

THONGS, GARTERS AND GIRLS

PLAYBOY

ENTERTAINMENT

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AL FRANKEN
INTERVIEW
THE NEXT
SENATOR
FROM
MINNESOTA?

THE
SEX.COM
SCANDAL

JOHN MCCAIN
DIANNE FEINSTEIN
BARNEY FRANK
AND THE **NO B.S.**
CAUCUS

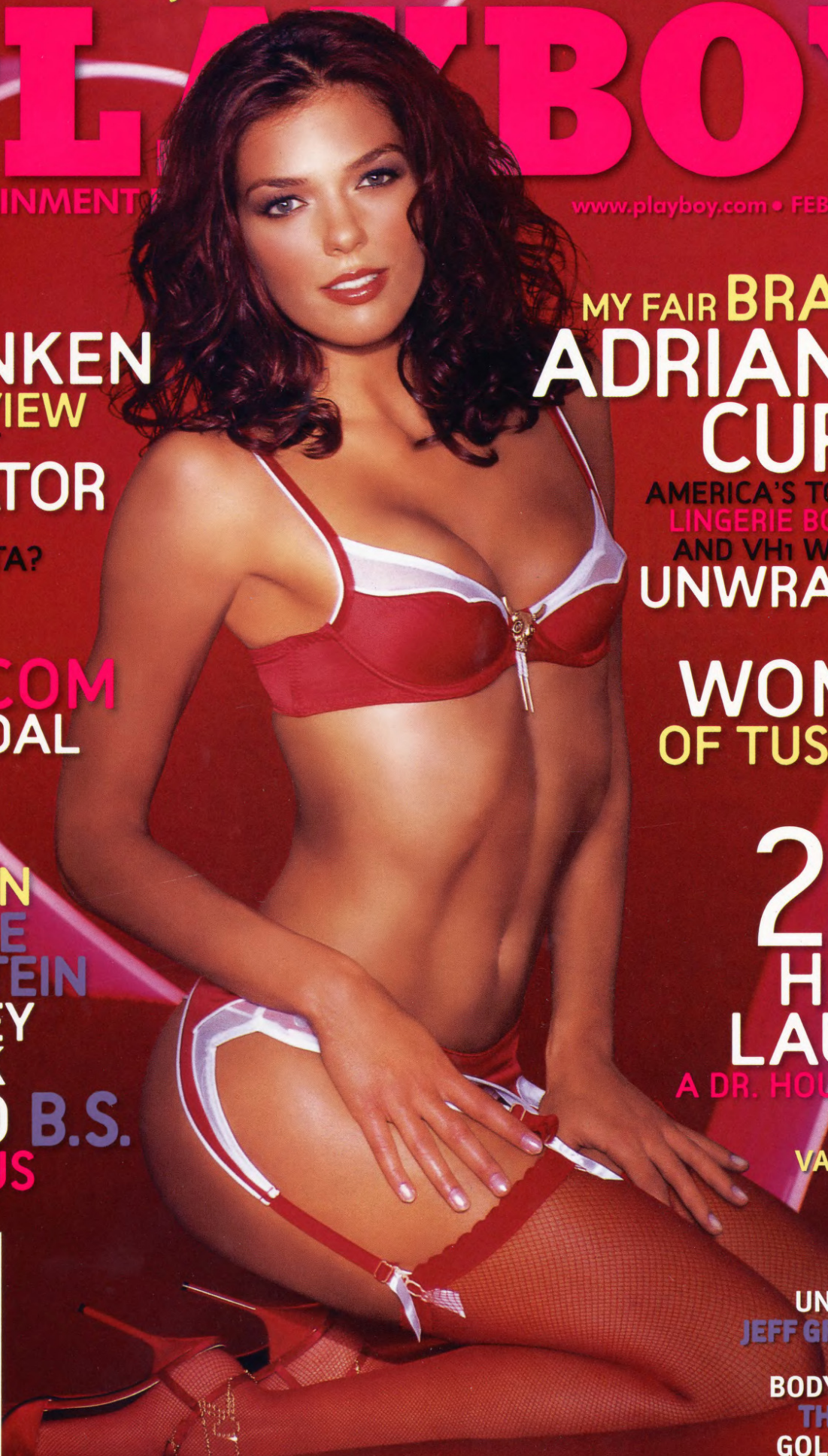
MY FAIR **BRADY'S**
ADRIANNE CURRY

AMERICA'S TOP MODEL
LINGERIE BOWL BABE
AND VH1 WILD CHILD
UNWRAPPED

WOMEN
OF TUSCANY

20Q
HUGH LAURIE
A DR. HOUSE CALL

VALENTINE'S
BEST:
MICHAEL GROSS
OYSTERS
UNDERWEAR
JEFF GREENFIELD
INSIDE
BODYBUILDING
THOM JONES
GOLF FASHION





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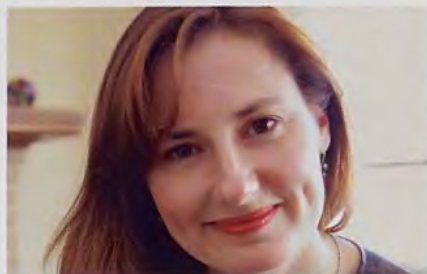
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Regular English seems to be a foreign language in Washington, D.C., where elected officials spew verbose politico speech every time they are put in front of a microphone. In search of a few plain-speaking politicians, CNN senior analyst **Jeff Greenfield** put together *The No-Bullshit Caucus*. "Politicians have always been inclined toward a flowery style of speech," Greenfield says. "There is danger in plain talk, as one stray remark may be blown out of proportion by the press—especially in the instant, 24-hours-a-day mode. The folks I nominate for the caucus speak with no fear of that, which projects a very attractive self-confidence. I sense the public is so saturated with political babble that they are ready for something different: 'Just talk to us.'"



Michelle Richmond provides our fiction this month with *An Exciting New Career in Medicine*, a story about a woman who gets a handle on life by joining the new field of medical masturbation. "There is a kind of unnerving yet empowering distance in that sexual act," Richmond says. "But surely a faint echo of my frustration with the health care industry is in there, so in the end this may be a health care satire disguised as a hand-job story."



We sent celebrated Italian photographer **Guido Argentini** home to capture natural beauties for *Kissed by the Tuscan Sun*. "I started out shooting in Tuscany before I moved to America," says Argentini. "No landscape is more gorgeous. Whenever women go outside, they are always more enthusiastic to pose. Their natural beauty interacts with nature to create something authentic, and it shows in the photographs."



"Though it isn't as sexy as rock and roll or fashion, there is something alluring about the subculture of computer coders," says **Michael Gross**. The author of *740 Park* and self-proclaimed geek recounts the war over a domain name in *The Taking of Sex.com*. "When I first learned about the battle between the con man and the nerd, I envisioned a face-off between two gladiators, but I was soon swept up in the human drama of it all."



Ed Paschke, one of PLAYBOY'S most admired contributing illustrators, died in November 2004. We bid farewell to the prolific rebel pop artist this month with his last work for the magazine, illustrations for **Thom Jones's** *Diary of My Health*. "He was a marvelous man," says founding Art Director Art Paul. "He had a very personal relationship with his art." Paschke leaves us with a treasury of works and some powerful thoughts. "Life is about rule breaking, about confrontation," Paschke said. "Otherwise history would just stand still. Someone has to come along and break the rules and try, for whatever reason, to go about things in a different way. Even if it is a simple sense of adventure, a sense of exploration. You explore concepts and things that interest you, but you are also exploring inside of yourself."

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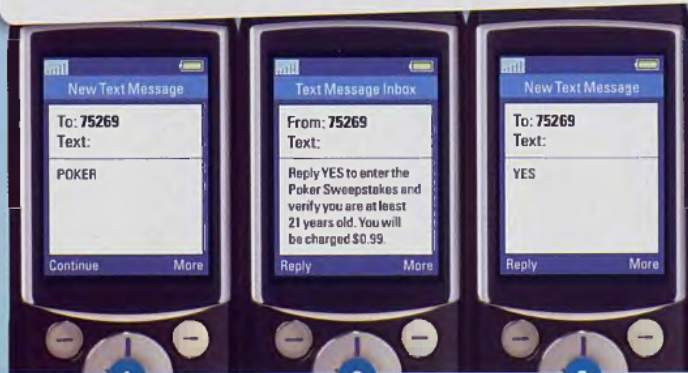
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PLAYBOY

contents

features

- 48 THE TAKING OF SEX.COM**
Sex.com was perhaps the most valuable address on the web. See how the site became a gold mine during the dot-com boom, then watch as the party implodes in a swirl of swinging, speed, spending and, ultimately, rancorous litigation between two men fighting to control it. **BY MICHAEL GROSS**
- 64 THE BIG SHOW**
A jaundiced journey through the freaky world of 21st century bodybuilding, in which today's champions are so pumped up they make Arnold Schwarzenegger look like your mom. **BY CHARLES M. YOUNG**
- 68 THE NO-BULLSHIT CAUCUS**
Does everything out of Washington have to come laden with evasions, qualifications, special pleadings and out-and-out untruths? No. A handful of our politicians—John McCain, Dianne Feinstein, Barney Frank and others—deal in straight talk with a minimum of manipulation. **BY JEFF GREENFIELD**
- 88 DIARY OF MY HEALTH**
The author of *The Pugilist at Rest* leaves no prescription unfilled as he uproariously details his manifold ailments and pharmacological reliefs. **BY THOM JONES**
- 94 LOVE IS A MUCH REWRITTEN THING**
Even the world's greatest love poets had to begin with first drafts. We've collected some of the false starts. **BY JOSH ROBERTSON**
- 106 OYSTER CULT**
Serving the world's most celebrated aphrodisiac at a social gathering makes a more sensuous statement than passing out edible underpants. We share a few pearls of wisdom about preparing these sumptuous bivalves. **BY A.J. BAIME**

fiction

- 60 AN EXCITING NEW CAREER IN MEDICINE**
After her sister's tragic death, a dexterous woman becomes a health professional specializing in hand jobs, now said to cure many ailments. Soon she finds there's more to healing than lube and Kleenex. **BY MICHELLE RICHMOND**

the playboy forum

- 37 OUR PILGRIM FANATICS**
Attitudes about sex, women and the Bible that were held by the religious fundamentalists who founded our country echo across the centuries as zealots seek to turn back history's clock. **BY SIMON WORRALL**

20Q

- 104 HUGH LAURIE**
He plays a sardonic doctor with a prickly bedside manner on *House*. Now the accomplished English actor dissects British colloquialisms, his status as the thinking woman's sex symbol and the Zen of boxing. **BY DAVID RENSIN**

interview

- 43 AL FRANKEN**
The man who invented Stuart Smalley has turned into one of the country's strongest liberal voices, becoming the public face of Air America Radio en route. We ask the *Saturday Night Live* veteran about how his self-proclaimed Al Franken Millennium is going, what motivated him to write *Rush Limbaugh Is a Big Fat Idiot* and who pisses him off the most. **BY WARREN KALBACKER**



COVER STORY

After becoming the first winner on *America's Next Top Model*, the uninhibited Adriaane Curry up and stole Christopher Knight's heart on *The Surreal Life*. Now she gets loose-lipped about her reality show *My Fair Brady* and her spinout with supermodel Tyra Banks. Senior Contributing Photographer Stephen Wayda serves Curry extra spicy. Our Rabbit goes for the gold.



PLAYBOY®

contents continued



52

pictorials **19**

52 KISSED BY THE TUSCAN SUN

Explore the lush hills and fertile valleys of Tuscany while becoming acquainted with these picturesque *belle donne*.

74 PLAYMATE: CASSANDRA LYNN

Liberated of her clothing, the beauty nicknamed Butterfly can spread her wings and fly to new heights.

110 A TASTE OF CURRY
America's next top model Adrienne Curry celebrates her surreal life with some provocative and deliciously un-Brady-like poses.

AFTER HOURS

31 MANTRACK

35 THE PLAYBOY ADVISOR

86 PARTY JOKES

123 WHERE AND HOW TO BUY

151 ON THE SCENE

152 GRAPEVINE

154 POTPOURRI

fashion

96 TEE IT UP
Get up to par with the latest golf clothes. **BY JOSEPH DE ACETIS**

102 TOP BOXERS
Let her slip into something more comfortable, like a pair of your boxer shorts. **BY JOSEPH DE ACETIS**



60

notes and news

11 THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY
Nicollette Sheridan and other celebrities go ape at the Mansion's 11th Annual Safari Brunch.

12 THE GIRLS NEXT DOOR
Hef and girlfriends Bridget, Kendra and Holly celebrate the success of their hit E! TV series.

93 CENTERFOLDS ON SEX: CARA WAKELIN
Miss November 1999 discusses what can go wrong while having sex in the backyard.

147 PLAYMATE NEWS
Lauren Anderson dons a tasty lettuce bikini and serves veggie hot dogs on Capitol Hill for animal rights; Jennifer Walcott gets the key to the city of Las Vegas.

reviews

25 MOVIES
James Franco is a fighting-mad midshipman in *Annapolis*; Albert Brooks is *Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World*.

26 DVDS
The Aristocrats is no longer an inside joke; out-of-print DVDs that can fetch up to \$1,000 each.

27 GAMES
Gun is the best Western game ever; with *The Matrix: Path of Neo*, the Wachowski brothers redeem themselves.

28 MUSIC
Yellowcard ventures beyond teen angst on its new album; catch the new wave of guitar rock.

departments

3 PLAYBILL

15 DEAR PLAYBOY

29 BOOKS
The Female of the Species author Joyce Carol Oates on the art of violence; *Hokum's* black humor.



110

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10284 Playboy—Helmut Newton \$40

B. Relive PLAYBOY's first 50 years with this sweeping retrospective of the groundbreaking magazine that grew from Hugh Hefner's pet project into a cultural icon recognized all over the world. As you thumb through this handsome updated and expanded version of the *Playboy 40 Years* book you'll visit the Playboy Mansion, canoe with Hef's delectable Bunnies, tour the DC-9 *Big Bunny* jet, experience the sizzling atmosphere of the Playboy Clubs, and—of course—admire every Playmate of the Month since the first issue (all 600 of them!). Featuring an introduction by Hugh Hefner. Hardcover. 9" x 12". 480 pages.

10375 Playboy—50 Years \$50

C. This elegant anniversary volume captures six decades of sex, art and American culture as seen through the eyes of Andy Warhol, Bruce Weber, Helmut Newton and more of the world's greatest photographers. More than 250 of the most memorable images ever published in the magazine appear in six chapters (The Celebrities, The Personalities, The Playmates, The Lifestyle, The Art of PLAYBOY and The Covers), each featuring an introduction by longtime PLAYBOY insider James R. Petersen. Hardcover. 9" x 12". 240 pages.

4010 Playboy—50 Years: The Photographs \$50

D. Beginning with Marilyn Monroe and including more recent legends like Pamela Anderson and Anna Nicole Smith, this history of PLAYBOY Centerfolds profiles every Playmate from the 1950s through the newest beauties of the new millennium. Includes fantastic nude photos as well as updated personal information about their lives—just enough to spark your memory or pique your interest to see more. Hardcover. 9" x 12". 464 pages.

10376 The Playmate Book: 50 Years \$50

E. This glorious collection contains more than 400 hilarious cartoons by such luminaries as Buck Brown, Jack Cole, Eldon Dedini, Jules Feiffer, Shel Silverstein, Doug Sneyd and Gahan Wilson. Handpicked from the PLAYBOY archives by Hugh M. Hefner himself, these cheeky takes on the sexual revolution, relationships, politics and more comprise an uproarious chronicle of PLAYBOY's lighter side! Hardcover. 9" x 12". 368 pages.

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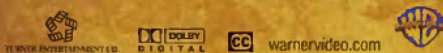
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THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY

HEF SIGHTINGS, MANSION FROLICS AND NIGHTLIFE NOTES



ANIMAL HOUSE

Desperate Housewives' Nicollette Sheridan (left) hosted the 11th Annual Safari Brunch benefit held at the Mansion to support Wildlife WayStation, a wild-animal sanctuary. Actor Leonard Nimoy and his wife, Susan (below left), and astronaut Buzz Aldrin and his wife, Lois (below right), were among those who attended.



ALL BOOKED UP

Hef, accompanied by Kendra, Holly and Bridget, stopped by the Taschen bookstore in Beverly Hills to sign copies of *The Playboy Book—50 Years*. The hardcover coffee-table volume handsomely illustrates the history and evolution of PLAYBOY.



PLAYBOY EXPOSED

PMOY Tiffany Fallon and a group of German Playmates were on hand for the opening of *Playboy Exposed*, an impressive exhibit of PLAYBOY photography on display at Harvey Nichols stores throughout the U.K.



COTTON CLUB

What does the man who has it all give his three TV-star girlfriends? A clothing line, of course.

Following the enthusiastic audience response to *The Girls Next Door*, Playboy created an eponymous fashion line reflecting the fun, flirty Playboy lifestyle. Bridget, Holly and Kendra embody on the show. The line is available at Playboystore.com and Virgin Megastores nationwide.



THE GIRLS NEXT DOOR



Hef and his girlfriends seem to be everywhere, celebrating the success of *The Girls Next Door*. (1) Bridget, Kendra and Holly pose with their November cover. (2) The VIPs let loose at the Ringling Bros. circus in L.A. (3) A circus star greets Kendra. (4) Miss December and Miss January at the circus. (5) Hef's posse clowns around. (6) Mr. Playboy and his three ladies celebrate Bridget's birthday with a murder-mystery party at the Mansion. (7) E! gossip king Ted Casablanca interviews Kendra, Holly and Bridget at the Mansion. (8) Jimmy Kimmel hosts Hef, the girls and Playmates on the set of *Jimmy Kimmel Live*. (9) The Man and his girlfriends take New York. (10) With the hosts of *The View*. (11) Relaxing at Frederick's lounge with Playmates Lauren Michelle Hill and Pilar Lastra. (12) Playboy Chairman and CEO Christie Hefner and the Editor-in-Chief. (13) Signing fans' issues at Virgin Megastores in New York and Chicago. (14) With Cyber Girl Monica Leigh at the Playboy offices. (15) Enjoying dinner at Japonais on Chicago Avenue.



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WONDERFUL NEIGHBORS

I am a wife and the mother of two little girls, as well as a PLAYBOY subscriber. My friends think I'm nuts, but I don't care. I had been waiting for the pictorial of Hef's girls (*Girls Next Door*, November), and it turned out wonderfully. I TiVo *The Girls Next Door* on E!, and the show is really funny.

Penny Clark
Prince Frederick, Maryland

The girls are all beautiful, but Kendra steals the pictorial. She is fun and sexy and seems very genuine.

Melissa Lisi
Boca Raton, Florida

Thank you for the beautiful photos. They look amazing. Congrats to Kendra, Holly and especially Bridget—her dream has come true.

Sarah Oleary
St. Louis, Missouri

I've been a subscriber for a long time and stealing my dad's issues even longer. I've never seen a better pictorial.

Neal Rosenblat
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

If you look at the shape of the girls' arms on the November cover, it



Bridget, Holly and Kendra go under covers.

appears they are spelling out the bottom half of the three letters S-E-X.

Frank Daugherty
Columbus, Ohio

Actually those are the bottom half of the first three letters of "subscribe."

I've always thought Hugh Hefner is a dirty old man, but that view changed after watching *The Girls Next Door*. He

is a kind man with a lot of morals. Hef deserves an apology—from me.

Debra Reak
Gilbert, Arizona

OIL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

It has been a long time since I leafed through PLAYBOY, but articles like *The Strange Heresies of Thomas Gold* (November) will keep me coming back.

James Denton
Columbia, South Carolina

I'm no geologist, but your speculation about drilling into molten rock is misinformed. Rock doesn't approach the melting point until much farther down than seven kilometers. The only way to see molten rock is to drill into an area where two tectonic plates are in contact and there is visible volcanic activity, as fictionalized in the 1965 movie *Crack in the World*.

Jerry Blahut
Bensalem, Pennsylvania

We used the term "molten rock" to signify the mantle, which may have caused confusion. Not all of the mantle is molten, but even the solid portions behave as a liquid, flowing and changing over time.

CORNER POCKET

Back in the 1960s and 1970s I shot pool with topless women in strip joints, but none was nearly as hot as Jennifer Barretta (*Shoot to Kill*, November). How could any guy concentrate on playing pool with Barretta as a coach? I'm sure that's why those bouncy babes always kicked my ass at nine ball.

Bob Fulford
Clayton, California

YOU CAN'T GO WRONG

In August you labeled a photo of me in *Playmate News* with the name of Playmate Neferteri Shepherd. That is quite a mistake. How would you like to make it up to me? Should I give you a spanking?

Serria Tawan
Los Angeles, California

For the first time in our history, every editor on staff is taking credit for an error.

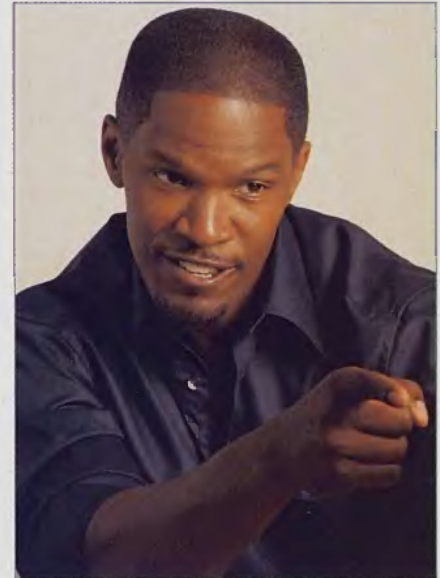
THE POWER OF WORDS

I enjoyed your *Interview* with Jamie Foxx (November) until he stated, "And I don't want to tell you that my birthday party was in the hood, but there was niggers at my birthday party." By using that word in that context Foxx seems to validate Bill Cosby's criticism that he perpetuates negative racial stereotypes. Foxx seems to be all about the money, not about where he is or

how he got there. He may not appreciate Cosby's humor, but he would be wise to listen. He has lost me as a fan.

Robert Karstens
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

I'd bet Foxx actually said "niggas." Only rednecks and racists use *nigger*, but even young white males call themselves niggas. I'm not trying to glorify



Jamie Foxx has a few things to point out.

one of the most uncomfortable words in history, but speaking as a black man, I think only black people could have transformed such a slur into a friendly greeting among white people.

Steve Goodwin
Bronx, New York

PLAYMATE SISTERS

Raquel Gibson (*Raquel's World Party*, November) is the sexiest Playmate I've seen in a long time. But how about a pictorial that includes Raquel's gorgeous sister, who appears with her in a photo on the Data Sheet?

Matthew Savener
Lincoln, Nebraska

I've been longing to see an exotic Playmate, and Gibson is *masarap* in my ocular world. My wife is from Pampanga, and if Raquel knows anything about Filipino chefs, she knows the best originate there. Come join us for the best *asado*, *adobo* and *pancit* around.

Scott Brann
Arnold, California

CARTOON COMPLAINT

In the November issue one of your cartoons shows a white woman straddling a nude Native American male,

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with the caption suggesting they had sex after sharing a peace pipe. The pipe is never used to smoke mind-altering drugs; it is used to smoke tobacco to carry prayers. It would also never be present when people are having sex, nor be left on the ground. It is important for people to have a sense of humor about themselves, and many of your other cartoons depicting Native Americans are okay. To avoid misunderstandings, it is best to leave jokes about other races or cultures to be told by members of that race or culture. I would encourage PLAYBOY to consult with Native Americans before presenting content that may be deemed offensive.

DaShanne Stokes
Boston, Massachusetts

You mean like a committee? Talk about killing a joke.

MENTAL BREAKDOWN

So even the big guys cry. As a card-carrying member of Raider Nation, I applaud your profile of Barret Robbins, who suffers from bipolar disorder (*Down Lineman*, November). It clears up a lot of misconceptions about Robbins's problems before and after the 2003 Super Bowl. If any good can come from his tragedy, it may be that bipolar disorder will no longer be ignored or misdiagnosed.

Mike Bell
Tampa, Florida

READY, AIM, FIRE

Unless he enjoys being knocked on his ass, the right-handed shooter in *High Fashion* (November) should not stand with his right foot forward.

Frank Duncan
Sellersburg, Indiana

HOT TO TROT

Thanks for *Dancing Queen* (November) with Kelly Monaco of recent *Dancing With the Stars* fame. My wife and I love to catch Kelly on *General Hospital*, but now I can't watch without getting aroused. Thanks a lot.

Patrick Holley
Augusta, Georgia

OVER THERE

We keep three Centerfolds on a wall. With each new issue, everyone takes a vote—does the Playmate deserve a spot on our wall of fame? The top three are Miss February, Miss August and Miss September, but it was a close vote with Miss March and Miss May. It is a tough challenge each month.

Kevin Bronson
Dale Jesseph
Camp Adder, Iraq

Your response to Chris Schnack and Jason Peck, the Christian students who

said they would bring down PLAYBOY, is perfect (*Dear Playboy*, November). I wonder if they wrote that letter to any of the other men's magazines that keep us sane over here in the sandbox.

Christopher Whalen
Balad, Iraq

THE PRIVATE ELVIS

If Byron Raphael was as close to Elvis Presley as he claims (*In Bed With Elvis*, November), his memoir is a poor testament to their friendship. Next time pick on someone who can fight back.

Wayne Christensen
Riddle, Oregon

Evidently you muckrakers haven't heard of *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*. You even manage to besmirch Natalie Wood and Juliet Prowse.

Ken Shelton
Brookings, Oregon

You write that Presley and Marilyn Monroe were "perhaps the two most



Elvis has left the bedroom.

famous people who ever lived." That's a big perhaps. Adolf Hitler and Jesus Christ come to mind.

Colquitt Old
Thermalito, California

Presley could not have kept that lifestyle a secret. Some of the girls would have sold their stories. I also assume that by "younger girls" Raphael means underage. If Presley was paying them \$1,000, Raphael was pimping minors.

Richard Noakes Sr.

Dearborn Heights, Michigan

We were not referring to minors. However, it's hard to overlook the fact that Elvis began dating Priscilla when she was 14, and she moved in with him when she was 16. That is hardly news to hard-core fans.



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2006 PLAYBOY



PLAYMATE CALENDAR

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C. NEW! Dressed to thrill. Every turn of the page brings you a new Playmate in the sexiest lingerie imaginable. Featuring Tiffany Fallon, Tina Jordan, Nicole Whitehead, Hiromi Oshima, Pilar Lastra and many more! No nudity. 11" x 17".

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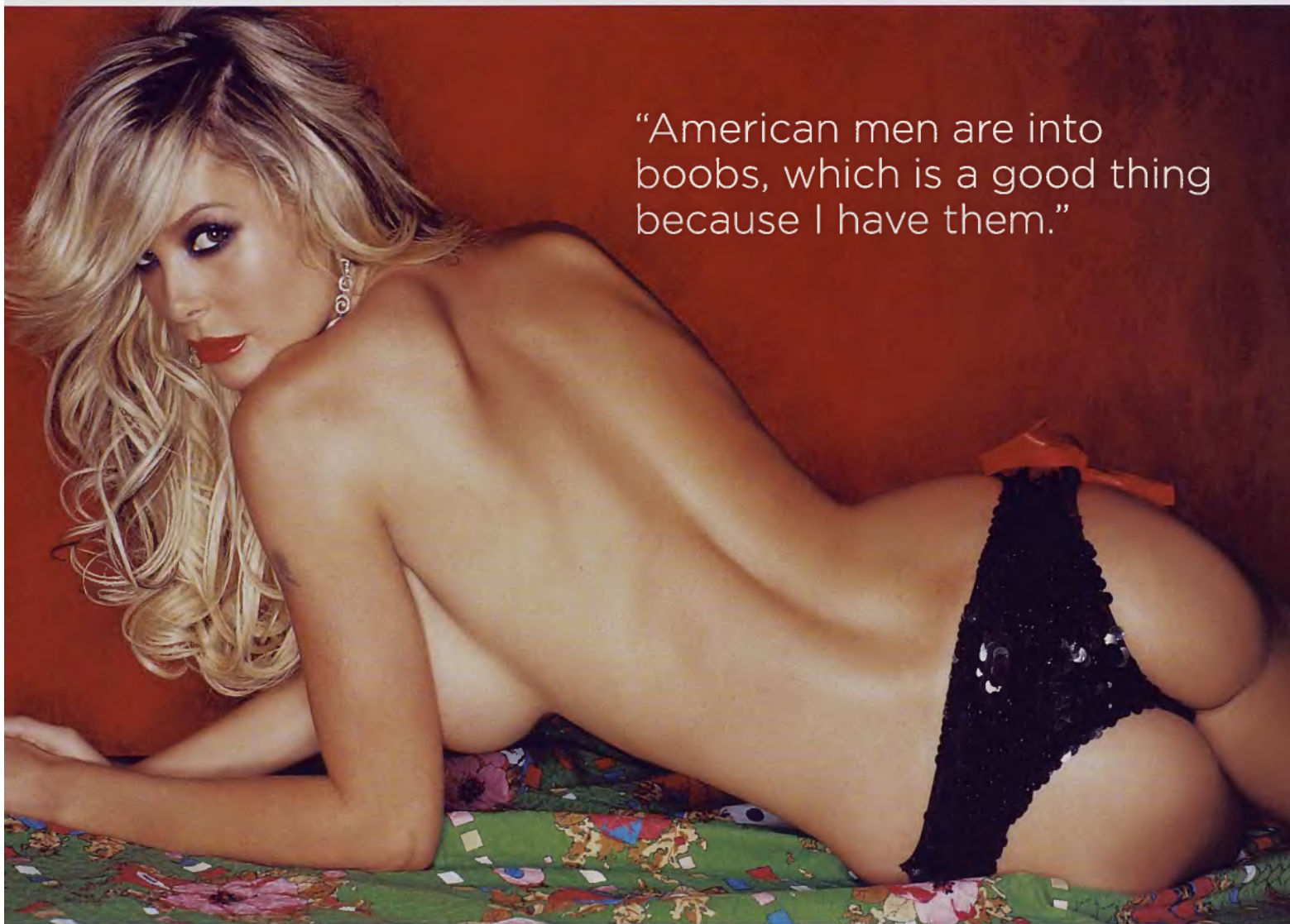
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P L A Y B O Y

a f t e r h o u r s



“American men are into boobs, which is a good thing because I have them.”

Babe of the Month

Monica Hansen

THIS STRIKING VIKING IS A NORSE TO BE RECKONED WITH

Seconds after answering the phone at her mother's house in Norway, Monica Hansen is grunting. “Ø,” she says with a shy Euro-giggle, spelling the name of her hometown, Tønsberg. “We have the letter ø, pronounced ‘oeeuhgr.’ It makes you sound like a pervert.” That’s a new one; from now on we’ll blame our uncouth grunts on the Norwegian alphabet. Now a swimsuit and lingerie model worshipped the world over, Hansen once pulled a no-show as Miss Norway: “I won Miss Norway, but on the way to the airport to fly to Florida for the Miss Universe pageant I got really sick,” she explains. “I had been passing a lot of gallstones.” Hansen emerged from the ordeal short a gallbladder but lucky to be alive. Her run on the brawling

show *Battle Dome* was less demanding. “My name was Monica Fox, and I didn’t fight,” she says. “The audience was crazy—I remember this boy, probably five years old, with a sign that read MONICA FOX, I WANT YOUR BOX. I thought, What have I gotten myself into?” Horny toddlers aside, Hansen likes the attention she gets in Los Angeles. “Scandinavian men don’t appreciate breasts,” she says. “American men are into boobs, which is a good thing for me because I have them.” She pauses for another Euro-giggle, as if her perfect C-cups needed the introduction. “And they’re heavy! If I’m going to carry around these heavy accessories, at least someone can appreciate them.” Some...pervert, maybe?



Over the Borderline

TOMMY LEE JONES FILMS A TEX-MEX TALE OF DEATH AND SURVIVAL

The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada has horses, rifles, spurs, boots and the Rio Grande—but it's not a Western. "I've always found the term kind of hollow," says director and star Tommy Lee Jones. "It's a label that has become a stigma. I'm interested in making movies about my country and its history, and almost inevitably that's going to involve horses and big hats." In Jones's film, which won awards at Cannes and opens stateside this month, a bereaved west Texan leads an unrepentant murderer into Mexico to bury the man he killed. It appears at first blush to be a story about the modern problems of the Texas-Mexico border, but once the trigger-happy border patrolman and the undocumented shepherd have their fatal run-in, things

take a turn toward the epic. The quest to find the dead man's family and home, an obscure village called Jiménez, is more *Odyssey* than *Red River*. "We thought we would be well served by a classic—or classical—narrative form," says Jones, who also cites Jean-Luc Godard, Akira Kurosawa and author Flannery O'Connor as influences. "The film begins in a bad place, with a hero who doesn't know himself or the world very well and finds that events have conspired to send him on a journey. It takes him through a series of events—some life-threatening, some funny, some mysterious—to a good place, where the character learns who he is and where he is. It's a form that has been used for thousands of years."



Television Vamp

REFLECTIONS ON SITCOM SUCCESS FOR A GIRL WE'VE SEEN UNDRRESSED

This is a poem for Jaime Pressly,
Of whom we're fond, eyes, lips and breastsly,
Who in life is as sweet as Nestlé,
Who on *My Name Is Earl* outfunnies Leslie
Nielsen, playing an ex-wife more oppressive
than oppress'dly,
A conniver, a schemer and infernally pestly,
But for Jaime's beauty and talent we say
expressly,
We love her more than Elvis Costello.



Love Potion No. 1

OUR FAVORITE SPELL-BINDER IS BACK WITH A POTENT POTABLE

A well-mixed cocktail is a kind of love potion in itself, but this Valentine's Day you can try something more authentic: a brew concocted for us by white witch Fiona Horne, last seen in her *Spellbinder* pictorial in our October issue. You'll need:

25 g dried damiana (a sacred South American herb)
500 ml premium vodka
½ cup honey
Champagne
Strawberry juice

Soak damiana leaves in vodka for five days. Separate vodka from leaves by pouring through a strainer and conical filter paper; discard leaves. Slowly stir honey into the vodka in a sunwise (clockwise) direction.

Visualize yourself and the girl you desire making passionate love and chant these words: "Aphrodite, hear my plea. [Her name] madly desires me. So must it be, so must it be." When the honey is dissolved, set the vodka infusion in the fridge.

On the night of your rendezvous, light vanilla-scented candles. In a shaker with ice, mix two parts infused vodka with one part champagne and a splash of strawberry juice. Repeat your love chant as you pour the potion into a martini glass. Serve with chocolate.

"Damiana is an herb of seduction, honey sweetens desire, champagne is sacred to Aphrodite, and strawberries bring love," Fiona says. "Remember, all acts of pleasure are sacred to the Goddess."

Sunshine Superman

LSD'S 100-YEAR-OLD INVENTOR HASN'T LOST FAITH

In 1938, working as a plant chemist for Sandoz's pharmaceutical lab in Switzerland, Dr. Albert Hofmann synthesized lysergic acid diethylamide-25 from an ergot fungus. Not until five years later, after accidentally ingesting the stuff, did Hofmann realize he'd created a wickedly powerful hallucinogen. We talked to him about his "problem child" on the eve of his 100th birthday.

PLAYBOY: How did you come to invent LSD?

HOFMANN: I had synthesized an alkaloid that stopped postpartum bleeding by causing uterine contractions. I prepared many other alkaloids, and one was lysergic acid diethylamide, or LSD. I was looking for a circulatory heart-lung stimulant.

PLAYBOY: What did you think after your first LSD experience?

HOFMANN: I was immediately convinced that LSD would become an important tool in psychiatric research and therapy, but I did not imagine it could become a party drug, a pleasure drug.

PLAYBOY: Did LSD's popularity in the late 1960s trouble you?

HOFMANN: No, but I had mixed feelings. I was not surprised that it became a ritual drug in the youth antiestablishment movement, but I was shocked by irresponsible use that resulted in mental catastrophes. That's what gave the health authorities a pretext for totally prohibiting its production, possession and use.

PLAYBOY: Were you surprised at how it changed the culture?

HOFMANN: Not at all, because LSD sharpens and intensifies all our senses, producing a worldview closer to the objective reality—the wonders of life—than the dull daily experience.

PLAYBOY: How did you feel about Timothy Leary?

HOFMANN: Leary proposed and gave LSD to people who were too young, people whose mental structures were still evolving and



JCEL NAKAMURA

who were not yet stable enough to integrate the new and overwhelming insights produced by LSD. What Leary did contributed to the prohibition of LSD and the end of scientific research.

PLAYBOY: You've called LSD your problem child. Will it ever be resurrected and assume a place in our therapeutic arsenal?

HOFMANN: Problem children often grow up to be illustrious personalities. LSD is developing in this direction.



Eyes on the Eyes

When Matt Lauer pressed President Bush on *l'affaire Plame* at a Louisiana photo op, some viewers detected excessive nervous blinking. Boston College professor Joseph Tecce, a blinking expert, says Bush kept his cool, with just 23 blinks per minute. How much is a lot? Try the Bush vs. Gore debate in which W's bpm soared to a frantic 116.

Ask the Girls Next Door

VALENTINE'S DAY ADVICE FROM THREE BEAUTIFUL BLONDES WE MET AT THE BOSS'S HOUSE

Is Valentine's Day important?

Holly: I love it. If you're dating somebody, you should acknowledge it with flowers or a card. Acknowledging holidays, especially mushy holidays, doesn't come naturally to a guy. So when he does, that tells me I'm special.

Bridget: Not really. I think it's kind of a made-up holiday. I'd rather you surprise me with flowers on a random day. There shouldn't be a specific day when there's so much pressure to go out of your way and you're in the doghouse if you don't.

Kendra: I really like Valentine's Day, but it doesn't have to be a big deal. All I look for is a simple "I love you."

What do you like to get?

Holly: Red or white roses. Roses are more romantic than a mixed bouquet. Getting candy sucks because I'm usually watching my figure and I don't want to feel any pressure to eat it.

Bridget: I love orange roses and orchids.

Kendra: I don't like flowers; they're just going to rot. If I get flowers, I'll just throw them away. But really, I'd like you to say something from your heart. Just write me a



poem. Chocolate is good too. I eat it in two seconds. *What kind of restaurant should a man take you to?*

Holly: You can't go wrong with Italian food and a bottle of wine. But you can do anything—even stay home and order pizza—as long as it's something you're both into.

Bridget: Italian food and wine. Wine is romantic because you sip it. It's not like a cocktail that you just slam.

Kendra: Take me to a steak house. I love Italian restaurants, but that's what everyone does on Valentine's Day. Be different. For me, a steak with a glass of wine is very romantic. Or you could cook me something. Make me some lasagna and put on some sexy music, like Sade. And don't worry: If you burn the dinner, at least you tried. That means something to me.



Cheerleader of the Month

Patriotic Beauty

JIE RALLS MAY BE THE MOST FAMOUS CHEERLEADER IN CHINA

PLAYBOY: What made you want to be a cheerleader?

JIE: I like to perform in front of a crowd, and I've danced all my life. There really isn't much work for a professional dancer, so I decided to become an NFL cheerleader.

PLAYBOY: What kind of dancing did you do?

JIE: Growing up in China I did ballet, and then when I came over here, at 13, I went through a tough transition to hip-hop and jazz.

PLAYBOY: Is there much cheerleading in China?

JIE: No. I had to explain it to my relatives. I told them it's just like dancing, and then they were very supportive. The Patriots actually launched a Chinese website this season, and on it I post weekly journal entries about cheerleading.

PLAYBOY: Sounds like you're an ambassador.

JIE: The sport of football is completely foreign to the Chinese. But the NFL has been trying to tap into that huge audience, and people there are getting excited about it. I'd like to see more Chinese girls become cheerleaders so instead of being an ambassador I would be a trendsetter.

PLAYBOY: In China are there more Patriots fans or Jie Ralls fans?

JIE: Right now there are probably more Jie Ralls fans, because they can see my picture on the website. I think that will turn them into Patriots fans.

Employee of the Month candidates: Send pictures to Playboy Photography Department, Attn: Employee of the Month, 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611. Must be at least 18 years old. Must send photocopies of a driver's license and another valid ID (not a credit card), one of which must include a current photo.



Game Off

PLAYBOY'S GUIDE TO THE LOST SPORTS OF THE WINTER OLYMPICS

Some sports have been glamour events at the winter Olympics ever since the games began in 1924, but these four had their day in the frost and then got iced.

Skijoring (1928): This event—skiing while being pulled by horses—turned pristine St. Moritz into a steaming pile of Wyoming. Even today, skijorers (often towed by dogs, not horses) hope to bring their sport back to the games.

Sled Dog Racing (1932): Prospectors returning from Alaska and the Yukon in the 1920s sparked a brief dogsledding craze; demand for the sport was even high enough to support professional mushers—NASDOG, if you will.

Eisstockschiessen (1936, 1964): Competitors grab a thing by its handle and slide it across ice—but it's not curling. *Eisstockschiessen*-loving Bavarians and Tyroleans included the game in their respective Olympics, but the rest of the world felt one version of ice bocce was boring enough.

Bandy (1952): With 11-man teams competing on a football-field-size ice surface, this hockey precursor dates back to at least the 16th century. Although bandy is less violent than hockey, its hard rubber ball is just as good as a puck for tooth removal.

Tip Sheet

sniffer's row \SNIF-erz rō\ *n*, stripper slang for the row of seats nearest the stage at a strip club.

That '70s Cover

EDITORS HONOR A GEM FROM PLAYBOY'S PAST

At a recent meeting of the American Society of Magazine Editors, this image from the October 1971 issue of *PLAYBOY* was named one of the best covers of the past 40 years. It was devised by Senior Art Director Len Willis, who will celebrate his 40th year on *PLAYBOY*'s staff in 2006, and shot by Richard Fegley. The model, Darine Stern, was the first black woman to appear on the magazine's cover.





Grin and Bare It

52% of American adults admit to having posed nude for a camera.

Well Crafted

On average, an American eats **8** grilled cheese sandwiches each year.

Sexual IQ

44% of women say they can't enjoy sex with a less intelligent partner.



Lapped

Executive Robert McCormick charged **\$241,000** to his American Express corporate card at Scores, a New York strip club. He disputed all but **\$20,000**.

Beer Money

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that raising the price of beer **20** cents would cut gonorrhea rates among young adults by almost **9%**.

Book of Pointless Records

Most Cushion Kicks

Twelve-year-old tae kwon do student Michael Hoffman managed to kick a cushion **2,377** times in one hour, or once every **1.5** seconds. The cushion had to be held by someone who was at least **5 feet 9 inches** tall, and Hoffman's foot had to touch the floor after each kick.



Acting Irresponsibly

2% Proportion of scenes showing characters practicing safe sex, in movies with the top box-office grosses of the past **20** years.



Extended Play

Since *Halo 2*'s debut, in November 2004, gamers have spent an aggregate of **21,000** years playing the popular Xbox title.



Cow Tripping

The world's first biogas train is running in Sweden. The fuel comes from dead cows, with one cow powering the train for about **2.5** miles.

Jail Bird

Accused of robbery and shooting with an intent to kill, Eric James Torpy secured a **30-year** prison term, but the Celtics fan wanted his sentence to match his favorite player's number. "He said if he was going to go down, he was going down in Larry Bird's jersey," the judge said. The court extended his sentence to **33** years.

Money Ticket

According to insurance company Progressive, **35%** of Americans would change political parties for **\$500**.

Speak 'n' Spend

\$414 billion: Total annual spending controlled by functionally illiterate consumers.

Price Check



\$40,411

Paid on eBay for a painting of a vagina from the HBO series *Sex and the City*. The prudish Charlotte (Kristin Davis) sits for the intimate portrait during the show's first season.

THE WILD ONE

THE SWEET ONE

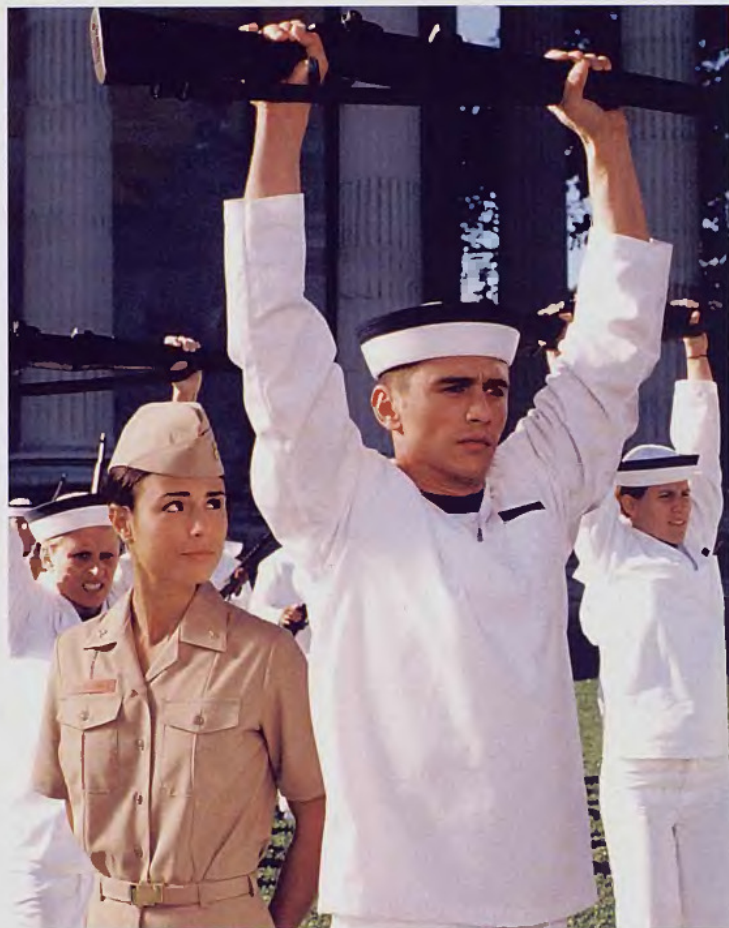
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R E V I E W S

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movie of the month

[ANNAPOLIS]

Testosterone fuels James Franco's biggest role

On paper, anyway, *Annapolis* packs some of the against-all-odds elements that made a 1982 Oscar-winning hit of that old-school favorite *An Officer and a Gentleman*. James Franco takes the Richard Gere-esque centerpiece role of a blue-collar Academy newbie put through hell by his hard-assed commanding officer, Tyrese Gibson, while Jordana Brewster plays a strong woman who helps knock the chip off his shoulder. Only this time, the movie—directed by Justin Lin, who sparked a sensation with his 2002 indie flick *Better Luck Tomorrow*—goes heavier on boxing than romance. In fact, the film's showstopper has Franco and Gibson going for blood in the ring in a surprisingly convincing sequence. Says Lin, "When I first met James, he was just the skinny kid from *Spider-Man*, but he worked out for six months, training every day at four or five A.M., even when we were shooting. I've been around sports my whole life, and the way he transformed himself was unbelievable." It also helps that Franco and co-star Gibson look very willing to beat the crap out of each other. "There is a lot of testosterone in this movie, and that's the way it should be," says Lin. "I don't care if they hated each other or if they wanted to kill each other. All the energy just worked. At the end of the day, our goal was to make the best movie." —Stephen Rebell

"The way Franco transformed himself was unbelievable."

now showing

BUZZ

Glory Road

(Josh Lucas, Austin Nichols, Derek Luke) In this fact-based college-basketball film set in the mid-1960s, a coach (Lucas) inspires a group of disenfranchised students to become the nation's first African American starting lineup. Prepare to be uplifted when they score a spectacular win over an all-white team.

Our call: A slam dunk only for those who haven't OD'd on the slew of inspirational underdog sports sagas that includes *Remember the Titans*, *Friday Night Lights* and *Coach Carter*.



Factotum

(Matt Dillon, Lili Taylor, Marisa Tomei) This version of Charles Bukowski's darkly funny novel features Dillon as a brilliant, grungy hell-raiser who keeps himself afloat by working odd jobs. In his spare time he manages to bed a succession of aimless women and write stories nobody's in a rush to publish.

Our call: Read the novel instead—it's terrific. And since Bukowski cultists are easily offended, this flick might provoke some of them to howl and hurl things at the screen.



Eight Below

(Paul Walker, Bruce Greenwood, Jason Biggs) Intrepid rescuers race to save a pack of sled dogs after an accident and brutal icy weather have forced three explorers to leave the animals behind. Inspired by a true story, this is an Americanized version of *Antarctica*, one of the most successful Japanese films of all time.

Our call: Even the toughest guys have a soft spot for dogs in distress. Disney returns to its roots with an old-fashioned animal adventure—think *Old Yeller* without the Kleenex.



Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World

(Albert Brooks, Sheetal Sheth, Jon Tenney) Brooks's latest showcases him as a comic sent to India and Pakistan by State Department boneheads hoping to learn what tickles Muslims' funny bones. The fact that India happens to be mostly Hindu is just one of the movie's jabs at American cluelessness.

Our call: Film execs and critics have cringed at the politically incorrect title. Lighten up, guys—it's satire. And even on his off days, Brooks is one of the funniest men alive.



dvd of the month

[THE ARISTOCRATS]

It's dirty, it's vile, it's lame—and comics can't get enough of it

"A man walks into a talent agent's office and says, 'I have an act...'" Thus begins the joke known as the Aristocrats. It's the dirtiest, funniest, lamest joke, and until last year not many people had heard it except working comedians—and they don't tell it onstage because the punch line is distractingly bad. Instead it's become like a secret handshake shared after hours as comedians try to top each other with outrageous riffs on scatology, bestiality, incest and sodomy—whatever pops into their twisted frontal lobes. Penn Jillette (of Penn & Teller) and director and comedian Paul Provenza had the brainstorm that it would be instructive to invite more than 100 comics to tell the joke and put it into context. The most outrageous bit is Gilbert Gottfried's fearless telling at a Friars Club roast for our own Hef, who clearly gets the joke. **Extras:** Amateur contest versions, commentary and alternate takes. **☆☆½** —Buzz McClain



exciting entertainment. **Extras:** Criterion's edition has archival interviews with Ford and Fonda, a stills gallery, a new essay by critic Geoffrey O'Brien and an audio dramatization of the story produced for radio, with Fonda reprising his role. **☆☆☆**
—Matt Steigbigel



THE CONSTANT GARDENER (2005) A timid diplomat (Ralph Fiennes) tries to solve the murder of his activist wife (Rachel Weisz) by digging into her past. Based on a John le Carré novel, the film is a fascinating journey for Fiennes as his wife pulls him into her cause from beyond the grave. **Extras:** Embracing Africa featurette and a page-to-screen chat with the director and the novelist. **☆☆☆**
—Greg Fagan



THE ROCKFORD FILES: SEASON ONE (1974) One of the most influential private-eye TV series gets a first-class DVD debut. Jim Rockford (James Garner) is a man with a passion for closed cases. He lives in a broken-down trailer by the beach and regularly gets stiffed by clients and beaten up for asking too many questions. Luckily, he has a lawyer girlfriend, an ex-con best friend, a meddling dad and a still catchy theme song. **Extras:** Garner reminisces about Rockford's origins. **☆☆**
—Bryan Reesman



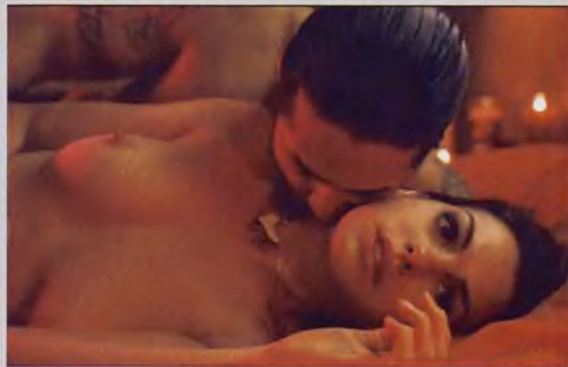
FLIGHTPLAN (2005) Jodie Foster escaped the panic room, but can she step off the panic plane? It seems the former Oscar chaser is now hell-bent on dominating a unique new subgenre of claustrophobic mom-and-daughter-in-peril nail-biters. Here again in wet-mother-hen mode, she tries to convince her fellow flight passengers that someone has kidnapped her daughter—a six-year-old whom nobody remembers, suggesting a suspiciously high number of ADD sufferers onboard. What's next, *Panic Elevator*? **Extras:** Making-of feature, filmmaker commentary. **☆☆**
—Robert B. DeSalvo



YOUNG MR. LINCOLN (1939) When Henry Fonda told director John Ford that he felt unable to portray as great a man as Abraham Lincoln, Ford famously shot back, "You think you'd be playing the Great Emancipator? He's a goddamn jake-legged lawyer in Springfield, for Christ's sake!" Ford's film is still very much a work of Hollywood hagiography on the early days of Honest Abe, who uses his mix of country smarts and book learning to defend two young innocents charged with murder. But it is nonetheless superb and

tease frame

As a romantic royal in both *Princess Diaries* movies (2001, 2004), doe-eyed ingenue **Anne Hathaway** became a tween idol. With a stage-actress mother and the same name as William Shakespeare's wife, she does seem upper-crust through and through—she most recently starred in Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) and will next appear in a



film version of the chick-lit best-seller *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006). But as a bored, rich teen in the racy drama *Havoc* (2005, pictured), Hathaway grows up fast, shedding more than just her tiara for a feabag-motel blunt bang in which she gets the royal treatment from a gang member. It's a career 180 that warrants a peek inside her back pages.

THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE (2005) A no-nonsense lawyer (Laura Linney) is hired to defend a priest held responsible for a young girl's death during an exorcism. The story leapfrogs from deafening flashbacks to courtroom hokum, making your head spin faster than Linda Blair's. The film plays more like a tedious *Law & Order* episode than a bona fide frightfest. **Extras:** A featurette on the true story. **☆**
—Stacie Houglund



game of the month



[GUN]

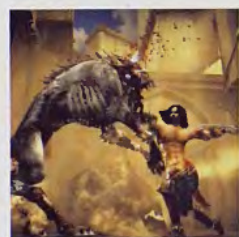
Gaming finally gets its *Wild Bunch*

When it comes to video games, you can never have enough of two things: cowboys and pirates. And while we have yet to see a quality unsanitized pirate game, for the time being we can console ourselves with *Gun* (GameCube, PC, PS2, 360, Xbox). Riding into town like a vengeful stranger, it's the first no-gimmicks, no-bullshit, high-touch and high-test Western game—call it *Grand Theft Mustang*. Free-roaming, engrossing and decidedly not for the kiddies, *Gun*'s story-based quests mingle with copious side missions, all set amid the pristine vistas and chaotic frontier towns of the old West. In keeping with the times, you'll get to know two things extremely well: your gun and your horse. Whether you're more excited by shooting down foes at full gallop, trampling the innocent, challenging other hombres to gunfights, escorting a precious "whore wagon" from town to town or collecting bounties on wanted bandits, you'll appreciate the high-end writing and voice acting of a game that takes its subject matter seriously. After years of tolerating gimmicky or just plain cruddy stabs at translating frontier life to a game, we finally have our first Peckinpah-worthy effort. Play it on 360 if you can. **★★★★** —Chris Hudak

NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED (GameCube, PC, PS2, 360, Xbox) This time around, after you win your illegal street races, you have to ditch the cops. A beefier story line and the adrenaline-soaked police pursuits almost take our mind off the lack of drift events. Can't take the heat? Stay out of the Mustang. **★★★★½** —Adam Rosen



KING KONG (GameCube, PC, PS2, 360, Xbox) This intense single-player adventure puts you in first-person perspective as Jack Driscoll, who's trying to keep the expedition team alive by foiling dinosaurs on Skull Island. Then the camera shifts to the third person, and you're capping T. rexes as Kong himself. Pure gaming magic. **★★★★** —M.S.



PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES (GameCube, PC, PS2, Xbox) The agile royal wraps up his amazing trilogy with his third game in as many years. A fugitive on the streets of a ravaged Babylon, he must team with his evil alter ego, the Dark Prince. An amazing end to a series that's a high-water mark for adventure gaming. **★★★★½** —Marc Saltzman



TRUE CRIME: NEW YORK CITY (GameCube, PS2, Xbox) Taking down New York City's four crime families? All in a day's work for an undercover NYPD cop. Plausibility aside, this sequel's improved controls and gameplay offer fighting, shooting and driving in 26 square miles of replicated Manhattan. Good, gritty fun. **★★★** —John Gaudiosi

ELECTROPLANKTON (Nintendo DS) You don't play this; you mess with it, launching tiny digital plankton into gyrating, dancing life using music created by swiping and prodding the portable's touch screen. Different creatures can sample, loop and lay down bass lines—and it's every bit as weird and wonderful as it sounds. **★★★** —Brian Crecente



50 CENT: BULLETPROOF (PS2, Xbox) Is there anything 50 Cent can't do? *Bulletproof* explores what would have happened if Fiddy and pals had decided to fight gangs instead of write songs about them. An engaging story with tons of heavy artillery, smooth moves, a roster of exclusive songs and plenty of room for personal style. **★★★** —J.G.



THE MATRIX: PATH OF NEO (PC, PS2, Xbox) This is "the One." That is, the *Matrix* game that redeems previous disasters and fulfills the franchise's promise. Work your way through the three movies in bullet time, smacking down dozens of Smiths and experiencing your favorite fight scenes from the inside. **★★★★½** —B.C.



HAMMER & SICKLE (PC) Step into behind-the-lines intrigue at the birth of the Cold War when the Soviet Union sends a spy into British- and American-occupied Germany in the spring of 1949. Wear the right disguises, make the right friends and polish your battle skills to survive this deeply tactical action-points-based game. **★★★** —C.H.

mood music



[SOLID GOLD]

Yellowcard's return offers more than angst

Blame Blink-182 for the rash of moody rock bands. Between the fart jokes on their 1999 album, *Enema of the State*, the punk pranksters slipped in "Adam's Song," an emotional ode to a fan who committed suicide. The track became a blueprint for bands such as Simple Plan and Taking Back Sunday, who built entire albums around the formula, tagging melancholy verses to overwrought choruses. Yellowcard's *Ocean Avenue* was the biggest of those efforts. The SoCal group's sound, augmented by a violinist, played off all the pre-20s angst, pushing the album to double platinum and earning the band a performance spot on the MTV Video Music Awards. On this follow-up, *Lights and Sounds*, Yellowcard comes out from behind the loud guitars and relies on piano, acoustic guitars, trumpet and, of course, violin. Not that the group doesn't still have the same energy. "Rough Landing, Holly" blasts like a better Jimmy Eat World tune, while the antiwar "Two Weeks From Twenty" could have fit on *American Idiot*. And if Green Day can survive teen angst, why not Yellowcard? (Capitol) **YYY** —Jason Buhrmester

BILLY BRAGG * Volume 1 Boxed Set

Not since Woody Guthrie (whose work Bragg would tackle, with Wilco, on his *Mermaid Avenue* projects) had an acoustic guitar sounded as punk rock as it does on Bragg's early albums, reissued here. In an era of self-absorbed singer-songwriter boys, it's worth exhuming a real working-class hero. (Yep Roc) **YYY** —Tim Mohr



WE ARE SCIENTISTS

With Love and Squalor

Here's a worthy U.S. response to the U.K.'s angular-guitar movement. WAS combines Franz Ferdinand percussion, the cascading guitars and soaring sound of U2 and a touch of emo intensity. The result: a more driving version of the Killers, minus the cheesy synths. (Virgin) **YYY** —T.M.



ANDERSON/DRAKE/PARKER

Blue Winter

This two-CD concert captures the jazz trio in warm surroundings. Drummer Hamid Drake and saxophonist Fred Anderson have long had a telepathic connection while playing, but the surprise here is how William Parker's bass pushes the pair to new elaborations. (Eremite) **YYY** —Leopold Froehlich



LIL' FLIP * I Need Mine

Discovered as a teen by the legendary DJ Screw, Flip is known in Houston as the Freestyle King. Here he adds to the Houston legend with an unpredictable but refreshing mix of club and street, offering further proof that H-Town gets all the hype for good reason. Perfect riding music. (Sony Urban) **YYY½** —L.F.



good-bye garage, hello wind tunnel



Enough with the rock duos and stripped faux-garage sound. We're predicting that this year, in reaction to all the minimalism of the past few, we'll see a new set of 1980s bands canonized and imitated: Ride, My Bloody Valentine and Slowdive, the most successful of the so-called shoegazing bands that emerged late in the decade. Their aesthetic was diametrically opposed to what's been going on in the rock scene of late. These British acts buried pop melodies and vocal harmonies beneath layer upon

layer of guitar noise, giving the effect of the Beatles playing in a wind tunnel. They're still around: Ride's Mark Gardener issued a low-key solo LP in October, MBV's Kevin Shields set the tone of the atmospheric *Lost in Translation* soundtrack, and Slowdive's principals release mellow Americana as Mojave 3. But with impressive albums on the way from a slew of young bands—including Film School and Ambulance LTD—influenced by this triumvirate, it's time we saw a full-on revival of complex, layered guitar rock.

american classics

[JOYCE CAROL OATES]

The author of *The Female of the Species* examines the art of violence

Q: Each of the stories in your new collection features a woman who, when pushed to extremes, commits violence or has violence done to her. But they are not femmes fatales, or are they?

A: These are women who might be described as so complicit in their exploitation by men that their blamelessness is doubtful. If women are attracted to sexually forceful, domineering men, can they reasonably expect not to be “threatened” by these men eventually? I wanted to create realistically ambiguous—and ambivalent—women who don’t always know exactly what they want from men or what they intend in their relationships and may wind up, to their dismay, both “victims” and “predators.”



Q: You’ve written extensively on boxing. What draws you to it? And to what conclusions did your research, including your conversations with Mike Tyson, bring you?

A: I was introduced to boxing as a young girl by my father, who took me to the Golden Gloves championships in Buffalo. Boxing possesses the allure—unpredictable, dangerous, sometimes heartrending—of that ultramasculine world. Tyson was the boxer I knew best, in the late 1980s. He was an extraordinary athlete and also a historian of his sport: Mike had seen every film of his major predecessors and remembered them all. What has happened to Tyson, much of it a consequence of his own self-destructive

nature but not all, has been an ongoing American tragedy shading into a dispiriting farce—reminiscent, in its very different way, of the tragic end of Marilyn Monroe.

Q: Your novel *Blonde* takes on Monroe’s life. What does she represent for you?

A: My interest in her was almost entirely my interest in the young Norma Jeane Baker, first as a child, then as a young woman trapped in the glittering persona of “the Blonde.” As Norma Jeane, in pictures taken when she was a teenager, she reminded me of girls I’d gone to school with and even of my young mother, in a long-ago America still shaken by memories of the Depression and in the throes of World War II.

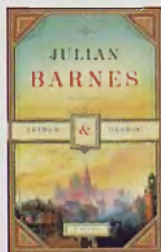
Q: You’ve written more than a hundred books. Why do you write so much?

A: For me, writing represents both an intellectual and an emotional challenge, and each work of fiction is a unique problem to be solved.

ARTHUR & GEORGE • Julian Barnes

Sherlock Holmes creator Arthur Conan Doyle (one of this novel’s eponymous protagonists) believed that a writer’s responsibilities were “firstly, to be intelligible; secondly, to be interesting; and thirdly, to be clever.” Barnes is three for three by Doyle’s score in this immensely entertaining tale of a Birmingham solicitor, unfairly convicted of mutilating livestock, and the famous author who championed his pardon. The main problem with Barnes’s writing has always been a narrative aloofness; here it works to his advantage. He doesn’t so much inhabit Arthur and George as follow them around like an invisible Dr. Watson. Clever dick.

☆☆☆ —Bill Vourvoulis



HAPPINESS: A HISTORY

Darrin M. McMahon

This expansive intellectual history traces mankind’s quest for an elusive, possibly nonexistent state of being. The ancient Greeks thought human happiness came from enduring the vagaries of fate. To attract converts, Christian fathers preached eternal happiness in the afterlife. But that was too far off for 18th century revolutionaries, who promised immediate gratification once the monarchs were overthrown. Today we are told happiness is an inalienable right, but we are still searching. The author succeeds in his desire to make this forever “unexamined assumption appear strange.”

☆☆☆ —Matt Steigbigel



black humor

In many ways, American culture has been built on the backs of African Americans. *Hokum*, an anthology of black wit that features personalities as diverse as Zora Neale Hurston and Spike Lee, reaffirms the resuscitative value of humor. Here are a few examples:



“I sought the hotel where I had sent my baggage. The clerk scowled. ‘What do you want?’ he asked. ‘Rest,’ I said. ‘This is a white hotel,’ he said. I looked around. ‘Such a color scheme requires a great deal of cleaning,’ I said, ‘but I don’t know that I object.’” —W.E.B. Du Bois

“But in the South, nobody gets scalped. They just get coldcocked. Of course, them robes the Klan sports around in is not as pretty as the feathers Indians used to wear, but they is more scary.” —Langston Hughes

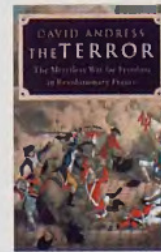


“‘How would you make a Venetian blind?’ He scratched his head and thought a few seconds, then finally replied, ‘Well, I reck’n ’bout de easiest way would be to poke him in de eye.’” —Anonymous

THE TERROR • David Andress

As the French Revolution proceeded from the hopeful egalitarianism of 1789 to the desperate Revolutionary Tribunal of 1793, the architects of change sought new ways to enact their republican vision. With the guillotine, they struck on an effective new method to dehumanize enemies of the revolution: terror. “Terror is nothing other than justice—prompt, severe, inflexible,” said Robespierre. “It is therefore an emanation of virtue.” Terror allowed the revolutionaries to invent an entirely new world. Andress’s brilliant history of the French Revolution also shows how the madness of the sansculottes is little different from the madness of jihad. ☆☆☆

—Leopold Froehlich



What sort of man wears Playboy?



PLAYBOYSTORE.COM



Sugar Mountain

Life is sweet at Badrutt's in St. Moritz—the ultimate chalet in the ultimate ski town

HOTELIER HANS BADRUTT got his start in the late 1850s when he overheard a group of Englishmen bemoaning their departure for London after a summer foray to the Swiss Alps. He challenged them to return to St. Moritz for New Year's, offering to pay for their trip if there was less sunshine there in winter than in summer. Badrutt won the bet. Since then St. Moritz has grown into one of the most glamorous and sophisticated ski towns in the world. And Badrutt's Palace (above), with its incredible views and luxuriously appointed rooms, which go for \$200 to \$15,000 a night, has become the grande dame of the town's exclusive hotels. Winter sports were born here, and the Corviglia, Corvatsch and Diavolezza ski runs are as amazing as ever. While a complete run on one of these trails can take hours, along the way are frequent ski-up bars full of lovely blondes to fortify you. Looking for a heavier adrenaline rush? Try the historic Cresta run, where you hurtle headfirst at up to 80 miles an hour on a skeleton-style toboggan down a bobsled course first made in 1885. And those are just the sports you expect. Turns out snow doesn't slow these people down. In the middle of winter, skydiving, golf and horse racing are all still on the menu. If this is too much testosterone for your lady friend, don't panic. St. Moritz is home to some of the world's most extravagant shopping. Okay, maybe you should panic just a wee bit. For more info, log on to badruttspalace.com.

Hot Cocktails



Irish coffee recipes are like opinions—everybody has one. Here's ours: Mix one tablespoon of brown sugar and one shot of Jameson into a cup of freshly brewed coffee of the decent sort, topped with frothed milk. For a **Mexican coffee**, pour one shot of Agavero (a tequila liqueur) into a cup of hot java and dollop with a spoonful of foam. When was the last time you had a **hot buttered rum**? You're missing out. Toss one ounce each of gold rum and dark rum and one teaspoon of butter into a mug. Top with hot cider and stir with a cinnamon stick. And for a little lift before you get on the lift, try a **snow cap**: Layer equal parts of tequila and Baileys in a shot glass and shoot it down.

About Time

THE SWISS are known for cheese with holes in it and watches. Nobody does either better. As for the latter, IWC's Grande Complication with a platinum band and case (\$300,000, iwc.com) is a true work of art. Each of its 659 mechanical pieces is made by hand using tiny lathes. What time is it? Who cares? We can't take our eyes off the thing.



Sweet Spot

YOU CAN'T GIVE HER another little heart-shaped box for Valentine's Day—that idea is so stale, you might as well give her Tupperware. Premier French chocolatier Richart freshens things up with its Chocolate Vault (\$825, richart.com). The burlwood chest resembles a humidor but is stuffed with 112 bites flown in from Lyon; its seven refillable trays each present a genre of delicately balanced pieces in balsamic, roasted nut, fruit, citrus, herbal, floral and spice flavors.



The Art of Writing

EACH OF THE 12 limited-edition fountain pens in Visconti's Mazzi collection has an airbrushed painting on it—a noble Masai warrior, the sleek contour of a great white shark, the curve of a beautiful woman's lower back. Pictured: Sinfonia Rossa ("Red Symphony," above, \$885) and La Regina ("the Queen," below, \$950). The pens are finished in polished silver and gold. Use yours to write a novel about a desperate man in search of a very expensive pen that fell out of his pocket in a taxi. For inspiration check out visconti.it.



Power Player

WHEN SONY STARTED making computers in 1996, it also made an implicit promise: It would use its lifestyle-oriented expertise to close the gap between computers and consumer electronics. The VAIO XL1 Digital Living System (\$2,300, sonystyle.com) accomplishes the task. It's a media-center PC designed to go in your stereo cabinet, but its secret weapon is a DVD carousel changer that speaks fluent computer. Fill it with 200 CDs and rip them all at once. Fill it with DVDs and it will index them so you can browse by title or director. Fill it with blank DVDs and burn entire seasons of television shows in a single keystroke. We hope you have a comfy couch.

All the Buzz

LOOK AT THE VESPA. Look at the Mini Cooper. Small and quirky equals fun. Now with the FAA's new light sport aircraft, or LSA, category, shrunken sport transportation takes to the air. Playfully designed and highly impractical, the Flight Design CTSW (\$89,000, flightdesignusa.com) is a carbon-fiber and Kevlar LSA suited to sprightly 138 mph cruises with an adventurous lass. Should the poop hit the propeller, the CT can pop an emergency parachute that lowers the entire craft to the ground. And after just 20 hours behind the stick with an instructor, you can take that baby 10,000 feet yonder into the blue.



Mix Master

YOU SPOT A PARCHED WOMAN on the street. You can tell she's had a long day. What do you do? Duck into a phone booth, peel off your suit and voilà! You're Super Bartender, able to mix tall drinks in a single bound. You approach her with your 14-piece Bar Briefcase (\$680, unicahome.com)—designed by Carl Mertens and complete with stainless steel shaker, strainer, bar spoon, knife, cutting board, pockets for office stuff, the works—and begin mixing a martini with the gin you magically pull from your pocket. Drink in hand, she asks, "How can I ever thank you, Super Bartender?" You answer, "Six bucks, please."



A Sofa With Balls

"**WE HAD A PROBLEM** with regular sofas," says designer Amit Axelrod. "They're all the same shape." Axelrod and his partner wanted to make furniture that fit its users' moods but found that static designs couldn't keep up. So they created the Feel couch. The name is corny, but the couch is not.

Made of 120 connected fabric-covered foam balls, it can be reconfigured at will by hooking the black connectors together in different patterns to suit your needs. Weave it into whatever blob-like shape you want, then take a load off. It's available with 14- or 20-centimeter balls (\$1,000 and \$2,950, animicausa.com).



ADVERTISEMENT

“My Boyfriend’s **SECRET** ... for Amazing **SEX!**”

As a faithful reader of your magazine, I just had to tell your readers about a recent experience I had with my boyfriend.

First, let me just say he is a great guy. **But, after dating for six months, it seemed he was having confidence issues in AND out of bed.** It was having a real negative effect on his sexual prowess and let's face it, with any new relationship, it usually doesn't last very long without a real strong sexual connection. My dilemma was that I really liked the guy.

Thankfully, I didn't have to make a difficult decision because everything changed a few days ago. I came home from work and he basically tore my clothes off before I even made it through the door. Right there on the stairs he practically pounced on me. Confident, aggressive, he made all the right moves. I definitely felt sensations I'd never felt before ... in places I forgot existed. We made love for what seemed like an eternity. I never knew what some of my friends meant when they said the earth moved from having sex - I do now. **"I can honestly say it was the best sex I've ever had in my entire life!"**

When I asked him what was going on - what brought about the change - he wouldn't answer me. So I did what any red-blooded American woman would do, I started snooping. It didn't take me long to figure out his secret. In his underwear drawer under the "men's magazines," was a tube of Maxoderm Connection. After reading the fine print and finding the website, I went online to maxodermct.com to discover more about this magic in a tube.

Maxoderm Connection (of which I'm having my boyfriend buy a lifetime supply) is a lotion that is applied topically to either the clitoris or the penis. **An all natural mix of herbs and who knows what, brings blood flow straight to the source - that's when amazing things start to happen. He achieves harder, stronger erections and my orgasms go through the roof!** We aren't into taking pills of any kind - not even aspirin - so I was relieved to find he was using something topical without any systemic side effects. Unless you want to think of great sex as a side effect, because that's definitely what's going on at our place - ALL the time!

So ... please print this letter. Anyone who wants to experience mind-blowing intimacy has to try Maxoderm Connection. They need to tell their boyfriends, husbands or partners about this product. Or just "accidentally" leave a tube lying around for them to "accidentally" find. I really want to thank the woman who developed Maxoderm Connection - only a woman could design something that feels this good.

T.J.

T.J.
Phoenix, AZ



**“I felt
sensations
I'd never felt
before
... in places
I forgot
existed.”**



P.S., Let your readers know I'm pretty sure they can still get a **FREE MONTH SUPPLY** of Maxoderm Connection with their order by calling 1-800-210-7410 or by visiting their website at www.maxodermct.com. Oh and even better, their product is backed by a 90 day full money back guarantee.

The Playboy Advisor

My girlfriend and I broke up for a few months. After we got back together I found out she had slept with another guy. Can you explain how this can infuriate me and turn me on at the same time?—J.H., Buffalo, New York

Focus on the turn-on. You like the idea that your girlfriend is desirable to other men, and it's arousing to imagine her responding as a purely sexual being as well. But when you start to think of her having an emotional connection (e.g., saying his name), the insecurity, anger and fear kick in. Your girlfriend had a choice, and she chose you. Appreciate that reality and have fun with the fantasy.

Whenver I meet an attractive guy, I challenge him to a game (typically poker) in which clothing is removed. I can't lose. It's thrilling to see him get red in the face when he must remove his boxers, but it's also arousing to see his boyish excitement if I must remove my bra and panties. The fun continues when we see each other again, either at work or wherever we hang out. I smirk because he has seen me nude or because I know he is thinking, Damn, she saw me naked, and I didn't get to see her naked. I play each guy only once so we never get even. I get a rush from doing this but worry it will get me in trouble, especially since I am about to get married. How unusual is this, and how can I stop?—L.R., Bellevue, Washington

Assuming this isn't a bluff, yours is an unusual variation of a common sexual interest in control, domination and humiliation. You should inform your fiancé of your tastes, though he isn't likely to be comfortable with continued poker dates. (How did you meet him, by the way? And how does he keep your interest?) You could easily rechannel this sexual energy into any variety of dominant-submissive activities, and if that doesn't work out, it makes a great vaudeville act.

I'm 29, and my hairline is receding at a frightening rate. The hair-restoration industry has ads everywhere claiming the days of hair plugs are gone. Is there any truth to this?—J.S., New York, New York

Transplants have become smaller (hair follicles are transplanted from the back or side of the head in groups of two or three rather than 15 to 20), which means they can be placed closer together to provide a more natural look. But the smaller and more numerous the grafts, the more delicate the operation and the greater the chance the follicles will be damaged. That's why the procedure costs thousands of dollars. Nonsurgical solutions include Rogaine (rubbed on your scalp) and Propecia (a daily pill), which slow hair loss by blocking the production of DHT, a form of testosterone that causes male-pattern baldness. These treatments are most effective on



the crown. Meanwhile, science marches on. Researchers have discovered that manipulating a gene in bald mice causes their hair to start growing. The gene also exists in humans, so the hope is that it could eventually lead to a cure for androgenetic alopecia, or inherited baldness—by far the most common type. Researchers are also working on cloning hair cells in the lab that can be injected into the scalp. But in a University of Toronto experiment that tried this, only four of 23 subjects grew hair, and only one ended up with what the lead researcher called a "nice tuft." Nevertheless, the transplant chain Bosley Medical and the British biotech firm Intercytex say they could have "cellular-based hair-multiplication technology" available as soon as 2008.

My most recent relationship was with a deeply religious guy. He's 25, still lives with his parents and swears he has never masturbated or watched a porno. Although he finger-banged me all the time, he refused to let me do anything to him, saying he considered it against his values. Eventually what little we had fizzled, but I wonder if I should have been easier on him. All I get from my girlfriends when I talk about this is puzzled looks.—A.M., Hot Springs, Arkansas

You're also getting one from us. Your ex sounds deeply conflicted. You shouldn't waste any more energy on him.

My wife has placed me on what she refers to as a penis-points system. I accumulate points for good deeds such as emptying the dishwasher, making breakfast and giving her a back rub. I was hesitant at first, but it turned out to be a great idea. A hand job costs 10 points, 15 points earns me a blow job, 30 points intercourse and

100 points any fantasy I want. My question is, should I hoard my points or continue to cash them in? One nice thing about this system is that it allows me to gauge the horniness of my wife. For example, this past week she gave me 10 points and a bonus BJ for getting her a glass of water.—C.S., Wichita, Kansas

Most couples barter for sex, even if it's not so overt. We suggest you throw a wrench into the system. Every third or fourth time your wife awards you points, decline them by saying, "There's no charge. I love making you happy." You may find that the best things in life are free. Ideally, she should be working for pussy points, but we're sure you would give them out like candy.

Iwould like to expand my grilling to include fish, but I have no experience buying it. How do you know if fish is fresh?—M.T., Toronto, Ontario

The best place to find something fresh is a fish market; supermarkets don't usually have the best choices, which are reserved for restaurants. You also need to see the entire fish—it's difficult to judge the freshness of a fillet. The flesh should be firm and spring back when you press it, and your finger should not leave a mark. The scales should not be broken, which can be a sign of age or mishandling. The gills should be red, not purple. The eyes should be clear and bulging, and the guts should smell like the sea, without any hint of ammonia. The freshest fish often have a thin layer of slime on them. Since even the freshest market fish has probably been out of the water for at least 36 hours before you bring it home, it's best to eat it on the same day or, at most, within two days.

Aco-worker closes his door for 20 minutes every day so he can meditate. He says I should give it a try, but it seems like a hassle. Is there any advantage to meditation?—N.G., Detroit, Michigan

Buddhists have thought so for at least 2,500 years, and they may be onto something. Researchers at the University of Wisconsin wanted to see if meditation caused physical changes to the brain, so they used an MRI machine to monitor eight Tibetan monks who had each practiced meditation for 10,000 to 50,000 hours over 15 to 40 years. While meditating on unconditional compassion, the monks produced the highest level of gamma waves—the brain impulses associated with happiness, mental awareness and coordinated thinking—ever recorded in healthy people. Even when they weren't meditating, the monks had more gamma activity than a control group of novices. This and other studies indicate that meditation sharpens the mind in the same way that exercise tones the body—a radical concept, as scientists have long believed that connections among the brain's nerve cells become fixed in childhood. Can meditation lead to better sex? Perhaps. In

YOUR FATHER
WASN'T PUSHY.
HE JUST KNEW
THE REWARDS
THAT WERE OUT
THERE FOR YOU.



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her book *Sex for One*, Betty Dodson describes taking her daily 40-minute meditation to a new level by chanting her mantra while touching herself with a vibrator. She calls her sessions, which conclude with orgasm, transcendental masturbation. Sex researchers at Rutgers University who monitored Dodson's brain while she meditated in a lab found that she entered a daydream-like state during her extended masturbation and a deeper, trance-like state just before she came.

My wife and I often argue by e-mail. I think it's better because you have time to think before you speak. Plus when we see each other again, the issue has been resolved. What do you think?—B.R., Riverside, California

We like it, as long as you aren't typing with your caps lock on. But it does limit the effectiveness of our favorite defense, which is "I never said that." What's important, however, may not be the medium but your approach. Psychologist John Gottman of the University of Washington has studied more than 600 married couples and how they fight. He divides couples who stay together into three types: avoiders, who agree not to discuss their disagreements; attackers, who bicker about seemingly everything; and soothers, who choose their battles, listen respectfully and respond with gentle persuasion. According to Gottman, most marriages have trouble only when spouses have conflicting styles. For example, soothers overwhelm avoiders, and soothers and attackers reach a standstill. The worst combination is avoider and attacker. Gottman also found that among couples who stay together, the positive remarks they make to each other, during fights or otherwise, outnumber their negative comments by at least a five-to-one margin. E-mail certainly makes that easier to tally.

I wear button-down shirts to work but can't stand to have the sleeves down. Now I am concerned that co-workers think I am too casual. Is it okay to roll up your sleeves? What does it say about you?—C.C., San Francisco, California

Our fashion director, Joseph De Acetis, says you should never roll up your sleeves or unbutton your cuffs at the office. If you must, roll your sleeves over no more than once. Consider switching to dress shirts made of stretch fabric, such as those by Prada, Liz Claiborne or Brooks Brothers. The sleeves will be more comfortable, so you won't feel the need.

My girlfriend claims she needs to be dominant to enjoy sex, so she ties me up a lot. I don't mind her being in control, but it also means I can't touch her. This past week she left me bound in the bedroom. When I called out, she came back and gagged me. I was angry and a little afraid. I spent 90 minutes trying to get free. When she saw that I had tried to escape, she lit into me, then devoured me. The sex was amazing, but I am worried. What if she decides to leave me for

longer periods? When I tell her how I feel, she calls me a sissy and asks if the sex isn't good.—D.T., Kansas City, Missouri

The sex may be great, but the setup needs work. Before you do this again, establish a safe word that ends play immediately when uttered by either partner. This ensures that no one crosses boundaries, and it can also prevent injuries. For example, if your girlfriend ties her knots so tight that they cut off your circulation, you have no way of convincing her that you are not just being a "sissy." If she won't agree to a safe word, or if you agree on one and she then ignores it, you should not allow her to bind you in any way.

A reader wrote in October to ask how to get better range on his wireless network. Your suggestions are good, but he may also want to change the 2.4-gigahertz channel on his router. (The factory default is six.) If he and his neighbors have their routers on the same channel, it can cause interference. Also if he has a 2.4-gigahertz phone, he should dump it for a 5.8-gigahertz one.—K.C., Eules, Texas

Thanks. Good advice.

What is the best way to clean sex toys?—A.C., LaGrange, Illinois

Most toys can be cleaned with a warm, damp cloth and antibacterial soap. If it has a nonporous surface, such as silicone or Pyrex-like glass, and it doesn't have a motor or plastic parts, you can boil it for five to 10 minutes or run it through a dishwasher in the top rack. Air-dry the toy before storing it. The easiest way to keep porous toys such as rubber dildos clean is to place a condom over them during use.

I'm engaged to be married, and everyone in my family says they love my fiancée, but she has a huge problem with them because they are still in contact with my ex-wife. My ex and I have a good relationship, in part because we share custody of our six-year-old son. My fiancée, who is divorced as well, believes my family should cut all ties with my ex out of respect for our relationship. How do I convince them that by staying in touch with her they are hurting my future wife as well as me?—J.M., Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Are you kidding? Neither you nor your fiancée has any right to demand this, especially as it involves the mother of your family's grandchild and nephew. We hope your third wife has a better attitude.

All reasonable questions—from fashion, food and drink, stereotypes and sports cars to dating dilemmas, taste and etiquette—will be personally answered if the writer includes a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The most interesting, pertinent questions will be presented on these pages each month. Write the Playboy Advisor, 730 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10019, or send e-mail by visiting our website at playboyadvisor.com.



THE PLAYBOY FORUM

OUR PILGRIM FANATICS

THEY LANDED WITH A PLAN—A REPRESSIVE
NEW WORLD ORDER

BY SIMON WORRALL

Religious fundamentalism is nothing new. We've seen it before, in the early 17th century, when a group of extremists sought to transform England into a theocracy governed by a strict interpretation of scripture. These were the Protestants who later landed at Plymouth Rock and are revered in the United States as the Pilgrim fathers.

Their story begins in Scrooby, Nottinghamshire. This was the birthplace of William Brewster, leader of the small band that eventually sailed to America on the *Mayflower*. William Bradford, an orphan from nearby Austerfield, later became the colony's second governor and provided its only firsthand chronicle, *Of Plimoth Plantation*. Other members of the group came from local villages.

Brewster had become interested in radical religious reform while studying at Cambridge University in the 1570s. After leaving he served as an assistant to one of the most powerful politicians of the day, Sir William Davison. But Davison, who served the death warrant of Mary, Queen of Scots, suffered a spectacular fall from grace, and Brewster returned to Scrooby a broken man. There he found God. To make a living, Brewster took over his father's job as village postmaster and devoted the rest of his time to creating a new world order ruled by God's word—with himself, perhaps inevitably, as its first leader.

He began by establishing an underground cell, a small group of men who met in secret in the villages around Scrooby. Known as the Separatists because they planned to found a church outside the Church of England, they formed the core of the group of pilgrims who would found a new country across the Atlantic. In their fundamentalist theocracy, pubs would be closed, maypole dancing and gambling

would be banned, men and women would be forced to dress in a sober and godly way and, above all, the Bible would become the foundation of civil society.

Among the draconian measures Brewster and his associates at Plymouth later introduced was a law that prohibited living alone; solitude was seen as a breeding ground for sin and antisocial behavior. Children and women (always a favorite target of male religious fanatics) were treated with shocking severity. A statute on the books in the Plymouth colony allowed the execution of minors who disobeyed their parents.

By demanding religious freedom and a spiritual life outside the Church of England, the Separatists lit a match that threatened to ignite English society. When caught by authorities, members had their nostrils slit, their right ears cut off and the letters SS (for "stirrer of sedition")

branded on their foreheads. At Clink prison in London (the Abu Ghraib of 16th century England) they were chained, tortured and beaten as they stood knee-deep in fetid water.

In 1608 Brewster and 14 adults and children, including William Bradford and his family, fled to Amsterdam on the first leg of a journey that would end at the Plymouth colony 12 years later. All but four of the 41 "saints" who sailed on the *Mayflower* had previously been in the Netherlands.

Much as London has now become a home to the jihad, 17th century Amsterdam was a haven for Protestant fundamentalists, including another group of religious firebrands known as the Ancient Brethren. Numbering about 300, they lived communally. Like the Taliban, they wore their beards long. Their spiritual leader was Robert Browne, a Cambridge intellectual and radical pastor. Two of the leading members, brothers George and Francis Johnson, had done time in London's torture cells.



PIERRE MOHNET

FOUR MYTHS ABOUT DARWIN'S THEORY

AND WHY THEY'RE WRONG

The sect was a minefield of personal feuds, theological battles, poverty and sexual tension. Soon Brewster and his group were sucked in. At the center of the storm was what religious fundamentalists, most particularly the men, fear most: female sexuality. Like the Mormons, Brewster and his group wore underwear designed to prevent sexual arousal. Like most Muslims, they frowned on sexually suggestive clothing for women.

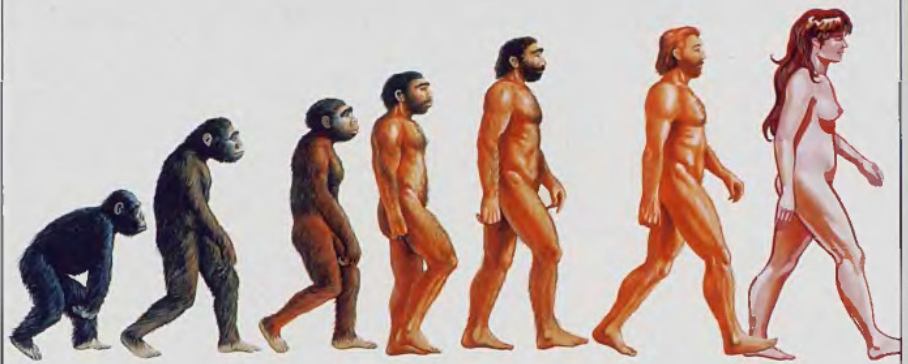
Enter Thomasine Boyes, the widow of a successful London haberdasher. She had remarried to one of the most radical Puritan theologians of the day and relocated to Amsterdam with the Brethren. Her sin was a taste for fine clothes and jewelry, which flew in the face of the sect's dress code; the Puritan version of the burka was a formless black garment that left no skin exposed.

As a result of her "scandalous" behavior Boyes became the focus of a war of words. Her brother-in-law George wrote a vitriolic 290-page tract denouncing her as a whore and servant of the devil. Faced with an increasingly chaotic scene in Amsterdam, the Scrooby congregation and a number of Ancient Brethren members decamped to Leiden, where they settled in Stincksteeg ("Stink Alley"), the poorest part of the city.

Eventually the group managed to pool its resources and establish a base in Leiden, with a meeting house and a dozen buildings on Choir Alley, which survives today as Vicus Choralis. The band also set up a clandestine printing press to produce pamphlets critical of England that were deemed seditious by England's ambassador in Holland. With the help of the Dutch authorities, the Pilgrim press was shut down and Brewster was forced into hiding with the rest of the Leiden group.

Two years later they made their way across the Atlantic. Their attitudes toward sex, God and the Bible would become the cultural DNA of the United States. Today—at a time when fanatics are seeking to turn back the clock of history, when twice as many Americans are said to believe in the devil as in Darwin's theory of evolution and when the most powerful nation on earth has a president described by an evangelical preacher as a "messianic American Calvinist"—it is worth looking over our shoulder at the fanatics who fled for the American coast in 1620.

Worrall is the author of Pilgrims: The True Story of the Englishmen Who Founded America.



By Cameron McPherson Smith and Charles Sullivan

1. IT'S ONLY A THEORY

To many people the word *theory* means a hunch or guess. The Cobb County School District near Atlanta had this in mind when it tried to put stickers that read, **EVOLUTION IS A THEORY, NOT A FACT**, on biology textbooks. But a hunch or guess that needs investigation is known as a *hypothesis*. A hypothesis becomes a theory only when overwhelming evidence supports it. The theory becomes stronger as it accounts for more facts and observations. The theory of gravity works well to explain why objects fall to earth and why planets orbit the sun. Similarly the theory of evolution does a fine job of explaining both the fossil record and the genetic similarities and differences between species. Evolutionary theory is supported in great measure by three observable processes: replication, that is, reproduction; variation, which refers to the genetic changes that make offspring different from their parents; and selection, which describes how better-adapted offspring tend to survive and pass on their genes.

Some people confuse evolutionary theory with Lamarckism, named for Jean-Baptiste de Monet de Lamarck (1744–1829), who argued that characteristics acquired during an individual's lifespan could be passed on to the next generation. As an example,

he suggested that giraffes developed their long necks over a few generations as they stretched to reach higher foliage. But such characteristics are not passed on. A bodybuilder does not have children with greater muscle mass. Modern evolutionary theory says that some ancestors of giraffes acquired slightly longer necks through mutation. Because these animals could reach more food, they tended to be healthier, to live longer and to have a better chance at mating and passing on their long-neck genes.



Who's your daddy?

2. THE LADDER OF PROGRESS

Evolution is commonly imagined as a ladder that over time climbs toward higher and higher stages of life, culminating in modern humans. Evolution does involve long-term changes, but these changes are unpredictable. Beneficial genetic changes tend to be passed on to offspring, and new species appear when many such changes have accumulated. However, complex species aren't "more evolved" than simpler species, especially since complexity doesn't necessarily guarantee survival. If an environment changes drastically, such as after a meteorite impact, we can't assume that a more complex species (e.g., humans) would survive while a simpler species (e.g., cockroaches) would die off. What matters is whether species are

sufficiently adapted to their environment to survive. That's why a bush depicts the evolutionary process better than a ladder. The branches can grow in any direction, and new limbs that sprout from existing branches aren't considered more advanced, just as a younger species that branches off an older one isn't more evolved.

3. ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVE

Television producers often present the natural world as the ultimate reality show—a vast, bloody battlefield where the strong vanquish the weak. But the strongest aren't the ones who survive. The fittest are. Each organism's environment includes an array of pressures, such as food scarcity, any of which may be as lethal as a predator. In fact, in the animal world we see more bluffing than actual fighting among members of the same species. Bluffing can be just as effective as physical prowess, and it's safer. Since fitness can be measured in many ways, and because selective pressures change unpredictably, adaptability and versatility can be more useful than size or strength.

4. PEOPLE DESCEND FROM APES

One of Darwin's fiercest critics, Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, once asked whether Darwin descended from monkeys through his grandfather's or grandmother's family. But evolution has never claimed that

humans come from monkeys or apes: It's not possible, since they're still here with us. But we are related. Among the animals, we're mammals, and among the mammals, we're primates. We share characteristics—such as relatively large brains, reliance on vision and highly dexterous hands—with about 200 other primate species. No rational person would dispute this.

Evolution holds that we have a common ancestor with monkeys, specifically with chimpanzees. Multiple lines of anatomical, fossil and DNA evidence make this relationship equally indisputable. The evidence indicates that about 6 million years ago, a chimpanzee-like group lived in the forested regions of central Africa. When its habitat began to dry and fragment, some members remained largely tree dwellers; these were the ancestors of modern chimps. But others adapted to life on the mostly treeless savannah. These were the hominids, distinguished by bipedalism—walking habitually on two legs—and they were our ancestors. This also explains why the idea of a missing link is a fallacy. Life is not arranged as a series of links but as a continuum. Because species are not fixed, it can be difficult to know where one ends and another begins.

*McPherson Smith, an anthropologist at Portland State University, and Sullivan, a writer, are co-authors of *The Top Ten Myths About Evolution*.*

MARGINALIA



FROM AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT issued this past fall by military spokesperson Kim Waldron of the U.S. Army Forces Command at Fort McPherson, Georgia on sending openly gay service members into combat: "The bottom line is some people are using sexual orientation to avoid deployment. So in this case, with the Reserve and Guard forces, if a soldier 'tells,' they still have to go to war, and the homosexual issue is postponed until they return to the U.S. and the unit is demobilized."

FROM AN ADDRESS to the Connecticut Evening Dinner Club by Mark Twain in 1881: "If you don't want to work, become a reporter. That awful power, the public opinion of the nation, was created by a horde of self-complacent simpletons who failed at ditch digging and shoemaking and fetched up journalism on their way to the poorhouse."



FROM A SERMON by Sheik Ibrahim Mudeiris broadcast on the Palestinian Authority's TV station: "The day will come when we will rule America. The day will come when we rule Britain and the entire world—except for the Jews. The Jews will not enjoy a life of tranquility under our rule, because they are treacherous by nature, as they have been throughout history. The day will come when everything will be relieved of the Jews—even the stones and trees, which were harmed by them. Listen to the Prophet Muhammad, who tells you about the evil end that awaits the Jews. The stones and trees will want the Muslims to finish off every Jew."

FROM A CONGRESSIONAL Research Service report that lists the subjects of 38 secret sessions held by the U.S. Senate since 1929: impeachment trial deliberations for Judge Halsted Ritter (April 1936); naval policies on building battleships and aircraft carriers (June 1942); reports from the war fronts (October 1943); Nike-Zeus antimissile system (April 1963); Defense Department appropriations (December 1969); U.S. involvement in Laos (June 1971); Trident submarine program (September 1973); report from the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities on alleged assassination plots involving foreign leaders (November 1975); funding for neutron bombs (July 1977); proposed airplane sales to Egypt, Israel and Saudi Arabia (May 1978); nominations for assistant secretary of state (February 1983); Nicaragua (April 1983); most favored nation status for China (February 1992); chemical-weapons convention (April 1997); impeachment trial

(continued on page 41)

THE 2 MINUTE DRILL

ORIGINS OF LIFE

QUESTIONS FOR HUGH ROSS

*Hugh Ross is the director of research and president of Reasons to Believe and co-author of *Who Was Adam?**

You're an evangelical minister with degrees in physics and astronomy. What is your take on Darwin's theory?

While natural processes may account for small changes in certain life-forms, I

believe that only supernatural intervention accounts for the larger changes and the origin of life. The timescale and sequence of the fossil record are in perfect accord with the book of Genesis. The only interpretation of the days of creation that is consistent with all 20 accounts in the Bible is that God created over six epochs and then stopped after creating Adam and Eve. *A literal Adam and Eve?*

Yes, and recent mitochondrial DNA and Y-chromosome anal-



ysis supports the conclusion that humanity is descended from one man and one woman who lived about 50,000 years ago. *Can you run down the various schools of creationist thought?*

Our position is known as day-age creationism. Young-earth creationists believe the universe is less than 10,000 years old.

Theistic evolutionists believe God has intervened only once or twice and only through the laws of physics, which he set up. Intelligent-design theorists say there is no need to identify the designer or the timescale. *What should students be told about the origins of life?*

We should teach the most scientifically credible models. I don't want certain Christian models such as young-earth creationism to be taught, because they are provably false, both biblically and scientifically.

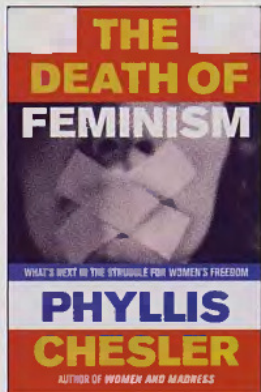
READER RESPONSE

VEILED CRITICISM

As Phyllis Chesler notes in "Gender Apartheid" (November), the widespread ignorance about Islam, Muslim women and Arab culture breeds provincial attacks on women, academics and political freedom. My recent book, *Veil: Modesty, Privacy and Resistance*, describes the strength Arab and Muslim culture gives women. It demonstrates the various meanings of veiling and its role in communicating social status and resisting foreign occupation. Many Muslim women choose to cover their bodies as a sign of respectability and personal piety and as a way to publicly assert their identity. Some women explicitly link choosing to veil with becoming liberated; they decide who should or should not see their bodies. Arrogantly insisting on interventionism puts feminism in bed with racist inequalities.

Fadwa El Guindi
University of Southern California
Los Angeles, California

Hats off to Chesler for writing such a superb article. It's good to see a woman stand up for the United States, the rational values and goals that many (if not most) Americans espouse and the large degree of freedom and liberty we possess and advocate.



Islamic terrorists are indeed our enemy, as they are the enemy of anyone who cherishes freedom and individuality. As our enemy they should be fought, not supported, validated or even passively ignored.

Ben Everhart
Scottsburg, Indiana

If Islamic women wish to cover their heads or faces, let them do what they want—even if they live in France.

Darwin Mani
Los Angeles, California

I want to give Chesler a huge hug and kiss for again raising the problem of violence against women in the name of Islam, a religion that has mistreated

females for thousands of years. That women are able to vote in Iraq is a triumph for women everywhere.

Chad Johnson
Montrose, Minnesota



Bienvenue à Paris: Muslim riots last fall.

The worst violations of women's rights in the Middle East occur in Saudi Arabia, which is an important U.S. ally. Similarly, when Kuwait was invaded, George H.W. Bush was there to restore its radical Islam. How can any feminist support policies that protect these regimes?

Khalid Rosenbaum
Silver Spring, Maryland

Chesler's discussion of feminism and jihad fails to acknowledge that both parties could be wrong. That the Islamic terrorists are evil does not make the American government good.

Saskia Hesselink
Iowa City, Iowa

GERMANISTAN

Your article about immigrant populations in Europe ("Welcome to Eurabia," November) really hit home. I live in Germany because my husband is in the Army. We are repeatedly told that Turks hate Americans and that we should stay away from Turkish neighborhoods. This makes something as seemingly simple as taking a cab complicated and potentially dangerous because many taxi drivers are Turks.

Michele Milford
Wiesbaden, Germany

Over the years I have found *PLAYBOY* to be quite evenhanded in dealing with religious issues. In keeping with its philosophy, the magazine debunks myths that sustain most of the world's religions, but I do not remember it alerting readers to the menace of any particular

set of beliefs. *PLAYBOY*'s live-and-let-live tone is what has made me a longtime subscriber. So I was blindsided by the shrill tone and outlandish conclusions about Muslims and the impact of one fanatical Islamist in the Netherlands ("The Future of Europe," November).

Andy Bras
Victoria, British Columbia

PHILLY IN FLAMES

In your May article about the 1985 police bombing of our MOVE family ("Philly in Flames: A Government Raid Revisited"), you write that "the group's aberrant sanitation policies and ranting made it a menace to those unfortunate enough to live nearby" and that "MOVE ruined the quality of life of those around it." These comments attempt to justify the murder of our family. Where is the sense in bombing and burning down a neighborhood out of concern for protecting it? The government's attitude toward compensating Osage Avenue residents—and more recently its attitude toward the people in New Orleans—proves just how little it cares about the plight of blacks in this country. Yet readers are expected to accept this nonsense as justification for murdering our family. It is not MOVE that has ruined the quality of life. How can you overlook government-sanctioned corporations that pour tons of poison into our water, air and soil? MOVE is not responsible for the children poi-



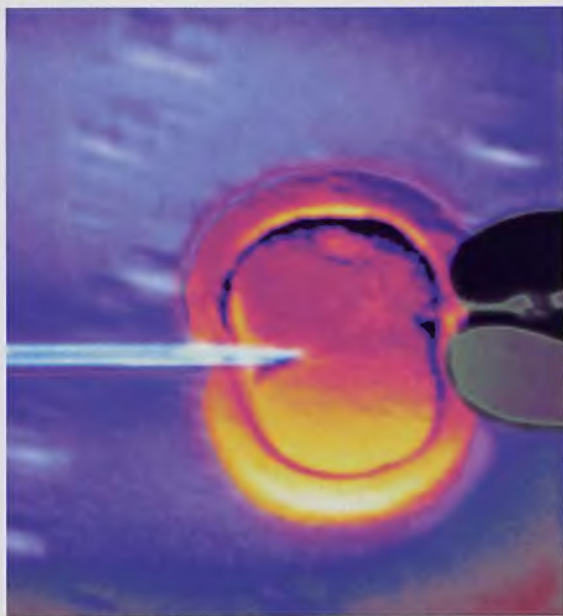
Brotherly love gone bad.

soned in Toms River, New Jersey or Love Canal, New York. MOVE doesn't spray food with poisons called pesticides, which give people cancer. Government-sanctioned corporations do.

Ramona Africa
The MOVE Organization
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

E-mail: letters.playboy.com. Or write: 730 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10019.

NEWSFRONT



Freedom Fry

INDIANAPOLIS—This past October, State Senator Patricia Miller, a Republican, proposed a law that would criminalize any medically assisted pregnancy (such as artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization and donor eggs) undertaken without a government-issued certificate. To qualify for a certificate, potential parents would have to meet state adoption requirements, which in Indiana stipulate that they be married and that they submit a "description of the family lifestyle," including their "participation in faith-based or church activities." Single parents and unmarried couples would be barred from certification. Various prior felony convictions would also disqualify applicants, among them any weapon or drug convictions and assisting suicide. The bill was withdrawn before a committee vote on it was to be held.

The Vagina Ideologues

PORTLAND, OREGON—Albertsons, an Idaho-based chain of 2,500 supermarkets with a strong presence in the Pacific Northwest, pulled the October issue of *Seventeen* magazine from all of its stores. The chain's corporate office said in a statement that it made the decision after receiving customer complaints about an article called "Vagina 101." The piece discusses hygiene (such as whether to trim pubic hair, to which the article says no) and anatomical norms. It also features an annotated diagram—under the headline *OWNER'S MANUAL*—indicating the location and function of the clitoris, labia majora, labia minora, hymen and anus.

Mourning Wood

BERLIN—The self-described sexual environmental fighters of Fuck for Forest have been raising eyebrows, and funds, since they presented a series of charity concerts featuring onstage sex. "Try to live like animals," the group urges on its website, "having sex with no shame. Just being a part of nature, celebrating life." In trying to funnel money to programmatic organizations, the group hit on the idea of donating some of its "porn aid," as it refers to its activities, to the WWF, the advocacy group formerly known as the World Wildlife Fund. The WWF rejected FFF's offer, stating in a letter, "I am sorry to inform you that my colleagues in the department that is responsible for communication



with companies and businesses have informed me that they have decided not to accept your offer. The reason for this decision is that our organization has a policy that states that we cannot connect our brand name and logo to certain sectors of industry. Your sector, unfortunately, is one of these."

There's No Place Like Home

TOPEKA—The Kansas Supreme Court ruled that the vastly different state penalties imposed for homosexual and heterosexual acts are impermissible under the U.S. Constitution's equal-protection clause. The decision will mean the release from prison of Matthew Limon, who as an 18-year-old high school student was convicted in 2000 of criminal sodomy after having consensual oral sex with a 14-year-old male classmate. A Kansas law known as the Romeo and Juliet statute had limited penalties for older teens who engaged in sex acts with younger teens—but only if the teens were of the opposite sex. If Limon had been with a female classmate, his potential jail time would have been capped at 15 months. Instead he was sentenced to 17 years in prison.

Period Peace

NEPAL—In western sections of this Himalayan nation, it is common for families to banish women to cow barns for four days during their monthly menstruation. In a decision hailed by Nepalese women's rights activists, the country's supreme court has demanded that the government characterize the practice as evil and that it immediately initiate programs to stop it.

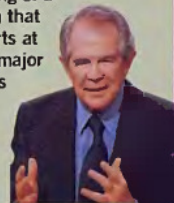
MARGINALIA

(continued from page 39)

procedures for President Clinton (January 1999); impeachment trial deliberations for President Clinton (February 1999).

FROM A COFFEE CUP removed from use by the Starbucks at Baylor University, one of a series of cups printed with quotations from literary figures. This one is from novelist Armistead Maupin: "My only regret about being gay is that I repressed it so long. I surrendered my youth to the people I feared when I could have been out there loving someone. Don't make that mistake yourself. Life's too damn short."

FROM AN ARTICLE by Chris Hedges in *Harper's Magazine*: "I can't help but recall the words of my ethics professor at Harvard Divinity School, Dr. James Luther Adams, who told us that when we were his age, and he was then close to 80, we would all be fighting the 'Christian fascists.' He gave us that warning 25 years ago, when Pat Robertson and other prominent evangelists began speaking of a new political religion that would direct its efforts at taking control of all major American institutions so as to transform the United States into a global Christian empire. At the time it was hard to take such fantastic rhetoric seriously. But fascism, Adams warned, would not return wearing swastikas and brown shirts. Its ideological inheritors would cloak themselves in the language of the Bible; they would come carrying crosses and chanting the pledge of allegiance."



FROM A FEDERAL INDICTMENT:

"I, Lewis Libby, also known as Scooter Libby, defendant herein, having taken an oath to testify truthfully in a proceeding before a grand jury of the United States, knowingly made a false material declaration, in that he gave the following testimony regarding his conversations with reporters concerning the employment of Joseph Wilson's wife by the CIA: Q: And let me ask you this directly. Did the fact that you knew that the law—the law as to whether a crime was committed—could turn on where you learned the information from affect your account for the FBI, when you told them that you were telling reporters Wilson's wife worked at the CIA but your source was a reporter rather than the vice president? A: No, it's a fact. It was a fact. That's what I told the reporters.

Q: And you're certain as you sit here today that every reporter you told that Wilson's wife worked at the CIA, you sourced it back to other reporters? A: Yes, sir, because it was important for what I was saying and because it was—that's what—that's how I did it."



THE NEW TEN COMMANDMENTS

MORALITY IS BEST INFORMED BY UNIVERSAL
VALUES, NOT BY RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

BY BERNARD GERT

Many people believe the Ten Commandments are a universal moral guide to be displayed in classrooms and courthouses. But universal morality can't come from a religion, because no religion is universally practiced. Many people learn about morality from their religion, which may explain why they think morality depends on religion. But people can be moral without believing in a higher power, and a moral guide that everyone knows and accepts serves societies better than one known and accepted only by followers of a particular religion.

To provide such a guide, I formulated 10 new commandments more suitable for display than the biblical version:

1. Do not kill.
2. Do not cause pain.
3. Do not disable.
4. Do not deprive of freedom.
5. Do not deprive of pleasure.
6. Do not deceive.
7. Keep your promises.
8. Do not cheat.
9. Obey the law.
10. Do your duty (i.e., what is required by your job, social role or special circumstances).

Breaking the first five rules automatically results in someone being harmed. Breaking the second five

increases the chances of someone being harmed. It isn't always immoral to break one of these rules; you may kill in self-defense or lie to save an innocent life. But you should break a rule only if you would be willing to allow everyone to break the rule in the same circumstances. Particular religions may prohibit gay sex or the use of contraceptives, for example, but these acts do not harm anyone and so

slaves. The English translation is "servant," "manservant" or "maid-servant," but in context the Hebrew or Aramaic clearly means slave. One reason behind the commandment against work on the Sabbath is "so thy slaves shall rest as well as thou." Although this commandment requires more humane treatment of slaves, slavery—no matter how humane—has no place in a universal moral code.

Another problem with taking the Ten Commandments as moral law is that it suggests people will behave morally only if threatened with punishment. That reflects a sophomoric view that no one ever acts contrary to his or her own self-interest for the benefit of others. But caring people often make sacrifices to help others without thinking about



Nobody objects to the need for a moral code, but the Bible is no foundation for it.

are not immoral. Several biblical commandments, such as not working on the Sabbath or not bowing down to graven images, have nothing to do with being moral; they do not prohibit behavior that harms other people. The Ten Commandments not only don't prohibit slavery, they explicitly accept it. The commandment not to covet thy neighbor's wife continues by proscribing coveting thy neighbor's

themselves at all.

If you believe that morality can arise only out of religion, then you must also believe that whatever your religion tells you to do is the moral thing to do. That is a dangerous view indeed.

Gert is a professor of philosophy at Dartmouth College and the author of Common Morality: Deciding What to Do.

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARCHIVE

In 1975 Corky Ra founded the Summum religion in Salt Lake City, where its followers use a pyramid as their headquarters. The group teaches seven types of meditation, including sexual ecstasy, and believes Moses delivered the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai for the masses but reserved another set of laws, the Seven Aphorisms, for select believers. The Summums have sued Salt Lake County and three Utah cities for publicly displaying the Ten Commandments, demanding not that they be removed but that the aphorisms be shown with them. Says Ra, "We want to tell the whole story."



The Seven Aphorisms

1. All is mind.
2. As above, so below.
3. Nothing rests.
4. Everything is dual.
5. Everything flows out and in.
6. Every cause has its effect.
7. Gender is in everything.

PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: AL FRANKEN

A candid conversation with the next senator from Minnesota (maybe) about his enemies on the right and what it's like doing stand-up at Abu Ghraib

In a world of talk radio in which Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity and Bill O'Reilly are kings, it's slightly surprising to see the welcome Al Franken gets at the National Association of Broadcasters radio convention in Philadelphia. As he makes his way through the hotel lobby he's stopped by a small mob of radio station executives who call his name and reach to shake his hand. Soon members of the hotel's staff join the crowd. A relative newcomer to radio, Franken is one of the rare liberals on the air, and he's become the public face of Air America Radio, a left-leaning network that broadcasts his show every afternoon. Conservatives may still dominate talk radio, but it's clear that Franken has become a force to be taken seriously.

Of course, Franken arrives with some solid credentials: several humorous political best-sellers and 15 years at Saturday Night Live. Air America has leveraged Franken's popularity to overcome a bumpy financial start and grow from a handful of stations in spring 2004 to a network of more than 70 affiliates today. He says he was initially reluctant to host a show but now feels quite comfortable during his daily three hours behind the microphone.

Franken may have been hesitant to enter political talk radio, but the Minneapolis native makes no bones about describing

himself as a political junkie. He traces his liberal politics to his father, a Republican who switched parties over what he saw as the GOP's resistance to the civil rights movement.

The hours Franken and his father spent watching comedians on television also influenced his career choice. After four years at Harvard and a dues-paying stint as a starving comic, Franken and his longtime partner Tom Davis were hired by Saturday Night Live producer Lorne Michaels before the show even premiered. Franken would later create and perform the character Stuart Smalley, a self-help guru. A Stuart Smalley book and movie followed. Franken is careful to note that he was never an SNL cast member, only a writer and occasional "featured player." Modesty may not be his strongest suit, though. On Saturday Night Live he proclaimed the 1980s the Al Franken Decade and returned in late 1999 to announce the beginning of the Al Franken Millennium.

Early in his SNL days, his extracurricular activities included cadging a ride on the press bus following Ronald Reagan in 1976 and heckling the Gipper at a campaign rally. But Franken's career as a political force really began with his books *Rush Limbaugh Is a Big Fat Idiot* and *Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them*, both of which made the best-

seller lists. Franken credits a lawsuit, *Fox v. Franken*, reportedly inspired by Bill O'Reilly himself, with generating an enormous amount of publicity for the second book.

His current book, *The Truth (With Jokes)*, dissects the Republican agenda, prescribes a Democratic one and offers a view of America from the perspective of Al Franken, grandfather and U.S. senator. (Yes, it's told from the future.)

Franken recently moved his family to Minnesota amid reports that he's seriously considering the political junkie's ultimate transformation by running for a Senate seat. Will he or won't he? Franken, 54, will acknowledge only this: "I'm thinking. I'm thinking."

Contributing Editor Warren Kalbacker squared off with Franken for hours across the comic's dining room table while Franken's Labrador relaxed underneath. "He is a thoughtful host," Kalbacker reports. "He's intense and obviously opinionated. He's also physical. He interrupted our sessions a couple of times to wrestle his huge retriever into a headlock."

PLAYBOY: On Saturday Night Live at the turn of the century you announced the beginning of the Al Franken Millennium. How's it going so far?

FRANKEN: Wait a minute. I've read the



"Wait a minute. I've read the Playboy Interview for years, and I never realized that the interviewee got to sleep with that month's Playmate. After some hesitation, my wife, Franni, thought it would be good publicity for my latest book."



"I can't believe what has happened to our country. We have a Republican administration that has taken us from huge budget surpluses to record-setting debt. We have gone to war. Our government is rife with corruption."



"A lot of this culture war is absolute myth. Bill O'Reilly talks about his traditional values versus what he calls left-wing secular values. He has traditional values? He's a married man engaging in phone sex with a female employee."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID ROSE

Playboy Interview for years, and I never realized that the interviewee got to sleep with that month's Playmate. I don't know why you haven't told your readers, but it's great. After some hesitation, my wife, Franni, thought it would be good publicity for my latest book. This month's Playmate is young, but that bothered me for just a minute. Now fire away.

PLAYBOY: Your jokes are occasionally misunderstood, aren't they?

FRANKEN: Now that I've gotten as political as I have, my jokes are deliberately misunderstood. I've become a lightning rod for the right. "Al Franken claims he slept with that month's Playmate," says National Review Online writer Byron York." For the record, I didn't sleep with this month's Playmate.

PLAYBOY: How about the Al Franken Millennium?

FRANKEN: It's going well. My kids are great. My wife and I still tolerate each other. But I can't believe what has happened to our country. We have a Republican administration that in five years has taken us from huge budget surpluses to record-setting debt. We have gone to war. The profiteering going on in Iraq is tragic. That country is a free-fraud zone. Harry Truman called war profiteering treason. It's causing the deaths of our troops. Our government is rife with corruption. Cronyism marked our tragically slow response to Hurricane Katrina.

PLAYBOY: Would you say that Katrina marked some sort of turning point in the Bush administration?

FRANKEN: It was a turning point in Bush's presidency because it popped the myth that his administration is competent. We lost Chicago in a fire and San Francisco in an earthquake, but Bush is the first guy who lost a city in the age of AccuWeather. He bears responsibility for downgrading FEMA and using it as a dumping ground for cronies, placing Michael Brown as director. I've been railing about this administration's incompetence for a long time.

PLAYBOY: You've certainly railed against Karl Rove, calling him a treasonous snake.

FRANKEN: And I've used the term *turd blossom* to report what the president calls Rove. That's his nickname. Google *turd blossom* and you'll see. Part of the reason the administration did such a bad job last summer was that Rove's guiding hand was not there. Once Rove was identified as outing a CIA agent and lying about it, I think he knew he was in trouble and became distracted. And I know he had a kidney stone during a key period. Maybe Rove has lost it. Or maybe he just made a couple of bad

calls. But whether Rove is a genius or a fool, he's a very bad guy.

PLAYBOY: You've committed almost two years to talk radio and recently moved the show to your hometown of Minneapolis. Do you find your daily three hours in front of the microphone more congenial now than when you started out?

FRANKEN: I look forward to being on the air every day. At first I signed up for one year because I didn't know if I'd like it. I wanted to get back to the Al Franken All-Girl Orchestra. But having written *Lies and the Lying Liars*, I felt there was this huge need. There was no liberal talk radio. Talk radio was right-wing.

PLAYBOY: Was Rush Limbaugh responsible for the growth of talk radio?



I like "Weekend Update" and Tina Fey. I'm disappointed in some of their political stuff. It's superficial.

FRANKEN: Absolutely. He deserves his props for that and nothing else. After the Fairness Doctrine fell, he spawned a number of conservative imitators such as Oliver North and G. Gordon Liddy. Lots of right-wing talk-radio stations popped up all over the country. That's why Air America had to create a day of programming and become a network with affiliates.

PLAYBOY: Political talk radio tends to fill the airwaves with indignation.

FRANKEN: Right-wing radio, especially during the Clinton years, was totally outraged. Now it gets outraged at our being angry. I get angry once in a while, but I don't apologize for getting angry at things like war profiteering. The right has this caricature of my being palsied by

my anger at Bush. Bill O'Reilly accused me of being like Goebbels and then denied it. O'Reilly will say Air America hates America, but it's especially irritating when the mainstream media writes about Limbaugh conservatives and Franken liberals as if there's an equivalence. I do the opposite of what he does. We tell the truth on the show. Months ago Limbaugh talked about the minimum wage, and he said 75 percent of all Americans earning minimum wage are teenagers in their first job. My researcher called the Bureau of Labor Statistics and found that 60 percent of Americans earning minimum wage are the age of 20 and older. Limbaugh gets his labor statistics from the Bureau of Limbaugh's Ass. He

pulled that stat out of his ass. It went out his ass and into his mouth, then into the microphone, over the airwaves and into the brains of dittoheads, and they believed it.

PLAYBOY: The media gave the Bush administration a tough time in Katrina's aftermath. Did you detect any permanent change in journalists' attitudes toward the president?

FRANKEN: No, not at all. There was no enemy in the Katrina coverage. In covering Iraq, journalists' attitudes were governed by the fear of being labeled unpatriotic. If you are an American correspondent embedded with our troops, you can't help but love them. The mainstream press did a disgraceful job reporting the lead-up to the war on weapons of mass destruction and Iraq's links to Al Qaeda. The sources for *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* were the highest-level administration officials, and those papers' reporting was terrible because they believed those sources. They don't want to be critical, because they don't want to lose access. I told a joke at a journalists' dinner where Floyd Abrams, who defended me in

Fox v. Franken, was presented with an award. Matt Cooper from *Time* and Judith Miller of *The New York Times*, who were both his clients, were there. This was just before Miller went to prison. I said how humbling it was to be there in front of two such courageous journalists, and don't worry, Judith, maybe you'll find some WMDs in your cell. Boy, that did not go over well. Did I tell that joke to the wrong group. The Knight Ridder papers, which don't have access to the top, were talking to midlevel people about the debates within the intelligence community. Knight Ridder wrote much more penetratingly about the aluminum tubes that couldn't be used for centrifuging uranium and about the reliability of sources, many of

whom were Iraqi exiles who had a vested interest in our invading.

PLAYBOY: Yet you don't advocate a quick withdrawal from Iraq.

FRANKEN: I'm not for pulling out of Iraq right now. I don't know if I'm right on that. The stakes are so high because of the tremendous carnage, not just to our soldiers and Marines but also to the people of Iraq. I believed Colin Powell's UN speech. Bush told us that Saddam Hussein had nuclear holy warriors who would pass a bomb to Al Qaeda, and you'd think Al Qaeda would have no qualms about using a nuclear weapon. What did it for me was when Powell said the anodized coating on aluminum tubes could be used to centrifuge weapons-grade uranium. Aha! That had to be it! If anodized coating has nothing to do with centrifuging uranium, somebody would speak up and say that's bullshit. No one did. Finally, *The Washington Post* talked to the grandfather of centrifuging uranium, in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and he said you couldn't centrifuge uranium with those small tubes. And even if you could, he said, the first thing you'd have to do is mill off all the anodized coating. I was fooled. But we were in Baghdad by that time.

PLAYBOY: Has the media gone soft?

FRANKEN: The media is biased toward making a profit, which means spending less money, which means less investigative reporting, which in turn means more celebrity reporting. On cable TV it means putting on two talking heads who are given a couple of articles in the green room. They read them and then go out and talk about school vouchers. They don't know anything.

PLAYBOY: Do Washington reporters socialize too much with their sources?

FRANKEN: I've done the White House Correspondents' Association dinner twice. Plenty of people in the room dislike each other, and that's nothing new in Washington. The first time I worked the dinner was in 1994. Al Gore was vice president, and I was sitting next to Tipper. I said to her, "I have a joke about your husband that my instinct tells me is over the line." "What's the joke?" she asked. I told her, "Vice President Gore reaffirmed his commitment to the environment today when he announced a new policy regarding the stick up his butt. Instead of replacing the stick every day as he does now, he will keep the same stick up there throughout the rest of the administration. This will save an entire rain forest." She told me to go with my instinct, so I didn't do the joke. But I love doing these dinners. The terrible part about it is people's desire to be offended in order to have an excuse to attack someone, especially someone like me, who has a known political bias. Irony is a dangerous tool if you're a comedian interested in politics, because what you say is taken totally out of context. I refuse to stop using irony. It doesn't matter where I

SAME CHAT, DIFFERENT DAY

Talk radio's airhead hall of fame



Rush Limbaugh

Shtick: Pompous ideology will not stand idly by as elitist liberals ruin America. **Listen to Limbaugh long enough and you'll:** realize your mother is an envirowacko feminazi. **Whoops:** Resigned from ESPN gig as NFL analyst for saying Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb is hyped because he's black. **Say what?** His slogan is "Excellence in Broadcasting."



Michael Savage

Shtick: Conservative talk radio's enfant terrible; bashes "Bush-bats" Limbaugh and Hannity in addition to liberals. **Listen to Savage long enough and you'll:** get very confused. **Whoops:** On MSNBC, suggested a "sodomite" should "get AIDS and die"; he was fired immediately. **Say what?** Wrote books under given name (Weiner) about herbal medicine and homeopathy.



Laura Schlessinger

Shtick: Holier-than-thou therapist doles out cruel advice to people stupid enough to call in. **Listen to Schlessinger long enough and you'll:** feel worse about humanity but better about yourself. **Whoops:** Prudery took a hit when nude photos of her surfaced on the Internet. **Say what?** She is not a psychologist or licensed M.D.; she has a Ph.D. in physiology.



Sean Hannity

Shtick: Conservative radio's schoolyard bully. **Listen to Hannity long enough and you'll:** believe the Iraq war was a really good idea. **Whoops:** He compared the Abu Ghraib torture photos to the fake documents that scandalized CBS, suggesting that they were "another DNC plot." **Say what?** He has fewer listeners than Limbaugh but more than Howard Stern.



Art Bell

Shtick: The truth is out there, and only Bell is crazy enough to tell it. **Listen to Bell long enough and you'll:** make a tinfoil hat to protect your brain from alien control. **Whoops:** His suggestion that a UFO was following the Hale-Bopp comet may have infamed the Heaven's Gate cult. **Say what?** Bell told Larry King, "I don't think you could call me a 'believer.'"



Tom Leykis

Shtick: Gender oppression of men must end! **Listen to Leykis long enough and you'll:** get "more tail for less money." **Whoops:** Revealing the name of the 19-year-old who accused Kobe Bryant of rape wasn't seen as the classiest of moves. **Say what?** Leykis is a hard-core oenophile, as demonstrated by his other show, *The Tasting Room*, which is all hairy-toity wine talk.

do it anymore, because they're watching me. A while ago I told this joke: "John McCain is a courageous guy taking on the tobacco lobby, taking on campaign finance reform. But I don't get this war hero thing. He just sat out the war. Anybody can get captured. Isn't the idea to capture the other guy?" It got big laughs. The next day's *Washington Times* quoted it as if it weren't ironic. It said I was attacking McCain and didn't realize that he had been a prisoner for five and a half years and had been tortured in the Hanoi Hilton.

PLAYBOY: When you make jokes like that, your critics start talking about the so-called culture war.

FRANKEN: A lot of this culture war is absolute myth. Bill O'Reilly talks about his traditional values versus what he calls left-wing secular values. He has traditional values? He's a married man engaging in phone sex with a female employee who doesn't want it and has asked him to stop. Ann Coulter, in her book *Slander*, talked about the left's Marquis de Sade lifestyle. I've been married for 30 years, and Coulter is in her mid-40s, hasn't been married, dresses in miniskirts and looks slightly like a dominatrix. Who's she kidding? At my 25-year Harvard reunion there was a survey, and one of the questions was "Are you still married to your first spouse?" About 77 percent of my class said yes. It was well above the national average for 47-year-olds. We're a socially conservative group.

PLAYBOY: You frequently clash with Laura Ingraham as well as with Coulter. What do you think of them?

FRANKEN: Coulter writes books and an online column that she can't get syndicated in newspapers. She's made a career out of being outrageous. She's hideous. Last year's *Time* magazine cover story on her was ridiculous because it was unbelievably nice to her. The cover photo was unfair; there are ways to make her good-looking. I called the managing editor of *Time* and told him it should have been the exact opposite—put somebody pretty on the cover and then write the real article on her. It should be absolutely scathing. Ingraham is pretty hideous too. I've debated both of them and haven't been impressed with either. One debate was on C-SPAN. It was Eric Alterman and I against Tucker Carlson and Ingraham, who said almost nothing. Carlson picked up the slack.

PLAYBOY: How is your relationship with Tucker Carlson? He claimed, "Liberals deride talk radio as the choice of morons, racists and tobacco chewers."

FRANKEN: They'll take any opportunity they can to portray liberals as elitist. Carlson was a good writer at *The Weekly Standard*. He was funny and smart when we did *Washington Journal* on C-SPAN. We've become estranged. He has a way of attacking people by saying they're not good to their staff. When he was on

a book tour and was asked about me, he said, "I can tell you one thing. He doesn't treat his staff well." I passed that on to Andy Barr, my assistant. We both laughed. Andy wrote him a note. Carlson has said it about a lot of people. Politicians never treat their staff well. Barney Frank doesn't treat his staff well.

PLAYBOY: You've accused Limbaugh of taking a crap on the ground and then raising dust to obscure the turd. Is he still the guy who pisses you off the most?

FRANKEN: Sean Hannity is the worst. He's completely humorless, a total hack. Hannity has no compunction at all about lying. O'Reilly and Limbaugh are sly. They have no interest in the truth. What Limbaugh will do is change something he said. That's kicking up the dust. It's about deliberately misleading people. O'Reilly does it on his TV show: Oh, is Bush's record on poverty not as good as Clinton's? Well, when Clinton was in midterm, the poverty level was 13 percent, whereas the level under Bush is only 12.7 percent. But the reason it is lower under Bush is that when Bush became president, the poverty level was

Hannity is the worst. He's completely humorless, a total hack. He has no compunction at all about lying. O'Reilly and Limbaugh are sly. They have no interest in the truth.

at its lowest point in years because of Clinton. O'Reilly delivers information that is technically true but deliberately misleading. Coulter does the same.

PLAYBOY: *Conversion*—almost in the religious sense—is a term we've occasionally heard on your broadcasts. You've teased Christy, a regular caller to the show, about converting her Republican boyfriend. You've noted that *Blinded by the Right* author David Brock crossed over as well.

FRANKEN: Christy dropped the boyfriend. I don't think that was my fault. As for Brock, he made an amazing conversion. He had been a right-wing hit man writing for *The American Spectator*. He was the author of the Troopergate piece that ultimately led to the president's impeachment; Brock named Paula Jones, and she instigated the sexual harassment suit that led to the Clinton deposition that was the basis for the impeachment. The right loved Brock. He then wrote a book on Hillary Clinton. Everyone was expecting a hatchet job, but he approached it as a journalist and came back with a look at her that

was pretty favorable. That incensed the right. Brock is gay, and that was fine with the right as long as he was doing its work. But soon he was on the outs. He went through a crisis of conscience. I don't know if it was about atoning, but he wrote *Blinded by the Right*, which exposes the right-wing smear media. We have him on the show to talk about the right's lying and smearing. Here's the irony: His *American Spectator* article led to Clinton's impeachment, yet I know that when Brock was starting his research center, he met with the Clintons to get help from their network of people. Talk about a guy who can forgive—that's Bill Clinton.

PLAYBOY: What do you think is Bill Clinton's biggest regret?

FRANKEN: I think Rwanda haunts him the most. We just let that slaughter happen. And I don't know how he can't regret Monica Lewinsky, because that changed history in such a way.

PLAYBOY: What's your take on former presidents Clinton and Bush getting together to raise funds for tsunami and hurricane relief?

FRANKEN: Smart. Good causes. My take is that it helps Clinton rehabilitate his image by appearing with George H.W., an ex-president who gained stature after the Clinton blow job as a president who didn't get a blow job.

PLAYBOY: You were a strong supporter of Clinton's, but he was hardly the most liberal Democrat.

FRANKEN: Liberal Democrats complained about his triangulating between the liberals and conservatives in Congress. He went down the middle. With the 1993 Deficit Reduction Act, Clinton did a good job of getting our deficit under control by changing our tax structure enough to give the markets confidence that we were actually going to address the deficit. He increased taxes on people at the top while beefing up the tax credit for those at the bottom. That set the stage for welfare reform. He passed the Brady Bill. He tried universal health care.

PLAYBOY: And universal health care never got off the ground.

FRANKEN: They made it more complicated than it had to be, which made it vulnerable to criticism. Hillary is brilliant, but she made mistakes there. That combined with the special interests that wanted to kill it. Talk about obstructionism. Bill Kristol basically sent out a memo to Republicans saying their job was to stop universal health care from happening. He didn't want Clinton to have this historic achievement. The thing I hate most about Washington is that people want to stop you from doing things just so you don't have the achievement.

PLAYBOY: What about George W. Bush's achievements?

FRANKEN: The Bush administration
(continued on page 128)



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THE TAKING OF SEX.COM

IT WAS THE BIGGEST SCAM IN INTERNET HISTORY,
THE CASE OF THE PURLOINED DIGITAL GOLD MINE
THAT SENT TWO MEN INTO AN 11-YEAR LEGAL
BRAWL OVER MONEY, POWER AND SEX



"That's him! Ohmigod, ohmigod, *ohmigod!*"

We were cruising the streets of Tijuana in August 2005, looking for a man named Stephen Michael Cohen, a fugitive from American justice, a lifelong thief and a silver-tongued con artist so gifted that even his victims and the lawmen who have pursued him for 30 years admire him.

The man shouting in a high-pitched voice was one of those victims—Gary Kremen, a 42-year-old millionaire who, 11 years ago, had been the mark in a bold and elaborate scheme in which Cohen took from him the most valuable domain name on the Internet, Sex.com. Kremen has been pursuing Cohen for more than a decade, first trying to get his property back, then seeking to enforce a federal order that would return to him \$65 million in lost proceeds from the website. In the process, Kremen spent almost everything he had—about \$5 million—on lawyers.

Hands on the wheel, head swiveling, face reddening, Kremen kept on shouting as he swerved to the curb. "Get out of the car!" he screeched. "Get out! Go talk to him!"

Kremen's eyes were wild. He hadn't seen Cohen face-to-face in more than four years, not since the day they had first met, at a legal deposition, and failed to settle their differences. Kremen wanted a confrontation but clearly didn't want any part of it himself. That was to be my job.

Across four lanes of Tijuana traffic, outside a black-glass office building and standing next to a soccer-mom-style Honda CR-V was a pasty guy in dumpy jeans and a Beverly Hills Polo Club T-shirt, carrying two cell phones on his hip. Cell phones, I already knew, were his weapon of choice.

BY
MICHAEL
GROSS

GARY KREMEN AT THE SAN DIEGO MANSION AWARDED HIM BY THE COURTS AS PARTIAL PAYMENT FOR THE THEFT OF SEX.COM.



"Steve Cohen?" I asked as I trotted up to him, notepad in one hand, the other outstretched. He seemed to flinch, and his eyes swept the street as he tentatively shook my hand. Walking into a cloud of his cologne, I studied the man who'd been avoiding me with elaborate lies. When we'd spoken a few days earlier, he'd claimed he was in Monte Carlo running a casino, extending credit to high rollers, getting his private Citation jet fueled up for a jaunt.

"Uh, what are you doing here?" he asked, struggling for composure. Cohen, 57, looked as unimpressive as a man can look and sounded very little like a canny international fugitive.

For the next 10 minutes I peppered him with questions, sure that I was safe because Kremen and a private investigator he had brought along were nearby in a Grand Cherokee. But then Cohen recovered and gradually nudged me into the building, guiding me into a cracked-leather chair in a dimly lit conference room in the office of his attorney, Gustavo Cortes Carbajal, known in Tijuana as El Sapo, the Toad.

The Toad's hand gripped my shoulder, his pockmarked face inches from mine. "*Mi casa es su casa*," he said. "Please don't steal anything." Cohen, the world-class thief, seemed to smirk too. The fear was gone, the color back in his face. The con man's vaunted confidence returned, and his words poured out in a honeyed flood. "I don't live here. I live in Europe," he said. "I'm normally in Europe. Tell Kremen you saw me. No, I'd appreciate it if you didn't. I don't want my whereabouts known to him. The days between Kremen and me are totally over. Kremen spends his life on this. I don't have the time and energy. If the Supreme Court rules in my favor, I'll give you the exclusive."

In the middle of his speech, I felt my cell phone vibrate with a text message from Kremen: COHEN SHOOTING IN BLACK BUILDING.

Jarred, confused and certain I'd hear nothing more of value from Cohen, I got out of there as fast as I could. Back in Kremen's Jeep, I asked what the message was all about.

"Just fucking with you," Kremen said.

When the history of the Internet is written, the taking of Sex.com will be one of its most entertaining chapters, not just because it was the biggest theft in Internet history but because the decadelong tragicomedy established a simple but vital legal principle: Internet domain names, unlike song titles but like songs, are property subject to conversion; in other words, they can be stolen. Open a property-law book. It's in there.

That such an important precedent arose from a legal spitball fight between two social misfits like Cohen and Kremen is but one of the ironies here. Aside from the law and the vast sums involved, the real story is the human one, with all the complexity and confusion that color relationships. This was the greatest duel ever fought on the world's newest lawless frontier, once upon a time out there in the ever-morphing ether of cyberspace, the ultimate morals-free zone.

Kremen and Cohen, white hat and black hat, turned out to be as similar as they are different, not just brilliant, pudgy nerds, not just multitasking, tech-obsessed, stay-up-all-night geeks with the ambition to make bags of money,



KING CON? STEPHEN MICHAEL COHEN IN 1966 AT VAN NUYS HIGH SCHOOL, IN CUSTODY IN SAN DIEGO IN 2005. ON THE STREETS OF TIJUANA WITH THE AUTHOR.

Yet one crucial difference remains: Kremen wants to win while playing by the rules. Cohen thinks flouting them makes life worth living.

Kremen doesn't look the part, but he's some kind of genius. Born in 1963, he grew up in Skokie, Illinois, "part geek," he says, "but definitely a hell-raiser." We're sitting in a conference room in Sex.com's vast, underpopulated office in San Francisco, after a staff meeting so full of techie jargon I've managed to understand only that the company sells clicks: When he wrested back control of the site in 2001, Kremen turned it into a Wal-Mart of porn, but the only products he offers are links. Each time a surfer clicks on one, the target website pays Sex.com a few cents from an escrow account. The amount the target agrees to pay, which is arrived at via a complex bidding system, determines how high on the page its link appears. When a customer types, say, "redhead blow job" on the Sex.com home page, the top position naturally costs the most. But don't search for violence, kiddie porn or bestiality. Kremen is like Wal-Mart in that way, too. He lists only what's relatively decent to look at. As a result he has gained an oxymoronic reputation as online porn's Mr. Clean, who neither produces nor distributes the stuff himself.

Part of his story is that he has been one of the good guys since he learned his lesson as a kid. "I hung out with this group of stoner, heavy metal, break-into-the-school-and-trash-things people," Kremen says. "We took all the money from the Coke machines. They called my parents, and they said, 'Put him in the jail cell for 10 minutes.' I became a good child."

His father was a driver's-ed instructor and ham radio operator; his mother taught accounting. It's appropriate, then, that Kremen studied science and dreamed of money, but during his years of studying and working he also developed a pent-up desire for kink. This somewhat explains the presence of B&D star Wilde, who is not just a Sex.com consultant but also Kremen's occasional chauffeur. Yet sex isn't his priority: When Wilde was late picking us up from the Oakland airport, he banished her to the backseat for the trip back to (continued on page 134)



"This is going to be a Valentine's Day you'll never forget...!"

KISSED BY THE TUSCAN SUN

Savor the rich flavors of beautiful Tuscany



By Jason Harper

At five o'clock on a July evening, a welcome breeze finally cuts the lazy heat. We're at the Dievole winery in the tiny village of Vagliagli, nestled in the lush hills outside Siena in Tuscany. Like something from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, this magical place exists beyond the reach of normal time. Nothing has changed here for centuries, and nothing likely will. Tourists rarely come to the Valley of Garlic, as the name translates, despite its location in popular Chianti. The meandering road from the city ends here. Vagliagli is its own destination.

We've come to this place to pay homage to its beauty—the wine, the countryside and the women. So far things are moving along splendidly. A farmer who works at the winery leads out a brilliant white horse, his own, and looks up shyly at the models—Lucia, Monika, Laura and Ida. Photographer Guido Argentini begins snapping shots of Monika with the horse, who

has taken a liking to her. Then it's off to the grape fields, where Lucia basks in the sun. Her natural beauty complements the vines, which are heavy with clusters of juicy grapes mere months from the harvest. After that we call it a day. No one works too hard here. The name of the winery translates to "God wants." It is very much what we want as well.

"This winery was once purchased for three chickens, two loaves of bread and a silver coin," says Argentini's charismatic cousin Dario Castagno. He would know: He not only lives in Vagliagli, he's a longtime tour guide in Tuscany, suffering 16 years of tourists' questions and comments with humor. (A favorite: "Italians really don't know how to cook Italian food.") He's even written a book about his experiences, *Too Much Tuscan Sun*, a play on the title of the best-selling book by Frances Mayes. Castagno has plenty of funny stories about Yanks stumbling around the Old World, most of them giddy and









wide-eyed. Americans are in the midst of a full-blown love affair with Italy—Tuscany in particular. Milan is crowded with beautiful women, and you'll never lack for entertainment in the Vespa-buzzing madness of Rome. But one big city ultimately resembles another; to truly understand a place, you must go where you can dig your toes into the soil.

The region of Tuscany lies in central Italy, bounded by the Tyrrhenian and Ligurian seas to the west and sleepy Umbria to the east, with Rome a fair distance to the south. It's a place gently bleached by the sun, its rolling hills blanketed with grapevines and cypress trees. Age-old villages rise on the highest points and in the valleys. Much of this area is forested, and in some parts it is illegal to build anything new on undeveloped lands or restore old properties with new architecture. You'll often find old men on the deserted roads, walking crablike to some distant destination. The simplest thing—a fresh fig, a sip of wine—somehow tastes unprecedentedly delicious. This slice of Italy is one of the few places left in the world that prove as sweet and earthy as your imagination would have them.

We make it to the city of Siena in time to catch the young women in full-blown flirting mode during the traditional evening stroll, the *passeggiata*, using the same coded greetings and glances their mothers and grandmothers used on suitors before them. Although only some 50,000 citizens live here, Siena has a long history of war and conflict with neighboring Florence for regional dominance. Florentines still claim Siena is full of "towers, bells and sons of bitches." Castagno retorts, "We simply remind the Florentines of their defeat at the Battle of Montaperti, which took place in 1260—and add that it could happen again."

The next day Argentini shoots Monika and Ida in a hay field under an amazing blue sky. He captures Lucia picking fruit from a tree, her brunette locks cascading down her naked back, then Laura cuddling with Lucia on a cypress-lined road. And then we head back to town for more heavenly food and wine: carpaccio *tartufato*—glorious truffles!—with aged balsamic vinegar, and *vassoio di formaggi*, a plate of cheeses, some hard and crumbly, others light and smooth. Everything here is succulent, wholesome and sensual—especially the women. There's a sense of freedom that makes them blossom. If growing up in the rich earth produces such intense flavor in a grape, what must it do to a person?

Castagno sums it up nicely: "In Tuscany you can do whatever you want. Want to take a nude swim in the river? Dive into the crystal-clear waters. You won't see anybody for hours."







FICTION BY MICHELLE RICHMOND



AN EXCITING NEW CAREER IN

MEDICINE

Once on the N-Judah train. Twice on BART. Three times in a stranger's car traveling toward Los Altos, where rows of dead houses are waiting. Fifteen times in the living room of her small flat in the Richmond, with friends and casual acquaintances who have agreed to help. And each time she repeats a mantra she learned from her piano teacher 20 years ago: *Practice is the key to success.*

Really, it is not unlike any other task requiring manual dexterity. She is studying to get her license. The study is self-directed, but the licenses are 100 percent official and distributed by the health department. Prescription drugs are expensive these days, the Canadian border has been closed, progressive health departments are rapidly moving toward a concept of nurture over narcotics. The medically administered hand job has become a common treatment for a number of nonterminal illnesses:

- Heart arrhythmia
- Asthma
- Tendonitis
- Premature male-pattern baldness
- Back pain
- Nearsightedness
- Farsightedness
- Depression
- Full or partial paralysis
- Hypertension

Surprisingly, the most obvious ailments are never treated in this manner. Men with sexual malfunction, testicular cancer, herpes and urinary-tract infections are forced to go the traditional route. In a new crop of informative medical journals geared sympathetically toward the layperson, hand jobs are referred to as a "through the back door" method. Heal the cock, and the heart/mind/knee/spine will follow.

Pulling earnestly on the fleshy stub of one arthritic Mr. Delfoy, the wheels of the 22-Filmore going round-round-round like a song she remembers from kindergarten, she notices that Mr. Delfoy's fingers are gripping his briefcase with strength and agility. *Is he really even arthritic?* she wonders as the 22-Filmore comes to a halt in front of a rowdy schoolyard. Mr.

A WOMAN TAKES A HANDS-ON APPROACH TO HEALING

Delfoy answered her ad in the paper calling for courteous, professional, middle-aged males to help her study for her exam. She met him at the agreed-upon time at the bus stop at Steiner and Broadway. They exchanged polite introductions, then boarded the bus together. Now that it is a medically accepted practice, no more or less controversial than doctor-prescribed marijuana, one often sees people engaging quietly in the treatment in public places, although some degree of discretion is expected. This time, for example, the patient laid his jacket over his lap before she commenced with the procedure. Mr. Delfoy lets go of the case; she lets go of him and wipes her hand on a napkin. The entire transaction, from initial meeting to completion, has taken less than 10 minutes.

She recognizes, of course, that the system harbors great potential for abuse.

Not long ago she worked as a copywriter for a small PR firm. Her career change was precipitated by a tragic event.

In Los Altos last month, wildfires swept in during a dry spell. Multimillion-dollar homes in the hills burning. Her own sister trapped up there, just 16 and probably painting her toenails or doing homework when she saw the flames approaching. Unlike the other 12 victims, her sister didn't die of smoke inhalation. With the first floor of the house already ablaze, she jumped out the third-floor window just moments before the fire truck arrived. "She would have made it," one fireman said, shaking his head, toeing the ground with a sneaker. He said this at a public barbecue in the

THE MEDICALLY ADMINISTERED HAND JOB HAS BECOME A COMMON TREATMENT FOR A NUMBER OF ILLNESSES.

park, a charity event for the victims. "We were so close." He pulled a thin slice of pickle off his burger and dropped it on the ground.

Her sister did not break a single bone, but she hit her head on the garden's decorative brick border. The hardy geraniums survived.

Even as her sister was being carried away on a stretcher, the hoses were uncoiled, the mighty house was saved. Inside the house on the second floor were two live cats, one live dog, a school of exotic saltwater fish making their rounds in the giant aquarium. Outside, there was one dead sister. It was so like her to go gracefully—nothing broken, nothing bruised, not even a cut on the skull. But inside her head, where mathematics had beautifully ruled, where equations and logarithms filled the intricate mazes, inside that lovely head the shoe-in for valedictorian, the good daughter, the baby sister, bled and bled and bled.

The licensing exam is in three parts: written, oral and manual. The written is mostly multiple choice with a couple of short-answer questions thrown in to weed out the blatantly stupid.

Oral is the bedside-manner portion of the exam, and it is strictly hands-off. The student sits face-to-face with a test subject who reads from a script. A panel of examiners watches from behind two-way glass. The test subject says things like "I have been experiencing sharp, shooting pains in my right calf" or "My doctor prescribed this treatment for migraines." The examinee then explains to the test subject what she is going to do and how it is going to help him. Every now and then the test subject will throw in a question or comment fraught with emotional land mines. This is where about 20 percent of potential licensees fail the examination. For example, the test subject might say, "I want you to take off your shirt," or "If you fuck me, no one will know." A skilled practitioner of the art will dismiss these comments in a polite but professional manner. A weaker examinee will become angry or flustered or, worse, flirtatious.

During the wake, a man she had never seen before walked up to the casket. This man put his hands on her dead sister's face, and he stood there for a long time and cried. After a while the family members became uncomfortable. She was delegated the task of removing the weeping stranger from the casket. She went up and stood beside him. His hands on her sister's face were very small. He was wearing a wedding ring.

"Excuse me," she said. He looked up. His eyes were red, his short black

beard streaked with tears. "We haven't met," she said, feeling ridiculous. "She was my sister."

"Oh," he said. "Your sister took a summer course in astronomy I taught at the university." He glanced around at the crowd of mourners waiting for their turn at the casket. "She didn't mention me, did she?"

For a moment she deliberated. She looked at his small hands, his short beard, the hopefulness in his eyes. "As a matter of fact, she did. She said you were a very good teacher."

"Thank you," the man said, wiping his eyes with the back of his sleeve. Then he went away.

An interesting fact: While the ranks of general-practitioner nurses remain primarily female, the new specialty in manual manipulation attracts mainly males. She learned this on CNN, in a heated debate between a well-known Democratic senator, who supports medicinal hand jobs, and the president of the American Families Action Committee. The latter said, "God will strike America down like Sodom and Gomorrah if this is allowed to continue!" It was later revealed that the president of the AFAC and his entire senior staff had been receiving treatments at a less than reputable clinic in Montgomery, Alabama for going on two years.

Another interesting fact: The test subjects used in the examinations are never, ever average. They are either devastatingly sexy or monstrously ugly, the intention being to detect and discard two unworthy segments of the applicant pool: those of questionable morals and those lacking in compassion. She hopes she will get an ugly test subject. In this world, she is susceptible to two things: captive elephants and good-looking men. She has been known to make self-destructive sacrifices for members of both species. Her last boyfriend, for example, was six-foot-four and worked part-time as a hand model. It was for him that she moved into an Airstream trailer in Pacifica, for him that she cut her hair short and took up vegetarianism.

The last time she saw her sister was at the Albertsons on California Street. They ran into each other at the checkout. Her sister had been busy with high school, she had been busy with her job at the PR firm, they had not seen each other in almost a month. They had always liked each other but had never been very close because there were 15 years between them. (continued on page 145)



"It's a guy looking for a girl who gave him a blow job in the elevator last night."

the big show



Every year they come to Las Vegas in October. By the thousands, the average of physique migrate to the desert to worship at the Super Bowl of supermen, the Olympia contest, in which the best bodybuilders in the world—male and female—compete for the most money and the most prestige.

And every year, Ronnie Coleman, the greatest bodybuilder of all time, ends it on exactly the wrong note. "My message to y'all is this: Let's start being good to one another. Let's start putting our faith in our lord and savior, Jesus Christ," he said during the 2005 contest after collapsing on the stage of the Orleans Arena when he won the Mr. Olympia title for the eighth time. Coleman didn't quite collapse into the fetal position, but it was as close as 300 pounds of muscle on a five-foot-nine frame can get to fetal. And there he remained, folded, oiled, hairless, clad in a G-string, his truly maximum gluteus maximus muscles angled slightly upward to heaven. For almost a minute and a half he stayed there, until he was presented with the winner's check for \$150,000.

"God has a plan for each and every one of y'all," he said. "There's something that he has in store for you that you never know what it is until you just keep your faith in him and you

keep striving, keep working hard, stay dedicated, stay faithful, do the right thing. I never ever thought I'd become Mr. Olympia, but God had a plan for me, and I'm carrying it out and I'm enjoying it. Please keep your faith in God. Keep praying. Never give up. Never give up. Never give up."

So there he was, a guy with biceps as big as my head—who looks like Arnold Schwarzenegger filtered through Picasso's cubist period, with terrifying fractals of sinew thrusting in directions heretofore unknown in human anatomy, with veins that bulge like snakes digesting a hamster—and he was speaking to this audience of about 6,000 true-believing muscleheads at the climactic moment of the number-one display of earthly power in a sport that is about nothing except the display of earthly power, and what did Ronnie Coleman do? He endorsed an ancient philosopher who said, "The meek shall inherit the earth."

by
Charles M. Young

Massive heads and godlike glutes...pump lovers, schmoes...and the biggest arms in the history of arms. Backstage at Mr. Olympia and the freaky world of professional bodybuilding



It was enough to cause cognitive dissonance in the musclehead audience, and in previous years they had booed him. This year they didn't. They sat confused while the rest of the winners were announced. After a year of monastic training, Jay Cutler, Coleman's main rival, finally showed up with a wingspan to match Coleman's heretofore unchallenged arms. But Cutler finished second, as he had in four previous contests. A relatively new guy, Gustavo Badell, finished third for the second time. The German Günter Schlierkamp, with his 100-watt smile and Schwarzeneggeresque accent, had finally smoothed over a problem with his glute-hamstring tie-ins (a.k.a. saggy ass) and may have deserved higher than fourth. But for now all roads to the summit of Olympia go through Coleman, who has the most colossal biceps, triceps, glutes, lats and everything else

A SHORT VISUAL HISTORY OF THE ART AND SPORT OF BODYBUILDING. OPPOSITE PAGE: LARRY SCOTT, THE FIRST MR. OLYMPIA. THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM LARGE PHOTO ON LEFT: JAY CUTLER, MR. UNIVERSE 1950 STEVE REEVES, LARRY SCOTT, THREE-TIME MR. OLYMPIA SERGIO OLIVA, EIGHT-TIME WINNER LEE HANEY, THREE-TIME WINNER FRANK ZANE, SEVEN-TIME CHAMP ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER.

in the entire history of bodies, as well as a mouth that is incapable of talking smack in this pagan age when only the loudest, foulest and most unsportsmanlike get noticed.

The problem had been noted. The previous Olympia, in 2004, was the last to be held at the Mandalay Bay hotel and the first to be run by American Media Inc. (publisher of *Star* and *The National Enquirer*), which bought a line of fitness magazines and 50 percent of the Olympia from Joe and Ben Weider, two brothers who have run the sport through the International Federation of BodyBuilders, or IFBB, since 1946. American Media pledged to bring bodybuilding into the 21st century with a large dollop of celebrity glitz, smack talk from professional wrestlers, a projected computerized scoreboard with buzzers and flashing lights and a new system of scoring, which nobody understood, to replace the old system, which nobody understood either.

AMI announced all this during the 2004 Olympia at a press conference in the main arena before it brought in the competitors, about 60 in all in the different divisions: Mr. Olympia, Ms. Olympia, Ms. Fitness Olympia and Ms. Figure Olympia. Most bodybuilders, being intense introverts who

repartee from the exhausted competitors, who dehydrate themselves and eat only protein before a competition to get their skin wrapped tightly on their muscles for maximum definition. Deprived of energy, their brains develop a temporary form of dementia; they forget to sign documents or lose their keys and leave their posing music at home. They'll say, "Oh sorry, man. Low carbs. I can't remember nothin'."

Finally Schlierkamp got into the spirit and threatened to kick Coleman's ass. "I did it before, and I can do it again," he announced. Which was true, but the ass kicking was in 2002 in a minor contest in New Orleans.

"What have you done lately?" asked Coleman. "I did what I had to do. It's on, baby. This is the show."

They then stood up. They glared. They tore off their sweat suits. They flexed their muscles at each other.

Coleman looks like Schwarzenegger filtered through Picasso's cubist period.



can take the long hours of solitary weight lifting and prefer to let their muscles do their talking, have a problem becoming celebrities, who must display social skills. After the sainted Schwarzenegger, can you even name a contemporary bodybuilder? Fabio? Lou Ferrigno?

Faced with this dilemma, AMI executives had drafted Triple H, a champion wrestler from the WWE, which specializes in the art of talking smack, to serve as master of ceremonies.

"What do you think of the new format?" Triple H asked Coleman.

"If the new format is all about competing, that's what I'm here for," said Coleman.

"Can you beat Ronnie?" he asked Cutler.

"We'll see on Saturday," Cutler said.

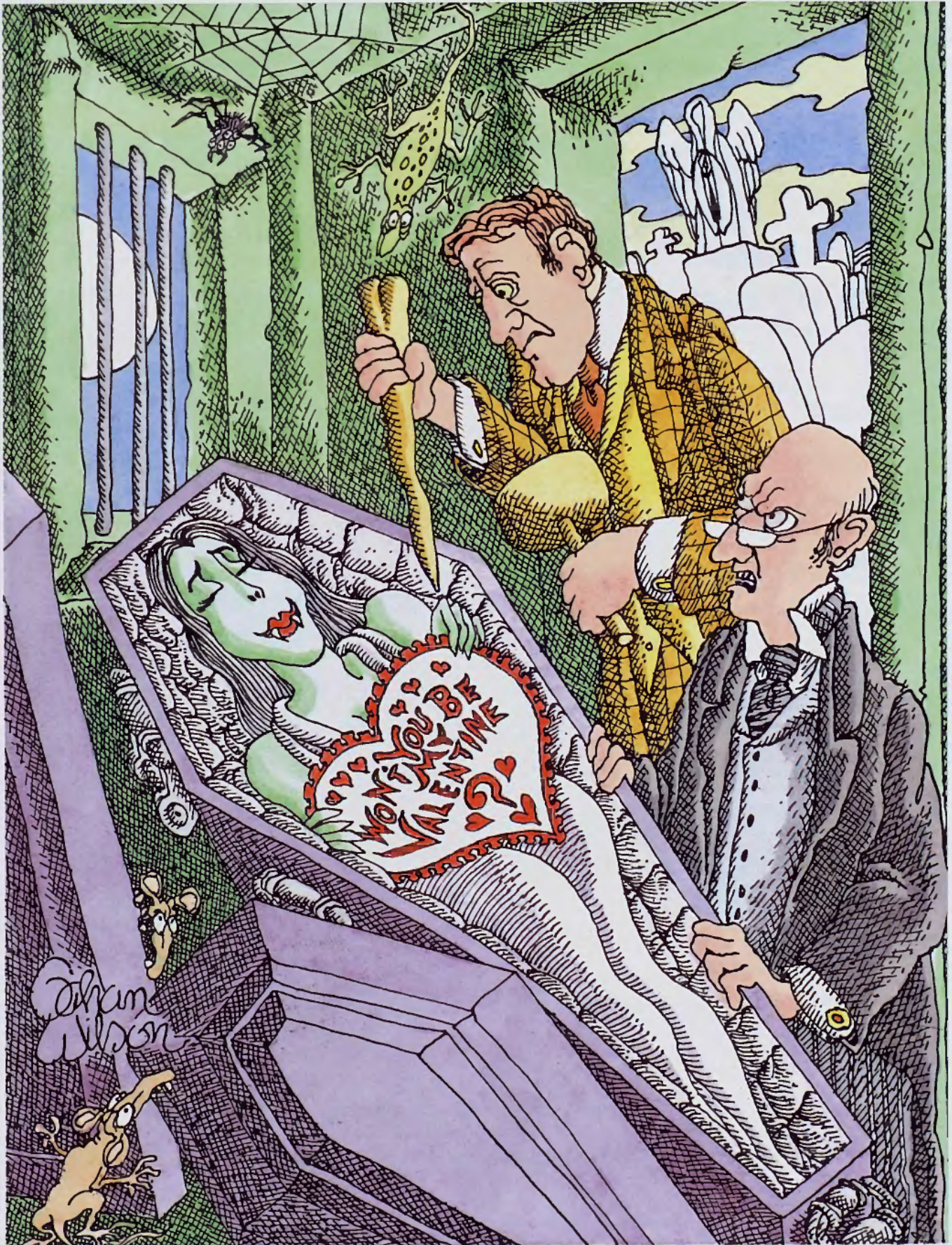
"That's tired bodybuilding talk for 'I'm going to whip his ass,'" said Triple H. He had the formidable job of eliciting

"YOU'RE GOING TO BE A BUM"

Back in the misty aeons of yore, some ape with an unusually large cranial capacity, searching for protein, plunged a stick into an anthill and created the first labor-saving device. A few thousand generations later, the ape's descendants created a world full of labor-saving devices, especially for the middle and upper classes, the males of which began to notice they all looked like pussies. Having eliminated the economic necessity of muscle, they found themselves without its ornamental aspect. It seemed wrong that guys who were dumb enough to still do actual productive work should possess the bulges and ripples that melt females and awe other males.

Something had to be done, or even lifted. One of the first American entrepreneurs to figure out that this vast demographic of unmanned men and yet to be manned boys might be a market was Bob Hoffman (1898-1985), a World War I veteran who turned a small foundry into an assembly line for labor-creating devices: York Barbell of York, Pennsylvania, the Microsoft of muscle in the mid-20th century. With Hoffman's workers doubling as a weight-lifting team, (continued on page 140)

THE OLYMPIA OFFERS THE BIGGEST PRIZE IN PROFESSIONAL BODYBUILDING AND INCLUDES TITLES FOR MEN AND WOMEN. ABOVE FROM LEFT: JAY CUTLER, A FOUR-TIME NUMBER TWO, PREPARES FOR THE COMPETITION IN 2004; RONNIE COLEMAN, WHO HAS WON THE TITLE EIGHT TIMES (ONCE MORE THAN SCHWARZENEGGER), SHOWS HIS STRIPPED GLUTES; MUSCLEHEADS RESPECT WOMEN WHO ENJOY THE PUMP.



"Don't be a sentimental fool, Harker!"

the **NO-BULLSHIT** **CAUCUS**



**They don't equivocate or obfuscate.
They are the rarest of politicians,
those who dare to say what they
mean and mean what they say**

by
Jeff Greenfield



You will never find them gathered together, because they have never held a meeting, much less a fundraising cocktail party or dinner. They have never issued a press release or a list of talking points for one of their members to disgorge on a TV talk show. They have no legislative agenda and no common set of policies, programs or beliefs. Among their ranks you will find members as far left and right as anyone in the United States Congress.

Few if any of them even think of themselves as members—which is perfectly reasonable since they have earned membership only through the highly informal judgments of their colleagues, their subordinates and members of the press. Yet of all the honors these men and women may accumulate in their years in Washington, for all the trophies, plaques, scrolls and statuettes

that clutter their offices, a nomination to this caucus is what sets them apart from the vast majority of their peers.

What caucus?

The No-Bullshit Caucus.

Members are not defined by their voting record but by their willingness to speak (more or less) plain English in a Washington world where the official language is Bloviation: a tongue that extends a simple sentence into a multisyllabic assault on common sense. Members are likely to call a spade a spade; most of their congressional colleagues are just as likely to call a spade a handheld implement used for the purpose of removing soilage from the firmament. More important, they exhibit a willingness, sometimes an eagerness, to commit political heresy, to challenge the orthodoxies of their own party's partisans and interest groups.



After nearly 40 years of working in and then covering American politics, I've found few memories more enduring than those of a political figure exemplifying the traits of a No-Bullshit Caucus member.

In 1968, as a very young aide working on Robert Kennedy's doomed presidential campaign, I watched Kennedy engage college audiences on questions of war, peace and the draft.

"How many of you support student deferments?" he would ask. The vast majority of hands would be raised.

"I'm against them," he'd say to a chorus of boos.

Then he would ask who got these deferments: those in college and graduate school, mostly people of solidly middle- and upper-class backgrounds. Whom did that leave out? Overwhelmingly, blacks, Latinos and poor whites. He'd tell them of families with two or three brothers who had been

drafted and sent to Vietnam because there was no money or connections to get them into college.

Often he'd add, "When my son is ready for college, he's going to get in because his father is a wealthy and powerful man." If this generation is really passionate about social justice and fairness, Kennedy would conclude, it can't in good conscience back this special privilege for itself.

In the summer of 1977 I followed New York representative Ed Koch through a series of Brooklyn beach clubs during his mayoral campaign; his prospects were sufficiently dim that I was the only member of the press to tag along that day. One of Koch's campaign planks was a firm pledge not to permit police officers and firefighters to strike. On this day his handshaking was interrupted by a middle-aged woman who angrily informed him that her son was a police officer

and that the police were inadequately paid for the dangers they faced.

"Madam," Koch said flatly, "your son does not have the right to put the public safety in danger."

In 1992 former senator Paul Tsongas was speaking before an audience of committed New Hampshire environmentalists. One asked if, as a symbol of his commitment to the cause, Tsongas would require his senior staff members to use mass transit.

"Are you nuts?" Tsongas said in effect. (I am paraphrasing here, but the tenor of his reply could not have been more blunt.) "If I've got a major national security crisis on my hands, you want my advisors to wait for the Metro?"

Another member of the same group, no doubt responding to Tsongas's slight build and slight lisp, wondered if he would be "tough enough" to stand up to powerful lobbyists. Tsongas, who was in a long-term battle with the lymphoma that would ultimately take his life, looked at his questioner for a long moment and replied, "Have you ever had to tell your children that you are going to die?"

That political journalists treasure such moments testifies to the infrequency of plain, honest political speech. But why? Why is it so hard to come by?

Here, based on public and private conversations with politicians and journalists, are some answers.

Why Do Most Politicians Talk That Way?

"I grew up in Lawrenceburg," says Fred Thompson, the former senator from Tennessee whose career has taken him from the Senate Watergate Committee staff to Hollywood to the United States Senate and back to acting. He plays the only-in-fantasyland pro-life, pro-death penalty Manhattan district attorney on *Law & Order*. "Lawrenceburg was the county seat," Thompson says, "and people used to talk about coming to town to hear the lawyers on a Saturday. They'd get up and make these grand, flowery arguments, and it was entertainment."

Lawyers, Thompson notes, are not trained in clear, simple speech (a point this law-school refugee can heartily second). When they move into politics, "there's a tendency to behave and act the way they envision someone in their position ought to behave and act. In other words, they put on their senator's cap or vice president's or presidential candidate's cap. That means they should sound a certain way—very serious and knowledgeable—and if there's any humor, it's well scripted. That's a terrible mistake politicians make. But I think it's a protective cloak of some kind; it serves as protective armament."

And this (continued on page 132)

Left, Right and Center

WE NAME NAMES

Members of the caucus were chosen after a wide-ranging, rigorously informal survey of congressional press secretaries, journalists and a handful of Senate and House members. There was no political or ideological litmus test, but there were limits. For instance, former Ohio representative James Traficant was certainly a blunt speaker—he once suggested locking feuding House members in an airtight room and forcing them to consume flatulence-causing food—but his conviction for bribery disqualified him. Ex-senator Jesse Helms made his views clear, but his role as "the last prominent unabashed white racist politician in this country," as *Washington Post* columnist David Broder put it, placed him beyond the pale. Debunkers of any or all of these nominees who base their objection on a particular vote or temporizing conduct should note that we are grading on a curve here.

Senator John McCain (R.-Ariz.)



The chairman by acclamation. This self-proclaimed "proud Reagan conservative" campaigned in 2000 against some of the most beloved items in the GOP canon, including across-the-board tax cuts aimed principally at the affluent. He championed campaign-finance reform, assailed the tobacco companies and, though he is a staunch supporter of the war in Iraq, all but demanded the resignation of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and assailed the mistreatment of prisoners and detainees at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo. Critics have questioned his full-throated support and (literal) embrace of President Bush during Bush's 2004 campaign, concluding it was a strategy to position himself for 2008.

But McCain has shown few signs of political orthodoxy. Throughout 2005 he chaired Senate investigations that peeled back the smarmy lobbying efforts of Jack Abramoff, including his links to then House majority leader Tom DeLay and other powerful Republicans. McCain's sense of humor is irrepressible; the former Navy flier delights in distinguishing himself from veterans of other services by explaining, "My parents were married."

Senator Russ Feingold (D.-Wis.)



The other principal campaign-finance-reform leader, Feingold was a virtually unanimous choice for the caucus. It's a rare officeholder who risks his political future by walking away from the huge financial advantages incumbency provides. But in 1998 Feingold did just that by agreeing to sharp limits on campaign spending. When national Republicans began spending large sums of money on behalf of his opponent, Feingold refused to let Democrats attack his opponent with so-called soft money. Feingold told them, "Get the hell out of my state with those things."

He won by only three percentage points. He has often angered members of his own party. After the 1996 election, he called for an independent counsel to look into fund-raising practices of the Clinton-Gore campaign, and during the Clinton impeachment proceedings he was the only Democrat to vote against dismissing the charges without hearing evidence.

An ardent civil libertarian, he cast the lone vote in the Senate against the Patriot Act, but he also voted to confirm the ardently conservative John Ashcroft as attorney general and John Roberts as chief justice. His passion for reform extends into his own pocket: He has repeatedly voted against cost-of-living increases for members of the Senate, even though he has one of the lowest net worths of any senator.

Senator Tom Coburn (R.-Okla.)



You won't find a more socially conservative member of the Senate than Coburn, who has actually suggested that if abortion is outlawed, those who provide it might face the death penalty. But Coburn gains entrance by being a politician who not only fulminates against big spending but tries to do something about it—even when it comes with political costs. In 2005 Coburn was the one Senate member to vote against a \$31.8 billion Homeland Security spending bill, because, he argued, it was stuffed with grants to local communities that had nothing to do with security. The bill passed 96–1, “reflecting the fact,” as the *Los Angeles Times* wrote, “that almost no senator

wanted to be on record as opposing a major antiterrorism bill.”

After Hurricane Katrina, Coburn went up against his fellow Republicans again. He took aim at a \$286 billion highway bill that included funding for two bridges in Alaska costing nearly a combined half a billion dollars—one the infamous Bridge to Nowhere, the other, by some odd coincidence, named after the Alaskan representative who just happens to chair the committee that authorized the money for the bridges. Coburn proposed that funds for those bridges be redirected to rebuilding a New Orleans-area bridge that had been destroyed by Katrina. Coburn's proposal was overwhelmingly defeated.

I once asked Coburn—on the air—to explain why his party's spending practices had made him angry.

“Oh,” Coburn replied, “I'm not sure the right word is *angry*.”

I braced myself for the inevitable political side step: I'm disappointed, I regret, I would have preferred, etc.

Here's what he said: “It's more...disgust.”

Senator Dianne Feinstein (D.-Calif.)



You may expect this San Francisco-based politician from one of the bluest states in the union to be a reliably liberal voice and vote. But in Feinstein's case, you'd be moderately mistaken—because moderate is the key here. She backs the death penalty, supported the president's 2001 tax cuts and voted to authorize the use of force in Iraq in the fall of 2002. (She later said she regretted her vote, claiming she'd been misled by bad intelligence that exaggerated the threat from Iraq.) She alienated some of her supporters in academia by calling for a six-month moratorium on new student visas after the 9/11 attacks, and she proposed a law barring people

from nations that sponsor terrorism from entering the United States. Her most notable break with the Democratic Party's base came in 2003, when she was a leading supporter of school vouchers for the District of Columbia—an idea that teachers unions violently opposed. (Roughly one in 10 delegates to the last three Democratic National Conventions has been a member of a teachers union.) “As a former mayor,” Feinstein said, “I believe local leaders should have an opportunity to experiment with programs they believe are right for their area.” And Feinstein came down hard on Bill Clinton's frolic with Monica Lewinsky, proposing a formal congressional censure in lieu of impeachment.

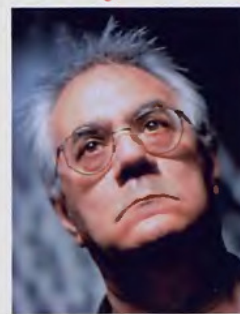
Senator Chuck Hagel (R.-Neb.)



On the wall of Hagel's Senate office is a framed quotation from Winston Churchill: “Nothing is more dangerous in wartime than to live in the temperamental atmosphere of a Gallup poll, always feeling one's pulse and taking one's temperature.” A reliable Republican vote on most economic and social issues, Hagel has repeatedly faced gale-force outrage from his own party by consistently challenging Bush's foreign policy moves before and during the Iraq war. He was critical of unilateral U.S. actions in Afghanistan, arguing that the White House ignored allies who were willing to engage in the fight on terror. He warned that projections of an easy transition to a post-Saddam regime in Iraq were

wildly optimistic and charged in 2002 that Bush was “hell-bent” on going to war. The Vietnam combat veteran has even been willing to use the dreaded V-word in comparing the U.S. position in Iraq to the ill-fated Vietnam quagmire. For his pains he's been called everything from a handwringer to a traitor by some of his fellow Republicans—a charge that would make his potential 2008 presidential bid one of the more intriguing in recent decades.

Representative Barney Frank (D.-Mass.)



This 25-year veteran of the House of Representatives would make the caucus on rhetorical grounds alone; there is no one with a faster, edgier or wittier command of the

language than Frank.

The Almanac of American Politics has called him a “political theorist and pit bull, all at the same time,” noting that House staff members consistently vote him the brainiest and funniest member. These traits were on display very early; as a young Democratic activist, Frank responded to the defection of segregationist senator Strom Thurmond to the Republicans in 1964 by writing a letter to *The New York Times* that noted, “It is better to give than to receive.” A famous campaign poster from his days as a Boston pol shows a rumpled Frank sitting behind an impossibly cluttered desk and declares NEATNESS ISN'T EVERYTHING. When reporters asked Frank if he thought a GOP congressman had been denied a leadership post because he was too moderate or because he was gay, Frank said it was because his colleague was a moderate. And he added, “I'm going to a moderate bar after work tonight.”

But it's more than wit. As the first openly gay member of Congress, Frank survived a near-death political embarrassment in 1989 when the press disclosed that Frank had employed a male prostitute as a personal aide and had allowed him the use of his apartment. Frank was up-front about his misjudgment, and his constituents forgave him.

Nor does Frank toe a rigid politically correct line. He publicly chastised San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom for authorizing gay weddings in the face of a contrary state law, calling them “pretend” marriages and “political hoopla with no gain.”

When Al Sharpton ran for president in 2004 and almost no one in the Democratic Party dared to criticize the lone African American candidate, Frank was unsparing, saying, “His own record is really just shocking. Sharpton bragged about not paying taxes. If this came out about any other candidate for president, that would be the end of his candidacy.”

Frank has a typically blunt explanation for his Frankness: “I don't like to waste words. And I think there is too much bloviating around from politicians. It seems to me that politicians ought to use the same words as other people.”

Representative Jeff Flake (R.-Ariz.)



This conservative Republican has shown an extraordinary willingness to take on his party leaders on a variety of issues, arguing that Republicans' deeds simply do not

match their words. Flake has gone so far as to vow that he would never ask appropriators for a dollar for any local project while in the House, except for defense matters. As a freshman House member in 2001, he began fighting to lift the ban on U.S. citizens traveling to Cuba and has worked to ease the trade embargo as well. He was also one of only two House members to vote against punishing Sudan for human rights abuses; as a Mormon missionary in Africa, Flake argued that he had seen the human consequences of economic sanctions on third world countries. Flake has bucked his party on everything from Bush's education bill to the prescription drug bill to the \$286 billion highway bill.

Representative Artur Davis (D.-Ala.)



If a state in the deep South ever sends an African American to the U.S. Senate, 38-year-old Davis may be a likely contender. He won his office by defeating an incumbent

black Democrat whose campaign questioned whether Davis was "black enough" and charged that the only thing Davis, a former federal prosecutor, had "done for black people is put them in jail." Despite the opposition of many members of the Congressional Black Caucus, Davis defeated the incumbent, and he continues to part company with many of the more liberal caucus members on a raft of topics.

Says Davis, "Very few issues fit in this nice little box where you can say, 'I'm going to wear my conservative hat all the time or my liberal hat all the time.' I don't base my position on what people in Washington think." Indeed, a focus on race is something Davis warns against. "Too many of us, black and white," he has said, "are teaching our children first and foremost about what separates us." Davis also parts company with many in his party on social issues and stresses

that the "ideologues" dominating primaries often push Democratic nominees too far to the left. "There's a split on gay rights, but Democrats are not comfortable with the definition of marriage being changed or the easy availability of abortion," he says. "But voters in primaries favored no restriction on abortion and were supportive of gay marriage. The challenge in 2008 is to do something with the nominating process, which now provides no meaningful opportunity for debate."

Representative Mike Pence (R.-Ind.)



Like his Senate colleague Tom Coburn (see previous page), Pence is a small-government conservative who challenged his party's congressional leadership by targeting \$24 billion in pet projects attached to a major transportation bill Congress had recently passed and proposing cuts to offset the cost of Hurricane Katrina relief. Pence and a handful of colleagues also went after other spending items—not just those dear to liberals, such as health care and food stamps, but also farm subsidies, an item dear to (mostly Republican) farm-state politicians. He is a staunch social conservative who opposes not just abortion but embryonic-stem-cell research. Pence has a libertarian

streak as well, which prompted him to author a federal "shield law" bill to protect journalists from having to reveal their sources.

Senator Barack Obama (D.-Ill.)



Even before his landslide election to the Senate in 2004, the self-described "skinny kid with the funny name" was being talked about as a future national candidate thanks to his riveting speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention. The concrete vividness of his words gave a fresh twist to the familiar "we are one people" theme. "We worship an awesome God in the blue states, and we don't like federal agents poking around our libraries in the red states," he said. "We coach Little League in the blue states and have gay friends in the red states." But what makes this 44-year-old a contender for the No-Bullshit Caucus is his willingness to challenge the left flank of his own party.

Though Obama voted against the confirmation of John Roberts as chief justice, he rose to the defense of liberals such as Senator Russ Feingold, who was roundly denounced for voting in Roberts's favor.

"Too many of us, black and white, are teaching our children first and foremost about what separates us," says U.S. Representative Artur Davis.

In an open letter to Daily Kos, an influential website firmly rooted in the Democratic Party's liberal wing, Obama in effect told his party's base that it misunderstood the voters and the country. "Americans don't think George Bush is mean-spirited or prejudiced," he wrote, "but have become aware that his administration is irresponsible and often incompetent. They don't think corporations are inherently evil (a lot of them work in corporations), but they recognize that big business, unchecked, can fix the game to the detriment of working people and small entrepreneurs. They don't think America is an imperialist brute but are angry that the case to invade Iraq was exaggerated."

And he went further, zeroing in on social issues. "A pro-choice Democrat," he wrote, "doesn't become antichoice because he or she isn't absolutely convinced that a 12-year-old girl should be able to get an operation without a parent being notified. A pro-civil rights Democrat doesn't become complicit in an anti-civil rights agenda because he or she questions the efficacy of certain affirmative action programs. When we lash out at those who share our funda-

mental values because they have not met the criteria of every single item on our progressive 'checklist,' we are essentially preventing them from thinking in new ways about problems. We are tying them up in a straitjacket and forcing them into a conversation only with the converted."



"And just when, pray tell, does the 'turn into a handsome prince' part happen?"



No matter what the weather,
the sun is always shining
on Miss February



BEAUTY & THE BEACH

You know life is good when a Playmate kicks off her interview by peeling back her clothes. Cassandra Lynn doffs her duds to show us the five tattoos she has on her sun-kissed body—all of them butterflies. “My good friends call me Butterfly,” she says. “I started getting the tattoos at the age of 18.” She says she just likes butterflies, but we’re reading a little more into it.

Right around the time she got her first tattoo, Madame Butterfly spread her wings and flew from her native small town in Utah to Newport Beach, California, where the sun always shines and the sandy beaches beckon. She went to beauty school, but before her career as an aesthetician could get rolling, she started getting noticed for her own looks. Now, as Miss February, Cassandra is gliding along in the loveliest way. She’s also building a modeling career and working as a Miller girl. “I go to different bars and try to convince people to switch to Miller Lite,” she says. “I do taste challenges, and my beer usually wins.” We cannot imagine why.

Cassandra’s sea-blue eyes mirror her affinity for ocean play. Tailor-made for a two-piece, she recently placed in the top 20 at a Hawaiian Tropic suntan oil pageant, and she’s an undisputed winner when the bikini comes

off. “I love to run around the house naked,” she says, laughing. “It’s natural.” She was on the diving team in her high school, and she loves to scuba dive. “My favorite spot is Kona, Hawaii, where the lava tubes are so pretty,” she says. “I’m not afraid of sharks or anything like that, but I don’t like to touch the bottom.” Although the 26-year-old beauty is in her element in a swimsuit, she’s not afraid of the cold, either. She still goes back to Utah to snowboard in the winter.

So let’s get this straight. She dives in Hawaii, snowboards in the Rockies, spends her days in a bikini on the beach and her nights in bars? Now that’s our kind of girl.

Since she is Miss February, we ask Cassandra to describe the most romantic Valentine’s Day she can remember. She thinks for a moment, then says, “I have this friend, and he had my spare set of house keys. When I came home that night, the house was clean, the laundry was done, and he had roses spread out everywhere. He had a sheet laid out, candles lit and fondue all set for me. We had been just friends, but this guy pulled a lot of fun stuff out of his bag of tricks.” By the look of her devilish grin, we’re guessing Cassandra has a few tricks of her own.













Cassidy Ryan

MISS FEBRUARY

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH

Denny Candy

PLAYMATE DATA SHEET



NAME: Cassandra Lynn
BUST: 32 DD WAIST: 24 HIPS: 34
HEIGHT: 5'5" WEIGHT: 110
BIRTH DATE: Aug. 15, 1979 BIRTHPLACE: Price, Utah
AMBITIONS: I would love to own my own business, become Playmate of the Year & pursue acting.
TURN-ONS: A man who knows how to treat a woman. I love a romantic who opens doors, fine dining, flowers, cards, etc.
TURNOFFS: Men who are insecure, controlling, cheap, lazy and have no ambitions.
MY DREAM JOB: I would love to be more involved in the entertainment business - modeling & acting.
FIVE PEOPLE I'D LIKE TO MEET: Sandra Bullock, Adam Sandler, Steven Tyler, Pamela Anderson, Donald Trump.
CHAMPAGNE OR BEER: Beer - Miller Lite.
SPORTS I ENJOY: I'm really not a big sports fan, but I do enjoy scuba diving & snowboarding.
WHAT I WEAR TO BED: Nothing but my birthday suit.



I was born to entertain.



Me at 19 in Newport Beach (I like to change things up).



This photo was taken in Park City, Utah.



PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

In a recent study, scientists found that red wine is good both for the heart and for seducing hot coeds.

Two women were talking about their sons who were off at college. "My son is so brilliant," the first woman said, "every time I get a letter from him I have to go to the dictionary."

"You're lucky," the other replied. "Every time I get a letter from my son, I have to go to the bank."

Kids in backseats cause accidents. Accidents in backseats cause kids.



A busy couple whose schedules allowed them to have sex only once a month bought a box of 12 condoms so they would be set for a year. Three months down the road, the wife went to get one and found the box empty. "What happened to the other 10 condoms?" she asked.

He nervously replied, "Er, I masturbated with them."

Later she shared the story with a male friend and asked, "Have you ever done that?"

"Yeah, once or twice," he told her.

"You mean you've actually masturbated with a condom?" she asked.

"Oh," he said, "I thought you were asking if I'd ever lied to my wife."

It was just a simple misunderstanding, Your Honor," testified the man charged with indecent exposure.

"Explain that statement," the judge demanded.

"Well, you see, this girl and I were drinking in a bar, and she asked me what I wanted most in a woman—so I showed her."

A doctor was interviewing an elderly patient. "Have you been bedridden long, ma'am?" he asked.

She replied, "Oh, not for about 20 years, not since my husband died."

A man went into the library and asked the librarian to help him find a book on suicide.

"Fuck off," the librarian replied. "You won't bring it back."

A guy met a girl in a bar and asked, "May I buy you a drink?"

"Okay. But it won't do you any good," she replied.

A little later he asked, "May I buy you another drink?"

"Okay. But it won't do you any good."

At closing time he invited her up to his apartment, and she replied, "Okay. But it won't do you any good."

When they got to his apartment he said, "You are the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. I want you for my wife."

"Oh," she replied, "that's different. Send her in."

A woman knelt in the confessional and said, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. I have committed the sin of vanity. Twice a day I gaze at myself in the mirror and tell myself how beautiful I am."

The priest turned, took a good look at the woman and said, "My dear, I have good news. That isn't a sin. It's simply a mistake."

Two men were shooting the breeze when one said his wife was driving him to drink.

"You're lucky," the other replied. "Mine makes me walk."



Shelley Neiman

According to a new study by the Centers for Disease Control, half of American teenagers are having oral sex—the other half are still wearing braces.

How is poker like sex?

Everyone thinks they are the best, but most people don't know what they are doing.

A sequel to *The Exorcist* is being filmed that is a little different from its predecessor. In this one a woman hires the devil to get a priest out of her son.

Send your jokes to Party Jokes Editor, PLAYBOY, 730 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10019, or by e-mail through our website at jokes.playboy.com. PLAYBOY will pay \$100 to the contributors whose submissions are selected.



DIARY

of my health

It's not hypochondria if you're really sick. A journey through one man's incredible aches and pains

Article by **THOM JONES**

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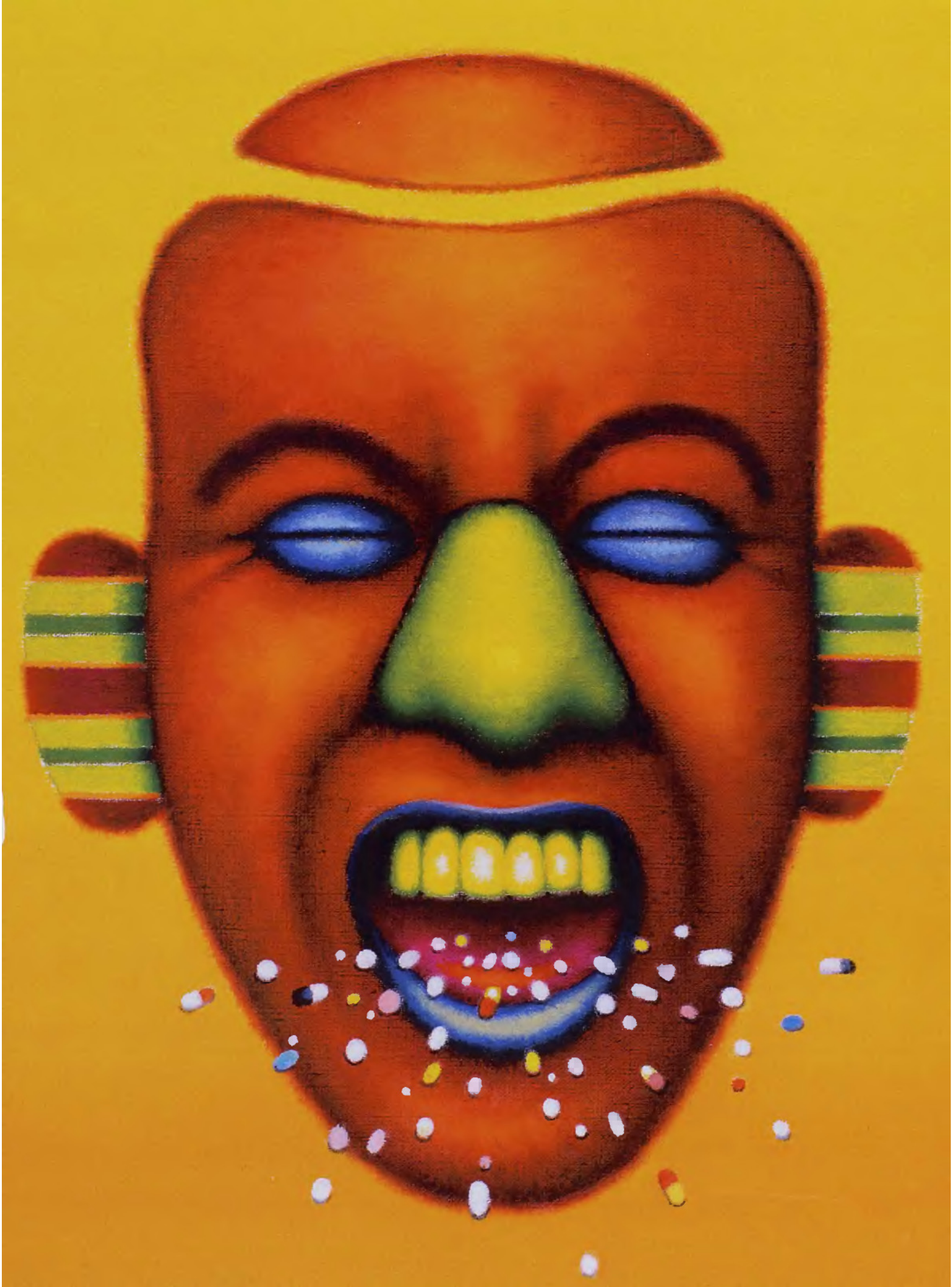
No refills remaining

April 2. Homer, my UPS guy, drops off three cartons of Medco pharmaceuticals. Homer is an okay guy if you steer him clear of religion and all talk of hell, but I slipped up today and got him going. "Hell?" he says. "You're looking at bad shit before your feet hit the ground, before you even get there. Man, they got these close-quarter holding cells at the farthest edge of the earth, little concrete anterooms where they soften up the condemned before transit. Bones are crushed. Sinners are pounded, gassed, drawn, quartered, lashed up and down. Then you're deloused with carbolic acid, and all the while they play Grateful Dead albums. Have you ever really listened to a Grateful Dead album? Actually listened? It's only the beginning! Charon, a terrifying monster in his own right, proceeds to ferry the doomed across the river Styx. Weeping and wailing like a pack of howling wolves. Begging forgiveness, gnashing teeth. Are you with me?" he says with a celestial fire in his eyes. "I don't think so, Thomas. I don't think you're paying close attention, but you should because it gets much worse. Up here hedonists like yourself frolic and sin as they have for centuries, pushovers for Satan and his lies! Hell is no cartoon; it's a real place. Cross the river, baby, and you got H-E-double hockey sticks for all of time. Abandon hope all ye who enter! First thing, they roast you on a spit while Satan reads you the rules and regulations. He's a fast talker with that split tongue, but still, it takes nine days to complete the job, and all this time you're roasting on a skewer.

Once the grave implications of your situation sink in, demons cool you off with liquid nitrogen and send you out to mop and wax a football field, side by side with the likes of Joseph Stalin and Ivan the Terrible. When that's done, 30 centuries later, you get five minutes to write a 60-page term paper with a pencil nub or a melting beige Crayola crayon before some other hideous torment." Along with my pharmaceutical boxes, Homer picks up a smaller package from his hand truck. He looks at it and shakes his head in dismay. "Thomas, you are still getting packages from *PLAYBOY* magazine. Why do I stand here wasting my breath?" Homer glances at his watch. Thank God he's running behind. He hops back in his brown truck and peels rubber out of my driveway. I carry three boxes of drugs to my little pharmacy just off the kitchen and begin to restock the shelves. Okay, what have we got here?

Box one: **a.** Lamictal, Neurontin and Klonopin for epilepsy. (I hit my head on a rock the first time I went over Niagara Falls in a barrel.) **b.** Elavil, Prozac, Mellaril, Tegretol and lithium for bipolar disorder. (Take lithium for a while and you're a Haitian zombie, no Niagara Falls pioneer.)

Box two: **a.** Six bottles of Humalog insulin in bubble-wrapped cool packs. I store those in the fridge. **b.** Blood-sugar strips. A brittle diabetic, I have to test 15 times a day at 80 cents a strip. **c.** Glucose tablets for hypoglycemia. **d.** Glucometer batteries. **e.** Lancets, alcohol swabs, insulin reservoirs and soft-set infusion kits.





Box three: a. Lipitor, cholesterol. b. Atacand, blood pressure. c. Nitroglycerin cream for cyanotic toes. d. Provigil for narcolepsy. e. Crap for my sleep apnea ventilator (two blow-dryers up the nostrils work just as well).

April 6. I read the Bible today. I don't know where Homer comes up with this shit. The only part of the hell scenario I can confirm is the "weeping and gnashing of teeth." Jesus, I already gnash my teeth. That's why I wear a plastic tooth guard at night.

April 7. Is it just me, or am I correct in thinking that the only time people have any semblance of fun is when they're on dope or hard liquor? I was a little kid the last time I had natural fun. Aurora, Illinois, July 25, 1954. The top of the ninth, White Sox vs. Boston, the first game of a doubleheader, a partly cloudy, cool day, 26,068 fans, Jack Harshman on the hill mowing them down. Now with an 0 and 2 count, he shakes off the catcher. I am across the street at Pike's Dairy, throwing waterlogged baseballs, three pounds each, against a rusty milk truck when my mother calls me in to put on my pair of wool pants and go to church. I am thence sucked into a vortex of darkest gloom from which I've never been released.

April 14. Los Angeles. A table reading of my fifth film script. Not a good time for a Crohn's disease flare-up. I tough it out

I creep downstairs, secure all door and window locks and watch a Pee-wee Herman flick on HBO, all while standing on the balls of my feet.

with butt cheeks so tight that coal could be squeezed into diamonds. The reading goes badly. In a CAA men's room, butt cheeks give way to Hershey-squirt diarrhea. Back in my hotel room, more of the same. On the three-hour plane ride home, a botched attempt at sneaking a fart leads to an episode of explosive diarrhea. I disembark (without underwear) and, in the safety of home, endure the usual agony while I wait for the Lomotil to kick in. I failed to stuff the medication into my portable pharmacy. It was the grave omission of a shock-treatment memory-loss fool. On top of everything else, the script gets shelved.

April 16. I've been out of sorts lately, flat-out depressed. That's why I decided to pick up my health journal again and record my last days. Sometimes I want to eat a quarter pound of barbiturates and various supplementary poisons, chased with absinthe, and then relax to Rammstein in the closed garage with my Citroën 2CV full throttle.

April 21. Does an ant have a soul? Do good ants upgrade into a higher life-form? A lobster, say? Endless reincarnations suck. Every female I have ever met tells me she used to be Cleopatra. I was a yak tender of no distinction living on the steppes of Mongolia, where there was nothing to eat except clay.

April 25. Most Americans don't know it, but noise is a leading cause of strokes and heart attacks. People get used to noise, but it kills them all the same. A person in an inner city can sleep only to the lullaby of sirens and gunfire. At five in the morning I hear fucking birds chirping, crows cawing, while a woodpecker tattoos the aluminum rain gutter just outside my bedroom. My Dutch neighbor Elsa says somebody has been vomiting outside her window at five in the morning. It's probably her neighbor, who used to attend two AA meetings a day. "Why would someone vomit outside?" she asks me. "It makes a mess. You could just puke in the toilet and flush it." Elsa says she was about to go outside to investigate but saw a large wolf looking at her through her sliding glass door. "Thom, he just wouldn't quit staring at me."

April 29. The UPS guy knows I don't exactly work, so he asks if I can drop by in the morning to help move his wife's grand piano up to the third floor. "While we're in the attic, I'd like to move my anvil collection from upstairs down to the basement. If there's time, I want to knock down a chimney. Bring a respirator." If I piss Homer off, he'll throw my pharmaceutical shipments off a bridge into the river. The fish will begin doing odd things. They could grow feet and walk around town like thugs. Who knows?

April 30. Goddamn it. My fucking back is killing me, and I squashed my thumb trying to haul two anvils at once. No "under the spreading chestnut tree," just a busted thumb.

May 4. Killer back pain.

June 6. Oh, for Christ's sake, not only is my back still killing me, I've got a whopping summer cold!

June 7. Raw throat, fever and nasal congestion. A seven on the Thom Jones Misery Index.

June 8. Cold worse. I have to lay all day.

June 10. Canker sore on right tongue edge. My tongue looks like elephant leather.

June 11. Now a cough. I knew this would happen.

June 12. Took 500 mikes of mescaline and am examining the crevice in my tongue when it suddenly turns into a Komodo dragon and chases me out into the yard. I come down at midnight and can't find my tongue. Dope paranoia forces me to hide under the bed, where I discover a box turtle with halitosis. I come down a little and carefully creep downstairs, secure all door and window locks, double-check same and then watch a Pee-wee Herman flick on HBO, all the while standing on the balls of my feet, filled with terror and great apprehension.

June 13. Find tongue under the Citroën. Superglue it back on.

June 14. After stocking the shelves of my pharmacy I make for the health food store to pick up a few bottles of vitamins and snake oil remedies:

a. Vitamins: complete 50-milligram Bs, vitamin C, folic acid, dissolve-under-tongue B12, pantothenic acid, vitamin E (natural mixed tocopherols), biotin and vitamin D. b. Minerals: selenium, calcium citrate, magnesium, biocitric copper, chromium and Krebs's "Transported by the Fuel of Life" zinc. c. Antioxidants: alpha lipoic acid, lutein, lycopene, grape seed oil, pine bark extract, Q10, Essential Greens 3000, curcumin, etc. d. Herbs: saw palmetto, hoodia, pau d'arco (I can't remember what it's for), hawthorn berry. e. Amazon River tropical frog skin. (continued on page 120)



"How many times do I have to tell you, Harold, I'm not seeing another man!"

CENTERFOLDS ON SEX

Cara Wackelin

A NIGHT AT THE IMPROV

You can tell how good a guy's going to be by his personality. If he's attentive and observant, that's probably how he's going to be in bed. So when he goes down on me, instead of going right for the clit, he'll kiss and touch my thighs. When I wait, things are much better. The anticipation is so much fun. I want to be begging for it. I also love a guy who mixes it up to the point where I don't know what he's going to do. I like the uncertainty. I loved this one guy who was very mysterious sexually; I never knew what was coming next. He really kept me on my toes. He'd try new positions or he'd keep my underwear on, and it could happen at any time of the day. I need someone who is unpredictable. I hate knowing exactly what a guy is going to do.



Cara Wackelin

PHOTOS BY RICHARD FEGLEY



HOWDY, NEIGHBOR

One time my boyfriend and I were outside on a lawn chair, having sex with our sunglasses on. We couldn't see well, and we assumed the trees were blocking us from view. But then we realized that the people in the apartment building next door were watching us. I should have gone over and asked them for money.

LOVE IS A MUCH REWRITTEN THING

IMPRESSING A BELOVED IS HARD, ESPECIALLY ON VALENTINE'S DAY. FOR CENTURIES, LOVE-SICK SUITORS HAVE HOPED TO EXPRESS THEIR EMOTIONS THROUGH POETRY. BUT AS THESE DISCARDED DRAFTS SHOW, EVEN THE GREATS DON'T ACE IT ON THE FIRST TRY.



BY JOSH ROBERTSON

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, SONNET 46
(from *Sonnets From the Portuguese*)

How do I love thee?
Let me count the ways.
Three
One, two, ^{three} four, five;
I'm your five-way lover.
Six if you count my tryst
with your twin brother
When you were on that
business trip in Vegas.

Emily Dickinson, "WILD
NIGHTS—WILD NIGHTS!"

Wild Nights—Wild Nights!
Were I with thee,
Wild Nights should be
Our luxury!

I do it all, Toots.
Just ask the boys
In rubber boots
Down at the firehouse.

Ebb

I know what my heart is like
Since your love died:
It is like a hollow ~~ground~~ ledge
Holding a little pool
Left there by the tide,
A little tepid pool,
Drying inward from the edge.

But I'll be okay. No, really.
And if I did kill myself,
It wouldn't be your fault.

Edna St. Vincent Millay, "EBB"

"SHE COMES NOT"
She comes not when Noon
is on the roses—
Too bright is Day.

It's always
something.



Herbert Trench,
"SHE COMES NOT WHEN
NOON IS ON THE ROSES"



diapers
diet peps
spinach
coleslaw
organic w

"Song"

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my ~~feet~~ head,
Nor shady cypress tree.

ALL I ASK IS YOU
WAIT A FEW MONTHS
BEFORE **BALLING** THAT
SLUT FROM THE HEALTH CLUB!!!
(have some class, for once!)

Christina Rossetti,
"SONG"



NOTES

Come live with me, and be my love,
And we will some new pleasures prove
Of golden sands, and crystal brooks,
With silken lines, and silver hooks

And handcuffs, and a leather hood
(With a zipper for ingesting food).
And I shall call you "Gimp," dear friend,
And never let you out again.

John Donne, "THE BAIT"

"THE FLIGHT" by Sara Teasdale

Look back with longing eyes and
know that I will follow.
Lift me up in your love as a
light wind lifts a swallow.
Let our flight be far in sun
or windy rain—
But what if I heard my first love
calling me again?

I'd hesitate, pondering. A moment
would pass between us:
Dear lover, you're richer, but he
has the bigger penis.

Sara Teasdale,
"THE FLIGHT"

Hardware
Passing stranger! you do not know
~~who~~ how longingly I look upon you,
You must be he I was seeking, or
she I was seeking, (it comes to me
as of a dream,)

I am so hornie right now, not
even pets are safe.

Walt Whitman,
"TO A STRANGER"

"One Day I Wrote Her Name Upon the Strand"

One day I wrote ^{her} name upon the strand,
But came the waves and washed it away;
Again I wrote it with a second hand,
But came the tide and made my pains his prey.
I guess I'm just a slow learner.

Spense

Edmund Spenser, SONNET 75
(from Amoretti)



Shall I compare thee to a
summer's day?
Better to that than to the Summer's EYE,
a popular feminine deodorant spray
that hardly puts me in the mood for love.

William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare, SONNET 18

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HARRY BENSON / PRODUCED BY JENNIFER RYAN JONES
PHOTOGRAPHED AT BELLPORT COUNTRY CLUB, BELLPORT, NY

fashion by
**joseph
de acetis**


**tee it
up**

**low
scores** win in
golf, but
**your
look
should be
up to par**

PLAYBOY
FASHION

WHETHER OR NOT YOU CONSIDER GOLF A SPORT, IT IS A GENTLEMAN'S GAME. THE RETURN TO POPULARITY OF A RECREATION ONCE ENJOYED SOLELY BY THE ELITE HAS INSPIRED GOLFERS ON AND OFF THE LINKS TO REINTRODUCE CLASSIC PREPPY STYLE WITH VIBRANT COLORS. THE ONLY TIME YOU WANT TO FADE IN ON THE FAIRWAY IS ON A DOGLEG RIGHT. AT LEFT, HIS JACKET (\$175), SWEATER (\$58) AND POLO SHIRT (\$58) ARE ALL BY **IZOD LX**. YOU WON'T NEED A JACKET ON THE COURSE, BUT BRING ONE TO WEAR IN THE CLUBHOUSE. AT CENTER, HIS BLAZER (\$148), SWEATER (\$78) AND SHIRT (\$50) ARE ALL BY **J. CREW**. BOTH MEN'S POCKET SQUARES (\$65) ARE BY **BEST OF CLASS BY ROBERT TALBOTT**. AT RIGHT, HIS BLAZER (\$400) AND SHIRT (\$140) ARE BY **PECKERS**. SINCE GOLF HAS COME BACK INTO SWING, DESIGNERS HAVE TAILORED THEIR SPORTSWEAR TO BE MORE FUNCTIONAL. YOUR GRANDFATHER'S OLD SET OF WOODEN WOODS WON'T DO, AND NEITHER WILL HIS CLOTHES.





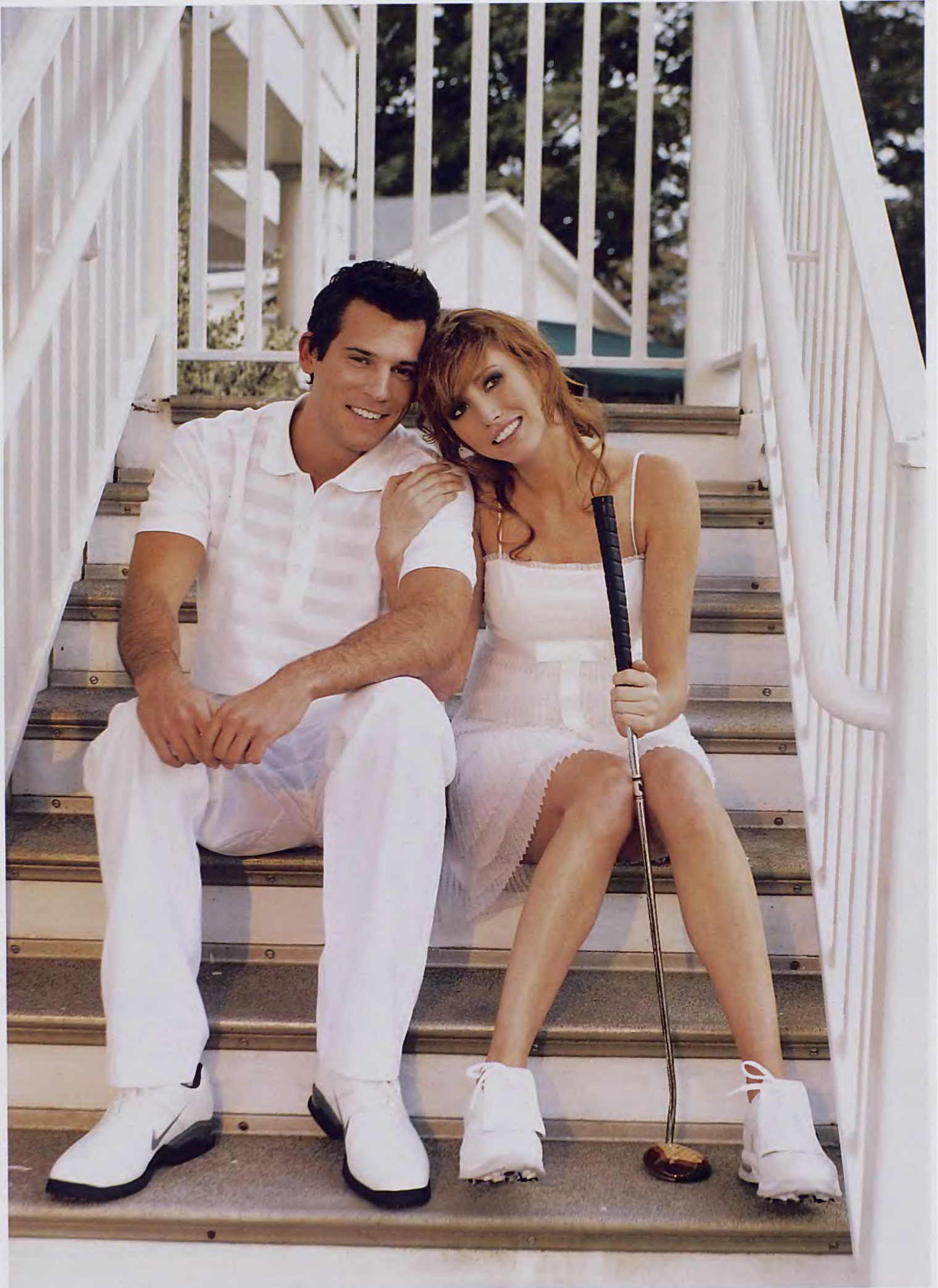
THIS PAGE: HIS SWEATER-VEST (\$590), SHIRT (\$430), PANTS (\$580) AND NEWSBOY CAP (\$250) ARE BY **Y'S YOHJI YAMAMOTO**. HIS GOLF SHOES (\$415) ARE BY **MEPHISTO**. HER SWEATER-VEST (\$150), SHIRT (\$70) AND SKIRT (\$150) ARE BY **J. LINDBERG**. HER SANDALS (\$205) ARE BY **BEVERLY FELDMAN**. OPPOSITE PAGE: AT TOP, HIS SWEATER-VEST (\$138), SHIRT (\$75) AND TROUSERS (\$196) ARE BY **J. LINDBERG**. HER DRESS (\$200) IS BY **BCBG MAX AZRIA**. HER SANDALS (\$150) ARE BY **BEVERLY FELDMAN**. AT BOTTOM LEFT, HIS JACKET (\$1,325), SWEATER (\$595), SHIRT (\$225) AND KHAKI PANTS (\$350) ARE BY **DUNHILL**. AT BOTTOM RIGHT, THE GOLFER KEEPING SCORE WEARS A JACKET (\$625), SWEATER (\$295), SHIRT (\$165), TIE (\$90) AND TROUSERS (\$295) BY **BOBBY JONES**. HIS BELT (\$75) IS BY **BEST OF CLASS BY ROBERT TALBOTT**. THE OTHER GOLFER'S JACKET (\$325), SWEATER-VEST (\$195), SHIRT (\$165) AND TROUSERS (\$195) ARE BY **BOBBY JONES**. HIS GOLF SHOES (\$120) ARE BY **ADIDAS**. HER JACKET (\$145) AND SHORTS (\$90) ARE BY **GANT**. HER SHIRT (\$65) IS BY **TOMMY HILFIGER GOLF**. HER SHOES (\$100) ARE BY **ETNIES PLUS**. ALL THE CLUBS ARE BY **LOUISVILLE GOLF CLUB COMPANY**.





THIS PAGE: HIS BLAZER (\$650), SWEATER (\$250) AND TROUSERS (\$280) ARE BY **C.P. COMPANY**. HER SHIRTDRESS (\$98) IS BY **TOMMY HILFIGER**, AND HER SCARF (\$175) IS BY **BEST OF CLASS BY ROBERT TALBOTT**. THE GOLF BAG (\$3,500) IS BY **GHURKA**. OPPOSITE PAGE: HIS POLO SHIRT (\$95) AND TROUSERS (\$145) ARE BY **BOSS GREEN**. HIS GOLF SHOES (\$130) ARE BY **NIKE**. HER DRESS (\$288) IS BY **BCBG MAX AZRIA**. HER GOLF SHOES (\$90) ARE BY **NIKE**. THE CLOTHES HAVE CHANGED SINCE GOLF RETURNED TO FASHION, AND NOW MORE WOMEN ARE ALSO ON THE COURSE. DRESS WELL, WIN THE GAME AND GET THE GIRL; YOU CAN'T TAKE A MULLIGAN ON YOUR LOOK.

WHERE AND HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 123.



IMPRESS HER WITH THE LAST THING SHE SEES BEFORE THE LIGHTS GO OUT

T BOXERS P

FASHION BY JOSEPH DE ACETIS / PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHUCK BAKER

When she asks to slip into something more comfortable, let it be a pair of your boxer shorts. His boxers are by **CHAPS** (\$19 for two); hers are by **VINEYARD VINES** (\$20).





The briefs' cut gives support but allows a free range of motion. His boxer briefs are by **GAP** (\$13); hers are by **PUMA** (\$28). All jewelry is by **SENGA**.



Because briefs are not billowy like boxer shorts, they are ideal to wear during the day under a suit and then at night at the gym. His boxer briefs are by **LEVI'S** (\$12).



His boxer briefs are by **DOLCE & GABBANA** (\$80). Hers are by **UNDER ARMOUR** (\$20) and have microfiber that wicks moisture away from the body.



His boxers are by **FAÇONNABLE** (\$35); hers are by **CALVIN KLEIN** (\$20). Her top is by **J. CREW** (\$15). If she puts on your underwear, have fun getting it back.





BY DAVID RENSIN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
VERONIQUE VIAL/CPI

HUGH LAURIE

THE ACTOR BEHIND DR. GREGORY HOUSE ISN'T REALLY
THE CRANKIEST MISANTHROPE IN AMERICA. HE JUST PLAYS ONE ON TV

Q1

PLAYBOY: Much has been made in the press of you, an English actor, doing an American accent so well on the medical drama *House*. Turn the tables: What execrable and painfully comedic American attempts at English accents do you remember?

LAURIE: I suppose at the top of every Englishman's list would be Dick Van Dyke in *Mary Poppins*. That would have to be construed as a virtual act of war. I think every Englishman assumed that the only justification for hiring someone that unsuitable to play a cockney chimney sweep was that he could dance like the wind. Sure enough, he did; the chimney-sweep sequence is magnificent. Years later I learned that Van Dyke had never danced before that movie. Of course, Audrey Hepburn is a peculiar case in *My Fair Lady*, given that the whole piece is about the nuances of language and dialect as well as being, to some extent, a satire on English snobbery. But I'm going to let it go. I think they're all noble efforts. My attitude has changed considerably now that I'm in that position myself.

Q2

PLAYBOY: Dr. Gregory House, the character you play, is probably the most sarcastic, antisocial curmudgeon currently on TV. Is he a hero?

LAURIE: House is a rather heroic figure. He's a man in search of some kind of

truth, whether it's scientific or psychological or whatever. And he is prepared to give up a lot, to make sacrifices to get there. Also he has no friends because of his dedication to discovering and telling the truth. I suppose that's sort of the definition of a hero.

Q3

PLAYBOY: How would Dr. House be received in England?

LAURIE: House wouldn't work transplanted to England. I don't think English writers like heroes outside of children's writing. Harry Potter is a hero, but I can't think of a hero in popular English fiction since James Bond. My own theory is that English writers are primarily motivated by revenge. They're taking revenge on the school bully or the teacher who didn't understand them or the first girl who wouldn't dance with them. I don't think the same is true of American writers. They write about people they like and admire and possibly even want to be. They write about their perfect selves.

Q4

PLAYBOY: House is described as the thinking woman's sex symbol. But really, why would anyone want to sleep with this guy or spend any time with him afterward? Can a damaged man be fixed?

LAURIE: That's an interesting question, but it's not the same as asking if a damaged man can be fixed by women having sex with him. Repeatedly. Why would they make that leap? I don't get it myself. I do think the character's funny. House gets some cracking one-liners, and I suppose that conveys the idea that he would be entertaining to spend time with—provided you weren't the butt of his attacks.

Q5

PLAYBOY: House has a pronounced limp. On the set, do you ever limp with the other leg just to drive the continuity people crazy?

LAURIE: I do actually limp with the other leg every now and then, but it's not to throw the continuity people off. It's to preserve some kind of pelvic symmetry, which is number one on my list of life goals. If I spend 15 hours a day throwing it out one way, I feel I have to redress the balance. My colleague Stephen Fry, back in England, volunteered to come on the show. He said, "I have no character ideas, but what if I had two limps?" I thought that would be an entertaining addition.

Q6

PLAYBOY: You came to America not knowing if *House* would be a hit or a flop. Had you made other plans? Do you feel trapped? *(continued on page 126)*



More than any other food, the oyster is better known for what it represents than for how it tastes. You could fill a dictionary with its connotations. Currency: The Romans paid for them with their weight in gold. Decadence: They didn't call them oyster palaces for nothing. Courage: "He was a bold man that first ate an oyster"—Jonathan Swift. Power: the young JFK slurping them down at Boston's Union Oyster House; FDR, George W. Bush and Dick Nixon making pilgrimages to Antoine's in New Orleans, where a portly chef dreamed up oysters Rockefeller in honor of John D. himself.

Don't get us started on the aphrodisiac thing. It's enough to note that in the seminal moment of sexual mythology, Aphrodite—the Greek goddess of love—rose from the Aegean, served raw on the half shell.

Today if you serve these tender sea-sweets at a gathering, you are making a statement. Power, decadence, arousal—now that's a party. Just handle them properly, as the little bivalves can be impetuous guests when they're not made to feel special.

For starters, head to a high-turnover seafood market and buy tightly closed oysters. If you're at all dubious, ask the monger to show you the FDA label. Every bushel has a government tag that certifies when the buggers came out of the drink and when they were shipped. The whole don't-eat-oysters-during-months-without-an-r warning had to do with sketchy refrigeration. Nowadays that's not an issue, but winter is still the best season, because the shellfish spawn in summer and get fatty and soft—as you will if you eat too many of them.

When choosing varieties, think of oysters as you would wine. Their taste and texture vary according to the species, how they're farmed and where they come from (their *terroir*, to use the oenological term). Briny, creamy, sweet—the profiles are different for each. Some of our favorites: creamy little Kumamotos and sweet Goose Points from the Pacific Northwest, briny and slightly metallic Belons from Maine and Nova Scotia, mild Malpeques from Prince Edward Island and sweet Island Creeks from Duxbury, Massachusetts, a favorite at top joints such as Per Se and Le Bernardin in Manhattan.

If you're serving oysters raw, don't wait until your guests show up to wrench them open. Do it ahead of time, then lay the half shells on a bed of ice, cover

a few pearls of wisdom on serving the most sensual food on earth

Oyster

CULT

By A. J. Baime

them with a cold, moist towel and put them in the fridge for up to an hour before you serve. No need for silverware—these bite-size hors d'oeuvres come with their own spoon.

Cocktail Sauce

No one knows who invented this classic, a sauce at home on four-star and crab-shack menus alike. Our house recipe:

- 1 cup ketchup
- 1 tsp. horseradish (from a jar)
- ½ tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- Tabasco to taste

Mignonette

The tart sauce preferred on raw oysters in France. Serve it in a ramekin with an espresso spoon.

- ½ cup red or white wine vinegar
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 1 dash cracked black peppercorns
- Salt to taste

Oyster Stew

This recipe comes from Sandy Ingber at the Grand Central Oyster Bar, one of the greatest lunch spots in New York, or anywhere, for that matter. Not including shucking time (you can also use canned oysters), this will take 10 minutes. Serves two.

- ½ cup clam broth or juice (canned is fine)
- 2 tbs. sweet butter
- ½ tsp. celery salt
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 12 shucked oysters with juice
- 4 cups half-and-half
- 2 slices white toast
- 2 tsp. sweet Hungarian paprika
- 2 pkg. oyster crackers

In a double boiler (or a metal bowl sitting over a pot of boiling water) combine clam broth or juice with butter, celery salt and Worcestershire. Once the butter has melted, add oysters and cook for 30 seconds, stirring constantly. Add half-and-half and cook for a few more minutes until the cream is just about to boil. To serve, lay a slice of white toast in a warm soup bowl. Using a slotted spoon, place oysters over the toast and pour the hot liquid over the top. Garnish with paprika and serve with a package of oyster crackers.

Oysters Rockefeller

The authentic recipe for this dish—created by Jules Alciatore at Antoine's in New Orleans at the end of the 19th century—is one of life's great mysteries. The folks at Antoine's have kept it a secret to this day. What follows is

a close cousin that Roy Alciatore (Jules's son) published in a *Life* magazine cookbook in the 1950s. Serves six.

- 6 tbs. butter
- 6 tbs. finely minced raw spinach
- 3 tbs. minced onion
- 3 tbs. minced parsley
- 5 tbs. bread crumbs
- ½ tsp. Herbsaint (or Pernod)
- ½ tsp. salt
- Tabasco to taste
- 36 fresh oysters on the half shell

Melt butter in a saucepan over medium heat, then add all the ingredients except oysters. Stir for 15 minutes. Place the mixture in a Cuisinart and have at it. Fill six pie tins with rock salt and set half a dozen oysters on each. Divide topping over oysters and broil until the tops brown.

Filet Mignon With Oyster Stuffing

You are the author of some heinous crime. It is the eve of your descent to the gallows. What are you going to have for dinner? A suggestion, courtesy of chef Brian Bistrong at the Harrison in Manhattan. Serves two.

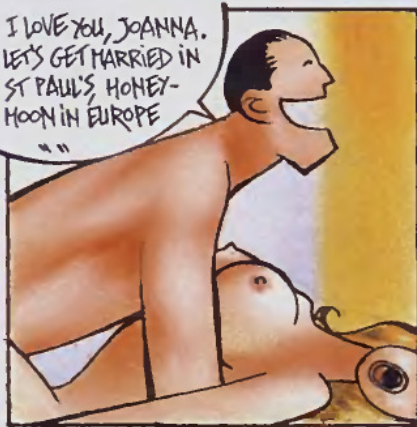
- Canola oil
- 12 shucked Wellfleet oysters (save the juice)
- 2 tbs. Wondra (or all-purpose flour)
- 2 shallots, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 cup porcini mushrooms, sliced
- 2 oz. dry vermouth
- Salt and pepper
- 1 cup croutons
- 2 tbs. parsley, chopped
- 2 tbs. chives, chopped
- 2 six-ounce filets mignons of the highest quality
- 1 cup red wine
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1 tbs. butter

Heat a nonstick sauté pan on medium high and add a little oil. Dredge oysters in Wondra, remove excess flour, then sauté for one minute. Set them aside. In the same pan, sweat shallots and garlic until golden. Add mushrooms and sauté for a minute, then pour in vermouth and oyster juice and season with salt and pepper. Chop oysters and throw them back in, along with the croutons. Stir, then allow to cool. Add half the herbs. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Make an incision in the side of each filet three quarters of the way through and spoon in as much stuffing as possible. Season filets with salt and pepper, then sear them in a clean sauté pan on medium high, two minutes each side. Put them on a baking tray and into the oven for five to eight minutes (rare to medium). Deglaze the sauté pan with wine and stock, reducing by half. Add butter, remaining herbs and excess stuffing. Plate a filet, then pour the sauce over.



From left: A cold Guinness stout, the classic oyster accompaniment in Ireland (unless you're in the south, where they prefer Murphy's). When it comes to wine, choose one with a tart, crisp acidity, which acts like a squirt of lemon on shellfish. A great Choblis, such as the 2002 Les Clos Grand Cru (about \$65), is a traditional choice. A fruity New Zealand sauvignon blanc is a more recent favorite; Cloudy Boy's 2004 (about \$28) is a winner. A muscadet from France's Loire Valley is a great bargain white with a lively, mineral-rich taste; try the 2004 Domaine de la Pepière Muscadet Sèvre et Maine sur Lie, Marc Ollivier (about \$10). Nothing pairs with oysters like champagne. A couple of great picks: the excellent Toitinger Comtes de Champagne Blanc de Blancs 1995 (about \$145) and the old and wonderful standby Veuve Clicquot Brut (about \$30).

Not So Different



JUAN ALVAREZ • JORGE GÓMEZ

A TASTE OF CURRY

The beautiful Adrienne Curry, served hot and spicy



By David Hochman

Adrienne Curry certainly knows how to make an entrance. At a sunny outdoor cafe near her home in Manhattan Beach, California, the towering brunette strides past the ladies who lunch, wearing a skintight thermal top and jeans that stop a few glorious inches below her waist. At a corner table she pops off her oversize black shades, throws down her handbag (clashed shut with a single metal handcuff) and promptly orders a sex on the beach. "Look out," she whispers with a wink and a smile. "White trash has infiltrated the land of the desperate housewives!"

Actually, Adrienne has a pedigree those fancy chicks would probably break a nail to possess. The suburban Chicago beauty was the first winner on *America's Next Top Model*, hosted by Tyra Banks; she followed that trick by scoring pop-icon status for hooking up with *The Brady Bunch*'s Peter Brady (Christopher Knight) on *The Surreal Life*. Faster than you could say "pork chops and applesauce," the couple had a popular reality series of its own, *My Fair Brady*, on which cameras chronicle the pair's wacky days living together in Knight's beach pad. That show's second season is about to air on VH1.

More than anything, though, Adrienne

Curry has gained a reputation for being, well, Adrienne Curry—an outspoken young woman with zero pretensions and a million opinions about sex, partying, lesbians, supermodels and just about everything else we enjoy thinking about. And as this particular afternoon unfolds and Adrienne's pink cocktails kick in, she delivers on that reputation.

"I'm very strong, and I've got some wild energy, which scares some guys off," she says, sucking on an ice cube. "But if you can keep up with me, I promise you'll be in for one hell of a ride."

It has certainly been a gonzo run since *Top Model*. Adrienne assumed her victory on the hit UPN series would translate into instant riches, but the modeling contract she won didn't pay off quite as she expected. Says Adrienne, "The only thing I won from *Top Model* was, like, \$300 and a one-way plane ticket to New York City, where I ended up standing in the street, going, 'Uhhh, what do I do now?'"

When the show became a sensation, Adrienne says, her contract bound her to bite her tongue. Before public appearances, her handlers would "throw all these diamonds on me and say, 'Tell everyone how rich you are!'"

From the beginning there were signs that supermodeling wasn't all it was cracked up

Above: Adrienne Curry (far left) with the original cast of *America's Next Top Model* and with fiancé Chris Knight (a.k.a. Peter Brady), with whom she currently stars on *My Fair Brady*. "We get elaborate and try everything," she says of her sex life with Knight. "Handcuffs, whatever."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
STEPHEN WAYDA





to be. Things were weird with Tyra Banks from the get-go. "I was flown out to New York, and I'm waiting around in my hotel room," Adrienne says. "In walks this woman with natty hair, looking like just another person, but she's telling me what to do. All of a sudden it hits me: That's Tyra Banks without a wig and makeup! That made me feel instantly better because I realized everybody looks like shit in the morning."

She says she and Banks aren't on the greatest terms. "I wrote her an ignorant letter after the show was over, which I regret because it was very immature. It went something like, 'I just spent my last dollar. Fuck you!'" But Adrienne says she learned plenty from the experience. "It was a wake-up call," she says. "I realized people will lie and walk all over you for self-gain if you're not careful."

Still, the modeling jobs she's done, including ours, have helped her self-image. "Before, I was insecure with my body," she says. "But after doing this it's like, Who cares? You're walking around in front of huge groups of people, buck naked. Now I feel comfortable with that. It's the most natural thing in the world."

Speaking of natural, Adrienne says she makes the most of her genetic talents even though it means working out two to three hours a day, six days a week. "I've lost 17 pounds since starting *My Fair Brady*," she says, flashing her perfect abs. "The only trouble is, my tits got smaller. Does that bother me? Not at all. My body's still bangin'. If I want big tits, I'll go out and buy them like everybody else in L.A. But why would I do that? They're too perky and perfect right now to mess with."

Adrienne is way too young to remember *The Brady Bunch*, but she'll catch a rerun now and then, and she laughs at the guy she is currently engaged to. "I just don't get it," she says. "He was such a twerp! He was this skinny, slimy, dweeby-looking kid. I can't believe I'm attracted to him. Even now the guy's three inches shorter than I am. Sometimes I ask myself, Shouldn't I be with a man I can look up to?"

But when Adrienne and Knight met on *The Surreal Life*, it was sort of a perfect union. "I'm 23, and Chris is 48 but acts as if he's 23, so it couldn't be better," she says, laughing. Case in point: When Knight first met Adrienne's mom, who is around his age, he said, "I'll marry your daughter when her communication skills catch up with her bedroom skills." Mom wasn't happy. Adrienne calls it

(text concluded on page 124)















See more of Adrienne at cyber.playboy.com.

DIARY

(continued from page 91)

Have I already mentioned that my memory is shot? I don't remember.

June 15. As a kid I experienced instances of natural fun whenever the Gypsies came to town. My grandmother saved the burlap bags potatoes came in and each year gave them to the Gypsies, who in turn sharpened all her butcher knives and fixed a coffee-pot with a broken handle. What a life! Roving caravans, dancing around a campfire to accordion and violin music. Crystal-ball visions of the future. One of the Gypsy elders took a shine to me and invited me to join up.

"Join up? Tonight? Let me think about it. I'm only five years old."

"Yes. Escape the ball and chain and come with us. It's a slacker lifestyle. The women do all the work."

I didn't go. I should have. Every time I think of it I kick myself in the ass.

My grandmother paid the fortune-teller 50 cents to tell her where she misplaced a cigar box filled with cash. The fortune-teller hit the nail on the head. It was a two-for-one deal. While my grandmother retrieved the cigar box, the Gypsy told me I would be jailed four times, fired from a number of jobs, mental hospitals, ambulances called, squad cars and ultimately 22 years as a custodian. Boy, did she ever hit the nail on the head.

June 16. Cough much worse. *Kaff, kaff, kaff, damn!* It's not the cough of acute bronchitis, which I have experienced seven times. It's a dry cough, which rules out pneumonia and cystic fibrosis. It's not lung cancer, with its telltale wheeze, lobar atelectasis with mediastinal shift, diminished expansion, dullness of percussion and loss of breath with pain and loss of weight. It could be Hand-Schuller-Christian disease. You will have a dry cough when you get that.

June 17. Dizzy. Head spinning, eyes whirling like pinwheels, smoke coming out of my ears. It feels like getting off the carnival Rock-O-Plane after a corn dog, a jumbo birch beer and a haystack of pink cotton candy.

June 18. Woke up okay. Blood pressure 115/64. Pulse 57. Blood sugar 89. The fever is down, but the cough dogs me. What if it is lung cancer? Fuck. Had to lie on floor and breathe into a brown paper bag.

June 20. Eat a bowl of alfalfa to bolster my waning immune system. Man, I'll never do that again. Decide to just fuck everything and ingest a large dose of ketamine. Paralyzed, I lie on the floor and watch my soul leave my body and fly to remote galaxies in outer space. Get real scared and try to reel my soul

in. A bad scene ensues. I am chased by a fleet of spaceships from the planet Mongo. Captain Torch at the wheel of the lead rocket ship. (Man, he hasn't aged well.) He shakes his fist at me, and I flip him the bird. Then I turn invisible, which is really draining. I bump into the Hubble Space Telescope and bruise my hip smashing the auxiliary lens into a thousand pieces.

June 22. I wake up with three ### floaters in my eye. When the nurse hands the phone to my ophthalmologist I overhear him saying, "What's wrong with poor Thom today?" I say I think little elves are in my eye typing on the back of my retina with an old portable Smith Corona typewriter. "Like with a faded ribbon," I tell him. When I explain this to him over the phone, this is what he says: "Look, Mr. Jones. You call me drunk at two in the morning. You call in the middle of Thanksgiving dinner. How many times have I found you sitting on the curb in front of my office as I drive in to work? Before I put the car into park you're banging on my window with some new bullshit symptom. I don't want to be your doctor anymore. Don't even come close to my office. I'm filing a restraining order against you, and I'm having my phone number changed."

June 28. I just noticed how yellow my teeth are getting. I brush them with Comet for a gleaming white smile.

June 29. Gums hurt. Scurvy? I eat four lemons and get a sour stomach. I take a Tagamet, Nexium and drink an entire \$2.95 bottle of Pepto-Bismol.

July 1. Constipated. Respite from diarrhea caused by Crohn's disease, finally.

July 5. Insomnia.

July 6. Insomnia. Completely haggard out.

July 7. I just can't sleep. Lay in bed and worry.

July 8. Toss, turn and mash pillows all night. Insomnia.

July 9. Will it never end? "The healthy man," writes E.M. Cioran, "only dabbles in insomnia: He knows nothing of those who would give a kingdom for an hour of unconscious sleep, those as terrified by the sight of a bed as they would be of a torture rack."

July 12. Twelve nights and not even a wink.

July 14. Haggard beyond belief. There is a variant of mad cow disease (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) that induces fatal insomnia. Dead in four to 12 months! Boy, I've eaten my share of burgers.

July 19. What if I were to fly to Africa, to a heavily infected tsetse fly zone, and contract sleeping sickness to counterbalance my affliction? Book a flight to Africa.

July 26. Try to read *Ulysses* and fall

into a five-day coma. Why didn't I think of that in the first place? I feel great!

July 27. Depressed again. Antidepressants should be called what they really are: hammers of despair. You can't sleep, you can't fuck, and your head feels like it contains 17 pounds of aluminum.

Labor Day. Tossing a football with my brother, I jump to catch a high pass and feel a lightning bolt shoot through my arm. Shoulder hurts so bad I can only tightly squeeze my elbow to my rib cage. Can't put on a shirt by myself.

September 5. Frozen shoulders are so rare, most people seldom hear of them. Twenty percent of the diabetic population gets them. A frozen shoulder is no day at the beach.

September 6. Insomnia again. The same old routine.

September 7. Born to suffer.

September 12. Acupuncture for shoulder. No go, nothing, zip. Just a big waste of time.

September 14. Rolfed by some Wavy Gravy chick who talked aromatherapy, e.g. the catfish flower.

September 16. Deep-tissue massage. Yet another flop.

September 20. The orthopedic surgeon attempts to break the shoulder capsule adhesions under anesthesia. "I couldn't do it," he says later. "I thought I was going to break your arm. Go to a pain clinic."

September 24. Pain clinic dispenses narcotics. "Not enough to get you high," the nurse says with a smile. Meanwhile, "the shoulder will only get worse. There is an osteopath you might try."

October 9. Facedown on the treatment table. Dr. Coors, osteopath and Spanish inquisitor, pulls my arm mercilessly. There are loud pops as he breaks the adhesions in the shoulder capsule. The pain is so bad I think my hair will catch fire. Coors says, "Come back tomorrow."

October 11. Facedown on the table I bite a hole through the Naugahyde, swallow a rusty spring and three wads of horsehair stuffing. Coors says, "We're beginning to get somewhere. We're making progress."

October 24. Lying in bed the evening after my third treatment I suddenly notice something. My God! For the first time in months my shoulder doesn't hurt. Ecstatic for a moment. Then I realize there's a disaster I'm currently unaware of that will announce itself with a thunderclap.

October 25. Boy, I sure hope I don't get bird flu.

October 26. Shoulder a lot better. Nothing to report except a hangnail on my anvil-crushed thumb. By and by it begins to feel like a cobra bite.



Dydini

"Three husbands, twice a mistress—sure I'll be your valentine."

October 27. Slept until four P.M. Thumb still bad. Why are we here? Just to suffer?

October 29. Elsa calls and says she saw the wolf again, hunkered down behind her woodshed. "It's an evil beast, Thom. I am so afraid. Why won't he leave me alone?"

October 30. Prostate trouble and a searing pain in my urethra. I take an Oxy-Contin and soak in a hot bath to relax.

November 1. Elsa tells me the five A.M. puker is still at it.

November 2. Took some Advil for my thumb. The Advil ignites a nuclear fireball in my stomach. Heartburn. The Channel 7 weatherman said there would be a meteor shower tonight. Outside for an hour and all I see are fizzlers. As a result, I get a sore neck and have to dig through the garage to find my cervical collar.

November 5. Elsa caught the dawn puker. Her immediate neighbor "just couldn't take it anymore."

November 9. I spring out of bed at noon, determined to accomplish great deeds. I tackle a raft of dishes, and through the kitchen window I see the farmer who lives behind me chuck-

ing fallen branches from his side of the fence over to mine. With him is the gray Norwegian elkhound Elsa has mistaken for a wolf. It is medium-size, about 50 pounds and wagging its tail to beat the band. I thank the farmer for the logs and tell him that with all that lumber I can finally build a meth lab. He looks at me and says, "You can kiss my ass!"

November 12. My diabetic toenails have evolved into hooves. Square them away with a rat-tail file.

November 15. Decide to use the business-class plane tickets I bought to Africa during my insomnia phase. They cost a small fortune; best I use them. All day packing. Wide-eyed and fearful. Another ghastly trip. What was I thinking?

November 16. Dawn limo to Sea-Tac, five hours to New York, two-hour lay-over, then an all-night flight to Heathrow, nine hours to Nairobi, drinking shooters. Arrive drunk. A pickpocket lifted my dummy wallet with my old driver's license, an expired library card and two bucks. Thank God for money belts, though mine was purchased during the Jimi Hendrix era. The psyche-

delic colors will be a big hit in Zambia.

November 17. Hitch a ride to the tsetse fly zone on the back of a sorghum truck. I arrive with my face pasted with red dust. Prostate trouble, a blowtorch in my dick, all 15 inches of it. Hop off the truck in a mud-and-wattle village. No hotel, no B&B, no TV, no McDonald's. Nothing.

November 18. Late afternoon. Fucking Christ, is it ever hot! I rent a room in the back of the OD Macaroni Factory.

November 19. I hate Africa.

November 20. I dug out a flea that had somehow burrowed under my thumbnail. There is a small fan over at the button factory. I rent a stall there. Mealie meal for breakfast, lunch and dinner. At least you don't get caught in a menu quandary.

November 21. The night watchman introduces me to Charles, a university student from Ethiopia who quickly makes himself at home in the stall across from my own. Charles shares a bucket of beer with me. In the light of a kerosene lantern we play cards all night. Lions roar in the distant jungle.

November 23. Bucket-of-beer hang-over persists. Charles constantly sprays himself with DEET. "Tsetse flies, man. Can't be too careful."

November 24. Drunk on palm wine at nine A.M. I buy a fish, oranges and a banana at the outdoor market. While the saleswoman bundles my purchase, I drop her baby and momentarily pass out on the road. Thankfully, the baby broke my fall.

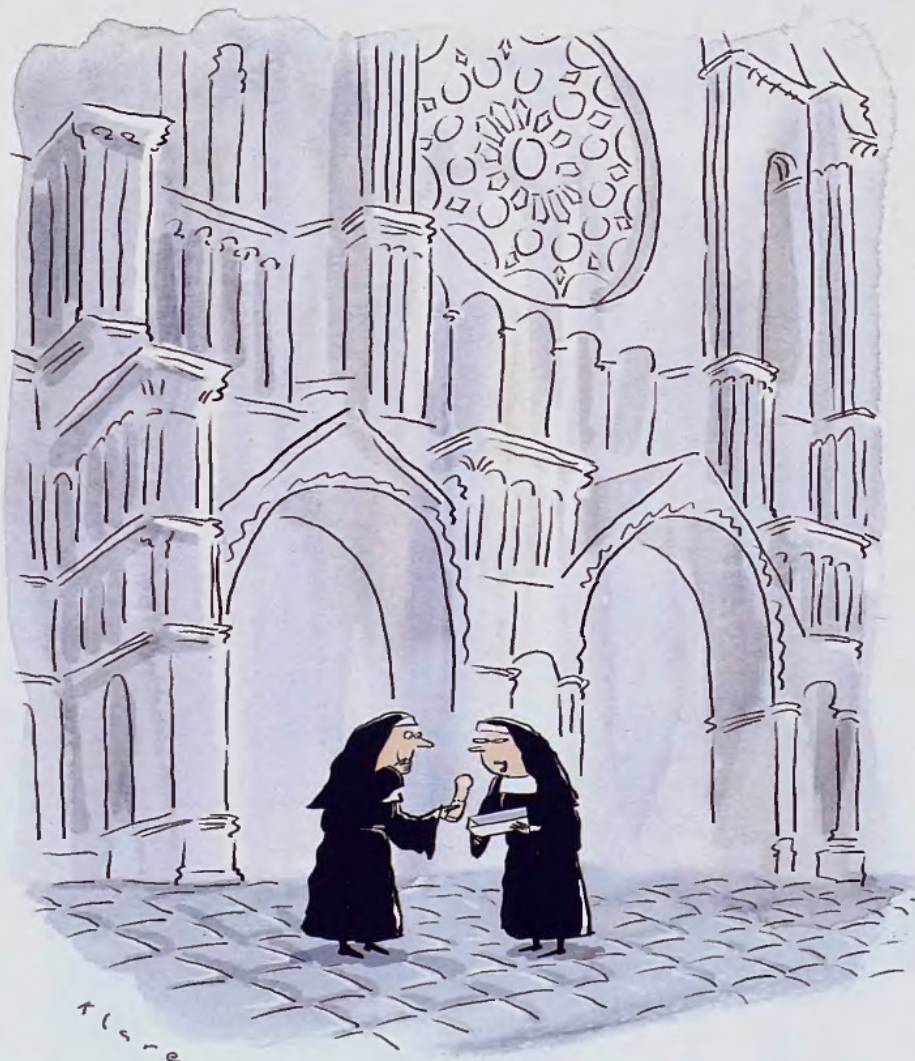
November 25. Tonight at dusk, as I walk back from the market, I step off the road to take a leak and, forgetting I am in Africa, disturb a jumping pit viper (*Porthidium mummifera*). It's a sturdy, short-tempered snake. This one strikes with such force, its husky body leaves the ground. It shoots past me faster than a left jab and sails deep into the roadside undergrowth. I pick up its Bolivian passport and wallet. Inside there's a picture of the snake's wife and children. There is also a letter. "My darling Estella, Africa is very bad. I have lost weight living on mice. I miss your shovel-shaped head, your hoot-shaped face, your gleaming fangs. Do you miss me at all? Why have you run off with Kenny Stabler?"

November 26. Oh God, I promise. I swear I will never drink palm wine again. Save me!

November 29. Venture into the bush with Charles and a new acquaintance, Sylvester. Chased by warthogs.

December 2. My stomach hurts low down. Sylvester says it's roundworms. "Eat a cigarette and it will die," he says. I wolf down a Pall Mall and become sicker than a dog.

December 3. I void a nine-inch tapeworm. That's odd. No wonder I'm so thin. Sylvester wants me to sponsor him to America. "Sell tapeworms to college girls," he says. "They can eat all they



"I call it Saint Peter."

want and stay thin. Make us millionaires."

December 11. Charles takes a Magic Marker and points a stake west to Seattle. The sign reads, HOME SWEET HOME THOMAS. I doubt I will live to see Seattle again. Another warthog runs through the village at dusk.

December 14. How come everything feels so much better when you're lying down? I'm really growing to love my little pallet at the button factory.

December 16. Sylvester won't lay off the tapeworm scheme. Now he's got Charles hot for the idea. I say, "American women, no matter how fat, won't swallow a thick white worm." "Yes they will," says Sylvester. "They will! What do you know anyhow?" Charles pipes in, "No worm to swallow, just a small vacuum-packed worm capsule. Just the ticket, man."

December 17. Charles drives me to a three-hut village packed with victims of sleeping sickness. They all look pale, like Michael Jackson. They aren't so much sleeping as they are "out of it."

December 19. The button-factory watchman tells me Charles and Sylvester made off with my passport. My mini-pharmacy? "Long gone, man. Fat man Jimi Hendrix belt gone too." I fall to the ground and kick at it and beat it with both fists. I chip a tooth on a rock. Send me a helicopter, God, and I swear I will never harbor a mean thought for the rest of my life.

December 23. Home just in time for Christmas. Three days in the Slumberking riding out a case of sandfly disease.

December 24. Christmas Eve. A stabbing pain in my foot. I hobble around bowlegged all day, like a busting-bronco cowpoke. I wrap Christmas presents. I can't get to the Slumberking fast enough. Beyond awful. I wonder what it's like to die. I'm sick all the time, but the final agonies must be worse. Yet so often I see old people smiling. Putting around their yard, smiling. Horseshoes and lawn bowling between chemotherapy, and still smiling. What is with that? They croak and an influx of new ones rushes in to replace them. On the plane home I saw a woman eight months pregnant, and she had a big-ass smile on her face. Was she just putting on a good show? Was she really thinking, "Why did I ever fuck that ex-con mentally retarded lowlife? Having this kid of his is going to hurt like hell, and I'll be a walking stretch mark. On top of it all I'll have a screaming kid on my hands night and day, living on welfare the next 20 years while the old man luxuriates in the penitentiary without a worry in the world. Man, could I ever use another hit of methedrine."

December 25. Birds chirping. The distant sound of puking in the bushes. Merry Christmas!

December 29. All I do is sleep. Jesus, I used to have time to do things, but now life revolves around Crohn's disease,

WHERE & HOW TO BUY

Below is a list of retailers and manufacturers you can contact for information on where to find this month's merchandise. To buy the apparel and equipment shown on pages 27, 31-33, 96-101, 102-103 and 154-155, check the listings below to find the stores nearest you.



GAMES

Page 27: *Electroplankton*, nintendo.com. *50 Cent: Bulletproof*, vugames.com.

Gun, activision.com. *Hammer & Sickle*, cdv.de. *King Kong*, ubisoft.com. *The Matrix: Path of Neo*, atari.com. *Need for Speed: Most Wanted*, ea.com. *Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones*, ubisoft.com. *True Crime: New York City*, activision.com.

MANTRACK

Pages 31-33: *Badrutt's Palace*, badrutts.palace.com. *Bar Briefcase*, unichahome.com. *Feel couch*, animicausa.com. *Flight Design*, flightdesignusa.com. *IWC*, iwc.com. *Richart*, richart.com. *Sony*, sonystyle.com. *Visconti*, visconti.it.

TEE IT UP

Pages 96-101: *Adidas*, adidas.com. *BCBG Max Azria*, 888-636-BCBG. *Best of Class by Robert Talbott*, roberttalbott.com. *Beverly Feldman*, beverlyfeldmanshoes.com. *Bobby Jones*, bobbyjonesshop.com. *Boss Green*, 800-HUGO-BOSS. *C.P. Company*, cpcompany.com. *Dunhill*,

800-776-4053. *Etnies Plus*, etniesplus.com. *Gant*, 212-813-9170. *Ghurka*, ghurka.com. *Izod LX*, available at Marshall Field's and Macy's. *J. Crew*, jcrew.com. *J. Lindeberg*, available at New York Golf Center, NYC. *Louisville Golf Club Company*, louisvillegolf.com. *Mephisto*, 800-637-4478. *Nike*, nikegolf.com. *Peckers*, 212-473-3980. *Tommy Hilfiger Golf*, tommy.com. *Y's Yohji Yamamoto*, yohjiyamamoto.co.jp.

TOP BOXERS

Page 102-103: *Calvin Klein*, cku.com. *Chaps*, available at Mervyns and Kohl's. *Dolce & Gabbana*, available at Dolce & Gabbana boutiques. *Façonnable*, available at Nordstrom. *Gap*, gap.com. *J. Crew*, jcrew.com. *Levi's*, levi.com. *Puma*, available at Puma retail stores nationwide. *Senga*, sunshine7gd@yahoo.fr. *Under Armour*, underarmour.com. *Vineyard Vines*, vineyardvines.com.

POTPOURRI

Pages 154-155: *The Art of Shaving*, theartofshaving.com. *Coldpoles*, coldpole.com. *44° North*, available at fine liquor stores. *Kama Sutra*, kamasutra.com. *Nike*, nike.com. *Omni*, sumolounge.com. *Roku*, rokulabs.com. *Snow kites*, ems.com. *Sunlight Saunas*, sunlightsaunas.com.

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prostate trouble, heartburn, epilepsy, a hundred million problems.

January 27. Feel deathly ill. I spend the entire day on the Slumberking. Every once in a while I have to sit up and look at the callus on my foot.

January 28. I pick at the callus with a small knife. The pain is unbearable. I can't get anything done. I just hobble from one room to the next looking for stuff I have misplaced.

January 29. A sharp triangle of glass begins to emerge from the callus. I finally dig it out with my knife. It is a dime-size piece of amber beer-bottle glass. My senior year in high school I was wading in Aurora's Mastodon Lake and stepped on something sharp. The foot bled copiously. The next day red streaks were working their way up my leg. My doctor gave me antibiotics. From then on, touching that spot with a fingertip sent me flying through the ceiling. It was a lot like stepping on a punji stick. Glass doesn't show up on X-rays. I had to order custom-made shoes from plaster of paris molds. The shoes looked like Frankenstein boots. People ridiculed

them openly. I learned how to find normal shoes that would accommodate the sore spot. After 42 years the glass works its way out. Amazing!

February 5. No matter how you cut it, it hurts to die. Asphyxiation is usually involved. With type 1 diabetes I will most likely have a stroke or fatal heart attack. Get out of the easy chair to take a whizzer and "Ahhhh!" *Ka-plop*. Two weeks later firemen will break inside trying to find the cloying odor that has the neighborhood up in arms. "Jesus, will you look at that? His head is bigger than a pumpkin! I wonder how they will ever squash him into a coffin."

So there you have it. The aeons of nonexistence, birth, Shakespeare's seven ages of man (which boil down to years of suffering in various forms), dreams that seldom come true and just enough good stuff to keep you going. Then death and the foreverness of all eternity, painless and carefree. No more problems. No demonic tortures. Just nothing, pure and simple. How can you top that?

HERE LIES THOM JONES RIP
HE PACKED 2,000 YEARS OF AGONY
INTO THE SUBSTANDARD 62



ADRIANNE CURRY

(continued from page 112)

"one of the worst moves I've ever seen a member of the male species make."

Yet the couple is obviously doing something right. Adrienne has one theory. "The good thing about dating an older guy like Chris is that he's past the slut stage," she says. "He's screwed everything with legs twice, and now he's done. The only thing is, even though he's in great physical shape, he gets tapped out sometimes."

Meaning?

Adrienne orders another sex on the beach. "Well, there are some things I can't divulge," she says, "but our sex life is definitely not boring. If you hook up with a guy in his mid-40s who has had the same Suzy Homemaker sex his whole life, you're gonna blow his fucking mind. I'm a very imaginative girl."

Hmm. Okay. Meaning?

"I'm a freak and an exhibitionist," she says. "We get pretty elaborate and try everything—handcuffs, whatever. But even role-playing can get boring. That's why we're having Suzy Homemaker sex this week."

Those desperate housewives have mostly cleared out of the cafe, and Adrienne feels free to open up about her past.

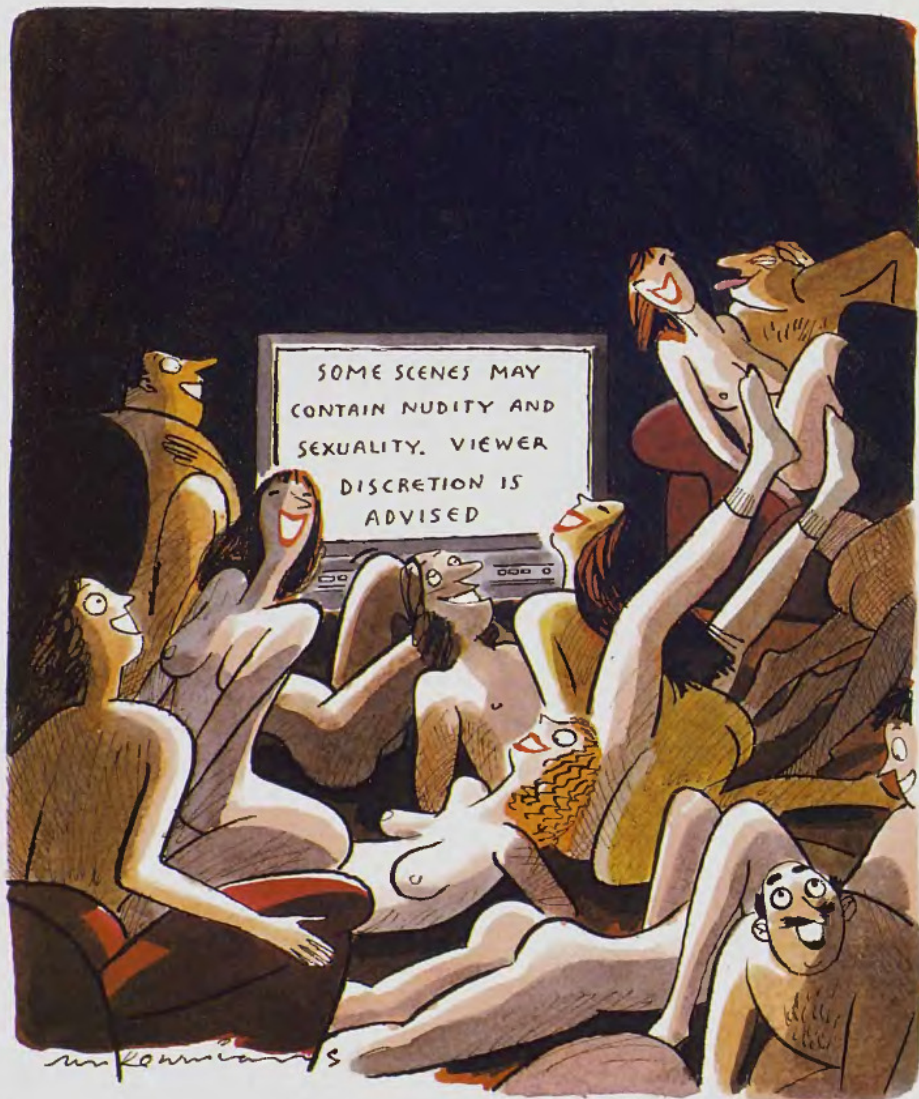
"I used to be a major tomboy and was totally embarrassed about my looks," she says. "Back in the Kurt Cobain days I was always hiding behind flannel. Nobody ever saw my body. But I remember a high school field trip. I had a bikini with a white T-shirt over it, and when I jumped out of the pool all the guys were like, 'Hey, Curry, you're frickin' hot.'"

The boys weren't the only ones. "Women have always been into me, and I was definitely into women for a long time," she says. "But women are worse to date than men. I feel bad for guys because women are catty, gossipy, bitchy, jealous. That's why if I'm walking down the street with Chris and I see a nice pair of tits, I'll point them out before he can even say something. I don't want to be the kind of girl who says, 'I can't believe you're checking out somebody else's tits!'"

Not that Knight doesn't have his jealous moments. "We went to see Lynyrd Skynyrd, and afterward I asked the band to sign my lower back," she says. "But there are so many of them that it quickly went south, and Chris was like, 'They are not signing your ass, Adrienne.'"

Then there's the reaction she gets from her buttoned-up Manhattan Beach neighbors. Adrienne says, "They see me on the beach with my thong, and I'll hear, 'Hey, put a wrap on. This is a family beach.' I mean, what do they think every night when we're fucking with the windows open and everyone's hearing it?"

Great question. We'll send a reporter over there right away to do a thorough investigation.



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HUGH LAURIE

(continued from page 105)

LAURIE: In a way I feel like a hostage to fortune. Not that I'm complaining. I wanted to play the role. But in truth I didn't think the show would be such a success. Okay, I thought it would fail. Not because it was bad. I was confident it was good, but plenty of good things just sort of wither on the vine. I thought I would have an enjoyable and interesting three weeks of filming in Toronto and maybe I'd end up with a one-hour tape I could show my friends and be proud of. But I absolutely did not imagine we would now be making our 32nd show only 18 months later. Inconceivable. I've never in my life looked that far ahead. I work maybe 36 hours ahead, maximum. What happens after that, I haven't a clue. Anybody who says, "Maybe we'll see each other next week," well, I'll agree to anything if it's next week. Fly to Kathmandu? Yeah, absolutely. Put me down. I'll be there.

Q7

PLAYBOY: Why is there a convulsion in every episode? What gives you convulsions?

LAURIE: Convulsions are cinematic, whereas strokes are silent, deadly assassins that simply result in, well, basically nothing. I'm going to stand up for the convulsion. Too much politeness gives me convulsions. I think of myself as a reasonably polite person. I say please and thank you; I try to be on time and dress appropriately for the occasion—you know, the basics. But too much politeness makes me jittery—oppressive politeness, people springing to their feet every time someone comes in, people overlapting. I start to twitch.

Q8

PLAYBOY: At home in England you enjoyed government-supported health care. Could Dr. House work for the National Health Service?

LAURIE: This is a problem. I believe not. The show would be too different. No show about the National Health Service can be confined to the treatment of a single patient's case; it has to be about the crisis of the health service itself. The National Health Service, I think, is the biggest employer in Britain. It may be one of the biggest employers in the world. Yet it's always thought of as a sinking ship or a building on fire. So anyone who treats the subject has to treat the crisis: There's not enough money and not enough beds, and how are we going to do this? This is long before you get to the patient, of course. In fact, instead of getting to the patient, the whole show is about how we can't get to the patient. In every show the patient dies in the corridor. Never even

gets into the room. "We can't afford a room, damn it! We sold off the rooms."

Q9

PLAYBOY: Do you wish you'd bought stock in companies that manufacture rubber gloves?

LAURIE: I get very upset by people just idly tossing off rubber gloves after every take. We have 20 people in a shot doing a surgical procedure, and by the time we finish shooting the scene we might have gone through 200 pairs of rubber gloves. I find that upsetting, so I try to recycle on the set. Getting them off is fine. Getting them on in less than 20 minutes is very tricky. The way to do it, since they tend to come off inside out, is to blow into them. Then you can invert them. I'm convinced that real patients have died on the operating table while the doctor was going, "Damn it! The fucking thing!" The patient's monitor goes *beeeeeeeep*, and the doctor says, "Oh well, at least I was sterile."

Q10

PLAYBOY: Jane Austen or *Austin Powers*?

LAURIE: That's close. There's no good answer, no winning here. There are invisible masses in Austen—domestic servants, farmworkers, just invisible people to her. I always felt that the maze of butlers and footmen gets a pretty raw deal from Austen. Not that *Austin Powers* is a valuable social document—or maybe it is in some ways, as a piece of reporting. I'm going to have to go with Austen, but I do it reluctantly.

Q11

PLAYBOY: Let's play English-American dictionary. Define for us these terms: *fop*, *twit* and *twat*.

LAURIE: Don't you have fops over here? A fop is a man unhealthily obsessed with appearance. Decorative but ineffectual. Do you use the word *panty-waist*? A twit is a fool, an ass. It's not that derogatory. It refers to someone who is foolish but not necessarily malevolent. There are worse things to be than a twit. *Twat* is one of those odd words that actually mean vagina, but some people who are unconscious of that connection use it to mean fool, jerk, prick—they use it as a softer version of *prick*. They think *twat* is permissible in polite company, which it isn't, really. By the way, I'm constantly confused by the difference between the English and American *quite*. They're almost opposite. Americans seem to use *quite* to mean very, exceptionally, extremely. "Your tie is quite nice." If an Englishman said that, it would mean your tie is so-so. If someone says, "I saw the show last night. It was quite good," I think, Oh, what the hell did we do wrong? I have to remind myself.

Q12

PLAYBOY: What's happening on the soap opera *House* watches?

LAURIE: Whoever makes *General Hospital* wouldn't give us the rights, so we had to create our own soap opera. I'm not a soap opera person, but my brother has never in his adult life missed an episode of the BBC Radio soap opera *The Archers*, which has run for more than 50 years. My brother was for many years a farmer. I could see the appeal of that life, but one problem is that it doesn't end. Christmas Day, New Year's Day, your birthday—whatever it is, animals have to be fed, the potatoes have to be dug. That doesn't suit me. I like endable things. I like paragraphs. I like chapters. I like periods.

Q13

PLAYBOY: You climb in the boxing ring now and then. Describe the Zen of boxing for humility and fitness. And when in real life would you throw the first punch?

LAURIE: Never. I'm not even sure I could throw a punch in an actual boxing match. I sparred last week. One of the interesting things about sparring, about boxing, is discovering the barrier you have in your own mind to trying to hit someone. You've got all the problems of trying to stop him from hitting you and various technical things to deal with. But there comes a point when you miss a chance to hit someone because you hesitated, because it is in one's nature—or in one's culture—not to punch someone. Boxing is what it is, and you have to get over that. The most interesting aspect of boxing is the sheer science of it. To people who haven't had much experience, it looks like two guys just flailing around in a ring. It's far from that.

Q14

PLAYBOY: Why is there so little hand washing on *House*? After all, it's a medical show. How often do you wash your hands?

LAURIE: Not often, although the smell of rubber gloves is a little invasive, so I wash my hands after using them. It is odd, this nonwashing. But in set-building terms, it's immensely tiresome to have people washing their hands because instead of using fake sinks or basins, builders have to actually plumb them. That takes a lot of man-hours. They'd much rather not do it if they can avoid it.

Q15

PLAYBOY: How big is Dr. House's cane? Do you ever let anyone else hold it?

LAURIE: As big as it has to be and no bigger. The prop guy holds it. They've almost had to dedicate a guy to watching the cane because I have this habit of putting it down somewhere, and then we have this terrifying moment when someone goes, "Who's got the cane?" and I can't

remember where I put it. If you delay shooting for even five seconds, you're wasting money. And if you delay for five minutes, that's a lot of wasted money.

Q16

PLAYBOY: We've heard that the butler icon for the Ask Jeeves search engine may undergo an image overhaul. Where do you stand?

LAURIE: An American journalist asked me some question that implied he thought everybody in England had butlers. I said, "Of course. But in America that can't be true. Half the country has butlers; the other half are butlers." He was kind of baffled by this and asked, "Where did the butlers come from?" But I guess now no one has any kind of familiarity with that, so it would probably be the right decision to get rid of Jeeves.

Q17

PLAYBOY: You're a Clint Eastwood fan. Does he influence your acting?

LAURIE: I grew up in the shadow of *Dirty Harry*. Yes, I can't deny it. *House* has elements of *Dirty Harry* in the medical world. There was that line "That's the one thing about Harry: He doesn't play any favorites. Harry hates everybody."

That seems applicable. I can't say I modeled *House* on him, but it amuses me to think of the similarities.

Q18

PLAYBOY: Have you ever asked why your character is named Dr. House?

LAURIE: I think there is some intent to make a sly allusion to Sherlock Holmes. If they were going to make it direct, they would have gone with *Houses* rather than *House*, but *Houses* is not really a believable surname.

Q19

PLAYBOY: You were shooting the movie *Flight of the Phoenix* in the desert when you got the call to audition for *House*. How much fun can you have with sand? What did you discover about it that you didn't know?

LAURIE: We were making a movie about people abandoned in the middle of nowhere. One night about four of us were sitting on top of a 100-foot dune, looking at the moonlight, and we decided to somersault all the way down. I went first, got to the bottom and suddenly said, "My wedding ring is gone." The other guys were already tumbling down, and I yelled, "Stop! I've lost my wedding ring." It was

dark, two o'clock in the morning. You immediately think if it's anywhere near you and you move, you're going to bury it. The four of us started searching, and within about 20 seconds one of the guys halfway down the dune yelled, "Is this it?" I said, "Of course it is. How many wedding rings are you going to find here?"

No surprises about sand for me. It should be kept in those little glass egg timers. It's good for cooking eggs; that's all.

Q20

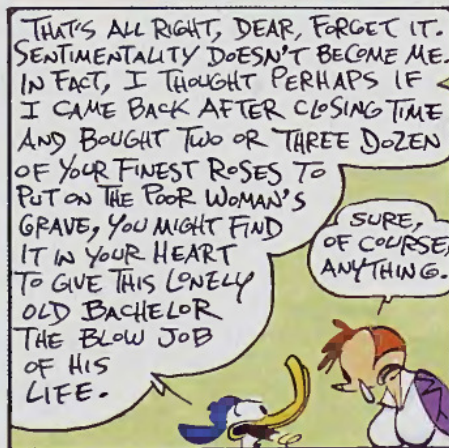
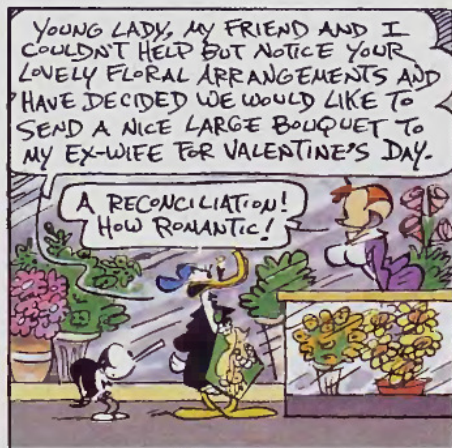
PLAYBOY: House's motto is, Everybody lies. What do you lie to yourself about?

LAURIE: That I'm doing this for a living. I keep thinking that I'm playing around, that I'm finding my feet and getting ready to pick and commit to a career. The truth is, I've been doing this for 25 years. I lie to myself that I don't take it seriously, when actually I do. I don't think I lie to other people. It's only to myself that I'm going, Oh well, I'll give it another six months; if it doesn't work out, I'll become a vet. But this is my job. I've got to face that one day.



Dirty Duck

by Bobby London



AL FRANKEN

(continued from page 46)

started off by saying that anything Clinton did, it would do the opposite. Bush felt Clinton was too involved in the Middle East. He felt Clinton paid far too much attention to Al Qaeda. Even things that were unquestionably successful, such as vesting FEMA with more money and authority, the Bush administration wouldn't do simply because Clinton had done them.

PLAYBOY: Bush certainly altered Clinton's policy of close engagement in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

FRANKEN: But now we're more hands-on there than we were when Bush took office. Arafat's death was a huge development. Let's just hope, because anytime something encouraging in that region happens, it blows up in our face. It's great that Ariel Sharon pulled out of Gaza. That pullout was ultimately pretty peaceful—emotional but not violent. I'm pro-Israel, but I believe it has definitely had a hand in exacerbating the situation over the years. It has to recognize that in having been given a Jewish homeland, it has taken land from people, and I think it has contributed to the cycle of violence.

PLAYBOY: In *The Truth (With Jokes)* you predict that in 2008 Al Franken will win a Senate seat, the Democrats will win a huge congressional majority and a "unity Congress" will be formed with a few good Republican members. What in the world are you thinking?

FRANKEN: It's a grand new design. We Democrats will control both the House and Senate, but we'll have some Republicans who are not jerks chairing committees. Jim Leach would be banking chair. He's a professorial type I've gotten to know because I have an interest in the Community Reinvestment Act, which makes sure that banks lend money to people who have been historically denied capital—minorities, women and the poor—so they can buy homes and start businesses. Leach has also been one of the few Republicans who has wanted to investigate war profiteering. I'd keep McCain. He'd be commerce committee chairman. Lindsey Graham is the only Republican talking about raising the amount of income subject to Social Security taxes. According to my scenario the Republicans who remain will come from very red districts or will have made their peace with the fact that Bush has been a disaster. I'm not saying we'd give them a lot of chairmanships. This is ridiculous fantasizing, by the way.

PLAYBOY: Care to dream on about your version of a "morning in America" for liberals?

FRANKEN: We will start to prevail. Nothing changes Washington like one good presidential election. We have some great leaders. Hillary will be a great

leader. Barack Obama is a great leader. Eliot Spitzer is a great leader.

PLAYBOY: Your account of the 2008 presidential race pointedly excludes mention of the gender of the Democratic winner. Is that a not so coy reference to Hillary?

FRANKEN: I think she will make a run for it and get the nomination. The joke is that I avoid the issue. I just say we have this incredibly talented and visionary nominee. But a lot of good candidates may run against Hillary. Kerry might run again. Bill Richardson, governor of New Mexico and a former UN ambassador, energy secretary and member of Congress, might run. He has a wealth of experience. John Edwards will run again.

PLAYBOY: Republicans will certainly do their best to derail the Franken scenario.

FRANKEN: But who do the Republicans have? They can't nominate McCain, because the conservative wing of the party doesn't like him. And unless they nominate McCain, they lose.

PLAYBOY: Why did you write *Rush Limbaugh Is a Big Fat Idiot?* Were you thinking of getting into politics then?

FRANKEN: I got mad. After I did the White House Correspondents' Association dinner in 1994, the publisher of the Stuart Smalley book said I should write a political book. I agreed to do it before the Republicans won Congress in 1994. That started the Gingrich revolution, which was really about dismantling large parts of the government and the safety net. I saw the book as a serious venture. I was the first to capture the frustration and hatred toward the Gingrich revolution and Limbaugh specifically, because he was Gingrich's spokesperson. I wrote an attack in a way no one else had, which was to write nutritional candy. It's fun to read, and it's good for you. I put out information other people don't put out, because I have researchers. My work, dare I say, is provocative, touching and funny. It sounds immodest, but I now have a brand name in political satire.

PLAYBOY: The troops in Iraq enjoy widespread support at home even though many oppose the war. That certainly distinguishes the Iraq war from the Vietnam war, during which esteem for the military was quite low. Can you account for the change?

FRANKEN: People have learned a lot. The Vietnam war wasn't the soldiers' fault. During that war, I never called soldiers baby killers. Kissinger and Nixon were the targets. I think virtually everyone in this country supports our troops.

PLAYBOY: You have a way to go to catch up with Bob Hope as a USO entertainer, but you're a regular on the overseas circuit.

FRANKEN: I've completed six trips, three of them to Iraq. I go where the USO tells me to go. We were told we were going to do a show at Abu Ghraib. This was well after the prisoner abuse scandal, and the

men and women there deserve recognition that they are not the ones who did that. The sergeant major of the Army, its highest-ranking noncommissioned officer, was with us. So the commander of the base said, "Let's give a warm Abu Ghraib welcome to the sergeant major of the Army." He said it with no irony, which struck me as just hilarious. And I got a nice warm Abu Ghraib welcome too. I had an older guy come up to me and say, "I'm totally against your politics, but thanks for coming." I did a bit in the show when I said, "Let's face it, we have gay soldiers serving honorably. Let's get rid of that ridiculous don't-ask-don't-tell thing right now." And I pointed to one guy. "You, you're gay. We all know it." Everyone laughed. Of course, he committed suicide after the show.

PLAYBOY: We know you're joking, but that leads us to wonder how someone with your political bias and edgy sense of humor gets tapped for stand-up at Abu Ghraib.

FRANKEN: During the Clinton administration, Secretary of Defense Bill Cohen asked me to go to Kosovo, Bosnia, Germany and various bases in Italy. The USO is totally nonpartisan. Part of its purpose is to show these soldiers that, unlike during the Vietnam war, Americans of all stripes support them. It's very gratifying, and it's sometimes very sad for me. You go to the hospitals and talk to kids. I talked to a guy who wasn't going to make it, but they didn't tell him that. I think he may have known it. He had been shot in the throat. He couldn't talk. I just talked to him. Tears were in his eyes. His buddies were behind him. What makes me angry is that none of the guys who got us into this war served in combat. People will say it's a better world because Saddam Hussein is gone, and it probably is. But is it worth the treasure we've spent and the blood we've spilled?

PLAYBOY: Harvard graduates appear to be overrepresented in the comedy business. As an alumnus, can you account for the phenomenon?

FRANKEN: A lot of the best and the brightest decided to write for *The Simpsons* instead of managing our Southeast Asia policy. It's partly because of *The Harvard Lampoon*. I wasn't part of the *Lampoon*; I was a math nerd, but I was in the so-called theater house at Harvard. I was able to do shows there, and I opened a cabaret or nightclub at Harvard where I did stand-up. Nixon was funny. Campus unrest was funny. Tom Davis stayed in my room at Harvard for a term. We started working together in high school, doing funny announcements in chapel assemblies at Blake, a private school in Minnesota. All the campus groups wanted us to do their announcements. Then we worked together for years and years.

PLAYBOY: Harvard to *Saturday Night Live*—good career move?

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FRANKEN: Tom and I were performing at the Comedy Store in Los Angeles. We were approached by an agent who asked if we were interested in writing for TV. We were broke, so we said sure. We put together a portfolio for a show that we would have liked to see on TV but that didn't exist at the time. Our being hired from the portfolio made me think this was going to be a very different show. It was the big time. I felt faint. First of all, they picked Tom and me. Maybe because of youthful arrogance or some understanding of what was going on, I thought the show would be a big hit. Then I started meeting people: Michael O'Donoghue, Chevy Chase and Gilda Radner. I had met John Belushi before. I was afraid of Lorne Michaels, who had given us this great opportunity. There was nothing fearsome about him; it was his position. He had hired us for only six weeks. Tom and I worked our butts off.

PLAYBOY: Did the charged atmosphere of the SNL writers' room hone your appetite for debate?

FRANKEN: It made me appreciate the benefits of a room where no one held back, where people could be extremely, biting, cruelly critical of each other but in a way that was also good-natured. The more you could savage someone else's piece in a constructive way, the funnier it was. Everybody had to have a thick skin.

PLAYBOY: The mainstream media regularly reports the political jokes of Letterman, Leno and Stewart. Are too many people getting their news from late-night television?

FRANKEN: Those who are likely to vote are getting their news from Jon Stewart. *The Daily Show* is different from traditional late-night talk shows. The others have a superficial quality. Still, if Leno or Letterman makes fun of

you, you're in trouble. With Clinton, it was first that he ate a lot and then that he was getting blow jobs. But *The Daily Show* is very sharp about the way political news is presented. Stewart has picked good people. Their politics are liberal, but they're careful not to have a dog in the race. In the 15 years I was at SNL we were very careful not to have a dog in the race. When I left the show in 1995, I felt free to express my own political viewpoint.

PLAYBOY: Do you feel *Saturday Night Live* maintains your legacy of political humor?

FRANKEN: I like "Weekend Update," and I like Tina Fey. I'm disappointed in some of their political stuff. It's more superficial. The cast and writers are not political junkies in the same way we were.

PLAYBOY: What was your involvement with "Weekend Update"?

FRANKEN: I helped pick Dennis Miller. I wanted to do "Weekend Update" after he left. Kevin Nealon was chosen and did a good job. Finally Kevin left, and the Norm guy got it. I felt I'd earned it just by virtue of years of service to the show. I think the decision wasn't fully Lorne's. I'm not in a position to say what the case was. I was disappointed, and I left the show after that, in 1995. Norm Macdonald did a great job. I thought I'd be at SNL doing "Update" for several years, which ended up not happening, so I tried to develop a career in something else. The movie *When a Man Loves a Woman* helped my screenwriting career. The utter commercial failure of the Stuart Smalley movie hurt it. It gave me the strong feeling I'd never star in a movie again.

PLAYBOY: *When a Man Loves a Woman* was a serious film about addiction and recovery that you co-wrote. Was that a change of pace after years of writing for laughs?

FRANKEN: It started out as a dramedy. What I thought was funniest about codependency was that a codependent acts out as much as a drug addict or an alcoholic. I figured the journey of the codependent realizing that he's as sick as the alcoholic would be a great movie. It went through the dehumorizer.

PLAYBOY: Were you disappointed with that?

FRANKEN: Yes and no. It was successful. I'm proud of the movie, and I'm told it's shown as an instructive film by rehab counselors and therapists. They also show *Stuart Saves His Family*. Stuart Smalley was born as this character who at first blush seems like an idiot but who has a lot to teach through his vulnerability. It was a way for me to talk about recovery and 12-step programs. I started doing it on SNL. I'd gone into Al-Anon, which is for friends and family members of alcoholics. Tom will say that I thought he had a problem. We broke up over that. We're good friends, and every once in a while he performs on my show. Again it was nutritional candy. My wet dream



"Gee—flowers, candy and jewelry...and I don't have anything for you!"

is that when Limbaugh was in rehab, he was made to watch *Stuart Saves His Family* with his wife.

PLAYBOY: We take it you have a great deal of affection for the Stuart character.

FRANKEN: I love Stuart Smalley, and I love doing him. Occasionally he appears on the radio show. He is a caring nurturer but not a licensed therapist, which he is very careful to explain because it's powerful stuff. Stuart is the one character I've wanted to do commercials with. He's a perfect character to do commercials for frozen waffles.

PLAYBOY: Not long ago Tom Davis remarked that Al Franken wants to be president of the United States.

FRANKEN: I don't want to be president. He might have said the same about my wanting to play center field for the Yankees.

PLAYBOY: How serious are you about running for the Senate?

FRANKEN: I won't make a decision about that until 2007. After the Limbaugh book a lot of people told me I should run for office because I know a lot about politics, am fairly articulate, have been married once and am very good-looking. I thought it would be funnier to write a book about my thinking that I should run for office. *Why Not Me?*, in which I run for president, is my funniest book. It's fictional. It didn't do particularly well, but every one of my failures has a cult following.

PLAYBOY: Assuming you do run for office, where will Republicans hit you hardest?

FRANKEN: They'll print my interruption from the beginning of this interview. "He slept with a Playmate." Then it'll be "Franken has no government experience. Franken was raised in Minnesota, but he spent most of his adulthood outside the state." When I lived in New York I considered myself a Minnesotan and a New Yorker. Now I consider myself a Minnesotan.

PLAYBOY: You admit to having used cocaine during your *SNL* years.

FRANKEN: Yes. When I was young and irresponsible, I was young and irresponsible. But we know the president used cocaine, because he basically

admitted it. If people were okay with Bush doing it, I'm not sure why what I did in my youth would matter. Also I've written two movies about addiction disease—more about alcoholism than chemical dependency—both of which are shown in rehab programs. I know a lot more about this area and have better ideas for what we should do about drugs than most political figures in this country. The way the drug war is being waged is ridiculous. There are people who have been in prison for way too long. We don't prepare people to make a transition into society after prison so they can lead productive lives without going back to crime.

PLAYBOY: That sounds like a bite from a forthcoming stump speech.

Rochester and over to Mankato and up to St. Cloud.

PLAYBOY: And no doubt you've versed yourself in local issues.

FRANKEN: I would push for wild-rice labeling. That's important, because the wild rice that's marketed as wild rice isn't real wild rice. Minnesota Indians had that right in a way, and they lost it. The labeling of wild rice is a political issue. That's one of the reasons I'm looking at running for the Senate—because you can do lots of things like that. Franni and I have been sent wild rice. We haven't cooked it yet.

PLAYBOY: If elected to the Senate, you know constituents will call Al Franken to help them solve problems.

FRANKEN: It's important. You make sure

your office knows that veterans' benefits and Social Security checks are priorities. Then there's facilitating some problem someone may have with the government. My cousin Adlai—he's named for Adlai Stevenson—runs a fabric company in Kansas City. He had all these raw goods from China sitting in a Brooklyn warehouse, and Customs wouldn't release them. He didn't know where to get help. He called me, and I called the office of a senator friend of mine.

PLAYBOY: Will fellow Democrats hit the campaign trail with you? We're sure you have some IOUs to collect from your own political appearances.

FRANKEN: I do. I've been there for Dem-

ocratic candidates around the country—for the Wisconsin party and for Senator Russ Feingold, for Senator Kent Conrad in North Dakota. I've appeared for a lot of progressive groups in the Midwest.

PLAYBOY: Has Senator Clinton given you any advice about your future plans?

FRANKEN: She promised me we'd sit down sometime.

PLAYBOY: Do you suppose we might ever see Senator Clinton appear on the campaign trail alongside a comic turned political candidate?

FRANKEN: Yeah, she'll come out to Minnesota for me. She totally gets it. She's got a great, goofy sense of humor.

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FRANKEN: It's not. It's simply talking. We talk about a lot of stuff on the show. We've talked about education and getting more pay for teachers who work in high-risk school districts. Often we have people on, and I have no idea what their political bent is. Anyone who listens to my show knows that's what I do. I find it ironic that people who don't listen to the show criticize it for being all Bush bashing.

PLAYBOY: Even before you established residence in Minnesota, you visited there often. Have you attempted to replicate Hillary Clinton's New York State listening tour?

FRANKEN: I would like to talk to her about it. I've traveled from Duluth to Moorhead and from Moorhead down to



CAUCUS

(continued from page 70)

protective cloak is reinforced by the hot-house atmosphere of modern politics.

"Everything's on a hair trigger," says one of the Senate's more independent-minded members. "You have high-priced political consultants telling you, 'Stay within the margins—one slip could be your George Romney slip [referring to the Michigan governor whose 1968 presidential run was fatally damaged when he offhandedly commented that he was "brainwashed" about Vietnam].' And the press is looking for that one slip. So you're conditioned as a politician to be very careful not to really answer the question. They train you that way."

When a politician makes it to the higher rungs of the ladder, that caution is reinforced, as is the sense of self-importance. If you've ever wondered why a senator spends almost every minute of his or her question time at a hearing making a speech that reeks of self-importance and then complains when a witness takes 15 seconds with an answer, listen to one of their own:

"The Senate," this member says wryly, "is the greatest assisted-living facility in the world. You get a pretty powerful sense of your own importance." Elevators are held; you summon a page with literally a snap of your fingers. Your staff talks as if you are the only member of the body. To illustrate the point, the senator I'm speaking with gets up and pantomimes an entrance into the Senate dining room, pointing to various dishes, snapping his fingers impatiently and saying, "I'll have this. I'll have that. And bring it to my table." It's not that hard to see, says my senatorial confidant, why "all senators believe that the entire world is hanging on their every word."

This lethal mixture of timidity and self-aggrandizement can take its toll even on those who begin their public life in a very different mode. Consider John Kerry: When he was a young man commanding a Swift boat in Vietnam, his letters home were strikingly vivid and direct, filled with sharply observed events and stark emotion. But after 20 years in the Senate, Kerry often spoke as if he were clutching a toga, endlessly wrapping his words in a fog of baffle-gab. To offer just one example: "It is time America had a president who understands that strength abroad means providing real leadership in the world and taking responsibility for the bad as well as the good. And strength at home means building a stronger economy by getting results for the American people and demanding accountability."

"There were times," says longtime *Washington Post* writer David Broder, "when I thought, My God, he sounds

like Bob Dole." Dole, by the way—one of the great senators of the 20th century but a full-fledged disaster as a presidential candidate—once replied to a college student who asked about acid rain, "That bill's in markup."

And maybe there's another, starker reason for the senatorial blather.

"If you're a senator," Broder asks, "what do you do besides talk? You go to Capitol Hill in the morning, and at the end of the day you're exactly where you were at the beginning of the day, and all you've done in between is fill up the air with talk. So that's what they do."

WHAT MAKES A NO-BULLSHIT POLITICIAN?

Remember the three keys to smart real estate investing? Location, location, location. That's one key to finding political straight shooters. Historically they're much more likely to come from the West than from the coasts or the major population centers. Think of Mike Mansfield, the taciturn Montana senator who set the all-time record for the most questions asked of a guest on *Meet the Press* because his answers were so short. Think of Arizona's Barry Goldwater, whose off-the-cuff comments on nuclear weapons dogged him in the 1964 presidential campaign and whose libertarian leanings prompted him to say almost 20 years later that "every good Christian ought to kick Jerry Falwell in the ass." Think of Arizona representative Mo Udall, who once observed at an endless political dinner, "Everything that can be said has already been said. It's just that not everyone has said it yet." Think of former New Mexico governor Gary Johnson, one of the first political figures to protest the draconian, hugely hypocritical war on drugs.

"Westerners," says Broder, "tend to be blunt, to be much more direct and not to bullshit about things."

Wisconsin, of course, is more Midwest than West, but it is a state with a long string of plainspoken maverick political figures, ranging from governor and senator Robert La Follette, the father of 20th century progressivism, to ex-senator William Proxmire, who mocked government boondoggles, to Senator Russ Feingold, who was almost unanimously nominated for the No-Bullshit Caucus.

"Wisconsin senators are independent," says Feingold. "This is the whole tradition." You're expected to be on the side of the environment and civil rights. "But to be somebody you can always guarantee is going to be with the team? That's not what Wisconsin senators do, and it's not what the people of our state want us to do," Feingold says. When he voted to confirm John Ashcroft as attorney general in 2001—only eight of 50 Democrats did so—he stirred angry responses among some Wisconsin Democrats. A year later, when he was the only senator to oppose the USA Patriot Act,

"people began to realize that this is the way I do my job," he says. "Others were like, 'Well, good, now he's back in the fold.' But the problem is that sometimes people think, Oh good, he's joined our team. But I'm not on any team."

But if geography helps some politicians develop an immunity to bullshit, an even greater measure of protection is provided by something else: a rich, varied and even dangerous past life that makes the risks of politics seem substantially less daunting.

If, for instance, you spent five and a half years in a North Vietnamese hell-hole, with torture a more or less regular part of your life, you are not likely to be cowed if a lobbyist or Republican operative accuses you of political heresy. Indeed, you are likely to feel a sense of political as well as personal liberation. That's why one of the enduring delights of Senator John McCain's 2000 campaign was that he began every day on his "Straight Talk Express" by proclaiming that everything—everything—was on the record. Apart from winning the gratitude of the traveling press, McCain could campaign utterly free of the chilling fear that his every phrase contained the seeds of his political destruction. This freedom also explains McCain's willingness, if not his eagerness, to take on some of the most sacred elements of the Republican Party canon. Compared with what he has lived through, is it really that threatening if an antitax group vows to run attack ads against you? Independence, of course, does not guarantee political immunity; the under-the-table assaults launched on McCain during the 2000 South Carolina primary clearly inflicted serious damage.

But it doesn't take brutal imprisonment to armor a public figure against the normal tendency to duck and cover. Chuck Hagel was a Vietnam combat veteran who then had a successful business career before entering the Senate. His Nebraska colleague, Bob Kerrey, was a Medal of Honor recipient in Vietnam and launched a successful restaurant business before entering politics. Ex-New Jersey senator Bill Bradley, one of the more independent-minded members of the Senate, did not need politics to feel admiration or even adulation. He had plenty of that as a basketball star. Ronald Reagan had the same dose of celebrity worship as an actor, as did Fred Thompson.

NO-BULLSHIT AS A POLITICAL WINNER

The vast majority of politicians who stay imprisoned within the confines of the political margins do so out of a primal survival instinct. It is, they are convinced, the way to stay alive in the only world that matters to them; to do otherwise is to risk everything, they believe.

"It's like you're kind of stepping into the unknown," Thompson says. "What

if they don't like me? What if just being myself is not enough? And if you're a professional politician, losing an election is equivalent to losing your medical or law license. You've been deprived of your profession. That's heavy stuff."

But there's a splendidly ironic twist to the fear and hunger for survival that muffles their voice: It's not necessary. In fact, the most persistent, inexplicable miscalculation made by much of America's political class is that a heavy dose of bullshit is an integral ingredient in the recipe for survival. The reality is that voters are desperate for the sound of an authentic human voice talking honestly to them.

"I've seen it time and time again," says Thompson. "If people would just let their hair down a bit, come across as you'd find them in private conversation, they would be a lot more likable and a lot more successful."

"People like it," says Feingold of his independence. "At least in Wisconsin, if they sense you're giving it a straight shot, if they think you're actually analyzing the issue and asking the right questions, they may not agree with your conclusions, but their feeling is you're doing your job, not blowing smoke at them. People love that."

There's plenty of evidence that this is true beyond America's dairy land. In 1992 Ross Perot got 19 percent of the vote for president—the second-highest total for any modern third-party presidential candidate—despite its being clear by Election Day that his seat back and tray table were not in the full upright, locked position. Why? In large part because he talked in clear, simple language about his ideas: comparing the enormous budget deficit to a "crazy aunt up in the attic who nobody wants to talk about" and proposing a 50-cents-a-gallon gasoline tax, saying, "Here's the one you're not gonna like!"

Eight years later McCain's long-shot presidential bid was fueled in no small measure by the promise—substantially fulfilled—of straight talk. I saw this firsthand in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where he told people that their naval base might have to be closed, and in Manhattan, where he expressed views on abortion and gun control with which most of the overwhelmingly liberal crowd fervently disagreed. Still, many said they would do the unthinkable—vote Republican—if he were the nominee.

Feingold, himself a possible presidential contender next time out, says of his Republican colleague, "It may be that the Republicans will have such a desire to win again that they would actually accept a straight shooter. The general public would support him, and he would win easily." And why? Here Feingold makes a point echoed by more than one member of the caucus: "We've been through a very long period in which people have manipulated political expression for the purpose of upsetting people and used phony approaches to fears in a way that has been

rewarded. But voters are catching on to that, and that era could come to an end."

WHY IT MATTERS

If Feingold is right, the rise of no-bullshit politics can't come a moment too soon. It's not that politicians have ever been admired for their intellectual bravery or wisdom. A century ago Mark Twain said, "Suppose you were an idiot, and suppose you were a member of Congress. But I repeat myself." More than half a century ago, in his famous essay "Politics and the English Language," George Orwell compared most political rhetoric to "a cuttlefish spouting out ink."

But the United States is entering a time when the political class will have to make very hard choices about very big matters. The promise of a debt-free, ever more prosperous country, which seemed a reality barely five years ago, is gone. The massive baby-boom generation, little more than five years away from Social Security and Medicare, will tax public resources in a way we have never seen before.

"That's where we're headed," Thompson says, "and everybody knows that. If we were doing the right thing, we would ditch 75 percent of what Congress has on its plate up there right now and focus. And that's the most discouraging part of politics—that we can't come together on even those basic things that are most important to the next generation and to our country's longevity and success, or have somebody who can look the American people in the eye and say, 'This is the deal.'"

If Thompson's right—and there is broad agreement across the spectrum that he is—then cutting through the bullshit is not a matter of aesthetics or clarity or even intellectual honesty: It's a matter of survival. Democrats will have to say more about entitlements than "They must be protected just the way they are." Republicans will have to begin wondering whether massive tax cuts are the nostrum for every economic circumstance.

And here's the most intriguing possibility of all: As McCain and then Howard Dean demonstrated, the Internet makes it possible for ordinary citizens of no particular wealth or clout to aggregate their money and their energy to produce impressive amounts of both. For the first time a mechanism exists that can override the two-party fix that has dominated politics for a century and a half. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that a pair of credentialed mainstream political figures—one from each party—may mount an independent campaign to speak plainly, clearly and bluntly to the country about what needs to be done.

And they could do a lot worse than to run under the banner first unfurled by Oklahoma senator Fred Harris more than 30 years ago: "No more bullshit."

It would make one hell of a campaign song.





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(continued from page 50)

San Francisco. He even ignored her when she flashed her breasts.

Skokie was a competitive environment for smart kids, and Kremen learned that he liked winning. He now lives in an 8,900-square-foot, six-bedroom San Diego mansion on three acres in the city's exclusive Rancho Santa Fe community; the home once belonged to Cohen. It's the first and so far the only significant asset Kremen has seized from "the bad guy," as he calls his adversary. Framed and mounted on a wall in his home are the circuit boards that made up his first hand-built computer, which won him first prize in a seventh-grade science contest. It's next to the popcorn machine and the red London phone booth, around the corner from the server room.

Something of a nervous man, Kremen sleeps in a small bedroom down the hall from the master suite; the bad guy's room makes him uncomfortable, he says. But as a kind of taunt, he keeps all the legal papers relating to Cohen in the big bedroom's huge walk-in closet.

Kremen always wanted to make money. "I missed out on 15 years of having fun, going to rock concerts, having girlfriends," he says. "That's why I had my little drug crisis." After winning back Sex.com Kremen also got into crank, or methamphetamine, which led to indulgences with porn stars, too.

Kremen enrolled at Northwestern in 1981, and in the era of the yuppie he fit right in with his double major in electrical engineering and business and his after-school job. "He took it on himself to be the guy with the most job offers for the highest salaries," says Steve Laico, who has been his best friend ever since. "He got all that." But he wasn't averse to fun. "I don't want to call him a crazy genius, but that's close," says Philip van Munching, a brewery heir who was another friend. "If he owed you \$10, he'd give you a check with a statement you vehemently disagreed with written above the endorsement line, so you'd have to endorse it. It wasn't malicious. He was contentious for fun."

After graduating, Kremen got a job with a government aerospace contractor, where he first encountered the earliest version of the Internet, then called Arpanet. He enrolled in Stanford business school, in Silicon Valley, to learn to be an entrepreneur, and he kept his nose to the grindstone. "I lost my virginity at a normal guy time," he says, hesitating briefly before adding, "you know—13 or 14. I had a girlfriend in college." That's right, just one. His final project was a study of bankruptcy.

Concurrently, a few hours' drive south in Orange County, his future nemesis, Cohen, was moving up the criminal food chain, with a specialty in bankruptcy fraud.

When he was little, his father, a successful accountant, left home, married his secretary and moved to Beverly Hills, where he drove a Rolls, inspiring admiration and envy in his son. "His mother was sweet, but he thought she was a real nutcase," says Susan Boydston, the third of Cohen's five ex-wives. "She kept the house spick-and-span, and he was a rebellious slob. He tuned her out at an early age. He felt he had only himself to count on, and everyone in his path would pay." Cohen's ex-wives aren't the only bitter people left in his wake. By phone from her home in Las Vegas, his mother, Renee Cohen, says, "I don't have anything to do with him. Sorry."

Cohen started cutting corners young. When he bought his mother roses at 16, she thought she'd perhaps misjudged him until the florist's charge showed up on her credit card. High school friends remember him as abrasive and cocky, always talking about sex but never getting any, a "strange duck" who sat in the back of class with "a perennial smirk, as if he knew what was going to happen and we didn't."

"His posture was slinky and dastardly," says schoolmate Penny Campbell. "I know that sounds a little cartoonish, but he presented a Snidely Whiplash persona. Interesting how much a person's body language can reveal, isn't it?"

Not long ago the fugitive Cohen reconnected by phone with another school pal and told him about his holdings in Tijuana, "his shrimp farm, his titty bar, his ISP," Steve Fischler says. "Then I heard him say, 'Get my jet ready.'" Cohen said it was a Citation. "Then another phone rings." Fischler next overheard half a conversation in which Cohen appeared to approve a credit line for a casino gambler. But Cohen has had the same second-line conversation almost word-for-word with others—including me when he tried to convince me he was calling from Monte Carlo, where, he claimed, he was too busy running casinos to give an interview. He was in TJ at the time.

Cohen married young twice and had three kids. He was later jailed for failure to support his oldest, a daughter who later became a police officer. Her father had long since turned to crime. "When I was a kid, I was involved in a multimillion-dollar check-kiting scheme," Cohen admitted to me that day in TJ. Through the mid-1970s he was constantly in legal trouble. His first arrest was for passing bad checks—all under \$300, by the way. He avoided prison by pleading guilty, but while on probation he was arrested again, for stealing a car.

Charges of forgery, impersonation and grand theft followed, and in 1977 Cohen was sure he was going to jail. While awaiting sentencing, he met and married Boydston, because, she thinks now, he needed someone on the outside to protect his interests. She was in court the day his then lawyer won a venue change from L.A. County to Orange County, where Cohen

lived. He was thrilled. He had a judge there "in his pocket," Boydston says.

In the 1980s Cohen continued his life of cons. He used Boydston's money to buy a house in a gated Orange County community and began moving in and out of businesses as fast as a three-card monte game. When the heat was on one, he'd open another: repossessions, key chains and gewgaws, computer time-shares, computer sales and import-exports; there was a liquor store, a limo service, a telephone-answering service and more—many with similar names incorporated in different states. Boydston learned later that she was listed as an officer of many of them, as were family members and friends. Evicted for non-payment of rent, Cohen would vandalize the offices on his way out.

He had five passports, three driver's licenses, locksmith and private investigator licenses, a plane, a sailboat, a Cadillac, a Porsche and that Rolls he'd always wanted, though it was never clear whether he owned, leased or had stolen the vehicles, and they seemed to have a habit of crashing or sinking or just disappearing—like the Rolls, which was registered in Boydston's name. He convinced Boydston he worked with the CIA to explain his frequent trips to South and Central America, booked through his agency, Confidential Travel—all free and first-class, of course, scammed somehow with travel agent vouchers. He would actually go with friends such as Jack Brownfield, a convicted cocaine trafficker.

An electronics nut since childhood, Cohen forged documents in the garage on his own copying machine, wired his own phones and had seven lines in the bedroom where he worked all night and slept all morning behind a locked door. Cameras were trained on the door of the house for good reason. Aggrieved victims of his frauds, marshals, process servers and investigators regularly rang the bell. Boydston wasn't allowed to answer the door or the phone. When a process server got past Boydston one day, Cohen pushed the woman down a spiral staircase and then started "slamming on me with his fists," Boydston says.

Cohen's lies were ceaseless and shameless. He told people he had studied at West Point and been an admiral, and he claimed to be one of the three Stephen M. Cohens on the California bar. He also borrowed his own lawyers' names—making fake letterhead on his computer, often with the same telltale layout and typeface (he was lazy that way), with word-processing software he'd then return for a refund.

Yet despite all this, Cohen charmed powerful people—like lawyers and judges. "I don't know what credentials he showed," says Roger Agajanian, his first lawyer and still a friend, "but he even impersonated a judge in Colorado for several years. He let people off all the time."

Cohen was sued and arrested so often that neither Agajanian nor Boydston could keep count, and he so frustrated his victims, creditors and the law by playing procedural games and hiding assets that they would eventually just give up.

Also during the 1980s Cohen discovered swinging, pressuring Boydston into wife swapping and group sex. By then she had learned he'd drained all her equity from the house and was perpetrating scams in her name. She finally divorced him in 1985 after he had sex with two of his answering-service operators in their bed. He had discovered computers, scamming to get one for free, of course, and using it to start a computer bulletin-board system for wife swappers called the French Connection. He would sit up all night, impersonating women (he posted under both Boydston's name and that of his elder daughter) to lure men to pay a fee and join.

The company that owned the BBS was called Ynata, an acronym for "you'll never amount to anything." Some who know him think his mother used to say that to him and he's been determined ever since to prove her wrong. Cohen calls it a private joke and told Boydston, who returned to her house in 1987 (though she moved into a separate bedroom), that he used it to mock his victims: When they came after him, all they'd find would amount to nothing.

When Boydston discovered that he was still using her name, this time in bankruptcy frauds, she finally had enough. She began going through his papers, hiding incriminating documents. Unbeknownst to her, she wasn't the only one investigating him. Gary Jones, an Orange County sheriff, had been trying to get the goods on Cohen ever since he'd gotten a tip that Cohen was stealing luxury cars from owners who were behind on their payments. He then learned Cohen was also running a fake law firm out of the towing companies he used to steal the cars. The thief who stole them for Cohen turned against him—yet he still got off.

Then Jones heard about the Club. In July 1988 Cohen opened his own swingers club in a four-bedroom house cut up into crawl spaces and tunnels lined with mattresses. It was so successful that it became a neighborhood nuisance.

After the slew of complaints reached a crescendo, Jones arrived on the Club's doorstep in 1989. Cohen was outraged and went on TV to plead for his free-speech rights. But then he telephoned Jones, pointedly mentioning the sheriff's wife and children by name, and threatened to buy the deed to Jones's house, "I came unglued," Jones says. "He made it personal, so every time that guy sneezed, I knew."

Jones finally charged him with zoning and fire-code violations, but the trial ended in a hung jury. Even before that, however, Cohen's troubles had begun to mount: He was ordered out of Boydston's house for

failure to pay the mortgage, was arrested for hitting one of his daughters and finally came under investigation for far more serious crimes than running a sex club. He'd flimflammed his way into a bankruptcy involving an elderly woman whose son had run up large debts. Cohen impersonated an attorney, created false documents and loans to hide what he'd done and then convinced his "client" to invest her hidden assets in his shrimp farm.

"They arrested him seven times," says Boydston. Still, he was cocky and sure he'd never be convicted. When he learned one of the DA's law clerks had failed her bar exam, he called and told her she'd passed, just to mess with her mind. Then Boydston went to the FBI with her evidence, and Cohen was on his way to federal prison for 46 months.

Once again, he married first. He met wife number four at the Club, where West Virginia-born Karon Poer was a member. Though she'd later say Cohen wore the same clothes for days, never brushed his teeth and was tight with money, she married him at a swingers convention in Las Vegas and moved into the house Cohen bought using Boydston's money. Cohen promptly made Poer an officer of Ynata.

Poer soon came to agree with Cohen's other ex-wives. "He never wanted to do anything legal," she said. Cohen took tens of thousands of dollars in benefits she'd received on the death of a previous husband and invested it in his own name. As the law closed in on the bankruptcy fraud, Cohen's father dropped dead. At the funeral his family told him to leave and stay away.

Cohen gave Poer the French Connection to run while he was inside. But when the BBS computers disappeared, allegedly stolen by his cronies, she also had enough and sued Cohen for divorce. Cohen countersued from prison, charging she'd stolen the French Connection from him. When he got out of jail in 1995, Cohen stalked her, Poer claimed, and flattened her tires.

When I reach her to ask about Cohen, Poer will say only, "You can kiss mah ass."

Kremen spent a couple of years learning the ropes in Silicon Valley before he launched his first businesses in repackaging open-source, or free, software and then selling security programs for computers hooked up to the newborn Internet. He hardly had a personal life. "I dated a couple of girls, but I was working hard," he says. "I wasn't dysfunctional; I was just focused on other things." He spent hours looking—mostly unsuccessfully—for dates in newspaper personals columns. And that led to an epiphany. "I wished there were a database you could sort through in order to find a person to marry. That's the absolute stone-cold truth." It didn't exist, so he invented one.

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In 1993, having noticed that more and more people had e-mail addresses, Kremen foresaw that classified advertising would eventually migrate to cyberspace, and he formed a company called Online Classifieds. He moved to San Francisco's Haight district, hired a programmer and, in May 1994, shrewdly registered a batch of classifieds-style domain names—Jobs.com, Housing.com, Autos.com and Sex.com. Kremen also bought a defunct domain called Match.com for \$2,500. He was going to start by selling romance. "I just have the vision," he said. "Gonna raise venture capital."

Kremen, then 32, raised \$200,000, then another \$2 million, then \$7 million more. Two months after the launch of Match.com, when it claimed 7,000 members and a 10 percent weekly growth rate, he turned down an offer to merge with the company that became Excite.com. "I probably left \$2 billion on the table there because of my ego," he says. "I didn't do it, because I wanted to be the CEO." He had that title at Match.com.

Almost immediately, though, he was forced out by his investors, who didn't think he was as good at managing businesses as he was at conceiving them. He stayed on long enough to see his stock vest and then left to develop an early form of ad- and spyware that he later sold to Microsoft for a stash of its stock. By the fall of 1995 Kremen was rubbing shoulders with some of the biggest names in the Internet business when a friend discovered, just days after it happened, that the Sex.com domain had

somehow been transferred to Cohen.

Released from custody in February 1995, Cohen was determined not only to regain his footing in the cybersex business but to move to a higher level. In prison he'd met and befriended Marshall Zolp, a convicted con man, securities fraudster and expert in offshore money laundering. "Zolp was his professor," says Luke Ford, a blogger known as the Matt Drudge of porn. "He took Cohen to school." Back on the street, Cohen applied his new knowledge to his old interests in sex and scams.

In the early 1990s sexual images were shared over the Internet with no profits at stake. Computer programmers scanned photos from magazines and uploaded them for tech-savvy nerds to download for free. With the release of Netscape, in 1994, everything changed. The web turned as lawless as the Wild West. Fledgling entrepreneurs snatched up corporate domain names from a company called Network Solutions, which was charged with registering all legal claims to this new digital territory. Ransom was often the idea. Others saw the future in commercial porn.

By 1998 adult websites accounted for almost 70 percent of the \$1.4 billion spent on online content. In 2003, when the market had grown to more than \$5 billion, pornography still made up almost 60 percent of the total. In 1995 high school dropout Seth Warshavsky started the Internet Entertainment Group, an adult site that reportedly grossed \$20 million in 1997, the year he marketed the renowned Pamela and Tommy Lee video.

The next year he marketed the infamous nude photos of Dr. Laura Schlessinger. He is now reportedly living in Thailand, on the run from various creditors.

Ron Levi, owner of Cyberotica.com, possibly the biggest early innovator, is credited with inventing pay-per-click advertising revenue in 1996, which charged for productive clicks rather than raw clicks. In the first six years of operation Levi paid out \$250 million to webmasters for his advertising—and he was still a very rich man.

None of this was wasted on Cohen, who had been given a desk at a company called Midcom, a placement service for technology professionals, many with top-secret government clearance. It was owned by Barbara Cepinko, a Good Samaritan who took a chance on Cohen and would soon regret her kindness.

In the fall of 1995 Cohen launched his greatest scam. First he contacted Network Solutions, the industry administrator of domain names, and then followed up with a forged letter purportedly written by the president of Kremen's company Online Classifieds. The letter claimed that, despite its name, Online Classifieds had no Internet access and stated that Kremen, a mere employee, had been fired. The company was therefore relinquishing its ownership of Sex.com and giving Cohen the right to take it. Cohen then forged an e-mail that gave his phone number as the one to call to confirm the transfer. With this flimsy pretext Network Solutions handed the prize to the con man.

A few weeks later Cohen incorporated Sporting Houses Management and assigned the company the rights to the domain. A few months later when he offered shares to the public through a San Diego brokerage that specialized in so-called pump-and-dump penny stocks, Sporting Houses announced plans to build Wanaleiya, an X-rated Disneyland cum Club Med, a brothel resort boasting 500 on-site hookers, golf, tennis, skeet, a race track and its own airport on 300 acres, including a warehouse called Sheri's Ranch, outside Las Vegas. For \$7,000 a weekend, clients would have all they could eat, drink, smoke and screw. But after the owner of Sheri's told the press it was not for sale and Nevada announced it would investigate the scheme, Wanaleiya fizzled. Meanwhile one of the banks that financed Midcom cut off its credit because, unbeknownst to her, Cepinko was named in the offering as an officer of Sporting Houses.

Early in 1996 Cohen struck again. This time he transferred the license for Sex.com to a new company he'd set up in the British Virgin Islands. Sir William Douglas was named as its chairman according to corporate documents, but Douglas had nothing to do with it. The real William Douglas was the chief justice of the Barbados Supreme Court; years before he had refused to extradite England's great train robber Ronald Biggs,



"Don't worry. I'll kiss it to make it better."

who had been on the run for 16 years.

When Network Solutions brushed off Kremen's complaints about his stolen domain, Kremen let the matter slide for a few months, unsure if he wanted to be identified with online porn. By then Cohen had put up what's known as a banner farm at Sex.com—a page of banner ads for porn purveyors who paid Sex.com to send surfers their way. He also posted articles such as "Adventures in Anal Erotica," by Stephen M. Cohen.

Finally furious that his domain was enriching Cohen, Kremen found a young lawyer who agreed, in 1998, to file suit against Cohen and Network Solutions. Kremen says the adversaries spoke for the first time when Cohen called him that spring, claiming to be an attorney with the United States Patent and Trademark Office, and tried to scare Kremen off by saying he'd locked up the name.

In fact, Kremen couldn't afford what he knew would be a huge legal undertaking, so it was a stroke of luck when Cohen started threatening some of the biggest names in online porn by filing infringement lawsuits against anyone using the word sex in a domain name. Kremen decided to find litigation partners who would pay for his lawyers in exchange for a share of any eventual winnings; he spammed the online porn world with e-mails seeking anyone who had been threatened by Cohen. Serge Birbrair, a Russian-born porn-traffic broker who bought clicks from small website operators and sold them in bulk to bigger ones via a domain called Sexia.com, had just been sued by Cohen.

"I knew the biggest sharks on the Internet," says Birbrair, and he called the two biggest, Levi of Cybererotica.com and Warshavsky, who agreed to bankroll Kremen in exchange for 45 percent of Sex.com.

Kremen's partnership of porn moguls soon fell apart. Warshavsky got in trouble with creditors and stopped paying his share of the legal bills. Levi then dropped out of the litigation too. But Kremen had found a new weapon: Charles Carreon, a burned-out Buddhist public defender with a ponytail. Carreon was smart, scrappy and well-spoken and considered himself a warrior in search of a just cause. He decided to portray Kremen as a woman-friendly good guy who had planned to turn Sex.com into an educational website and argued that the domain was a piece of property. If Carreon won the day, he would not only stop Network Solutions from disavowing its responsibility (the company claimed domain names were services like phone numbers, not property like a car), he might pave the way to Kremen recovering the profits Cohen had siphoned off.

In 1999 Carreon won a big round in Oregon, where he convinced a three-judge panel to stay all of Cohen's trademark cases while he rewrote Kremen's federal complaint. He resubmitted it

almost four years to the day after Cohen had snatched Sex.com. The litigation kept the case alive, albeit on life support. Kremen had no money and had agreed to pay Carreon only if he won.

Meanwhile Cohen, who was making \$750,000 a month from Sex.com and had almost no overhead, was revving up his lifestyle. By that time, Sex.com was making a fortune, so much that Cohen was able to hire one of the best-known trademark attorneys in the country. Cohen also bought the mansion in Rancho Santa Fe and started moving his Sex.com proceeds offshore. He changed the name of his British Virgin Islands corporation to Ynata, began building a network that illegally sent microwave signals across the Mexico-California border and issued a press release claiming that he was taking over Caesars Palace.

Depressed, Kremen began taking crystal meth, which turned out to be his drug of choice. He'd begun, like "a lot of software guys," with caffeine, then moved on to cocaine, he says. "But you can't program on coke because it makes you too jittery." Then someone gave him his first hit of speed. "I didn't touch drugs until I was 35," he says, "when someone said, 'Take this and you can stay up all night and have fun.'" Fun was not going to clubs and meeting good-looking women, though. It was sitting at the computer for three days straight. "Which is kind of pathetic, if you think about it," Kremen says. "Speed is a coder's drug."

He also began having affairs with "women who thought I was a little Internet star," he says. "I had no time for the long chase after good-looking women, but I wouldn't throw away low-hanging fruit." One catch was Ana Belinda, Carreon's doe-eyed 18-year-old daughter, who'd come to San Francisco to help with the lawsuit.

Over the next year the case began to turn slowly in Kremen's favor. When Cohen countersued for defamation, Carreon, a former insurance lawyer, had another brainstorm. If Kremen had homeowners insurance, his carrier, State Farm, would be obliged to defend him. Kremen did, State Farm agreed, and suddenly there were far more powerful lawyers and investigators in the fray, taking depositions and serving subpoenas to sniff out Cohen's assets, perforating the corporate shells that had always protected him and analyzing how he moved his money around. "It was going to Liechtenstein in \$100,000 chunks," Carreon says.

Luckily for Kremen, some of his early investments began paying off at that point and he decided to, as he puts it, "liquidate the dot-com stock I had and put it all on red to beat this guy." When Judge James Ware, who was hearing the federal case in San Jose, granted a motion dismissing the suit against Network Solutions, Kremen hired Jim Wagstaffe, a noted appellate attorney, to mount an appeal. Wagstaffe had a crucial advantage: Unlike Carreon,

suit against Network Solutions, Kremen hired Jim Wagstaffe, a noted appellate attorney, to mount an appeal. Wagstaffe had a crucial advantage: Unlike Carreon, he looked like the kind of lawyer a federal judge might take seriously, and he could balance out Kremen, who admits he was, at the time, in his "drug-addled state."

"Courts don't traditionally respond well to eccentricity," says Wagstaffe. "Gary was perceived as wacky, and the con man was seen as a businessman surrounded by men in suits. Plus he's got Network Solutions on his side. You're a judge. Who do you think is crazy?"

Kremen's team knew where Cohen had hidden his money, but it wanted to keep Network Solutions in the case; it was the proverbial pot of gold. Wagstaffe proposed narrowing Kremen's argument to a single issue that would give them a wedge to reopen the case against Network Solutions. So they did. In mid-2000 Wagstaffe replaced Carreon as the lead attorney and asked the court to issue a summary judgment declaring Cohen's claim to Sex.com invalid because the letter Cohen had used to take it was an obvious forgery that couldn't be authenticated and thus could not be introduced as evidence.

Cohen's deposition, which followed that motion, was a revelation to Kremen. "I'm sitting there listening to this guy, and I knew about the criminal record," Kremen says. As Cohen went on and on, Kremen realized "this guy's a complete, total bullshitter. It's all made up, and if I can just stay the course, he's gonna lose. I'm gonna beat him. And then he panics."

Cohen had fought like a legal demon to keep Kremen's side from seeing certain of his bank records. When they were finally produced, in October 2000, he made his biggest mistake. He waltzed into the Kinko's where they were being copied, claimed to be one of Kremen's lawyers and, demonstrating the audacity that had brought him so far, walked out with them. When the documents finally appeared a few days later, 113 pages were missing. So Kremen's lawyers asked if the Kinko's had security cameras. Sure enough it did, and the tapes showed Cohen absconding with the records.

"You'd think he'd at least wear a hat or something," Kremen says.

"That was it," says Cohen's lawyer Robert Dorband, who worked for Duboff. "I pretty much threw up my hands and said, 'We're in damage control.'"

Wagstaffe immediately made a second motion asking Ware to restrain Cohen from disposing of any of the assets they'd uncovered and ordering him to repatriate \$25 million they could already prove had been sent offshore. A few days later Ware granted both of Kremen's motions effective immediately.

On that victorious morning of November 27, 2000 Cohen was not in court. Kremen says that while he went into a courthouse bathroom to snort some celebratory coke, the bad guy worked the phones and man-

aged to send another \$1.3 million out of the country before he hightailed it to Tijuana. A few months later a trial to determine damages was held in Cohen's absence. When his lawyer claimed Cohen had failed to appear because he'd been put in jail in Mexico for trying to bring some of his ill-gotten gains back to America, Ware was outraged and issued an arrest order, citing Cohen for civil contempt. As a fugitive Cohen lost his right to present a defense. A month later Ware ruled that Cohen owed Kremen \$65 million.

In the years since, as he appealed Ware's rulings from Mexico, even taking his case to the U.S. Supreme Court and always sticking to his story that he'd been thrown into a Mexican jail for trying to repay Kremen, Cohen again resorted to playing lawyer, representing himself. And true to form, when the court finally seized his only significant asset in America, the Rancho Santa Fe mansion, Cohen filed a phony bankruptcy to disrupt the process; when that failed he had his lackeys vandalize the place. On September 10, 2001 a furious Ware ordered that the house be restored within a week.

"I bought a building in San Francisco and had all these people doing heroin, squatting with me. Eventually it comes to my dull mind that I gotta clean this up."

Seven days later Kremen moved in.

Alas, the Internet porn boom was over by then, and the dot-com bubble had burst. Though Kremen made \$500,000 in each of the first few months he owned Sex.com, the revenue soon plunged. For a moment Cohen, who had founded Earthstation 5, a peer-to-peer file-trading network (à la Napster and Kazaa), seemed more prescient than Kremen, but the network was exposed as a fraud in *The Washington Post* and the geek community turned against it.

Depressed because he'd won so little so far and would have to fight like crazy to get anything else, more than a little boggled by his turn from litigant to porno clickmeister and still fielding regular taunting phone calls from Cohen, Kremen went a little crazy too. He offered a reward for Cohen's capture but withdrew it after Cohen claimed it led to a shoot-out with bounty hunters in Tijuana.

Kremen's lifestyle backslid then as well. "He had to date the porn star, you know?" says Margo Evashevski, his private investigator, speaking of Wilde, who ever so briefly passed through Kremen's bed. "I did some dabbling and tasting in the

world of porn," Kremen says. "I went to that zone, checked out the dark side, had a little fun and came back to the business side." His drugging escalated again, and a year later his parents induced his sister to move in with him. She redecorated the mansion, and he kicked his drug addiction and got on an even keel.

"My customers are websites," Kremen says, settling in front of one of his computers to give a lesson in online porn. Porn purveyors can log on to Sex.com and see what it costs to get a porn consumer's attention: 18 cents for the home page, 3 cents "for the top listing on the pee page," Kremen says. If people ask for child porn, Sex.com's software sends them to an anti-kiddie porn website. "No one says it's pretty," Kremen says, surfing to WiredPussy.com. "Water bondage? What the fuck! I don't even know what that is."

In January 2001 Kremen started his new life with a *Fear and Loathing*-like road trip with his lawyer to a Vegas online-porn trade show where he ate naked sushi and first encountered Cohen's world. "I had fun," he says, "but in a voyeuristic, out-of-my-league way."

"Gary had zero friends," says Carreon. "The next day he was God."

For a moment he lost his mind again. "I bought a building in San Francisco and had all these people doing heroin, squatting with me," Kremen says. One of them, a carpenter, offered to build a dungeon in the basement, and Kremen agreed. "I never got to use it," he says sheepishly. "Not my style. Some other people did, though. Eventually it comes to my dull mind that I gotta clean this up. So I spend the next two years cleaning up."

By then Kremen had learned enough to think he might indeed have a case against Network Solutions. After an appeals court reinstated that suit in 2003, he did some math, realized he might be able to win \$120 million and decided to pursue it. The defendant must have realized it too, since the company (which has been sold several times and has few connections to what it was in 1995) settled in exchange for a confidentiality agreement and a sum, a knowledgeable source says, in the neighborhood of \$15 million.

Kremen began to feel he was free from his own form of bondage. He actually laughed when Cohen called to offer him a share of Earthstation 5 in lieu of the \$65 million he owed him (which with interest has now risen to \$82 million). Kremen's learned to laugh at himself, too. Asked if he's come to love litigation—he sues so frequently now it seems like a hobby—he replies, "They don't teach you about the use of law at Stanford business school."

Kremen moved full-time to Rancho Santa Fe, where he didn't know any drug addicts, and he came up with the idea that Sex.com would henceforth sell dirty searches to squeaky-clean search engines. "You type in,

like, 'lesbians,' and it's really our listing," he says. "We're doing a revenue share. I want a sustainable business that, at the end of the day, someone will buy. This is about ad sales. This has nothing to do with porn."

With perfect timing, Kym Wilde serves lunch as he says this. She keeps her clothes on this time.

Last year Kremen turned his attention to Cohen's hidden assets, and by the fall his latest push against the bad guy began to bear fruit. In San Jose Judge Ware issued a series of orders that let Kremen seize not just the U.S.-based hard assets Cohen had put in the names of his fifth ex-wife and several straw men, but even his mail, or at least whatever of it was directed to the postal drops Kremen's team had managed to identify. His people also seized several computers that showed, among other things, that Cohen had hacked into Kremen's voice mail more than 300 times.

Kremen's lawyers subpoenaed and froze the bank accounts, domain names, e-mail accounts and credit cards of everyone close to Cohen, paralyzing their lives. A similar effort was under way in Mexico.

Still Cohen appeared to be no less powerful on the lam. His ISP sent bandwidth by microwaves from the U.S. to Mexico and provided Internet connectivity to, among other customers, the U.S. consulate and government buildings in Tijuana.

The pressure on Cohen's associates worked, though. Just after Kremen sued them all to recover those assets, his fifth wife Rosa's daughter Jhuliana was arrested while driving through a special easy-clearance lane at the border near TJ with 200-plus pounds of marijuana in her car. She was served with Kremen's suit while she was in jail. Her mother was served at Jhuliana's arraignment. Former drug dealer Jack Brownfield, who'd remained a friend and Cohen frontman, had begun negotiations on behalf of himself, Rosa and Jhuliana to give Kremen title to Cohen's Mexican shrimp farm, his TJ strip club, his ISP and more.

At the end of October the hunt was still on when Kremen got a lucky break. A top officer with the U.S. Marshals Service's Mexican cross-border unit had been following the case and trading information with Kremen's team; even though civil contempt warrants aren't a priority, someone in the government had at last taken an interest in Cohen. When one of Kremen's lawyers told the marshal something he didn't know, that Cohen had divorced Rosa, the marshal quietly took action.

Post-divorce, Cohen had fewer legal rights in Mexico and needed a different kind of visa to remain in TJ. Though he could have paid a lawyer \$100 to get it for him, he characteristically chose to save the money and do it himself. When he arrived at the local immigration office for his appointment on October 27, Mexican officials arrested him and turned him over to agents of the U.S. Border Patrol, Immigration and Customs

Enforcement and the marshals, who walked him across the border at 2:45 that afternoon and locked him up in the same San Diego jail as his stepdaughter.

The next day, dressed in a green prison jumpsuit, Cohen was arraigned in a wood-paneled courtroom. With a "very amused, smug, shitty-ass, you-think-you-got-me grin," says Evashevski, who was there with Kremen's sister, Cohen surveyed the crowd, "staring us down, looking for Gary," who, to his obvious disappointment, was in Illinois visiting his parents.

The next step would have been a hearing 10 days later, when the government would have had to prove its man was in fact Cohen. But over the objections of the judge and oblivious to the rolling eyes of his public defender, Cohen confirmed his identity, claimed poverty and asked for a court-appointed lawyer. Then, incredibly, the con man added that since he already had another lawyer trying to settle with Kremen, he wanted to be released on bail to facilitate their talks. The judge refused and ordered Cohen's transfer to San Jose, where he would face a choice: Repatriate \$25 million of the money he'd moved offshore before 2001 or, as Kremen's attorney Tim Dillon puts it, "rot in jail."

But no one was ready to declare victory yet. "Cohen never stops working you, ever," says Wagstaffe. "He thinks if he keeps talking, eventually you'll be persuaded. Gary's a worrier, and Cohen plays on Gary's insecurities." And as Wagstaffe admits, "when Kremen dies, Cohen's name will be in his obituary. They are linked for the ages."

Kremen is well aware of this. Indeed, within hours of Cohen's arrest, Kremen said he fully expected to pick up a ringing phone and find Cohen on the other end, calling from prison just to fuck with him. In Mexico Kremen's team has uncovered about \$5 million in real property in addition to the ISP, which it thinks is a \$1 million business. Millions more are hidden in Europe, the Caribbean and Vanuatu, and Kremen hopes to get some, if not all, of it. "I tell him it's going to happen with or without lube, so lie down and get it over with," says Kremen. "I don't think we'll see \$82 million, but a couple million's better than a sharp stick in the eye. Don't you agree?"

Still, Kremen's not ready for his 11-year war with Cohen to end. "Clearly," he says, "this story is not over." I can't help but think I hear relish, not dread, in his voice.



"It's my first Valentine's with my girlfriend, so I want to get us something we can both enjoy. Are you available?"

the big show

(continued from page 66)

York became a scene, and Hoffman bestrode it like a Greek god, promising all men they could resemble him if only they lifted enough York barbells.

Hoffman made a great deal of money, but his vision had a flaw. He thought the point of weight lifting was to lift a lot of weight. He wanted his teams to win medals, and he promoted weight-lifting shows. Guys would go onstage and strain, grunt and sweat as if they worked for a living. It wasn't graceful. It wasn't pretty. It lacked the extended story lines of baseball and football. It connoted the economic necessity of muscle when the crowds craved only its display.

The guy who figured out Hoffman's mistake was the aforementioned Joe Weider. Born a generation later, in 1922, Weider dropped out of the seventh grade to help support his family, which had emigrated from Poland to Montreal in 1919. Delivering groceries in a wagon, he often had to defend himself amid the ethnic tensions of the day and started lifting weights. He also had a lot of time to think, and at the age of 17 he took his life savings of \$7 and purchased a used mimeograph machine. The future, he saw, was not in barbells, which are purchased once or twice in a lifetime. The future was in advice you could repackage and resell every month. He wrote four pages, called the pamphlet *Your Physique* and mailed it off to 600 weight lifters whose addresses he had gleaned by going to shows and reading health magazines.

"As my mother said, 'You're a kid. You think you're going to compete with Bob Hoffman? He's a multimillionaire, and he controls all the associations. You better learn a trade or you're going to be a bum,'" Weider recalls in his huge hotel suite 27 floors above the Olympia competition. "My father said, 'To be a worker and to be a dead man is the same thing. You take orders and you shut up. Whatever Joe wants to do, let him do it. It's his life, and he's a smart boy.'"

Joe and his father prevailed, and both parents were impressed a year and a half later when he had accumulated \$10,000, a huge sum during the Depression. Hoffman was also impressed, banning the teenager from his events and forbidding other weight lifters to order Weider's rapidly growing magazine.

"Hoffman couldn't stand any competitor," Weider says in an accent that is often imitated but rarely duplicated, with its Yiddish, Polish, French, Canadian and Californian nuances. "He had his magazine, *Strength and Health*, and he was writing mostly about strength training because he was interested in winning weight lifting at the Olympics. He figured I was taking good potential athletes and encouraging them to do bodybuilding. He was losing his grip.

For me, it was just common sense: How many guys want to kill themselves lifting heavy weights? And how many guys want to look good for girls? I figured I had 100-to-one odds. Plus Hoffman was very prejudiced. He loved the Nazis. He didn't like minorities. He thought Hitler was making the German people strong, teaching them strength through joy and all that kind of stuff."

LADIES' NIGHT

In *Pumping Iron*—the 1977 bodybuilding documentary that turned a small niche sport into a medium-size niche sport—Schwarzenegger famously says that the feeling of blood rushing to a strained muscle, known as the pump, is better than sex. Bodybuilders love the pump and identify with anyone else who loves it. Fans give women bodybuilders a lot of respect because their love for the pump is so pure. The women make a fraction of the men's money and get few endorsements, and they endure many horrified stares, all for the love of the pump. The sad truth is that muscleheads do not buy expensive tickets to look at the women. Not enough muscle. And men in general still find women bodybuilders weird and threatening.

So on ladies' night at the 2004 competition, the Mandalay Bay Events Center was about half full, and the Ms. Olympia contestants, lightweight and heavyweight divisions (below and above 135 pounds), were not exactly hidden but one act among many. The aspirants to Ms. Fitness Olympia ran through gymnastic routines that fell somewhere between cheerleading and striptease, and the contestants for Ms. Figure Olympia looked statuesque with their hint of muscularity and nice boobs. Eight-time Ms. Olympia Lenda Murray lost her title to Iris Kyle, who simply had bigger arms. Both of them had very large muscles but also tried to look feminine and elegant, which is a trick.

Women who take massive doses of steroids develop many of the same side effects as men: acne like an aerial relief map of Peru, hair on the back and other undesirable places and male-pattern baldness on the head. Opposite sexes also develop opposite side effects. Male bodybuilders can develop gynecomastia, which is to say they grow breasts, while women tend to lose theirs as testosterone burns their body fat. Many women compensate with implants, the architecture of which rarely fits the landscape. Steroids raise the male voice and drop the female voice. Some female bodybuilders give the impression of being transsexuals.

A man taking artificial testosterone (which is what steroids are) will see his genitalia shrink because his testicles have concluded that they need not produce natural testosterone. If he stops taking steroids, he will suffer from estrogen rebound while his testicles decide to produce again, which is to say he will get depressed and fat. A woman can take

so much testosterone that she develops an enlarged, penis-like clitoris, which is taped back into the vagina when she displays herself in a G-string.

A man who is into women with large muscles and an elongated clitoris is called a schmo. Schmoes are a small part of the audience for bodybuilding and are not regarded as true muscleheads. A top woman bodybuilder who shall remain nameless was recently offered \$10,000 and a first-class airline ticket to Texas to tie up a schmo, whip him and ride him around a corral for an hour.

After World War II Hoffman continued to push weight lifters as the ideal of masculinity. He campaigned relentlessly against the bodybuilders Weider was promoting in his magazines, disparaging them as "Weedy men" and showing caricatures with broad shoulders, narrow hips and muscular legs, which he declared effeminate. Weider was happy to be so disparaged. Hoffman's readers flocked to him, and he built a financial empire of magazines, equipment and supplements, all promising access to the Weedy physique. It was a turning point in the history of the male body: muscle mass-marketed to the average guy as pure ornament. All Weider needed was a personality behind the ornament.

"Arnold won a title in London, and I bought him a ticket to come over here," Weider says. "I saw in him the determination and the charm and the willpower. See, some people are born with the will to power. The Nietzschean man has the will to power, and Schwarzenegger had that. Whatever he was going to do, he was going to win. And not one bodybuilder disliked him. He made friends instantly. Every sport has to have a hero. A hero brings the sport and the fans around to him. Schwarzenegger had a joy for life and a will to power."

In sports the will to power often becomes the will to cheat, I suggest.

"You can use power for good or bad," Weider says. "It's up to you. What does a competitor want?"

The subject is veering toward steroids, which the Olympia does not test for. "Every sport uses steroids," Weider says. "Some more, some less. People have some fantasy that a bodybuilder is someone who just sits there and takes drugs. Not true. Anybody who goes to the gym and uses resistance to change his appearance is a bodybuilder. It would be a good idea if you read the predictions I made in 1950, because bodybuilders have changed our culture since then. The rules bodybuilders follow, everything they do to get where they want to go, have taken over the world."

During the afternoon of most bodybuilding events, the competitors come onstage in groups of four and flex their muscles

in predetermined poses at the command of the judges, who grade them on tightness, definition and shape in the various muscle groups, as well as on size. In the evening the top guys come back and do their posing routines, in which they are required to hit certain poses but may move as they see fit. Most work with choreographers, and some do a reasonable facsimile of dancing, disproving the widespread myth that extremely muscular men can't get loose. Indeed, some close their routines with a full split.

It used to be compulsory to do the posing routine to the theme from *Exodus*. The song was on a 45 rpm single, and at the end of each routine someone would lift the needle and start it again—for years the *Exodus* theme over and over and over again. Since 1978 each bodybuilder has been allowed to choose his own music. Most start with some *Exodus*-like classical theme that morphs into heavy metal or hip-hop. Only Coleman can get away with posing to "O Fortuna" from Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*.

The grand climax has, until 2004, been the pose-down, in which all the finalists come out and strike their poses to emphasize their own best features in contrast to their opponents' worst. The bodybuilders step in front of each other a lot and otherwise try to express the kinesis of alpha masculinity. The muscleheads get excited and goad their favorites to ever more intense flexing with lines

you don't hear in any other sport: "You can't win a show with soft boobs!"

The bodybuilders are illuminated by bright white spotlights shining at a 45-degree angle to eliminate shadows. This also bleaches out their muscles, so all the contestants stain their skin dark brown and then oil themselves to enhance definition. In *Pumping Iron*, all the athletes have unoiled white skin; now it's hard to tell the white guys from the black guys. They also used to wear the equivalent of tight swimming trunks; now they wear posing trunks that are about halfway between a jock and a thong. This allows closer inspection of the crucially important glute-hamstring tie-ins; that is, the

area where the butt meets the thigh, which is chronically difficult to smooth out. It also allows the bodybuilders to bounce their ass muscles, which is a big audience favorite. If you suggested there was anything homoerotic about a pulsating gluteus maximus, all true muscleheads would be deeply offended.

In the months before a contest bodybuilders eat a meal of protein and vegetables (say, fish and broccoli, plus supplements of vitamins, amino acids and other stuff advertised as the next best thing to steroids) every two hours, on the theory that numerous small meals crank the metabolism and burn fat. Eating such an unbalanced diet lacking nearly all carbohydrates, followed by

again. Six to 10 applications over three days. With no showers. Then a woman named Jan Tana began marketing a tan in a bottle that is sprayed on in one 15-minute session before an appearance and followed by a slathering of Posing Gel ("Maximizes muscularity, vascularity and hardness").

Another reason bodybuilders eat a lot (up to and beyond 14,000 calories a day) is that some of them take large amounts of human growth hormone, which burns muscle, including the heart, if it's not burning food. HGH makes all the soft tissue in your body grow, including the cartilage between the plates of your skull. When you hear a sports commentator gripe that an athlete has an unnaturally

large head because of steroids, the culprit drug is possibly HGH. An HGH head is round like a basketball. A steroid head is squared off, especially at the jaw.

When a top bodybuilder thinks nobody is looking and relaxes his washboard abs, he looks like a pregnant hippopotamus.

After a contest, when the bodybuilder no longer has to drain all his water and fat for maximum muscle definition, it is not unusual for him to gain 20 pounds in 48 hours. In the off-season, a 290-pound bodybuilder can easily balloon to 350 pounds. Getting to optimum weight is called peaking and can be done only once or twice a year.

Some bodybuilders inject irritants into their muscles to make them swell.

They inject steroids into their asses. Older bodybuilders and professional wrestlers have calloused asses. One bodybuilder who shall remain nameless recently tried to inject HGH directly into his thigh, which caused it to swell to three times its normal size and his scrotum to blow up to grapefruit proportions. He had to go to the hospital or lose his leg.

Most bodybuilders are short; many will add an inch or two to their official height. (Coleman, for example, bills himself as five-11.) As a tall person among them, I thought, Aha, this is a way for small men to make themselves large. There may be some truth to that. It is also true, however,

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carbohydrate loading, requires tremendous discipline—bodybuilders drink two or three gallons of water a day to flush their kidneys of all that protein—and creates an ungodly gas problem. I wasn't overwhelmed in the huge Events Center, but in less roomy venues the doors are left open and there are a lot of electric fans. If you see a bunch of bodybuilders together on a plane, sit in another section.

It used to smell a lot worse. When bodybuilders first started painting themselves brown, they had to stand naked while the dye was brushed on and remain standing for several hours while it dried. Then they had to do it all over

as a short bodybuilder explained to me, that a large muscle on a short bone bulges bigger than a large muscle on a long bone. Standing onstage by himself, flexing to "Ride of the Valkyries," a short guy with 60 extra pounds of muscle looks like a colossus. A tall guy with 60 extra pounds of muscle looks like a swimmer, and who's going to pay to look at a swimmer? So in rock and roll, horse racing and bodybuilding, short guys usually rule.

I will admit that I take a lot of pride in being taller than Schwarzenegger. I saw him once on the street in New York just after *Pumping Iron* came out, and I distinctly recall looking down at the top of his head. Backstage at the Events Center, he was wearing cowboy boots with high heels, and I was still looking down at the top of his head. Since I am six-two, I estimate the governor of California to be about five-10, not the six-two he has claimed to be since *Pumping Iron* made him a celebrity. The Austrian Oak is a girlie man, and that's all there is to it.

THE QUESTION OF RESPECT

I looked up the "10 Predictions" Weider published in the July 1950 issue of *Your Physique*. He said civilization would speed up, causing illnesses of all kinds to increase. He said physical fitness would be the countertrend and its principles (balanced diet, adequate sleep and so on) would sweep the world. "Bodybuilding will become the stepping stone to every other sport and physical activity," he said, and those who practice it will be happier and more productive. These aren't bad as prophecies go. The 10th makes the largest claim: "I predict that bodybuilding will one day become one of the greatest forces in existence and that it may be hailed as the activity that actually saves civilization from itself."

Up there on Weider's mountaintop, one can just make out football, baseball, basketball and Hollywood, the godly arenas for American male heroism made vastly bigger because of bodybuilding.

Most of the time, in most sports, the most muscular athlete wins, and this truism was not so obvious a mere five decades ago. Without bodybuilding, football linemen would weigh as much as Vince Lombardi, home-run hitters would have the pumpkin-on-toothpicks physique of Babe Ruth, basketball forwards would have the arms of Bill Bradley, movie strongmen would be lumpy squat guys like Anthony Quinn in *La Strada*, and Gray Davis would still be governor of California. Men looked like crap before Weider, and respect must be paid.

Has civilization shown that respect? Well, the most prominent admitted user of steroids in the world made a gazillion dollars, married a Kennedy and got elected governor of California after a reign as the biggest star in Hollywood. Meanwhile we have panicked testimony before Congress that 5 million people, including half a million teenagers, are taking steroids for the same reasons Schwarzenegger did: to get stronger and look better. Little regulated, much investigated and heavily criminalized, steroids are condemned by politicians and the sports press as sinful, and the wages of sin, they imply, is death.

So that's one problem. The more respect bodybuilding gets, the less respect bodybuilding gets.

A second problem is that no new Schwarzenegger is on the horizon. Coleman is undoubtedly the greatest pure bodybuilder ever. Having seen him onstage with Schwarzenegger, I would guess Coleman is about an inch shorter and outweighs Schwarzenegger at his peak by 60 or more pounds of muscle mass. Coleman makes Conan the Barbarian look about as ripped as your mother. He is not, however, a good quote. A journalist will forgive just about anything, but if you don't help him fill white space between the ads, he's not going to make you a star. "I don't tell people to take steroids or not to take them," said Coleman, a former middle linebacker at Grambling

State University and a part-time policeman in Arlington, Texas. "It's their life. I don't advise anything on that." This was the most interesting thing he said to me. On the wide beach of celebrity, Schwarzenegger kicks sand in his face.

So the illegality of steroids and their obvious use in the sport create certain natural limits on the interest in bodybuilders, just as there are natural limits on the interest in politicians. Both spend their careers not talking about what they are talking about.

Of course real muscleheads don't care if Coleman has original ideas. They like muscle, identify with muscle and want to have muscle for themselves. Weider Nutrition International does business to the tune of \$250 million a year. And the IFBB, founded by the Weider brothers to shut Hoffman out of the sport forever, now boasts 175,000 members in 173 countries. You can't go broke selling masculinity to men.

"There's one thing you should know about Joe and me," says Ben Weider, who was born in 1924. "We've never, ever worked with money as a goal. It was the passion for doing the right thing. Remember, if you go back to the 1940s and 1950s, bodybuilding was laughed at. Doctors thought you'd get an enlarged heart. They thought an athlete's heart was bad for you. Coaches thought if you exercised you'd become muscle-bound and wouldn't be able to play sports. That's what we fought against all those years. When we founded the IFBB, everyone thought we were nuts."

Ben, the federation's president since its inception, has the gracious air of a diplomat; he has essentially served as his brother's secretary of state. The IFBB, he points out, has a professional division, which does not test for steroids and sanctions events like the Olympia, and an amateur division, which does test for steroids and has for decades been lobbying to become an



Olympic sport. For that, you must be steroid-free or at least make a believable attempt at it.

"Controlling the doping situation in the amateur division costs us an arm and a leg," Ben says. "Every test costs about \$300. When you test thousands of athletes, it becomes very expensive. I was an intelligence officer during World War II. I never once met a German prisoner who was a Nazi. And here I have never met a bodybuilder who was found positive and admitted to using steroids. Once we had a girl from Singapore sue after she was found positive, and at the hearing, which lasted three days, she finally broke down under questioning and said, 'Yes, I use drugs.' Just this one case cost us \$60,000."

ENTER SCHWARZENEGGER

When Joe Weider started the Mr. Olympia contest in 1965, it was the first competition for professional bodybuilders. The top prize was \$1,000 until 1973, when Weider cut it by \$250. Upon receiving his check for his fourth title, Schwarzenegger took the microphone, walked to the center of the stage and said, "I train all year. I diet all year. Last year I win \$1,000. This year I win \$750. Something is wrong with this sport."

First prize went back to \$1,000 in 1974 and \$2,500 the next year, after which Schwarzenegger retired from competition and became a promoter operating under the IFBB's aegis. He invested in professional staging, lighting and sound for the first time. He increased the prize money to \$50,000 by 1980, at which point he came out of retirement and won the contest one more time before revolutionizing the Hollywood action hero.

Nowadays a top bodybuilder can earn in the high six figures with income from contests, endorsements, appearances, column writing, photo signings, personal training for rich people and modeling. Bodybuilders without sponsors struggle with day jobs, which don't usually allow for lunch breaks every two hours. Just as musicians often sell pot because the hours

are flexible, bodybuilders sometimes give art a higher priority than law.

"I got caught up in trying to make a fast buck so I could continue to train without having to take a nine-to-five job—the old don't-pay-for-your-anabolics-when-you-can-get-some-and-sell-some game," says Craig Titus, a former Mr. USA and top 10 bodybuilder. "Steroids and things of that nature weren't that big a deal at the time, and they decided to make an example of me in the sport and in the whole professional athletic world. And they did. I went to prison for 26 months. No female companionship, no family, just sitting there in a cell while other bodybuilders surpassed me. Prison makes you reflect on

ple die from those substances every day. Nobody is dying from anabolic steroids. It's crazy. I don't use them anymore myself, just supplements, which are absolutely necessary in this sport. But a bodybuilder can take 250 milligrams of testosterone and feel like a million bucks. And I'm not talking about this roid-rage bullshit. I've never seen it. I'm talking about aggression in the gym. I'm talking about a level of athletic ability like no other. I'm talking about a libido like no other, a sense of wellness like no other. Should they be made legal? No. Should they be available by prescription to athletes? Yes."

Is it possible to be a top bodybuilder without steroids?

"In general, no, I don't think it's possible," Titus says. "But I also don't think it's possible to break the record for the 100-meter dash at the Olympics without them. I don't think it's possible to hit 75 home runs without them or to gain 30 pounds of muscle in 10 months without them. The only difference between a bodybuilder and other elite athletes is that the bodybuilder is a walking billboard for steroid use. You can't tell with the others because the steroids are used to enhance different abilities. Steroids are used in every major sport. I know."

Bodybuilders have a reputation for being horny. If you were walking around with 10 times the testosterone you had at the age of 19, you'd be horny too. Perhaps this explains

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what you were doing before you got there. It's no joke."

Married to highly ranked fitness athlete Kelly Ryan, with whom he has a daughter, Titus now has seven sponsors (ranging from Pinnacle Nutrition to APT wrist straps), makes good money and is reluctant to say anything that might annoy the authorities who locked him up in 1997. But he still has opinions. "I was one of the select athletes who went to Iowa and testified before the grand jury in the BALCO investigation, and I'm telling you the same thing I told them," he says. "I cannot agree with the money being spent on investigating anabolic steroids when alcohol and tobacco are still legal. Thousands of peo-

Governor Schwarzenegger's lifelong habit of groping. At the same time, your testicles, which make testosterone, will assume they have no useful function and shrivel to the size of peas. I have been told by bodybuilders that you can take a couple of drugs to resume normal testicular function when you go off steroids. But the drugs don't always work.

Groupies behave around bodybuilders the way they behave around any other professional athletes. No matter what their testosterone level, the pros nonetheless don't take much advantage of their status as they pursue their ascetic training routines. "You just don't have time for that stuff," Titus says. "You can't

hook up with a girl on Friday night and expect to do well at a show on Saturday. The players aren't top bodybuilders, and the top bodybuilders aren't players."

TALES FROM AN EX-PROMOTER

"Every time a test catches up with a new drug, there are probably five more variations of that drug that it can't detect and 10 more variations that the testers don't even know exist," says Wayne DeMilia, former president of the IFBB pro division. "The guys say, 'You're going to test for these things? Okay, I'm going to take those things. You wanna test for those things? I'll take these things.' What have you accomplished? So we don't test for steroids, because it's an incomplete test. The diuretics we test for are the most dangerous ones, the ones that can kill."

That happened once, in 1992. A bodybuilder named Mohammed Benziza died from an overdose of diuretics in Europe. And another guy almost died the following year at the Arnold Classic in Columbus, Ohio. When bodybuilders dehydrate themselves with all kinds of diuretics, they deplete not only their fluids but also their minerals, which can induce a heart attack. The guy in Columbus was so macho he didn't want to go to the hospital, even as his body was shutting down from lack of potassium. Once in the emergency room, he was so embarrassed that he whispered the drugs he'd

been taking to DeMilia, who relayed the information to the astonished doctors. He was saved with an IV mineral drip for the diuretics and some candy bars from the nurses station to counter the HGH. The IFBB pro division has tested for diuretics but not steroids ever since.

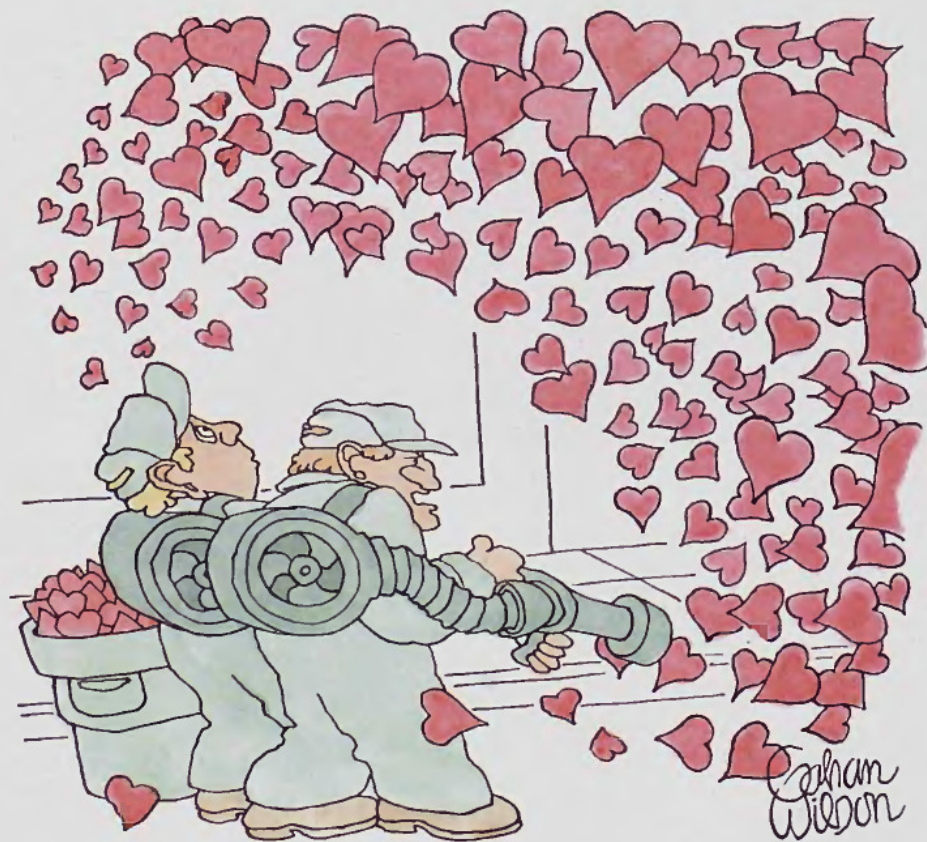
These are sad stories, but compare them with those of the young men who have died from broken necks or heatstroke while playing football, or the many old football players with artificial knees and early Alzheimer's from too many concussions.

"Sports is entertainment," DeMilia says. "We are all fans, and we always want to see something better. If we don't get it, we go elsewhere with our dollar. Why does an athlete take drugs? To make the big money longer. If you want to get rid of drugs, get rid of the money. Every sport has to decide where to draw the line. And I don't know. Whatever the athletes do, nobody is forcing them to do it. I don't go to anybody and put a gun to his head and say, 'I want you to become a Mr. Olympia competitor.' We live in a free society. We just create the venue for them to compete and make money and for the fans to be entertained. And you can see that they love it."

One of the great innovators in bodybuilding (it was he who suggested every-one stop posing to the *Exodus* theme), DeMilia was promoter of the Olympia from 1981 to 2003 and has been promoter of New York's Night of Champi-

ons since he created it in 1978. Being the promoter means putting the show together, selling the tickets and giving the Weiders 15 percent of the gross for the IFBB sanction. "The Weiders sold half the Olympia to American Media, which bought their magazines, and it's going to promote the Olympia now," DeMilia says. "I'm out. Its goal is to make bodybuilding mainstream, but you can't make it mainstream. It's not. It's specialized. Go to a health club on Monday night in New York when it's crowded. You'll see 200 people working out, and maybe one or two of them are serious about this sport. That's how small our demographic is. It's just a certain guy who's a fan, and he's looking at male bodies but not in a sexual way. He admires it, he wants to be it, he's in awe of it, and that's all. For most people it's odd to see men looking at other almost naked men. But that's the bodybuilding fan. He's checking out that glute-hamstring tie-in, and if it's tight, he's going, 'Oh man, he's got striated glutes. Unbelievable!' I'm talking bodybuilding freakiness.

"That's what they want. You have to understand that, market to it, have the fan hyperventilating, thinking, Oh man, I've got to see that. It's not sexual, but it's not going to become respectable, either. You take that away from the hard-core fan and you're not going to create a new fan base. All you're going to do is drive away the people who support you. The fan base is small, and it's coming to see freaks. There's that constant pressure for more muscle. Where will it end? Well, it's not going to end. That's the scary thing. We have no idea where we're going."



"They don't call it 'The Boulevard of Broken Dreams' for nothing, kid."

Having watched the Olympia for three years, I have wondered the same thing. The big change in Mr. Olympia since 2004 is that the posing routine with music isn't important anymore. In fact it was barely part of the 2004 and 2005 night shows. The 19 contestants were introduced, their point totals from the afternoon preliminaries were announced, and they posed to music for a strictly limited two minutes. This was a drag because they weren't being judged and it's the only truly creative part of the show. Whatever you think of bodybuilders, it's fascinating to watch anyone with 200 pounds of extra muscle try to dance. But in this new format, contestants were judged mostly in the afternoon, so there was no suspense and no point other than to give the losers a moment in the spotlight. The athletes were visibly spiritless.

At that point in the 2004 Olympia, Sylvester Stallone (another guy with lots of horizontal bulge and not much vertical extension) read the new rules for the challenge round: The top six guys were to pick a body part they thought was better than the other guy's body part and challenge him. The contestants squared

off with five seconds to pose, and a 1950s quiz-show buzzer went off. The judges voted, and the results were flashed on another innovation: a large computerized scoreboard. This all sounds okay in theory as a suspense builder, but it replaced most of the time previously spent watching a choreographed, creative posing routine with watching a scoreboard. The competition is more like other sports now, but bodybuilding isn't like other sports.

Another bummer was that once, say, Schlierkamp, had challenged Marcus Ruhle to a back double biceps and Schlierkamp lost, Ruhle could choose back double biceps again when it was his turn to challenge Schlierkamp. The judges, once more evaluating the same pose, of course decided exactly the same way. What's the point?

Cutler was in second place and Coleman in first. They had beaten the others at every pose, and finally it came down to one final pose between them. Coleman called out a "rear-lat, lights-out, game-over spread" and won with a rippling display of his massive back. The crowd of 6,000 got pretty excited, but it was somehow less human than the previous year. Schwarzenegger, who was juggling his duties as governor of California and executive editor of *Muscle and Fitness* magazine, came onstage to give Coleman his seventh Eugen Sandow trophy and a check for \$120,000. "I used to flex my muscles for bodybuilding," Schwarzenegger said. "Now I flex my muscles for California. I promise you I'll be back." That got a big cheer. His plug for President Bush got a mixed response, which turned to religious ecstasy as the bodybuilders ran out into the audience to shake hands and sign autographs. Then they ran backstage for an orgy of carbohydrate loading with pizza and Gatorade.

In Las Vegas in October 2005, at the 40th anniversary of the Mr. Olympia competition, it happened all over again. Schwarzenegger was there—a bit chastened after a year in office—as was an older-looking Joe Weider. But this time, after Coleman rose from his fetal position to accept the Sandow trophy and the \$150,000 first prize, a rumble of dissent moved through the crowd.

Backstage, Cutler was cornered by TV reporters and asked if he'd even *thought* he had a chance to best Coleman after four second-place finishes. He did. "Me and a whole lot of people in this audience did," he said. "They wanted to see a change." He shook his head. "It's just Mr. Olympia, man. It seems they don't want to give it to anyone else."

"Yeah, but Jay Cutler will be back next year, right?" asked one of the reporters.

Cutler looked angry enough to use his colossal biceps for more than ornamental purposes. "What's the point?" he said and stalked off to his dressing room.



MEDICINE

(continued from page 62)

"What are you doing in the city?" she asked.

"Just errands," her sister said, blatantly evading the question. Errands? In the city? So many miles from Los Altos? Her sister's shopping cart was stocked with small, expensive items, as if she were planning a gourmet meal. She placed a couple of rib-eye steaks on the conveyor belt, a small bag of fresh basil, some shiitake mushrooms. "Mom wants you to come over for dinner soon."

"I know. I've been busy."

"Next Saturday?" her sister asked.

"Next Saturday, I promise."

"There's someone I want you to meet."

The thing she remembers most vividly from that encounter is that her sister was wearing a pair of red brocade house slippers. Her sister, who was five-foot-two and had preferred heels since she was 12 years old, was shopping in public in house slippers. And she looked radiant, as if she'd just returned from an exotic vacation or received some very good news.

Three days later her sister was dead. Only after the funeral did it occur to her that the person her sister wanted her to meet might have been the astronomy professor and that the Albertsons on California Street was just a few blocks from the campus where he taught.

Ever since her sister died, she has felt a profound sense of disconnection—from her family, her work, the entire world. A few days after the funeral, she gave her two weeks' notice at the PR firm. "Why?" her boss said. He was wearing a Post-it with a cartoon drawing of a Neanderthal man on his forehead, trying to make her laugh. Everyone in the office was trying to make her laugh.

"I need to find work that is more personally fulfilling," she said. She had rehearsed this line a number of times. Her boss came forward and hugged her.

"Tell me if there's anything I can do," he said. She could feel his steamy breath on her neck. The Post-it bristled against her hair. For years the boss had tried unsuccessfully to hide his crush on her. Later he would be one of the friends whom she called upon to help her prepare for the exam. She practiced on him three times: once on BART, once in his car, once in his light-filled loft in Potrero Hill. That was the time they ended up going to bed together. Afterward he stroked her back and said, "Now that we're together, I can't let you pursue this career path."

"What?"

"I don't feel comfortable about you getting so intimate with other men."

"We're not together," she said. She got up and dressed, found her purse, her cell phone, her keys.

Naked, he followed her around the



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apartment. "Don't leave," he said. He tried the Post-it trick again. She hasn't seem him since.

She is not the kind of person to make career decisions without thoroughly thinking them through. She did not quit her job at the PR firm without first considering the consequences. These factors drove her decision:

- Manual manipulation is a booming and lucrative industry.
- The hours are flexible.
- She is not and never has been squeamish about bodily fluids.
- The male sexual organ is an organ like any other, in most instances, not something to be feared or reviled. Erections and the male orgasm are mere reflexes, somewhat on par with knee jerks and sneezing.
- She cannot remember the last time she did something even remotely selfless for another human being. She cannot remember the last time she touched another person in a way that felt truly intimate.

The portion of the exam about which she is most nervous is the manual. This is where 57 percent of applicants flunk out. After a failure, one cannot sit for the exam again until 13 months have passed. It is unclear where this time frame originated, but she suspects it is meant to weed out dilettantes. Thirteen months is plenty of time to find a new career path or to begin dating someone who doesn't approve, someone who puts his or her foot down.

She plans to pass the first time. At this point in her life there is no other career path, no potential love waiting in the wings. The boss is not on her radar. All of her exes have swiftly and cruelly moved on. She realizes from past breakups that she is an easy person with whom to sever

ties. She is 31. Her last boyfriend married a software executive and is living in a \$2 million bungalow in Palo Alto. Recently on the phone the ex said to her, "I am flush with love and cash," and there was no hint of self-deprecation in his voice. The software executive is expecting.

"Expecting what?" she said when the ex told her the news.

"You know," he said, sighing the exasperated sigh that characterized most of their exchanges during the last four years of their relationship. "Expecting."

"But you said you never wanted children," she reminded him. "You said children have nothing to offer. You said they would cause undue wear on your hands. The diapers, remember? The preparation of nutritious meals. The assembling of swing sets."

To which he replied, "You always were so negative."

The week after the funeral she received a call from the astronomy professor. He was weeping into his cell phone. "I have to see you," he said. "I need to talk to someone."

They met at the diner by Lake Merced. It was a cool day. College students were rowing through the fog on the lake. The afternoon special was chicken salad on rye served with a side of hash browns. She had the special, he had coffee, he confessed he had been deeply in love with her sister.

"My sister was only 16," she said. "You're a married man."

His eyes were so small, his hands so small, his beard so short and bristly, she wondered what her beautiful sister could possibly have seen in him.

"Did you know her dream was to map the distance between Earth and the nearest sentient life-forms outside our solar

system? Yes, she was 16, but she was working on a mathematical formula that could quite possibly have changed the way humans view our place in the universe."

She looked at her hash browns and shook her head dumbly. "No, I didn't know."

"What I'm saying is, to you she was a 16-year-old girl. To me she was a great scientist in the making."

And a lover, she wanted to add. And you're married. But she didn't say it. It occurred to her that her sister may have tapped into something enormous and inspired, a kind of love she herself had never experienced.

Although a number of schools have opened to serve the vast number of hopefuls flocking to the new profession, formal training is not required to sit for the exam. Nonetheless, she briefly considered enrolling in a local certificate program in order to validate the respectability of her chosen path, but when she looked into it, she discovered the costs would be prohibitive. Three thousand dollars a semester, and that didn't even include the lubricant.

Anyway, what she knows about hand jobs could fill a textbook. She gave her first at 14, to a banker's son named John Zephyr, in the living room of her friend Ramona's house during a party at which no adults were present. Everyone had been drinking Seagram's and Seven, and John Zephyr was passed out on the sofa. Someone sent her to wake him up; it was long past his curfew. She tried slapping his face, pulling his hair, talking loudly into his ear, but he just kept on snoring.

Then she saw that his pants were unzipped, a fact that was not entirely surprising given the haze of marijuana and alcohol that wafted through the house. She opened the fly of his boxers and gently took him in her hands. She had not planned on doing it; it just happened that way. Soon he was awake and proclaiming his undying love. She was surprised by the pleasant stiffness in her hands and the way this boy, who had paid no attention to her before, succumbed entirely to her control.

After that, she was very popular at parties.

When she tells the ex about her new direction, he says, "You always were good at *that*." He has a way of turning every compliment into a stinging insult, just by his tone of voice.

Sometimes she lies awake late into the night, thinking of her sister. The image is always the same: her sister stepping up on the windowsill, looking back one last time at her bedroom. The woods around her blaze with firelight. In her brilliant mind she calculates the distance from windowsill to ground. She considers the probabilities of her survival. The ground beneath her window is soft, the first floor of her house is burning, it

(continued on page 149)



"I'm looking for a card that says, 'I love you and all your hot girlfriends.'"

PLAYMATE NEWS



Miss July goes to Washington: Lauren Anderson takes Capitol Hill.

ANIMAL IMPULSE

"I feel I can do more good in the spotlight," Miss July 2002 Lauren Anderson says, declaring her commitment to animal rights. She may be correct. Every summer since her Centerfold, her appearances at PETA's annual Congressional Veggie Hot Dog Lunch have made her one of Capitol Hill's most anticipated visitors. With the help of a few other volunteers and a tasteful (and no doubt tasty) lettuce bikini, Lauren draws attention to animal rights and promotes vegetarianism. "Every year the American Meat Institute has a free hot-dog lunch, so in response we have a free veggie-hot-dog lunch. The point is that there's an



Who's yellow? Lauren protests KFC.

alternative to meat," she explains. Lauren also served on the hosting committee for PETA's 25th anniversary gala, co-hosted by Pamela Anderson (see "Playmate Gossip"), and she staged a lone protest against Kentucky Fried Chicken in frigid Anchorage, Alaska. Dressed only in a yellow bikini, white boots and earmuffs on a 25-degree day, Lauren protested the restaurant's use of suppliers believed to mishandle chickens. "PETA is asking Kentucky Fried Chicken to take a stand and not buy from these warehouses," she says. "Me in a bikini in Alaska got a lot of attention."

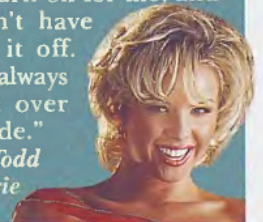
20 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

One of PLAYBOY's most prominent Playmates, *Julie McCullough* was the cover girl of the February 1985 Girls of Texas issue. She became a Centerfold a year later and posed for a sexy Venice travel pictorial just a month after that. Julie went on to build a career in film, TV and theater that continues to this day. Most recently she starred in a revival of *Pajama Tops*, a bawdy French sex comedy, in Alberta, Canada.



LOOSE LIPS

"The look is so hot. It's such a turn-on for me, and you don't have to take it off. You can always move it over to the side."
—Lani Todd on lingerie



BUNNY BLITZ

Centerfolds make L.A. the city of angels. From left: **Deanna Brooks** is the woman in red at the Mansion's Playmate of the Year party; **Marketa Janska** soils to Avolon for o Hollywood's Helping Hands event; **Heather Kozar** chimes in at Playboy's Music Poll party; **Tiffany Fallon** slips into o Christian Audigier party in Hollywood; **Jaime Bergman** earns her party stripes at Argyle in West Hollywood.



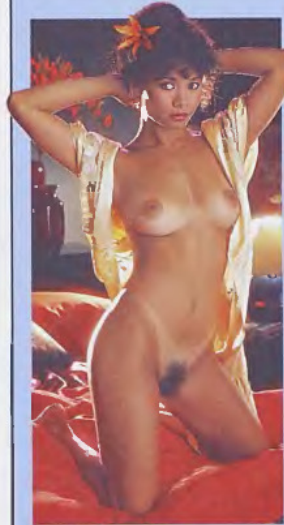
HOT SHOT



ANGELA LITTLE

MY FAVORITE PLAYMATE

By Reggie Hayes



My favorite Playmate is Miss June 1982 Lourdes Ann Kananimanu Estores. She was the first Playmate I ever loved.

POP QUESTIONS: CARMELLA DECESARE

Q: What have you been up to lately?

A: Half the year I'm in Detroit, and half the year I'm in L.A. I've been in Detroit with Jeff Garcia for the football season, and I haven't been working too much. But I look forward to getting back to print work now that the season's over.

Q: Looking back, tell us what it was like to be Playmate of the Year.

A: It was a great experience, and I wouldn't take it back for anything. But I do enjoy my rest nowadays. I was on

the road and flying six to 11 times a week. When I woke up, I wouldn't even know what city I was in half the time.



East Coast to West Coast, all over the place. During that time I don't think I got tired because my body became accustomed to lack of sleep and being on the road. But it takes a toll.

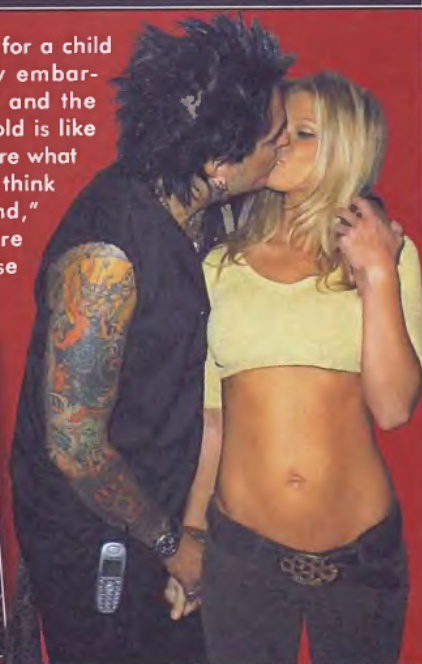
Q: What did you miss most?

A: I love spending time with my dogs, my family and my friends. I really missed that.

MEET THE PARENTS: DONNA D'ERRICO AND NIKKI SIXX



It's a rite of passage for a child to become painfully embarrassed by the rents, and the Sixx-D'Errico household is like any other. "I'm not sure what my children's friends think of me or my husband," Donna admits. "We're not allowed to get close enough to find out."



PLAYMATE GOSSIP

Pamela Anderson co-hosted PETA's 25th anniversary gala, which honored prominent animal-rights activists, including Alec Baldwin, Heather Mills McCartney, Morrissey, Ravi Shankar and Pink. Meanwhile, in virtual reality, Pam's name was cited as Lycos.com's most popular search term for the years 1995 to 2005.... PMOY

Tiffany Fallon and Miss June 2000 Shannon Stewart represented Playboy at the MAGIC fashion convention in Las Vegas.... Also in Vegas, Miss August 2001 Jennifer Walcott



Pam rallies for PETA.

received a key to the city.... Miss September 2002 Shalann Meiers and Miss June 1997 Carrie Stevens are slated to appear in the ensemble comedy *Click* with Adam Sandler,



Shannon and Tiffany make MAGIC.

Christopher Walken and Kate Beckinsale, anticipated for the summer.... Miss October 2002 Teri Harrison appears in the controversial festival-circuit horror film *Snuff-Movie*.... Miss March Jillian Grace just finished filming her role in *The Agonist*.... Last, we'd like to extend our congratulations to Miss July 1996 Angel Boris, who recently gave birth to her first child, a boy.

Jennifer has the key, and she's not afraid to use it.



cyberclub

See your favorite Playmate's pictorial in the Cyber Club at cyber.playboy.com.

MEDICINE

(continued from page 146)

takes only a few seconds to die of smoke inhalation. For some reason she does not factor in the brand-new brick border framing the geraniums.

When people ask why a nice copywriter like herself is making such a dramatic career shift, she mentions the good pay, the flexible hours, the geographic mobility. She does not mention that she has always been at ease when giving a hand job. She never admits that she finds it comforting, the feel of her palm against giving flesh, the way she can control a man's face and his emotions with a simple shift in speed or rhythm. She doesn't say that she enjoys the moment of intense tightening just before he lets go and then the quick, hot stream of semen. She never mentions these things because she fears that perhaps she is a little strange to find peace and wholeness in such a simple, primal act.

And she tells no one what goes through her mind while she is working on her practice subjects. Occasionally she tries to concentrate on rhythm and technique, speed and accuracy. More often, though, her mind wanders, and she finds herself thinking about everything except the job at hand:

- Will she see her ex, the software engineer and their new baby on the street? If so, what will she say?

- If, on that day at Albertsons, she had known she was seeing her sister for the last time, what would she have said?

- Did her sister believe in an afterlife? Does she herself believe in an afterlife? If there is an afterlife, will she one day in the distant future be able to locate her sister there?

- How do her parents manage to pass the endless days in that enormous, immaculate house in the Los Altos hills, and does her mother still tend the geraniums?

The day of the exam arrives. She goes to a nondescript building on Polk Street, rides the elevator to the 12th floor and joins 37 other hopefuls for the written exam. She uses a number-two pencil and finishes half an hour early, certain that she has aced it.

The oral exam is more difficult. Her test subject is extremely attractive. She resorts to an old technique she has of slightly crossing her eyes in order to blur her vision. This way she does not have to look at his beautiful green eyes, his perfect face. He reads from his script in a convincing way. When he says, "I'm so ashamed to be here," she says, "There is nothing to be ashamed of. This procedure is a medically sound method of relieving upper-back pain." A few minutes later, following the script, he says, "You fucking whore," to which she replies, "Please refrain from making comments that may interfere with the treatment." As she is

leaving the room she can hear murmurs behind the two-way glass. She spends half an hour in the waiting room, flipping through *Popular Mechanics*.

Finally the administrative assistant calls her name and says, "Please proceed to room 1237 for the manual portion of your exam."

She finds her test subject in a large room containing nothing but two hard-backed chairs. The room is painted white. To her great relief the test subject is a fat man in his mid-50s with a receding hairline, complaining of excruciating leg cramps. She takes a pair of disposable surgical gloves from a box by her chair and gets to work. It takes only three minutes and 27 seconds.

The next day she receives her final results by phone. A sleepy voice of indeterminate sex says, "We are calling to inform you that you have passed all three segments of the Manual Medical Caregiver examination. You were in the top third percentile of your exam group. Congratulations, this is the beginning of an exciting new career in medicine."

A few weeks after she passes the exam, her mother calls and says, "You never came to dinner."

Meaning, of course, that she is a lousy daughter, that she quite possibly caused the fire, that it should have been she who died instead of her younger sister.

Her mother says, "Your father wants to talk to you."

Her father comes on the line. "Who is this?"

"It's me."

"Oh, hello. I heard through the grapevine that you've become one of those whatchamacallits."

"Manual Medical Caregiver."

"Yes, how do you like the work?"

"It's good, not too stressful. It pays the bills."

She can hear her mother whispering something in the background. "Sweetheart," her father says, "your mother wants you to return the necklace you borrowed from your little sister."

"What necklace?"

More whispering, then, "The one with the rhinestone rhinoceros pendant."

She has to think for a minute, and then she remembers it. "That was five years ago."

Her father sighs. It has been a long and arduous marriage. She knows this for a fact: He never wanted children. He never even wanted a wife. Before he got her mother pregnant, he'd been planning a solitary career in forestry. "Your mother wants it back," her father says. "I can't say why. Just do this one thing for the sake of harmony."

"Sure," she says.

Months pass. She never finds the necklace; she never goes over for dinner. She cannot bear the thought of her mother's cautious hug, the polite pat on the shoulder, the inevitable point in the evening



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when her mother would remind her, "Your sister took after me."

She advertises her services on the back page of a reputable local magazine and gradually builds her clientele. She rents a small office in the financial district. The office contains a couch, a chair, a pillow and a desk on which she makes appointments and keeps the books. She paints the walls a pale, hospitable green and maintains a large supply of Kleenex. She always wears scrubs to work, in order to underscore the message to patients that this is a serious medical establishment. She finds the work relaxing. She sleeps fairly well at night. Her patients depend on her; she is providing a valuable service to the public. Slowly she begins to feel connected to the world.

But there is one thing that bothers her, one horror she can't shake: the image of her baby sister standing on the windowsill, preparing to leap. She purchases several books about the afterlife. Each night before falling asleep, she attempts unsuccessfully to channel her sister's ghost.

Oh yes, of course it happens this way. She runs into the ex on the street. He is pushing a stroller, and the software executive is beaming. The software executive has gotten a perm and a thousand-dollar pram. "I quit my job!" this woman says, unprovoked. "Motherhood is so fulfilling!"

Consequently, the ex has taken a full-time job for the first time in his life. He has given up his career in hand modeling for something more stable, something in sales. He looks haggard, possibly insane, and she knows he is ready to jump ship at any moment. When the software executive runs off to change the baby's diaper, the ex says, "Would you like to have coffee sometime?"

"I don't think so." She does not even

feel the slightest emotional tug, the slimmest pang of nostalgia lust.

One thing she never told anyone about her ex: He did not masturbate. Ever. He was concerned about repetitive stress injury to his hands.

Nearly a year after she passes the exam, the astronomer shows up at her door. It's late on a rainy night, and she's wearing her nightgown, watching old Westerns on TV. She has not seen him since that day at the diner.

"May I come in?" he asks.

He is wearing a yellow raincoat in which he looks very small, no bigger than a boy. She steps aside to let him in. She offers him coffee and a bagel. Still wearing his wet raincoat, he sits down on the sofa. She sits on the other end. His face has the gaunt, prematurely aged look of someone who has given up food for cigarettes.

"I can't get her out of my mind," he says.

"I know," she says. By which she means, *Me too*.

"I've left my wife," he says. "I've quit my job. I've been spending a lot of time at sports bars."

She is thinking about her sister, how one young girl with an infinite stream of numbers coursing through her brain could have caused so much grief for so many people simply by ceasing to exist. She doesn't know what to say to him, so she tells him a story that she only recently remembered.

"I remember this one time," she says. "My sister was six years old, and I was home from college. It was 1986, and Halley's comet was passing by. She'd heard about it in school, and she was desperate to see it. I drove her out to Point Reyes, and we camped out on the beach. I remember it was this bright baseball of light with a fuzzy white tail. We lay on our backs, watching.

My sister took a few pictures with a Polaroid camera, but none of them came out. When I woke up the next morning, she was sitting down by the water's edge. I asked her what she thought of the comet. 'It was cool,' she said. Then she asked me the strangest thing. 'How far away do you think they are?' she asked. 'Who?' 'The other people,' she said. 'How many light-years do you think it would take to get to the nearest planet inhabited by people?' I said I didn't know but that there'd be plenty of time for her to figure it out."

The astronomer is looking at her with extreme concentration, as if waiting for some clue, some consoling fact that will allow him to get on with his life. "Yes, I remember when Halley's comet passed by," he says. "Do you know it won't return until the year 2061?"

They sit for a few minutes in silence. John Wayne's voice emanates softly from the TV.

Finally she says, "Why are you here?"

He leans his wet head against the sofa. "I don't know."

It occurs to her that she need not let him suffer. It occurs to her that he has come to her for a purpose, even if he is unaware of this himself.

"I am a licensed medical professional," she says, sliding closer to him. "Manual manipulation has proven extremely effective in treating patients who suffer from long-term mourning." She is using her most professional voice. She touches his hand first, in keeping with protocol. He flinches slightly but does not move his hand away.

He lifts his head and looks at her. "It's very kind of you, but I don't think that will help. Nothing will help." His hair is dripping on her sofa.

"At least we can try," she says. "I won't charge you."

"Okay."

She goes upstairs, puts on her scrubs and gets a bottle of lotion. When she returns, he has taken off his raincoat and laid it over the arm of the sofa. He has unzipped his pants and is sitting with his hands in his lap. "What now?" he says, trying to be nonchalant.

"Just relax."

She reaches for him. He is so soft, so small. As she is working, she thinks about the universe. She thinks about planets spinning. She sees cold moons and burning suns. She thinks about the year 2061, and she is pleased by the thought that when the comet passes again, she too will be nothing more than particulate matter.

Soon the astronomer shudders and lets out a great sigh. He opens his eyes and says, "Elizabeth." For a moment she forgets the rules and leaves her hand in place. For a moment she is not alone in the world; she is connected to some greater thing. It is the first time she has heard her sister's name spoken aloud in many months.



Nick Downes

"She left me for the guy who stole my identity."



Playboy On The Scene

WHAT'S HAPPENING, WHERE IT'S HAPPENING AND WHO'S MAKING IT HAPPEN



Surf's Up. Way Up

Huge waves, cold water and rocks. It's just another day at Mavericks, the world's toughest surf contest

Some call surfing 50-foot waves insane. For Jeff Clark it's therapy. "It's the place I go when the shit hits the fan. I can just paddle out to my own planet," he says. Clark is the discoverer, pioneer and champion of the Mavericks surf break in northern California. In 1975 the now legendary big-wave spot in Half Moon Bay had seldom been encountered without a ship, but today the world's top big-wave riders seek it out for the annual Mavericks surf contest. Clark got his first glimpse of a huge wave there when he was a teen, thanks to a sharp-eyed Little League coach who spied the colossal curl about half a mile offshore. Not long after, at the age of 17, Clark screwed up

the gumption to paddle for 20 minutes through 52-degree water and take on a modest (for Mavericks) 25-foot face. For 15 years Clark was the only person with the audacity to surf the break. "No one was looking for big-surf spots up by San Francisco," he explains. In the 1990s he shared his secret with some big-wave-riding pros, who immediately saw it for what it was—the hugest surfing on the West Coast. The competition is held between January 1 and March 31, whenever waves are best. Once Clark announces the date on his website, maverickssurf.com, contestants have 24 hours to get there. Whether they get back in one piece is another story.



Crisis Management

Just when you thought you'd outgrown the world of caped men who fly around in tights

If you haven't noticed, the world today is in a state of crisis. Terrorism, mistrust of government, Brad and Jen—it's a mess. Who can save the day? Superman, naturally. Vaunted comic-book publisher DC Comics' new seven-issue miniseries *Infinite Crisis* offers a new take on good and evil more in accord with our times, when the lines between them are not so clearly drawn. Written by fan favorite Geoff Johns and illustrated by Phil Jimenez (pictured left is cover art for issue #4, which hits stands this month), the series features nearly 400 characters from the publisher's superhuman pantheon in an epic battle that reshapes their fictional universe. Primarily the story interweaves the plotlines of DC's holy trinity: Batman, Superman and the superendowed Wonder Woman. "For me it's about showing the audience—if they've forgotten or don't know—why Batman, Superman and Wonder Woman are such great heroes," says Johns. "To do that across the board with the entire DC Universe, you have to ask, What does it mean to be a hero? That's really the theme." And Johns isn't joking around. By the end of this series, some of his beloved heroes will kick the superbucket.

Slip of the Tongue

One thing you should know about THANDIE NEWTON: The *h* is silent. Oops, we meant *thing*—one *thing* you should know about her. She's wearing a thong, though. And a slip. Nicely, don't you tink?

Cleared for Takeoff

Runway star NOEMIE LENOIR, one of the world's top lingerie and swimsuit models, earns an A for sheer effort on the catwalk.

Hearts in the Right Place

Happy Valentine's Day from RACHEL BRUDWICK and all the treats at Apexglamour.com.

GREG GORDON/SHUTTERSTOCK COLLECTION, INC.



Herblouse: Fully Reloaded

Welcome back to America's favorite teen twins. After LINDSAY LOHAN's lean summer, it's good to see her God-given talents once again on display.

A Sudden, Impulsive and Seemingly Unmotivated Notion or Action

That's CAPRICE for you, according to Merriam-Webster's dictionary. We would also have accepted "smoking-hot supermodel."



SHUTTER MEDIA/PLUSH NEWS

Empress of Ice Cream

Playmate Angela Melini, who runs Marquismodels.com, turned us on to yummy JAIMI HAMANN, a Las Vegas bartender. We hope Jaimi's more careful with a whiskey sour than a wafer cone.



GREG HADEL/MARQUISMODELS.COM

© JIM SPALAN/REIMAGES



Y Is This Woman Laughing?

The alphabet's penultimate letter has been good to ELISE NEAL, best known as Yvonne on *The Hughleys* and Yvette in *Hustle & Flow*. We wouldn't mind seeing a little more of her.

Potpourri



FULL OF BEANS

When is a beanbag not a beanbag? When it's a beancouch. Or a beanchair. Or a beanbed. The Omni (\$200, sumolounge.com) is a giant pillow-shaped bag full of polystyrene foam that in no way resembles the schlubby little spheroid you had in your dorm room. Depending on how you mold, punch and shape it, the Omni can function in a multitude of positions (much like yourself). At four and a half by five and a half feet, it's big enough for two, and you don't need to worry if things get adventurous—it's coated in ballistic nylon that's rip-proof and wipes clean.



BLOW UP

Skiing and snowboarding are exhilarating, but humans aren't the type to stop at exhilarating. Where there is adrenaline, we say there must be more adrenaline. Hence the invention of the snow kite, a device that lets you catch hospital air and still land softly, speeds you across the flats and even lets you snowboard uphill. The open-cell foil design on the two-meter Samurai (\$362, ems.com) makes for sharper turns and a safer ride, perfect for first-timers. Want to crank your backcountry cruise to the next level? Power up the high-performance five-meter Frenzy (\$850), made for aggressive expert riders who want to play in winds upward of 50 miles an hour. Don't forget your helmet.

FACE TIME

Just because there's a *Miami Vice* movie in the works doesn't mean the sporty-stubby Sonny Crockett look is coming back. The Sandalwood Essential Oil Gift Set from the Art of Shaving (\$40, theartofshaving.com) will protect and soothe your face during these harsh winter months (for those of us not in a drug-lords-and-palm-trees climate). Each set includes glycerin-rich shaving cream and an eau de toilette, both with woody undertones and sandalwood oils from India.



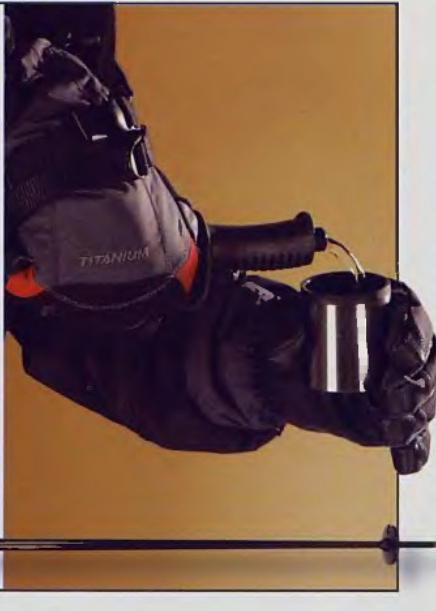
SWEATING IN STYLE

Technology changes everything, even saunas. The new wave of sweatboxes uses infrared light instead of direct heat. The room doesn't actually get hot; instead invisible light heats you from the inside, which means you sweat out more toxins. Plus it heats up in 15 minutes (as opposed to 45) and is electronics friendly. Sunlight Saunas' Armana line (\$3,500 to \$6,500, sunlightsaunas.com) is available with flat-screen TVs and sound systems, none of which would last long in steam heat.



FROZEN DRINKS

A little nip now and then takes the frosty edge off a day on the slopes, but you don't want to bomb down a mogul run with a wineskin flopping around on your back. Pick up some Coldpoles (\$55 to \$75, coldpole.com) and you'll slide in style. These ski poles with screw-off handles hold eight ounces of your favorite beverage inside. Not only will they make you the most popular guy on the lift, they'll also make sure your hooch stays ice-cold.



THE NEW SOUND

As digital music continues its march to absolute domination, we're getting more and more ways to listen to it. The latest is Roku's SoundBridge Radio (\$400, rokulabs.com), a perfect gadget that can pull in tunes from your computer with its Wi-Fi receiver, then fill the room with them using its built-in speakers and subwoofer. It includes an AM/FM radio, and Roku even tossed in an alarm clock so you can wake up to MP3s, Internet radio or your favorite podcast.



STROKE OF GENIUS

The link between sex and chocolate is well established, body chocolate doubly so. Going a step further, Kama Sutra, the sensual-massage-oils company, offers the Lover's Paintbox (\$35, kamasutra.com), an elegant Hindu-esque package containing chocolate body paint in dark, milk and white flavors, as well as a mischievous little paintbrush with which to create your masterpiece. What you do with it from there is your business, but keep in mind that while the abstract-expressionist market remains hot, conceptual art is the real up-and-comer.

AIRING IT OUT

The Air Max has been a well-worn fixture on treadmills and tracks ever since Nike introduced it in 1987. Back then Air technology applied only to the heel. What Neanderthals. In Nike's new Air Max 360 (\$160), the cushioning system runs through the entire sole, making that sub-12-minute mile smoother than ever.



COLD MOUNTAIN

Normally we don't go for flavored vodkas, but something about the spirit of 44° North (\$30 at fine liquor stores) caught our eye. It's distilled in Idaho from the state's vaunted spud, pure Rocky Mountain water and sweet huckleberries, Idaho's state fruit. The name refers to the latitude where the Idaho potato thrives. For best enjoyment, chill a bottle in the snow next to a hot tub all day. When night falls, fill the hot tub with leeks and beautiful women, then climb in with shot glass in hand. Gently steam until tender.



Next Month



CELEBRITIES SHOW SOME SKIN.



FICTION: A RELIEF WORKER COVETS A LOCAL'S WIFE.



FRANZ FERDINAND, ARCHDUKES OF THE AIRWAVES.



WILLA MAKES US WANNA BE BAD.

KANYE WEST—THE TOP DOG IN TODAY'S RAP GAME IS A SUBURBANITE WHO WOULD RATHER POP HIS COLLAR THAN A CAP. THE POLO-SHIRTED RHYMER DISCUSSES HIS FONDNESS FOR PORNOGRAPHY AND WHY GEORGE BUSH DOESN'T CARE ABOUT BLACK PEOPLE. *PLAYBOY INTERVIEW* BY **ROB TANNENBAUM**

WILLA FORD—THE FEMINIST POP STARLET WHO BELTS OUT "A TOAST TO MEN" RAISES A SYMBOLIC GLASS BY DROPPING HER CLOTHES. HERE'S TO HER.

DOWNHILL RUNNER—JEREMY BLOOM IS THE TOP-RANKED FREESTYLE MOGUL SKIER ON THE PLANET AND A FAVORITE TO WIN GOLD FOR THE U.S. IN TURIN, BUT THE TRUE SUMMIT OF HIS CAREER WOULD BE TO PLAY IN THE NFL. *PAT JORDAN* PROFILES AMERICA'S NEXT TOP TWO-SPORT ATHLETE.

SOGBO'S WIFE—A RELIEF WORKER IN AFRICA FALLS FOR THE CONTINENT AND A VILLAGER'S WIFE. A WHITE MAN CAN LEARN TO HUNT IN THE JUNGLE, BUT CERTAIN PLACES ARE TOO DANGEROUS FOR EXPLORATION. FICTION BY **TONY D'SOUZA**

THE YEAR IN MUSIC 2006—YOU VOTED, WE'RE COUNTING, AND SOON EVERYONE WILL KNOW WHAT *PLAYBOY* READERS WANT TO HEAR ON THE SOUNDTRACKS OF THEIR LIVES. ALSO: THE BATTLE TO BE TOP IN HIP-HOP HAS BEEN DOMINATED FOR

YEARS BY THE EAST COAST-WEST COAST RIVALRY, BUT HOUSTON IS ABOUT TO BECOME NUMBER ONE. PLUS WE EXAMINE WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE NEW ORLEANS MUSIC SCENE IN THE WAKE OF KATRINA—MO' BETTA BLUES.

FRANZ FERDINAND—THE ENDEARINGLY COCKSURE ROCKERS FROM SCOTLAND SOUND OFF ABOUT SECTARIAN VIOLENCE IN GLASGOW AND REVEAL THE HIDDEN BACKWARD MESSAGES IN THEIR RECORDS. *20Q* BY **TIM MOHR**

THE 25 SEXIEST CELEBRITIES—OUR CULTURE HAS BECOME OBSESSED WITH FAMOUS WOMEN. COME SEE WHY.

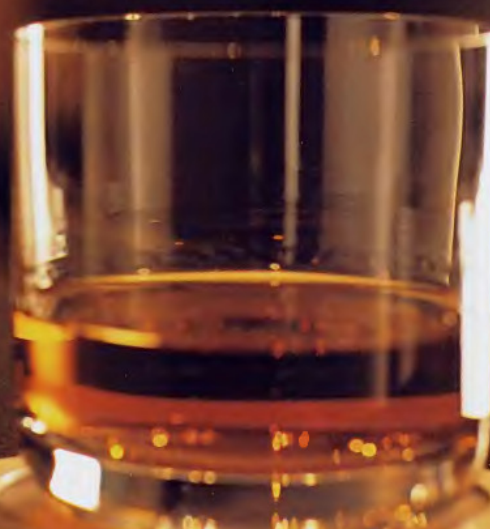
THE PLAYBOY GAME ROOM—BECAUSE THE WORD *PLAY* IS IN OUR NAME AND INFORMS OUR LIFESTYLE, WE SEARCHED FOR AND FOUND THE COOLEST ARCADE MACHINE, THE BEST POOL TABLE, A CHESS SET MADE OF CAR PARTS AND OTHER NECESSITIES. CALL IT THE CHAMBER OF LEISURE.

DRESS LIKE A PLAYER—MUSIC AND FASHION INFLUENCE EACH OTHER LIKE TWIN ORBITING PLANETS. WE LET **QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE**, **THE SOUNDS**, RAPPER **TRU LIFE** AND OTHERS CHOOSE HOT THREADS FOR A COOL FASHION SHOOT.

PLUS: AN INTIMATE CHAT WITH **COURTNEY RACHEL CULKIN**, AND MISS MARCH, OFFICE FAVORITE **MONICA LEIGH**.

Bourbon

IN A WHOLE NEW LIGHT.



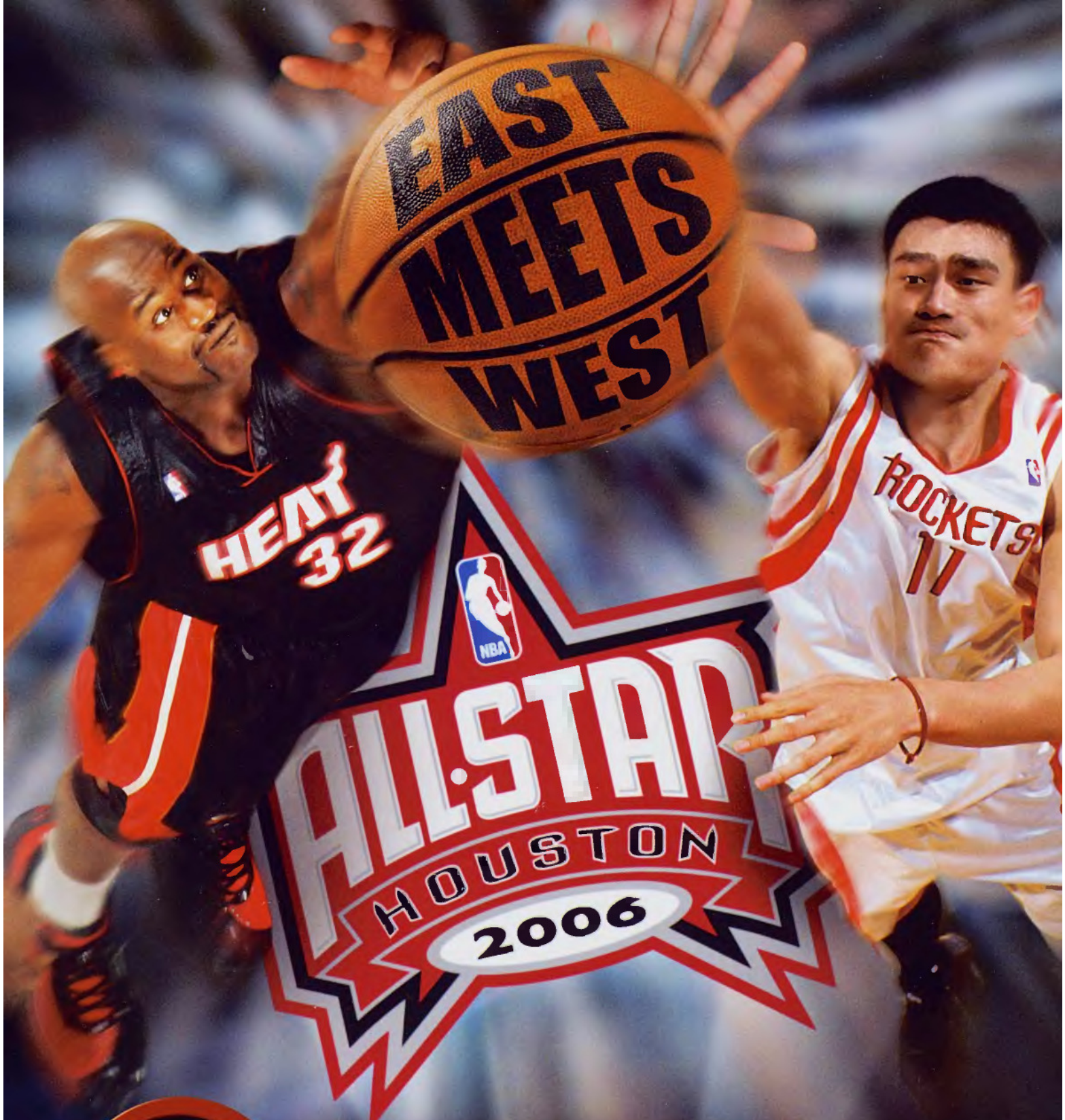
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WOODFORD RESERVE

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2006 NBA ALL-STAR GAME

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19 8PM ET