Lorin Jones' flabby and shallow, which I think poet who loved her but left her alone in our relationships, that we're not half-brother and the irresponsible pariah, "they of his duties was to check that no one called me a traitor." And the Band 

of his episodes smoking in the building to report one on both sides ... And the Band 

institutions (the bath was smoking in the building to report one on both sides ... And the Band 

was set ting his muse 

There is a certain irony to this fact, inasmuch as the publication of And the Band Played On was greatly instrumental in closing down gay bath houses throughout the country. 

"SOME GAY community leaders called me a traitor," says Shilts. "They said I was a prude, a puritan, that I was setting back the cause of gay rights. People were in utter denial, and my role was to tell the story.

"It was very hurtful to me, because some people treated me like a pariah, but you had these institutions (the bath houses) that were obviously facilitating the behavior that spread the disease, and they had to be closed. It was like reporting on a fire and going to one side of the building to report on the firefighters, and not going to the other side of the building where the arsonist is dump ing gas on it. I had to report what was going on on both sides ..."

Shilts began requesting government documents about AIDS under the Freedom of Information Act in 1983; in 1984 he went to the Pasteur Institute in Paris, where he saw an intense rivalry with American scientists; and he found that the media questioned nothing government officials released about AIDS. "By early 1985," says Shilts, "there were 10,000 cases. I thought the media coverage would build on a round number, but it didn't happen. That's when I decided to do the book."

"I got a $16,000 advance for two years," Shilts says with a laugh. "I had to go to Europe, and I had to take a leave from the Chronicle. The money went fast, and then I went $30,000 in debt on my credit cards."

THE REST, as they say, is a matter of record. And the Band Played On took off, but Shilts says it did so for "the most invalid reason": His discovery and exposure of "Patient Zero," one Gaetan Dugas, a Canadian airlines steward who could be linked to 40 of the first 248 AIDS cases in America. Dugas died at the age of 31 in March 1984, four years after having been diagnosed with AIDS. "It was ironic," says Shilts. "What got everyone going was the Patient Zero stuff. Here I was chas-tising the media in the book way, in avoiding public policy matters, and look what they latched on to.

But after the Patient Zero hys-te ria died down, the book went on to find a more serious and concerned audience. Shilts says sales were strong in the medical profession and in cities, and that it is being published in six foreign countries. An audio tape has been made (read by William DaFoe, star of The Last Temptation of Christ), and NBC is doing a miniseries.

"Yes, I'm comfortable," says Shilts about his financial profile. It isn't essential that he work, unless he wants to, and he does. He's just been made national correspondent for the San Francisco Chronicle, and he'll also coordinate a team of reporters to cover AIDS for the newspaper.

But he cannot hide his frustration about AIDS and about how much things have not changed. "I've had great personal success, but on the other level, I'd hoped with the book to shame the scientists into mobilizing. I'd hoped the national media would be ashamed of how they behaved. I thought the White House, once subjected to the ridicule they deserve, would change. Never have I had so much success, and never have I failed in such a large way."

On this point, many people would not agree. Bud Shilts, for instance, is eager to point out that 8/8/88, his son's 37th birthday, was proclaimed by San Francisco's Mayor Art Agnos to be Randy Shilts Day throughout the city. And even Randy Shilts ad mits that there's enough government money allotted for AIDS research and perhaps soon there will be better management of those funds.

NOT LONG after his book was published, Shilts went to Kalamazoo to visit the small factory where his stepmother, Pat, works. "Basically, it was a collection of people like out of Norma Rae, very blue collar," says Shilts. "One woman who talked to me had a hemophiliac nephew. Another had a gay cousin in Chicago, and another a gay hairdresser she was worried about.

"It was very moving. Five years ago, it would have been, 'Oh, here's Pat's gay son,' but I think we've seen the whole gay and lesbian community humanized through the suffering of AIDS. People are beginning to see that there is a depth of commitment in our relationships, that we're not trivial and shallow, which I think was the basis for negative stereotyp ing. A couple of years ago, all the questions were, 'Can I get it from a mosquito?' Now, it's 'How do we do a better job in helping people out?'

From the outset, it would seem, men are in for feminist bashing in Alison Lurie's new novel, The Truth About Lorin Jones.

Poly Former, an art historian probing the "truth" about the life and death of American painter Jones, observes that she no longer trusts men. In fact, she goes out of her way to avoid them, even preferring female pharma cists and shopkeepers to the male variety.

Of course, she didn't always feel this way. She was married to Jim for a dozen or more years, and she dealt routinely with men at her job at the museum. But now her husband, a soft and pliable man, has left her in New York and moved to Denver.

BECAUSE SHE'S been given an advance to write the biography, she takes a leave from the museum. The men she must face are those who knew the painter — Lorin Jones' famous ex-husband, her unfailing half-brother and the irresponsible poet who loved her but left her alone to die of pneumonia in Key West. Poly is convinced these men exploited Lorin and robbed her of her rightful position in painting. Lurie, whose last novel, Foreign
America responds to deadly tune of 'Band"

By Ruth Pollack Coughlin
News Book Editor

"If you don't want to say it, I'll say it for you," says Russell "Bud" Shilts of Galesburg, one of Michigan's smaller burgs, located 10 miles out of Kalamazoo.

"We have never been ashamed of the fact that Randy is gay. Here is somebody from a small town who has been a tremendous success. He worked his buns off to get where he is. What more can I say as a parent? We have achieved our goal," Shilts states in the voice of a true parent, making sure there's no question about what he's just said about Randy Shilts — one of his six sons. Randy Shilts is the highly acclaimed author of perhaps the most passionate and controversial book ever to be written about AIDS. And, yes, he is gay.

And the Band Played On, just reissued in trade paper back by St. Martin's Press with a new Afterword, was one of last year's groundbreaking, major best-sellers, a book for which the critics took out all the stops. By the time it hit the national charts, the adjectives were beginning to mount: Stunning, comprehensive, monumental, heroic and spellbinding were just a handful of the descriptive rose petals strewn in Randy Shilts' literary path.

This was more than a bunch of critics making mouth music about the newest kid on the block, for what Shilts, an investigative reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle, had managed to do was to brilliantly expose our government and its agencies, as well as our scientists, for downplaying the AIDS epidemic during the early 1980s and the threat it posed.

"I don't remember thinking much about AIDS back in 1981 when it was called "gay cancer," admits Randy Shilts, in talking about his early years at the San Francisco Chronicle, where he'd moved after having been a reporter at The Advocate, the national gay newspaper. "But I do remember my first story was in April, 1982, when there were only 330 cases of AIDS in the whole country. In those days, you could put the majority of AIDS patients living in San Francisco in one living room, which is what I did."

As of June, 1988, Shilts points out, an average of one American every 14 minutes was being diagnosed with AIDS; there are more than 69,000 diagnosed cases; and there have been, to date, 39,000 deaths. In discussing such matters of gravity, Shilts, 37, is straightforward and committed, but he is also cheerful and energetic, a man who talks nonstop with a rapid-fire delivery that's often dazzling and sometimes difficult to catch.

Please see Shilts/2L.