Three Penny Opera

September 1, 1999 By Gabi Horn

If Elton vs. Tina on VH1's *Diva's Live* curled lashes, June's round two flipped wigs. **Michael Petrelis**, head of the one-man San Francisco AIDS Accountability Project, alleged to *New York Post*'s Page Six that not all of the **Elton John AIDS Foundation**'s cash flows into charitable coffers. The *Post* found no evidence of wrong-doing, however: In fact, the foundation's IRS forms showed a surprising 80 percent going directly to patient care.

When **Larry Kramer** got wind of Petrelis' hot-air accusation, he fired off a flaming e-mail, which the *Post* excerpted during Gay Pride week: "Are you crazy?" he bellowed. "How dare you go after Elton John! With all the enemies we have, you must really be off your rocker to go after such a stalwart friend. Get a life."

Petrelis offered no apologies. "Some-one blasts me on a daily basis. 'Oh, Michael, you're so d*estructive*,'" he told POZ in an unusually high nasal whine. "Well, Larry, AIDS groups are in trouble. Why shouldn't I ask where the money goes?"

Petrelis didn't lay off the Brit, either. "Nine million dollars donated to AIDS in six years? Elton could give that much *a month*." Or can he? *The London Times* reported on June 27 that a cash-strapped Sir Elton has requested a $140 million loan from a London financier.

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