

May 2, 1985

Dear Eldon:

I wanted to wait until all was well before writing to you about the typesetter. What a fiasco! but looks like we're in business now.

When we first got it, we couldn't regulate the leading...all the lines printed real close to the one above it, no matter what setting we put it on. Compugraphic sent some goof to fix it (we had to give them \$300 upfront for the call) and he spent over two hours on it, but, when we used it a week later, words on the line were dropping down about a half-space, not every line, but once in a while. They sent another goof (at another \$300) who worked on it another hour and said there was nothing mechanical wrong with the typesetter, but we needed a new 'C' board, and that the 'C' and 'A' boards in the spare parts kit were bum. I wrote a letter to the District Manager protesting the service charge for the first call, insisting he hadn't corrected the "leading problem" and he promptly sent back our check.

So we ordered another 'C' board (\$443) but when we put it in, the type was worse than ever, with no justification and big black lines all over the paper. Went through a week hassling to get them to send the serviceman back open account, as this \$300 every call was insanity. So they sent the first goof back, who spent another two hours working on it until he finally decided that they had sent us another bum 'C' board and he took it back and sent another, which turned out to be even WORSE than the two before it...all the words were printing out on top of each other. Called the District Manager again and they quickly sent a third serviceman who worked on it another two hours and said we never needed a 'C' board at all, but it's the flash lamp and trigger module that needs to be changed! He put a flash lamp in it from his repair kit, even though it wasn't the right part number, but I typeset a whole lot to really test it and it all came out real nice, so (dare I say?) it's WORKING! So we're supposed to get credit for the \$443 and buy these "\$200" parts instead (after they ordered them I realized we had a flash lamp in the spare parts kit already, but things are confused enough--I might make them use the one we have and return the new one for more credit when they come to install these things). Boy, have we learned a lot about Compugraphic Incorporated! What a racket! The processor is fine, except we have to 'prime the pump' each time we turn it on.

In the meantime we've been hassling with word processing equipment, too. Tom's stepfather "donated" a Diablo computer and printer to our printing business and we spent months trying to get it going, finally determining that Diablo no longer makes systems disks to get the computer up (it's only a 1976 model, but already obsolete in the computer industry), but we hoped we could get the printer to hook up to a personal computer. Tom and I went to

ComputerLand (now we call it ComputerScam), *intending to buy an*

IBM, but the salesman talked us into an AT&T, promising it would work with the printer and the software I'd purchased. When we got it we found that there was no way to connect it to the printer (Diablo said no adapter is made, either) and I discovered that my software would work on an IBM with 256K, but because I had an AT&T, it needed 320K to perform all the functions. We packed the thing back up and returned it under their 30-day return policy, went to another location and got the IBM I wanted in the first place with a Brother printer for the same price as the AT&T. So I'm real happy with it and I am writing this letter to you on it. I've already got rough drafts of nine chapters of my biography of Jack Garland in it, and pretty much the final draft of my newly revised edition of my 1980 pamphlet, Information for the Female-to-Male, which I hope to sell through the mail.

I am still on unemployment, but yesterday went to interview for a job, which I start next Monday. A guy I worked with at ARCO recommended me to this man and wife who have some kind of "sales promotion/sweepstakes/premium" business in their home. They've just relocated from New York and need someone to get their offices together. They live in a house and have their offices on the second floor and it seems like these people are loaded. They just got an IBM computer like mine and I'll mainly be entering data into that at first. He thinks about 12 hours a week, and agreed to \$12/hour with a salary review in a few months. It's an ideal situation. He even said I could work on my biography on their computer if I wanted, so I can do my work and have them pay me \$12/hour for it!

Got together a few times with Howard when he was out here--he's always such a joy to see. He always makes me feel like getting old won't be so bad after all. He took me out for breakfast on Castro Street one morning and a few days later I had him and his old friend Paul over for dinner. Tom couldn't join us either times--he's been on such a god-awful work schedule. Yesterday he went in at 3:00 p.m. and returned this morning at 7:00 a.m.

I'm finally getting involved in another gay organization, the San Francisco Bay Area Gay & Lesbian Historical Society. They're just forming and I've volunteered to work on their newsletter and other typing/printing/typesetting for them. I've told several members I'm TS, mainly because I can't fully share with them what I have to offer without them knowing. I'm one of the "old timers" with historical significance because I've been involved with gay lib since 1973. I'm going to donate my old GPU NEWS to their archives and several people there remember GPU NEWS.

Just now we got a bill from Compugraphic for the flash lamp and trigger module--\$432!!! Now for sure I'm going to have them use the one in the spare parts kits and return this new one. The repairman was so positive it would be about \$200. I sure hope we

don't have to deal with them very often. What a rip-off company.

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Eldon, you won't believe this story!!! It just gets better and better! So the third repairman returned to install the flash lamp and trigger module. I told him we had a flash lamp in the spare parts kit, but he said it wasn't the same part number as his catalog said for my machine--it was the same number as the original one giving us a problem. OK. So he installs the new pieces and then, when I test it, NOTHING AT ALL PRINTED ON THE PAPER! He worked on it about an hour and finally ended up putting back the old trigger module, plus the flash lamp with the wrong parts number he'd taken from his repair kit last time, just happy it was WORKING and he was sorry, he said, he ever tried to "do it right" and put in the new parts!! He took back the two new parts and now they can only charge us for one flash lamp, which according to this rip-off invoice they sent should be less than \$200! HA HA on them. What a riot! Anyway, I don't care what it is just so the goddamn thing is up and working!

Well, meanwhile, while all this shit is going on, I find out my older sister Kathleen (3 years my senior) has multiple sclerosis. I am devastated and it seems like it's just one damn thing after another with this family of mine. My 20-year-old brother gets killed on a motorcycle in 1978, my dad has a fatal stroke in 1983, my usually healthy hyper sister is leveled with multiple sclerosis. She just finished working as a warehouse supervisor with a hard-hat on and everything in New Jersey for PepsiCo. Now she's there in Froedert Hospital (Milw General) and will be for several more weeks and then they have to send her to a Rehabilitation Center to learn to walk and use the bathroom. I just wish to hell she were out here with me and my other 2 sisters and their families so she'd have more help/encouragement. My mother and grandmother are the only ones there in Milw and my mother is wandering around with a halter heart monitor on. I have to stop being so freaked out about it, because Kathleen is married but her nitwit husband is in New Jersey dissolving his failing business with my older brother. I guess it really is his responsibility to decide "what are we going to do with Kathleen." He says he's going to fold up his business, throw everything in a U-Haul, drive to Milwaukee, throw my sister in the trunk and come out here to San Francisco, like he promised her he would a year and a half ago.

Well, Eldon, see how great these word processors are. I just blasted off a real long letter, no sweat. Write when you can.

Warm regards,