

# Master Jeff and slave sparky

*San Francisco*  
15 years together



PHOTO COURTESY OF MASTER JEFF

**M**ASTER JEFF AND SLAVE SPARKY ARE COMMITTED 24/7 to their roles, but they are also a loving gay couple who got married while it was legal in California. Unlike most couples today, however, Jeff is the sole breadwinner, driving over the Golden Gate Bridge every weekday to work as a software quality-assurance engineer. Meanwhile sparky, a “recovering actor” and service slave, takes care of their hillside home and their Pyrennean Shepherd dogs, Loki and Freyja. He does all the cleaning and laundry, has dinner on the table when Jeff is ready for it, and is just as accommodating when it comes to Jeff’s sexual demands.

While Master Jeff is a bit of a service top in his sideline pro Dom business (see MasterJeffBDSM.com), he definitely prefers to be the one served at home. He picked “Master/servant” to express the dynamic of their relationship because “servant” suggests more freedom and initiative on the slave’s part and less need for micromanagement, which is more work than he wants to do.

Another analogy they like is that of a dog and his owner: the dog offers unconditional love and devotion, is as obedient as he is trained to be, and in return is loved, protected, and cared for. They aren’t much into doggy role-playing — the snouts on those dog hoods make it really hard to lick, chew, or suck things, sparky drily notes — but sparky’s collar carries a bone-shaped steel dog tag with his name and his owner’s. Emotionally, sparky is Jeff’s dog as much as Loki and Freyja are. He

was named for a gay dog in a *South Park* TV episode; a secondary influence was the nickname of the late Charles Schulz, creator of *Peanuts*, whom Jeff calls “one of the great modern artists.”

The tag went on with the collar, probably in 1998 (neither man could remember exactly), and both have rarely

<b>age of Master</b>	41
<b>age of slave</b>	57
<b>basic dynamic of M/s bond?</b>	Master/servant
<b>Master and slave(s) live together?</b>	yes
<b>slave works outside home?</b>	no
<b>Master controls finances?</b>	yes
<b>slave’s sexuality controlled?</b>	yes
<b>strict protocol followed?</b>	no
<b>bond based on love?</b>	yes
<b>Master and slave identify as leathermen?</b>	yes
<b>main benefits of bond for Master</b>	a clean butt to bareback; a clean, pleasant house to come home to
<b>main benefits of bond for slave</b>	love, companionship, deep meaning, excitement, playfulness



PHOTO COURTESY OF SPUNK VIDEO

been off since. The collar is finely crafted and resembles a necklace or bracelet more than a dog chain. For Jeff, the collar was a symbol that he owned sparky, while for sparky it meant “that he was *willing* to own me and wasn’t just taking care of the dog because the dog was around.”

While sparky wears the collar 24/7, not even taking it off for an MRI test before an operation, it often gets slipped under his T-shirt outside the home, and sometimes inside when faced with folks who aren’t clued in to the nature of their relationship. Only close friends know the full story, and then only if the friends really *want* to know, which is why only Jeff’s first name and sparky’s nickname are used here.

### **The backstory**

Jeff and sparky’s M/s bond predates the collar. Its beginnings date to 1994, when Jeff and sparky met over breakfast in the

home sparky shared with his then lover, “Bruce,” in Louisville, Kentucky. Bruce and sparky (not called “sparky” then, of course) both grew up in Baltimore and had been partners for almost two decades. They had lived in San Francisco for a while in the ’70s but found the gay scene there too frenetic and home costs too high, so they moved to Louisville. Bruce worked in human resources and sparky found work in theater.

Jeff entered their lives as a trick Bruce brought home. Growing up in Cincinnati, Ohio, Jeff also went to college in the Midwest and moved to Louisville for work. He met Bruce online in an AOL chat room. It wasn’t unusual for Bruce to bring in a third party to enliven his sexual relationship with sparky, who enjoyed being used by two tops at once. “When’s my turn?” sparky asked when they met, and Jeff replied, “Can I have breakfast first?”

Their first sexual encounter was that afternoon. Jeff was only 26 and “merely aware that [he] liked ‘boots and leather.’” But sparky had rope, leather restraints, and other “toys” that they soon began playing with, “and it accelerated continuously from there.” Jeff became a frequent fuckbuddy for Bruce and sparky, and when they sold the Louisville house and relocated back to San Francisco a few months later, they invited him to join them there.

While sparky’s fantasies of bondage and submission — he’s not a masochist — began before puberty and were well formed by the time he came out in 1976, at the age of 24, his long relationship with Bruce was mostly vanilla, except emotionally. Bruce is “a complete, instinctive top,” sparky says, and made all the key decisions, but he’s uninterested in and even “repulsed” by the trappings of s/m. “You’ll do whatever I tell you,” he told sparky, “so why do I have to tie you up?” Occasionally he did, sparky says, but his heart wasn’t in it.

To meet his need for a more intense submission, sparky turned to some of the dozen or so third parties Bruce introduced to the relationship over the years. But even if they were interested in Mastery, they could see there was no real future in it with sparky because of his commitment to Bruce. One such liaison continued “sporadically” for 10 years, but all were over by 1990 or so.

“I’d always avoided going out and looking for a serious leather partner,” sparky says, “because I thought it might destabilize my relationship with Bruce — and, in fact, it did after Jeff joined us.” But not right away. Despite a growing intimacy as sparky expanded Jeff’s horizons and Jeff fulfilled many of sparky’s fantasies, sparky fully expected that some day Jeff would find a boyfriend nearer his own age and leave him. And he thought he’d be okay with that, but it never happened.

“The control freak in me was enjoying becoming sparky’s Master,” Jeff says. “Certainly the exploration was fun, and the feedback was really nice. I’m still having a great time with it today.” For a while, sparky was the leader in their explorations, being more experienced, though he always took the slave’s role, but Jeff soon outstripped him, especially after the move to San Francisco with its wealth of BDSM opportunities.

“The sexual relationship between Bruce and me,” sparky says, “waned as the sexual interaction between my Master and me strengthened and diversified.” But Bruce “is a very tolerant person,” sparky says, and for nine years the three of them shared a bedroom, with Jeff and sparky playing in Jeff’s office upstairs, until Bruce decided he didn’t want to live that way anymore.

In January 2003, living arrangements in the house were changed to reflect the reality that sparky and Jeff were now the primary partners. Bruce moved upstairs, into what had been Jeff’s of-

fice/playroom, and the bedroom downstairs got an outright leather makeover. Bruce and sparky dissolved their domestic partnership agreement, and six months later sparky entered into one with Jeff. Before long, Bruce met someone else he fell in love with and moved him into the house, but it was cramped with four men and a large dog (Harvey, Loki’s predecessor). In 2006 Bruce and his new partner moved out. But they’re still close friends with sparky and Jeff.

## Milestones

“There were several milestones” in forging the Master/slave bond with Jeff, sparky explains: “my Master fisted and barebacked me (i had never been fisted before); he shaved my head and collared me; he had me shave my crotch, had my dick pierced, and gave me a PA; he had my tattoo of Bruce’s initials augmented with his own; finally, he had that tattoo



PHOTO COURTESY OF MASTER JEFF

made over to conceal Bruce’s initials.” None of these steps was definitive, but they had a cumulative effect. In 1994, they were top/bottom fuckbuddies; by 1998, they had evolved into 24/7 Master and slave.

Today, sparky is content to be monogamous with Jeff. He says he doesn’t even think about having sex with anyone else and it makes him “very uncomfortable” if another guy makes a pass at him. Jeff has sex or plays with anyone he wishes, though sparky is the only one



he fucks without a condom. That restriction was arrived at some years ago, when sex in the house was still three-way and sparky made sure that all three got tested periodically. Because sparky was so uncomfortable when Jeff had even “low-risk” bareback sex with outsiders, Jeff agreed to save that for sparky alone.

### **Benefits**

Jeff now considers that restriction the most important benefit of their bond. As he puts it, “sparky provides a clean butt that I can bareback when I want to (often), which keeps me from pursuing such risky activity with others, letting me satisfy my ‘outside’ recreational needs safely.” Of course, there are other benefits, too, such as “a clean, pleasant house to come home to after work, with dinner ready.”

On sparky’s side, the benefits of slavery to Jeff are “love, companionship, deep meaning, excitement, playfulness.” He says that “my Master is my world. Loving my Master and being allowed to serve him sexually as well as in mundane ways fulfills me mentally, physically, and spiritually. My Master supports me in every way, including materially.” sparky gave up his career as an actor to focus on Master Jeff, in part

because “theater is very ego-driven, and it’s difficult to maintain a reliably submissive mindset.”

A major opera buff, sparky has been collecting operatic recordings since the age of 14. He now has several thousand, which he listens to when he’s alone since Master Jeff can’t stand them — Jeff prefers high-energy techno, house, and trance music. Still, he gives sparky a personal allowance, aside from the house-keeping funds, to add to the collection. The substantial space devoted to sparky’s CDs in the small house (see photo at left) is an accommodation Jeff makes to keep his slave happy and eager to serve.

### **Age issues**

Neither seems to notice the large age difference, in part because Jeff has a passion for “ancient” TV game shows and sitcoms. “We’re trolling so deeply into the past,” sparky says, “watching shows that predate me as well, that it erases the difference in our ages.”

However, sparky *is* beginning to face some of the limitations of middle age. He’s less limber and doesn’t have the stamina of a young man. That doesn’t concern Jeff, as he feels he can adapt to whatever limits sparky or another play partner may have. It’s the emotional response that matters to him. He likes being able to control what another man is feeling.

Jeff’s earlier, less satisfying relationships were with guys close to his own age, and he now prefers older men “because they know what they want and don’t play games.” And sparky says, “Never having been handsome or athletic, I find it wonderful past description that Jeff cares so little about looks.”

### **S/m and kink**

Bondage is a big turn-on for both of them, and their bondage scenes are special treats for sparky. While sparky can’t get into every scene Jeff now enjoys, he’s

always willing to try, as with fisting, which he has “no talent for.” He also shares Jeff’s fetish for boots and enjoys servicing his Master’s footwear. Water-sports is something else they share, as foreplay or at Master’s whim. “It’s not always convenient, or appropriate, for sparky to take my piss,” Jeff says, though they both enjoy it when he does.

Harvey, their first dog, had a different reaction. “The first time Harvey saw us do watersports,” sparky says, “I was on my knees in front of Jeff in the upstairs bathroom. Harvey walked past the door. There was a brief pause, then he came back, took a hard look at us, and barfed.”

Canine criticism notwithstanding, they also enjoy rimming and have experimented with scat, which sparky fantasized about but turned out not to like. Because sparky has a low pain threshold, Jeff’s heavier s/m activities are usually with his pro-Dom clients.

The few things Jeff *doesn’t* get into in his small but well-equipped home dungeon include urethral sounds, verbal abuse, piercing and anything else that draws blood, and scripted role play. “I like to be real,” Jeff says. “I don’t like anything fake.” And sparky had enough drama and dress-up in his life as an actor not to crave it anymore, either.

When Master Jeff and sparky have sex, the slave wears a cockring with dull pins on the inside that inhibit erections. He’s not allowed to come except when his Master wishes him to, which tends to be around once a month. “Chastity makes sex simpler,” sparky says, “something entirely about Jeff, not me. It’s more of a gift that I can give him.”

Jeff says that sparky is fine for about two weeks after he comes, and then he starts getting “needy, pushy, aggressive, in my face.” Laughing, sparky agrees. When he does come, he says, it’s “typically in restrictive bondage and after

prolonged edging, with Master sitting on my face. Other times, by rubbing my cock with Master’s foot while Master’s other foot is in my mouth.”

### **Limits and spirituality**

Besides the orgasm control, there are few limits Jeff imposes on sparky. The slave can make his own decisions in many areas, such as voting, though he often defers to his Master’s choices there, too. In terms of limits Jeff imposes on himself, he would never require “any behavior that would harm the slave or that would require him to harm anyone else, to act in a callous or cruel way to an animal, or to be dishonest. These would damage the slave spiritually or psychologically in a way incompatible with the Master’s love for the slave and respect for himself.”

**M**ASTER JEFF IS NEITHER religious nor spiritually inclined, but he does find “a certain ‘one-ness’ when a slave has obviously given himself to me.” And when the chemistry is right, as it is with sparky, the bottom “is communicating so much, such need and hunger, and if I’m right there, in his face, that’s all he can see and all I can see. It’s just the focused energy that passes between us. I don’t get that all the time, but when I do, it’s really, nice.”

**“I might like to have sparky naked and shackled all the time, but it’s not practical. He couldn’t go to the door or out to shop or walk the dogs.”**

While sparky is not religious either, he says that “serving my Master sexually, especially when he is very demanding, is a kind of spiritual practice” because it takes him out of himself. “Worshipping my Master makes me feel deeply connected to him, which helps me



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sense the connections between myself and others, and between myself and everything else.” Bondage, especially, he finds liberating, a paradox one encounters often among bondage aficionados. Being focused on “just doing what is put before me to do is an opportunity unreservedly to express love and, in the moment, to live love.”

Jeff is impatient with the unrealistic expectations Masters can face, and he’s not inclined to demand anything of sparky that would result in more work for himself. That’s why they have no explicit protocol: “Master trusts his slave to understand what would displease him and to avoid doing so.” Jeff makes the decisions and “wins every argument,” he says. “So there are no arguments,” sparky adds.

While always respectful and deferential, sparky doesn’t always refer to Jeff as “Master,” or say “Sir” in every sentence, and he doesn’t always use third person for himself. He can use the fur-

niture and go to the bathroom without asking. But there’s never any doubt or confusion about who’s in charge. They don’t need “time out” periods to discuss problems because they can communicate at any time.

Discipline and punishment are not big parts of their lives together, especially after so much time in which sparky has been able to internalize Jeff’s wishes and preferences. If sparky does need correction for some lapse, Jeff tends to withdraw temporarily, “which is, of course, the worst possible punishment,” sparky says. He’d rather be flogged, but that’s more work for Jeff, who doesn’t enjoy making sparky cry. For a severe offense, sparky might have to sleep on the floor for a night or two instead of sharing the bed with his Master — but neither of them could recall an offense that serious in recent years.

### **Family and community**

Both Master Jeff and sparky are professed homebodies. They don’t go out much or travel, don’t socialize much, and aren’t very involved in the leather community. Jeff’s workday is intense, and when he comes home he prefers to spend the evening watching TV, playing videogames, or fucking with sparky.

“For most of the interaction I have with other people in the leather scene,” Jeff says, “they come to me,” drawn by his regular ad in the gay papers or the website. “So I don’t have a strong need to go out to bars and such to meet people.”

However, sparky adds, “It’s wonderful that there is so much available here [in San Francisco] for leatherfolk. The two or three times we went to play parties at the 15 Association, it was very validating to see other men doing the same kinds of things we do.” But they played classical music in the dungeon, which for Jeff is torture.

It’s sparky who manages their limited social life, and he goes to the opera

with friends maybe 10 times a year. Jeff has little contact, by choice, with his biological family, and sparky remains friendly but not close only with his older half sister and with some nieces and nephews.

### Advice for novices

Master Jeff says, “A slave has no value if he’s broken, so it’s in the Master’s best interest to protect and care for his slave. A happy slave is a rewarding slave.” For his part, sparky emphasizes that “real submission includes a lot that isn’t overtly kinky — what movies to see, which restaurant to go to, what TV shows to watch. A slave needs to accept his Master’s wishes and do his best to learn not only to go along with them but to internalize and adopt them fully. And he should *not* expect his Master to share the slave’s enthusiasms. Inexperienced slaves often have (as I had) many elaborate fantasies, but the Master’s desires are unlikely to exactly coincide.”

Both point out that scenarios of constant bondage and sexual stimulation are unrealistic for many reasons, and expectations that real-life slavery will be like that can “become burdensome and wear out the Master’s enthusiasm,” sparky says. After all, “while the slave is restrained, he’s unavailable to work for the Master.” The same goes if the slave is injured and needs recovery time, so sparky advises slaves always to make it clear, respectfully, when something the Master does is *unintentionally* painful, like a bondage position, and not just tough it out. “An orthopedic injury can last a long time or even become permanent,” he notes, and “a slave disabled for weeks cannot serve his Master well, if at all.”

Slave sparky has a little list of misconceptions about the lifestyle: “It can’t possibly last, there has to be self-hatred on the part of the slave, you’re going to live in a permanent state of sexual bliss. One rea-

son people think s/m relationships can’t last is that they expect them to maintain a level of quivering intensity all the time. People can’t live like that.”

Jeff says he “might like to have sparky naked and shackled all the time, but it’s just not practical. He couldn’t serve me the way I expect if he couldn’t go to the door or go out to do the shopping or walk the dogs. We’d have to keep the heater running all the time. The chains would be horribly noisy and hard on the floors. After everything is taken care of and it’s our time, that’s when he takes off the clothes and serves me on his knees or meets me in the dungeon. That’s what works for us.”

“People often think s/m is intrinsically abusive behavior,” sparky says, “with a lot of negative energy. With us, there is never any negative energy and nothing that could be called abuse. I love him more than anything, and he makes me happier than I ever thought I could be. I want people to know it’s possible to get that out of this kind of relationship.” ❖



PHOTO COURTESY OF MASTER JEFF