FIGURE 1. Varying versions of familiar films, spread across home-video iterations.
And these significant alterations still remain largely overlooked by scholars. The Halsted fisting scene is something of a structuring absence for scholars of gay hardcore, but among scholars of straight hardcore, only David Church, in a recent and fine-grained analysis, has begun to grapple with this legacy.4 The United States lacks a specific formal proscription such as Australia’s 1995 Commonwealth Classification Act, which bars even consensual graphic depictions of golden showers, spanking, fisting, and other “perverse” behaviors—but also thus documents their excision.5 While US alterations occurred under the general threat of obscenity law, they played out beyond its specific auspices, in corporate decision making that left no accessible records and managed to elude scholars for decades. This was no less than an editing of sexual memory, with serious consequences for our historical understanding of sexual representation. In these practices gay and straight hardcore share a genealogy, one of furtive modification in which adult home video was shaped less by transgression than the implantation of more regulated and often conservative sexual normativities. Far from challenging sexual norms, pornography helped enforce them—on itself.

A RENTED ARCHIVE

Porn studies began in video store adult backrooms, and in some important ways has only begun to find its way out. In her groundbreaking book Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the “Frenzy of the Visible” (1989), Linda Williams acknowledged the limits of the available archive in the 1980s: essentially, the Kinsey
Institute for early stag films, and video rentals for most of the rest. Since her purpose was to chart dominant heterosexual representations of the moment, this served her well, as witnessed by the enduring relevance of *Hard Core* decades later. Yet while subsequent scholars (including Williams herself) would apply pressure to aspects of the book—its exclusive heterosexuality, its reading of BDSM, et cetera—the material conditions of its research base would remain a default methodology until the emergence of a “new video studies” attending closely to matters of platform, physicality, and format.

This inattention was hardly unique to porn studies, but rather symptomatic of film studies more broadly. As Caetlin Benson-Allott notes, “scholars’ tendency to treat commercial distribution like an archival practice” necessitates a reckoning with the ways “material history affects our critical politics.” This need magnifies tenfold when pornography comes under the lens. Few filmic terrains have been as poorly preserved, or distributed on home video with as much open disdain toward their textual integrity, as hardcore, and this degradation is too easily elided by the relegation of porn studies to its own historiographical “back room,” as Peter Alilunas warns.

Thus while all film texts are always already unstable due to the vagaries of censorship, distribution, regionality, platform modification, and other factors, those alterations are cataloged more dutifully for non-pornographic works: from *Greed* (1924) to *Blade Runner* (1982), the travails of so many Orson Welles films, or numerous MPAA ratings battles. Yet when it comes to pornography, the site of crucial struggles over the parameters of feminism, sexual citizenship, and free expression under the First Amendment, we remain under-informed about the ways porn distributors reconfigured the very nature of both hegemonic and oppositional sexualities during the video era.

Ironically, the distant past is frequently better preserved than the recent. John Cleland’s book *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (better known as *Fanny Hill*, 1748) contained an oft-removed “sodomitical” scene between two men, but scholars have long recognized its textual fluctuations. Kathleen Lubey devotes careful attention to the obscure *History of the Human Heart* (1749), tracking its alterations and revisions over two centuries as it became more sexually and genitaly focused, until “the formal and thematic contraction of pornography” itself is made visible through the book’s differing manifestations across time. Entering the twentieth century, Eric Schaefer uses censorial archives to document how “hot” and “cold” versions of midcentury exploitation films circulated, their variations based on regional permissiveness and the contours of local anxieties.
Yet when we reach the modern hardcore era that began in 1970, the archive evaporates quickly. A great deal of hardcore cinema is simply gone—a precise count is impossible, but archivist and historian Joe Rubin considers X-rated film “second only to silent movies in the number of titles that are totally lost,” including historically significant works. When Alilunas sought *Lights! Camera! Orgy!* (1978), the first shot-on-video hardcore feature, he could locate no existing copies. Concluding that “a complete portrait of adult video” is probably not possible, he elsewhere describes resorting to eBay auctions for research materials in the absence of otherwise archived distributional ephemera even for post-1980 adult video.

The new video studies has begun to confront what Church calls “the material legacies of adult cinema,” if slowly. Lucas Hilderbrand’s trailblazing *Inherent Vice: Bootleg Histories of Videotape and Copyright* (2009) catalogs the bootleg erotics of early amateur porn videos, while recent work on “media breakdown” and decaying gay VHS porn, or porn video bootlegging as an act of “indexing desire,” reckons with some of these legacies. Yet Church alone has substantively highlighted the dangers of relying on commercially available smut to narrate hardcore history, which was systematically altered over the course of 1980s and 1990s into more socially and legally palatable forms, delivering porn studies scholars something of a forged and fraudulent archive in which the texts they study depart, radically at times, from those encountered by first-run patrons.

As Church notes, a paradox of censorship is that it documents and thus helps preserve precisely that which it seeks to erase, while “more passive forms of cultural forgetting, such as gradual neglect, may leave far less of a discursive trail.” In the case of pornographic home video, by failing to investigate the integrity of the texts they use and the quiet corporate editing of their archive, porn studies scholars risk historical complacency. Video editing is at once a trivial and momentous history: marginal cuts to a marginal cinema hardly carry the same political weight as contemporaneous political struggles over feminism, HIV/AIDS, queer rights, and other matters of sexuality, but they nonetheless pertain to these debates in the ways the boundaries and limits of the body politic were set, often without public recognition. Much as Marc Stein has argued that the archival canon on midcentury homophile history was invisibly shaped by, first, partisan participants through the materials they bestowed on historians, then corporate interests through their proprietary digitization protocols, hardcore history requires moving beyond passive reliance on available materials—the backroom and its digital extensions—to interrogate and historicize the very texts that have long served as source material.
Church powerfully begins this in Disposable Passions: Vintage Pornography and The Material Legacies of Adult Cinema (2016), chronicling industrial self-censorship in the video era at some length. Yet while he displays a consistently sharp eye for detail and capacious analytical acumen, he limits his discussion to heterosexual hardcore. Putting this straight history into dialogue with its gay counterpart is crucial. Gay porn scholars have more often recognized textual alterations than straight porn scholars, but they still appear as anomalies, in need of a broader context. Porn studies itself remains overly bifurcated in its straight/queer divisions of focus, indeed to a greater degree than the industry itself, where participants have regularly crossed that divide in numerous capacities. Taken together, straight and gay hardcore video in the 1980s and 1990s share very interwoven histories of internal regulation, an important point when it comes to genealogies of heteronormativity (often collapsed into its anti-queer iterations, but also a regulatory apparatus for heterosexuality itself) and the emergence of what became known as homonormativity, or queerness’s complicity in various forms of assimilationism and nationalism. As fisting scenes, water sports, rape scenes, and more disappeared, the pornography industry helped shape and bolster these new normativities.

WATERED-DOWN AUTEURS

By any metric, the majority of both straight and gay hardcore filmmakers recognized by scholarly or fan communities were affected by home video self-censorship. Gerard Damiano, Joseph Sarno, Roberta Findlay, Cecil Howard, Jack Deveau, Shaun Costello, Jerry Douglas, Alex de Renzy, and others all saw their work cut and altered for video. The pervasiveness of this cutting, and its impact on the films as texts, can be gauged by a survey of two paradigmatic directors, Radley Metzger and Joe Gage. Metzger, often hailed as the greatest hardcore filmmaker, pioneered the role of the sexploitation auteur in the 1960s with his glossy, stylized softcore films before undertaking five hardcore features under the name Henry Paris between 1974 and 1978. They embodied the crossover aspirations and multi-gendered appeal of the “porno chic” era, with some of the best production values and wittiest scripts of the genre. Gage, in contrast, took a grittier, earthier approach, but one that resonated with aspects of both gay liberationist politics and the emerging “gay macho” aesthetic. After early forays in straight exploitation and hardcore, Gage established himself with the so-called Working Man Trilogy between 1976 and 1979, films about rugged men who drive trucks,
cruise highway rest stops and roughneck bars, and fight as well as they fuck. Like Metzger, Gage has drawn a fair amount of scholarly attention. Of the eight films between Metzger’s quintet and Gage’s trilogy, all but one suffered cuts and edits on home video. The modifications ranged from trivial to substantial, but none were announced or acknowledged by the paratextual materials of VHS cover art, case descriptions, or advertising. For both filmmakers, the cumulative effect was to circumscribe the erotic imaginary and, ironically, render it more palatable to the conservative sexual politics of the 1980s and 1990s—precisely the opposite of pornography’s ostensibly transgressive impulses. These edits did not correspond to a coherent ideology, scrubbing both misogyny and polymorphous perversity alike, but in their constricting of sexual possibility they left less unwieldy texts for porn scholars to rent and study.

The Private Afternoons of Pamela Mann, as noted above, lost a lengthy rape scene. In a manner typical of what Natalie Purcell calls the “Golden Age assaults” endemic to 1970s hetero-hardcore, the scene moves with sincerity, the sexual assault delivered viciously, Barbara Bourbon’s reactions as Pamela Mann whimpering, terrified, and pained. But after several grueling minutes, the film employs what Purcell calls “narrative brackets” to recuperate the scene into its breezy tale by revealing it as consensual playacting—a “quasi disavowal” that allows it to wallow in misogyny but then distance itself. As the detective following and secretly filming Pamela’s travails explains to her husband, “She enjoyed the humiliation . . . she wanted to be treated like an animal.” Indeed, Metzger himself, in a rather blithe 2011 DVD commentary assessment, explained, “I never thought of it as a rape scene.”

Shorn of this scene, Pamela Mann offers an uncomplicated vision of primarily female desire, albeit mediated through an obviously hetero-patriarchal gaze. Yet the frivolity of its VCA home video versions (VHS 1989, DVD 2001) operates in a different register from the original cut, unmarred by the intrusion of brutality that belies the facile simplicity of the film’s happy-go-lucky tone. Even a few later flashbacks of the scene were carefully edited, as a meticulous shot-by-shot breakdown by one fan noted; some spectral echoes of the rape remain, but sufficiently decontextualized as to void it of meaning.

If this act of repression provided porn on home video with an alibi, showing that it looked nothing like the grim descriptions thrust upon it by Andrea Dworkin or Catharine MacKinnon, other Metzger edits in turn reinforced a dismissive view of the fundamentally unimaginative nature of hetero-porn. Metzger’s undeniable visual fascination with fellatio plays a prominent role in most of his hardcore, often superseding even the genre’s seeming telos of
penetrative intercourse. He did, however, surround this rote fixation with more creative and even queer-tending sexuality, some of the most adventurous of which disappeared in various video incarnations.

_The Opening of Misty Beethoven_, for instance, served as Metzger’s signature achievement, an updated _Pygmalion_ whose scenes of sexual pedagogy lavishly flow across New York, Paris, Rome, and elsewhere. Metzger holds raw carnality at bay through his careful aestheticization of sex, rendered always through humorous distancing and tastefully lit and shot scenes in which every set of genitals of the largely white cast appears impeccably pink. And yet, if _Misty_ acts as transcendental hetero-hardcore, it has also at times had its erotic vision pruned to more easily fit into facile categorization. While lesbianism rarely threatens the presumptive heterosexuality of hardcore cinema, depicting male bodies as penetrable historically might. To this end, at least some versions of the VCA VHS tape removed shots from a critical scene in which Misty, having been “trained” by the aristocratic Seymour to rise from humdrum streetwalker to artful courtesan, comes into her own sexually, participating in a threesome with a man and a woman in which she attaches a strap-on dildo and penetrates the man anally. The fan who documented this describes an “obvious cut just after she lubes his ass and the dildo penetration isn’t shown,” noting that the “censored tape” ran only 82 minutes, despite a box-cover assertion of an 86-minute running time.24

Misty’s facility in wielding a phallus links her to later feminist theoretical discussions of the dildo, and helps establish a genealogy situating later explorations of pegging such as the _Bend over Boyfriend_ series (1998–99) in both straight and queer contexts.25 Yet to viewers who see VCA’s “straightened” version, it is Metzger who appears squeamish in the face of porous sexual boundaries, his editing now a reactionary shoring up of the film’s representational boundaries in which female bodies are infinitely penetrable, but male penetrability is shrouded in ellipsis.

Cuts to his next film, _Barbara Broadcast_ (1977, fig. 2), extend this logic further. Another whimsical, somewhat free-form utopia set at a sex-filled restaurant in which journalist C. J. Laing interviews Annette Haven’s sex-worker title character about her new book, _Barbara Broadcast_ again offers a very clean view of sex in which even money shots are rarely messy. Yet its sexual centerpiece, and most boldly counter-normative expression of desire, is precisely the scene that most frequently disappeared on video. At the thirty-six minute mark, after much humorous but entirely vanilla sex, Laing wanders back into the kitchen, where she encounters shirtless cook Wade Nichols, a Tom Selleck
FIGURE 2. C. J. Laing woos a transfixed Wade Nichols by peeing into a bowl in *Barbara Broadcast* (dir. Radley Metzger), 1977, in the 2013 Distribpix DVD.
lookalike and mainstay of the genre. Turned on by the sight of him, she pauses against a wall near a bowl on the floor and hikes up her skirt; wearing no panties, she flashes her crotch at him. As Metzger cuts against shots of an entranced Nichols, Laing proceeds to squat over the bowl and urinate into it. Once finished, she tosses back her head and laughs heartily, before finally approaching him for a vigorous session of mutual masturbation and oral, vaginal, and anal sex.

The conventional sex never left *Barbara Broadcast*. The peeing, however, was altered repeatedly in various incarnations. Appearing intact on the initial Quality X Video (1977) and Video-X-Pix (1980) VHS versions, it subsequently disappeared. By the time of the 1989 VCA VHS tape, the empty bowl remained on the floor, but to no purpose; Laing’s squat itself is terminal, and a horizontal pan of her body is protracted into clumsy and artificial slow motion, presumably to maintain soundtrack continuity. Yet at the same time even the audio is altered, the tinkling sounds as the urine hits the bowl now absent.26 A VCA DVD version in 2000 restored the sound of the liquid spatter but only visually alluded to it through shots of Laing’s face, and not until the 2013 Distribpix re-release was the scene fully restored.27

Thus yet again, for much of the duration of porn studies’ existence, a compromised version of a major porno-chic film from the era’s most iconic filmmaker represented an altogether more banal heterosexuality than most theatrical audiences would have seen.28 For queer and feminist scholars who might find straight porn largely unimaginative, Laing’s scene resists the general phallic economy of the terrain, recalling feminist reporter Lucille Iverson’s celebration of “pissing, farting, and fucking” at the 1972 New York Erotic Film Festival.29 Indeed, Metzger considered the scene important, and later recalled that it “just took forever” to get the sound of the spray hitting the bowl.30 Considered in the context of the urination scenes in his quasi-hardcore BDSM film *The Image* (1975), this suggests an openness to polymorphous perversity and non-phallic bodily pleasures at the heart of hetero-hardcore—but one obscured by home video editing, which again rendered heterosexuality more rote.

*Barbara Broadcast* lost more than micturition. A concluding BDSM scene between Jamie Gillis and Constance Money, pulled from *The Opening of Misty Beethoven* outtakes and inserted with less than Metzger’s customary grace, followed the trajectory of Laing’s scene: vanishing entirely from the VCA VHS, it reappeared but in crudely edited softcore form on early VCA DVD versions, again awaiting rescue by Distribpix many years later. The cuts to Metzger’s other two Henry Paris films were less severe, though the 1975 farce *Naked Came
the Stranger lost a light, playful spanking scene, reflecting the anxieties that hovered around even slight departures from safely normative sex.31

As heterosexuality found itself narrowed, homosexuality too was quietly adjusted for the home video era. Lucas Hilderbrand argues that gay porn was the central cultural expression of gay liberation, and while Joe Gage came too late to play the pioneering role of Wakefield Poole or Fred Halsted, he loomed large over the iconography of late-1970s gay visual culture.32 What Metzger was to porno chic, Gage was to the clone era of chiseled gay masculinity.

Gage’s gay hardcore debut, Kansas City Trucking Co. (1976), was cheekily described by star Jack Wrangler as “the Gone with the Wind of gay porno movies” due to its ambitious scope.33 Set on the highways and road stops of the US Southwest, its erotics were those of both the open road (invoking a national romance that extended from Walt Whitman to Jack Kerouac) and an open masculinity in the vein of John Rechy’s novels such as City of Night (1963), which pioneered a hustler archetype whose enticement was based in large part on his refusal to coalesce into a clear identity.34 Drawing on this rough-trade mythos, Kansas City Trucking Co.’s own press release emphasized the “story of a straight trucker” who nonetheless observes, and ultimately participates in, a series of sex acts with other men.35 This irresolution, while never quite a tension per se (the Gage men are quite unperturbed about masturbating and fucking together), nevertheless provides a rough-hewn frisson, carried out and extended in El Paso Wrecking Corp. (1977) and L.A. Tool and Die (1979). Even an occasional heterosexual scene, a rarity in gay hardcore, feeds back into Gage’s vision of manly desire.

Core to Gage’s erotics was the offhanded ruggedness of the sex: casual and knocked out in tearooms, glory holes, and front seats in between beers and manly camaraderie, shooting a load together (as his characters would say) was simply part of the male world of friendship and ritual. While distinct from the particular theatrics of BDSM, Gage sex shared with it a roughness that contained an easily missed tenderness. Spitting, crude talk, and seemingly depersonalized orgies left The Advocate’s critic complaining that Kansas City Trucking Co. “lacks much fucking and sucking,” with a cast that “seems fixated on masturbation,” yet the film’s box office success showed an audience open to Gage’s approach.36

As with Metzger, however, later audiences would receive an altered version of Gage’s erotics. His films tended to climax in large, lengthy orgies in which bodies, desires, and identities blurred into both figurative and literal fluidity. Kansas City Trucking Co. culminates in a truck-stop free-for-all, which becomes
aforementioned “straight” trucker Steve Boyd’s initiation into male-male sex. As sweat, come, and beer all run together, so too does urine; in the middle of the scene, stars Richard Locke and Jack Wrangler launch into what leather magazine *Drummer* enthusiastically called “a brilliant, mass golden shower sequence”—not the “fucking and sucking” missed by *The Advocate*, but precisely indicative of an erotic sensibility that extended beyond orifices and orgasms.37

And yet once more, home video moved this closer to mere fucking and sucking, again constricting the erotic imaginary of 1970s hardcore. Of its VHS, Betamax, and later DVD editions on Gagetape, HIS Video, Select Video, TLA, and Ray Dragon, only Select appears to have contained the water sports scene. In a perfect crystallization of the near impossibility of conducting rigorous historical research even on relatively recent hardcore film, none of these iterations of this major gay cultural text is held in a library listed on WorldCat, the most extensive global catalog, and the pre-DVD versions rarely circulate even on eBay. Quite possibly the only place their variations are archived is a 2004 post on the knowledgeable blog *BJ’s Gay Porno-Crazed Ramblings* (fig. 3).38

![Figure 3](https://example.com/figure3.jpg)

**FIGURE 3.** Climactic golden shower from *Kansas City Trucking Co.* (dir. Joe Gage), 1977, taken from best available source, an MPEG file hosted on the blog *BJ’s Gay Porno-Crazed Ramblings*.38
If the alteration of *Kansas City Trucking Co.*, despite coming at a crucial moment in the film and reducing its sexual range, nonetheless remained relatively nominal, home video butchered its sequel, *El Paso Wrecking Corp.* Playing theaters in a ninety-minute version that expanded on many of *Kansas City Trucking Co.*’s themes and motifs, *El Paso Wrecking Corp.* was an artistic and sexual high point of 1970s hardcore, a pinnacle auteurist moment comparable to *The Opening of Misty Beethoven* in achievement. What later audiences would see was a choppy sixty-four-minute condensation that lost not only sex but texture.

The Gagetape VHS and Betamax release at the dawn of the 1980s appears to be the last time *El Paso Wrecking Corp.* circulated intact until the return of a complete version on DVD in 2013. Thus for most of the home video and porn studies era, viewers encountered a film that lost footage from almost the first moment: in the opening scene, a bored Gene and Hank (porn superstars Fred Halsted and Richard Locke) lose their jobs after shooting up their workplace firing a gun at an annoying fly. Apparently cut to distance pornography from the accusation of “violence” (both an anti-porn trope and a legal risk in the Reagan years), the dominant video version is reduced to incoherence with the disappearance of the gun entirely. Gene and Hank set out on the road and almost immediately reencounter elision. At a bar run by hetero-hardcore icon Georgina Spelvin, Gene hooks up with a straight man while his girlfriend eagerly observes. When he returns to the bar he finds Ox, a homophobic lout who complains about “faggots” and “fuckin’ perverts.” When Ox grabs Gene, Gene shoves him away, then throws him through the window, leaving Gene and Hank to take to the road again after spending their savings covering the replacement cost. Aforementioned blogger BJ recalls that “back in the late late 70’s seeing the original in a porno theatre, a homophobe tossed thru a plate glass window, made a HUGE impression on me!” Yet again this scene is pared down to an unmotivated shot of broken glass collapsing without Ox’s body crashing through it; while it takes on oblique resonance, it loses the hardboiled anti-homophobia.

Other omissions return to the redaction of water sports that marked both *Kansas City Trucking Co.* and *Barbara Broadcast*. Two supporting characters, Boyd and Chuck, have a sexual encounter when the former, a biker, stops to see whether Chuck needs help with his broken-down car. He doesn’t, so Boyd says, “Might as well take a piss while I’m here”—which he does, onto Chuck’s chest and face. As Chuck gets into the act they both pee on each other and themselves before fucking on Boyd’s motorcycle, as his line about taking a piss echoes across Gage’s very deliberate soundscape. Once more, the scene plays less as dominance
and submission than an expression of unbridled masculinity, the piss part of a continuum with the beer poured on one man’s face and the semen shot in every direction among the tactile pleasures of Gage’s wet phallic fantasy. But again, its disappearance on video through a brutal cut that launches the scene directly from first encounter to anal sex reconfigures the sexual landscape into a flattened one of penetration and orgasm rather than polymorphously perverse play. As with C. J. Laing’s kitchen-bowl eros, even the aural signifiers vanish; on the prevailing video versions, gone too is Boyd’s looped dialogue.

A subsequent scene in which Halsted fights a construction site foreman before seducing his son also disappears from the later versions in its entirety. And even more impactfully, the concluding orgy scene is radically reduced. While the earlier cuts carry a clear logic of distributor caution, this scene’s butchery is simply an incoherent jumble. In the theatrical version, Gage takes a tired porno trope and powerfully literalizes it. Intercutting between graphic sex and its metaphorical extensions had made for a crowd-pleasing moment of humor in Gerard Damiano’s Deep Throat (1972), when Linda Lovelace’s first orgasm is set against shots of trains speeding into tunnels and fireworks exploding, but it left little room for further refinement. Yet Gage cleverly gave the gag a durational twist: as his men gather at the construction site, many of them anonymous or reduced to extreme close-up cocks, the scene takes on the quality of a single unified machine, pistons pumping and squirting, dragging on until, when he finally cuts to demolition-site implosions, it plays not as a cheap orgasm joke but rather a manifestation of the self-shattering quality of anonymous group sex.

Without the durational element (or, for that matter, the demolition shots), El Paso Wrecking Corp.’s climax plays simply as prosaic orgy. The only real frenzy is the unknown video editor’s blunt force, which chops off even the bittersweet closing moment when a morning-after Gene tells Hank, “You know how it is, when it’s time, it’s time,” parting ways with mutual smiles—yet another affectionate, not-quite-gay Gage moment.

L.A. Tool and Die appears to have circulated on video intact; it alone of the key Metzger/Gage octet eluded revisionism. As the films of Radley Metzger and Joe Gage show, even the work of major hardcore filmmakers looked different on home video—sometimes in trivial ways, sometimes in ways that reshaped, and limited, the erotic imaginaries of their work.

The Defistification of Sex

The sex acts described above systematically vanished from straight and gay films, with similar effects. But if any one sexual spectacle merits sustained attention
for its disappearance from the texts of 1970s hardcore cinema on home video, it is fisting, which ascended into the realm of the queer symbolic at precisely the moment it vanished from the dominant visual record of seventies sex. While pornography has always failed at demystifying sex, it demonstrably defistified it. Often remembered as a sexual innovation of gay men, in fact fisting ran through 1970s heterosexuality as well (albeit in physically asymmetrical form, the gay version being anal and the straight vaginal). Its erasure thus helped some of the foundational claims of queer theory go unquestioned.

Much of fisting’s theoretical significance rests on a few brief allusions from Michel Foucault, whose History of Sexuality (1976) concluded its first volume with an injunction to move beyond “that austere monarchy of sex” by “counter[ing] the grips of power with the claims of bodies, pleasures, and knowledges, in their multiplicity and their possibility of resistance.” In Saint Foucault (1995), David Halperin enshrined fisting as a “utopian political practice” that embodied the “remapping of the body’s pleasures” called for by Foucault. Halperin situated fisting as an “especially clear case” of “the creative and transformative potential of queer sex.” This celebration of transgression, marked most especially by fist fucking, permeates much of queer theory. In a pointed feminist critique, however, Lynne Huffer locates a problematic “masculinist universalism” in Halperin’s valorization of gay men’s sexual creativity. She sees an ironic “foundational contradiction within queer theory,” in that it reductively replays Foucault’s scene of the repressive hypothesis, except this time with queer fisting and transgression pitted against shocked straights. The hardcore of the 1970s helps underscore Huffer’s point—although, in a not terribly Foucauldian denouement, it once again ends in actual repression.

The gay history of fisting is better known than the straight. While Julie Peakman tracks fisting back through Aristophanes and the Marquis de Sade, its invention as an organized social event traces to gay men of the 1960s and 1970s. Gayle Rubin chronicles this emergence in the San Francisco South of Market leather scene and such early groups as the Fist Fuckers of America, eventually coalescing around the Catacombs, a male-dominated “fister’s paradise” that opened in 1975.

Women and straight people were involved in the early fisting scene, although most of its earliest pornographic representations came in gay hardcore. Fred Halsted’s landmark LA Plays Itself introduced cinematic fisting, which quickly permeated gay hardcore. By 1973 the Fist Fuckers had released The FFA Experience (now lost), and Jack Deveau’s Left-Handed (1972), Drive (1974), and Rough Trades (1977), Nickolas Nichodel’s Behind the Greek Door
(1975), and Wakefield Poole’s *Moving!* (1974) all reflected the trend.\(^46\) Poole recalled fisting (which he personally found “nonsexual and too mental”) as “becoming more and more popular,” and fellow gay pornographer Peter de Rome felt commercially pressured to include it in *Adam and Yves* (1974) despite personal distaste.\(^47\) The expensive *Centurions of Rome* (1981) even included a fisting scene shot at FFA club headquarters in New York.\(^48\)

But if gay culture most visibly claimed fisting as its invention, straight hardcore also explored its pleasures. In *More Than a Voyeur* (1976), hetero-hardcore featured its own new mappings of bodies and pleasures—here, on a beach, where a standard straight fuck ends poorly for the dissatisfied woman (billed as Linda Lovelips) when her male partner comes too quickly, at which point she simply inserts her entire hand into herself. With Lovelips positioned astride the man and his now-limp cock dangling uselessly while she charts her own course, the brief but striking scene moves beyond the male phallic.


By the late 1970s this was beginning to change. Wakefield Poole shot a fisting scene for his *Take One* (1978) but removed it before release because “hand-balling is not allowed in L.A. Same for piss scenes. The LAPD busts you for both.”\(^51\) Notably, the scene involved real brothers having sex together for the first time; incest, apparently, fell under the legal radar that the spectacularity of fist fucking could not elude. In his memoir of working in the nascent adult video industry, David Jennings recalled, “I often had to delete fistfucks” in gay films as early as 1978, too.\(^52\) Yet that same year, Falcon Studio released *The Other Side of Aspen*, a harbinger of gay hardcore’s emerging dominant modality: soft stylization, far removed from the underground impulses driving Halsted or Gage; a more standardized masculinity, in the form of well-maintained clones; and a sexual vision that began moving away from the expanded sexualities of water sports and kink toward a decided emphasis on oral and anal sex. Perfectly poised as an inflection point between pornographic regimes, the enormously successful *Aspen* also included a fisting scene between stars Cal Culver and Al Parker.
For that matter, Falcon’s evolution as a studio helps chart the revised genealogy of pornographic sex that the industry produced. Chuck Holmes founded Falcon as a mail-order outfit in 1972, selling 8mm gay loops. For most of the 1970s its offerings ran the gay spectrum, from hardcore beefcake to rougher works such as *I Want Something Big*, marketed in 1974 with a description explaining, “It takes Jim’s whole fist and arm to completely satisfy Donny’s desire. . . . Shows the unbelievable size of Donny’s fully stretched rectum.”53 *Fist Full* in 1975 offered a “fist lover’s delight,” and the double-loop *Erotic Hands* that same year was announced in a proud foldout flyer full of large, graphic images of fisting “past the elbow.”54 Interspersed with these were such vanilla loops as *Allen* (1975), a solitary scene of a “hot young college superstud.”55

The breakout success of *The Other Side of Aspen* “transformed Falcon into a different sort of company,” Jeffrey Escoffer notes.56 Its catalogs shifted to full color, with nearly as much seasonally appropriate menswear as nudity (the September 1981 catalog cover featured a fully dressed model). With *Aspen* as the model, an early-1980s catalog presented Falcon as “top-quality films featuring youthful, good-looking, lust-driven men getting down to the brass-tacks of healthy, wholesome all-male sex.”57 While new production shifted effortlessly, what to do with the studio’s back catalog now became an unspoken problem, and 1980s catalogs reflected the casting away of now off-brand sexuality. By 1986 *Erotic Hands* had disappeared from Falcon’s offerings, and *Fist Full* survived only on a back-page list—in which other loops received at least terse one-line descriptions, but it received none.58

This recasting of the studio’s lineage fit not only marketing strategies, but the new sexual politics. With AIDS came moralistic New Right bigotry and also its internalized echoes in the scapegoating of leather, kink, and fisting communities. Fisting, recognized as a high-risk behavior, took on unsavory meaning, and while an organized subculture persisted at such places as New York’s Mineshaft, its pornographic representation moved to a specifically marked niche in the works of Christopher Rage, Dave Nesor, and other fringe pornographers.59 As Falcon moved away from fisting, Bijou Video in Chicago picked it up. Bijou distributed Nesor’s extreme films such as *Fisting Ballet* (1984) as well as *Erotic Hands*—which in the late 1980s contributed to owner Steven Toushin’s obscenity conviction in Tennessee.60

By this point, mainstream straight adult companies had long cut fisting scenes from their releases—nearly every scene mentioned above was removed on video. Even radical Bijou followed suit. While lambasting the GOP’s “ultra-right wing fanatics (no different from Ayatollah Khomeini),” its fall 1993
catalog included the brief note “(electronically edited)” for the 1975 kidnapping roughie *Boynapped*, stopping short of clarifying that its fisting scene was gone. Bijou’s approach included optical blurring that left fisting scenes intact, but opaque, similar to Japanese censorship of exposed genitals in porn. By the time DVD entered the market, even *The Other Side of Aspen*’s fisting scene had disappeared, thus leaving a distorted erotic genealogy in which fisting seemed to derive strictly from the BDSM world of such films as the notorious *Born to Raise Hell* (1975) rather than having existed within mainstream gay representations.

Straight hardcore was just as uneager to announce its landslide of internal censorship, which went largely unremarked upon except by the industry writer (and video editor) Jim Holliday. In his 1986 consumer guide *Only the Best*, Holliday included “The Famous Forbidden Fist Chart,” listing many of the examples mentioned above. “Fist scenes have been cut from video cassettes for years,” he wrote, surviving only in memory and privately held film prints. That the new, safer, porno sex of the 1980s was adapted to changing times has long been established by porn studies: Candida Royalle’s courting of a female audience with *Femme*, Vivid’s quest for respectability with its Ginger Lynn line, and the fit and depilated bodies of gay porn in the wake of AIDS. That it also rewrote its own recent past to bring it in line with the new normativities of the 1980s may not suggest a conscious or coordinated memory project on the part of the adult film industry, but nonetheless had the impact of one: as fisting ascended into the queer symbolic, one of the strongest arguments against its exclusively gay provenance disappeared from the representational landscape, as heterosexuality adjusted to the new vanilla hegemony.

The loss of fisting scenes profoundly altered such key gay titles as *LA Plays Itself* and *Moving!* (1974, fig. 4). The latter was shot silently and on the cheap by Wakefield Poole; rather artless in its execution, it nonetheless expressed the exploratory quality of gay-liberationist sexuality. Of its three segments, two contain fisting. In the first, Cal Culver doesn’t even maintain a steady erection, indicative of the multiplied sites of bodily pleasure as he and Val Martin suck, kiss, fuck, caress, and make a somewhat faltering fisting attempt. Later, in the third section, Peter Fisk displays more mastery, shoving several metal balls into Tom Wright’s ass, holding him down and shaving his head, and then roughly fisting him at some length. Poole as filmmaker shows minimal interest in money shots; when Fisk eventually comes, his ejaculation is partly obstructed by Wright’s head. Of greater interest to Poole is the climax of the fisting when Fisk pulls out and fluids leak out after him. He considered this “a truly real moment,” one that
“sometimes disturbs the vast majority of gays who for all their gayness still cling to middleclass values.” Audiences often gasped, but for Poole, “That’s not blood. That’s not scat. Those are juices, life fluids. I can’t cut that moment, because that is the REAL moment . . . that’s one interpretation of reality related man-to-man.”

He couldn’t cut the moment, but later distributors could. On home video *Moving!* shrank from sixty to fifty-two minutes. Bijou’s 1994 catalog avoided acknowledging the editing, describing the bowdlerized final section as, “Bearded Peter Fisk worships macho Tom Wright’s big boner while having his butt swatted.” Devoid of its boundary-pushing explorations, it played as rote, inert smut, gay liberation as enjoyable but banal fucking rather than proto-Foucauldian desexualization.

Even Halsted’s landmark found itself reshaped into precisely the orgasmic arc the sex radical had explicitly resisted. In its full, fifty-five-minute version, *LA Plays Itself* treats the orgasm as an ancillary sex act. Building its sexual city-symphony around shots of Los Angeles, audio of an awkward pickup being
negotiated, and scenes of Halsted’s domination of “slave” Joey Yale, the dissonant score swells as Halsted kicks, ties, and beats Yale. Midway through Halsted leans back and masturbates for the camera. When he spurts a visually impressive money shot, his taut body barely quivers, rejecting the orgasm-as-frenzy. This cursory act of coming completed, he immediately lubricates his hands, returns to Yale’s bound, face-down body on a mattress, and pushes his fist into him. For four minutes, as he goes nearly elbow deep, the body and arm rise and fall together (intercut with later, simulated footage that extends the scene) with greater attention, rhythm, and fervor than the orgasm scene. Halsted never pulls out; at a certain point, he simply cuts back to the city, resting on a billboard for the then-current film *Camelot* (1970) with an upraised fist and helmet, the perfect interweaving of urban space and the sexualities it produces. From there, the credits appear.

All of this was central to Halsted’s sexual and cinematic vision. Yet the home video versions—the basis for nearly all Halsted scholarship—omit the entire closing scene. On the HIS Video VHS, Halsted ejaculates onto his stomach, and the film immediately flashes its credits before launching into the short *Sex Garage*, which always accompanied *LA*. A director who very deliberately rejected the conflation of orgasm and filmic climax now replicated the structural logic of pornography at its most basic. *LA Plays Itself* remained an innovative, challenging film, but one ultimately absorbed back into exactly the trajectory it had successfully resisted before its censorship.

Even heterosexuality explored pleasures beyond the phallocentric at times, and in unexpected places. *Candy Stripers* (1978) is everything Halsted was not: a bubbly, lighthearted screwball utopia, an archetypal model of the genre—indeed, the centerpiece of Jim Holliday’s straight-porn canon. Director Bob Chinn, best known for the “Johnny Wadd” series featuring famously endowed John Holmes, dwelt primarily in sunny California bliss. Yet even at the heart of mainstream heterosexuality, *Candy Stripers* hinted at perverse pleasures. “One unique scene alone is worth the price of admission,” coyly announced a newspaper ad.

In fact, two fisting scenes punctuated *Candy Stripers*, occupying eleven of its eighty-one minutes. The minimal plot involves a group of female hospital volunteers who are unfailingly eager to sexually service the patients, doctors, and staff. Foregrounding female desire, it opens with candy stripe Chris Cassidy leading a sexual encounter with a doctor whose name she forgets. A few scenes later, her colleague Amber Hunt visits a male patient (Rock Steadie) to collect a urine sample. Already the scene invokes the water sports of earlier films as she
enjoys holding his cock, watching it spray, and then dabbing it dry. As that evolves into sex, she shares her desire to have him “suck my ass,” adding with frustration, “I can never get anybody to do it.” After a standard penetrative sex scene with money shot, he then fulfills her request, performing analingus and then inserting first one finger, then two, then his entire hand, into her vagina. Steadie’s fisting continues for some four minutes, as Hunt writhes, moans, and guides his arm thrusts with her own hand (fig. 5). While tonally very different from Halsted’s LA Plays Itself scene, it runs parallel in decentering the male orgasm, which rather than the climax of the scene was a mere sexual pit stop.

Shortly thereafter, candy Stripper Nancy Hoffman interrupts an encounter between patient Paul Thomas and his female partner Eileen Welles. Again following porn protocol, Hoffman immediately joins in, going down on Welles, who exclaims, “Gimme some more head, that feels so good.” Hoffman complies, but also inserts first one hand, then her other as well, while Thomas simply sits on the sideline, at one point checking in to ask, “Does it hurt you?” Welles, like Hunt, conveys enjoyment, and the scene continues for five minutes

FIGURE 5. Amber Hunt guides her own fisting in an excised scene inaccurately listed as “previously unreleased footage from the director’s cut” on the 2002 Arrow DVD of Candy Stripers (dir. Bob Chinn), 1978.
before finally including Thomas for a conventionally penetrative conclusion. Combined with other scenes of women performing oral sex on one another, masturbating with a banana, and Hunt’s delight when she meets a man who timidly confesses, “I wanna suck your ass,” Candy Stripers offers a robust array of female pleasures and desires, albeit one bound within the generic strictures of the male-oriented hetero-hardcore feature.

In its video incarnations Candy Stripers would, like the gay features before it, conform to a more reductively phallic sexual economy. By Arrow’s 1987 VHS release, both fisting scenes were gone. The second disappeared through a newly inserted television-style spinning dissolve, complete with mechanical “poing” sound, smoothly jumping from cunnilingus to Paul Thomas’s sexual entrance. Less smoothly elided was Hunt’s scene, which allowed Steadie to insert two fingers before abruptly cutting away, mid-measure of the accompanying soundtrack song. Fisting thus left legible traces—but nothing more. By the year of Arrow’s VHS—the same year the VCR reached 50 percent of the American public—pornographic sex of the 1970s looked very different from its original version. It looked suspiciously like the ideal market conditions for the 1980s: frictionless, vanilla, safe.

**CONCLUSION**

The altering of pornographic memory on video was both constant and cyclical, playing out steadily across the rise of VHS and later DVD, but also in punctuated bursts. Ronald Reagan’s anti-porn Meese Commission report in 1986 spurred one such, and longtime industry insider William Margold claimed that “severe editing, almost castration, of adult film began after the Freeman case,” referring to the 1988 California State Supreme Court decision that finally provided First Amendment protection to hardcore filmmaking, which had long been chased by vice police under pandering statutes. According to Margold, People v. Freeman shed the industry’s outlaw status—and the cleansing of its past then followed. Meanwhile, Cass Paley, who worked as an independent contractor performing some of the video edits for various companies, recalled it as “an arbitrary thing” that differed among companies, although the notoriously intrusive VCA escalated its cautious approach after owner Russell Hampshire served time on an obscenity charge in the early 1990s. The revelation of star porn performer Traci Lords’s underage status in 1986 also led to both heightened legal anxiety and a new wave of tape editing to remove her scenes that further industrially normalized textual alteration.
The instabilities of pornographic texts continued past the 1970s. Into the late 1990s, in but one example, Seymore Butts included a double-fisting scene, in the spirit of *Candy Stripers*, in *Tampa Tushy Fest, Part 1* (1999) and was promptly charged with obscenity in Los Angeles. He won the case, but by the time AVN reviewed the film on DVD in 2004, the scene was gone. The presidential election of conservative George W. Bush in 2000 led to the circulation of the Cambria List, a set of proscriptions by an industry lawyer that included fisting and water sports along with interracial sex, “transsexuals,” menstruation, and other perceived kinks thought to trigger obscenity prosecutions. While the Cambria List evolved into a regulatory discourse perhaps more rooted in the imagination than in reality, it did accurately anticipate escalated Bush administration action, which focused largely on marginal fetish porn involving rape scenarios, scat, and other material from outside the mainstream industry. It also coincided with the transfer of many adult films from VHS to DVD.

In recent years, such cult labels as Vinegar Syndrome and Distribpix have finally restored some of the films in this article to their original theatrical versions. And while “gonzo” pioneer John Stagliano faced obscenity charges as late as 2010 for hetero films that “emphasized the excretory function and squirting,” as an FBI agent explained, this attempt to shore up the boundaries of sexual propriety failed. Genderqueer performer Jiz Lee, meanwhile, reclaimed fisting for a queer feminist porn praxis on their blog for International Fisting Day, October 20, 2011. Much of the anxiety of the early home video era seems superseded by the rise of “extreme” pornography: gangbangs, bukkake, anal gape, et cetera. And yet the “tantalizingly uneven history of sexual visibility” David Church identifies continues. The 2013 Ray Dragon DVD of Joe Gage’s Working Man Trilogy restores *El Paso Wrecking Corp.* to its full original cut, but despite the case’s claim of “uncensored and unabridged,” *Kansas City Trucking Co.* continues to miss its climactic golden shower scene. Even in the attentive world of fan-culture message boards this absence appears to have gone unnoticed, attesting to the ongoing challenges of approaching these texts in a properly historicized manner and situating contemporary erotics within their rightful genealogies.

The rise of tube sites for both authorized and bootleg streaming, meanwhile, affords unprecedented access to previously elusive material but often operates as a chaotic data dump, without even useful metadata. As of September 2018, for instance, leading tube site XHamster contains multiple versions of *Candy Stripers*, some edited and others complete, but none indicate their precise source. Ephemerality too remains a problem: Vinegar Syndrome’s restoration of the...
complete *LA Plays Itself* never received a physical release, only streaming on their Exploitation.tv site, which shut down in July 2018 so that as of this writing, the film is once again unavailable legally. Corporate porn archives do exist, but remain proprietary and inaccessible, so this history can be recovered only through what Peter Alilunas calls “trace historiography,” with fan-culture venues as a crucial source.79

The pornography of the 1970s was more perverse, diverse, inventive, and problematic than its home video iterations would suggest. No matter how much we as film scholars insist on the mediated nature of its representations, porn nonetheless serves as a dominant visual record of the sexual past, and thus a central repository for the production of cultural memory.80 That the 1970s looked different in the 1980s and 1990s than it did at the time matters, as do the shared affinities and genealogies between heterosexuality and queerness in this shift, as pornography retroactively reinscribed the boundaries of acceptable pleasures and desires. Normativity reproduces itself through invisibility and ahistoricity, naturalizing memory as an ideological device that replaces history; counter-normative projects rely upon exposing these operations. The pornography industry colluded in the editing of sexual memory. The point of this article is not to offer a referendum on the complicated political implications of a more fully historicized reading of these films, but rather to insist on the necessity of such readings in work to come. Porn studies scholars must resist the methodology of convenience by which we allow commercial interests to sell or rent us not just our archive, but also a sanitized, revisionist history of pornography itself.

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NOTES

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3. William E. Jones, *Halsted Plays Himself* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011), 39. Cindy Patton in *L.A. Plays Itself/Boys in the Sand* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2014) writes of the climax, “Reviewers of the day suggest that this now missing segment was exceptionally graphic,” indicating she was unable to view it herself (79).


10. For one example, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Changes_in_Star_Wars_re-releases.


22. Radley Metzger, commentary track, *The Private Afternoons of Pamela Mann* (Distribpix, 2011), DVD.


28. Metzger notes that the urination was cut from many West Coast prints in his commentary track for *Barbara Broadcast* (Distribpix, 2013), DVD. Regional variation in theatrical adult film of the 1970s is perhaps even more difficult to trace than its video equivalent, but the role of the repressive Los Angeles Police Department in defining the parameters of representation is often noted by industry insiders, such as David Jennings, *Skinflicks: The Inside Story of the X-Rated Video Industry* (Bloomington, IN: 1st Books, 2000), esp. 55, 138, and deserves further scholarly scrutiny.

30. Metzger commentary track, *Barbara Broadcast* (Distripix, 2013), DVD. In *The Image*, one pee scene is clearly explainable within BDSM power relations, as Mary Mendum’s character Anne is ordered by her mistress to urinate on the ground in front of a man as a form of debasement; its second scene is more open-ended and involves the tactile pleasure of peeing onto her mistress’ hand. These scenes were also cut on various home video versions.


47. Wakefield Poole, *Dirty Poole: The Autobiography of a Gay Porn Pioneer* (Los Angeles: Alyson, 2000), 211; Alex Needham, “Peter de Rome Quit His Job at Tiffany’s


52. Jennings, Skinflicks, 82.

53. Falcon catalog, August 1974, Studio and Distributor Marketing Ephemera Collection, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles. All Falcon catalogs cited subsequently come from this collection.

54. Falcon catalog, April 1975; Erotic Hands mail-order flyer, July 1975, Studio and Distributor Marketing Ephemera Collection, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles.

55. Falcon catalog, April 1975.

56. Escoffier, Bigger Than Life, 178.


60. On Toushin’s legal struggles see his The Destruction of the Moral Fabric of America (Chicago: Wells Street, 2006).


62. For examples see http://bjland.ws/directors/deveau.html.


68. Holliday, Only the Best, 68.


70. On VCR statistics see Hilderbrand, Inherent Vice, 36.


75. Some language here taken from an anonymous reviewer, with gratitude. On Bush-era obscenity cases see Strub, *Perversion for Profit*, 279–97.
78. Church, *Disposable Passions*, 137.