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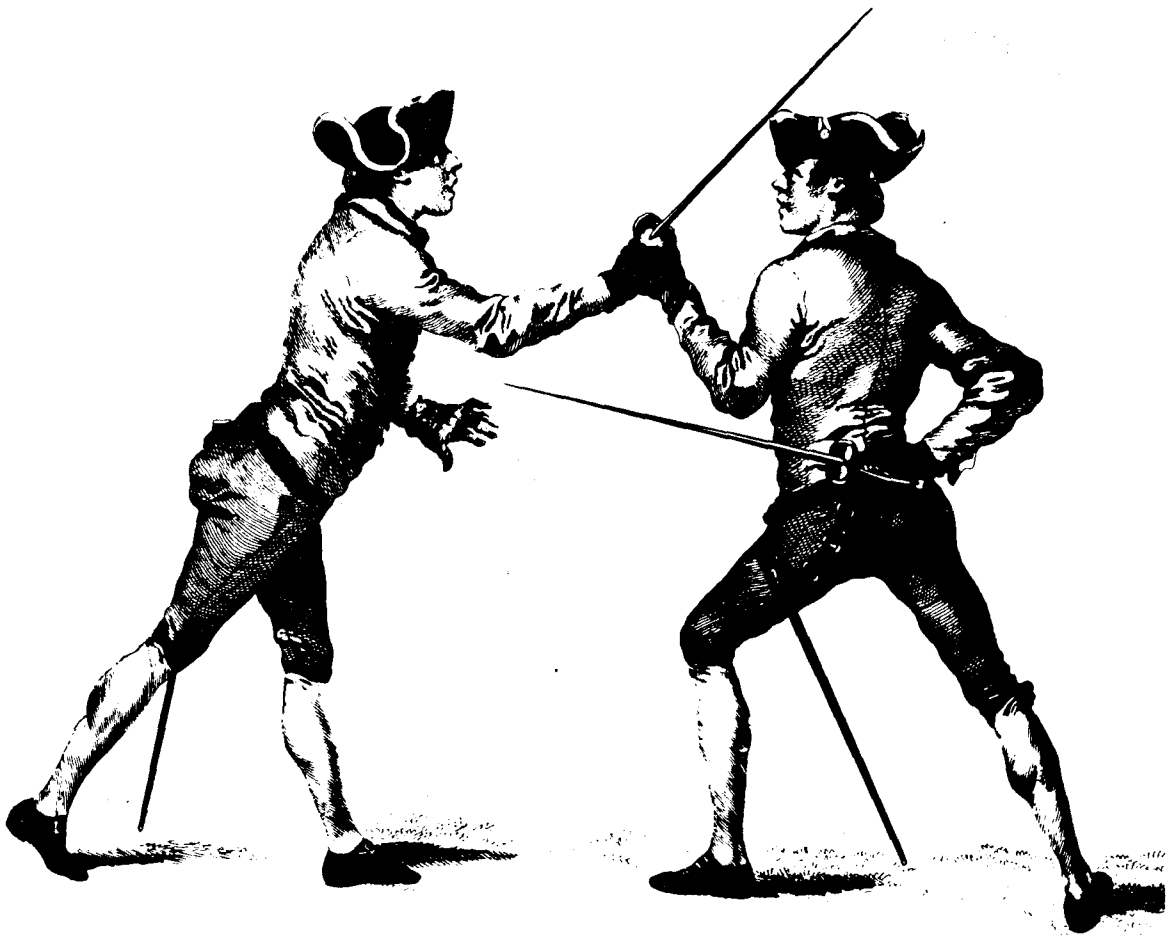
The Society of American Fight Directors

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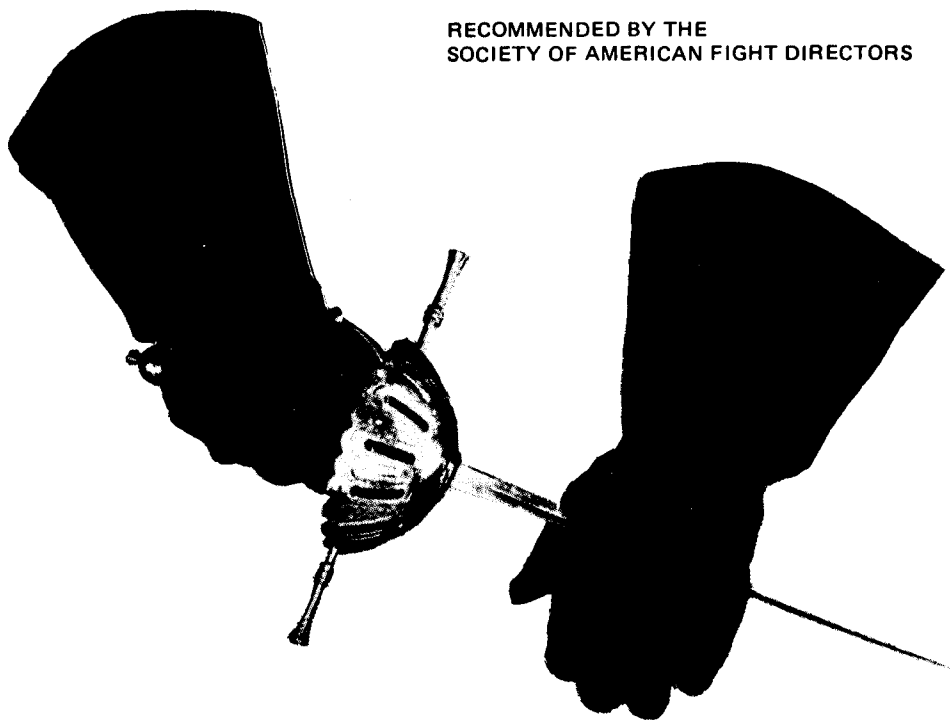


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THE FIGHT MASTER

The Magazine of the Society of American Fight Directors.

NO. 12

JANUARY 1981

Editor - Ann C. Long

Lay-out - David L. Boushey

Typed and Duplicated by Ann C. Long

SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FIGHT DIRECTORS

The Society of American Fight Directors was founded by David Boushey and incorporated in Seattle, Washington, in May, 1977.

OFFICERS:

President	Erik Fredricksen 1551 York Ave., No. 5N New York NY 10028
Vice-President	Rod Colbin 6160 Temple Hill Drive Los Angeles CA 90028
Secretary- Treasurer	David L. Boushey 4720 38th N.E. Seattle WA 98105

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ANNUAL DUES

A new year is upon us and with the new year a Society that continues to thrive and prosper. What makes the Society a viable organization are the dues collected each year which go toward producing the Society's magazine and promoting its image across the country. Again this year, we finished in the black financially. What funds we have left over from 1980 will be put into the general fund for 1981. We are anticipating using any funding from this year's coffer to further promote the Society through advertising and various newsletters to influential organizations and publishers. We don't want to give the impression that the Society is "rolling in dough" but we have managed a surplus for 1980 and with the economy in dire straights and printing and advertising costs becoming outrageous, we are managing well. The primary reason for our financial solvency is the response of our members in paying their yearly dues. We obviously couldn't survive without the dues from our membership.

We will need to make one change this year. The dues for students and actor/combatants will need to go up by \$2.00 a year. We have held the student, A/C dues to \$10.00 since the formation of the Society. The reason for the increase is the increase in publication costs. It now costs the Society \$3 an issue to produce the magazine and one can plainly see that dues of \$10 doesn't cover the cost of the magazines that go to the students and actor/combatants. The officers of the Society do not feel it is fair that the affiliates and full members subsidize the students and actor/combatants. We do not feel that a \$2 increase is out-of-hand and hope that our fellow members concur with us. (When referring to the \$3 an issue, that includes our editor's salary, postage, envelopes, besides the standard publishing costs.)

The new dues schedule will be as follows:

Full members	-	a fee of \$15.00
Affiliate members	-	a fee of \$15.00
Actor/Combatant members	-	a fee of \$12.00
Student members	-	a fee of \$12.00

If a member has been a member of the Society since before July 1, 1980, he or she owes the full fee due. If a member joined between July 1, 1980, and January 1, 1981, he or she owes one-half the fee due. (All those who joined at the national workshop in Illinois this summer would owe the half fee.)

The dues must be paid by March 1st in order to insure a member his/her active status as a member of the Society of American Fight Directors. Please don't let this slide as the dues are the working capital by which

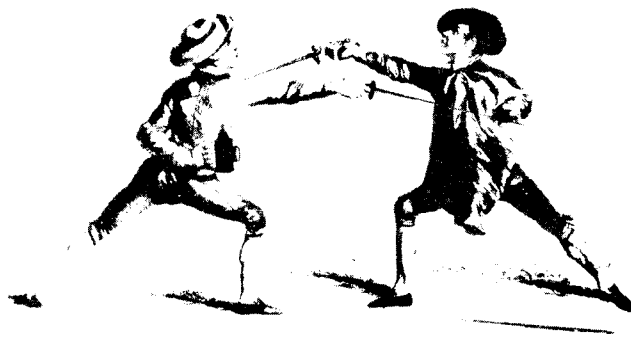
the Society exists.

PLEASE PAY YOUR DUES TO THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FIGHT DIRECTORS AND
SEND IT IN CARE OF:

ALLEN SUDDETH
310 97th Street, No. 44
New York, New York 10025

The reason for sending your dues to Allen is a situation where Erik Fredricksen and David Boushey will both be out of town for an extended time. Allen has graciously accepted this responsibility. Please don't add to his burden by being delinquent.

We hope that the membership sees the value of the magazine and how it continues to improve in quality and content. THE FIGHT MASTER is still the thread that links us all together and passes on valuable knowledge from one member to another.



MEMBERSHIP ROSTER
(January 1, 1981)

AOYAMA, Kay	(Friend)	22B Gormley Ave. Toronto, Ontario Canada M4V 1Y8
BEARD-WITHERUP, Mark	(Actor/ Combatant)	1905 N. Dayton Chicago IL 60614
BEARDSLEY, J.R.	(Affiliate)	2233 Grant St., No. 13 Berkeley CA 94703
BELL, Rab	(Student)	345 Riverside Dr., No. 5H New York NY 10025
BELLAH, George	(Student)	2601 "D" St. S.E., No. 12 Auburn WA 98002
BOECK, Gary	(Actor/ Combatant)	RR2 Ida Grove IA 51445
BOOTH, Eric	(Affiliate)	156 West 29th St. New York NY 10001
BOUSHEY, David L.	(Full)	4720 38th N.E. Seattle WA 98105
CALLAHAN, Dr. John M.	(Affiliate)	501 Walnuttown Road Richmond Commons Fleetwood PA 19522
CAMPBELL, Samuel Bruce	(Affiliate)	65 East 96th St. New York NY 10028
COLBIN, Rod	(Full)	6160 Temple Hill Drive Los Angeles CA 90028
CONABLE, Emily	(Actor/ Combatant)	350 W. 47th St., No. 5B New York NY 10036
COX, Roy	(Affiliate)	P.O. Box 443 Athens OH 45701
COYL, Charles	(Actor/ Combatant)	1306 Oxford Lane Glenview IL 60025
CREAN, Patrick	(Honorary)	53 William St. Stratford Ontario, Canada
CUMBA, Peter	(Actor/ Combatant)	134 Kent St. Brooklyn NY 11222

DE LONG, Kimberly	(Affiliate)	934 E. 10th Dr. Mesa AZ 85204
DUET, Rick	(Student)	356 W. 45th, No. 5B New York NY 10036
DUTSON, Lyn	(Actor/ Combatant)	123 E. Fairmont Dr. Tempe AZ 85282
EAGLE, Tabitha	(Student)	New England College Henniker, NH 03242
EDDY, Stacy	(Affiliate)	1405 S.E. Taylor Portland OR 97214
EDWARDS, Steven	(Actor/ Combatant)	301 E. 90th St., No. 2B New York NY 10028
EVES, David	(Actor/ Combatant)	University of South Florida Theatre Department TAR230 Tampa FL 33620
FRACHER, Drew	(Student)	Lamoine Village, No. 2-315 Macomb IL 61455
FREDERICKSEN, Erik	(Full)	1551 York Ave., No. 5N New York NY 10028
GIFFEN, Peter	(Affiliate)	Ashland Shakespeare Festival Ashland OR 97520
GOSS, Peggy	(Actor/ Combatant)	515 Kenilworth Ave. Kenilworth IL 60043
GRADKOWSKI, Richard J.	(Full)	Box 274 New York NY 10010
HANCOCK, Jim	(Affiliate)	3618 37th S. Seattle WA 98144
HAUSERMAN, William	(Affiliate)	107 Marburth Ave. Towson MD 21204
HEIL, John	(Affiliate)	c/o Psychology Dept. Roanoke College Salem VA 24153
HOOD, Michael	(Affiliate)	1942 North Salem Anchorage AK 99504
HUSTON, Hollis	(Affiliate)	3 Prospect Ave. Newark DE 19711

JASSPE, Arthur	(Affiliate)	80 First Ave. New York NY 10009
JENNINGS, Byron	(Full)	2119 Hyde St. San Francisco CA 94109
KATZ, Dr. Albert M.	(Affiliate)	University of Wisconsin- Superior Superior WI 54880
KATZ, Michael	(Affiliate)	10 Franklin Ave. Bedford Hills NY 10507
KIRK, Jan	(Affiliate)	26 Perry St., No. 4A New York NY 10014
KOHLHEPP, Greeg	(Student)	218 S. Mill Road Princeton Jct., NJ 08550
LANCASTER, David	(Affiliate)	370 C.P.W. No. 404 New York NY 10025
LEONG, David	(Affiliate)	3421 Toledo Terrace, No. L2 Hyattsville MD 20782
MACCONNELL, W.S.	(Affiliate)	Montclair State College c/o Theatre Arts Dept. Upper Montclair NJ 07043
MARTIN, Jennifer	(Affiliate)	University Theatre Iowa City IO 52244
MARTINEZ, Joseph	(Full)	630 Orchard St. Macomb IL 61455
MARTINEZ, Ramon	(Affiliate)	1083 Warren Road No. 1 Ithaca NY 14850
MATTHEWS, Ramon	(Student)	26 N. Rosedale St. Baltimore MD 21229
MOORE, Peter	(Affiliate)	314 W. 100th St., No. 26 New York NY 10025
MORABITO, Gary	(Student)	646 Ninth Ave., No. 4RS New York NY 10036
NICKLIN, Scott	(Student)	2063 Royal Fern Court No. 11-B Reston VA 20091
OSBORNE, Michael	(Student)	418 S.E. Grand, No. 308 Portland OR 97214

PHILLIPS, F. Peter	(Affiliate)	214 Lincoln Rd. Brooklyn NY 11225
PHILLIPS, J. Christopher	(Affiliate)	1913 Shelby Mattoon IL 61938
PIRETTI, Ron	(Actor/ Combatant)	Leroz St., No. 12 New York NY 10014
REITH, William	(Affiliate)	P.O. Box 18027 Cleveland Hts OH 44118
ROBINSON, Jim	(Actor/ Combatant)	S.M.U. c/o Theatre Arts Dept. Callas TX 75275
ROBINSON, Milton	(Affiliate)	c/o Southern Utah Stage College Cedar City UT 84720
SCHENKKAN, Robert	(Affiliate)	c/o Schneider 333 W. 87th, No. 6 New York NY 10024
SHELTON, Kent	(Student)	211 E. 10th, No. 15 New York NY 10003
SLOAN, Gary	(Affiliate)	603 New York Ave. Newcastle IN 47362
SMITH, Dawson	(Affiliate)	1581 S.W. Fairview Ave. Dallas OR 97338
SMITH, Jersome	(Affiliate)	161 Kelton, No. 31 Boston MA (Allston, Dist.)
SOKOLOFF, Michael	(Affiliate)	821 E. 10th St. Bloomington IN 47401
SOPER, Tony	(Student)	1304 N.E. 42nd, No. 204 Seattle WA 98105
SUDDETH, Allen	(Affiliate)	310 W. 97th St., No. 44 New York NY 10025
TAYLOR, Mark	(Actor/ Combatant)	4289 Shirley Lane Salt Lake City UT 84117
THACKABERRY, Neil	(Affiliate)	2418 Barrington Pl. Rockford IL 61107
TOBINSKI, John R.	(Affiliate)	2524 32nd St., Apt. 1 Northport AL 35476

TOWSEN, John	(Student)	21 E. 2nd St., No. 26 New York NY 10003
TURNER, Craig	(Affiliate)	University of Washington c/o Prof. Actors Program Seattle WA 98195
UHLER, Erick	(Affiliate)	351 W. 45th, No. 4RW New York NY 10036
VALLA-HAYES, Patrick	(Affiliate)	624 Third St. McMinville OR 97128
VAN DYKE, Leon	(Affiliate)	University of Wisconsin- Parkside c/o Comm. Arts, No. 283 Kenosha WI 53140
VILLA, Christopher	(Affiliate)	1736 Santa Ana Canyon Rd. Orange CA 92665 1386 Foster Ave. Arcata CA 95521
WALSH, Robert	(Actor/ Combatant)	171 East 92nd St. New York NY 10028
WINTERS, Katy	(Actor/ Combatant)	301 E. 90th St., No. 2B New York NY 10023

SOME METHODS OF WEAPONLESS

STAGE COMBAT

(Continued from issue No. 11)

Techniques of Stage Violence

The basic tools of actors training for Weaponless Stage Violence are somersaults, falls and rolls. With these quite simple gymnastic techniques (and they can be learned and done by anyone, excepting the physically handicapped), any actor can fall or be tossed without injury to himself.

The simplest somersault--"a leap or roll in which a person turns his heels over his head"--is nothing more than a common rollover, also known as a front roll. The Stage Violence student kneels on both legs, places his chin on his chest (this action automatically rounds the back by pulling the head down), places both hands flat on the floor before his knees, and then rolls over onto his shoulders with a kicking motion of his legs. He lands on his shoulders, and because his back is rounded, his feet and legs follow, and he rolls easily to a standing position. Avoid arching the back in this maneuver, for arching will cause the buttocks to hit the floor in painful contact. If the student rounds his back, he will follow through naturally and fall out smoothly. The next improvement is in performing the same somersault from a person's own height, and this is known as a front handspring. The technique is exactly the same as in the rollover, except that the back is arched, not rounded; the hands are placed on the floor while the upper torso is coming down, and the hands and forearms are used as pivots for the body to roll over. In effect, the person's head would strike the ground if he did not place his hands on the floor. These two techniques are what this author terms "simple somersaults."

From here the students progress to "difficult somersaults," which are more properly termed front flips or front somersaults. These also consist of two different methods. In the first method two members of the class kneel on opposite sides of the width of the tumbling area, and loosely join hands, so that, if need be, their arms can be quickly separated. Other members of the class must take a short running start (perhaps only two or three steps), jump and somersault over the arms of the two students holding hands. The arms are raised progressively higher and higher each somersault. This accustoms Stage Violence students to somersaulting over heights ranging up to about four feet. To accustom the students to somersaulting forward over width, as well as height, the second method is used, termed front or long dives. One member of the class lies across the width of the somersaulting area

(for this work, a large tumbling mat is highly recommended). By raising his body higher and higher through use of his arms and legs, students must clear not only his height, but width. In essence, this exercise allows any member of a Stage Violence class to dive and somersault safely over any object up to four feet high and three feet wide, for example, a table. And for extremely able students, the heights and widths can be increased for truly spectacular and theatrical somersaults.

The difficult somersaults provide a very needed psychological stimulus to the students; they begin to realize that they can somersault from "great heights," and even over obstructions, without injury to themselves. The one word which best summarizes what the students gain is CONFIDENCE: confidence in themselves and their abilities. It is not unusual, and quite common, for there to be a large element of fear present in the students the first time that they realize they are going to somersault with an obstruction in their path. But once they have completed their difficult somersaults, their fear vanishes and is replaced by confidence and pride. This stands them in good stead when the time comes for the various judo and jiu-jitsu tosses (using somersaulting techniques).

Perhaps the most difficult somersault is a no-hands one, whereby the student must do a complete somersault without the use of his hands or arms for pivoting purposes.

I can state from personal experience that while a no-hands somersault is not very complex, it can be psychologically terrifying to the student. Denied the use of his hands, the normal student will experience some fear of striking his head on the floor.

The technique for performing a no-hands somersault is exactly the same as the simple somersault from a person's own height, excepting that the arms and hands are not used. Instead, the student will flip himself by bringing his forehead down into his knees while at the same time kicking out strongly with his legs and somersaulting over onto his back at the top of his shoulders and then rolling out smoothly to either a sitting or standing position.

A no-hands somersault requires much more impetus and momentum on the part of the student than a simple somersault, and this momentum is supplied by the strong outward kicking of the legs, combined with the rounding of the back. If the student has tucked his head down, touched his chin to his chest, and kicks out hard enough, there is no danger of hitting his head.

With just one successful no-hands somersault, the student will

rapidly gain confidence and lose his fear--but any student that cannot overcome this fear should not be ridiculed or coerced in any way, as such action can lead to possible injury. A cheating no-hands somersault can be achieved by allowing the student one arm with which to pivot on and somersault over.

A no-hands somersault, and a well-executed cheating no-hands somersault, is a valuable tool in Stage Violence, and is particularly effective in the judo one-arm circle throw (to be seen later in this chapter). With practice and confidence, students will be able to perform this somersault with their arms folded across their chests, behind their backs, or even with their hands in their pockets!

Falls and rolls are exactly what the terms imply: any fall (forwards, sideways, backwards) on stage, and the learning to roll out of a fall. Excepting a forward fall, any fall can be rolled out of. The rolling dissipates the force of the fall. Because of the body position, a forward fall (as on the face) cannot be rolled out, without using the rollover techniques which makes it no longer a fall, but a simple somersault.

The mechanics of falling are relatively simple but the execution takes a good deal of practice and rehearsal. When an actor falls the shock of the drop must be absorbed in several places. While the usual sequence involves turning slightly and allowing the knee, hip, shoulder, and hand to hit the floor in succession, a detailed description of a stage fall or roll is not possible here, for every individual falls or rolls differently. However, all violence students can follow the general rule that falls should be taken on either the flabbiest or the broadest portin of the body. A fall should also be spaced over the greatest possible area of the body to disperse the force of the fall. (In tumbling, such a technique is known as "shock dispersion.") Under no circumstances should a fall be taken on the tailbone, elbows, kneecaps or any other protruding bones, as these can be injured rather easily. A sample sideward fall would look like this: the student begins the fall to his right (left) side, bends his right (left) leg at the knees, takes the initial brunt of the fall on the calf of his leg, and then continues the fall onto his outer thigh, hip, waist and chest. The right (left) arm has been extended out to protect the head from hitting the floor and also to continue the force of the fall upward. The fall begins with the bottom of the feet and ends with the fingertips of the right (left) hand. The force of the fall is equalized by the actor's own body, and no injury results.

FIGHT EXTRAVAGANZA

My students had been keeping after me to perform, and I tried to organize shows all summer, outside in Central Park, a day tour to a kid's camp in Connecticut, but what was lacking it seemed to me, was a performance in a theatre. A performance situation, with lights, costumes, an audience in attendance, and first night jitters to deal with. So with my Master Classes, I proposed an evening which would be entirely at their disposal as far as materiel, with the fights to be set by myself, or other upcoming student choreographers. They chose from a broad range, including a fight from the William Goldman novel, "The Princess Bride," to Dumas' "Twenty Year's After," to original pieces...a comedy/food fight, "Below Decks," to three scenes from a musical/fantasy piece entitled "The Ballerina and the Kid," written by Gary Phillips.

The attendance was about fifty people a night for the two nights of performance and besides the usual friends, wives, lovers, and husbands, there was a smattering of agents and producers. The performances were very well received both nights, the audience always wanting more. I would like to make mention that everyone involved in the cast (with the lovely exception of Carla Stallings, a real ballerina from the American Ballet Theatre at Lincoln Centre...) is Certified by the Society. Those who enjoy "Recommended" status are:

James Monitor
Nancy Sigworth

Robin Wood
Gary Phillips

...and those having "Passed,"

Gary Morabito
Lois Tibbets
Katy Winters
Gary Apple

Steve Andresen
Emily Conable
Damien Carto

Of special note were Nancy Sigworth and James Monitor who, both being ambidextrous, were able to execute the "Princess Bride" fight as written, with much switching of hands and fancy footwork. What a pleasure for me to work with trained actors! For those unfamiliar with the piece, this fight between two master fencers begins with them fighting both left handed. One character then switches..."I know something you don't know...I'm not really left handed!'" They continue to fight left vs. right. After a particularly entertaining display of swordwork, the second character is backed into a corner and wounded, only to reveal, "...I'm really right handed too!" The fight then redoubles in intensity, with much fancy switching of hands and feet.

The end??? Well, I guess you'll have to read the book.

The show was intended to be, and turned out to be an educational experience for all. For the cast, of course, although most had had already the experience of fighting before an audience, but also for me. I relate this next bit so that we may all learn, and remember that no matter how much you try and prevent accidents, and how "Safety" conscious one is, you always have to be on your toes.

Dress rehearsal night, during the "Twenty Year's After" sequence, the actor playing D'Artagnan, while being strangled and spread over a table, lost his footing and fell, taking the table, and its contents, with him. The fall was not much, but on the table were many props, including a glass brandy bottle. Yes, as the bottle hit the floor, it shattered, the actor's hand finding its way unerringly to a shard of glass. Well, the long and the short of it is that the actor, Steve Andresen, was whisked to the nearby hospital where he received five stiches in the palm of his right hand. Now, the glass bottle never should have been used, of course, at all, much less on the cement floor of this particular theatre. It remains on that list of, "one of those little things" that I had seen, and not realized immediately the possible danger involved. So, to my fellow colleagues and compatriots, learn from my mistake...nothing is safe! Keep an eye out for detail... we always look for the obvious, the loose pommel, the unswept stage, lights that blind us and shoes that give us the slip, but beware, sometime...somewhere...when you least expect it....

As a postscript to this, let me add that the scene was left in the show, and the actors did the fight sans weapons, in mime style, and the audience thought that it had been rehearsed that way.

The Program

INTRO

Robin Wood
Gary Phillips
James Monitor

Chor. James Monitor

The Princess Bride

Inigo.....James Monitor
Man in Black.....W. C. Sigworth

Book - Wm. Goldman
Chor. Suddeth

Scene: High cliffs overlooking the sea.

Below Decks

Chor. Sud/Mor./Tib.

Pete.....Gary Morabito
Bonny.....Lois Tibbets
Lout.....Damien Carto

Scene: Galley of a coursair somewhere off Madagascar.

Twenty Years After

Book - Dumas
Chor. Suddeth

D'Artagnan.....Steve Anderson
Mordant.....Gary Apple

Scene: 1648, a chateau, sometime after midnight.

3 Way

Chor. Suddeth

Gary Morabito	James Monitor
Lois Tibbets	Katy Winters
Nancy Sigworth	Emily Conable

4 Way

Chor. Suddeth

Nancy Sigworth	Gary Morabito
James Monitor	Emily Conable
Lois Tibbets	

The Ballerina and the Kid

Book - Phillips
Chor. Phillips
Music Phillips

Ballerina.....Katy Winters, Carla Stallings
Kid.....Gary Phillips
Poot.....Ron Piretti
Baron.....Robin Wood

(Dance chor. - Reginald)

Scene: A magic forest a long time ago.

Allen Suddeth

CERTIFICATION TESTS

12-21-80
New York City

Seven people participated in an attempt to gain recommended status. Those actually going for this status had all been certified by the Society at earlier dates. Although most of the groups began a bit slowly and many of the beats seemed marked and tentative, they were working in a space totally without heat. During the prepared sequence, all combatants worked with rapier/dagger and broadsword as well as having an unarmed portion included. All in all, it was (as one would hope from previously certified combatants) work of a fairly strong standard. Successful recipients of a Recommended were:

Rab Bell
Damien Carot

Lois Tibbets

All participants had studied for some time (many for at least two series of sessions) with Allen Suddeth.

12-17-80
St. Louis, Missouri

Ten graduating seniors from the Prof. Actor's Training Conservatory at Webster College in St. Louis tested for the SAFD. Nine passed with three receiving a Recommended. Two of these were candidates for an MFA in Directing. There were two outstanding fights, one centering about the theme of trying to come up with an idea for the fight test--between two competitive directing students replete with pauses between sections for sips of what appeared to be an excellent dry red. A later sampling proved this to be the case.

This is the second time the Society has certified at this professional training school. Last year approximately 35 observed the test, this year over 75. Work consisted of rapier/dagger, unarmed and quarterstaff. (Instructor, Erik Fredricksen--Examiner, Joseph Martinez)

A reminder to anyone conducting certification tests: Two weapons must be employed and a section of unarmed combat. The examiner must not previously have seen the scenes being presented and must be a full member of the Society.

Erik Fredricksen

P.S. To Mr. John Heil and all interested in purchasing weaponry--Please contact Mr. Mark Haney for an updated list of weapons and prices. Perhaps in the next issue, Mr. Haney could include a list of current weapons and prices.

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

A THREE-YEAR PROGRAM

During primarily my last two years of teaching and choreographing (as well as acting), I've become more and more convinced of the necessity of two requisites in training an actor to act and really be founded in stage combat fundamentals. Although many of the "League" schools follow the format of a magic array of four-week "flying" visits by Stage Combat teachers, mime teachers, clown and/or mask teachers, circus technique teachers, etc., most of the institutions do not regularly train their actors in a discipline that trains and tests their students in a highly active psycho-physical environment.

One can spend hours in Tai-Chi, Alexander Technique, Dance, etc. (all of which I incidentally am totally in favor of and think are fine for what they do) and not really have the neural system trained to react to "perceived stress". The ability to deal with, to control this, is of course different with each individual and the basic determinant of the amount of inhibiting tension present in an individual.

In an earlier article I mentioned my belief about the efficacy of fencing as a way of training the actor. I did not dismiss the potential of other combative arts, but did say that its relation to certain forms of armed combat and the relatively low incidence of injuries made it ideal.

The following is a rough outline of a three-year program culminating in a testing for proficiency in stage combat. Starting this semester at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor I hope to implement this program.

While in attendance at a Movement Workshop at the ATA this summer, I talked with several movement people who also are aware that "something" is missing from all of the good work and time spent "relaxing" and locating "centers". I feel it is the regular participation in an activity that requires, as part of its fundamental value, the active employment of constantly appearing and disappearing qualities of relaxation, harmony, balance, etc.

The following are some thoughts about organization that I will be concerned with in at least two actor training institutions relative to Stage Combat, Fencing and the actor, and Conditioning and the Actor. I certainly would welcome in following issues thoughts and input concerning this subject, particularly from those of you who regularly deal with the teaching and training of actors.

PROPOSED CONCENTRATION OF STAGE COMBAT COURSES

FIRST SEMESTER

SECOND SEMESTER

SPH. Classic French Foil

Continuation--include reciprocals and light bouts in the spring.

JUNIOR Introduce Epee (4 weeks) and Modern Sabre (6 weeks)

Unarmed Combat: to include slaps, punches, kicks, and adapted Aikido techniques. (10 weeks)
Introduce broadsword--(4 weeks)

SENIOR Review Broadsword and unarmed combat (2 weeks). Introduce Court Sword (5 weeks)
Introduce quarterstaff (5 weeks)
Begin rapier and dagger in final 5 weeks.

First 5 weeks would be continuation of rapier and dagger. The second 5 weeks would be the preparation of a standardized final evaluation involving 2 weapons and a portion of unarmed combat in an acted scene presentation.

Particularly the second semester of the Senior year would lend itself to graduate or upper level undergraduate credit if evidence of past course work or comparable training is presented for entrance.

This outline is arranged upon the basis of three one-hour course meetings per week or two 1½ hour meetings per week.

The choice of weapon concentration is based upon:

- A. relative ease in obtaining or constructing
- B. expense
- C. incidence of usage most likely required by actors and directors

THOUGHTS ON THE FENCING REQUIREMENTS FOR THEATRE STUDENTS

Any student declaring a Theatre Major by the beginning of the Sophomore year should be required to take basic Foil and possibly some sabre.

1. Balance
2. Flexibility
3. Anaerobic conditioning
4. Posture and upper body relaxation under conditions of intense psycho-physical involvement.
5. Refinement of circle of concentration.
6. Foundation for control and vocabulary required in stage combat.

Transfer students in either acting or directing should take the second semester Junior year and first semester of the Senior year in Stage Combat if they wish to be able to take the final semester required to graduate with a Theatre Major. This could be waived at the discretion of the department if evidence of comparable training and skills are provided.

I firmly believe that the inclusion of sport fencing should be a requisite in the training of theatre students who anticipate any involvement in acting or directing. The fencer must maintain a relaxed but highly "informed" physicality, balance, and highly specific concentration under the stress of a simulated combat situation. The fencer is constantly dealing with maintaining an optimum physical state and an effective sensory-awareness frame in a very highly charged emotional environment.

Too often the "soft" movement approaches only teach the actor to relax in a fairly atypical environment to the one in which he will be working. A physical and emotionally complex scene will often yield the straining, out-of-control actor; rounded, tight shoulders, tight neck and resultant vocal problems--stiff, erratic lower body movement--and the frequent inability to relate to specific stimuli from other actors.

Certainly other combative arts can often do the same, but frequently with the chance of injuries. The non-contact nature of fencing makes it a comparatively injury-free sport and thus an ideal one in this respect for its inclusion where ability to perform is a requisite.

Erik Fredricksen

BOOK REVIEW

As I have been unable thus far to get William Hobbs' new book, STAGE COMBAT, I am submitting an article written by a member of the Society of British Fight Directors. This review doesn't reflect my opinion toward Hobbs' new book or his first book but it should be of some value to any colleague anticipating a purchase of the book. I might add that the author of the review does appear to be nit-picking indeed. He spent more time on petty quarrels than he did on detailing the book and its overall effectiveness. As soon as I can obtain a copy of the book, I will submit a more detailed opinion of the book and its merits and shortcomings.

D. L. Boushey

While not exactly a new book, this is very much more than a second edition of "Techniques of the Stage Fight" published by Studio Vista in 1967. There are additions, revisions and changes. Among new material are photographs of fights in films "Macbeth", "The Duellists" and "The Three Musketeers." And there is a strong section on Ideas, a useful up-to-date list of suppliers of weapons and effects (the address for stage blood filling a long-felt need), plus a good section on Acting Intention, and an expanded section on unarmed combat. A fascinating chapter on fight cliches--the art of coarse fighting--winds up the revised text.

On a nitpicking note, why spell Nap as Knap? Also it really was Baptiste not Felix Bertrand who arranged those famous nineteenth century London stage fights (see Aylward's "The English Master-at-Arms"). And Hobbs' well-known golf swing with the hilt at the face, which he entertainingly quotes as a possible cliché of his own, would in reality cut the fingers to ribbons, even if it does look rather glorious.

The chapter on Fight Notation demonstrates four systems. John Barton's, Arthur Wise's, the author's own, and the Benesh choreology devised for dance steps. All of them look pretty baffling. Even John Barton's is like some fearful piece of mathematics. I am sure I speak for many Fight Directors who recoil in horror at the prospect of having to master the obscure secret language or hieroglyphics produced by someone else's ingenuity. The simplest and most comprehensive notation in my experience which is not demonstrated here, is Ian McKay's. But even this, while not employing numerals and diagrams, takes quite a bit of practice in reading. It is far more difficult to take in than a simple longhand record.

Are we not chasing a will-o' the-wisp in pursuing the chimera of a universal fight notation, a question which has occupied the Society on and off for eleven years? Any fight script, no matter how notated, has to be reduced to simple terms to hand over to the actors and the stage manager. It is no good giving them obscure diagrams to ponder when all they want is to have their memories jogged over what move to make next.

A good analogy here is the Law Courts. Although a shorthand verbatim record of evidence is kept in the High Court, Judge, Counsel and Solicitors record the proceedings in their own longhand since one cannot possibly expect every lawyer to qualify in shorthand as well as in the law.

To return to Hobbs' book, the original version, thirteen years ago, was the first ever published in Britain on stage fighting. Its new adaptation reflects the changes in the field since then--the importance of ideas above all, the increasing role played by unarmed combat, the spread of modern fight direction to film fights, and the author's perpetual quest for the "unobvious" in his own work. There are some excellent examples of his style portrayed in action, particularly one of his famous "Reach and stretch cut" in a German version of the Mercutio/Tybalt fight.

If you don't possess the original, or even if you do, this new book is a "must" for all who want to know the latest developments in the work of Britain's best-known Fight Director.



DUELS IN BRITAIN

From: The Duel: A
History of Duelling

In 1654 Cromwell thought it necessary to pass an ordinance to prohibit and punish duelling. This ordinance stated that any person sending, carrying, or accepting a challenge was to be imprisoned for six months; and that any person who was challenged and did not report the challenge within twenty-four hours was to be considered as having accepted it. When a duel resulted in death, that death was to be regarded as murder; and any person using provocative words or gestures was to be indicted, and, if convicted, was to be fined, bound over, and compelled to make reparation to the injured party.

Presumably Cromwell's ordinance against duelling was intended to curb the sort of inveterate fighter who would pick a quarrel on the slightest pretext at any period of history. Such a one was Philip Stanhope, the second Earl of Chesterfield, who was arrested in February 1658 to prevent him from fighting a duel with Lord St. John, and then imprisoned in the Tower in June of the same year for wounding John Whalley in an affair of honour. Recounting this last encounter himself, Chesterfield wrote in a letter: "This year a young lady having drawn me for her Valentine, I presented her with a Purslan Chamber pot and a Looking glass fitted to the bottom of it, with this inscription:

Narcissus se mirent en l'onde
Vit la plus belle chose du monde

which was ill resented, and I had a quarrel with Captain Whaly who in a duel I wounded and disarmed, for which I went sent Prisoner to the Tower by the Protector Oliver Cromwell."

After the Restoration, duelling very naturally regained all its previous prestige, and soon ballrooms, coffee-houses and public walks were all scenes of fighting and bloodshed. Covent Garden and Lincoln's Inn Fields were the favourite rendezvous in London for deciding points of honour, and at all hours of the night the clash of swords could be heard by peaceful citizens living in the neighbourhood or returning home. Many duels originated in a quarrel at some theatre, for the young bloods of the day were in the habit of going to a playhouse simply in order to insult some woman and get involved in a dispute which might further their reputation. A typical theatre incident occurred at a performance of The Scornful Lady, when the notorious Beau Fielding insulted a barrister called Fulwood by giving him a push. When Fulwood protested, Fielding put his hand on his sword, but the lawyer drew first

and gave his antagonist a serious wound in the body. "Beau Fielding," we are told, "who was then a man of above fifty years of age, came forward, and uncovering his breast, showed his bleeding wound to the public, to excite the compassion of the fair sex; but, to his no small disappointment, a burst of laughter broke forth from the audience." As for Fulwood, he went triumphantly to Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, where he picked another quarrel with a certain Captain Cusack, from whom he demanded satisfaction. But this was pushing his luck too far, and they had scarcely gone out into the fields before the soldier dispatched the lawyer and left him dead on the ground.

All classes, in fact, were now affected by the mania for duelling, and even doctors occasionally settled their professional differences at the point of the sword. Two physicians called Mead and Woodward fought a duel under the gate of Gresham College which is still remembered, not on account of the fight itself, but because of a witty retort made by the defeated duellist. This was Woodward, who slipped and fell to the ground. "Take your life," said the magnanimous Dr. Mead. To which the prostrate Woodward replied acidly: "Anything but your physic."

Pepys deplored the prevalence of duels at this time, which he described as "as kind of emblem of the general complexion of the whole kingdom." Fortunately for us, the great diarist's disapproval led him to write this engaging account of a typical duel of the late seventeenth century, that which took place in 1667 between Sir H. Bellasses and Mr. Tom Porter:

They two dined yesterday at Sir Robert Carr's, where, it seems, people do drink high, all that come. It happened that these two, the greatest friends in the world, were talking together, and Sir H. Bellasses talked a little louder than ordinary to Tom Porter, giving him some advice. Some of the company standing by said: "What! Are they quarrelling, that they talk so high?" Sir H. Bellasses hearing it, said: "No, I would have you know, I never quarrel, but I strike; take that as a rule of mine!"—"How?" said Tom Porter, "strike! I would I could see the man in England that durst give me a blow?" With that Sir H. Bellasses did give him a box on the ear; and so they were going out to fight, but were hindered. And by and by Tom Porter went out; and meeting Dryden the poet, told him of the business, and that he was resolved to fight Sir H. Bellasses presently, for he knew, if he did not, they would be friends tomorrow, and then the blow would rest upon him; and he desires Dryden to let him have his boy to bring him notice which way Sir H. Bellasses goes. By and by he is informed, that Sir H. Bellasses's coach was coming; so Tom Porter went down out of the coffee-room, where he stayed for the tidings, and stopped

the coach, and bade Sir H. Bellasses come out. "Why," said Sir H. Bellasses, "you will not hurt me coming out, will you?"--"No," says Tom Porter. So out he went, and both drew. And Sir H. Bellasses having drawn and flung away the scabbard, Tom Porter asked him whether he was ready. The other answered, he was; and they fell to fight, some of their acquaintances by. They wounded one another; and Sir H. Bellasses so much, that it is feared he will die. And finding himself severely wounded, he called to Tom Porter, and kissed him, and bade him shift for himself; "for," says he, "Tom thou has hurt me; but I will make shift to stand on my legs till thou mayest withdraw, and the world not take notice of thee; for I would not have thee troubled for what thou hast done." And so, whether he did fly or not, I cannot tell; but Tom Porter showed Sir H. Bellasses that he was wounded too; and they are both ill, but Sir H. Bellasses to the life. And this is fine example! and Sir H. Bellasses a parliament man too; and both of them extraordinary friends!

Bellasses lived for only a few days, and Pepys, noting his death, added as a postscript:

It is pretty to see how the world talk of them, as a couple of fools, that killed one another out of love...



PROFESSIONAL THEATRE VS. UNIVERSITY THEATRE

I recently returned home from an extensive tour which involved doing the fight work for the Actors Theatre Louisville (Cyrano de Bergerac) and Southern Methodist University (Romeo & Juliet). As might be expected, I found the two worlds very different.

To begin with, when you are choreographing for a professional theatre, one is under the gun to get the job done on time. One can say the same for the University setting--however, there is one big difference. When you work at a professional theatre, you have to compete for the time allotted to rehearsal. If the lead (such as Cyrano) is forever busy rehearsing, it makes it very tough for the fight director to get him. Quite naturally the director will want him as much as possible and there are no such things as 14-hour days. You have eight hours to rehearse in a given day and it is up to the fight director to finagle some of that time for the action sequences.

There is a union involved when dealing with professional theatres that you don't have to worry about with the university theatre. You can generally get all the time you need in the university setting as the schedule is often wide open. In the professional arena, you do not have that luxury. What you do have, however, are professional actors. A good actor knows what demands are there in a fight situation and if he is a responsible actor, he will utilize his fight time to the fullest. Most actors are very aware of the demands of the theatre and consequently will work to get the job done. Sometimes you find actors who don't want to be bothered with the fights, but these are generally people who are very insecure about their physical prowess. It is up to the fight director to assure them that they can indeed do the job and they are going to look great come opening night.

Sometimes it is simply a matter of laziness on the part of an actor. Many actors once they get out of college and into the profession have a tendency to let themselves go physically. They don't have the capability to perform a physically demanding sequence on the stage. You rarely find this in the academic community. The students are almost always in good shape. At least those schools that profess quality. The S.M.U. students were of this ilk as they were in very good shape and had some idea what their bodies were about. Perhaps one of the big problems with students is that they want to do "too much." They want to start improvising or want to show their instructors just how good they really are. In many cases, it is a matter of displaced energy. One has to keep in mind that stage fighting is "controlled violence."

At S.M.U. I had a bit of a problem with the actors playing Mercutio and Tybalt. They simply weren't getting the fight down. After two and a half weeks, they were still having to stop and ponder the next move. The fight was pretty complex but they weren't utilizing their faculties to the best advantage. Learning a fight is very serious business and you cannot approach it as though you have six months to get it down. In the case of students, I feel it is a matter of naivete to some extent. A professional actor knows how much time and effort he will have to expend in a fight sequence where students often assume that it will all come together eventually and there is really nothing to worry about.

When dealing with professional actors, the acting of the fight is often easier to define. It doesn't take the pro long to get to the heart of the acting and we all know how crucial the acting of the fight is. You can often just give the professional actor an idea or glimpse of what you feel the acting attitude might be, but with many students, you literally must show them quite specifically what you want in the way of timing or acting technique in the fight. Of course, one doesn't want to spoon-feed acting technique to an actor because it really isn't your responsibility, but when it makes or breaks the fight sequence, one finds it necessary to give a little helpful advice (in regards to the fight).

One other thing I might mention when working the professional theatre and the university theatre is the set. Often in the professional setting, you do not have the set until tech rehearsals because another show is dominating the stage at the moment. Often in the university, one can get the set (in whatever shape) to rehearse on. What a luxury to have the real thing to work on. How often have you choreographed a fight sequence that didn't quite fit on the real thing. It is nice to get the real thing, thus avoiding all the re-blocking that goes along with fights that have been created in the rehearsal hall.

In general, I love the energy of students and the professionalism of equity actors. What is ideal is when I find professional actors with high energy levels and students with professional qualities.

I must say that my experiences in Louisville and Dallas were super! I was able to work with one of the foremost professional theatres in the country and one of the top drama schools in the country.

D. L. Boushey

"POINTS" OF INTEREST

Paddy Crean dropped me a note to make mention that he new book "More Champagne Darling" will not be published until later this year. He will notify the Society when it is on the market. So for all you autograph hounds awaiting Paddy's book, you will have a few more months to wait. Side Note: Paddy's wife Susan recently made a film on brass rubbing as well as being one of eight Stratford artists to exhibit their work at the Canadian Arts Gallery in Ontario.

I received letters of high commendation for Jan Kirk and Chris Villa from the University of New Mexico, and California State University at Dominguez Hills, respectively. They had taught workshops and choreographed shows for them. It pleases the Society to get letters of such merit. It is good to know that various members are representing the Society well--BRAVO!!

Jerome Smith is the East Coast representative for American Fencing Supply. If some of the members on the East Coast want to contact Jerome, he can be reached by writing:

Jerome Smith
161 Kelton, No. 31
Boston MA

or calling (617) 232-2271

The Society is still planning to conduct a second national fight workshop at Ann Arbor, Michigan this year in the month of July/August. When the Society has specific details regarding the workshop they will be submitted to the membership via our magazine. For those of you considering participation this year, note that it will be held in July and will run for approximately three weeks.

We continue to boycott Castello's Fencing Inc. We recommend very strongly that members interested in supplies out of New York pursue Santelli's Fencing Equipment.

One person sent in articles to the Society after the appeal was made in the last issue of The Fight Master to help the producers of the magazine during the holiday season. That one person was Erik Fredricksen, president of the Society, and a workhorse in our organization. Well, colleagues, I am a bit lost for words. I simply do not know how to ask, beg, plead or demand articles for the magazine. It's your source of information. Please make the effort in this coming year!!

D. L. Boushey, Sec.-Treas.

SOCIETY NEWS

DAVID L. BOUSHEY recently choreographed Cyrano de Bergerac for the professional training program at the University of Washington. He will be teaching at California State University at Los Angeles this winter quarter.

ERIK FREDRICKSEN recently conducted a workshop at Webster College in St. Louis, Missouri. He will soon be heading to the University of Michigan to take on a full-time position for the remainder of the academic year.

PETER GIFFIN (Affiliate) is in rehearsal for the lead in Fiddler on the Roof at a dinner theatre in Colorado.

MICHAEL KATZ (Affiliate) recently choreographed an unarmed fight scene for the Broadway production of Naonu Court playing at the Players Theatre. He is also teaching stage fighting privately in New York.

GARY SLOAN (Affiliate) recently finished playing Valvert in Cyrano at the Actors Theatre Louisville where he was fight captain for the production. He is now choreographing Cymbeline for the Hartford Stage Company and acting a part in the production.

JEROME SMITH (Affiliate) is currently choreographing the combats for a production of Rashomon at the Footlight Theatre of Boston. He is teaching at the Boston Center for the Arts and is also writing a script for a stage version of the Four Musketeers which will be performed by his combat troupe "Swordplay" upon its completion. He has also been cast and is now playing the role of the King in an ongoing production at the Medieval Manor dinner theatre in Boston.

ALLEN SUDDETH is busy teaching his classes at his studio. He is presently conducting four classes at various levels in his studio program. He is also about to start a collaboration with King Productions out of Cincinnati regarding an out-door drama in Canada this summer. He recently choreographed and produced another fight extravaganza in New York with the help of many of his students.

CHRIS VILLA (Affiliate) is teaching combat at Humboldt State University in California and will soon be choreographing Romeo & Juliet for Crescent Valley High School near Salem, Oregon.

ROBERT WALSH (Actor/Combatant) is currently working with the Riverside Shakespeare Company in their production of Romeo & Juliet in which he is playing the role of Romeo.

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