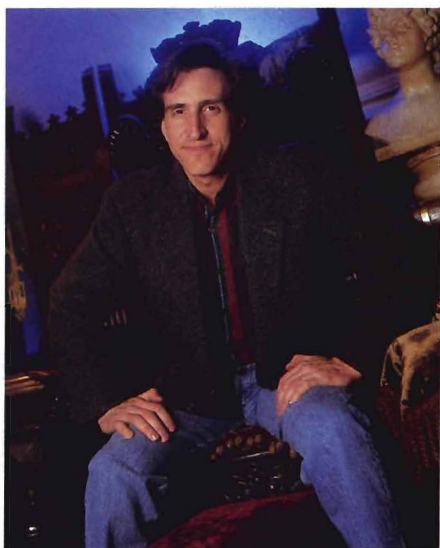


BETWEEN THE LINES

PAUL RUDNICK ON THE GAYQUAKE



The playwright-screenwriter-essayist.

PAUL RUDNICK'S ESSAY FOR THIS ISSUE WAS due a week ago, his new show (*The Naked Truth*) opens this Thursday at the WPA Theatre, his 1993 play (*Jeffrey*) begins filming in July, and he's gearing up for the Gay Games (his essay starts on page 34). But all that pales in comparison with Rudnick's real burden: moving. That meant vacating a fifth-floor-walk-up apartment once occupied by John Barrymore. Was he worried about a surprise visit from Nicol Williamson, who famously misbehaved in Rudnick's *I Hate Hamlet* (and is now in a one-man show about Barrymore)? "Oh, please," the New Jersey native says. "As if he could get up that many stairs."

Rudnick can afford to joke. Besides the plays, he's written two novels (including *I'll Take It*) and several films (including *Addams Family Values*). He's been busy enough to avoid the inevitable Gay Games squabbles about "inclusiveness."

"It's only in New York that you get into those insane *Village Voice* debates," Rudnick says. "I was at an ACT UP meeting once, and this really earnest woman got up and said that what we really needed to do was raise funds to buy dental dams for the lesbians in El Salvador."

Though the parades and parties will keep him busy, Rudnick is looking forward to gay traffic. "All of New York's streets are going to be *clogged* with homosexuals," he says. "But we are just the politest minority. I'd always want to be the policeman who works a gay event, because nothing bad ever happens. They stand there, they get ogled, and that's it." ■