Oh my, you lucky folks out there, it's time for my annual xmas letter - hopefully only one of many hilarious and bright even. this holiday season. It's taken me nearly a full week, off and on, to write it. So, no excuses. You better laugh hard.

We'll start right off with the real nitty-gritty. I'm most unhappy to announce I'm making thousands of dollars less this year and I have no one to blame but myself.

I've kept David Combs, my ex-wife, on the payroll to keep her out of the house. I've hired her new lover of two years' standing to help him support her.

I've given John Heliker, an old friend, my favorite mental retard, and a loyal hardworking good productive employee a raise or two -- not because I wanted to, but because he well deserved it.

John Klar, my apprentice lampmaker of 7-yrs standing, who was erroneously described as 'being gone for good' in last year's picture section, is back. I admit, by now, he's become a better and more experienced master-lampmaker than I.

But he's also obnoxious. Moody. Throws temper tantrums. Works like a speed freak. Is enthusiastic, productive, interested, passionate, artistic and talented. He's super productive, really. And I pay him an awful lot of money. Only because he earns it.

I've put George Flimlin on the payroll as well. (Everyone calls him 'Miss George,' a nickname he doesn't object to because, in his words, "It sounds so prim & proper.") He's cute, young, sweet and (periodically) com-

patible. A very hard working, domestically-inclined boy who has, over the past eleven months, gone from friend and sleep-in slut, to employee and roommate...and on to fiance, to wife, to ex-wife and now back to fiance again.

You're beginning to get my drift. It's been a busy, topsy-turvy year. But is this any way to run a quarter-of-a-million-dollars-a-year business? I think it is. Aren't you glad you don't own stock in this outfit.

And despite this mini-army of helpers, I still have to play bookkeeper, secretary, salesman, stock boy, garbage-packer, inventory clerk and janitor. I'm also a manic-depressive boss and a merciless slavedriver. That's why I have to pay them all a fortune to put up with me.

Since some but not all of you fans keep files of these incriminating, unique, pathetic, embarassing, hysterical yearly notes, (Shame on those of you who don't. Today's Xmas letters could be tomorrow's valuable collectibles.)- I'll recap last year's annual soap opera in a few short sentences.

Business was booming. (It continued but my expenses boomed even more.) I had a new flame. (It flickered out by early January.) Willie & Marsha had left home for part of the year and then returned. (They did the same thing again this year!)

Willie had cut way down on hustling and had held a responsible, wage-paying job as manager of NIC's top male burlesque house for nearly a year. (He quit a few weeks later. Hustled his way through an endless lost summer. Fell in love with a man nearly twice his age, moved uptown and is still involved in a rocky relationship. But, at last, he has started working hard again - this time in his new lover's Columbus Avenue card shop. Oh, I wander. Back to the recap. Marsha was hustling the West Side Highway. She went to California again in April for six months. When not in jail, she was virtually held captive by her young, lavishly kept hustler friend in fashionable Woodland Hills. But, finally, she 'escaped' back to Hoboken.

It's been almost two months now. Hasn't gotten arrested yet. No warrants currently out on her. Opps, Marsha just walked in. Got a "disorderly conduct" ticket last night. Has a court date January 29th. Probably will just get a fine. Marsha can't afford a new wig. Goes up on the row with the other

Marsha can't afford a new wig. Goes up on the row with the other hookers wearing a dress anyway. Doesn't seem to do much business though.

"Those men don't like girls in combat boots that much," Marsha says. But she still has her fans. "Poppa ten-dollar" calls occasionally and she rushes off to the city to meet him.

ally and she rushes off to the city to meet him. Paying dates are not allowed at Hotel Wicker. Contrary to past impressions, my home is not a house. We've got to stay respectable. Otherwise we might lose our innkeeper's license.

It's great having her back. She's my big home mama. She's funny, sweet and good. She truly loves people and gets off on helping those who need it. Anyone in NYC can tell you, she is truly a living legend.

living legend. She visits strangers in the hospital"aids ward whose friends are "afraid" to go and cheer them up. She gives the cold the clothes off her back. She gives her hungry street sisters food, and money, if she has it. She energetically collects toys to give to the retarded children at Christmas. She even chipped in \$150 to help pay off Willie's bill.

And she works anybody and everybody for all the dollars and "spare change" she can get.

After all, she's a self-described S.S.I. "social security cheat." The government only gives out minimum support, not the kind of money a "real soul sister" needs to go out each and every night to disco with today's "space age children" until after the sun has risen.

MARSHA OUT ON THE STREETS. ACTUAL PHOTO OF A JOHN KLAR TANTRUM



MARSHA BEING HELD PRISONER IN L.A. SUPER GOOD WORKER JOHN HELIKER



MARSHA SERVING THANKS-GTVING DINNER BACK IN HOBOKEN TO OUR NEIGHBOR, BILL "I've lived too long already," Marsha says. "I have to get out

there if I'm ever going to meet poppa-million-dollar. I'm 39 years old and I've got to find him soon." (Ain't it the truth.) Last year I announced an impending big Puerto Rico vacation-honeymoon-family-trip. The would-be 'honeymooners' (I wince) didn't make it. But the kids did. I sent Willie & Marsha on to San Juan alone for two weeks. John Bronson, of the El Mar Guest House, did us all an enormous favor by agreeing to manage their money - giving each their daily \$20 traveler check. He really had his hands full.

Willie played blond-beauty nymphomaniac up and down the Condado and at the gay discos. Marsha hid from the afternoon sun in the balcony of the local porno theater, a sexually active entertainment spot.

By night, she was a go-go dancer at Vibrations, a local gay bar, and shook it all night for free drinks and a rare \$5 tip. Reportedly, at one point, she even became a sugar momma paying some local hustler a few dollars for stud service in the backroom.

All this wasn't exactly the uplifting, educational, broadening cultural experience I had intended to finance. More specifically, I was anguish-stricken and suffered horribly via long distance phone calls during the next two weeks while they squandered \$1500 of my money. Never send a 20-yr-old blond nymphomaniac and a 38-yr-old black,

transvestitic, somewhat-mental hustler to Puerto Rico and expect them to get off on historical forts, old Spanish architecture, coral-reef beaches, rainforests, Indian caves, magical phosphorescent bays, mountain scenery, etc. They'll only drink and party your (and their)

money away with gorgeous studs on the Condado. Now you know. Everett Trop & Guillermo Knight, two of my closest friends who live in San Juan, did their best to help out. With a mammouth weeklong effort, forty dollars in phone calls and another \$50 expense money, we finally got them to the rain forest on a tourist bus. was the extent of their non-sexual sightseeing. That

Willie more-or-less paid for his own trip. Marsha's was heavily subsidized. But Willie, after arriving home with an allheavily subsidized. But Willie, after arriving nome with an all-time-high bill of nearly a thousand dollars, quit his job at the theater because, in his words,: "I'm tired of working." (And who isn't?) - "There isn't any future there." (Maybe so, but \$200 a week clear isn't bad for a 20-yr.-old who can't even read or write.) -and- "This is my last summer to have fun." (I doubt it.) - "After this summer, I'll have to work the rest of my life." (Let's hope so.) I got extremely twisted one morning after he'd been out playing all weekend with his new boyfriend at NYC's most expensive discos. To my mind. Willie was becoming a lazy hum - trying to get aven with not

my mind, Willie was becoming a lazy bum - trying to get away with not paying his bills & living off me.

Knowing Willie couldn't stand a mess, and blinded by what for

me was my first experience with what I can only describe as 'parental rage,' I began throwing eggs at the kitchen walls and cabinets. "He doesn't want to work for money," I shrieked, clutching at the eggs in the frig so hard several broke in my hands as I pulled them out. "Well, I' see he works --works for nothing, cleaning up this mess."

Bam! Splat! Bam! Splat! The entire kitchen was a dripping, gooey, eggy mess. Feeling relieved, I returned to the livingroom. "Why did you do that?" George chirped. "Willie and his friend have probably already left for a week out on Fire Island. His friend has a house there. We're probably going to have to clean it up ourselves.

The rage returned. I rushed back into the kitchen like a man crazed, grabbed the last box of eggs and headed for Willie's bedroom. Willie had just painted it a godawful maroon. I systematically pelted

Willie had just painted it a godawiul marcon. I systematically pertect the walls with the last of the eggs. "He'll work," I vowed. "He'll work. He'll have to clean these walls anyway." Soon both walls were shiny and slimy, decorated with running globs of yellow and white spots of shell. My calm returned. My euphoria was short-lived. I didn't know dried eggs had a

consistency somewhere between that of plaster and cement. Willie came We all worked at cleaning and repainting the kitchen. But, if home. you look hard, you can still see a few streams of dried egg under the new coat of paint

But the walls in Willie's room stayed Wickerized for months -mostly hidden by paintings and tacked up spreads. Surprisingly, Willie's new affair seemed to go well. He moved uptown, (No rent there.) --coming back only a couple days a week--now and then for longer periods. Slowly, he paid off his bill. We always knew when he and his new hubby were fighting. All of a sudden, I'd start getting sizable payments from Willie on his debt.

P.5 Missing -looking for a copy 1984

Meanwhile, after'new flame 83' had flown back to Virginia, George pictured holding my dog, Tinker, in last year's letter - began helping out at the shop.

Willie had brought George home a couple years before because he knew George was "my type." Willie was forever trying to match me up with somebody. I liked George and we hit it off well enough. He was one of Willie's favorite disco friends & preferred sleeping on our couch a couple nights each week to going home to momma's house several miles further out in Jersey.

"I'm out there circling the building just waiting to land on the balcony and come back in when she fucks up," George had warned. Flame'83 fucked up & fled. And sure enough, George landed on the balcony, in the store and in my bedroom with a bang.

Everyone liked George. He was pleasant, worked like a dog and did everyone's bidding. He didn't sleep his way into Uplift. He worked his way in the hard way, he earned it. Simultaneously, he took the interest and found the time to gorgeously redecorate Hoboken's decaying, and nearly empty, Hotel Wicker.





MOTHER & THE GENERAL OUTSIDE THE STORE



"HE'S SO GOODLOOKING. SO SUAVE." MOMMY NOTED ABOUT GEORGE.

"George has made Randy's apartment a home again," David Combs explained to my mother during her annual visit, Then, perhaps not wanting to appear too out of character by being too kind, he opined,

"George is really just a very expensive maid." "He's so goodlooking, so suave." Mommy noted. (She's no dummy.) Mother's visit was one of the real highlights of the year. She sent "the General" on his way back to their summer home in Pennsylvania. She had decided to stay an extra day to shop and to do something she had not done recently --take the trouble to get to know some of the important people in my life.

Getting belated copies of my last two Xmas letters must have done more than simply left her head spinning and her heart pounding. Maybe they had whetted her curiosity.

It was wonderful. Willie volunteered to go shopping at those downtown discount stores with us and help carry home the bags full of cheap junk Mother and I love to buy. It wasn't easy for Willie to tag along all day behind me and my 67-yr-old mommy. Except for his usual devilishness --trying to trip me a couple

times and dousing me with enough samples of cheap perfumiin one store to make me smell like a whore, he was a perfect gentleman.

Then it was dinner at David Combs's house a few blocks away in Hoboken where she enjoyed the gorgeous garden David was building, and

sampled 'ex-fem-fatale' Michael Toy's gourmet cooking. "When you take Randy downtown," George had made the mistake of telling my mother, "make him buy himself a new suit. He's too cheap with himself."

She must have misunderstood. The word "cheap" stuck in mommy's

mind.
 "He's not 'cheap,'" she kept saying over and over again all evening.
 "He's anything but cheap. He spends too much money on other people.
 "He's anything but cheap. Not cheap..." (Wait till she sees this He's not cheap. year's letter.)

Hoboken life was bouncing along in its own merry way. I hadn't taken a trip in years except to go to Baltimore late in the spring to visit Willie's family and to attend his sister's wedding. I had slowly become fonder of George than I ever thought possible. With Marsha in California and Willie uptown most of the time, George

I had slowly become fonder of George than I ever thought possible. With Marsha in California and Willie uptown most of the time, George had truly made my entire apartment--and Willie's bedroom--his own. When the summer heat and tedium kept David Combs out of the store for weeks at a time, George and I ran it alone together. By the end of August, I had bought two round-trip tickets to

By the end of August, I had bought two round-trip tickets to the Dominican Republic. Terry, a good respectable friend of mine, visited me often and lived their several months each year. He had invited the two of us a Vacation & romance time had arrived at last.

We arrived to find ourselves the beneficiaries of the island's collapsing economy. Filet minon dinners at the fanciest oceanfront hotels came to only \$8 including drink, desert and tip. In ordinary restaurants, club sandwiches cost \$1. In bars, an 8 oz bottle of rum cost \$1.35. Twenty-five cents purchased a ©oca cola and a bowl of ice for mixing. At the supermarkets, liquor ran \$1.50 a fifth.



WILLIE, HIS SISTER & I JUST BEFORE THE WEDDING RECEPTION.



"OH, TERRY," I SAID, "LET ME GET A PICTURE OF YOU TO USE IN MY CHRISTMAS LETTER."

There were two gay hotels-both well run, safe, clean and with an endless array of young men eager to keep you company for the going rate of \$3.50.

Outside was a warm, friendly society. Gentle. Drug free. Relatively crime free. And virtually an entire native population -male and female--looking for any excuse to get involved with any American who might help them get to the USA. George had never been anywhere outside the States. Being blond,

George had never been anywhere outside the States. Being blond, blue-eyed and beautiful proved no handicap. I felt like Sebastian in "Suddenly Last Summer" traveling with Elizabeth Taylor.

Our vacation got off to a rocky start. The first couple nights, George got swept away drinking and dancing at the local discos -disappearing at the most inappropriate times (around midnight) and stumbling in the next morning with tales of a party at a Dominican Doctor's house, or of a wild night with a luscious native queen spent in a cheap downtown hotel.

Like my Willie & Marsha vacation plan, this was not what I had in mind. To put it bluntly, I was twisted, jealous and in a furious rage by the third day. George wasn't being evil. He was just floating along having a good time and failing to think --as he is sometimes too prone to do.

A depressing pattern started emerging. He'd be still too tired and sleepy at noon to go out on legit sightseeing trips to the beach and such in the afternoons. I was both too tired, and too sound sensitive to last into the wee hours at the discos. I was ready to just pack up and go back to NY. But I couldn't

I was ready to just pack up and go back to NY. But I couldn't get a reservation any sooner than the one I had five days hence. Terry, my friend and our host, was being driven mad by the conflict.

my friend and our host, was being driven mad by the conflict. "Tomorrow, we're definitely going to Trujillo's Estate." I told George. "And you better not ruin another day. You be here." "Sure," George agreed. "Sounds good to me. I'll be here." At ll:25 the next morning, Terry and I locked his house and left for a couple days out around the island--leaving George a sweet note wishing him a nice weekend. We knew he'd get home tired and with no money in his pocket. He'd have only the clothing on his back. Everything else was locked up in Terry's house. It was Santo Domingo's best neighborhood. The private security guards on the street packed guns.

And what a nice trip out on the island it was. One moment, I'd feel crestfallen. But the next, Terry and I would be laughing so hard tears would streaming down our faces. Poor George, marooned in Santo Domingo at the gay hotel, his clothing smelling worse by the hour.(It was in the nineties every day. Sometimes we'd shower and change clothes three times a day.)

Poor, beautiful, promiscuous George - his money gone, left with nothing but his wits and looks. We wondered what it was like back there with a hundred \$3 native hustlers twisted over their new competition.

Terry thought George would manage to survive without much discomfort 'in the short run.'--but not indefinitely. I was sure the jaded, ugly American tourists (like me!) would be dragging him to their room and putting him through some awful changes for next to nothing.

The second night we called from out on the island. George said he'd eaten the night before at a restaurant which Terry knew to be the most expensive and elegant on the island. He demanded his I.D. and clothing which were locked in Terry's house, pointing out he had a legal right to have access to them and that he was subject to arrest if stopped on the street without I.D. George used enough Dominican 'legalese' to convince Terry that George had latched onto one of Santo Domingo's top lawyers--or, heavens forbid, even the Chief of Police.

We asked George to take a bus and join us in El Siebo, and fabulous little mountain town seventy miles inland which we had discovered. There were cowboys on horseback, riverside cantinas with booming spanish music, women washing clothing down on the rocks, dozens of naked boys swimming under the bridge, and a 25-day-old luxury hotel with a staff of 23 and only Terry and I as guests.

For \$8 nightly, we had a big room with two double beds and designer sheets, a full private bath, a fantastic mountain view, a full sized new swimming pool, wide marble steps, etc. It was built by the Dominican government to encourage tourism in the interior of the country. And, to think, they ended up getting us. George promised to come via bus the next day. When he failed

George promised to come via bus the next day. When he failed to show, we headed back to Santo Domingo. Terry made me take everything out of his house and register myself and George into one of the gay hotels so, if there was trouble with George involving violence or the police, he would not be implicated. Smart friend, my Terry.

I found George ensconced in a suite of rooms in the best gay hotel, money in his pocket and drinking on a newly-made acquaintance's tab. His "gleaming white knight" (as George called him) had gone to Puerto Plata on the other side of the island for a few days & left George his room.

No heavy suffering. No pound of flesh extracted. I was simultaneously relieved, and disappointed. George's charm and personality had carried him through. He wasn't even'Knight'Richard's type (lucky George) but Richard found George delightful company and great "bait" for those super-butch studs he wanted to meet.



GEORGE WAS GREAT "BAIT" & SOCIAL SECRETARY FOR RICHARD, HIS "GLEAMING WHITE KNIGHTE & SAVIOUR



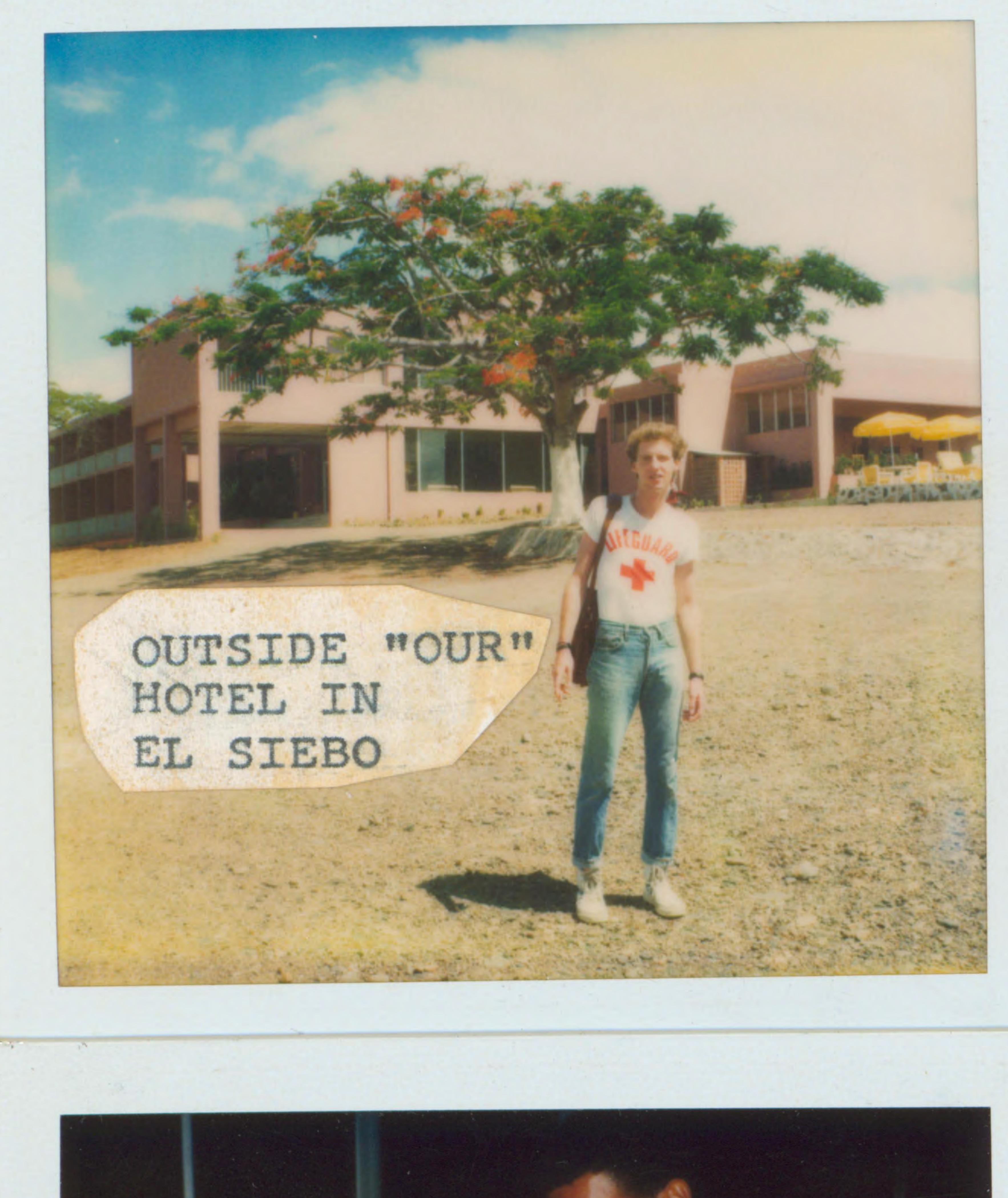
TERRY AMOUNG THE FLOWERS BY THE RIVER IN EL SIEBO.

V



To make this long and boring tale short - we were so happy to see each other again, we jumped for joy right into each other's arms. No trouble. No police. And like a happy ending in a schmaltzy Hollywood movie, the next day George and I headed back to El Siebo, the little mountain town, for what we both agree was the most enjoyable week of our lives.

My original 8-day trip turned into a memorable 20-day extravaganza. It was truly a trip to equal my last odyssey to Greece, Turkey & Egypt--which is saying a lot.









All that inexpensive liquor started getting to us toward the end. After all, there wasn't anything to do but drink, go to the beach and fight the boys off back at the hotel, when we weren't fighting each other off.

19

George fell in love about three times the last week alone. He's that way. First a native drag queen star caught his attention. Then it was a handsome young local. But, by now, I had adjusted to it all. I had the plane tickets. I had the money. My little angel was soon to fly home with me. Those native boys had nothing to offer but their passionate selves.



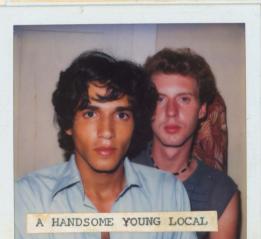
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WE SPENT OUR LAST FEW AFTERNOONS TOGETHER AT A BEAUTIFUL BEACH CALLED "BOCA CHICA."





A NATIVE DRAG QUEEN STAR CAUGHT GEORGE'S ATTENTION."





" THOSE NATIVE BOYS HAD NOTHING TO OFFER BUT THEIR PASSIONATE SELVES."

PASSIONATE

PASSIONATE

PASSIONATE SELF

Another highlight this year was a long-overdue visit from my writer friend Jack Nichols, a professional feminist propogandist, and his friend who'd never been to NYC before. I'd visited Jack I'd visited Jack in Florida a couple years ago.

Simultaneously, Jim Kepner, an acquaintance who had vividly impressed me as a charming, literate, pioneering gay activist back in 1959, called. I'd followed his writing career and respected his work establishing the National Gay Archives in L.A. but had had little contact with him over the years. I invited him to stay at Hotel Wicker.

What a stay it was. He knew what had happened to everyone I'd lost track of over the past twenty years. He was even more fascinating and brilliant than I recalled. His visit was more than pleasurable, it bordered on being inspirational.



If you have any candles left, you'll need 427 more of them, for this is quite a literary day: French writer Abel Hermant (1862), American writer Gertrude Stein (1874), American poet Benjamin Musser ("the Poet Laureate of New Jersey'') (1889), American filmmaker and writer Kenneth Anger (1930), and American writer Randy Wicker (1938).

FRI

"THEY GIVE YOU ALL THAT CREDIT ONLY AFTER YOU'RE GONE." MARSHA LOVES BUT IN 1984'S GAY ENGAGE-TO SAY. MENT CALENDAR I FOUND THE ABOVE.

This fall has been a time for murderously hard work. Overhead and an exploding payroll have erased that glittering promise of "fat cat Republicanism" touted in last year's note. (What? Another correction? Another mistake? What hasn't been 'recapped' & changed You just can't believe anything in these Xmas from last year? letters anymore!)

Ietters anymore!)
For a short time I got excited about Gary Hart (about \$120 worth).
Then I lost interest. Thank goodness. I couldn't have squeezed in,
nor afforded another bout of 'John-B-Anderson'-style fanaticism this year.
David Combs and Michael Toy (last year's 'one-time fem-fatale'
now another year past his prime) are still together - between fights.
Michael Toy quit selling those \$600 handbags at Macy's. He has proven
himself to be masochist supreme at dealing with those American
Express Card parts who drive even the non-alcoholics at the Unlift to Express Card nerds wholdrive even the non-alcoholics at the Uplift to drink.

George and I have had more ups and downs (psychological and otherwise) than we care to count. But with Marsha to help clean up the glass after I smash the alcohol bottles during my Carrie Nation impersonations, life is easier. AA would make it easier still.

Last year, I had one of the most enjoyable Christmas eve's ever at, of all places, Willie's burlesque theater. Bo, Willie's friend, had a Santa Claus outfit. The two of them decided to "clean

Irlend, had a Santa Claus outfit. The two of them decided to "clean up" taking polaroid photos at the theater of customers with their favorite 'dancers' at \$2-\$5 a throw. Well, the spirit of Christmas got hold of them and they didn't even cover their film expenses after taking 'free' photos of friends. On stage, Willie did a charming rendition of "I Dreamed I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" while 225-pound Bo wearing his Santa Suit danced and bobbed up and down around him. Ever see a really big perso dance spectacularly and move really well? Well, those other conceited beauties were sure twisted when I gave Santa a \$5 tip during the finale--and no one gave any of them Ever see a really big person

gave Santa a \$5 tip during the finale -- and no one gave any of them anything.

Marsha was there - still fresh from her shopping trips to NY's most fashionable department stores. Last year, and this year too, she got the "Jackie Kennedy" treatment. From the time she entered, dressed in drag and wearing tree lights or tinsel in her hair, the security guards stuck right by her side. Saint Marsha must look like a shoplifter to them. But she has

only come to sample all the free cosmetics and perfumes.

Last Christmas, our special guests were David Benton and Cindy, his sweetheart at that time. David's sort of the straight boy in our little family. (Every family should have at least one.) He's worked for me and stayed with me off and on over the past three years. Mainly, he's done security guard work and other jobs this past year and has managed to maintain his own place.





MARSHA IN HER XMAS 'S1 OUTFI PAINTING ON WALL BEHIND HER WAS GIVEN TO ME BY ARTIST JOHN VENTURA AND IT'S THE NICEST GIFT I'VE RECEIVED IN YEARS.



DAVID BENTON & GINDY BEHIND. BO & MARSHA IN FRONT -XMAS 1983, HOBOKEN



MICHAEL TOY, "EX-"FEM-FATALE" & SUPER MASOCHIST FOR UPLIFT'S NERDY CLIENTS.

p.11 missing original 1984

T



WILLIE GOT AN ELF OUTFIT FOR CHRISTMAS LAST YEAR.



DAVID COMBS GAVE GEORGE THE FIRST ORNAMENT FOR OUR TREE THIS YEAR. IT WAS A BLOND-HAIRED, BLUE-EYED LITTLE ANGEL. HOW APPROPRIATE.

David and Willie (unfortunately, they don't get along) both turned twenty-one within days of one another earlier this month. It seemed like we were having "21" parties every other day. Oh well, old age finally gets us all. I had my <u>second</u> 21st birthday four or five years ago myself.

David got himself a new wardrobe together and set off on a bus for Phoenix, Arizona, this morning to be with his mother and sisters by Christmas. Go west, young man, go west.



GEORGE JUST COULDN'T KEEP HIS HANDS OFF SHY, STRAIGHT MR. BENTON. DURING HIS 21st BIRTHDAY PARTY, YOU ALWAYS WANT WHAT YOU CAN'T HAVE.



GO WEST, YOUNG MAN, GO WEST.

So, another ho-hum year has passed. I've escaped mental collapse, stroke and the need for an artificial heart. (Narrowly.) But the grim reaper is out there. The Aids epidemic is swirling about me.

Phillippe, a friend who lived with his mother on the floor just above mine, died on Willie's 21st birthday. Phil was only 33. Joe, the florist across the street from my shop, died a couple months ago. Another young man of 25, who works a few doors away, is in bad shape and getting worse.



PHILLIPPE - TOO YOUNG. TOO GOOD. A TRAGIC LOSS. WE MICS YOU.

It is sad and sobering. Makes you realize how precious and short life really is. Makes you want to pray. But, we atheists can't pray. We can only be careful in our habits and give money to groups like the Gay men's Health Crisis.

13,

My lifestyle is no nearly as saucy as many of you fantacize. I gave up 'tricks' for 'relationships' a long time ago. Personally, being a whore - paid or unpaid - has lost its appeal. But, for me, a life unshared is a life unlived. To varying

degrees, and in widely different ways, those you read about here share my life. My Acrid humor does not seek to make jokes of any of them.

It is aimed solely at the absurdity of life - my life in particular. "Love" is what life is all about. Only during the Holidays do we seem to realize that. And, ironically, it has been Marsha --someone I've never had anything to do with sexually-- who has helped show me what love is all about.

Those of you who know Marsha well will understand. Those of you who don't probably think I'm mad. I'd seriously considered titling this year's letter: "A Love Letter to Marsha." But, now in retrospect, I see the journalist and frustrated comic within have prevailed.

Marsha is more than clown, maid and house mama. She is my emotional anchor, my counselor and my friend. And she is my teacher.

I watch her do for others, always being considerate, kind and appreciative. And I see that people respond in kind. Somehow, she touches the human spirit, something religious folks might call the human soul.

Whatever question I ask, she answers clearly, simply, perfectly. Marsha may masquerade as a "dumb colored girl," but she's extremely intelligent, socially perceptive, and stunningly wise. "I'm working so hard, "I might whine, "and I'm just not getting

ahead in life." "Oh, you'll never get ahead, Mr. Wicker," Marsha reassures me, "because you have so many children. Let's see, there's...(she lists all those who live with me full or part time, plus all those who work at the shop.)" "But they're not all my children," I'll object. "Some of them are just my employees."

"Oh yes they are." Marsha hoots back and laughs. "You just don't realize it Mr. Wicker." "Why do I fall for these boys half my age?" I ask Marsha.

"Oh, it's very easy, Mr. Wicker," she responds, "because they're so beautiful." "This running around drives me crazy," I'll confide seeking pity and ballast.

"Well," Marsha chides, "you better get used to it Mr. Wicker. All young people are like that. As long as you go out with them, it's going to be that way.

"Even when they want to settle down, it's very hard. They have to get out there and have those other young numbers while they can. If I was 24, I wouldn't want to sit at home every night with some

46-year-old. "Now, I know this 70-yr-old man, Mr. Wicker," she continues laughing, "who'd love to marry you. He'd be very devoted. He'd stay home every night."

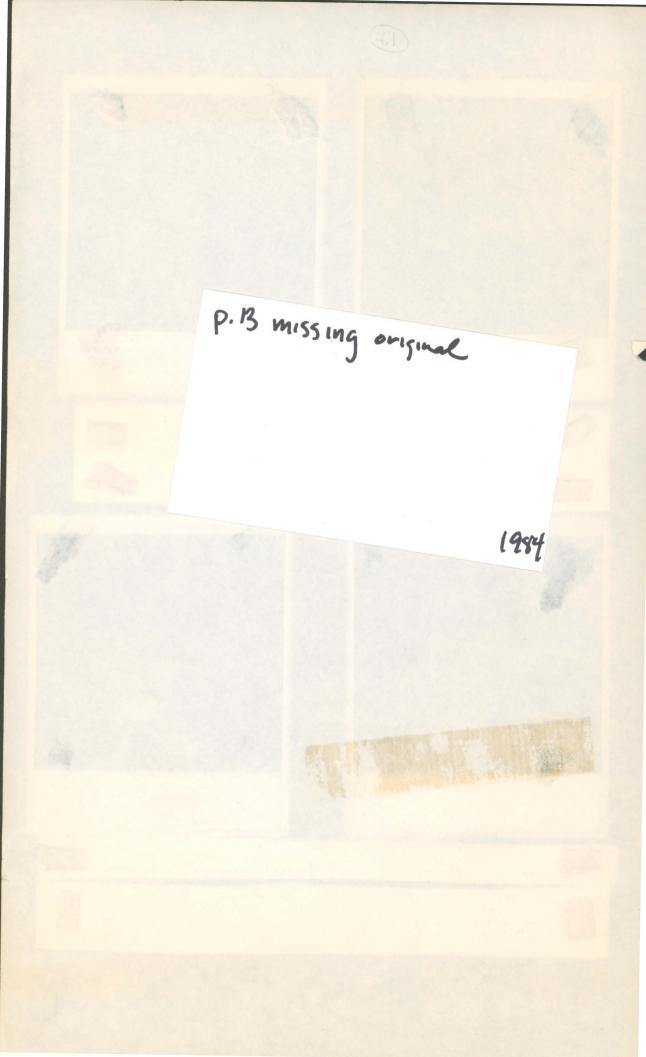
Yes, Marsha - more than anyone- makes me laugh when I am sad. She fills my life with warmth and makes it glow. When she's here, every day is Christmas. I hope each of you has, or finds, your own Marsha. May life be so good to you.

Seasons Greetings o With love, Danty

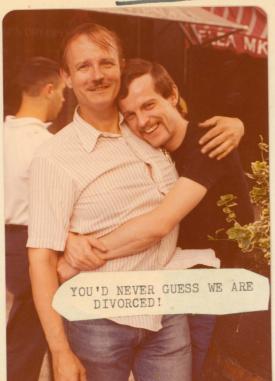
Happy New Year! See you next year maybe.

Randy Wicker's Uplift Inc. 506 Hudson Street New York City, NY 10014

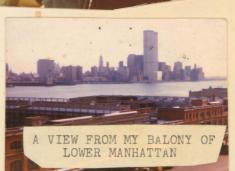
@ Randy Wicher 1984



A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS &









NOT DEAD YET! NOPE! HERE'S PETER. HIS CANCER WAS MISDIAGNOSED BUT HE'S STILL PLAYING SICK. BEATS WORKING.



2 THE GLAMOROUS MISS MARSHA AS SHE APPEARS ON THE STREETS BETWEEN ARRESTS.

> DESPITE MY TACKY REMARKS. THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE I'VE EVER HAD THE PLEASURE OF KNOWING



A MOMENT OF HILARITY.-SEE MY FABULOUS HAIRDO A-LA-WILLIE

> Turn page for more thrills 's



BALTIMORE FRIENDS WHO CAME FOR CSLD. NICE FOLKS BUT EXPENSIVE. COST WILLIE \$250.00 IN 3 DAYS

WILLIE WITH THE LAMP HE MADE IN BACKGROUND





WILLIE PRACTICING IN THE LIVINGROOM. FOR ONCE, HE HAD CLOTHES ON



