

## Depraved BDSM Convention at Cleveland Westin Hotel in April 2019

By Amy Contrada

January 10, 2019

[CLAW](#) – the Cleveland Leather Annual Weekend – is set to take place April 25-28, 2019. This event is an orgy of instruction and participation in the most depraved and dangerous sex acts imaginable. The focus is on bondage, sadomasochism, fisting, scat play, master/puppy play, and other horrific practices. Almost all the attendees are men. Most identify as “gay” or “bisexual.”

The venue is the downtown [Cleveland Westin](#) (216-771-7700). [Other hotels hosting](#) CLAW events and guests are the [Cleveland Marriott](#) (216-736-7009), [Aloft](#) (216-400-6469), and [Hampton Inn](#) (216-241-6600).



*Online advertisement for the 2018 event.*

In 2018, [MassResistance](#), [Americans for Truth about Homosexuality](#), [Coach Dave Daubenmire](#), and [Wisconsin Christian News](#) exposed the event last year. We were able to get only one “mainstream” conservative outlet, [American Thinker](#), to take note.

The authorities in Cleveland, once alerted, had no interest in halting the event. In fact, the event proceeded with the support of Cleveland’s [Mayor](#) and business community.

In the hopes of halting the 2019 event, we profile one of CLAW’s premier instructors here.

## Richard A. Sprott, PhD - Instructor on Humiliation, Scat (feces play), and Mental Health of BDSM Practitioners

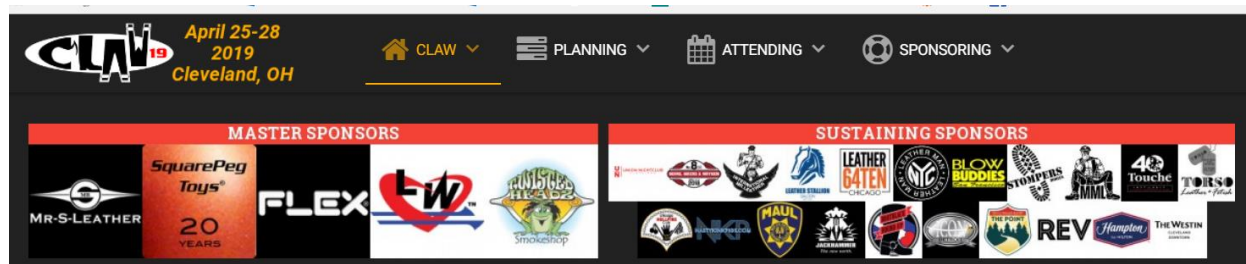
### CAUTION: Graphic and Repulsive

*This is a profile of just one of the workshop instructors at the BDSM convention, CLAW, held the last weekend of April at the downtown Cleveland hotels.*

[Richard Sprott](#) holds a Ph.D. in developmental psychology from the University of California at Berkeley where he is currently an “Honored Instructor” in behavioral health sciences. Sprott presented three workshops at CLAW 2018:

- BDSM humiliation
- Scat (feces play)
- Mental health issues of BDSM practitioners

Sprott’s bio says he’s a “leather daddy” with a husband, three “slaves,” a dog, and a pup – his “leather family.” (It’s not clear if his “dog” and “pup” refer to humans or animals, but in light of BDSM “[puppy](#)” play, we would guess it refers to humans.)




The screenshot shows the CLAW 2019 website. The header includes the CLAW 19 logo, the dates April 25-28, 2019, and the location Cleveland, OH. Navigation links for CLAW, PLANNING, ATTENDING, and SPONSORING are visible. Below the header, there are two sections: MASTER SPONSORS and SUSTAINING SPONSORS. The MASTER SPONSORS section includes logos for MR-S-LEATHER, SquarePeg Toys (20 YEARS), FLEX, and LEVI. The SUSTAINING SPONSORS section includes logos for LEATHER BATTEN, BLOW BUDDIES, STOMPERS, 40, and TORSO. Below the sponsors, there is a section titled "Skills & Education Presenter: Richard Sprott".

**Skills & Education Presenter: Richard Sprott**





Richard Sprott entered the San Francisco leather scene in 1990, and after a few years joined the Defenders/SF in 1995. That led to involvement in the Leathermen's Discussion Group, serving on the Board since its inception in 1999 until 2006, and then returning to the LDG Board in 2011 to help start up the LDG Mentoring Program. Richard served on the organizing committee of the SF Leather/Levi Weekend from its inception in 2001 until 2006; and he was chosen as SF Leather Daddy XXIII in 2005. In 2009, he was chosen as Mr. Alameda County Leather, a title produced by the Alameda County Leather Corps. He is also serving currently as the Executive Director of CARAS (the Community-Academic Consortium for Research on Alternative Sexualities), a nonprofit corporation designed to promote scientific and scholarly research on kink/BDSM sexuality, polyamory and other forms of negotiated non-monogamy. Richard is one of the founders and serves as a director of TASHRA (The Alternative Sexualities Health Research Alliance). Richard has a Ph.D. in developmental psychology from UC Berkeley. He is co-author with sex therapist David Ortmann of the book "Sexual Outsiders: Understanding BDSM Sexualities and Communities" which was published in November 2013 by Rowman and Littlefield. He has a wonderful leather family supporting him: his husband Dave, his pup Spunky, his dog Chomper, his slave eric, his slave lyle and his slave jason.






Watch the [video](#) of his [lecture on humiliation](#) given at the [San Francisco Leathermen's Discussion Group](#).









Below is the [description](#) of his [lecture](#) at CLAW 2018.



April 25-28  
2019  
Cleveland, OH

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## Humiliation: Hot, Edgy and Sometimes Dangerous

## Friday 11:45AM - 1:00PM

Topic area: Power Exchange / Humiliation

Humiliation play involves some intense psychological dynamics, and comes in a variety of expressions. On one hand, humiliation can mean "putting someone in their place" - protocols and actions that reinforce a submissive or beta position. On the other hand, humiliation can mean playing with embarrassment and shame. This presentation will discuss shame and embarrassment - and why some are attracted to this kind of scene. The presentation will also discuss the ways in which humiliation can reinforce a power exchange dynamic. We will also discuss emotional triggers, handling things when the scene goes wrong, negotiating boundaries, and aftercare.

[View Class Materials](#)

### Presenter

RICHARD SPROTT

Here is one panel from his lecture outline on humiliation (was linked at "View class materials"):

- Humiliation Play is about playing with power, especially
- It is a deep form of psychological play (similar to mindfucks, interrogation scenes, etc) and needs to be respected as such
- Remember to denigrate aspects/behavior that you actually value or like; avoid topics/areas that the person is most insecure about
- Learn psychological first aid and plan on aftercare

What exactly might "aftercare" entail? It's easy to imagine that a person subjected to BDSM abuse will experience some level of trauma. CLAW even [posted](#) a flyer ("Event Drop Brochure") on suicide prevention for its attendees. (Page 1 of 2 shown below.)

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Name	Type	Modified
Event-Drop-Brochure.pdf	PDF	Papa Woof Roth 2 May 2017 at 22:00
Leather Values Resource Guide.pdf	PDF	Jason Southerland 2 May 2017 at 23:50
Event Drop Brochure.pdf	PDF	Dady C John 2 May 2017 at 19:59
icypaa_non-discrimination_anti-harrassment...	PDF	Chad Wilson 9 August 2017 at 12:37
CLEXPO crop 2.jpg	Image	Bob Miller 21 August 2016 at 02:20

Resources...

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-8255

General Numbers

1-800-SUICIDE ( 1-800-784-2433 )

1-800-273-TALK ( 1-800-273-8255 )

Military Veterans Suicide Hotline:

1-800-273-TALK (Press 1)

Suicide Hotline in Spanish:

1-800-273-TALK (Press 2)

LGBT Suicide Hotline:

1-866-4-U-TREVOR

Trans Lifeline

1-877-565-8860

Trans identified & educated volunteers assist transgender people experiencing crisis

GLBT National Help Center

1-888-843-4564

Serves gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender & questioning people by providing free & confidential peer support

Kink Aware Professionals NCSF

<https://ncsfreedom.org/resources/kink-aware-professionals-directory/kap-directory-homepage.html>

The Inter-Fetish Coalition for Suicide Prevention and Awareness (IFCSPA)

IFCSPA is an organization dedicated to further effective suicide prevention and mental health safety through collaborative activities and information sharing within the fetish community in order to save lives.

THE FEELINGS AFTER

A GUIDE FOR HEALING AND MENTAL HEALTH AFTER AN EVENT

Research indicates a high level of suicidality among “men who have sex with men” – with various estimates showing from two to six times the risk seen in the general population. Levels of anxiety disorders and depression are also higher.



In Sprott's CLAW workshop (below) on the mental health of BDSM practitioners, he notes that their self-reported attempted suicide rate was *five times* that of the general population. (Yet the American Psychiatric Association [declassified BDSM](#) as a mental illness in the 2013 DSM-5!)

The screenshot shows the CLAW 2019 website. At the top, it says "April 25-28 2019 Cleveland, OH". Navigation links include "CLAW", "PLANNING", "ATTENDING", and "SPONSORING". A row of logos for various sponsors is displayed, including MR-S-LEATHER, SquarePeg Toys, FLEX, and others. The main title of the workshop is "A State of Mind, a State of Heart: How Mental Health Challenges Intertwine with BDSM and Power Exchange Relationships", scheduled for "Saturday 11:45AM - 1:00PM". Below the title, the topic area is listed as "Health / Mental Health". A description of the workshop is provided, followed by a "View Class Materials" link. The presenter is identified as "RICHARD SPROTT".

CLAW 19 April 25-28 2019 Cleveland, OH

CLAW PLANNING ATTENDING SPONSORING

MR-S-LEATHER SquarePeg Toys 20 YEARS FLEX LEATHER 64TEN BLOW BUDDIES STOMPERS 40 Touche TITANS

**A State of Mind, a State of Heart: How Mental Health Challenges Intertwine with BDSM and Power Exchange Relationships** Saturday 11:45AM - 1:00PM

Topic area: Health / Mental Health

Some people discover that BDSM and power exchange relationships help them cope with past trauma, depression, impulses to cut or harm the body, ADHD, anxiety, and addiction. On the other side, sometimes these issues can interfere with scenes and Dom/sub interactions. In this presentation, we will explore the healing journeys that people have taken, discuss mental health emergencies in the dungeon, and talk about sub-drop, Top-drop and event drop. Come to share and listen to people's experiences and insights, in conversation with the latest science on mental health challenges.

[View Class Materials](#)

**Presenter**

RICHARD SPROTT

The "View Class Materials" link in the workshop description leads to Sprott's research outline: "[A state of mind, a state of heart](#): How Mental Health Challenges Intertwine with BDSM and Power Exchange Relationships."

He notes these concerns on the psychological and physical health of BDSM practitioners:

- 16% have been hospitalized for a mental health concern
- 36% are currently taking medication for a mental health condition
- **25% have attempted suicide**
- 40% had been treated for anxiety in past 12 months
- 39% had been treated for depression in past 12 months

Compared to the general population, BDSM practitioners have:

- **10 times the incidence of HIV infection**
- almost twice the rate of Hepatitis C
- 2.5 times the incidence of major depression
- 2.6 times the incidence of PTSD


Below is a table from Sprott's outline:

Our Sample	National Prevalence
0.52% Hep C	0.305% Hep C
3.72% HIV +	0.378% HIV +
36.83% obesity	state with highest rate: Louisiana at 36.2%
33.2% anxiety - lifetime prevalence	28.8% anxiety - lifetime prevalence
<b>41.8% depression - lifetime</b>	<b>16.6% major depressive disorder - lifetime</b>
<b>5.91% bipolar - lifetime</b>	<b>3.9% bipolar - lifetime</b>
<b>17.98% PTSD - lifetime</b>	<b>6.8% PTSD - lifetime</b>
<b>24.70% attempted suicide - lifetime</b>	<b>4.6% attempted suicide - lifetime</b>





Returning to Sprott's workshop on "humiliation" play, he lists what he calls "HOT" themes (implying they are recommended):






- Dirt (taboo)
- Objectification (consensual non-consent)
- Weakness (power)
- Public Display (shaming, exposure)






What this actually means in practice can be seen in another area of Sprott's expertise, scat (feces play). His workshop "Scat: Beyond Brown" at CLAW 2018 was given in a conference room at the Hampton Inn. (It was co-taught by "Piglet.")



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**2019**  
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## Scat: Beyond Brown

### Friday 3:30PM - 5:30PM

Topic area: Community / Scat

Scat has been covered in CLAW educational seminars for the past three years and for the past two years, they have offered socials as well. The scat "scene" is a misnomer to an extent as there are literally hundreds of subsets within the scene. This class will cover the basics of scat play for those new to the scene, as well as conversations dealing with how to be more visible within the community: socials at other events, play parties, etc.

### Presenters

PIGLET

RICHARD SPROTT

He includes the photos below in his [lecture](#) as models to emulate. They illustrate humiliation via beating – notice the reddened buttocks – and forced consumption of feces and urine in a filthy toilet.



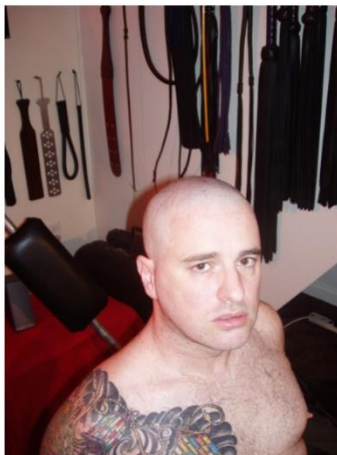
Here is an [explanation](#) of scat from a “gay” men’s guide to sex practices (sponsored by the “leading British AIDS charity”). Note that scat is referred to as a form of sex.

Scat involves playing with shit, smearing it on your or his body, and sometimes eating it. It can also mean just getting off on seeing another guy dump his load. “Farming” is taking shit from public toilets to play with.

Men can be drawn to scat precisely because it provokes such a strong negative reaction in others. Lovers of scat might get a kick from stepping over what for most people is the line between what’s OK and what’s too extreme. Scat is perhaps the ultimate in sex without limits or inhibitions.

Sprott gave a glimpse into his personal torture chamber (“dungeon”) in this photograph of a man he “humiliated” in a “scene” involving head shaving – which “objectified” the man as “subhuman.” Note the paddles, belts, lashes, and whips hanging on Sprott’s wall:

## Object, subhuman



The ultimate in BDSM humiliation objectification may be fisting. There were several workshops at CLAW 2018 on this incredibly dangerous practice, including live demonstrations. (The claim in the description that it can be done safely is a lie.)













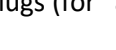




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An Intro to Fisting: Oh the places you can go! Friday 10:00AM - 12:00PM

Topic area: Sex / Fisting

Fisting looks hot in videos, right?! You have an interest in fisting, but you don't know how to begin. How do I prepare myself as a top, bottom, or versatile man? What should I do, and not do, to safely get inside that butt?

This class will include information on how to prepare for anal fisting, for both tops and bottoms, along with the toys, supplies, lubes, and techniques for safe anal fisting. The format will be casual, and discussion/questions before, during, and after the demonstration are highly encouraged.

CAUTION: A live demonstration of some of the techniques discussed will ensue. To protect the privacy of the presenters, photography will not be allowed.

Presenter

JOHN "JCBTMI"

CLAW 2017 published the photos below of fisting devices and graduated-size plugs (for “anal training”) available in their vendor hall.



CLAW also rented equipment at the hotel so attendees they could practice in their private hotel rooms. Included were seats and slings for fisting and rimming, flogging racks, plus a vendor hall full of lashes, whips, paddles, ropes, chains, puppy masks and tails, lubricant, etc.



Might some of the attendees have a hard time recovering after all the abuse they took at the conference? Even Dr. Spratt admits this is a problem. In the [document](#) that accompanied his "State of Mind – Mental Health" presentation, he notes the downers ("drops") many BDSM practitioners will experience after the "highs" at their parties. This can take the form of "blues" including emotions of "loss, grief, bereavement, numbness, disorganization, despair, denial, anger, depression." Some will experience a "high-intensity stress response" after the event which can include "fear, intense anger, freeze," or they may dissociate, depersonalize, feel "out of body" or that "this is a dream."

It makes one wonder how these men are functioning in normal society after participating such events. Might it explain the anger one often senses in many homosexual activists?

Dr. Spratt's participation as an expert in the BDSM underworld is no doubt a flower in his cap at U Cal Berkeley.