

No. 7  
WINTER 1990  
\$5.95

**OUTLOOK**  
NATIONAL  
LESBIAN  
& GAY  
QUARTERLY

# When Lesbians Fall for Men



**SEXUAL LIES: A BUTCH 'FESSES UP**  
**PHOTOGRAPHY: THE HOMOEROTIC LENS**  
**OPENING THE HONG KONG CLOSET**  
**WHAT'S WRONG WITH MAPPLETHORPE**



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**VOLUME 2, NUMBER 3 WINTER 1990**

OUT/LOOK, National Lesbian & Gay Quarterly  
(ISSN 0896-7733) is published quarterly by the  
OUT/LOOK Foundation, 2940 16th Street, Suite 319,  
San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 626-7929.

**Postmaster:** Send address changes to OUT/LOOK,  
2940 16th Street, Suite 319, San Francisco, CA 94103.  
Second class postage paid at San Francisco and addi-  
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**Deadline!**

How are we going to lay this out in 3 days?



**A Typo?**

Who turned off the waxer?



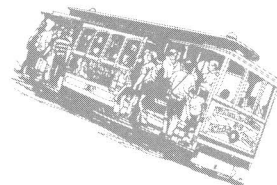
What's wrong with the type size?

Who's supposed to design this new ad?



Will somebody proof this again?

Who is helping me on this layout?



O.K. - can we finish the.....

**SAN FRANCISCO  
OCT. 17 1989**

**5:04 pm**

My **G**od! **d**earth? **H**ere? **S**th this it?

I can't get a **ph**one? There **g**o the shelves!

Do we have food? **W**here are the candles?

Can we **d**rink the water? Was Cathy coming over the Bay **B**ridge?

Where is a **R**adio? Where is Peter? Doug?

Was Jenny **D**owntown?

**A**mid the chaos, despair, loss, confusion, helplessness and comradery, most San Franciscans survived the earthquake. Thanks to the neighbors who helped and comforted us all. To friendship. To family. And to a deeper, richer appreciation of each and every day.

# "O, Say Can You See" ...As Far as We Tell You to Look

IN *TO ELSIE*, a poem dedicated to his black maid, writer William Carlos Williams commented that "The pure products of America/ Go crazy." You could easily substitute "politics" for "products," given the series of political decisions that have been rolling out of Washington lately. First there were the maddening Supreme Court rulings on civil and reproductive rights. Then came last summer's potboiler, the equally enraging controversy about the Corcoran Museum's cancellation of the Robert Mapplethorpe exhibit and the subsequent "Helms Amendment."

Though there may not be a *Hardwick* facing the Court this term, the rulings it already has issued will have a dramatic impact on the gay and lesbian community—since it is often through the laws, statutes or constitutional amendments designed to protect women or people of color that we have obtained protection for the precious few rights we do have.

While not outlawing abortion *per se*, *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* opened the floodgates for right-wingers to deluge lower courts with cases that restrict reproductive freedom. On the civil rights front, there was *Patterson v. Maclean Credit Union*, a case which lacked the visceral impact of a sweeping *Brown v. Board of Education*, but, like *Webster*, continues the process of whittling away our rights. As a result of *Patterson*, minority employees still can lodge discrimination claims during the process of applying for a job, but Section 1981 of the 1866 Civil Rights Act no longer provides them with redress if prejudice obstructs their promotion once they've been hired.

It would be an easy leap of conservative faith to use the ruling in *Patterson* to discriminate against gay men and lesbians in the workplace, or to use the new restrictions on reproductive freedom generated by *Webster* to justify state intervention in the lesbian baby boom. It seems that desecrating the flag (as is the pleasure of this issue's back cover artist, Gene Wesley Elder) is turning out to be our first—and perhaps last—right to be protected by the Rehnquist court.

Out to ban public funding of (amongst other images) "homoerotic" art, the Helms Amendment is one of the most obvious anti-gay rulings to emerge from Washington recently. It's particularly chilling, not only because of what it says, but because of the form which it takes. It appropriates

the language of the non-discrimination clause, the building block of gay civil rights, only to turn around and censor gay speech. With Congressional elections rolling around in 1990, our sometimes allies on the Hill have issued generic objections to "censorship of artistic expression." No one has dared defend the right of homoerotic images to exist in and of themselves.

Because these assaults are scattered and buried under an avalanche of obscure references to code and section numbers, and because they don't always affect us on the basis of our sexual orientation, we may be numb to the political sum effect these Congressional and Court actions are having. As dispersed as these attacks seem to be, they actually betray a shrewd sophistication. The construction of a kinder, gentler nation seems to depend upon the piecemeal dismantling of the liberties of those political constituencies who challenge the identity and privilege of the conservative mainstream.

Indeed, the conservative right has launched a new cold war, with a new cast of demonized "others": We're diseased-ridden infectious carriers; we're violently crazed drug pushers and addicts; we're lazy do-nothings who want to ride the backs of hard-working white men; we're sexually promiscuous women who don't want to bear our responsibilities when we fuck around and fuck up. The danger for those of us on the political margins is that this name-calling is so specific and so withering in its specificity, that we may not notice who's alongside us on the firing line. Let's not allow these seemingly blind-sided attacks to prevent us from seeing that all of our backs are pressed against the same wall.

Jackie Goldsby, for the Editors

Desecrating the flag is turning out to be our first—and perhaps last—right protected by the Rehnquist court.

