



**REDLIST**

FRIENDSHIP

It's All About The Eyes

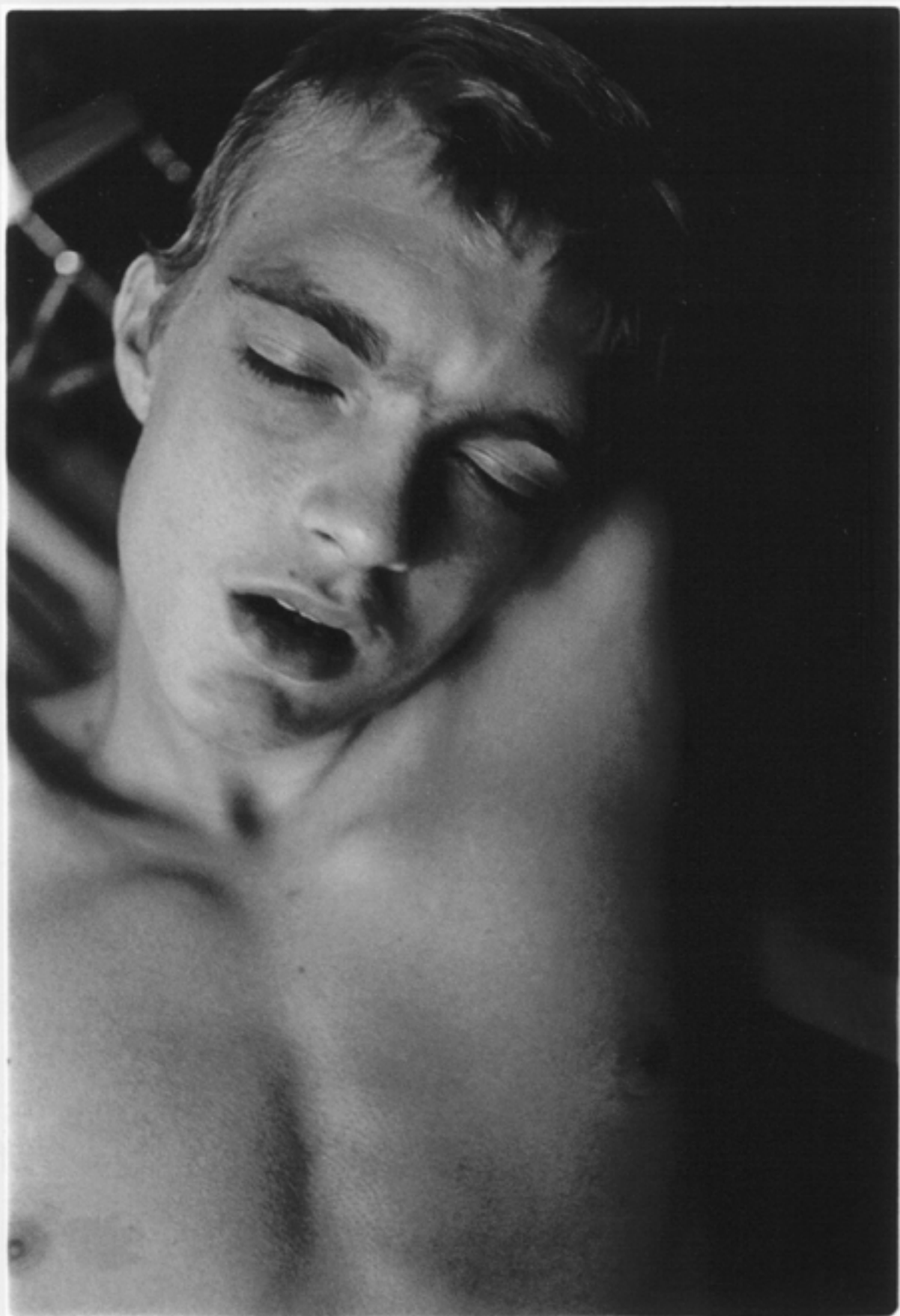
# *The Work of Amos Badertscher*

Hunter O'Hanian

Amos Badertscher never talked about desire. He just showed us what he liked. It's a long story, but in the end, it was about the eyes. He believed they told a story if only we took a moment to take it in.

*Hunter O'Hanian is the founding Director of the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art. In May 2025, Phaidon published Amos Badertscher: Images and Stories, edited by Hunter O'Hanian, Jonathan D. Katz, and Beth Saunders. [HunterOHanian.com](http://HunterOHanian.com)*





Having lived in Baltimore his entire life, Badertscher (American, 1936-2023) spent forty years documenting the gay world of Baltimore from the 1960s to the early 2000s. In all, he worked with more than four hundred models, mostly people he picked up at one of Baltimore's meat racks or seedy gay bars. Gay men acting straight. Straight men acting gay; everyone willing to pose nude for the camera and make a record.

In nearly every instance, he wrote about the individual's life – their victories and defeats - often on the margins of the eight-by-ten silver gelatine prints he made in his basement.

out together a lot in the late 90's, hustling

Sean and Billy under a bridge on Wilkins Avenue. They have



and scoring drugs all over the westside. Sean was part Cherokee & lived with his mother, her boy friend & 2 younger brothers in Brooklyn in S W Baltimore. He started hustling at 14 & his father died in jail of sclerosis of the liver. *R 1918*



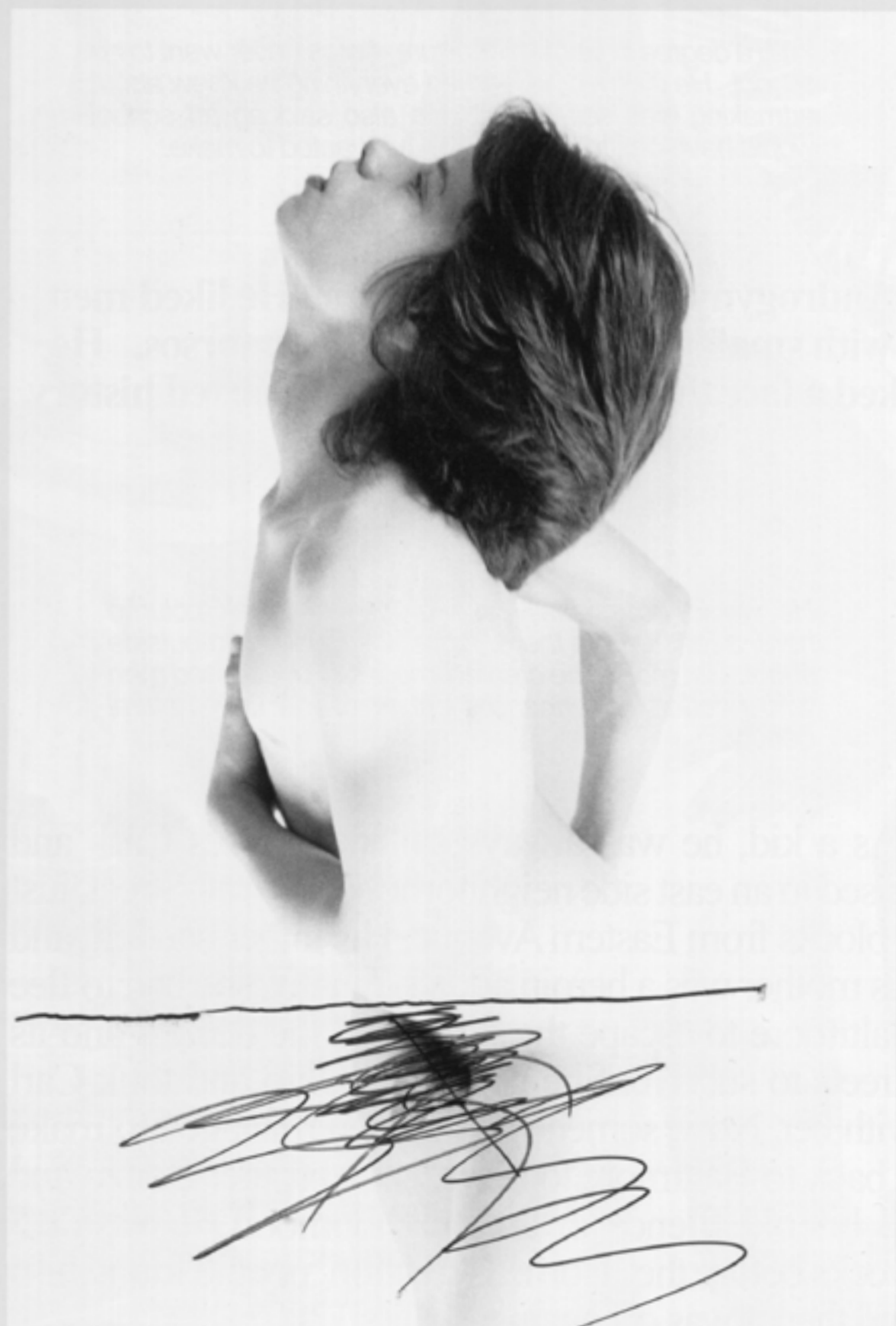
*With a degree in English literature, Amos never went to art school. He claimed he learned everything he knew about artmaking was self-taught. He also said an art school would have destroyed the work he wanted to make.*

**Androgyny caught his attention. He liked men with small waists and hairless, lean torsos. He liked a face that told a story and imparted history. And he liked eyes.**

*He would occasionally use props—a Greek column here, a feather boa there, a graffiti-ed wall in an outside shoot. But mostly, he created images of unadorned men who needed no enhancement to exude their natural beauty.*

“As a kid, he was always called ‘Glasses Carl’ and raised in an east side neighborhood on Pratt Street, just 3 blocks from Eastern Avenue. His father had left, and his mother was a heroin addict. Finally, she had to flee Baltimore to escape the drugs and the dealers and its streets to survive. She moved to Ohio and took Carl with her. Now, somehow, Carl had managed to make it back to Baltimore to be with his brother Bonzo and all his old friends in the neighborhood. It wasn’t 5 weeks before the ‘Home Detention’ people found him and then it was off again to Ohio.” 2001







“On the opposite side of Patterson Park, along Baltimore Street, there were so many street corners for casual loitering. Streetlights made shadows form at each house corner and Billy might be found there in the late evenings, for one or two summers. He was always casual and friendly with a large black comb at the ready in his left front pocket. The whole city back then seemed so labyrinthine, so compelling, so endless and resistant to change. After all there would always be boys on the streets, and men. It was so sanctioned by the Ages.

Oh!, as Rimbaud could so often begin a line of poetry, ‘those hot, heavy and so humid Baltimore evenings, each night having its own particular smell, its own particular fantasy, its own particular ecstasy or danger’. And I, for one, really believed it would all continue forever and myself along with it. But I was much younger, so clueless and obsessed and I knew no tomorrow. And yet, all of this did change and so quickly and completely vanish from history. Faster than a speeding bullet, faster than a heartbeat!” c. 1982

“He looked very much like his divorced mother, her light, delicate features. Her voice, fragile, hesitant, questioning. Her nervous smile on too many occasions. There was not the slightest doubt but that he was her son.

Just before this he had pulled out from both pockets, slowly, sheepishly and incredibly, a small arsenal of drug paraphernalia and then laid it all out somewhere in the room, meticulously.” 1984

David came from a typical Baltimore working-class neighborhood. As a younger boy he was constantly ridiculed and harassed, sometimes physically, by most of his peers in this neighborhood because of what he was. Actually, he's quite good looking.

His only dream was to become a Woman, at any cost, which he eventually did, completely. He wanted nothing to remind him of his past as a boy: His image, his name, and all the pain that went with it. Only these photographs remain.” 1975





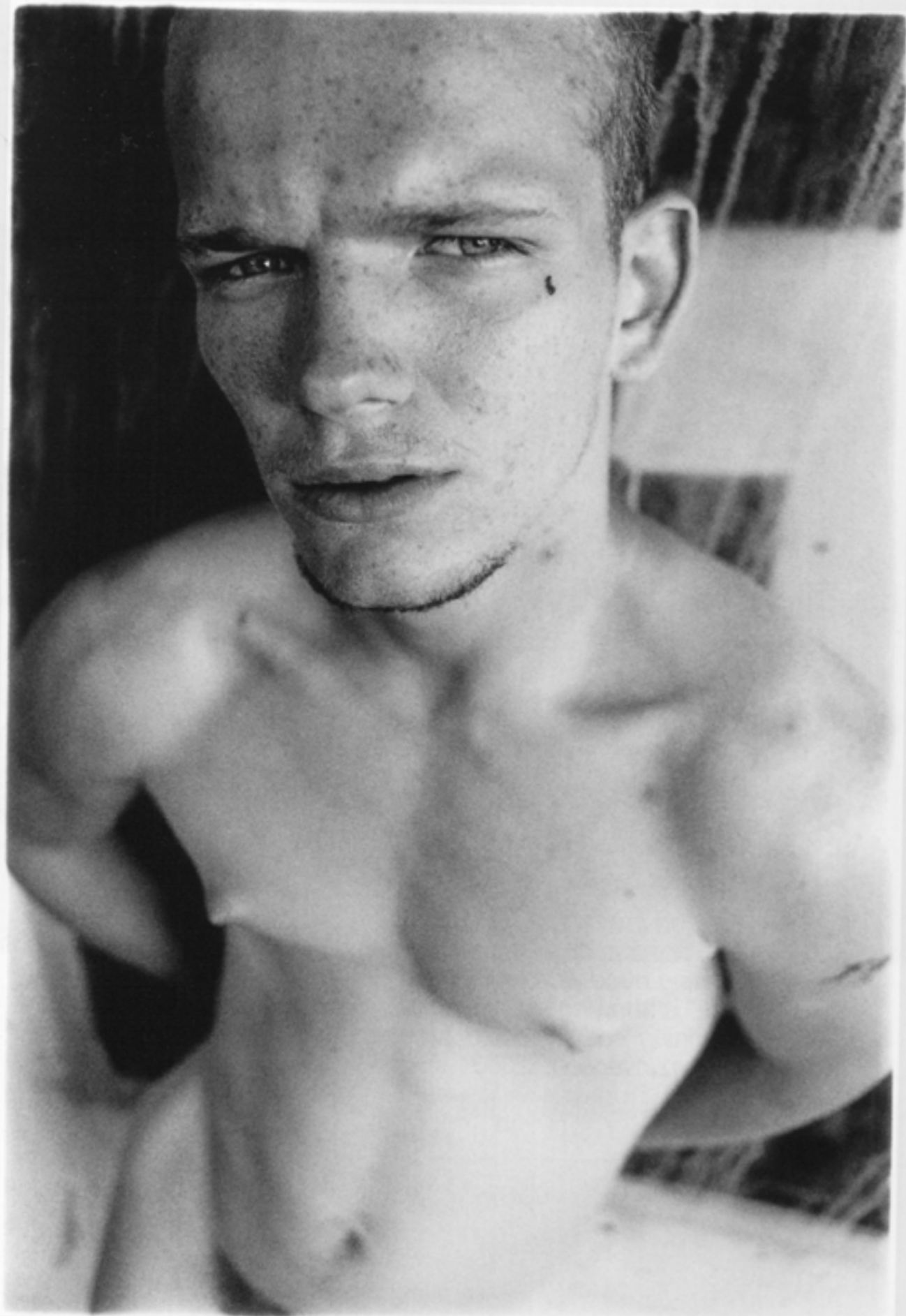


get a good copy of "Sexual Behavior in the Human Male" by Dr. Alfred Kinsey and Ward P. B. T. All of it!!



Dr. Kinsey will explain to you in gruesome detail everything you always wanted to know about "Beastility".

When the navy ships docked in the Baltimore harbor with <sup>real</sup> sailors in the 70's, it was amazing how many of them so quickly found a lot of the gay bars esp. the "Hippo"





*"Last of the red hot reclining Odalisques on the east side of Baltimore City in 2003. 'PCP' Peaceable, erotic, fluid, not armed and dangerous, cool, carnal, accommodating, well-built, always laid back, far too casual. 'A photograph is always a kind of oblique self-portrait, which simultaneously shows reality and the person who is recounting it.' 'You coulda fooled me!' You can still experience countless moments of joy in your private life today.*

**They all lived in Baltimore City and after a while I felt like one of the family.**

**Why not put Something new in your bedroom, tonight!  
'Good Luck' will never abandon him.**

*Early on in the last century major European painters would never put pubic hair on their sizeable pampered reclining nude women, 'Odalisques' they called them. 'PCP' is showing everything that God gave him in the beginning so you could say that pubic hair was a modern invention." 2003*



