

--Holly Woodlawn

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celebrated antics of Holly and others like him on the grounds that they have worked against the movement by reinforcing damaging stereotypes. Others have said that his fame and talent have promoted the interests of gays. I asked Holly what he thinks his career has done for the movement.

“People from different movements keep telling me that I’ve helped,” he replied. “I’m glad, but I’ve never been involved in any of them. I’m just for everybody

being free to do what they want.”

I asked him if he has any interest in anything that might be even remotely described as political. Holly waved his hand and exclaimed, “no, no, nada, nada.” He hesitated, then added, “only I think I’m going to vote this year. I just realized that this is the first time we have a President we didn’t vote for. Somebody has to run the country, it’s just not my area. I have enough of a time trying to remember lyrics to songs.”

Holly Woodlawn

"Now I'm A Man, And It's Beautiful"

didn't pay off. But Holly isn't bowed by his experience at Bimbo's, however. "I was really down for a couple of days," he confessed. "Last night it was back to the same old thing, sitting home and watching television, but I'm ready to go at it again. Some of the cast is going to work with me again, and I want to stay in San Francisco, it's great out here. I never saw a Victorian house before."

I asked him if he was going to change his act. "Yes," he said with a sigh. "I'm ready to get up there and scream again, you know, give the public what it wants. Next time I'll do a couple of numbers in a sequined gown, maybe open in drag, but that will be only one character. I used to live like that, you know, you have no idea how much that costs in false eyelashes alone."

He also plans to develop one of the characters he played in the review at Bimbo's, a Puerto Rican pimp called Chi Chi Castanets. "I can get behind that character because that's my background," Holly explained. "Basically I'm a half-Puerto Rican kid from Florida."

The Chi Chi character was one of the show's best elements. Holly, in luminescent orange-pink satin pants and a green satin shirt strewn with purple glitter palm trees, performed a number called "Puerto Rican Choo-Choo" which describes rush hour traffic on a Manhattan subway. Also featured in that routine were Maryann Price (formerly of the Kinks and Hot Licks) and Mary-Cleere Haran (*Beach*

Blanket Babylon, Babes in Arms). The show was everybody's Hollywood fantasies come true: huge glittered palm trees, top hats and tails and, as Holly says, "lots of staging and choreography and schtick . . . incorporating all kinds of stuff from MGM musicals."

Holly's fascination with show business began when he was in high school in Hollywood, Florida. "They had dance contests every Friday night, I won all of them. The prize was 45's, I had quite a collection." Holly's odyssey from high school to Andy Warhol's "Factory" in New York was immortalized by Lou Reed in his song, "Walk on the Wild Side," which Holly describes as "an expose on the real filth at the 'Factory' as told by Louie." Holly gave me his own version.

"It all basically started at 15 and a half, when I ran away to New York to be a star, like everybody else. I was struck by lightning along the way, in Georgia. Maybe that was an omen. I had some friends who were in an off-off-off Broadway play, so I joined it. It was a very sick show. We sang a song about antlers." He sang it for me, tilting his head and flashing his eyes, "I have antlers in my nose, I have antlers in my toes, I have antlers in my ass." Peculiar indeed. "That was in 1968-69, when everybody was into glitter," he continued, "so I would come in early and put vaseline all over my body and roll in glitter. I wore a mink bikini and had leaves on my head."

The rest of the story unfolds like a

classic fairy tale. Warhol came to see the show. Afterwards, he went back stage and asked Holly if he wanted to be in a film he was making. "And who's going to turn down a movie offer, right honey, so I did it." The film was *Trash*.

The first initiation rite into the ranks of the superstars is the christening. I asked Holly how he got his name. "They called me Holly because I whistled for cabs, and in that movie (*Breakfast at Tiffany's*), Audrey Hepburn (as Holly Gollightly) used to whistle for cabs. So to add to that, I named myself after the cemetery (Woodlawn cemetery in Los Angeles). It was for impact. I even got a letter from Woodlawn once. They wanted me to buy a plot, they were going to send a car and take me to lunch. It really freaked me out, honey, I wasn't ready to go yet. Anyway, how could I buy a plot? I couldn't even afford to buy another mink bikini."

What are Holly's ambitions, now that he's revamped his image and is trying for the big time? "I would like to get into records and, oh, movies," he said with enthusiasm. "The real thing this time, with clapboards and cameramen, not just two lights and a mike between your legs, you know, that's the Andy Warhol version. . . I want the glamour, the whole thing. I would love to do the Johnny Carson Show, and ohhhh, maybe Dinah. I'd like to do serials, I can see myself on Mary Hartman."

Some gay activists have criticized the

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