


A TRIBUTE TO ANNA NICOLE SMITH

PLAYBOY

COLLECTOR'S

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ANNA NICOLE

THE PLAYBOY
YEARS

PLUS: GIRLS OF CONFERENCE USA • ORIGINAL STAR
WARS STORYBOARDS (OBI-WAN LIVES!) • STEVE NASH
INTERVIEW • FERGIE 20Q • SEX, IRANIAN STYLE • NEW
URBAN WARDROBE • UNERRING BASEBALL PREVIEW



"I want to be the new Marilyn Monroe," **Anna Nicole**—then Vickie—**Smith** told us during her Playmate shoot in 1992. Fifteen years later her tragic passing has drawn comparisons to Norma Jean's sudden departure. To pay homage to the voluptuous beauty from Texas, we are running her most stunning shots, accompanied by *Remembering Anna*, in which PLAYBOY staffers share with Kevin Cook their memories of her. "Hers is a sad story," says Cook, author of *Tommy's Honor*. "But as Hef said, it would have pleased her that people will still admire her pictures." The day after she died, Photography Director Gary Cole wrote a poignant good-bye on our blog: "Now she is gone, like Marilyn and Jayne Mansfield, taken too quickly. Perhaps Billy Joel should write a sequel to his song 'Only the Good Die Young,' simply changing the last word to *beautiful*. We'll miss you, Vickie."



Celebrated baseball writer **Tracy Ringolsby** returns to provide team-by-team analysis, a World Series prediction and thoughts on this season's trends in *Playboy's 2007 Baseball Preview*. "Barry Bonds beating Hank Aaron for the all-time home run title will be the center of attention this year," Ringolsby says. "Fans won't be able to totally enjoy it, though, because of the debate surrounding Bonds. It seems that as a society we can't accept that we are witnessing the best ever. I suppose to truly appreciate something, we have to be far removed from the event."



A father always wants to be able to protect his child, but when the child is a war correspondent such primal imperatives become impossible to fulfill. In this month's fiction, *Winter Storms*, by **Edward Falco**, a daughter tells her father about her wrenching experiences in Baghdad, but what she refuses to disclose may hurt him more. "The daughter in this story has again and again thrown herself into dangerous situations," Falco says. "It's tough for her: She loves her father, but his love is suffocating. She has to hurt him by making dangerous choices in order to be free of him. That's the personal story going on here underneath the more topical elements of the war."



"Our culture is fascinated with bad girls," says **Michelle Richmond**, whose *To the Bad Girls Go the Spoils* appears in the magazine this month. "Perhaps because even in 2007 women are still expected to toe the line and do everything with honesty and integrity." In this piece, which will also be in *Bad Girls: 26 Writers Misbehave* (W.W. Norton), Richmond, author of *The Year of Fog*, recounts her colorful transgressions in a letter addressed to a reality-show producer in hopes they'll make her seem like perfect TV material. "I know this head shot of me couldn't be more innocent," she says, "but now I guess I could have included having my picture in PLAYBOY."



After an erotic home movie purporting to feature an Iranian television darling swept through the supposedly conservative country, **Pari Esfandiari** and **Richard Buskin** wrote *Sex in Iran*. "Many Iranians may say the tape is appalling, but a sizable portion of the country has seen it," says Esfandiari, editor in chief of *irandokht.com*. Buskin adds, "The government can't control the Internet or satellite television. Iranians have access to Western culture, and this tape, which has made it back to the West, shatters the contrived facade of a wholly fundamentalist Iran."

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A bootleg sex tape allegedly featuring a popular TV star has been spreading through Iran like wildfire. The actress denies she's on the tape, but that's almost beside the point. The video has shaken Iranians by exposing their hidden emotions and double standards. In a fascinating peek at a modern Islamic society, we lift the veil on a conflicted culture in which religious fundamentalism wrestles with the allure of sexual freedom. **BY PARI ESFANDIARI AND RICHARD BUSKIN**
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The Fergalicious frontwoman of the Black Eyed Peas helped shoot the band to the top of the charts before achieving solo success. The sexy singer doesn't phunk around as she discusses overcoming addiction, being bitten by Quentin Tarantino and getting unexpectedly moist in front of concertgoers. **BY JASON BUHRMESTER**

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The Phoenix Suns' wiry Canadian point guard is a two-time NBA MVP who keeps pace with Shaq, LeBron and other basketball heavyweights. Riding high on a six-year, \$66 million deal with Phoenix, the notoriously press-shy player dishes up his thoughts about sex on game day, the possibility of reverse racism in the NBA and whether he thinks Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban screwed up royally by letting him walk. **BY KEVIN COOK**



COVER STORY

When we met Anna Nicole Smith in 1991, she was a shy Texan obsessed with Marilyn Monroe. Chosen Playmate of the Year for 1993, she became a star, and like her idol, she died far too soon. In our article we share memories of Anna's Playboy years from those who knew her best. Here, Senior Contributing Photographer Stephen Wayda captures her peerless beauty; our Rabbit is still a girl's best friend.



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Hef turns the Mansion into a winter wonderland for Playmates and celebrity guests like Frankie J, George Lucas, Ron Jeremy and many more.

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BY JENNIFER RYAN JONES

this month on playboy.com

THE ANNA NICOLE YEARS
See a tribute to our 1993 PMOY, including her Playmate pictorial, all her covers and a preview of her Playboy TV special premiering April 11 at nine P.M. ET.

THE PLAYBOY.COM A-LIST
Get to the meat of the matter as we name America's top 10 steakhouses.

THE 21ST QUESTION
Read the final word from Fergie.

AMERICA'S SEXIEST BARTENDER
Our fourth annual hunt for the comeliest cocktail shaker is on.

BEST-DRESSED MAN ON CAMPUS
Got threads? Apply for our sartorial student search.



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PRINTED IN U.S.A.

THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY

HEF SIGHTINGS, MANSION FROLICS AND NIGHTLIFE NOTES



PICTURE PERFECT

Hef's unveiling of the Playboy Legacy Collection at Republic in L.A. brought out some of the most legendary members of the Playmate sorority, including PMOY 2005 Tiffany Fallon (above) and Miss February 1990 Pamela Anderson (right). For more about the limited-edition retrospective of the magazine's landmark photography, see page 30.



THE RABBIT IS A TIGER

With boutiques in Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok, Playboy fashions are a huge presence in the Asian market, where the line made a major splash during Hong Kong Fashion Week.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, RAY

Hef, his ladies and chosen Centerfolds celebrated band-leader Ray Anthony's 85th (below) at a party with Motown's Berry Gordy, actor Leon Isaac Kennedy and zillionaire Kirk Kerkorian (left). Quite appropriate for the man who wrote "The Bunny Hop," don't you think?



SOME OF THE PERKS

As any business mogul will tell you, strategic alliances are the name of the game. Donald Trump, with wife Melania and daughter Ivanka (above), kicked off the new season of *The Apprentice* with a party at the Mansion, broadcast by top radio jock Adam Carolla (left). And they call this work. Ha!

Hef's
HAPPY
HOLIDAYS

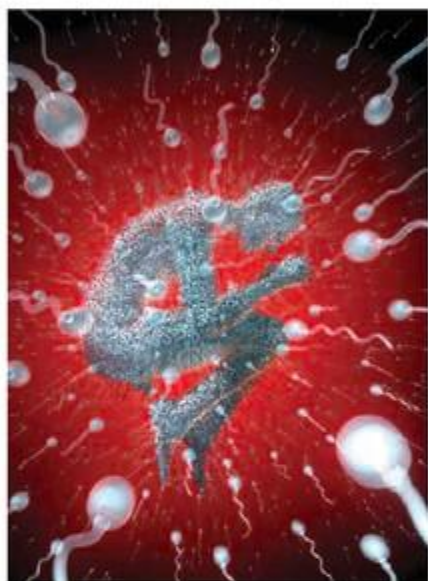


We've always thought of a certain Holmby Hills estate as enchanted, but snow in southern California is ridiculous. Still, Hef celebrated Christmas by installing a snowmaking machine that turned the Mansion's grounds into a winter wonderland, and then he threw a celebrity-packed black-tie and lingerie bash on New Year's Eve, featuring painted ladies and a performance by R&B star Frankie J. (1) Playmate Alison Waite and friends Cristal Camden and Stacy Burke help Kendra, Holly and Bridget construct a Snow Hef. (2) Mr. Playboy takes a run on the Mansion's bunny slope. (3) Hef plays Santa for the Girls Next Door. (4) George Lucas chats with Hef on New Year's Eve. (5) Actor Patrick Cassidy, his wife, Melissa, and actor David Faustino. (6) Jon Lovitz and Kendra make merry. (7) Indy driver Marco Andretti and Playmate Nicole Narain. (8) Ron Jeremy with the host. (9) Judd Nelson and guest. (10) Frankie J performs. (11) Playmates Sara Jean Underwood and Alison Waite. (12) Jose Canseco and guest. (13) Hef and his ladies ring in the New Year.



THE SEXUAL MALE

In *The Flight of the Spermatozoon* (February) Chip Rowe repeats the long-accepted conclusion that any two humans are 99.9 percent similar in genetic makeup. Many scientists had thought the tiny difference could explain a number of diseases. But in a study published this past November, we found that at least 2,900 of the 30,000 known human genes can dif-



There's more to a man than meets the eye.

fer substantially. Because our genome contains 3 billion pairs of chemical letters, each additional .01 percent of difference translates to 3 million DNA changes. Being 99 percent alike still confirms our common humanity, yet the many new genetic changes being found among us better explain the nature of our individuality.

Stephen Scherer
The Centre for Applied Genomics
University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario

Rowe notes that Moulay Ismail the Bloodthirsty, who ruled Morocco between 1672 and 1727, is said to have fathered at least 867 children. While Ismail has been recognized by *Guinness World Records*, I examined this claim more closely for a study published in *Evolution and Human Behavior*. Although Ismail had four wives and a harem of 500 women, it's highly unlikely that the ruler (who also claimed to have found time to personally kill 30,000 Christians) produced anywhere near that many offspring. Even assuming he had sex twice a day for 40 years, I calculated Ismail could have produced at most 368 children, given the many natural obstacles. For example, he could

only guess when each of his partners was fertile, and groups of women who live together ovulate less frequently. Even when the timing is right, it's not that easy to get a woman pregnant, and the primitive medicine of the time surely led to many miscarriages. The record for one man is more likely a few dozen children, if that. Female fertility necessarily constrains male fertility.

Dorothy Einon
University College London
London, U.K.

Rowe explains the biology of manhood better than any of my high school science teachers ever did. I have new respect for the old family jewels.

Thomas Stahler
Grayslake, Illinois

I enjoyed Rowe's clever piece, but as a scientist who specializes in the evolution of human reproduction, I am disappointed that he gives even a single paragraph to the notion of sperm wars, as not a shred of evidence exists to support it. The idea may sell books, but why confuse the public? He could also have said more about the "bad boys have big balls" argument; the relative size of the testes in relation to body weight is an infallible guide to the mating systems of all mammals, birds and fish. As human testes are relatively tiny, we were not designed to be multimale maters. However, the fact that men are taller, heavier and stronger than women also shows we are not by nature monogamous. It seems likely that we are designed for serial monogamy. Finally, Rowe is coy about what happens to sperm that are not ejaculated. They leak into the urinary tract continuously and are carried from the body in urine. So a man spills his seed (the "sin of Onan" described in the Bible) every time he urinates.

Roger Short
University of Melbourne
Melbourne, Australia

AIM HIGH

The U.S. Air Force may have removed Michelle Manhart from active duty and demoted her because she posed (*Tough Love*, February), but she has nothing to be ashamed of. The USAF, in which I served for 20 years, needs to chill out.

Jim Rohrich
Great Falls, Montana

We couldn't agree more. As one military analyst told the San Antonio Express-News, "There was a time when overt expressions of sexuality were considered inappropriate in popular culture. But that time has been

gone for more than a generation. So if the Air Force is trying to send a signal that it's not much fun, it has succeeded."

Manhart's pictorial is a convincing argument against allowing women in combat. Her body is nothing less than a national treasure and must be kept out of harm's way.

Todd Kistler
Redlands, California

Manhart is a babe and a hero. Her demotion only reflects the fact that many men can't handle all-American women showing their independence.

Chris Staskewicz
Boston, Massachusetts

While I can't dispute Manhart's beauty, she was charged with training airmen to comply with regulations. Posing in uniform in this setting undermined her credibility and authority.

Dan Stants
Altoona, Pennsylvania

I assume the recruits assigned to Manhart were old enough to realize that airmen's private lives are their own



You've seen enough, dog meat. Give me 10.

as long as their ability to accomplish a mission is not negatively affected. I fail to see how associating with a reputable magazine such as *PLAYBOY* does that.

Patrick Greene
San Antonio, Texas

NUMBER SIX IS A 10

From the moment I first laid eyes on Tricia Helfer (*Out of This World*, February) in the infamous slinky red dress she wears on *Battlestar Galactica*, I was

WIN A TRIP TO LONDON WITH A PLAYMATE!



Tell us how many Rabbits are hidden on the next page



and visit

playboy.com/beefeatersweeps

to enter

your findings and

BEEFEATER'S

"The Rabbit's Loose in London Sweepstakes"

BEEFEATER
LONDON

hooked. Even if I didn't like the show, I would watch it to see her.

Rich Black
Carbondale, Illinois

For 18 years I have faithfully read each issue from front to back without peeking ahead. But after one look at Helfer's beautiful behind on the February cover, my streak was broken.

Brian Sankel
Albany, New York

FOR THE LOVE OF BETTIE

In her February 20Q Bettie Page discusses the love of her life, Carlos Garcia Arrese. I would like Bettie to know my dad had the utmost respect for her and would always tell me about all the wonderful times they had together. Sadly, he passed away on May 4, 2006, so he didn't have a chance to read the interview. My mother was his third wife; they were married for more than 40 years, and she brought him great happiness. He was a terrific father, the best on earth.

Robert Arrese
New York, New York

Page certainly carries a lot of baggage. At this point you have to wonder if photographer Bunny Yeager really took advantage of her, given that she made Page into a global icon.

Phil Marsh
Santa Clara, California

Page says, "When I turned my life over to the Lord Jesus, I was ashamed of having posed in the nude, but now most of the money I've got is because I posed in the nude. So I'm not ashamed of it now." I'm not a religious man, but I think it's ridiculous to practice your faith only if it's financially feasible.

Graham Jura
St. Joseph, Missouri

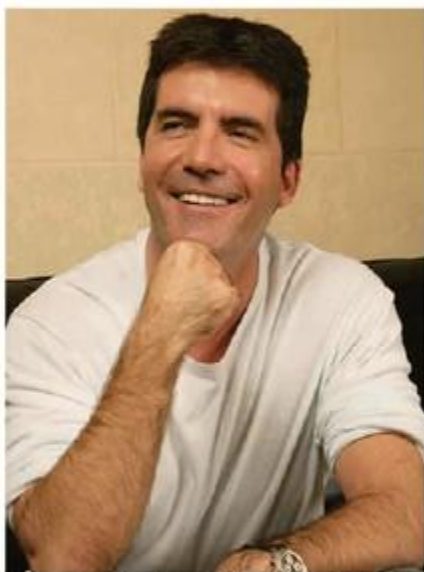
Bettie Page makes a number of remarks in her 20Q that caught me by complete surprise and upset me deeply. I have never claimed I taught Bettie to pose; she was an experienced model when we met in 1954. I never told Bettie or any model I would "do right" by her if her photos sold well. Like any photographer, I paid a flat fee to each model for her time, and she in turn signed a standard release giving me full rights to the images. Bettie claims I got "quite a bit of money" for her Centerfold; in fact, I was paid \$100. The two writers she mentions (one of whom was her agent) who asked me to provide a large number of my photos for use in a book about her insisted I share them without charge as a token of friendship. I agreed but asked that they at least cover the mini-

mal cost of having a lab make prints from my negatives. That hardly qualifies me as a cheapskate. Bettie says she designed the suit she wore in the famous cheetah shots, and while it's true she sewed it together with the thread and material I supplied, it was based on my sketches. In the end, Bettie now earns quite a bit of money from the photos I took of her, because I allow her agency to license them to be placed on all sorts of merchandise. So she does have a use for me, despite her claim otherwise.

Bunny Yeager
Miami, Florida

SIMON COWELL

Bob Dylan's music bores Simon Cowell of *American Idol* to tears (*Playboy*



Simon Cowell sings all the way to the bank.

Interview, February)? If Dylan wants to dub a Power Rangers single, I'm sure he'll be in touch. Sheesh.

David Ebert
Cape Coral, Florida

Great interview with Cowell. After reading it I felt I knew the man behind what many people consider the greatest show on television. I will miss *Friday Night Lights* for a while.

Craig Summers
Hollywood, Florida

Cowell is an entertaining interview but also symbolizes everything that is wrong with the music industry. By focusing solely on profits, he keeps many talented artists from getting the recognition they deserve.

Dan Smith
Williams Bay, Wisconsin

Read more feedback at blog.playboy.com.



PLAYBOY

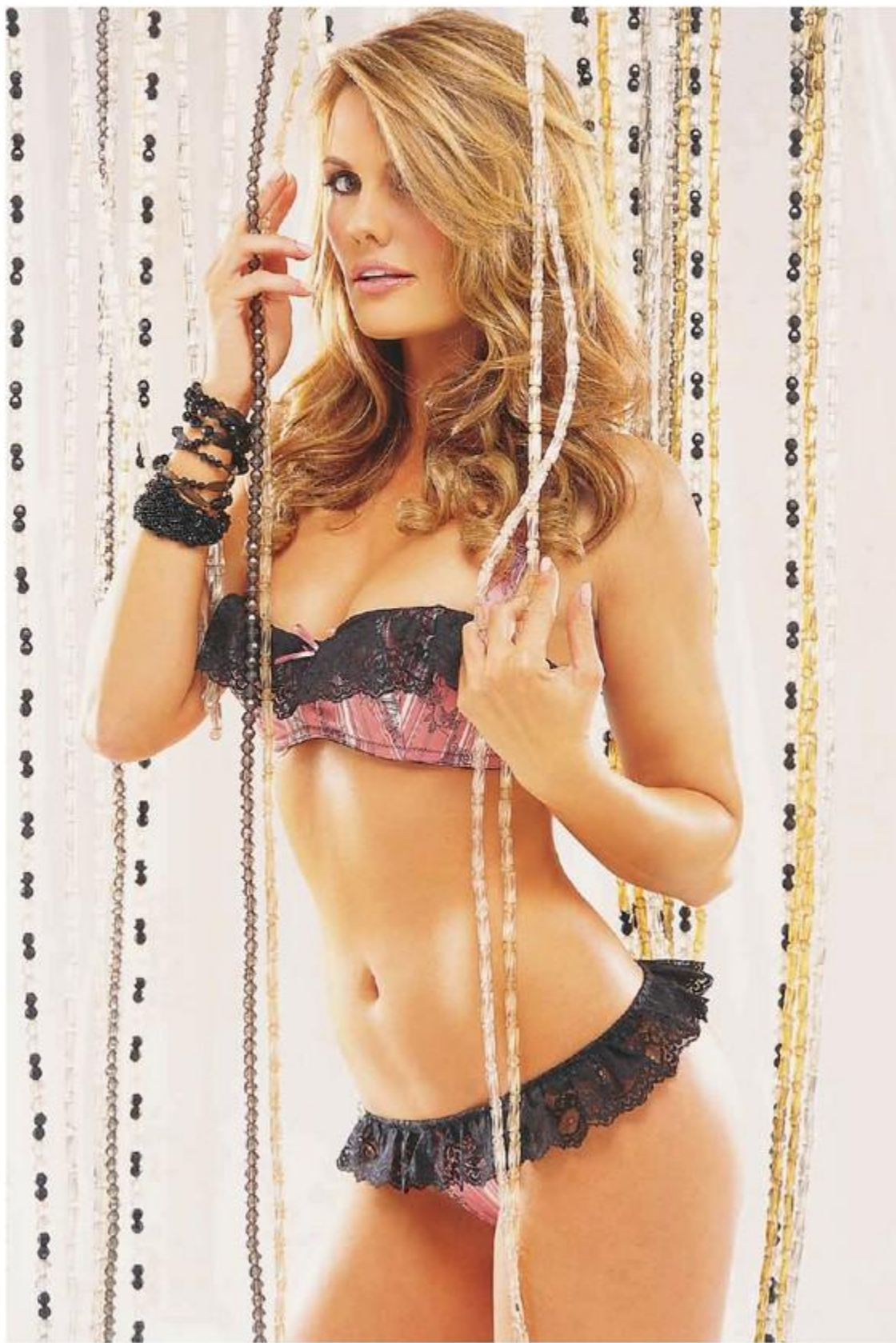
after hours

babe of the month

Courtney Hansen

MAY CAUSE VISCOSITY OR THERMAL BREAKDOWN

It would help if Courtney Hansen were afraid of something. Anything. When we ask her for the scariest moment from her adventure show, *Destination Wild*, she's got nothing. Wrestling a steer at a rodeo wasn't scary. Bobsledding at 80 miles an hour and pulling four (or five—she's not sure) g's didn't faze her. Jumping out of a plane? "I haven't made up my mind about skydiving yet," she admits. Such indecision is rare; talking to Courtney is a little like talking to—oh, this won't sound right at all—a guy. What's worse, this Courtney fella looks nice in lingerie and is likely better at guy stuff than you. She's a whiz with cars, which is perhaps inevitable given that she's the daughter of Jerry Hansen, the Sports Car Club of America driver who won a record 27 national titles. "I've been in the garage since the day I was born," she says. Daddy's little grease monkey grew up to be the Garage Girl, mainstay of Spike TV's *Powerblock* and author of *The Garage Girl's Guide to Everything You Need to Know About Your Car*. Muscle cars in particular get her going; she lights up at the thought of getting her hands under the hood of a 1970 Barracuda or Oldsmobile 442. And you, Mr. Flesh-and-Blood Ordinary Man? Your best bet is to be funny and sane. "When people ask, 'Who's your dream guy?' I always say the hot comedian," she says. "But without the troubled side. Many comics have a lot of baggage and issues. I'd rather have a guy who's just funny because he's funny."



double-barreled action



Naked Came the Stranger

GUNS A-BLAZING, SPECIAL EDITIONS MODEL OF THE YEAR 2005 ERICA CAMPBELL FIRES UP PRAGUE

When Playboy model Erica Campbell flew to the Czech Republic with Actiongirls.com (the Rolls-Royce of naked-girls-with-guns websites), she knew communication would be an issue. "None of the other girls spoke English," she recalls. "Neither did 90 percent of the stuntmen." You wouldn't know it from the results, though—sex and violence, it seems, are international languages.

antiheroes

Bad After Bond

WHEN HER MAJESTY DOESN'T NEED YOUR SECRET SERVICES, USE YOUR DASHING PERSONA FOR EVIL



What is it that makes ex-007s such good sleazebags? In *Hot Fuzz* (the latest from the *Shaun of the Dead* crew), Timothy Dalton plays a rural Snidely Whiplash—mustache and all. It's his best performance since turning in his Walther PPK, and something of a tradition.

Sean Connery in *The Great Train Robbery* Bearded rapschallion Edward Pierce is the natty frontman with felonious freaks (Donald Sutherland, etc.) who do his bidding. When girlfriend Lesley-Anne Down asks him point-blank if he ever tells the truth, he smiles and answers, "No."

Roger Moore in *The Cannonball Run* Let's see, you've got the crazy sheikh (Jamie Farr), the biker (Peter Fonda), the redneck (Terry Bradshaw), the cleavage (Adrienne Barbeau)—find someone to play delusional girdle company heir Seymour Goldfarb Jr. and we're done!

Pierce Brosnan in *The Matador* Globe-trotting mustachioed assassin Julian Noble is a lying, friendless scoundrel incapable of sincerity. When not eliminating targets for corporate clients, he's usually down at the whorehouse, sampling the local womenfolk.

Timothy Dalton in *Hot Fuzz* Is local grocer Simon Skinner murdering prominent citizens of his sleepy English hamlet? Or is he just really, really creepy? One thing's for sure: That mustache isn't helping.

George Lazenby in...in...in Ah, poor George—always the punch line.

expert analysis

Mo Better Movies

CBS NEWS SUNDAY MORNING'S MO ROCCA BREAKS DOWN THE BEST AND WORST BIG SUMMER SEQUELS

Spider-Man 3: If you're expecting another sweet Dakota Fanning spider movie, this isn't it. The action here is nonstop, and the villains are super-scary. (Truth be told, I couldn't sit through *Charlotte's Web*—Dakota scares the crap out of me.)

Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End: This installment runs considerably shorter than the first two. Johnny Depp, taking a cue from his real-life model, Keith Richards, injures himself falling out of a coconut tree 20 minutes into the movie.

Ocean's Thirteen: Another heist—of moviegoers' money, that is! And it won't be the last. As long as a cut of the loot goes to Darfur, Clooney plans to keep this thing going through *Ocean's Thirty-Five*.

Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer: The first movie was underwhelming—should have been called *Okay Four*. This is the *Slightly Better Four*. You still have the feeling that a single X-Man could kick all their asses.

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix: Wait for the director's-cut DVD, which I'm told includes scenes of a nude Daniel Radcliffe—hogwarts and all.

Rush Hour 3: What happens when a black man and a Chinese man indulge their mutual addiction to Red Bull? It's spaztastic fun—and the only surefire hit on this list.

no boris, no natasha



This Man, Why He Is Laughing?

A DVD BOXED SET OPENS THE BIZARRE WORLD OF ANTICAPITALIST CARTOONS

Films by Jove's four-disc anthology *Animated Soviet Propaganda* features fascinatingly clunky clips about noble laborers and greedy Westerners. The Soviet state could train gymnasts and launch pets into space but was hopeless at zany cartoons.



employee of the month

Getting Snippy

CALIFORNIA HAIRSTYLIST BRITTANI LANTZ GIVES THE BEST BUZZ IN TOWN

PLAYBOY: What do you do?

BRITTANI: I'm a hairdresser at Supercuts. I started as a receptionist, then got my cosmetology license. I've been cutting hair ever since.

PLAYBOY: Do you cut mostly women's hair?

BRITTANI: No, my clientele is actually about 80 percent male. A lot of men request me and get their hair cut every two weeks or once a month. The tips are good.

PLAYBOY: We're sure. Do the guys ever hit on you?

BRITTANI: I get a lot of phone numbers, and I keep them in a box—the last time I checked I was up to 28 for the month.

PLAYBOY: What part of your body do men pay attention to?

BRITTANI: I've been told my butt looks good in anything. It's not fat, but it jiggles. Often I'll catch customers checking out my butt in the mirror.

PLAYBOY: Have you ever given a bad haircut?

BRITTANI: No, not yet. When guys ask for a weird haircut, I can usually talk them out of it. I do get a lot of customers who want a mullet. I always joke that I want to cut the back off, but I never do.

PLAYBOY: What do you do for fun?

BRITTANI: I like to do wheelies on my dirt bike. It's pink.

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.

hollywood square

There's Something About Garry

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO LARRY SANDERS?

With its vérité style, *The Larry Sanders Show* paved the way for current hits like *The Office* and *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. It's been hard to catch since going off the air in 1998, but creator and star Garry Shandling is rectifying the problem with the four-disc DVD set *Not Just the Best of the Larry Sanders Show*. You know what this means: Garry Shandling lives!

Playboy: Will you do another TV series?

Shandling: There is a good chance, but I'm enjoying my life, and there's nothing funny about a guy enjoying his life. Although maybe that's the title for my next series: *Enjoying My Life*. It would be sort of a counterpoint to Paris Hilton.

Playboy: Why are Americans so obsessed with celebrities?

Shandling: Everybody wants to be famous in some way. I could write a book about my own family, called *Everybody Wants to Be Famous*. What drives MySpace? It's ego stuff. You don't see too many monks who have a MySpace page.

Playboy: The show within *The Larry Sanders Show* was modeled on Carson's *Tonight Show*. Did Johnny like it?

Shandling: I know he liked it. We had dinner five years ago, but I can't remember whether he picked up the check. That would have been the final indication of his approval.

Playboy: So you're not sure to what degree he liked it.

Shandling: No, I would have to see a copy of the check.

troublemakers



Bloody Awful

ONE SMALL BOOK TAKES ON CENTURIES OF IMPERIALISM AND SNOBBERY

Interesting chapter names from Steven Grasse's *The Evil Empire: 101 Ways That England Ruined the World*:

"They Love a Good Hanging"

"They Can't Dance"

"They More or Less Castrated Scotland"

"They Worship a Giant Clock God as the Living, Ticking Symbol of State Authority"

"They're Descended From Cannibals"

"Their Country Has Too Many Flags and Too Many Names"

R A W D A T A

SIGNIFICA, INSIGNIFICA, STATS AND FACTS

what they're thinking



Good in Bed

In a *USA Weekend* magazine and Allrecipes.com survey, women chose what makes them happiest. The top three choices: sleep **51%**, food **18%**, sex **14%**.

Proper Names

When naming their babies, Danish parents must choose a moniker approved by the Ministry of Family and Consumer Affairs. The ministry has a master list of more than **13,300** names.



Vital Signs

Roughly one quarter of the **383** pieces of legislation signed into law during the 109th Congress (2005–2006) dealt with naming federal properties—post offices, courthouses—after celebrities and public figures.

Youthful Indiscretions

During the 2005–2006 school year **28** kindergarten students (five- and six-year-olds) were suspended in Maryland public schools for “sex offenses,” including **15** who were accused of sexual harassment.

Big Trouble

In less than **15** years China will have **30 million** more men of “marriageable age” than women.



Murder Most Foul

The typical life span of a major league baseball is **7** pitches.

Out of Control

The average U.S. household possesses **6** remote controls.



Lost in Translation

Only **6** of the **1,000** workers in the U.S. embassy in Baghdad speak fluent Arabic. Were we greeted as liberators?

price check



Acting So Blonde

3% of women can't remember their natural hair color.

Golden Locks

Prices paid at Mastro Auctions for snippets of historical figures' hair: Elvis Presley **\$115,000**, Abraham Lincoln **\$34,309**, George Washington (his real hair, not from his wig) **\$14,052**, Marilyn Monroe (for hair plus a lip print) **\$7,626**, Jackie O. **\$4,024**.

R E V I E W S

m o v i e s



movie of the month

[SPIDER-MAN 3]

The third time is the charm for Tobey and company

Everyone's favorite webslinger swings back to movie screens to face the unholy team of vengeance-minded Harry Osborn and shape-shifting villain Sandman. To make matters stickier, Spidey tackles a black intergalactic substance that clings to his costume, changes his superpowers and deepens his identity crises before the gunk breaks away to become the deadly Venom. For this third franchise outing, stalwarts Tobey Maguire, Kirsten Dunst and James Franco are joined under director Sam Raimi by newcomers Topher Grace and Bryce Dallas Howard. But one of this sequel's showiest roles is prison escapee Flint Marko, played by Thomas Haden Church, who transforms into Sandman following a bizarre accident. Church underwent intense physical training for nearly two years to prepare for his supervillain debut. "These movies are driven by the characters," says the actor. "I shot a very emotional scene with Tobey, a preternaturally gifted actor, that comes at the very end of the movie when his character and mine find out they're more alike than either had imagined. People are anticipating an action ride that surpasses the other two movies, but this one also deepens the story and the characters' relationships. As long as Sam is at the helm, he'll never drift from that."

"The Spider-Man movies are driven by the characters."

—Stephen Rebello

now showing

BUZZ

The Last Legion

(Colin Firth, Ben Kingsley, Aishwarya Rai) It's chest-pounding heroics and a touch of mythology in this 476 A.D. action epic. The 12-year-old Roman emperor ducks execution by barbarian conquerors and later escapes exile with a few loyalists who trek with him to Britain to find the last Roman legionnaires.

Our call: Die-hard fans of *Gladiator*, *Rome* or *300* may write this off as one brawny men-in-skirts historical epic too many, but can any movie with the lovely Rai be that unwatchable?



Vacancy

(Kate Beckinsale, Luke Wilson, Frank Whaley) It's creepy enough when a married couple finds hidden cameras taping them in the motel room where they are stranded. But things get scarier when they realize they must escape from the nut jobs who are filming them as the "stars" of a snuff movie.

Our call: We've seen Beckinsale smack down vampires and werewolves, so doing the heavy lifting in a flat-out survival horror chiller will put her superhuman powers to the test.



Balls of Fury

(Dan Fogler, Christopher Walken, George Lopez) Comic craziness ensues when FBI agent Lopez sends disgraced former Ping-Pong phenom Fogler undercover to infiltrate underground table-tennis tournaments. This is the domain of bizarre crime lord Walken, who is responsible for the death of Fogler's dad.

Our call: No matter how you feel about full-frontal humor, a high-five to this film's creators—the writer-producers of *Reno 911!*—for casting a brand-new guy in the obvious Jack Black role.



Perfect Stranger

(Halle Berry, Bruce Willis, Giovanni Ribisi) Suspense is set against the world of kinky online relationships when the unsolved murder of a friend prompts reporter Berry to go all Nancy Drew on oily millionaire Willis. Suspects pile up as Berry assumes several cyber identities to nab the real killer.

Our call: Not so perfect because, star power and glitzy production values aside, this story has already been done way better and sexier—sometimes even on basic cable.



dvd of the month

[THE T.A.M.I. SHOW]

A landmark 1960s concert film is resurrected on DVD

Before Woodstock and the Monterey Pop Festival, this 1964 movie (the initials stand for Teenage Awards Music International) was one of the first to showcase live performances by the people who would shape rock and R&B for years to come. The two-day event captured the musical moods of the U.K. and America under one roof at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium. James Brown glides across the stage on one foot, spins and bursts into a transcendent version of "Out of Sight," reminding us why we miss him. Then the Rolling Stones take the stage while the audience of 2,600 fans screams as if on fire. This raw 112 minutes of nonstop energy, briskly emceed by Jan and Dean, is ridiculously rich in talent: the Beach Boys, Chuck Berry, Gerry and the Pacemakers, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, Marvin Gaye, the Supremes and more. It's an essential music time capsule. **Best extra:** Commentary by director Steve Binder. **YYY½** —*Buzz McClain*



THE QUEEN (2006) We never thought we'd say this, but Queen Elizabeth II is hot. Helen Mirren wears the crown in this portrayal as England turns on Her Majesty for her icy reaction to Princess Diana's death. It's a riveting memoir, not just a history lesson. **Best extra:** Commentary by a British historian. **YYY** —*B.M.*



DREAMGIRLS (2006) The stellar rise of a "supreme" 1960s girl group is driven by charismatic performances from Jennifer Hudson and Eddie Murphy. The drama will hook even those with a musical phobia. Also available on Blu-ray and HD DVD. **Best extra:** The nine-chapter "Building the Dream." **YYY½** —*B.M.*



TWIN PEAKS: COMPLETE SECOND SEASON (1991) At last we have the only full season of David Lynch and Mark Frost's cult phenomenon on DVD. It begins with a nine-episode run that resolves the show's core mystery: Who killed Laura Palmer? The aftermath is a mélange of real estate schemes,



shifty Canadian drug deals and David Duchovny as a DEA transvestite. The first season debuted on DVD way back in 2001, so Lynch completists will rejoice. **Best extra:** Episode intros by the Log Lady. **YYY½** —*Brian Thomas*

JAMES CAGNEY SIGNATURE COLLECTION Film gangster James Cagney puts the gun away in five new-to-DVD titles. Whether playing a plantation manager in *Torrid Zone* (1940) or a pilot in the World War II action flick *Captain of the Clouds* (1942, pictured), the dapper leading man proves he was no dirty rat. **Best extra:** The classic cartoon "Pilgrim Porky." **YYYY** —*Matt Steigbigel*



PAN'S LABYRINTH (2006) Writer-director Guillermo Del Toro sets his dark fairy tale in rural Spain circa 1944, where young Ofelia and her pregnant mother have gone to live with Ofelia's stepfather, a sadistic martinet in Franco's Fascist army. The tyrant demands a male heir from Ofelia's ailing mother while driving Ofelia to surreal flights of fantasy. This visual marvel is Del Toro's masterpiece. **Best extra:** Primal themes are explored in the "Power of Myth" featurette. **YYYY** —*Greg Fagan*



SCANNER

LITTLE CHILDREN (2006) Dark secrets keep hopes of domestic bliss at bay for Kate Winslet and company. Superb acting and a smart script save this suburban-angst tale from being another *American Beauty* rip-off. **YYY**

THE GOOD SHEPHERD (2006) In director Robert De Niro's vision of the early CIA, the Cold War drains Matt Damon's soul and leaves him resistant even to the charms of Angelina Jolie, cast to little effect as his wife. **YY**

MARY HARTMAN, MARY HARTMAN: SEASON ONE (1976) All in the Family creator Norman Lear broke satirical ground with this syndicated soap featuring Louise Lasser as the eponymous put-upon Ohio hausfrau. **YY**

DEATH OF A PRESIDENT (2006) This fictional, controversial "documentary" about the assassination of George W. Bush is a fairly decent political thriller in deep disguise. **YY½**

WKRP IN CINCINNATI: SEASON ONE (1978) Although some of the songs have been changed (royalty issues), it's great to see Dr. Fever and the gang again, especially kicking a punk band's ass in one episode. **YYY**

YYY Don't miss **YY** Worth a look
YY Good show **Y** Forget it

tease frame



Laura Linney is a fearless actress, as this shot from *Maze* (2000) shows. In the upcoming *Jindabyne* she plays a woman pushed to the brink when her husband fails to promptly report a dead body he finds.

rock royalty



[**KINGS OF LEON**]

New LP swaps Southern rock for arena chops

After a barn-burning debut and a critically acclaimed follow-up, the Nashville-based band—three brothers and their cousin—reaches for even higher ground with its latest, *Because of the Times*. Drummer Nathan Followill, oldest brother and family enforcer, talks about it.

Q: The new album has a lot of new sounds. Are you trying to avoid being pigeonholed as Southern rock?

A: Since we're from the South, every comparison is going to be with the Allman Brothers or Lynyrd Skynyrd. We used to wonder why. Then we went back and listened to our first record and looked at the clothes we wore and decided the comparisons weren't too far off. I think we've grown and stepped away from that with each album. This one has even less of that element, but the stigma gets put on you whether you want it or not.

Q: This record sounds bigger. How did that happen?

A: We toured with some pretty big bands after the last album. U2 definitely made us want to write songs that would sound amazing in Madison Square Garden. But we realized if we were going to make a big record, we would have to step up. So this was the first one we kind of wore a producer's hat for, I guess you would say.

Q: Did that make recording the album difficult?

A: Actually, it was a pretty short, relaxed process. We did the record here in Nashville. I don't know if it was sleeping in our own beds every night or getting to eat Mom's cooking on Sundays, but the comfort level was so good. And we were all pretty well intoxicated on this album. I would say this was the first one we did pretty much intoxicated the whole way through. I think we tapped into that alcoholic music vibe.

THE DETROIT COBRAS • Tied & True
The cover of Dori Grayson's "Try Love" here says everything about this impressive album. Sure, it's red-blooded and raw, but it's also as beautiful as it is brassy. Throughout, the lovable Cobras strut their stuff with new depth and ease. In other words, bad girls make good. (Bloodshot) **YYY½** —Tim Mohr



THE ACADEMY IS... • Santi
If last year belonged to labelmate Panic! at the Disco, 2007 could be the breakout year for this Chicago five-piece. Confident, intense without being strident or histrionic, light on melodrama and heavy on melody, this is the LP you wish the Killers would make. Stadium ready in a good way. (Fueled by Ramen) **YYY** —T.M.



GUS GUS • Forever
Although it retains some of the quirkiness and all the melodic sense of this Icelandic collective's more indietronic previous records, this is the group's most resolutely club-oriented album yet. But it's a club you can stay in all night, full of ticking hi-hats, synth pulses and squelches, and jumpy house keyboards. (Pineapple) **YYY½**—T.M.



rhythm nation

Three significant musical movements came out of New York during the second half of the 1970s: hip-hop, punk and salsa. Salsa, the sound of the Latin diaspora, mixed traditional Caribbean music with elements of jazz and funk. One record label served to establish salsa as a worldwide force: Fania.

The label's co-owners, Jerry Masucci and musical director Johnny Pacheco, were fortunate to work with a lineup that included Ray Barretto, Celia Cruz, trombonist Willie Colón and singers Héctor Lavoe and Ruben Blades, but they developed a strong aesthetic that defined everything they recorded. As a result, it's hard to find a bad album on the label. Over the past year, Miami-based Emusica has remastered and reissued more than 130 of Fania's classics. Driven by Jose Febles's horn charts, a relentless rhythm section and soaring vocals, Fania's music is as powerful today as it ever was. Check out Colón and Blades's classic *Siembra*, a masterpiece of energy and passion. These Nuyorican grooves represent, as much as anything by Kurtis Blow or Richard Hell, what went down on the sidewalks of New York in 1978.



games of the month

[WII WILL ROCK YOU]

The little console that could hits its stride and proves the haters wrong

Prior to the Nintendo Wii's launch, gamers fretted it would be kidcentric and underpowered and that its novel controller would become gimmicky. It didn't help that its name is homophonic with slang for urine. A brief rebuttal to each of these points:

(1) nope, (2) who cares? (3) couldn't be more wrong and (4) guilty as charged. Since its launch, the Wii has everyone from hard-core gamers to your dear old Nana flailing their arms at the screen. Here are five recent examples of the Wii's innovation and depth. **SSX Blur** (pictured top left): Twisting the Nunchuk carves your turns, pulling it up makes you jump, gesturing and "sketching" with the Wii remote while airborne lets you perform tricks; it's a near-perfect marriage of form and function. **Heatseeker**: The Nunchuk's tilt sensitivity yields



some of the most natural flight controls we've seen, while the unfolding multi-objective missions will have you pulling g's in no time. **Prince of Persia Rival Swords** (bottom left): This remake of *Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones* for Wii controls allows



players to perform the prince's acrobatic feats along with him. Stab down for a showy dagger plant, or chain-swing about using the Nunchuk. **Mortal Kombat: Armageddon** (top right): Previously complex button sequences have thankfully been reduced to simple motions. Nothing is more intuitive than throwing punches to beat someone down. **The Godfather Blackhand Edition** (bottom right): Another remake. In this one, all combat is gesture-based, and you reload by swinging out the cylinder of your revolver. It's an offer you can't Wiifuse. —Chris Hudak

MONSTER MADNESS (PC, 360) This comic-book romp lets you brawl with beasties either by yourself or along with three friends on the same screen. A host of clever homemade weapons is your protection against the occasionally repetitive onslaught of vampires, zombies and other classic creatures. Since it uses the same graphics engine as *Gears of War*, it's a looker, and a surprising variety of multiplayer modes makes the online action rock. ★★★

—Scott Stein



RUNAWAY: THE DREAM OF THE TURTLE (PC) Help hero Brian and his ex-stripper girlfriend Gina sort out their lives in this sequel to 2003's biggest sleeper, which recalls both the highs (the gonzo hand-drawn cast) and lows (the whiskey-filled urinating dog toy) of the adventure-game genre. The globe-trotting point-and-click head-scratcher opens on a remote tropical isle and will appeal to those who still have memories of spring break but have outgrown keg stands. ★★★

—Scott Steinberg



VIRTUA TENNIS 3 (PSP, PS3, 360) The world's first full 1080p tennis game is more than just pretty polygons. Gamers create a unique player from scratch, train him or her to master volleys and footwork, then tour the globe to compete against Andy and Venus in heated tournaments. Novice gamers will also find an accessible pick-up-and-play experience. Online matches are 360-only but satisfying, and 12 challenging mini-games keep things bouncing. ★★★

—Marc Saltzman



COMMAND & CONQUER 3: TIBERIUM WARS (PC, 360) Despite the nerdy rep of real-time strategy games, this one's built with the mass market in mind, with fast-paced gameplay and live-action scenes featuring Josh Holloway and PLAYBOY cover girl Tricia Helfer. For C&C vets there's a third playable faction, the Scrin, in the war for global domination. Plus, the 360 version has been specifically tuned with RTS novices in mind. ★★★½

—John Gaudiosi



game on

TRITTON AX360 These let you crank it up at three a.m. and stay on good terms with your neighbors. Four speakers in each ear cup create a mini 5.1 surround setup, and digital inputs give you crystal clarity. (\$130, trittontechnologies.com)



D-BOX GP-100 In the most realistic driving chair we've tested, D-Box's Immersive Motion System lets you feel the thrum of pavement under your tires, throws you into turns and rattles your bones when you crash. (\$15,000, d-box.com)



AMBX PREMIUM KIT Philips's immersion system for PC games lights your walls in sync with your play, provides wind effects and has a rumbling wrist pad. The company will expand the line in the future. (\$400, ambx.com)

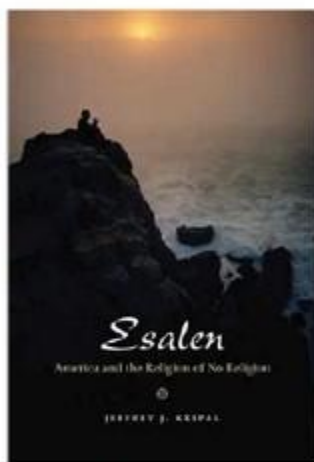


second comings

[EDGY CULTURE]

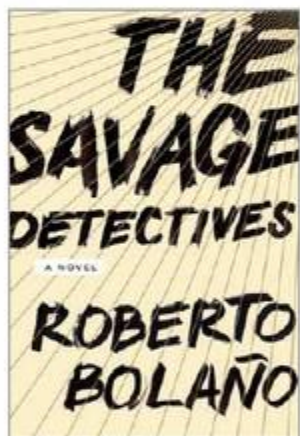
A look back at when free love was an institution

Esalen Institute is a combination alt-think tank, academic community and sensual retreat perched on the Pacific-facing cliffs of Big Sur, California. Its thinkers formed the leading edge of American culture for decades. Here was ground zero of the 1960s social revolution: the sweaty hot-tub commingling of free love, tantric yoga, Buddhist meditation and Gestalt therapy—as well as the academy for the propagation of the human-potential movement. Outlaw all-stars like Aldous Huxley, Allen Ginsberg and Hunter S. Thompson felt the pull of the place. Now scholar Jeffrey Kripal has produced the first all-encompassing history of Esalen: its intellectual, social, personal, literary and spiritual passages. Kripal brings us up-to-date and takes us deep beneath historical surfaces in this definitive, elegantly written book. **★★★★** —Robert Love



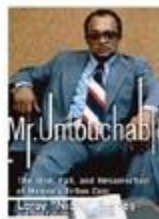
[THE GENIUS OF BOLAÑO]

A literary masterpiece disguised as a whodunit

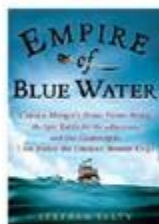


When Chilean novelist Roberto Bolaño died in 2003 at the age of 50, he had already established himself as a master of Latin American literature. A few of his shorter works have recently been translated, but with the publication of one of Bolaño's two great novels (2666 is the other), English readers can now see why he merits comparison to Borges and Cortázar. *The Savage Detectives* is a picaresque about two self-styled poets who leave Mexico City in 1976 to find an avant-gardist lost in the Sonoran Desert. The structure of the book—a series of testimonies presented as an oral history—is remarkably effective; the action seems propelled by an invisible force rather than by narrative. With its mix of humor and world-weary pathos, this is one of the best novels of the past decade—in any language. **★★★★** —Leopold Froehlich

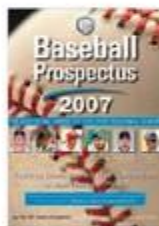
MR. UNTOUCHABLE • Leroy "Nicky" Barnes Harlem's heroin kingpin during the dark nights of Abe Beame-era New York, Barnes was known as the original uptown player. Refusing to kowtow to either the NYPD or the Mafia, he lived a larger-than-life role that was subsequently played out by poseurs like Sean Combs. It's a familiar tale of hubris and retribution, but Barnes's indomitable spirit makes this one special. **★★★★½** —L.F.



EMPIRE OF BLUE WATER • Stephan Talty No man ever trod the razor-sharp line between hero and antihero like Henry Morgan. The pirate captain left Wales and settled in Port Royal, Jamaica, "the wickedest city in the New World," in 1655. His bloody, rum-addled adventures shifted the course of history. With rich detail and crackling prose, Talty makes you feel as if you were there, which can be a little scary. **★★★** —A.J. Baime


BASEBALL PROSPECTUS 2007

Steven Goldman and Christina Kahrl Why do publishers issue baseball titles in the spring? We don't need books about the Gas-house Gang or playing catch with Dad when we finally have the game to enjoy. Books essential to the season are those that help us understand the sport. This annual has its expected statistical analysis but also an unexpected quantity of good writing. **★★★★** —L.F.



the erotic eye



SEX GAME BOOK • Denyse Beaulieu Though the terms *encyclopedic* and *sex* don't often couple titillatingly, French publisher Assouline takes a playful and largely successful stab at the match. Generously illustrated and certainly democratic (if to a fault—equal space is given to each of the 300-plus topics, from Mrs. Robinson to the magazine you're reading to the history of the prostitute), this *Britannica* of erotica is a mix of cultural write-ups, Trivial Pursuit-style questions and puzzles that is sure to amuse—maybe even arouse. **★★★** —Jamie Reynolds





Vröom Vröom

Audi's new R8 aims to give Porsche's 911 Turbo a run for its money

FROM ANY ANGLE Audi's new R8 crackles with visual energy and sensual beauty. This is the *wunder* sports car Audiphiles have lusted for—a gorgeous mid-engine all-wheel-drive German road car that feeds off the marque's racing heritage. (Audi has won the 24 Hours of Le Mans in six of the past seven years.) Everything about the R8, most notably the optional carbon-fiber sideblades just behind the doors, is summed up by Audi's motto: "Never follow." An aluminum skin stretched taut over a superrigid frame and a 420 hp, 4.2-liter V8 nestled Lamborghini-style ahead of the rear wheels and behind the cockpit make for superior handling. The engine can be seen through a window in the rear deck—try not to drool on the glass. You can choose between F1-type paddle shifters (select the sport mode for more aggressiveness) or a six-speed gated manual shifter. Zero-to-60 time is about 4.5 seconds. The interior is surprisingly roomy, with space for a golf bag behind the seats, and the Bang & Olufsen sound system, designed specifically for this car, has 12 speakers and a total amplification power of 465 watts. Desert roads outside Las Vegas proved to be the perfect environment for confirming the car's 187 mph top end, as did a run around the Las Vegas Motor Speedway. The R8 is a dream to drive. Look for it this fall, starting at an estimated \$105,000; info at audiusa.com.



24 Hours in Amsterdam

WITH ITS EMBRACE of liberal values and civilized living, Amsterdam is truly a Playboy man's town, and on Queen's Day, April 30, the city turns into one massive street party. **Stay:** Book a room at the Dylan (from \$341, slh.com/dylan), overlooking the charming Keizersgracht canal. **See:** Charter a vintage canal boat (from \$250 an hour, privateboat.tours.nl), and make sure to order some hors d'oeuvres and a bottle of champagne for the ride. **Drink:** Break up the afternoon with a Heineken or a glass of *jenever*, Dutch gin, at Cafe 't Smalle (20-344-4560). **Eat:** Go for the game at Brasserie Harkema (20-428-2222). **Toke:** Wherever, man...it's cool. **Score:** Club 11 (20-625-5999) is the home away from home for the city's nocturnal lovelies.

On the Fly

A WALLET IS a wallet is a wallet, even when it's an airmail envelope. Artist and industrial designer Terrence Kelleman constructs these thin bifold billfolds (\$25, moma.store.org) out of a single sheet of tough, recyclable Tyvek with nary a stitch or seam. There are plenty of pockets inside for your plastic. Just don't make the airheaded mistake of sticking your cash-loaded wallet into a mailbox.





America's Top 10 Steakhouses

To bring you this story, we gathered a panel of the nation's best food writers, gourmands and gluttons and tasked them with serious "research." Our panelists judged scores of steakhouses on the quality of the beef, sides, service, ambiance and wine list, weeding out the good from the truly great. For more, see our full story on Playboy.com. The envelope, please! **1. Bern's (Tampa):** The dry-aged beef is impeccable, and exacting waiters have been known to apply the vermouth to your martini with an eyedropper. **2. Cut (Beverly Hills):** The name is so-so (sorry, Wolfgang), but everything else is on the money at Mr. Puck's latest venture. **3. Sparks (New York):** The dining room has hosted the greatest mobsters, actors and ballplayers of every era since it opened in 1966. **4. Grill 23 (Boston):** The smoked-shrimp cassoulet, please, with the bone-in Delmonico to follow. **5. El Raigon (San Francisco):** Argentina is more beef crazy than America. This rustic spot, with its *bife de chorizo* and selection of malbecs, is a love letter to South America. **6. Craftsteak (Las Vegas):** Tom Colicchio's gem in Vegas is better than the one in New York. **7. Bones (Atlanta):** This may be the manliest restaurant on earth. Good luck finishing that 28-ounce porterhouse. **8. Red (Cleveland):** Classic meets contemporary in this heady joint, opened in 2004. **9. Crescent City Steaks (New Orleans):** Corn-fed beef sizzling in garlic butter is the perfect primer for a night on Bourbon Street. **10. Keefer's (Chicago, pictured above):** Simply put, chef John Hogan's 17-ounce New York strip is textbook.

Bunny Love

FOR ANYONE WHO collects PLAYBOY back issues and memorabilia, we hereby present the be-all, end-all Bunny package for the ages: the Playboy Legacy Collection Gold Edition. At \$75,000 it's not cheap, but the limited run of 75 sets is packed with rare prints of our historic subjects, including Bettie Page, Ursula Andress, Pamela Anderson, Shannon Tweed and Anna Nicole Smith, along with countless other treats such as a photo of Marilyn Monroe signed by Hef. The handsome polished-cherrywood box also holds tickets for two to Playboy's Fantasy Becomes Reality party at the Mansion in July. For details on this and less spendy packages, see internationalimages.com.



Once Upon a Time in Mexico

MOST PEOPLE HAVE no idea why they drink tequila on Cinco de Mayo. The scoop: On May 5, 1862 the Mexicans did away with the French occupation at the Battle of Puebla. Seems as good a reason as any. While you're familiar with great brands like Cuervo and Patrón, here are a couple of smaller players we love. For margaritas: Try Milagro Silver (\$25). Milagro makes tequila the way it was made 200 years ago—estate-grown agave baked in clay ovens and triple distilled. For sipping: Corzo's newly launched *añejo* (\$65), with honey and caramel notes and a unique, beautifully designed bottle. *¡Salud!*



The Playboy Advisor

While surfing for porn, I found a series of photos of a woman who looks like my wife giving a guy head. There are no straight-on shots, but her body, breasts, nose, hairstyle and even the part in her hair are similar. I've never had any reason to suspect she is cheating, but how can I confirm it's not her? It's not like I can print one of the photos and ask, "Is this you?"—S.F., Boise, Idaho

Do you recognize the guy? We doubt your wife is finding regular work as a porn actress in Boise, although we can't speak to her past. Keep surfing and you're sure to find images of this performer that provide a clearer view of her face. We suspect you'll be reassured. If not, send us the images and a photo of your wife before confronting her and we'll provide a second opinion. In the meantime, here's a question to ponder: Did the photos turn you on?

In *Ring in the New Year* (January) you list asparagus as an ideal hors d'oeuvre for a sexy soiree. Asparagus is one of the worst foods to eat prior to fooling around. Your guests will be stinking up the bathroom with their asparagus pee, not to mention the fact that the odor is often emitted through the genitals. If I'm looking to score, asparagus doesn't come near my lips. That's swinger etiquette 101.—A.F., Charlotte, North Carolina

You will be pleased to know that scientists have discovered that many people do not produce stinky pee after eating asparagus and many more can't detect the sulfurous odor. They suspect these traits are genetic. So there's still hope for successful hookups even if you serve our delightful dish before your next orgy.

My boyfriend is insecure about his looks, and I have to say it's not without justification. He used to be thinner and have more hair. However, he is incredibly smart, intuitive, sensitive and a fantastic lover. The problem is that I am more beautiful than my boyfriend is handsome. He swears my looks don't threaten him, but my friends have noted an imbalance. He is also gloomier, while I have plenty of confidence. It is getting harder to pretend there isn't a difference in our personalities and—God, I hate to say it—looks. What do you think?—A.B., Bend, Oregon

It sounds as though your boyfriend would be happier with an uglier girl. It would be easy to dismiss your attitude as condescending, but this imbalance can burden a relationship. Guys are keenly aware when they have seduced a stunner. It's usually to their own amazement, and they hear the whispers and see the looks as people size them up and make calculations. Right or wrong, the assumption typically is that the guy must be wealthy. Your boyfriend likely understands his tenuous position and, despite whatever confidence he may have in his personality, feels wary of any guy you meet who is more attractive than he is.



As repeated studies (and just looking around) have shown, people tend to choose partners of a level of attractiveness similar to their own. "Narcissism guides mate selection" is how evolutionary psychologists put it. But in your situation, we suspect you have a more compelling reason to reconsider the relationship: You are starting to think you will always be one step ahead of your sensitive but gloomy boyfriend, tugging him along.

With all the studies touting the benefits of red wine, particularly for the heart, are any varieties more beneficial than others?—J.E., Marion, South Carolina

*Having a glass or two of cabernet sauvignon daily with food may be your best bet, but much depends on how the wine is made. Most studies that have tackled the French paradox—the notion that the French have fewer clogged arteries than the rest of us despite a fattier diet—have not addressed the potential benefits of specific grapes. A team of U.K. scientists led by Roger Corder made an attempt by exposing bovine blood vessels to more than 300 wines; it discovered that a substance in reds called procyanidin suppresses a protein that appears to be a major factor in clogged arteries. Cabernet sauvignon grapes consistently have high levels of procyanidin, as do nebbiolo and tannat. Corder, author of the forthcoming book *The Wine Diet*, notes that ripeness, altitude, yield and fermentation method all play a role in procyanidin levels. The wines of southwest France and the Nuoro province of Sardinia, for example, are fermented with their skins and seeds for two or three weeks rather than just the few days needed to extract color from the skins, which may help explain the unusual longevity of those regions' residents. Wines made in this tradi-*

tional way, however, are not always easy to find because they tend to be very tannic, and the masses prefer sweeter, smoother wines.

My husband has never been able to climax during a blow job. The other night we were hanging out in our living room with another couple when the conversation turned to sex. My husband said the discussion was making him horny and half kiddingly asked for a blow job. I called his bluff and went down on him. Our friend immediately asked his wife for a blow job, and she obliged. After a few minutes my husband made a cheesy buzzer sound and said, "Time to switch." We all laughed, and the other couple went through a routine of "What do you think?" and "It's up to you" until deciding they were game. After a few minutes I got her husband off and looked over at my husband just as he came. The next night, I tried sucking him off for 45 minutes (my lips went numb), but he could not climax. I asked our friend for her secret, but she said she doesn't have any special technique. I have tried for eight years to get him off, yet the second time he meets her he's coming down her throat. What's the story?—C.S., Hartford, Connecticut

We're surprised your husband lasted as long as he did with your friend—we would have come the moment she agreed to switch. In other words, the novelty of the situation dictated his response, not her technique or your lack thereof. You are both so focused on this goal that the sex is no longer any fun. For example, you should not be going at this for 45 minutes. That takes the blow right out of it, leaving only the job. Some readers have told us 69 does the trick, probably because it takes the guy's mind off the fact that he isn't climaxing and focuses it on your pleasure. Finally, if you haven't already tried it, add a hand to the experience, well lubed with your saliva or kinkified with a velvet glove, and stroke him with a firm and steady grip while sucking the head of his cock. Few men are foolish enough to call this cheating.

A reader wrote in January that he noticed women checking him out at a grocery store after he had visited a strip club. You discussed the possibility that men give off a scent that says other women have been nearby. That's a nifty hypothesis, but there may be a more mundane explanation. Lap dances and the entire experience of a gentlemen's club make you feel like a big baller. The reader had just spent several hours flirting with a variety of gorgeous women who showed (or feigned) interest, concluding with a lap dance that provided an endorphin rush. In other words, he felt like a million bucks. Of course

women were checking him out.—B.M., Weymouth, Massachusetts

You may be right, though we rarely feel so empowered after visiting a strip club—only frustrated and broke.

Is it okay to wear a suit jacket with all three buttons fastened? I think it creates a more streamlined, modern and flattering look. I also don't like how the belt buckle and tip of the tie show when I leave the bottom button unfastened. My roommate says that it's unthinkable to fasten all three buttons and that leaving the bottom one undone is "just how you wear a suit."—K.B., Eatontown, New Jersey

Your roommate has the right idea. The bottom button should be unfastened; otherwise the jacket will look like a tunic. The jacket was also likely cut with the assumption that the bottom would be left undone. Regardless, three buttons are hard to pull off, particularly if you are tall and slender, and most men look better with two.

I think I have met the woman I want to marry but am still a little unsure. Are there any questions I should be asking?—B.W., Clive, Iowa

Everyone is a little unsure—or should be. Otherwise you're expecting too much. The first question to ask is whether your girlfriend wants to get married. It's nice to be able to surprise her by popping the question,

*but that should never be the first time the subject comes up. It's crucial to discuss issues such as whether and when to have children, how you will handle household finances and how often you hope to have sex. It is also useful to hear from those who have gone before. For his book *VoiceMale*, Neil Chethik asked nearly 300 husbands what they would tell a young man who is weighing this decision. Their foremost advice, he reports, is not to rush it. Most thought a man should be 25 or even 30 before marrying. One said, "A balanced marriage comes when you don't need the relationship, when you can function on your own. When you're secure with yourself, you're not pulling at each other." You shouldn't expect that your life will be easier or happier or that you will gain confidence by being married. You should plan to make the partnership your top priority and marry a woman you like as well as love. One man spoke of his "mental attraction" to his wife. Finally, understand her goals and dreams so you can encourage them. A few men expressed regret at having married a woman simply because she was too hot to pass up, because that was all they ended up with.*

My husband bought me a few sex toys, but he hides them so I won't use them when he's not around. He says masturbating with them is cheating, which strikes me as childish and unfair, especially since he would watch porn movies from sunup

to sundown if he could. Is it a form of cheating when I use my toys alone or he watches porn?—K.W., Cambridge, Ohio

To call either of those activities cheating would be a poor tribute to people who actually cheat. If you want to get technical, the toys your husband bought should be reserved for sex with him. Those you purchase yourself have no such restrictions. If you don't mind your husband watching the occasional adult film to get off, he shouldn't mind if you do the same with a vibrator and a fantasy. As long as your sex life together is satisfactory—is it?—there shouldn't be any haggling over the time you spend alone.

My home-theater system puts out great sound considering the size of its speakers. I'm thinking of upgrading but wonder if my money would be better spent on tower speakers and components. In other words, is bigger always better?—W.M., Westmont, New Jersey

Bigger is better as long as your listening room can handle the sound. "The first thing I do when building a system is size up the space," says Blackie Pagano of Tubesville.com, who builds custom components. "Equipment that works in a loft is different from what's best for a small apartment." Don't fret too much about the perfect setup because, as Pagano notes, "there are a million right ways to do it. You just have to choose your compromises. For example, you can find small speakers that deliver copious bass, but to do that they need more power, which



DOMINATION IS
THE MOTHER OF INVENTION.

can cause distortion." Pagano says you should also consider the WAF, or wife acceptance factor. "You may want speakers the size of Volkswagens, but that's not going to cut it aesthetically." Art Dudley of *Stereophile* magazine notes that small speakers can often fool the ears but not the eyes. That is, if you are listening to big music, it won't sound as good simply because you know you're being tricked. "This doesn't matter much with movie sound effects," he says, "but with orchestral music especially, some people have a problem with the sense of scale. The bottom line is that the laws of physics haven't changed. To hit the lowest frequencies, you need to move more air, and to move more air, you need larger speakers."

My penis is six inches erect. I would love to be bigger, but a girl once told me I was small, and now I fantasize about girls making fun of my penis. Why does this turn me on so much?—D.B., Providence, Rhode Island

You enjoy being humiliated. In fact, you're not small, so a woman would need to role-play to fulfill your fantasy. The best time to have a partner say this sort of thing, if she must, is when she's deep-throating you.

America has become obsessed with tips. Everywhere I go there's a tip jar on the counter. What is the etiquette for tipping at delis and bagel shops? Are you also expected to tip at a restaurant when picking up a take-out order?—J.C., Bergenfield, New Jersey

We throw our change in when the person waiting on us is polite and friendly despite being harried or abused by less patient customers. We also tend to be more generous if we are a regular. And we're in the habit of adding five percent for takeout, especially if a server packaged the order. Sometimes you can feel tipped out, but a buck or two now and again doesn't add up to much.

A year ago my girlfriend went to college in another state. Not only is she the most gorgeous woman I've ever dated, she is wonderful in spirit and in bed. I am also in college and working, which together fill 70 hours a week. I'm exhausting my brain in all categories—work, school and worrying about the thousands of men who must be hitting on her. She frequently goes to parties where she sips Dom Pérignon with older, wealthier single guys. I wonder how I am ever going to keep her. She deserves a yacht, and I have a life raft. I still have at least three years of school left. It seems the only things I have going for me are that she says I'm great in bed, I'm fairly intelligent and I can cook. But without money, that doesn't add up to much. I can't go to the school she attends because I can't afford the tuition. Any tips?—R.S., Kneeland, California

About all you can do in this circumstance is let her know how you feel. But honestly, if your school and job by necessity take up 70 hours a

week, we're not sure how you expect to maintain any relationship, especially at long distance. If money is an issue, there's not much you can do. The sad truth is the timing for this relationship is bad. It happens. We hate the idea of your spending three years pining for her.

My wife watches porn showing group sex and is turned on by it. She acts and talks as though she would enjoy being part of a threesome, but I can't get her to say yes. When I bring up the subject she gets angry. How do I approach this without provoking a fight?—R.H., Shelby, North Carolina

A woman can't have fantasies? You proposed, she declined. Forget it. She may change her mind at some point, but it won't happen if you keep tapping her on the shoulder.

*All reasonable questions—from fashion, food and drink, stereos 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 in 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 Advisor's latest book, *Dear Playboy Advisor*, is available at bookstores, by phoning 800-423-9494 or online at playboystore.com.*



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THE PLAYBOY FORUM

THE TRUTH ABOUT AL FRANKEN

DON'T CALL HIM A LIBERAL STOOGES—
HE'S REALLY A CONSERVATIVE

BY CURTIS WHITE

I'm going to bitch-slap Al Franken. Actually, I take the language of bitch-slapping from Franken himself. In his book *Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them* he gleefully relates how he "bitch-slapped" Bernie Goldberg in public debate.

It's good that the pundits of liberalism have learned the idiom of the people. It disproves Ann Coulter's claim that liberals are elitists because they don't talk to truck drivers. It's also funny and shows that Franken and liberals are down with homeys and shit. Honestly, this is how people who do research at Harvard's Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy talk these days. Of course, seriously considered, neither the conservative populism of drinking beer with truck drivers nor the liberal politics of street cred is honest. Republicans do not care about working people (as their forever war against labor unions proves beyond all question), and Democrats do not care about the welfare of blacks (never mind the legends about President Clinton's genealogy). Whether Republican or Democrat, the two major political parties always leave the poor behind.

Consider Detroit. Federal administrations of both parties come and go, but illiteracy in Detroit hovers around 50 percent. In a conversation with an administrator of the Detroit library system in 2003, I learned that the most eager private contributor to literacy efforts in the city was McDonald's. And McDonald's was concerned only because the teenagers it was hiring couldn't read the menu board. Given politicians' general indifference to realities of this kind, it is clear that both parties' rhetoric is fraudulent. The two are ultimately just two sides of the one great party of business, and business has no interest in educating people it doesn't need. That's the real message to the poor of Detroit, a message they are not slow to understand: "You are not needed. For anything. Ever. So why should we go to the trouble and expense of educating you?" When Wesley Clark says the Democratic Party gives to the less fortunate out of spiritual conviction, it is true only when compared with the practices of Republicans. Otherwise it is a lie.



But let me get to the point: Al Franken, one of the best-known, best-loved liberal heroes in the good fight against conservative extremism, is a conservative. What is most meaningful in his work is not its spectacular and scandalous criticism of conservative commentators such as Rush Limbaugh but simply his willingness to agree with conservatives that there are limits to what can be said and thought.

Here is how that works: Al Franken is willing to say, along with Bill O'Reilly, "I love America." With a little tear in his eye, no doubt. Franken argues that the conservatives' biggest lie is that liberals hate America. But by replying, "No, liberals love America too," Franken has created a political universe in which from end to end we all say, "I love America." It reminds me of a Huey Lewis song of some years back, "Hip to Be Square." It's liberal to be conservative! Franken can be one of these notorious liberals and say, "I love America." We used to call this sort of thing operating in bad faith, but in Franken's case we may better say it's bad shtick.

What if you neither love America nor hate it? What if you simply don't have any idea what America is? Seriously, what content does the word contain for Franken? And what can it mean to say you love something that has no content? Is this America we love the land itself? Is it the prairies we've destroyed, the water and air we've polluted and the species we've driven into extinction? Is it the forests we've clear-cut to make farmland and the farmland we've so depleted of nutrients that only by applying massive amounts of nitrogen can we get anything at all to grow on it? Or is our America the vinyl-clad subdivisions we erect on the depleted soil? If so, we lovers are dangerous. We're loving America to death. America should turn and run for cover when it sees us coming with our hungry arms outstretched.

Or perhaps we mean our elected representatives when we say we love America. No one would believe that one. Most of us have the good sense to hold our politicians in contempt no matter their party affiliation and for a reason

they never seem to tire of refreshing for us: They are corrupt.

Well, then, is it the people we love? Perhaps, but not in any simple sense. The truth is that as a matter of habit and misconceived principle we cordially hate one another's guts on most days. Our national character is more riven than Sybil's personality. Religion, region, race, class, gender and education all fracture us. We as a people are not one. And maybe it's a bad idea to try to be one (as our "united we stand" international militarism would seem to demonstrate).

Or the ultimate possibility: By America, perhaps we mean the values expressed in our founding documents. I think most people would be willing to try to love those ideas, as long as the understanding is that those ideas have only imperfectly been realized and mostly require of us not some sort of sycophantic blind faith but a willingness to learn how to change.

You know, instead of saying, "I love America," I would prefer to say, "Our democracy defends itself by appealing to values that make no sense but that we are not allowed to criticize."

In the end, all the familiar political oppositions in this country—Republican against Democrat, conservative against liberal, evangelical against humanist and, yes, even Franken against O'Reilly—are little more than theater. They create a national spectacle, a drama whose tragic dimension is always kept carefully out of view. We are asked to confirm this drama, to take sides ourselves and legitimize it as an expression of our freedom. But it is in fact the opposite of freedom. It is a subtle form of authoritarianism. What is most clever about this authority is that in order to forbid alternative perspectives, it does not have to do anything as crude as censoring. It simply has to saturate the stage, leaving no room for anything other than the beguiling sound of its own voice.

By saying such things—"Al Franken conspires with conservatives to create authoritarianism? What?"—I have, of course, made myself monstrous. I am beyond the pale. An extremist. Un-American to be sure. I should probably be made to sleep with the feral dogs out beyond the city walls. But since I've come this far, I may as well have the virtue of incorrigibility and say what Franken won't say: To prefer a Democrat to a Republican is at best to prefer death by a thousand cuts to a good, clean bullet to the base of the skull.

Curtis White's new book is The Spirit of Disobedience: Resisting the Charms of Fake Politics, Mindless Consumption and the Culture of Total Work (PoliPointPress).

KILLING IN THE NAME OF

THE AUTHOR OF *GOING POSTAL* SAYS WORKPLACE SHOOTINGS AREN'T NUTS AT ALL. THEY'RE LOGICAL

By Mark Ames

How would you react if your co-workers bought you a Pimp My Cubicle gag gift? This novelty kit not only exists, with a write-up in *Newsweek* it was a hit even before it shipped to stores last year.

The joke, of course, is that life in a cubicle is the opposite of a pimp's life—completely unexciting, underpaid and,

stood violent crime wave this country had seen since the periodic outbreaks of supposedly random slave violence in the 18th and 19th centuries.

By the end of the 1980s, after the humor had worn thin, Congress set about trying to determine why there were so many massacres in post offices. As it turned out, the U.S. Postal Service's



worst of all, agonizingly undersexed. The instant popularity of Pimp My Cubicle is proof that America's tens of millions of office workers are so accustomed to indignities both great and petty that they don't even know when they're being degraded anymore. It just seems normal.

But for middle- and lower-middle-class workers, life today isn't normal at all. It's getting worse by the year, a trend that began with the Reagan revolution 26 years ago. Around that time something else appeared that is the complete opposite of the Pimp My Cubicle joke: It's called the "going postal" rampage. The wave of postal massacres that swept the country was the most misunder-

corporate culture was cited for its brutality and authoritarianism and for the stress it placed on many of its workers, all stemming from a quasi-privatization scheme President Nixon had forced on it 16 years before the first massacre. But by the time Congress started figuring out what was wrong with the USPS, workplace shootings had jumped from post offices to the wider private sector. According to *Ticking Bombs*, by psychologist Michael Mantell, the number of employees who killed their bosses doubled between 1984 and 1994. A 2004 study by Handgun-Free America found that from 1994 to 2003, 164 workplace shootings left 290 people dead.

These days we accept going postal as

a fact of life. And after each incident we're always left juggling the same unsatisfactory explanations, blaming lax gun control, violent Hollywood movies or oddball workers who snap for no apparent reason. Yet none of these account for the appearance of workplace massacres in the mid-1980s specifically; guns, violent culture and psychos have always been features of American life. Moreover, the FBI and Secret Service have tried and failed to come up with a profile of an employee who will potentially go postal.

The murderers aren't the ones who should be profiled—they can't be. Instead, workplaces need profiling. And when you do that, you realize that, for the overwhelming majority of American workers, everything has gotten significantly worse. In 1978 CEOs of major companies earned 35 times their average employee's pay. By 1997 they earned 115 times their average employee's pay, and by 2001 it was 531 times. During this period, middle- and lower-

middle-class earnings remained flat. In 1997 the average white-collar worker earned just six cents more an hour, adjusted for inflation, than in 1973. This represents a big change from how wealth was distributed prior to the Reagan revolution: For every dollar earned by the bottom 90 percent between 1950 and 1970, those in the top 0.01 percent earned an additional \$162. Between 1990 and 2002 that same top 0.01 percent earned an extra \$18,000 for every dollar earned by the bottom 10 percent. America now has by far the worst wealth gap of any advanced economy. America's middle and lower middle classes also have to work harder. Everything from lunch-break time to vacation time is down sharply since the early 1980s, to the point at which Americans work far longer, with far less leisure time, than any other people in the first world. But unlike their counterparts in any other advanced economy, Americans don't have guaranteed health care.

Most workers accept their situation as somehow inevitable, forgetting that the rich won their gluttonous share of the wealth pie not through the invisible hand but through a willful and visible hand. Former General Electric chief executive Jack Welch preached that his employees had "unlimited juice" to squeeze and put his theory into practice by firing more than 120,000 workers during

his tenure. Al "Chainsaw" Dunlap's "mean business" philosophy led him to fire a third of Scott Paper's workforce in 1994—11,200 employees. For his service Chainsaw Al was rewarded with \$100 million in bonuses in just 20 months. Fear, stress, squeezing and the mass appropriation of wealth have become deliberate corporate philosophies. Intel's Andy Grove intimated that fear is the best motivator, attacking the pre-1980s model of corporate culture, which emphasized loyalty and security. What has happened isn't just a wealth transfer; it's a

landgrab on a scale not seen in this country since the last free Indians were exterminated. Indeed the landgrab is quite literal, as the average American's work space has drastically shrunk in the past 25 years, thanks to the rise of cubicles.

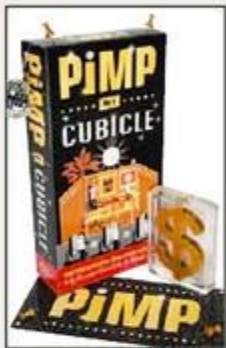
What is most baffling is the lack of outrage. America should be in the throes of a mass rebellion, and these cubicle workers, the self-deprecating "wage slaves," the ones mocking their

own wretchedness, should be leading the marches. When you consider the fact that workers' lives are getting objectively worse yet no one does anything about it, "going postal" no longer seems so unusual; in fact, it seems obvious, perhaps even justified in the sense that many crimes born of intolerable socioeconomic conditions can be justified. Take the example of Robert Mack, who shot two of his General Dynamics supervisors, killing one, during the company's downsizing in the early 1990s. In an interview he gave in prison, Mack was

asked why so many of his fellow workers later expressed sympathy with his actions. "Some of them feel like the pressure won't be on us as much," he said, "because now General Dynamics' management is starting to change its ways." Or con-

sider Warren Murphy, who shot and wounded his supervisor at a New Orleans post office in 1988. Murphy said he was "happy to get the attention of management" at the post office because he was "disgusted and aggravated" by them. All told, 52 percent of workplace shooters had experienced a negative change in employment status, while just 13 percent had a history of mental health problems before the shooting incidents.

Still wondering why, for 20 straight years, American workers have been going postal?



MARGINALIA

FROM THE DESCRIPTION of a training session on how to fire your employees in *The Whistleblower: Confessions of a Healthcare Hitman*, by Peter Rost: "After having welcomed the employee we were going to terminate, we were told to 'express interest in the person's comfort in the room.' I guess the firing manager was supposed to ask if it was too warm, too cold or just right. Or perhaps make sure that the victim found their chair comfortable. It was important to note that 'small talk' should be kept brief, e.g., two minutes. The presenters—by now I was thinking of them as Terminators—strongly suggested not waiting too long before letting the ax fall. The second step was to 'set the stage.' Here the manager should express his understanding of the acquisition. To be honest, I didn't see how saying, 'Pharmacia shareholders will make a lot of money on this transaction, but many of us will be out of a job, so let's be happy for our shareholders,' would go over too well. The third step was to actually do the deed."



FROM A COMMENT by the ACLU's Chris Hansen about a million-dollar

Department of Justice study of sexually explicit material on the Internet, which determined that

just 1.1 percent of websites indexed by Google and MSN are sexually explicit: "Some people find it a scary number. Some people find it a reassuring number. What it mostly is is an irrelevant number."

FROM COMMENTS BY Michael Zimmerman, a dean at Butler University and founder of the pro-science Clergy Letter Project and Evolution Sunday, both designed to push back against the spread of creationism and intelligent-design movements in churches: "For far too long, strident voices, in the name of Christianity, have been claiming that people must choose between religion and modern science. We're saying you can have your faith and you can also have science. Creationists fear that if you believe evolution, you're an atheist. If you have enough faith, you don't need science to prove God exists, and science can't prove this anyway."

FROM A STATEMENT issued by New Jersey governor Jon Corzine concerning the successful prevention of the Army's proposal to ship millions of gallons of a nerve agent from Indiana to New Jersey for disposal: "The Army's persistent efforts to dump partially treated VX—one

(continued on page 41)



READER RESPONSE

TO PROTECT AND SERVE

I would like to thank you for your response to letters sent in by the pro-police screwup club ("Reader Response," February). For some reason it has become acceptable for police to make enormous errors and find some small crime to justify their gross incompetence. Our tolerance of this paramilitary



Is the Fourth Amendment under fire?

style of serving warrants makes me worry for our future as a country. We still have the right to protect ourselves in our homes if we feel threatened; police should expect a violent response if they use threatening tactics. I also wonder why police seem to no longer take the time or energy to observe and confirm their target before taking such hostile action. The notion that police are above the law and cannot be held accountable for their actions must be debunked. I thank *PLAYBOY* for continuing to have the balls to state the truth.

David Miller
Indianapolis, Indiana

I've always been a fan of your magazine, but today you inspired me to finally subscribe. Your retort to police-state-loving readers responding to Radley Balko's article "Unreasonable Searches and Seizures" in the November issue is absolutely on point. Too many people mindlessly buy into government propaganda regarding SWAT teams, among various other governmental assaults on freedom, and it is extremely refreshing to see them put in their place.

Andrew Riegler
San Antonio, Texas

I read with interest the letters defending SWAT teams. One reader suggests

we should worry about the slain policeman rather than the occasional innocent person who happens to get shot while defending his home and family. If I ever hear a shout at my door and see a bunch of black-clad marauders trying to break in, they'd better cover their heads and their asses—and have the right address—because I won't hesitate to shoot.

Carey Randall
Maplesville, Alabama

Reading the responses to Balko's article, I noticed most of the negative ones come from police officers. To those officers: The primary mission of the police is to protect and serve the public. Even the doors of LAPD squad cars tout that mission statement. Recently it has been lost in the concern for officers' safety, but it's what you get paid for. If you don't like it, find another job. For those who don't agree with Balko, I suggest you read our Constitution and appreciate everything it stands for.

Christopher Engels
Bend, Oregon

BIAS ATTACK

"Sexual Hypocrisy" (February) is no more than a sneering political jab at Republican and conservative figures. While no one should excuse boorish behavior, the fact that virtually all the individuals in the article are from the



Ted Haggard, left, and his sex partner.

right is beneath your usually high standards. It would be quick work to write a similar exposé using all Democrat and far-left targets such as Bill Clinton, Barney Frank, Gary Studds or Ted Kennedy, to name a few.

Donald H. Bunnell
Glen Mills, Pennsylvania

Just to clear up any misunderstanding, here is the Merriam-Webster's definition of hypocrisy: "Act or practice of feigning to be

what one is not, or to feel what one does not feel; esp. the false assumption of an appearance of virtue or religion; canting simulation of goodness." Conservatives are far more likely to opine about and attempt to legislate how we should conduct our private lives. Thus when they prove to have sexual tastes as diverse as the rest of the citizenry (when, for instance, vociferous public gay-basher Ted Haggard is forced to admit he slept with men), their behavior is hypocritical. We received many letters that mention Barney Frank and Bill Clinton. Frank has never attacked homosexuality or run on a family-values platform, and Clinton openly admitted to infidelity prior to his election to the presidency. So regardless of how you feel about Frank's bedroom preferences or Clinton's dalliances, their actions do not constitute hypocrisy.

FRIEND OF THE FAMILY

Louis Ingelhart, an Indiana-based First Amendment scholar known for his tenacious backing of collegiate and student-press freedoms, died in a Muncie hospital in January at the age of 86. Ingelhart received a 1989 Hugh M. Hefner First Amendment Award citing his many contributions to keeping student newspapers free from administrator interference. He testified in court cases and fought whenever a student-publications advisor was fired for defending a student's right to report controversial school news. Perhaps Ingelhart's best-known act of advocacy was his co-founding of the Student Press Law Center to provide legal advice and financial assistance to student journalists battling suppression of stories or prior restraint by high school principals and college administrators. His name is on awards given to publications advisors for extraordinary accomplishments, such as the College Media Advisors' Louis Ingelhart First Amendment Award for distinguished advising. Ingelhart was an author of scholarly books and articles; his best-known works include *Press Freedoms, Press and Speech Freedoms in America 1619-1995* and *Press and Speech Freedoms in the World From Antiquity Until 1998*. He leaves behind a daughter, a son and, by his own estimate, 8 million published words in books and articles, not one of which was censored.

Hank Nuwer
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NEWSFRONT



Surrealism

ROME, GEORGIA—*The Salon*, a graphic novel by Nick Bertozzi, has just been published by St. Martin's Press. Set in the Paris art world of 1907, the thriller involves Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque and Gertrude and Leo Stein, among others. Comics retailer Gordon Lee faces trial this spring because a child obtained from his shop a copy of the giveaway anthology *Alternative Comics 2*, which includes a scene from *The Salon* depicting Picasso painting in the nude. The nine-year-old's parents took the book to the county district attorney. The resultant charges have been reduced from felonies to misdemeanors, though a judge ruled the material is inherently harmful to minors. Author Bertozzi says *The Salon* was researched for historical accuracy. "My choice to draw Picasso nude," he says, "was not dashed off and certainly not intended to titillate."

Another Brick in the Wall

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Even as the Recording Industry Association of America continued to initiate new lawsuits against alleged music file sharers, adding to the 20,000 total of the past three years, the group signaled a change in policy that seeks to bypass the legal system. A leaked memo from the RIAA to Internet service providers indicates the body wants the ISPs to make settlement offers to their customers. The companies are to tell customers they can avoid an RIAA lawsuit by going to a website being set up, P2Plawsuits.com, and paying discounted settlement fees. Providers are also directed not to discuss the validity of the file-sharing claims leveled at these customers. The program allows the RIAA to avoid the hassle and expense of having to establish guilt in a court of law. Cindy Cohn, legal director of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, comments, "Does the RIAA readily tell customers that parents are generally not liable for infringements committed by their kids or that bankruptcy may be a last-ditch option for some or that the record labels have occasionally sued the wrong people? Doubtful."

Choice Made

LISBON—Following a referendum in which 59 percent of voters backed a change in existing law, Portugal will legalize abortion. The current law allows termination of a pregnancy only during the first 12 weeks and only to save the woman's life or protect her health. Among European Union members, Ireland, Poland and Malta are the only countries with

similarly restrictive abortion laws. Portuguese prime minister José Sócrates wants to reduce the number of "clandestine" abortions, as well as the number of women forced to go abroad for the procedure. The new law will likely allow abortion on request within the first 10 weeks of pregnancy.

Monkey Man

ATLANTA—Republican state representative Ben Bridges has long opposed the teaching of evolution, but lately he has added a new level of animosity to his subject. In a memo that circulated in February, and which members of the Texas legislature subsequently distributed further, Bridges claims evolution should not be taught because it is a myth spread by a Jewish sect. "Indisputable evidence—long hidden



but now available to everyone—demonstrates conclusively that so-called 'secular evolution science' is the big-bang, 15-billion-year alternate 'creation scenario' of the Pharisee religion," the memo reads. "This scenario is derived concept-for-concept from rabbinic writings in the mystic 'holy book' kabbalah dating back at least two millennia." The Anti-Defamation League called the document "outrageous anti-Semitic material."

MARGINALIA

(continued from page 39)

of the world's most deadly nerve agents—into the Delaware River are simply wrong and ill-advised. The Army should take note: New Jersey is no dumping ground. The Delaware River should be treasured and protected, not harmed and mistreated."

FROM THE PREFACE of the book *Extreme Cop*, by Jerry Ardolino: "There have been many Chicago cops who have committed violent acts. Some have wounded or killed criminals in questionable shootings. Some have been drug dealers and pimps, and many were burglars. But none of them ran even close to me in all-around violent acts, dangerous car chases on a regular basis (some at 130 in heavy traffic), maniacal behavior during arrests, the torturing of criminals, the rule violations—which nobody had the balls to commit—and unprecedented civil rights violations all on an almost daily basis."



FROM AN EDITORIAL by Betsy Hart, responding to a *Glamour* magazine story about purity balls, a new trend in abstinence activism in which fathers pledge at a formal party to protect their daughters' virginity: "Look, I'm an evangelical Christian who knows the incredible and positive value of the relationship between a dad and daughter and who firmly believes that sex should be reserved for marriage. But I just can't imagine going about it this way with any of my four kids, son or daughters. For starters, something like a purity ball essentially minimizes a young woman's very humanity. It seems that in this context a girl's sexuality is first her father's (a little odd), then her husband's. But of course, if we value her, we know that her sexuality and the choices she makes about it as an adult are hers. Besides, I can't help but wonder if a single-minded focus on virginity is an ironic and unintended way of sexualizing youth in a different way."

FROM A CHANT sung by female patrons of Jake's Sports Bar in Lubbock, Texas after police halted a sold-out Chippendales show and shut the venue for allegedly violating local adult-entertainment ordinances: "Bring them back. Bring them back. The city council sucks. The city council sucks."

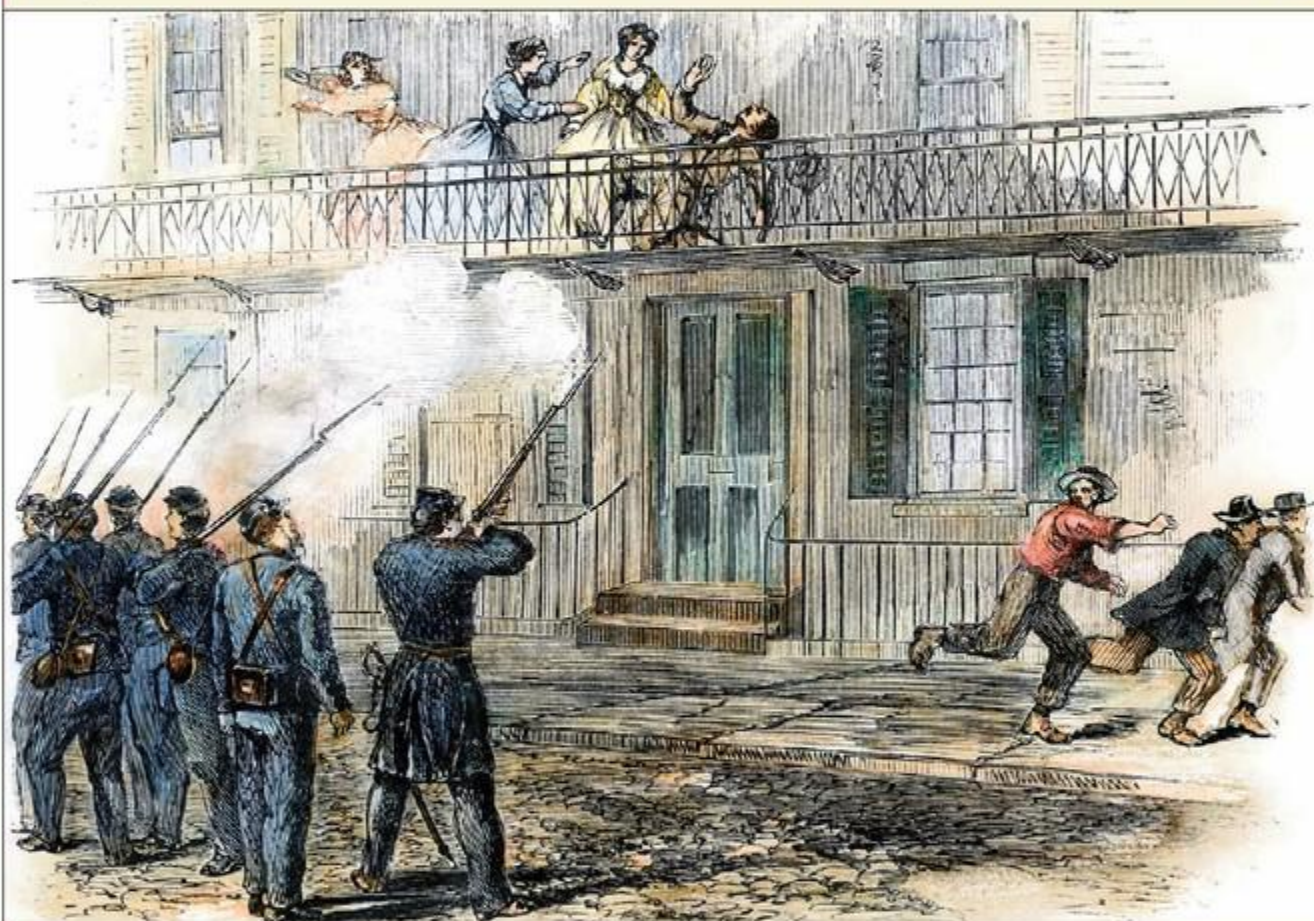
FROM AN INTERVIEW with Zbigniew Brzezinski, Jimmy Carter's national security advisor, by Jim Lehrer: "The fact is, the American effort in Iraq is essentially colonial. We're waging a colonial war. We live in a postcolonial era. This war cannot be won because it's simply out of sync with historical times."



MARTIAL LAW RETURNS

THE JOHN WARNER DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007 LETS THE FEDS CONTROL STATE NATIONAL GUARD UNITS. THAT'S TROUBLE

The term *posse*—as in “round up a posse”—derives from the Latin *posse comitatus*. The 1878 act of that name bars the military from domestic law-enforcement duties, enshrining in law the 1876 removal of troops deployed in Reconstruction states. Now President Bush, together with the outgoing Republican Congress, has imperiled the act’s ability to keep the military out. The Warner bill makes it “easier for the president to declare martial law, stripping state governors of part of their authority over state National Guard units in domestic emergencies,” say Kit Bond and Patrick Leahy, the co-heads of the Senate’s National Guard Caucus.



During the July 1863 Draft Riots in New York City, an Army officer shoots a riot leader at a building on 36th Street.



Top: U.S. cavalrymen working for the IRS go house-to-house looking for illegal whiskey stills. Left: In 1877, 10 are killed in Baltimore during the Great Railroad Strike. Right: Fear of renewed violence in the South plagued the 1876 presidential election, in which Rutherford B. Hayes defeated Samuel Tilden.



PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: STEVE NASH

A candid conversation with the NBA's unlikely two-time MVP about bad backs, Mark Cuban, reverse racism and why Canadians are so laid-back

The NBA's two-time MVP—soon to make it three?—is the least likely purple star since Barney. He doesn't dunk, his bum back forces him to lie down during time-outs, and he's from a country where basketball is a minor sport somewhere between skiing and ice fishing. Still, the Phoenix Suns' scrawny Canadian point guard manages to keep up with Kobe, Shaq, LeBron and the rest of the league's dominators.

Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, where his dad was a pro soccer player, Nash grew up in a family with a social conscience. The Nashes so hated apartheid they moved to British Columbia, where Steve became a soccer virtuoso and did footie tricks with the ball. But since soccer and hockey were the big sports, nonconformist Nash switched to hoops. With his picture-perfect jump shot and superhuman court sense, he became the best high school player in Canada—which is like being the tallest munchkin. He got exactly one scholarship offer from a U.S. college: Santa Clara University, nobody's idea of a basketball power.

After a million hours of practice and 10 zillion gallons of sweat, the consummate gym rat twice became West Coast Conference Player of the Year, averaging 17 points and six assists as a senior. Still, when the Suns drafted him in the first round in 1996 (behind Allen Iverson, Stephon Marbury and high schooler Kobe Bryant but ahead of Jermaine O'Neal),

Phoenix fans booed the pick. Soon they booed Nash in person, and in 1998 the Suns traded him to Dallas. He became an All-Star for the Mavericks but courted controversy at the All-Star Game in 2003; Nash, who opposed the U.S. invasion of Iraq, wore a T-shirt reading NO WAR—SHOOT FOR PEACE. Sports columnists howled, "Shut up and play!"

When Mavs owner Mark Cuban, who wanted to build a team around forward Dirk Nowitzki, let Nash go the following year, Nash signed a six-year, \$66 million deal with Phoenix. Ridiculous money, according to Cuban. But the point guard who got away has been the NBA's MVP ever since. The year before Nash arrived, the Suns went 29–53. In the 2004–2005 season, with Nash leading an explosive, fast-breaking attack, they scored more points than any other team in a decade. With Nash averaging 15.5 points and a league-best 11.5 assists, Phoenix had the NBA's best record. Last year he stepped it up again: 18.8 points and 10.5 assists a game, leading the Suns to the Western Conference Finals and grabbing his second Maurice Podoloff trophy as league MVP.

With his long hair (shorn last summer—national news in Canada) and lady-killing looks, Nash has become a crossover star, an MTV sort of MVP who gets shout-outs in hit songs. We sent freelance writer Kevin Cook to meet him.

"Steve drives fast on and off the court," says

Cook. "We chatted courtside at the U.S. Airways Center in Phoenix, then zipped in his black Mercedes C32 AMG to a hole-in-the-wall restaurant downtown. I'd been told he turns down nine out of 10 interviews. He said yes to this one because he knew we'd talk about more than how the Suns match up against the rest of the league. And we did. I have interviewed Bryant, Michael Jordan, Shaquille O'Neal and other NBA stars but never about Nelly Furtado, game-day sex and kicking soccer balls at Owen Wilson. We started with the basics and kept the pace quick."

PLAYBOY: Your Suns lost the past two Western Conference Finals. Can you do better this year?

NASH: For sure. Don't bet against us. We have to stay healthy and establish our rhythm: Push the ball up and score a lot of points.

PLAYBOY: If you were buying a ticket, who would you go to see? Pick a team other than the Suns.

NASH: You're putting me on the spot. Okay, I like teams that share the ball. Detroit, Miami, San Antonio, Dallas. They're exciting to watch and to play against.

PLAYBOY: You're 33 now, a 10-year veteran. How crucial is it for you to win a title before you're through?



"We can't swear anymore. It's a technical foul. The league wants us to be as presentable as possible, but where do you draw the line? At what point does the game get so Leave It to Beaver that all the passion and personality go out of it?"



"I don't need to feel vindicated about Iraq. Look, it's not about 'I told you so.' I just don't believe in aggressive war. Aggression should be a last resort. That's all. I wasn't being anti-American or anti-Bush."



"No sex on game day" is definitely not written on my bed. That would be too limiting. Ninety-nine percent of the time it's not happening because you're in a routine that day; you're totally focused. But I don't make a law of it."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID ROSE

NASH: Not crucial. I won't kill myself if it never happens.

PLAYBOY: Is it more American to think you have to win or else?

NASH: Yes, and I'm a Canadian who will not commit suicide if I don't win an NBA championship. But I'm sure gonna give it a go.

PLAYBOY: Can you keep getting better?

NASH: I'd like to be a better defender. But it's tough. I expend a lot of energy on offense, and I'm not big.

PLAYBOY: The media guide says you're six-foot-three. How big a lie is that?

NASH: I'm six-two. I'm not growing any taller, and at my age I can't just play defense all summer, which is the best way to improve—to guard guys. I tried to get a little stronger and quicker last summer, but there aren't enough hours in the day, not enough *recovery* hours, for me to use up my body that way. My being healthy is a bigger priority for our team than my defense.

PLAYBOY: We've all seen you lying on the baseline during time-outs. You've got spondylolisthesis, which is...?

NASH: A vertebra that slips a millimeter out of place. It's congenital but not degenerative. If it moves more millimeters out of place, I won't be able to play anymore, but lots of people have it. I don't see it as career-threatening.

PLAYBOY: Did Mark Cuban? He said he loved you, then let you go from his Mavs to the Suns three years ago.

NASH: He thought I was old and would physically break down.

PLAYBOY: Was that more incentive for you?

NASH: Nah. I play because I love to play and want to win. I don't know where "breaking down" came from. In the end, it was about money.

PLAYBOY: Were you and Cuban friends?

NASH: Yes. We would e-mail each other and saw each other all the time. He's done a lot for his franchise and the league. In the grand scheme I respect him.

PLAYBOY: Take us behind the scenes. It's 2004, you just got an offer from the Suns, and you'd promised to give Cuban a chance to make a final offer. How did you do that?

NASH: By phone. I was in Dallas with my agent, Bill Duffy, at the home of a Suns part owner. The Suns said, "We want you to promise not to tell him what the offer is. Just say it's a substantial one."

PLAYBOY: Six years and \$66 million is pretty substantial.

NASH: So I called Mark.

PLAYBOY: From the Suns' co-owner's house?

NASH: Yeah. "The Suns have made me a substantial offer," I said. I even cheated

a bit and told him it was close to another guy's salary, one he knew.

PLAYBOY: And Cuban said—

NASH: He said, "Oh fuck!" He was surprised. "Let me talk to Duff," he said. So I gave the phone to my agent.

PLAYBOY: Cuban never came close to matching the Suns' offer. Here's a billionaire who has happily spent millions to pay fines for ripping league officials. Were you surprised he made a stand about paying you \$10 million a year?

NASH: I was. He paid a lot of guys who never came close to living up to their contract. [The Mavs paid Alan Henderson \$8.3 million for his 3.5 points per game that year and the following season paid Keith Van Horn \$15.6 million for his 8.9.]



It's a black man's game. The numbers support that. The question is, What does it mean to me? Nothing.

To draw the line on me, a guy who always showed up and worked hard and was a big part of the team's success—it hurt.

PLAYBOY: Cuban later said your agent misrepresented the Suns' offer, inflating it to try to get more from Dallas.

NASH: That was spin.

PLAYBOY: Because he had to save face after letting you go?

NASH: Yeah, he was going to take some heat. It's all spin.

PLAYBOY: How did that affect your friendship?

NASH: He was a friend. There were other sides of him that weren't fun to play for: yelling at referees, pouting in the locker room. That was irritating. But then, who's perfect?

PLAYBOY: Did you roll your eyes when he hollered at the refs? Did it make your job harder?

NASH: Well, refs don't appreciate it.

PLAYBOY: Do they take it out on the Mavs?

NASH: [Nodding] They're human.

PLAYBOY: Who did you first tell about going to the Suns?

NASH: Two teammates: Dirk Nowitzki and Michael Finley.

PLAYBOY: Teammates before family?

NASH: I could tell my family later. I wanted those guys to hear it from me before they heard it on the news, to tell them it wasn't my wish. "I don't want to go, but Cuban doesn't want me back," I said. And they were both with me. They said, "You gotta go."

PLAYBOY: Finley called you "our rock star." And now you keep turning up in hit songs. You're the MTV MVP.

NASH: *Keep* turning up?

PLAYBOY: In "Promiscuous," Nelly Furtado sings, "Is that the truth, or are you talking trash?/Is your game MVP like Steve Nash?"

NASH: Well, aside from the title, I love it. Nelly's great; I'm a fan. We're from the same neighborhood in Victoria, British Columbia. It was sweet of her to put me in the song. It's not on my iPod, though. I'm too worried one of my friends will see it there and say, "Oh, who loves himself?" But if "Promiscuous" comes on the radio, I don't change the station.

PLAYBOY: You Canadians stick together. Is that a conspiracy?

NASH: We root for each other. Did you know there are fewer people in Canada than in California?

PLAYBOY: You're also in the song "Get 'Em Daddy," by the rapper Cam'ron. It goes like this: "I got weed hash, when I breeze past,/Breathe fast, eat ass, on point like Steve Nash." How does it feel to be rhymed with *ass*?

NASH: I'm flattered. I've never met Cam'ron, but I love his songs. That's cool.

PLAYBOY: Your Mavs teammate Finley said you were the coolest guy in the league. He called you Wolverine for the way you slice and dice defenses and for your Hugh Jackman-like effect on the ladies.

NASH: I think he was joking.

PLAYBOY: Female fans held up signs that said MARRY ME, NASH. How much fun was it to be the NBA's most eligible bachelor?

NASH: Any young guy with money has a shot at a nice bachelor lifestyle. The NBA's no different. You've got the most opportunities to meet women in the big cities: New York, L.A., Chicago and Miami—that's a fascinating town. But what do I know? I'm a father of two.

PLAYBOY: Not until two years ago. Any tips on fending off NBA groupies?

NASH: The usual image of groupies lounging in hotel lobbies—I never saw that. The groupie knows where players go in a particular town, which restaurant or bar, and goes there looking for them.

PLAYBOY: Ever meet one you could relate to—a well-read, politically aware groupie?

NASH: Nah. I'd remember that. Those don't grow on trees.

PLAYBOY: You were linked in the press with actress Elizabeth Hurley and Geri "Ginger Spice" Halliwell of the Spice Girls. Did you link with them physically?

NASH: I met them both through mutual friends. They seemed nice, but I didn't know them.

PLAYBOY: In 2005 you married your girlfriend, Alejandra Amarilla, the mother of your twin daughters. Did you propose with a big sign that said MARRY ME?

NASH: No, no sign. We'd been living together for three years. It was time. She's from Paraguay. We met in New York, started dating and boom—together ever since. Our babies were eight months old when we married.

PLAYBOY: Some athletes think sex saps their energy. What's your view of sex on game day?

NASH: I don't have a rule against it. I think you want to be spontaneous. Ninety-nine percent of the time it's not happening on a game day because you're in a routine that day; you're totally focused. But I don't make a law of it. "No sex on game day" is definitely not written on my bed. That would be too limiting.

PLAYBOY: Let's fast-break through your formative years. Born in South Africa, moved with your family to British Columbia, where you grew up playing soccer.

NASH: The first word I ever said was *goal!* But all my friends in eighth grade loved basketball, so I switched. It was an exciting, romantic time for the game, and I was swept up in it. The Showtime Lakers, Magic Johnson, Larry Bird and my favorite player, Isiah Thomas.

PLAYBOY: Point guard for Detroit's "Bad Boy" Pistons.

NASH: And Michael Jordan, who was new then. Air Jordan commercials definitely influenced my life.

PLAYBOY: Did your soccer background help you in hoops?

NASH: In soccer you have to see where everybody is all at once. In basketball it's called court sense. You really need it as a point guard, and for me it started in soccer. And there's something else: Since you can't use your hands in soccer, you find creative ways to get the ball to the right spot. Switching to basketball made ballhandling a lot easier. I could use my hands! It was almost like cheating.

PLAYBOY: You were the best high school basketball player in Canada. You wanted to play for a big-time program in the U.S. but couldn't get a scholarship. Indiana and Duke rejected you. Who else?

Nash by the Numbers

Fast facts and stats on the most exciting point guard in the NBA

The case against Northern exposure

Number of NCAA Division I programs that recruited Nash out of his high school in Canada: **1**

Cinderella wore high-tops

As a freshman playing for Santa Clara in the 1993 NCAA Tournament, he nailed **6** straight free throws in the final **31** seconds against a top-seeded Arizona team to cap off the biggest upset of the tourney.

Best in class?

Nash was selected **15th** overall in the 1996 NBA draft, which *Slam* magazine named the most talented field of incoming players ever. The two point guards picked ahead of him were Allen Iverson (first), currently on the Denver Nuggets, and Stephon Marbury (fourth), now playing for the New York Knicks.

The Suns rise again

His return to Phoenix in 2004 helped the team rebound from a **29-53** record in 2003-2004 to a **62-20** record in 2004-2005, reaching the Western Conference Finals for the first time in **11** years.



Most Canuck teeth on a Wheaties box

In April 2006 Nash became just the **3rd** Canadian to appear on the front of the cereal carton. (Hockey dental victims Wayne Gretzky and Mario Lemieux were the first two.)

Sharpshooters club

In the 2005-2006 season he became the **4th** player in NBA history to shoot better than **50%** from the field, **40%** from three-point range and **90%** from the line, joining Larry Bird, Reggie Miller and Mark Price.

One of the most decorated floor generals ever

Nash and Magic Johnson are the only point guards to be named the NBA MVP in at least **2** seasons.

Chief executive assistant

He ranked **1st** in the NBA in **3** categories: total assists, assists per game and assists per **48** minutes as of the All-Star break. He ranked **2nd** in three-point field-goal percentage and **3rd** in double-doubles.

He is, after all, human

Number of times Nash has dunked in an NBA game: **0**

NASH: You name 'em. My high school coach sent letters to 25 top schools. Nobody wanted me. I would have loved to go to the University of Washington, but there was zero interest.

PLAYBOY: You wound up at Santa Clara University. How did coach Dick Davey recruit you?

NASH: He said, "You're the worst defender I've ever seen." There was some truth to that. Compared with a lot of kids in the States, where the competition is better, I had a lot to learn. And he set the tone. He made it clear that if you played for him at Santa Clara, he wasn't going to kiss your ass. He was going to push you.

PLAYBOY: After your junior season there, you were the West Coast Conference Player of the Year. You considered leaving school for the NBA draft.

NASH: I explored it. It looked as if I might be a late first-round pick, but you can't be sure. It was safer to stay.

PLAYBOY: Risky, though. What if you'd been hurt during your senior year?

NASH: I took out an insurance policy—for a million dollars. To get it I had to take a physical exam to show the insurance company I wasn't a career-ending injury just waiting to happen.

PLAYBOY: How did you pay for the policy? You were a college kid.

NASH: I got a line of credit. The bank evaluated my earning potential; a million dollars seemed about right.

PLAYBOY: You make that in a month now. What kind of student were you at Santa Clara?

NASH: Average. I definitely majored in basketball. There wasn't enough time or energy to excel on the court and in the classroom, at least for me.

PLAYBOY: Why shouldn't college players major in sports? It's hypocritical of the NCAA to pretend it's turning out scholar-athletes.

NASH: I agree. College sports is a huge industry. You could make different educational demands on athletes who are part of that billion-dollar money-making scheme.

PLAYBOY: While you were still in college you practiced with NBA stars Jason Kidd and Gary Payton. How did that come about?

NASH: I don't know if this incriminates me, but my agent had played at Santa Clara, and he represented Jason and Gary. It isn't legal, but he said, "You can work out with these guys." I went

to Gary's backyard, and we worked out. I went to a health club and worked out with Jason.

PLAYBOY: Payton was called the Glove, for his tight defense. Do other players call him that?

NASH: That's fan vernacular. Most of his friends call him G.P. or Gary.

PLAYBOY: How about you? You don't like the nickname Wolverine.

NASH: Most guys call me Nashy or Steve-o.

PLAYBOY: Are there any nicknames guys actually use?

NASH: Kevin Garnett is Big Ticket. Allen Iverson's the Answer, but I would never, ever call him that. I call him Allen. And if I saw Stephon Marbury, I wouldn't say, "I ran into Starbury the other day," because I'd sound like a total cheeseball.

PLAYBOY: In 1996 the Suns made you their first-round pick, 15th overall—the highest any Canadian had ever gone in the NBA draft. When the pick was announced, Suns fans booed.

NASH: And I couldn't have cared less. Hey, I'd made the NBA!

PLAYBOY: What did you buy with your NBA money?

NASH: Cars for my parents. And a big-screen home-entertainment center, also for my parents, because we had this lousy TV when I was growing up. The channel dial fell off, so we changed channels with a pair of tweezers.

PLAYBOY: In Phoenix you backed up All-Star point guard Kevin Johnson.

NASH: We went against each other in practice. One day he said, "You know what? You're as good as anybody I play against. You just don't know it yet."

PLAYBOY: Was he right?

NASH: [Nodding] I thought I could be good, but that gave me more belief.

PLAYBOY: Did you call him K.J., like everyone else?

NASH: We called him K.

PLAYBOY: A nickname for a nickname.

NASH: Yeah, you want to get it down to one syllable if possible. Shawn Marion is Matrix because his game has special effects, so we call him Trix.

PLAYBOY: After two years Phoenix traded you to Dallas for three players and a first-round draft pick the Suns used to get Marion. You hurt your back, and Mavericks fans booed you.

NASH: That helped me. I thought, Not many people get to have this experience.

PLAYBOY: The thrill of being booed by thousands?

NASH: No, of having something to prove. It hurt, but what a great opportunity to fight through it and win them over.

PLAYBOY: You're fierce for a Canadian.

NASH: We're a pretty laid-back country.

PLAYBOY: Here's a joke: What does a Canadian say when you step on his foot?

NASH: Okay, what?

PLAYBOY: He says, "Excuse me."

NASH: That's not a joke. That's true. But you can be laid-back in life and fierce in your profession.

PLAYBOY: When you joined Mark Cuban's Mavs, you struck up a friendship with Nowitzki, who had just arrived from Germany.

NASH: We got to camp the same day. We lived in the same apartment complex and both loved to work at our game, so we practiced together. The team's practice facility was open to the public most of the week. When the public players had the court, Dirk and I would use one of the side baskets.

PLAYBOY: A bunch of lawyers and college kids kept you off the court?

NASH: We didn't own the court, so we played horse on the side.

PLAYBOY: School-yard rules? Would you call a swish?

NASH: Sure. Call a swish, call a bank shot. I'd shoot runners to get a letter on Dirk, or I'd wear him down with threes. He might get me with mid-range jumpers.

PLAYBOY: In your years at Dallas you and Nowitzki were deadly on the pick-and-roll. Was that from endless practice or just good timing?

NASH: Both. It's about reading the other

Who wants to be some kind of basketball machine? I put a lot into the game when we're playing. When the game's over, I want to think about something else.

team—the bodies, the footwork. You get your man stuck on the pick, so the big man has to cover you; just when he steps toward you while the guard's trying to get back, that's your moment. With Dirk it was like telepathy.

PLAYBOY: You two are Western Conference rivals now. Does he take it easy on you if you come through the lane?

NASH: No. There are some hard elbows out there. I expect Shaq would be at the top of the list for elbow power. He's a *strong* man. I've avoided his elbows, but Karl Malone got me good. One of his elbows bent back my front teeth. It took six or seven sessions in the dentist's chair to fix that.

PLAYBOY: Did you haze rookies? Does that still go on?

NASH: We make the rookies sing a song or carry our luggage. When I was a rookie in Phoenix, A.C. Green would kick the balls around at practice and say, "Rookie, go pick 'em up."

PLAYBOY: Green was religious—the league's most famous virgin. He didn't make you all become virgins?

NASH: Well, you can't reverse virginity.

PLAYBOY: You can in law school. Law students say if you study so much you never have sex, you become a common-law virgin.

NASH: Fortunately, I never went to law school.

PLAYBOY: How much game tape do you study?

NASH: I'll watch 10 minutes of tape, but it gets old. I mean, who wants to be some kind of basketball machine? I put a lot into the game when we're playing—mentally and physically. When the game's over, I want to think about something else. I operate better that way. Some aspects of the pro game are no fun—the travel and the media demands—which is why I turn down the vast majority of media requests. But the game itself, when you're out there playing with your teammates, that's as good as it gets. I still love to play as much as when I was a kid.

PLAYBOY: Which would you rather have, an assist or a three-pointer?

NASH: An assist. It involves more than one person.

PLAYBOY: You hate to pick up your dribble—to stop dribbling—and have to pass or shoot. Why?

NASH: Picking up your dribble does the defense a favor. You can't go by them anymore; they can smother you. But if you keep your dribble alive, they have to constantly adjust. It's like in soccer—you want to keep moving forward, keep the pressure on.

PLAYBOY: Does game action seem to go faster than real life?

NASH: It might when you're a rookie. With experience you get calmer and the game slows down.

PLAYBOY: What makes for a great point guard?

NASH: He needs to be intelligent and have his teammates' best interest at heart. He makes his team better. He can see the whole court at once. John Stockton was a great point guard. Magic Johnson, Isiah Thomas, Jason Kidd. Chris Paul, last year's Rookie of the Year, is a terrific young point guard. The Clippers' Shaun Livingston could be a great one.

PLAYBOY: How has the league changed in your 10 seasons?

NASH: The rules have changed for the better.

PLAYBOY: The NBA has curtailed the hand check and introduced the defensive three-second rule, which keeps defenders out of the lane. Both changes helped ball handlers who could penetrate.

NASH: They helped the game. Before that, teams would just isolate the two best players while everybody else stood around. Five-on-five's a better game, and these rules promote five-on-five.

PLAYBOY: Could you have won two MVP awards without the new rules?

NASH: They sure didn't hurt.

PLAYBOY: Michael Jordan used to taunt other players—he'd hit a jumper and

(continued on page 122)



A LEAKED
EROTIC VIDEO
ALLEGEDLY
EXPOSES
AN IRANIAN
ACTRESS AND
LIFTS THE
VEIL ON A
CONFLICTED
SOCIETY

SEX IN IRAN

BY PARI ESFANDIARI
& RICHARD BUSKIN



The film begins with a dark-haired man in his mid-20s lying naked on a bed, hands behind his head, casually enjoying sex. Reaching out, he takes hold of the camera and swings it around to reveal the attractive brunette who's on top of him. About the same age and wearing nothing but a smile, she rides him, coolly allowing a creaking twin bed to make all the noise within the red-hued confines of the small, dimly lit room. The pleasure on her face is unmistakable and, to many in the strict Islamic country of Iran, so is the face itself.

Zahra Amir Ebrahimi is one of that nation's most ascendant actresses, known for portraying religious, morally upstanding characters on a trio of the past few years' top-rated TV soaps: *Help Me*, *Strangeness* and, most famously, *Narges*, a prince-and-the-pauper-type drama about the trials and tribulations of a wealthy patriarch's three children, which was watched by 68 percent of the Iranian audience during its run. Now here she allegedly is, both dominant and submissive, on a 26-minute-and-17-second recording, giving a performance that's causing a storm in her homeland. Nicknamed *Narges 2*, the film seems to depict three encounters of tender lovemaking involving scenes of leisurely foreplay, fellatio and ejaculation. Though dimly lit and photographed with a not always advantageously positioned camera, the home movie is burning up the Internet, and a DVD has sold an estimated 100,000 copies and grossed about \$4 million—a record in the annals of Iranian



In the privacy of their homes, left, many Iranians party in the same ways as secular Westerners. Right, shopping for lingerie.

moviemaking—since the story broke last October. But all may not be as it seems, at least according to Ebrahimi.

Dubbed Iran's Paris Hilton and interrogated multiple times at the request of Tehran's hard-line chief prosecutor, Saeed Mortazavi, Ebrahimi strenuously denies participating in the sex tape, which her ex-partner and co-star has reportedly claimed they filmed at her apartment a couple of years ago. Instead she insists the man authorities call Mr. X—identified by our sources as Shahram Shahamat, an aspiring film director—employed a look-alike actress and professional montage techniques to create a fake video in order to ruin Ebrahimi's career after she jilted him because of his infidelity. If her story is true, he did a pretty convincing job. If not, she could be in real trouble. Were she convicted of violating morality laws, Ebrahimi would face the possibility of a public lashing with a leather strap, jail time or worse.

Initially rumored by the Iranian media to have committed suicide while in police custody, Ebrahimi has been barred by authorities from speaking publicly. However, she made a statement to the Iranian Labor News Agency in November 2006, saying in a sarcastic tone, "I wish to reassure or at least inform my friends that I, Zahra Ebrahimi, the so-called actress who looks very much like the one who appears in the movie that's been exchanging hands since the middle of Ramadan, am in good health, and as yet I haven't found enough reason to kill myself."

Whatever the truth, Ebrahimi has had the ironic experience of becoming a fixture on the front pages of several of the independent but tightly controlled daily papers (on state-run TV and radio the story got minimal play) while watching her career go down the tubes. Although *Narges* was on hiatus when the scandal broke, release of her two most recent movies, *A Trip to Heidaloo* and *It's a Star*, has been delayed on the advice of authorities while the investigation continues. Since she hasn't been charged, no ban has been ordered, but in Iran it would be more than a little foolish to ignore such advice.

Within a year of the 1979 revolution that saw the Ayatollah Khomeini overthrow the Shah's government, Iran was converted from

the region's most Westernized society into a restrictive Islamic republic. For many this amounted to a hijacking—the democratically chosen replacement for a royal despot transformed the country into a hard-line theocracy. The subsequent mass migration, coupled with the countless executions of activists and deposed power brokers labeled *mofsed e fel arz*—the most corrupt on earth—left behind a population composed of people who either supported the government or were too exhausted to resist, all of whom were expected to reject Western values in favor of strict Islamic law. Once the government realized this was impossible to enforce, it settled for public obeisance to morality laws and focused on raising a new generation that would passionately embrace the regime.

It was targeting a large group. Iran is now home to around 70 million people, but because of mass fatalities in the war with Iraq in the 1980s and an officially sanctioned baby boom, the country has a median age of 25, one of the world's youngest. Yet despite the government's indoctrination, it appears that many young Iranians have rejected traditional beliefs. The Ebrahimi scandal provides us with a window into the psyche of people who quite simply have developed their own philosophical outlook: Live now, and let the future take care of itself. More important, the *Narges 2* video exposes the double standards within Iranian culture that toy with Islamic rules, lifting the veil on a schizoid society that juxtaposes religious fundamentalism with a youthful lust for sex, drink, drugs, parties and material possessions. The very idea that Ebrahimi could have been a willing participant flies in the face of her prior public image, and it also gets in the face of a society torn between tradition and modernity, unsure of its identity and ambivalent about moral values and social norms.

Regardless of country or jurisdiction, there are legal repercussions whenever a personal sex tape is made public without all the participants' consent. However, in Iran a person can be in trouble just for having made the film. Westerners can generally do what they want in private, but in the Islamic world each person has a moral duty to publicly



Two views of Ebrahimi? Top, allegedly in a sex tape. Iranian law says such content merits a public lashing, jail time or worse. Bottom, playing a pious woman on TV.

Watch an excerpt from the tape at playboy.com/magazine.

acknowledge his or her transgressions. And since religion underpins the society, moral obligations have become legal ones, too.

In Iran, sharia law governs everyone's life, private and public. Islam differs from other religions that discourage nonprocreative sex by acknowledging a man's sex drive, though it ignores a woman's. This has resulted in a culture that allows men to gratify themselves but expects women to be submissive. But with Ebrahimi or Madame X clearly enjoying herself, the sexual role of Iranian women is being redefined—or will be if authorities don't clamp down soon. Camcorders weren't around when sharia law was conceived, and now it is trying to play catch-up amid a torrent of vivid images and divided opinions. No one is quite sure where to draw the line.

"These DVDs are targeting our youths and endangering family morals," declared a letter from 150 members of the Iranian Parliament to Ayatollah Hashemi Shahroudi, the country's judiciary chief. "The government should accelerate the process of arrest and conviction and then hand out the harshest penalties." The letter called for those who produce and distribute sex films to be punished by hanging.

In response, acclaimed writer and political activist Emadeddin Baghi wrote an open letter to Parliament, calling for moderation. "Execution will resolve nothing," he asserted, pointing out that excising the root of the problem should be the primary concern. "The question to be asked is why this immoral DVD has broken Iranian film-industry records by making \$4 million. That figure shows the extent of our social problems."

Among those problems is prostitution, particularly teenage prostitution. The reputable Iranian Labor News Agency has estimated the number of prostitutes to be between 300,000 and 600,000, and the proposed remedies diverge just as widely. One female parliamentarian called for public hangings of prostitutes, while several prominent clerics suggested legalizing brothels. This stimulated a national debate, with the government vowing to address the root causes, which it identified as poverty, unemployment, drug addiction and family conflicts. It also recognized that men marrying later and the increasing divorce rate have left more single males around to drive up demand.

But condemning prostitution and porn is easy for the authorities. It's another matter to deal with the

DR. RUTH OF THE MIDDLE EAST

HEBA KOTB LIGHTS A FIRE WITH A SEX-TALK SHOW



If you're a 39-year-old mother of three who plans to talk about sex each week on a satellite-TV program seen throughout the Middle East, it's probably best to name Allah as your co-host. It's a formula that has turned Dr. Heba Kotb into a sensation. This past October, her head scarf in place, Kotb debuted *Serious Talk* (also translated as *Big Talk*), on which she responds to call-in questions and invites clerics as guests to provide commentary. The Egyptian therapist's influence has been compared

to Dr. Ruth's in the West. "I didn't mean for it to be a religious show," she tells *PLAYBOY*, "but when I first began reading about sexuality as part of my medical studies, I realized there was a link to things Muhammad mentioned a very long time ago. Sexuality is a gift from God; we alone have sex with passion and not just for procreation."

Kotb's presentation is a carefully balanced mix of function and fundamentalism. "It's a delicate equation," she admits. "Sex must be discussed in a respectful way, within marriage only." Based on her readings of the sacred books, she encourages husbands to spend more time with foreplay, suggests wives take an active role in lovemaking (including initiating it), notes that nothing in any religious text forbids oral sex and says that while masturbation is nothing to boast about, it's certainly better than premarital sex or adultery. To prevent her viewers from becoming aroused, Kotb speaks in the tone of a medical-school professor, which she happens to be. "I watch my words because I don't want it to be a sex-fantasy show," she says. This cautious approach has earned the endorsement of the Muslim Brotherhood: On its website the group proclaims that "discussing sexual issues is one of the taboos we ought to break as long as it is done in a decent manner without cheap provocation and within the boundaries of Islamic etiquette. We salute Heba Kotb for her bold idea."

Naturally, Kotb has critics. Some women have told her they watch the show in secret because their husbands object. A radical cleric accuses her of creating perverts by even broaching the topic, while a more liberal newspaper columnist in Cairo laments that everything in the culture, even sex, must be presented through the prism of Islam. Kotb, who says she is recognized everywhere by fans, seems to take it in stride. "I know you can never please everyone, but I am convinced of the value of what I am doing," she says. "I expected some reaction, but nothing like what has happened."

Kotb's audience appears insatiable. She receives tens of thousands of e-mails, has a months-long waiting list for personal counseling and has lectured all over the Middle East, including to groups of women dressed in traditional black garb, many with their faces covered. Kotb initially heard mostly from wives but says she is now getting questions and comments from an equal number of men. She believes many divorces in the region can be attributed to frustration that arises from sexual ignorance. "Sexual relations are like a gas station," she has said. "If the gas is no good, the car will break. This is what happens to marriages in the Arab world; most of them are in shambles."

Kotb's interest in sex began while she was a resident in forensic science at Cairo University Hospital. She says she found her sexual knowledge lacking, so she began work on a doctorate in clinical sexology at Maimonides University in North Miami Beach. (Ironically, the school was founded by a rabbi and specializes in Judaic studies.) Kotb's dissertation, *Sexuality in Islam*, which is posted online, reads more like a sermon, although she does endorse a number of relatively progressive ideas such as age-appropriate sex education for children. "Sex is not a thing to be ashamed of, nor to be treated lightly or to be indulged to excess," she writes. Yet Kotb also digresses into sanctimonious rants that ignore the latest science, such as when she cites the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* to claim that homosexuality has been "proven to be a learned behavior" and is therefore evil. (As an aside, she reveals that "the Western fashion industry is controlled by homosexuals who attempt to blur the distinction between males and females in order to make their behavior more acceptable.") Other unnatural acts such as choosing to have sex outside marriage are also easily explained: They are the work of Satan and the mass media. That message plays well with the devout but is not so satisfying to those in the Arab world who prefer their sex education provided without judgment. Kotb's show is a hopeful sign, as it goes.

—Chip Rowe

titillating image of a naked actress with a Brazilian wax enjoying sex in multiple positions. Ignoring it could be perceived as legal approval; punishing it could open a can of worms—try enforcing a ban on all such behavior at a time when more and more people are filming their own sex sessions.

Even with several months having passed since the sex-tape story broke, simply raising the incident in any cafe or shopping area is enough to illustrate its impact. Just as the O.J. Simpson case gave Americans a way to discuss and confront their feelings about such difficult subjects as race, sex and police power, the Ebrahimi scandal is allowing Iranians to confront their attitudes about sex and construct rationales for accepting or not accepting what they've seen. We spoke to a variety of urban, middle-class Iranians, and though we received a range of reactions, none were condemnatory. Some even found the film exciting. "My husband, Mani, and I watched the film without feeling guilty," says Yasmin. (Fearing government retribution for publicly expressing their opinions, those interviewed for this article have asked that their surnames be withheld.) "Personally I don't care if it was Ebrahimi or if she was drugged. We watched it as a porno movie. The sex was hot. I kept saying,

between traditional thoughts and modern behavior, and modern thoughts and traditional behavior, and where it may be easier to feel sorry for Zahra the victim than accept the sight of a liberated woman enjoying sex.

Although President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's ultraconservative government constantly decries the corrupting effects of Western culture, it can do little to control people's private actions. Consequently, it has sought to make an example of the highest-profile offenders, even when the crime is less than salacious. For instance, a TV host was recently fired for being filmed dancing with the bride at a wedding. Perhaps because the government is unsure about how to deal with immoral personal behavior, it has shifted its focus toward those who publicly distribute the depiction.

An aboveground porn industry doesn't exist in Iran, but in this era of camcorders and the Internet, amateur porn has flourished. Voyeurism is big; government-approved intrusiveness and a general awareness of people's double lives make snooping a habit, if not a guilty pleasure. People's appetites were initially fulfilled by the curious distribution of home movies showing ordinary citizens' parties and family gatherings. Circulated next were videos of celebrities attending

MORE AND MORE IRANIANS ARE FILMING THEIR OWN SEX.

'What great love.' My husband kept saying, 'What great sex.' Watching this kind of movie isn't a sin."

Curiosity drew Pejman, a high school teacher, to the film. "My primary reason for watching it was to see how much naked sex Ebrahimi has in the movie," he admits. "I always liked her in *Narges*, and I think she is very pretty. I also wanted to see if it was really her."

Even conservative Iranians have seen the film. Mehri, a 30-year-old Tehran woman who describes herself as very traditional, watched the film just to confirm what her husband had described taking place. "That she did something sacrilegious and immoral makes me very angry at her," she says, "but the fact that her reputation has been forever destroyed makes me feel very sorry for her."

Behnam, a young graduate student at the University of Tehran, watched the "supermovie," as Iranians often refer to porn flicks, with nine fellows in his dormitory. Each chipped in around \$4 to buy the DVD—at one time the going rate was as high as \$50, equivalent to the average weekly wage in Iran. "Most of the guys saw the film at least a couple of times," Behnam says. "Once to check if it was really her and then to actually enjoy what was going on. Afterward the dorm walls were covered with Zahra Ebrahimi's pictures, some torn from magazines of her wearing a veil and others nude screen grabs from the movie."

Behnam says he did not enjoy the film. "I couldn't watch it all the way through," he says. "I got sick during the part where the guy forces her to have sex from behind and she cries. Clearly she is unhappy. I thought it was inhuman."

Most who have seen the film would say Behnam is misreading the scene. Ebrahimi seems to be shedding tears of emotion, not pain; she writhes sensuously and caresses her lover with apparent affection. Even so, we often see what we want to see. Behnam's interpretation is typical of this conflicted society, where people move unpredictably

illegal mixed-gender gatherings where alcohol was served, as well as photos of the unveiled faces of actresses. Next, more flesh was exposed on film; women in swimsuits were photographed, sometimes with hidden cameras and cell phones.

Before long, the movies grew more daring. Men secretly filmed their girlfriends in their bedrooms, though not necessarily naked or having sex; just being there with a man and without a veil was shocking enough. Sometimes the images were used to blackmail the women, causing scandal and disgrace. Three years ago a film appeared on the Internet showing 13 high school girls wearing Western-style clothes and dancing without veils at a birthday party. Fearing their parents' reaction, all 13 committed suicide. Soon after, a man in the northern city of Ray beat his daughter to death when he thought he recognized her wearing "revealing" clothes and partying with Iranian soccer players in some footage. He was mistaken and was sentenced to three years in jail.

Finally the first overtly sexy film of willing participants began to circulate. A group of young women from the southern city of Ahvaz danced and stripped in front of the camera, a kind of Iranian *Girls Gone Wild* that did big business. Then came *Narges 2*, the first homegrown sex movie to allegedly feature a well-known personality. Given the low overhead of DVD replication, it earned those who distributed it a fortune—as well as a possible death sentence. Seven entrepreneurs are currently awaiting their fate behind bars, but many others have jumped into the market; as a result the film can be found in street bazaars, car trunks and, most helpfully, the hands of home-delivery merchants. Among these *filmei*, as the latter are commonly known, is one Mr. Farhang, whose name evidently reflects his sensibilities, since it translates into English as Mr. Culture.

"Getting home delivery isn't all that easy," he says. "You must be referred by someone the supplier already knows, and then initial contact should be by phone in order to establish trust. Eighty to 85 percent of (continued on page 98)



"The civilization on our planet isn't nearly as advanced as yours. We actually celebrate sex and consider violence obscene."



IN 1991 HER NAME WAS VICKIE AND SHE WANTED TO BE A PLAYMATE. THIS IS HER STORY, AS TOLD BY THOSE WHO KNEW HER

REMEMBERING ANNA



BY KEVIN COOK

Late in 1991 PLAYBOY's Photography Department received a package from Texas: photos of a girl named Vickie Lynn Smith. She wanted to be a Playmate. The magazine's photographers and editors, who get about 1,000 such submissions a year, were impressed enough to fly her to Los Angeles for a test shoot.

ARNY FREYTAG, PLAYBOY Senior Contributing Photographer: I rejected her Playmate test. She had a great face, but she was overweight. I said she should lose a few pounds and maybe we'd test her again.

MARILYN GRABOWSKI, PLAYBOY West Coast Photo Editor: And I said, "No way! She's so pretty." You couldn't help being mesmerized.

FREYTAG: Marilyn said, "This girl has got to be a Playmate."

GRABOWSKI: She was still Vickie then. She seemed shy, a sweet girl who wasn't comfortable posing for nude photos. The moment we stopped snapping pictures, she'd grab a robe and cover up. As it turned out, she'd been a stripper back in Texas. So was that shyness a persona of hers? Was she faking it?

ALEXIS VOGEL, makeup artist: The photographers didn't want to deal with her. They had beautiful girls going





through there every day for Playmate tests, and this one was heavy. It would be hard work to drape her just right, hide the weight and get the perfect angle.

GRABOWSKI: She weighed 160 pounds. A tall girl, but still—

VOGEL: Still she had that incredible face. And being an exotic dancer helped her. She could really turn it on when she wanted to.

GARY COLE, PLAYBOY Photography Director: Vickie was pretty unpolished. I met her at our Santa Monica studio, and the first thing she said was "I'm glad to be anywhere that isn't Texas." When we saw her pictures, we saw something special. It's hard to say what makes a person photogenic. The stock answer is great bone structure, good skin, big eyes. She had all that plus something undefinable, a sort of camera charisma you can't teach. As I was picking pictures for this month's tribute to her, I went through a stack of black-and-white contact sheets, 36 exposures each, and couldn't find one bad expression. She never blinked. She never looked goofy like the rest of us. That made it easy to edit her photos, because they all looked good. But at the same time it made it very hard to edit her photos, because you couldn't run them all.

After an attention-grabbing debut as cover girl of the March 1992 PLAYBOY, she made the Centerfold two months later. Signing her Data Sheet as Vickie Smith and claiming to weigh 140 pounds, Miss May listed a bold ambition: "I want to be the new Marilyn Monroe."

GRABOWSKI: She felt a great affinity for Marilyn, the first PLAYBOY Centerfold. While we were shooting she would put on Marilyn's music to get in the mood, and she'd sing along. *(text continued on page 132)*





Top: At her PMOY party, with founder Hugh M. Hefner. "She was a dear friend who meant a great deal to the Playboy family and to me personally," says Hef. "In this newer pantheon of celebrities defined by fame itself, she was one of the greats." Bottom: With fellow Playboy icons Bettie Page and Pam Anderson in 2003.





"Believe it or not, I was considered a goody-two-shoes nerd back in high school," Smith said when being interviewed for her Playmate shoot (left). "The people back home won't believe it when these pictures hit the newsstands."



Anna brought sexy back to full-figured women. "Thank you," a female wrote us after we published Anna's February 1994 pictorial. "I knew my boyfriend was turned on by small-framed women, and I wasn't sure he was still attracted to my curvy, big-breasted body. But after seeing his reaction to Anna, I'm feeling secure."



See more of Anna at cyber.playboy.com.





In her own words: "I grew up poor. I had no money. My family was poor. There's things I wanted to do and couldn't. And for me to come up and have all this fame and fortune, it's just—it is a Cinderella story to me."

PLAYBOY'S • 2007 • BASEBALL • PREVIEW

WORLDWIDE BASEBALL



THE PLATE TECTONICS OF THE GAME ARE SHIFTING. PLAYERS FROM ASIA AND SOUTH AMERICA HAVE ELEVATED THE LEVEL OF PLAY IN THE MAJOR LEAGUES, TURNING THE NATIONAL PASTIME INTO A TRULY GLOBAL PHENOMENON

Baseball has sacred numbers, like Hank Aaron's 755 home runs, which Barry Bonds is expected to surpass this year, and the 3,000-hit milestone Craig Biggio should reach this summer. And then it has scary numbers, like the seven-year, \$126 million contract San Francisco gave free-agent pitcher Barry Zito during the off-season. There is nothing like labor peace to give players a bigger slice of the pie: This past fall, for the first time in history, baseball negotiated a new basic agreement with the Players Association before the old one expired. Also, baseball has expanded beyond national boundaries, as teams increasingly look abroad for solutions to their roster problems. Boston bid \$51 million for the rights to negotiate with Japanese right-hander Daisuke Matsuzaka—\$13 million more than the runner-up New York Mets—then gave him \$52 million for six years to pitch in Beantown. The Red Sox were praised for not caving to the contract demands of agent Scott Boras. Strange game? Not really. In the past quarter century, teams have given out 46 contracts with guarantees of six years or longer, including 29 still in force and seven that were signed since the start of last season. That's the biggest commitment to long-term deals baseball has seen since 13 were handed out for the 2001 season. But buyer beware. Long-term guarantees don't guarantee long-term success. Consider this: Of the 28 players given contracts of six years or more between 1993 and 2002, only 16 finished or still have a chance to finish their contracts with the team that signed them. Nobody can say that the Giants will suffer the consequences for the security they have provided Zito nor that the Chicago Cubs will be punished for the long-term comfort they gave Alfonso Soriano. But the odds aren't in their favor. It's not the money, it's the duration. Let's take a look at how the teams shape up for 2007 (in predicted order of finish), with a glance at a long-term deal gone bad for each franchise.

BY TRACY RINGOLSBY

NL East



Philadelphia

Last season: 85-77, second place, 12 games out of first. First baseman Ryan Howard, second baseman Chase Utley and shortstop Jimmy Rollins combined for 115 home runs, 334 runs batted in and 362 runs scored, the most by any infield trio in baseball.

Off-season focus: The Phillies continued a salary purge that began with last season's unloading of outfielder Bobby Abreu and third baseman David Bell. To beef up the pitching staff, the team acquired righty Freddy Garcia from the White Sox and signed free agent Adam Eaton, a former Phils first-round pick who continues to show promise but not results. That adds depth to a rotation bolstered by the acquisition of left-hander Jamie Moyer in 2006.

In-season prognosis: After winning at least 85 games in five of the past six seasons, Philadelphia should be primed to take the next step. Veteran additions are key to the rotation, but the 2006 emergence of homegrown Cole Hamels marks the team as a contender. The bullpen needs to answer a few questions, but the offense has plenty of power to hide flaws.

The Zito factor: General manager Pat Gillick spent the bulk of last season trying to unload left fielder Pat Burrell, who has two years and \$27 million remaining on a six-year deal. In the first four years he hit .251, reaching 100 RBI only once and striking out 563 times.

PLAYBOY'S PICKS

NL East
Phillies

NL Central
Cardinals

NL West
Dodgers

NL Wild Card
Mets

NL Pennant
Dodgers

AL East
Yankees

AL Central
Tigers

AL West
Athletics

AL Wild Card
Indians

AL Pennant
Yankees

World Champs
Dodgers

The Dodgers had one of the NL's best offenses last season. This year, with a strengthened starting rotation and solid young players, Los Angeles should be able to win it all for the first time since 1988.



New York

Last season: 97–65, first place. The Mets swept the Dodgers in the Division Series but lost to St. Louis in seven games in the NLCS. They ran away with the NL East despite only six victories after July 1 from Pedro Martinez and Tom Glavine.

Off-season focus: The Mets had to reshape their rotation in light of the free-agency loss of Steve Trachsel, who won 15 games, and Martinez's rotator-cuff

• NL East •

Carlos Delgado Puerto Rico

The Mets have always been popular in the Caribbean, but with two of the better Puerto Rican players now in Queens, it's no surprise San Juan's favorite team resides in Shea Stadium.

Current players include: Carlos Delgado and Carlos Beltran, Mets; and Ivan Rodriguez, Tigers.

Hall of Famers: Orlando Cepeda and Roberto Clemente.



There's a suspicion that scouts don't beat the bushes in Puerto Rico anymore.

Totals: 219 Puerto Ricans have appeared in the big leagues, including 42 last year.

Strength: Coming from a U.S. commonwealth makes for easier adjustment to the American lifestyle. Also, Puerto Rico has a long-standing baseball tradition.

Weakness: The inclusion of Puerto Rican players in the draft reduced signings, creating suspicion that scouts don't beat the bushes anymore and are willing to accept Scouting Bureau follow lists in lieu of personal observation.

surgery, which will keep him out until at least August. While the team re-signed the aging duo of Glavine and Orlando Hernandez, it passed on overspending for Barry Zito, content to gamble instead on pitcher Chan Ho Park and take a shot with John Maine, Oliver Perez, Mike Pelfrey or Phil Humber in the rotation.

In-season prognosis: The Mets think their offense can simply outscore the opposition, which is fine until big games are on tap. That's why the distance the Mets can go depends on whether two among Maine, Perez, Pelfrey and Humber develop well enough to provide strong arms in a rotation that could wear down.

The Zito factor: In 1982 the Mets acquired George Foster from Cincinnati and gave him a five-year, \$10 million contract. The front office wanted to show it was committed to spending what it takes to win. Foster struggled so much, though,

that the team released him in August 1986 while en route to a world championship.



Atlanta

Last season: 79–83, third place, 18 games out. Atlanta's 29 blown saves led the NL, though the bullpen settled down with the July 20 addition of Bob Wickman, who converted 18 of 19 save opportunities.

Off-season focus: After last year's disappointment, the Braves wanted to build on the revived relief corps. They found an ideal left-handed complement by landing Mike Gonzalez, who was 24 for 24 in save opportunities with Pittsburgh last year, and brought in two veteran right-handed relievers: Rafael Soriano, via a trade with Seattle, and Tanyon Sturtze, a free-agent signing. Finances dictated that GM John Schuerholz not tender contracts to second baseman Marcus Giles and first baseman Daryle Ward.

In-season prognosis: Before last season the Braves had won 14 consecutive division titles, and a core of players remain who know how to win. A strengthened bullpen will allow manager Bobby Cox to at least be part of the action down the stretch.

The Zito factor: In December 1984 then-owner Ted Turner decided he wanted the best closer in the game. So he gave Bruce Sutter a six-year deal that paid him only \$750,000 annually but included \$1 million a year for 30 years after retirement. The return? In three years, Sutter, sidelined in 1986 and 1987 by shoulder problems and from 1989 on by Bell's palsy, had only 40 saves in 112 appearances.



Florida

Last season: 78–84, fourth place, 19 games out. Eleven of the 22 rookies who appeared for Florida in 2006 were making their big-league debut, and 21 were on the active roster prior to the September 1 expansion.

Off-season focus: The front office had damage control to do after firing first-year manager Joe Girardi and hiring Atlanta third base coach Fredi Gonzalez. Truth is, the baseball people had wanted to fire Girardi in the spring, but owner Jeffrey Loria stuck up for him until a midseason incident in which Girardi, from the dug-out, gave Loria a tongue-lashing during a game for yelling at the umpires.

In-season prognosis: Gonzalez faces a no-win situation. The rookies from a year ago face the toughest season of any player's career—the sophomore one. What's more, the Marlins lost their closer, Joe Borowski, leaving them without a legit candidate for the job.

The Zito factor: Hoping to attract interest from Miami's Cuban community,

the team gave local boy Alex Fernandez a five-year, \$35 million deal in 1997. He went 17–12 in 32 starts his first year, but continuing battles with a torn rotator cuff limited him to only 32 more appearances and an 11–12 record in the final two.



Washington

Last season: 71–91, fifth place, 26 games out. The Nationals' rotation had an NL-high 5.03 earned-run average. With a 4.80 ERA, Mike O'Connor was the team's only pitcher with at least 10 starts to have an ERA below 5.

Off-season focus: The Nats were busy getting their new ownership group, the Lerner family, in place. They began a youth movement by hiring Manny Acta,

• NL Central •

Jason Bay Canada

With the dissolution of the Expos, Canada has only the Blue Jays to follow. It wasn't so long ago that fans jammed into the SkyDome. Eventually we will see those seats filled again. For now, Canadians keep an eye on the exploits of their fellow citizens, who seem to have little problem fitting in down south.

Current players include: Jason Bay, Pirates; Jeff Francis, Rockies; Eric Gagne, Rangers; and Justin Morneau, Twins.

Hall of Famer: Ferguson Jenkins.

Totals: 210 Canadians have appeared in the big

Canadian players tend to be good athletes with size who adjust quickly.



leagues, including 20 last year.

Strength: Canadians tend to be good athletes with size who adjust quickly to the American environment.

Weakness: With a large landmass and small population, Canada is expensive for scouts to cover properly, and its short playing season drives most athletes into cold-weather sports.

38, to replace 71-year-old manager Frank Robinson and shed more than \$25 million in payroll by bidding adieu to outfielders Alfonso Soriano and Jose Guillen, second baseman Jose Vidro and pitchers Ramon Ortiz and Tony Armas. They didn't reinvest that money in 2007 contracts, preferring to prepare for the move into a new ballpark that should be ready in 2008.

In-season prognosis: The plan is to build for the long term, so there's not much to get excited about in the present, except perhaps for the potential of Ryan Zimmerman, who should emerge as the team's future leader.

The Zito factor: GM Jim Bowden wanted to make a splash prior to 2005, and among the questionable deals he handed out was a four-year, \$16.8 million guarantee to shortstop Cristian Guzman. Guzman hit .219 the first season and missed all of the second with a torn labrum.

NL Central



St. Louis

Last season: 83-78, first place. The Cardinals beat San Diego in four games in the Division Series, took seven games to beat the Mets in the NLCS

• NL West •

**Byung-Hyun Kim
South Korea**

A promising area for recruiting future major leaguers is South Korea, where the big-league products have been few but are increasing. So far pitchers have been the primary focus for American teams. Only two South Korean position players have made it to the majors, both recent additions—Hee Seop Choi and Shin-Soo Choo.
Current players include: Byung-Hyun Kim, Rockies; Sun-Woo Kim, Giants; and Chan Ho Park, Mets.
Hall of Famers: None.



Teams don't know how much abuse a Korean pitcher's arm has endured.

Totals: 13 South Koreans have appeared in the big leagues, including six last year.
Strength: The pitchers have excellent command, the ability to change speeds and a desire to pitch often.
Weakness: Much as in Taiwan, youth league players are under a lot of pressure to win, but few records are kept of their performances. When a team signs a pitcher, it doesn't know how much abuse his arm has endured. Scouts tell of seeing Sun-Woo Kim in a regional tournament in which he started all five games and pitched 44½ of a possible 45 innings—in one week.

and topped Detroit in five games in the World Series. They had the worst record ever for a world champion and endured one seven-game and two eight-game losing streaks during the regular season.
Off-season focus: St. Louis had to rebuild a rotation that lost right-hand pitchers Jeff Suppan, Jason Marquis and Jeff Weaver to free agency, as well as Mark Mulder, who won't be back

after surgery until midseason. The team signed right-hander Kip Wells, but that was it. Adam Kennedy's addition should provide offensive improvement at second base, and Preston Wilson gives the team outfield depth.
In-season prognosis: Pitching coach Dave Duncan will have to work his magic again. With the exception of Chris Carpenter, the Cards' season-opening rotation won only seven starts last year. The offense will be improved, and all signs suggest closer Jason Iiringhausen is fully recovered from hip surgery.
The Zito factor: Walt Jocketty has come a long way since he signed Danny Jackson to a three-year, \$10.8 million contract shortly after taking the GM job after the 1994 season. Jackson was 4-15 in 154⅓ innings in two-plus seasons for the Cardinals.



Milwaukee

Last season: 75-87, fourth place, 8½ games out. The Brewers were 6-17 with the fill-in starters they used in place of injured pitchers Ben Sheets and Tomo Ohka.
Off-season focus: The team addressed a need at catcher by acquiring Johnny Estrada from Arizona in a multiplayer deal, giving up lefty Doug Davis but getting back right-hander Claudio Vargas. To add rotation depth, it then outbid St. Louis to land righty Jeff Suppan.
In-season prognosis: Sheets is finally supposed to be healthy. Factor in his return with the signing of Suppan and the Brewers have a rotation capable of winning this division. But they'll have to avoid the critical injuries that so often derail this franchise. Francisco Cordero, an in-season acquisition in 2006, gives them a late-inning alternative if Derrick Turnbow fails to recover from his second-half meltdown.

The Zito factor: In the early years of free agency the Brewers signed Larry Hise to a five-year, \$3.2 million contract. He had a solid 1978 but tore his rotator cuff in April 1979 and had only 274 at bats and 15 home runs in the deal's final four years.



Houston

Last season: 82-80, second place, 1½ games back. The Astros hit .255 in 2006, matching Tampa Bay for the lowest batting average in the big leagues.
Off-season focus: Jilted by left-hander Andy Pettitte and unsure of what Roger Clemens will eventually do, the Astros were willing to gamble on right-hander Jason Jennings, giving up three quality prospects to Colorado for him even though he is a prospective free agent after this season. The Astros

needed a workhorse to have a shot at contending. They were so desperate for a run-producing bat that they shelled out \$100 million for Carlos Lee, who will have an interesting time playing left field at Minute Maid Park.
In-season prognosis: Houston could contend, but that will take a revival of closer Brad Lidge and the arrival of potential starters Wandy Rodriguez and Fernando Nieve. The offense should be

• AL East •

**Daisuke Matsuzaka
Japan**

With Boston's megabucks signing of Daisuke Matsuzaka, the AL East has become the division that will attract the most attention in Nippon. The Yankees had plenty of fans in Japan even before Hideki Matsui began his successful run in the Bronx, but this year loyalties will be divided, as the greatest contemporary Japanese pitcher will ply his craft on Yawkey Way.
Current players include: Daisuke Matsuzaka, Red Sox; Hideki Matsui, Yankees; and Ichiro Suzuki, Mariners.
Hall of Famers: None.

Pitching is the thing. Position players haven't had a lot of success here.



Totals: 34 Japanese have appeared in the big leagues, including 10 last year.
Strength: Pitching is the main thing. It must be something in their routine, but Japanese hurlers throw hard and are durable. And it's not as if they are particularly large—Hideki Irabu excepted.
Weakness: Position players, with the exception of Ichiro and Matsui, haven't had a lot of success over here. They seem to struggle with bat speed.

better with Lee, though the defense will take another step back.
The Zito factor: Jeff Bagwell will go to Cooperstown as a Houston Astro, but the last two years of his five-year, \$85 million contract were a nightmare. He had three homers while being paid \$15 million in 2005 and then picked up \$24 million—including \$7 million as a buyout for 2007—for not playing in 2006.



Chicago

Last season: 66-96. Sixth place, 17½ games out. Injuries to Kerry Wood and Mark Prior were the main reason the Cubs turned to rookie pitchers for 80 starts in 2006.
Off-season focus: The Cubs needed a psychic overhaul to get out of the funk that has hung over the North Side since they let game six of the 2003 NLCS get

away. They brought in manager Lou Piniella, hoping he could rekindle his competitive fire that burned out in Tampa Bay; then they went on a spending spree that included shelling out \$136 million on an eight-year deal for Alfonso Soriano and \$75 million to retain third baseman Aramis Ramirez. They also signed middling free-agent starters Ted Lilly and Jason Marquis to fill big holes in the rotation.

In-season prognosis: Be careful before you get too excited. The Cubs are looking to force a square peg (Soriano) into a round hole (center field) and have their fingers crossed that Wood can somehow become a closer,

• AL Central •
Johan Santana
Venezuela

Over the past few seasons some of the best players in the game have come from a nation that hadn't been much of a factor in previous years. In Caracas, all eyes follow the AL Central, where Venezuelan Ozzie Guillen manages the White Sox and right fielder Magglio Ordonez patrols the outfield in Detroit. Minnesota's Johan Santana, perhaps the best pitcher in the game, makes life miserable for hitters in baseball's best division.

Shortstops have been the staple, but lately pitching has started to come too.



Current players include: Johan Santana, Twins; Carlos Guillen, Tigers; Victor Martinez, Indians; and Omar Vizquel, Giants.

Hall of Famer: Luis Aparicio.

Totals: 199 Venezuelans have appeared in the big leagues, including 71 last year.

Strength: Shortstops have been a staple over the years, but lately strong-armed pitchers have started to come too.

Weakness: Just when teams began to build complexes in Venezuela, figuring it was ripe to become a steady pipeline of major league talent, political unrest and fears the country could become another Cuba raised concern the supply would dry up.

allowing Ryan Dempster to work the middle innings. They do, however, have right-hander Carlos Zambrano, a nice cornerstone for a rotation.

The Zito factor: After signing a three-year, \$32.5 million contract three years ago, Wood was limited to a 12–15 record in 47 appearances, nine in relief.



Pittsburgh

Last season: 67–95, fifth place, 16½ games out. The Pirates lost 60 of their first

90 games before they rallied to go 37–35 after the All-Star break.

Off-season focus: The Pirates were concerned about their lack of left-handed power, so they sent closer Mike Gonzalez to Atlanta to get first baseman Adam LaRoche, who hit 32 homers last year. They tried but couldn't get any free-agent pitchers to take their money, leaving a need for a right-hander in a rotation that has three lefties.

In-season prognosis: Even in a division as limited as the NL Central, it's hard to consider the Bucs a serious contender. The bullpen is a mess. Salomon Torres, who has only 17 saves in the past five years, will be asked to become the closer. Even more troubling is that after a 95-loss season last year, the team arrived at spring training with the lineup in disarray.

The Zito factor: Preparing to move into PNC Park, the Pirates wanted to show they would commit money to their payroll and signed catcher Jason Kendall to a six-year, \$60 million extension that began in 2002. Before it even took effect, the team was trying to unload him as his defense and power diminished, finally moving him to Oakland two years ago.



Cincinnati

Last season: 80–82, third place, 3½ games out. The Reds hit .244 with runners in scoring position, worst in the NL. Adam Dunn hit .221 and Ken Griffey Jr. .216 with runners in scoring position.

Off-season focus: As busy as GM Wayne Krivsky was in changing the roster during 2006, he couldn't find a dance partner in the off-season. Efforts to revive the bullpen resulted in nothing more than the signing of lefty Mike Stanton. No starters or closers were found.

In-season prognosis: Put Jerry Naron high on the list of endangered managers. He worked miracles to keep this team respectable last year, and now he's being asked to thrive with basically the same team in 2007.

The Zito factor: Despite objections from manager Jack McKeon, who pleaded for a couple of pitchers to have a chance to contend, the Reds instead shelled out \$116.5 million for a nine-year contract to Griffey in 2000. He has only twice played in more than 100 games in a season in the past five years and has driven in more than 72 runs only once in the past six.

NL West



Los Angeles

Last season: 88–74. The Dodgers tied for first but wound up as the wild card because of their head-to-head

series record against San Diego. They were swept by the Mets in the opening round of the postseason. Los Angeles led the NL with a .276 average and was fourth in runs scored despite ranking 27th in the majors—15th in the NL—in home runs.

Off-season focus: Pitching has always been the Dodgers' calling card, and they made sure they'll be noticed by signing right-hander Jason Schmidt and southpaw Randy Wolf. They couldn't add the bat they need, which has become more of a concern

• AL West •

Vladimir Guerrero
Dominican Republic

One of the cradles of baseball civilization, the Dominican Republic has historically brought slashing hitters, smooth infielders and strong pitchers to the big leagues. Perhaps the best Dominican in the bigs today is Vladimir Guerrero, who can hit any pitch to any field, with power.

Current players include: Vladimir Guerrero, Angels;



Dominicans have not been known for their willingness to take a base on balls.

Adrian Beltre, Mariners; and David Ortiz, Red Sox.
Hall of Famer: Juan Marichal.

Totals: 440 Dominicans have appeared in the big leagues, including 146 last year.

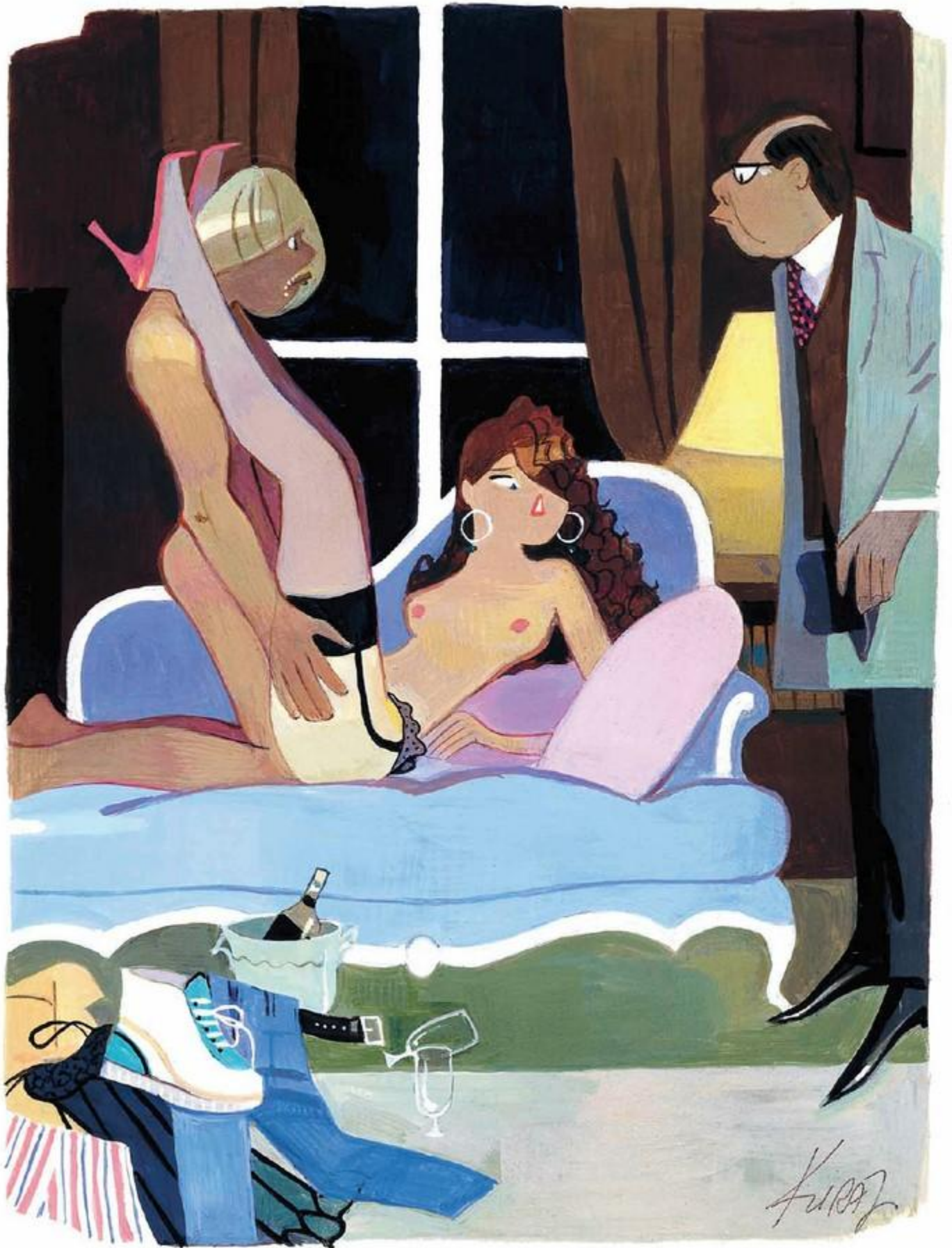
Strength: Some of the better bargains over the years have come from the Dominican Republic, including Guerrero's \$5,000 signing.

Weakness: As the old adage goes, "You can't walk off the island." Dominicans have traditionally not been known for their willingness to take a base on balls.

since outfielder J.D. Drew opted out of the final three years of his contract. They made overtures to Aramis Ramirez, Alfonso Soriano, Carlos Lee and Gary Matthews but settled for center fielder Juan Pierre and aging left fielder Luis Gonzalez.

In-season prognosis: The rotation alone makes the Dodgers the team to beat, but they'll need starters to work deep into games to keep the bullpen fresh, and they'll have to strike batters out. Shortstop Rafael Furcal is the only above-average defensive player in the lineup.

The Zito factor: After the 2000 season Darren Dreifort signed a five-year, \$55 million deal with the Dodgers. He was out with injuries for two entire (continued on page 125)



"I have to keep my legs up. Doctor's orders."



OBI-WAN LIVES

OBI-WAN BEATS VADER, HAN PACKS A LIGHTSABER, AND LUKE USED TO BE A GIRL. AN EXCLUSIVE LOOK AT THE ORIGINS OF THE STAR WARS UNIVERSE



In 1973 George Lucas began drafting what would become *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*. His original vision was an homage to the Saturday-matinee space operas of his youth, and it's still there in the final execution, though buried under several layers of dirt, effects and 1970s-era cool. In honor of the movie's 30th anniversary, in May, Random House will release *The Making of Star Wars*, a comprehensive look at the genesis of the film that launched a thousand geeks. Packed with production minutiae, rare interviews and on-set photos, it shows the radical evolution from Lucas's original concepts to the iconic finished product. Early illustrations are more Buck Rogers than Akira Kurosawa, with a youngish Obi-Wan Kenobi looking Travolta-esque, sporting a *Staying Alive* headband and Kenny Loggins beard. More shocking than the disco look is a set of never-published Death Star storyboards (pictured right) showing Obi-Wan surviving his encounter with Darth Vader. The Jedi's self-sacrifice is a linchpin of the films' plots, of course, not to mention of our understanding of the Force, which nerds have been debating ever since. The idea of Obi-Wan surviving the escape from the Death Star is a blasphemous footnote to Lucas's masterpiece. But damn if it's not a fun one.

LUCAS'S CHARACTER CONCEPTS CONSTANTLY EVOLVED BETWEEN 1973 AND THE FILM'S 1977 RELEASE. TOP LEFT: EARLY CONCEPT ART BY RALPH MCQUARRIE SHOWS VERY DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF HAN SOLO (WITH LIGHTSABER), CHEWBACCA, C-3PO, R2-D2 AND A FEMALE (!) VERSION OF LUKE. THE SKETCH ABOVE REPRESENTS LUCAS'S THINKING ON THE LOOK FOR "BEN KENOBI" AS INSPIRED BY HIS CONSIDERATION OF ALEC GUINNESS.



FRAME 1: VADER'S AND OBI-WAN'S SABERS CLASH. NOTE VADER'S METALLIC HAND. FRAME 2: R2-D2 AND C-3PO SEE A CHANCE TO SLIP AWAY UNNOTICED. FRAME 3: THE JEDI AND HIS FORMER APPRENTICE BATTLE THROUGH A DOORWAY INTO THE DEATH STAR'S MAIN HANGAR.



FRAME 4: STORM TROOPERS CHASE AFTER THE ESCAPED PRINCESS, AS... FRAME 5: LUKE, LEIA AND CHEWIE MAKE A DESPERATE SPRINT FOR THE MILLENNIUM FALCON. FRAME 6: LUKE AND CHEWIE SQUEEZE OFF A FEW ROUNDS INTO A PACK OF STORM TROOPERS.



FRAME 7: FEELING THE FIRST STIRRINGS OF HIS FORCE PERCEPTIONS, LUKE SENSES SOMETHING IS WRONG. FRAME 8: VADER AND OBI-WAN'S LIGHTSABER BATTLE CONTINUES. FRAME 9: ANOTHER SABER CLASH AS THE TWO BATTLE FOR CONTROL OF LUKE'S DESTINY.



FRAME 10: BREAKING THE CLASH, OBI-WAN PUSHES THE POWERFUL SITH LORD BACK THROUGH THE DOORWAY, THEN... FRAME 11: JUMPS BACK AND CLOSES THE BLAST DOOR IN VADER'S MASKED FACE. FRAME 12: NOW SAFE BEHIND THE DOOR, HE CAN TURN HIS ATTENTION TO ESCAPE.



FRAME 13: OBI-WAN FINDS A PHALANX OF STORM TROOPERS BETWEEN HIM AND HIS RIDE HOME. THEY TURN TO FACE HIM. FRAME 14: SHOTS HIT THE DISTRACTED TROOPERS FROM BEHIND. FRAME 15: WE SEE THEY WERE FIRED BY LUKE FROM THE MILLENNIUM FALCON'S GANGPLANK.



FRAME 16: BUT A TROOPER HAS THE JEDI IN HIS SIGHTS! HE AIMS AND FIRES,... FRAME 17: CAUSING AN EXPLOSION THAT SENDS OBI-WAN AND THE SURROUNDING TROOPERS FLYING. FRAME 18: LUKE RUSHES TO AID THE PROTECTOR WHO HAS WATCHED OVER HIM SINCE INFANCY.



FRAME 19: REACHING THE WOUNDED JEDI, LUKE HELPS HIM BACK TO THE FALCON, BUT THERE ARE STILL TROOPERS ABOUT. FRAME 20: LUCKILY, LEIA IS HANDY WITH A BLASTER. SHE PICKS UP A WEAPON AND LAYS DOWN COVERING FIRE. FRAME 21: EVERYONE MAKES IT SAFELY ABOARD.



Clockwise from top left: Alec Guinness, Mark Hamill and Anthony Daniels (C-3PO) enjoy some downtime in the *Millennium Falcon's* rec room. Obi-Wan and Vader face off sans lightsaber effects. (Trivia note: Only half of the *Falcon* was actually built for the film, so you're seeing all of it here.) Frame-by-frame shots of Obi-Wan's famous disappearance. George Lucas gives Guinness direction on the finer points of being absorbed into the Force. An early sketch of "Luke as Starfighter," complete with intergalactic codpiece.





"Don't do anything I wouldn't do!"

MAY FLOWER



Thank Howard Stern
for bringing us
this spring blossom

If you're a Howard Stern fan, you're already familiar with 20-year-old Shannon James. The fresh-faced beauty from Holland—as in the small town outside Philadelphia, not the country known for tulips and knockout blondes—appeared on Stern's show after a friend submitted some pictures of her in a bikini and said Shannon wanted to be a Playmate. Stern is no fool; he knows a good thing when he sees one. At first Shannon had reservations about being on the show. "Sometimes they tear people apart," she says. "I was scared. But then they told me PLAYBOY Senior Photo Editor Kevin Kuster was going to be there. I had to take a chance."

It paid off in spades. Everyone adored Shannon. "I mentioned I wanted to get my chest done," she says, "and Howard said not to, that I have perfect breasts." Hear, hear.

This isn't the first time our favorite shock jock has helped a young woman fulfill her Playmate dreams. Stern brought Jillian Grace to our attention, and she became Miss March 2005. As for Shannon, she is indeed a well-rounded woman. She says her education is her top priority. She is working on her bachelor's degree in marketing and is considering a career in pharmaceutical sales. Her disposition is as warm as her smile is bright, and she describes herself as a good girl with a wild side. "I'm such a nerd," she tells us. "I love to cuddle up with a good book, and I have a huge collection of poetry I've written. At the same time, I'm always game for staying up until four o'clock in the morning or going to a party with my girlfriends in Old City in Philly, where we attract a good amount of attention."

In front of the camera Shannon has no inhibitions. "I've always been comfortable with my sexuality and my body," she says. "Half my sorority sisters run around naked, so there's no time to be shy." And her romantic life? Says the magnificent Miss May, "I've been both the committed girlfriend and the serial kisser making out with the world."

PHOTOGRAPHY
BY ARNY FREYTAG





Above: Shannon on *The Howard Stern Show* and in softball uniform, ready to swing for the fences. Right: The 20-year-old beauty is no slouch with a pool cue in her hands. And when she's feeling more romantic? Turn the page.









See more of Miss May at cyber.playboy.com.



MISS MAY

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH

**THE
FOREMOST
COLLEGE
SONG HITS**







PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Shannon James

BUST: 34C WAIST: 23 HIPS: 34

HEIGHT: 5'8" WEIGHT: 115 lbs

BIRTH DATE: 2-5-87 BIRTHPLACE: Holland, PA

AMBITIONS: To pursue a career in pharmaceutical sales or acting & have my poetry published one day.

TURN-ONS: Confidence, funny guys, ambition, great smiles, six-packs & sexy V-shaped torsos.

TURNOFFS: Bad manners, smoking, bad breath & cocky attitudes.

WHY I JOINED A SORORITY IN COLLEGE: It was a great way to meet amazing & fun people. I established friendships I know will last forever &

WHY I WRITE POETRY: It's a really good release of my emotions & cheers me up when I'm down.

WHAT I'D LIKE TO SAY TO HOWARD STERN: Thank you for being so sweet & giving me this amazing opportunity.

MY PORN NAME (FIRST PET & STREET I LIVED ON): Jade Sheffield 😊



I was always putting on a show!



My senior picture. ^{class of '05}



Heets & Kisses.
♡ ☺ ♡

PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

Why is Laura Bush always on top when she and George make love?

Because George can only fuck up.

A first-time john went to a whorehouse. He entered a private room, put \$50 on the table and dropped his pants. At the sight of the man's 18-inch penis, the hooker almost fainted.

"Hold on, pal," she said. "I'll lick it, I'll suck it, but you're not sticking that in me."

The man pulled up his pants, picked up his money and said, "Screw you. I can do those things myself."



Why do women prefer circumcised penises?

Because they can't resist something that's 10 percent off.

Enjoying his first night in Rome, a young American was drinking a cappuccino at a sidewalk cafe when a pretty girl sat down beside him.

"Hello," he said. "Do you understand English?"

"Only a little," she answered.

"How much?" he asked.

"Fifty dollars," she replied.

Why do men love a woman in leather?

Because she smells like a new car.

I'm telling you," a woman said to her friend, "I've never been happier. I have two boy-friends. One is just fabulous. He's handsome, sensitive, caring and considerate."

"What in the world do you need the second one for?" the friend asked.

"Oh," the first replied, "the second one is straight."

A kindergarten class had settled down to its coloring books. One boy went up to the teacher's desk and said, "I ain't got no crayons."

"You mean," she replied, "I don't have any crayons. You don't have any crayons. We don't have any crayons. They don't have any crayons. Do you see what I'm getting at?"

"Not really," the boy said. "What happened to all the fucking crayons?"

Why does a chicken coop have two doors?

If it had four doors, it would be a chicken sedan.

A husband bought his wife a mood ring so he could monitor her emotional swings. After a week of her wearing the ring, he discovered that when she was in a good mood the stone on the ring turned green. But when she was in a bad mood, it left a big fucking red mark on his forehead.

What do a rattlesnake and a soft penis have in common?

You can't fuck with either one.

It seems George W. Bush has the same problem as his father. Neither knows when to pull out.

What's something a wife can say that will make her husband both happy and sad at the same time?

"Your cock is bigger than your brother's."

What gets longer when pulled and works best when jerked?

A seat belt.



Alley Neiman

A Catholic, a Baptist and a Mormon were bragging about the size of their families. "I have four boys, and my wife is expecting another," said the Catholic. "One more son and I'll have a basketball team."

"That's nothing," said the Baptist. "I have 10 boys now, and my wife is pregnant with another child. One more son and I'll have a football team."

"I have you both beat," said the Mormon. "I have 17 wives. One more and I'll have a golf course!"

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.



"Notice how they seem to follow you around the room."



st-one

TO THE BAD GIRLS GO THE SPOILS



ONE WOMAN'S QUEST FOR INFAMY

BY
MICHELLE RICHMOND

I've been waiting for a phone call. I've been waiting a very long time, or what passes for a long time in the mind of the terminally impatient. I've been waiting exactly 12 hours. The phone call I'm waiting for, sadly, isn't from the National Book Award committee or some venerable institution of higher learning at which I am vying for a coveted professorial position. It's from the casting crew of *The Apprentice*, for whom I recently auditioned at a dingy talent agency in downtown San Francisco.

Of course the call never comes. Of course I will not be the next *Apprentice*. Nor will I be the next *Survivor* or the next half of a two-person wonder team on *The Amazing Race*. I will not even be the next contestant on *The Biggest Loser*. It occurs to me now that my audition strategy was all wrong. I shouldn't have presented myself as a devoted mother, an earnest writer of obscure literary fiction, an enthusiastic teacher. Enough with the girl-next-door act. If I'm ever to have my 15 minutes of fame and my shot at public humiliation with a pot of gold at the end of the line, I should confess to the producers all the ways in which I am bad.

Let's face it: To the bad girls go the spoils. As it is in life, so it is in reality television. It wasn't Omarosa's fine business sense that landed her gigs on *Extra* and *Passions* after Trump canned her. Nor was it Jerri Manthey's exacting execution of the downward-facing dog that earned her a *PLAYBOY* cover following her disgraceful exit from *Survivor*. Omarosa and Jerri became famous for one reason only: They were down and dirty, mean and nasty, the kind of girls you don't want to meet at the office or, worse, at your husband's office party. Omarosa and Jerri and their ilk would probably argue that their apparent reprehensibility is a matter of unfair editing, that in truth they spend their spare time knitting eco-friendly rice-bowl cozies for homeless widows, but we all know the truth: These women forged lucrative, if not exactly respectable, careers out of being bad.

To this end, and in advance of the next round of reality-television open calls, I am making a list. In order that the list may be quickly digested and neatly summarized by the poorly paid and likely hungover production assistant who stands between me and Mr. Burnett, it will follow the easy-to-

read bullet format. Let it be known that this list should serve as a representative but in no way exhaustive sampling of my forays into the bad.

(Note to production assistant: Should the task of vetting my application prove overly daunting, I have organized the bullets into categories of badness. Please note that the final category, Bad Things I Have Not Yet Done But Would Gladly Do for a Fee, is constantly expanding and very much open to suggestion.)

SEXY AND/OR SEXUAL BADNESS

- For a couple of years in high school I was an enthusiastic member of an overzealous Southern Baptist youth group. It was not beneath me to give a guy a hand job in order to persuade him to attend a contemporary Christian rock concert. My target audience: track-and-field boys. My message: Religion can be fun!
- I once worked for Dollar Dial in Knoxville, Tennessee. Under the alias Charity Strong, I sold subscriptions to *Sesame Street* and *Popular Mechanics*. I bombed with *Sesame Street*, but when it came to *Popular Mechanics* I was salesperson of the month for five months

running. It might have had something to do with the Charity Strong voice—breathy, sleepy, very Southern. I was frequently known to veer from the script and more than once was called into my supervisor's office for using unethical sales techniques, which I cannot divulge here, as they form the basis of my work in progress. *Get Rich Slow: A Raunchy Salesgirl's Guide to the Male Psyche*.

- I arrived at the initial interview for yet another telemarketing job—this one in Atlanta—without the proper identification. Unable to produce a driver's license, I proffered instead a wallet-size photo I'd had taken for that year's Christmas card: me in black fringe and leather, standing beside a repentant-looking Santa who had been bound and gagged. A couple of months later my boss would willingly find himself in a similarly compromised position on the floor of his office in a high-rise in Buckhead. In the interest of protecting my former boss's reputation, it should be noted that he was not wearing a Santa suit.

- Speaking of binding and gagging, I own a number of items from Good Vibrations, some of which may or may not involve straps, fringe and padlocks. The male chastity belt is highly underrated.

- Ten years ago I met an alarmingly attractive man named Kevin in an orientation course for graduate students at the University of Arkansas. For six days I tried to get his attention, to no avail. At two in the morning on the seventh day, I found myself standing outside his first-floor apartment. It was a hot night, and his bedroom window was open. Because I am not one to ignore a clear instance of divine intervention, I climbed through the window and crawled into his bed. "Hi," he said, as if this sort of thing happened to him all the time. I suddenly felt the need to set parameters. "Let's get one thing straight," I said. "I'm going to sleep with you, but I'm not going to sleep with you." The next morning I asked if he had a girlfriend. He did. "Good," I said. "I have a boyfriend." Five years later we were married. The conundrum being, of course, that once you are a wife, you are expected to be good, but the only way you get to be a wife is by being bad.

SOCIAL BADNESS OF OR RELATING TO MY FAILURE TO ACT AS A PRODUCTIVE MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY

- On a number of occasions I have fraudulently taken General Mills up on its Goodness Guarantee, which states, "If you are not satisfied with the quality of this product, a prompt refund or adjustment of equal value will be made."

- At the end of each semester, I tell my students that if they would like to receive my comments on their final papers, they must submit a self-addressed stamped envelope. I say this with the full knowl-

edge that most of them are either too poor or too ill-coordinated to provide a self-addressed stamped envelope, thus significantly reducing my workload.

- My cell phone has a permanent outgoing message that says, "This cell phone user is either out of the area or has been disconnected. Please do not leave a message unless you are Mark Burnett or Mark Burnett's assistant."

CULTURAL BADNESS, MOST OF WHICH PERTAINS TO TELEVISION

- I have been known to sit in rapt attention through entire Whitney Houston interviews and Britney Spears exposés. I've yet to turn away in horror from a celebrity crash-and-burn story—the more drugs and bulimia, the better.

- I prefer In-N-Out Burger to any restaurant at which sprouts are featured prominently on the menu. I prefer Krispy Kreme to In-N-Out.

- I have TiVo. I've had TiVo since long before most folks even knew it existed. I'm on the lifetime plan. In the beginning I made an effort to record only art films and *Frontline*. These days, however, I've succumbed to my own worst tastes and can often be found scrolling through the Now Playing list, debating whether to watch *Hell's Kitchen*, *Bewitched* reruns or *Vacation Home Search*.

- If there were only two men left on earth—Vince Vaughn and Bill Gates—and I had to procreate with one of them in order to ensure the survival of the human race, there would be no contest.

BAD BEGINNINGS, OR HOW I CAME TO BE BAD

- Kindergarten, Greystone Christian School, Mobile, Alabama, 1975. A boy named Roland sticks his hand in the fish tank, which we are not allowed to do because, according to Mrs. Smith, it will result in certain painful death for the fish. Until this point I've been considered the shyest girl in the class—so shy that I have on a couple of occasions peed on the floor rather than ask Mrs. Smith if I can go to the bathroom. But when Roland sticks his hand in the fish tank, his rebelliousness so excites me that I step forward and land a big wet one on his mouth. Roland begins to cry. This for me is a defining moment—the moment I realize the awesome power of a kiss.

- The summer of 1978. During a family trip to Six Flags Over Georgia inspired by a made-for-TV movie starring Carol Burnett, I make a sign that says HELP! KIDNAP! and put it in the window of our Buick station wagon. I proceed to ham it up for passing cars, crying and showing signs of terrible distress. My parents in the front seat have no idea what's going on. It's all fun and games until, just outside of Atlanta, a state trooper pulls us over. He won't even approach the car but instead stands back and gives instructions

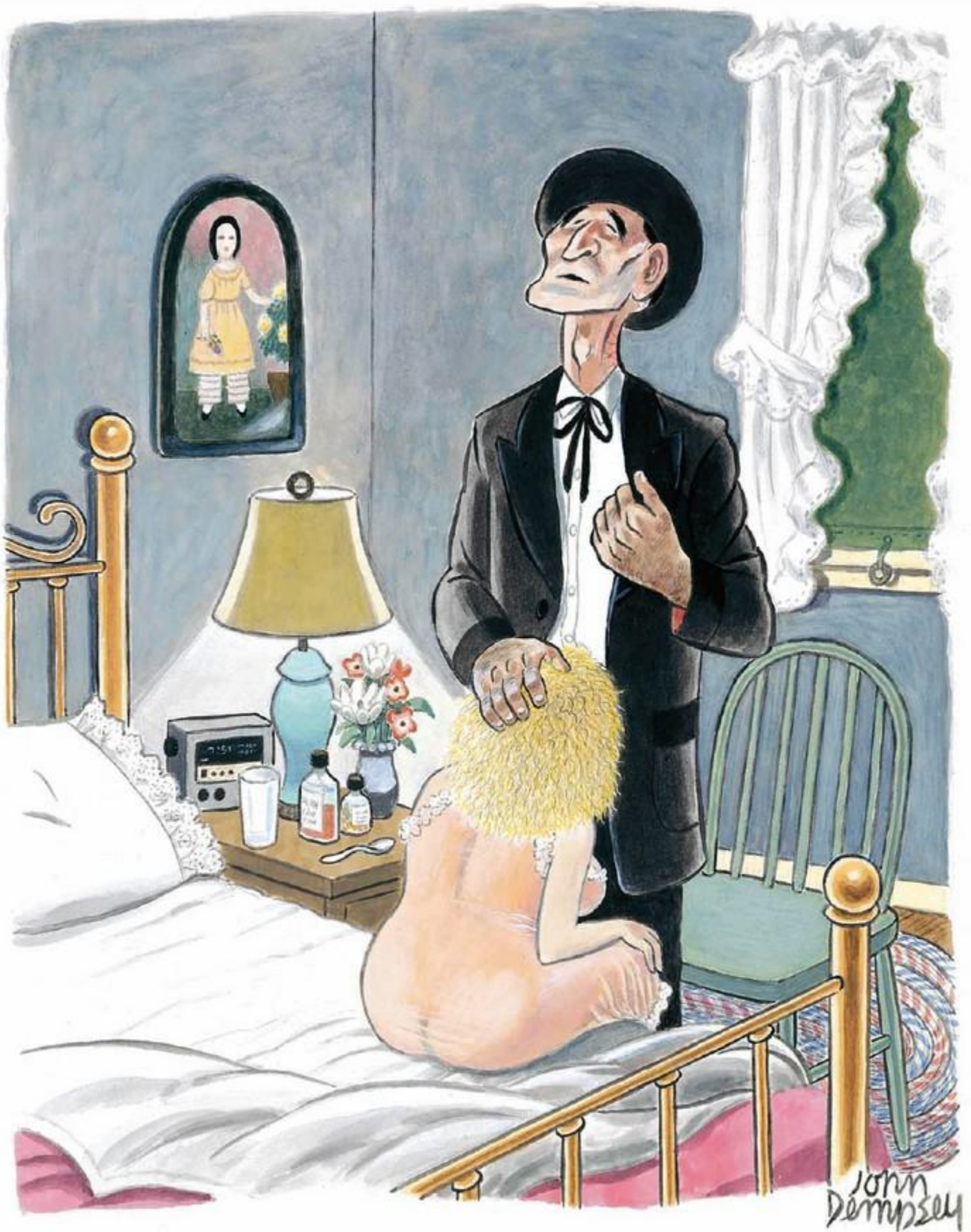
for my dad to come out with his hands up. Within 10 minutes we're surrounded by squad cars, sirens blaring, guns held aloft. It turns out somebody took my plea for help seriously, and there's been an APB out on our car from Alabama to Atlanta.

- 1982, Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Wednesday-night prayer meeting. I am sitting in the balcony with Jimmy, a blond boy whom I love. The pastor is miles away at the front of the church, praying into the microphone. The lights in the church are low. The choir is singing "Have Thine Own Way, Lord," and Jimmy stretches out his hand, palm up. It hovers above my lap. It occurs to me that he would like me to hold his hand, but I've never held hands with a boy before and don't know how to go about it. We are supposed to be praying, but I am thinking of Jimmy's beautiful hand, tiny blond hairs just beginning to form at the base of the wrist. I am 12 years old in a church in Alabama, and I am thinking quite plainly about having sex with Jimmy—despite the fact that this is something I have never done before and wouldn't know how to do. The shape of his hand hovering there is enough to plunge me into erotic bliss.

BAD THINGS I HAVE NOT YET DONE BUT WOULD GLADLY DO FOR A (REASONABLE) FEE

- Grand larceny
- Counterfeiting
- Gerrymandering
- Anything involving Vince Vaughn and/or Benicio Del Toro
- Anything involving chocolate, preferably from Joseph Schmidt, preferably in combination with bad acts to be committed with Vince Vaughn and/or Benicio Del Toro.

Should the aforementioned acts of badness not prove bad enough, I would be more than happy to provide you, Mark Burnett's production assistant, with further evidence of badness. Should you still find yourself questioning my ability to capture an audience's attention with lewdness, perversity, random acts of selfishness and general bad attitude, please see the attached list of references, which include but are not exclusive to my parents, past boyfriends, in-laws, members of various law enforcement agencies and a certain former employer who, following a life-altering bout with bondage, has revamped himself, for better or worse, as a submissive. Should you remain unconvinced after reviewing the not inconsiderable supporting materials that accompany my application, I offer one last, desperate incentive: I am willing and able to engage in questionable relations of the fiduciary and/or sexual variety with Mark Burnett's production assistant, provided that said assistant can provide documentation supporting his/her position of influence in the murky underworld of reality television.



John Dempsey

"Healeth...healeth our dear sister's tonsillitis."

THE NEW URBAN WARDROBE

The right fitted shirt. The perfect pocket square. A bag for all seasons.

A timely guide to essential pieces for the metropolitan man

FASHION BY
jennifer ryan jones

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
sergio kurhajec

THE CARDIGAN AS SUIT JACKET. "A business look with casual detail is of the utmost importance for men," says BOSS Black designer Ingo Wilts. Wearing a cardigan over a shirt and tie is a way to appear professional while avoiding the predictability of a suit. The cardigan should be fastened high (six inches below the collar), mimicking the critical V that naturally occurs in dress jackets.

His sweater (\$175), shirt (\$155) and pants are by **BOSS BLACK**. His tie (\$125) is by **BOSS SELECTION**.

IF THE SHIRT FITS... The cut of a dress shirt is as crucial as its color and style. "A shirt that is fitted to the body is definitely more flattering whether you're slim or carry a few extra pounds," says Christopher Bastin, head wovens designer for Gant. "A shirt that is too bulky will make you look bulky—and who wants that?" Don't be afraid to make the most of time well spent at the gym. Remember the tuck rule: with a jacket, yes; without, let it hang out. The right fit is significantly more noticeable when a shirt is untucked. Wearing a shirt that's too long looks ridiculous and shortens your legs. The only time a dress shirt should hang low is when it's on your girlfriend as she makes your morning coffee.



LEFT: His jacket (\$475), shirt (\$89) and pants (\$175) are by **GANT**. His belt (\$185) is by **GORDON RUSH**.
RIGHT: His shirt (\$100) and jeans (\$135) are by **GANT**.



LEARN TO LOVE YOUR SPORTS COAT.

The sports coat was originally designed to flatter English gentlemen hunting fox. Though the rules have changed (but not the quarry), the jacket is still the classiest article of clothing for the man of leisure. Throwing one over a hoodie is a fashionable trend worth adopting—a contemporary marriage of insouciance and style. "A sports coat can never make you look overdressed, but without one you can definitely look underdressed," comments Hickey designer Billy Draddy. Make a habit of wearing one and you'll soon experience the pleasure of draping it over the shoulders of an underdressed lovely.

His jacket (\$795) is by **HICKEY**. His sweatshirt (\$295) is by **ZEGNA SPORT**. His shirt (\$170) and pocket square (\$130) are by **JASPER CONRAN**. His pants (\$65) are by **J. CREW**.

POUNDING THE PAVEMENT. When you're chasing a cab (or a blonde) from three blocks away, it helps to have versatile footwear. These days you don't have to sacrifice style for comfort. Many high-end designers have done away with stiff shoe bottoms and now sole their dress shoes with rubber. If artfully crafted, this kind of footwear gives you the cushion and strength needed to travel hard city streets without giving the impression that you just came from refereeing a pickup basketball game. Steve Madden's Lexus loafer is a perfect example of the fusion of function and fashion. "This shoe rocks," Madden says. "It's flexible and comfortable to wear around the city, and it's badass."



His shoes (\$130) are by STEVEN BY STEVE MADDEN.
His pants (\$225) are by HUGO.



IN THE TRENCHES. Sideways rain? Cab-splash tsunami? Slick subway seat? The city can be a dangerous place. Protect yourself with a trench coat. This khaki version is far shorter than its predecessors (sorry, Columbo) and has a light fleece interior for warmth. Even if you break it out only for three weeks of spring showers or flu season in the fall, it will prove invaluable. Deciding between a single- or double-breasted trench coat is like choosing between the subway or the bus—both get the job done, but in the end it's your call. A single-breasted unbelted trench makes you look taller, while a double-breasted tends to broaden your chest and shoulders. Above all, go for a slim silhouette. It's a coat, not a poncho.

His jacket (\$100), sweater (\$40), shirt (\$40)
and jeans (\$40) are by UNIQLO.



SUIT UP. And leave the tie on the rack—if, that is, you plan on heading out after work. To break from the pack, pick up a pocket square or three. “Whether it’s made of silk, fine linen or pure cotton, that embellishment identifies a man as having exceptional style,” explains Bob Jensen, vice president of design at Robert Talbott. A colorful pocket square will add a nice spark to a plain white shirt, while a bright, bold shirt can go it alone if necessary.

LEFT: His suit (\$895) and shirt (\$234) are by TED BAKER LONDON. His pocket square (\$63) is by ROBERT TALBOTT. His belt (\$95) is by BOSS BLACK. **RIGHT:** His suit (\$1,495) and shirt (\$225) are by CALVIN KLEIN COLLECTION.

WATCH YOURSELF. Sure, you can rely on your cell phone and BlackBerry to tell the time. You can also wear shorts to the office, but you don't. Watches are functional accessories. Avoid timepieces that are either overly ornate or designed to be conversation pieces. (Who has time to talk about time?) Note the watch at right. The clean dial and black leather strap complement your outfit whether you're wearing a crisp suit or safari sleeves. For the man splitting his weeks between two cities, this TX by Timex keeps track of two time zones. "Bottom line," says TX by Timex brand director Herb Doscher, "the more functionality your quality timepiece offers, the less you have to carry with you as you go about your day."



His shirt (\$165) is by Z ZEGNA.
His watch (\$450) is TX BY TIMEX.



BLUE AND GRAY. A good pair of jeans is a staple of any American male's wardrobe. Unlike the simple days of Johnny Blue Jeans, denim now comes in different shades every season. The preferred colors now are grays and a spectrum of blues. "For us, it's all about shades of blue," explains Kevin Carrigan, creative director of CK Calvin Klein and Calvin Klein, "from bleached and faded to dark indigo and ink-colored denim." While the shade is up to the man, the jeans must be cut slim. Thankfully, men are past the baggy-jeans phase and have relocated their waistline. Denim has even become dressy and acceptable to wear to the office (with a sports coat) or to any hot spot (without).

LEFT: His sweater (\$98) is by MODERN AMUSEMENT. His T-shirt (\$65) is by BOSS ORANGE. His jeans (\$210) are by J. LINDBERGH. His belt (\$185) is by GORDON RUSH. RIGHT: His jacket (\$800) is by CALVIN KLEIN COLLECTION. His shirt (\$68) is by CALVIN KLEIN. His jeans (\$80) are by CALVIN KLEIN JEANS. His socks (\$45) are by PANTHERELLA FOR THE BRITISH APPAREL COLLECTION. His shoes (\$365) are by JOHN VARVATOS.



DON'T KILL THE MESSENGER BAG.

Briefcases should be seen only in mobster movies. This John Varvatos messenger bag doesn't look like some of those other man purses on the market. "I don't adorn the bags with logos or overdesign them with heavy hardware," says Varvatos. "The end result is a masculine bag, elegant and functional."

His shirt (\$185) and pants (\$165) are by **JOHN VARVATOS STAR USA**. His bag (\$550) is by **JOHN VARVATOS**. His necklace (\$315) is by **BARKING IRONS**. His watch (\$150) is by **ANDY WARHOL 15**.



FOR MORE URBAN LOOKS, CHECK OUT PLAYBOY.COM/MAGAZINE.
WHERE AND HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 126.

SEX IN IRAN *(continued from page 52)*

Before the revolution Iranians prayed in private and partied in public. Now it's the other way around.

my clients demand porn material from me, and these are mostly wealthy men, although in the case of the Ebrahimi movie women have also been interested in seeing an actress display her femininity within a private space. This is a growing industry."

And in response, the government has become more threatening. "Beforehand, if we were arrested, we'd be thrown in jail and would have to pay a fine," he says. "But now things are more dangerous. I'm frightened."

The Iranian people have grown quite adept at maintaining appearances. As long as a woman wears a hijab—a body-concealing outfit and veil—her inner beliefs are her own. The facade is all that counts, and the result is that during the past 28 years two very different lifestyles have existed side by side.

A walk on the streets of Tehran suggests a population governed by strict religious and moral values. This is also the image projected overseas. Move just outside the city center, however, and you'll find women undermining the government's authority by wearing heavy makeup and reducing their hijabs to fashionably tight, sexy outfits. On many you'll see nose bandages, betraying an appetite for cosmetic surgery. And behind closed doors, there's even greater deviation. In the eyes of many Iranians, the only change wrought upon them by the Islamic revolution is that once they prayed in private and partied in public and now it's the other way around.

It is a Thursday night in the summer of 2005, the Saturday-like height of the Islamic weekend. A party is taking place in Shahrak Gharb, a neighborhood in northwest Tehran, at a large white mansion owned by a businessman who made a fortune importing machine parts in the years following the revolution. The house is typical of the area—modern yet unpretentious from the outside. Guests have been asked to deflect official attention by staggering their arrival and coming by taxi or not parking too close to the house.

Most in attendance are in their 30s or older, couples, some married, all affluent. Or at least they seem that way, dressed in designer clothes, the women dripping in jewelry under the mandatory long coats they wear with head scarves that they remove the second they enter the house.

This is standard practice for any party or get-together in Iran, as is the need to keep the coats and scarves close at hand in case of a police raid. Also handy are wet-wipe tissues for makeup removal, as well as chewing gum and breath spray to mask the smell of alcohol.

A police raid tonight, however, is unlikely. The host has already paid a police officer not only to be incurious but to provide all the liquor. Not a bad deal. The drinks are in the kitchen, hidden in a cupboard and served in plastic cups that can easily be ditched should a uniformed cop drop by. Soft drinks and snacks are being served by a team of maids in the main room, where people are talking and mingling, and in the rooms en suite, where some are dancing to both Arabic and Iranian pop music—with the appropriate moves for each—and listening to an assortment of English and American hits.

Next door is the obligatory opium room. People sit on velvet floor cushions next to small tables with dates and other sweet snacks and pass the pipe; smoke rises as poetry is read and mellow Iranian classical music is played. Among the guests is Catayon, a 42-year-old homemaker with an open attitude toward sex. Her husband, Iraj, has another wife, which isn't outrageous in a society where up to four are allowed, along with a string of lovers, which is also less than remarkable for a wealthy man. At least Catayon feels entitled to take lovers of her own.

"I knew before we arrived that Iraj had been trying to get close to Mitra, a friend whose marriage is going through a rocky time because her husband spent a weekend with my half sister," Catayon later recalls. "As soon as we got to the party, he poured Mitra a drink and began talking with her. That was fine—it gave me the opportunity to chat with Kamshad, whom I had always fancied. Since Kamshad's wife was spending the summer in the United States, I could have him to myself. We both knew it wouldn't be long before Iraj and Mitra would disappear into one of the upstairs bedrooms, and at that point we could find a quiet corner."

This kind of scene, although not commonplace, serves as a counterpoint to the fundamentalist extreme often portrayed as the norm to the outside world. There's a widespread misconception in the West that sex outside marriage is illegal in Iran, but in fact Islam permits sex outside marriage as long as it is conducted within a legal framework known as *seigheh*. This is a temporary contract between a man and

a woman that allows sexual interaction and sets conditions including the financial obligations of the parties and the actual duration, which can range from a few hours to many years.

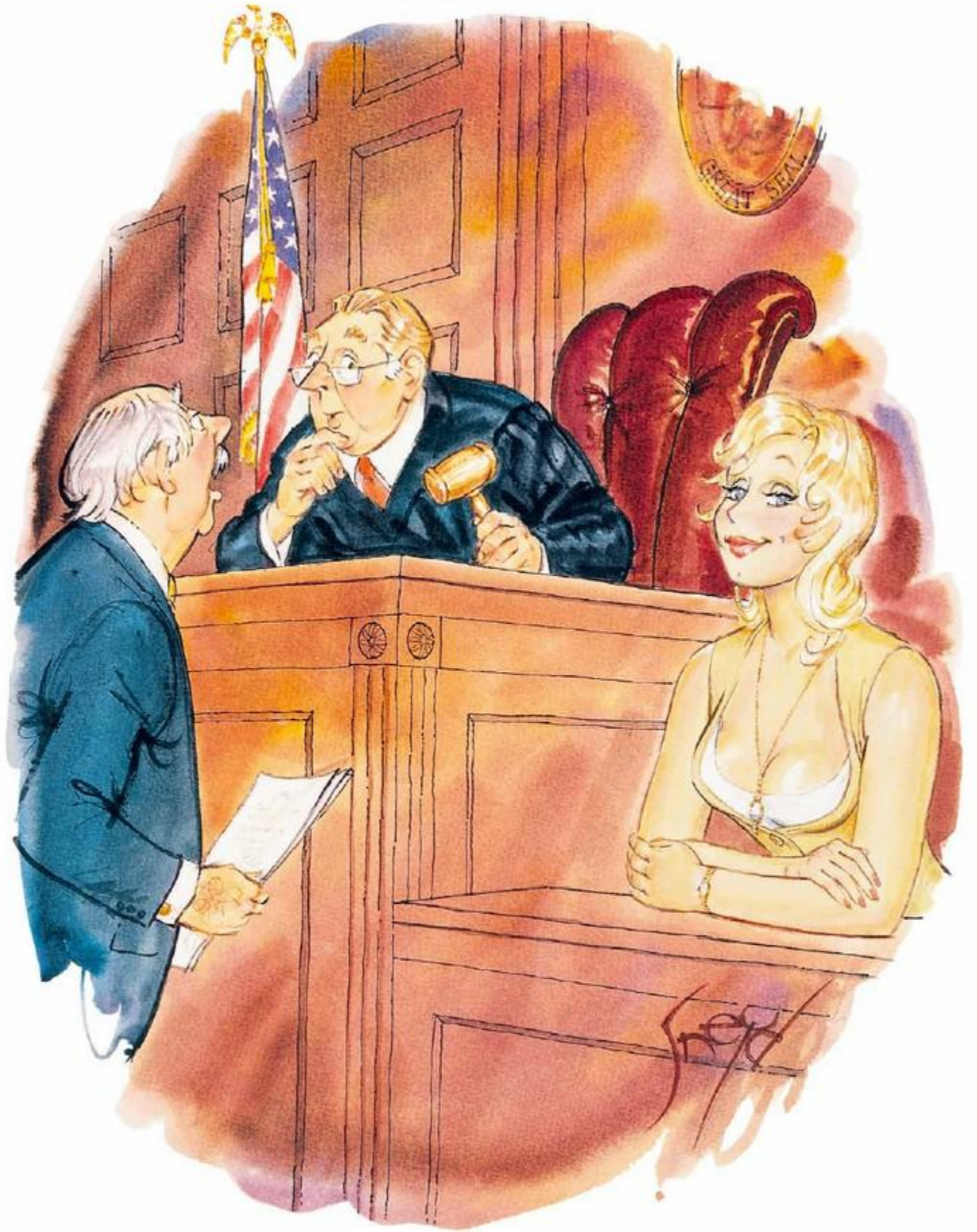
This controversial practice, which dates back to the beginning of Islam, lost its popularity in modern Iran until the revolution, when it passed into law. Since then it has commonly been employed by young couples avoiding government harassment, poor or divorced women seeking protection and financial support, and others. Though widely regarded as a loophole legalizing prostitution, *seigheh* could be another way of exonerating Zahra Amir Ebrahimi should matters proceed to that extent.

It may seem surprising that religious hard-liners would allow such a spongy exception, but those crusty-looking mullahs and ayatollahs aren't nearly as narrow-minded as many people think. Over the years, several of them have taken it upon themselves to serve as the nation's sexual arbiters. Indeed, for years following the revolution, one of the most popular TV programs in Iran was one viewers called the Gili Show. Each must-see episode featured the Ayatollah Gilani discoursing on a particular topic, often of a sexual nature, and discussing the rights and wrongs as they pertain to sharia law.

Today Iranians use the Internet to hear similar advice from ayatollahs all over the Middle East. For instance, at islamonline.net, a site run by Al-Jazeera Publishing, Iranians can see Qatar-based cleric Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi declare that "Muslim jurists are of the opinion that it is lawful for the husband to perform cunnilingus on his wife or a wife to perform the similar act for her husband, and there is no wrong in doing so. But if sucking leads to releasing semen, then it is *makruh* [blameworthy], although there is no decisive evidence to forbid it." On the same website visitors are cautioned "not to develop any of the medical symptoms that may result from masturbation, such as weak eyesight, a weak nervous system and/or back pain. More important, feelings of guilt and anxiety can be complicated by missing obligatory prayers because of the need to shower after every incidence of masturbation."

Thanks to external influences as well as Islam's practicality about the subject, sexual mores have definitely been relaxed. "In sexual matters, most Iranians take their lead from Iraj Mirza," says Reza, a psychologist, referring to the early 20th century poet and intellectual known for his extremely graphic musings on the subject. "His advice was to do it but not talk about it. Well, Iranians' attitudes toward sex are currently evolving. These days, virginity is still an important issue in many towns and villages, where young girls could lose

(continued on page 137)



*"Your Honor, my client would like to throw herself on the mercy of the court.
Individually or in groups of two or more."*





Winter

FICTION BY

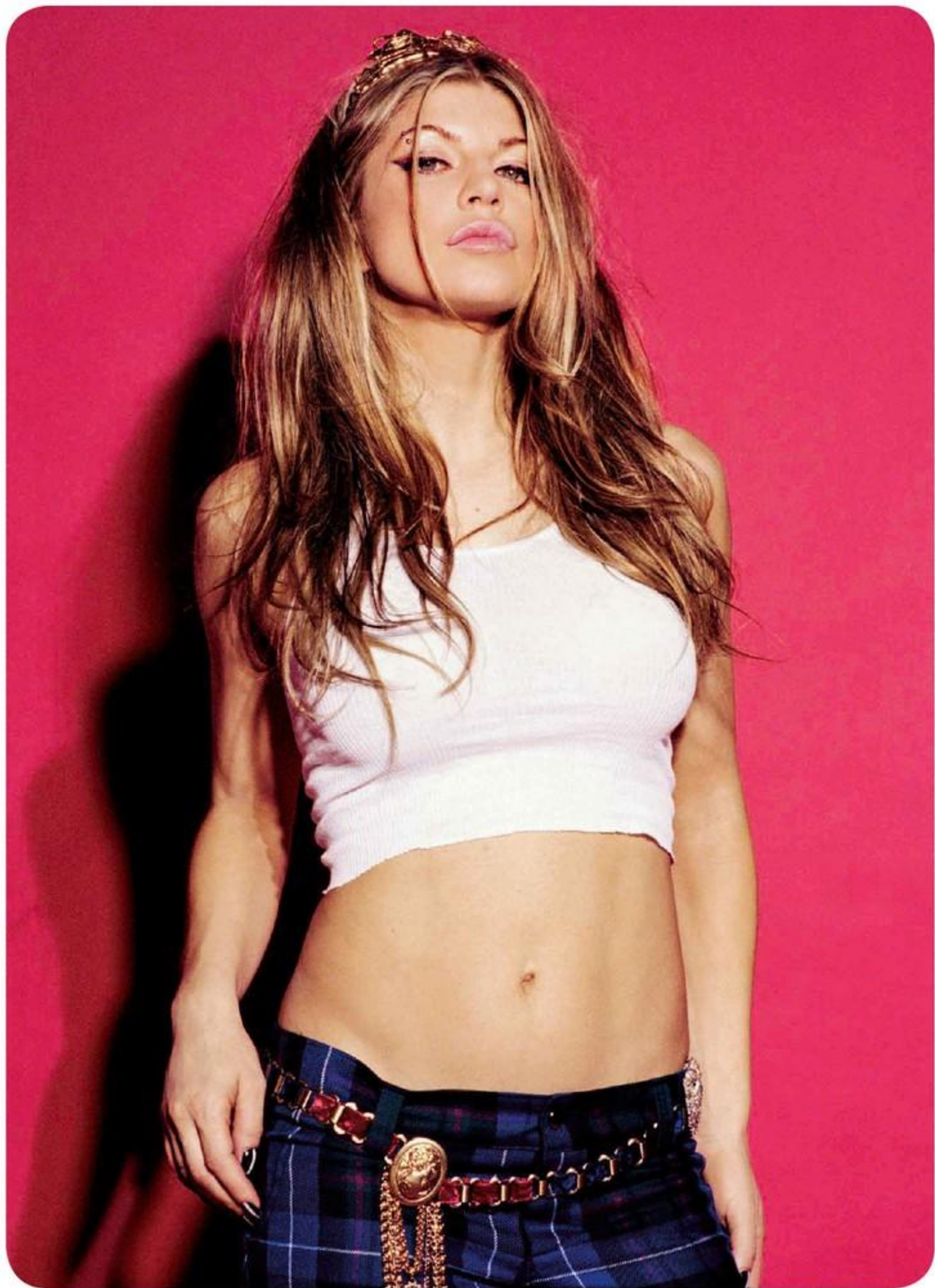
A REPORTER RETURNS
FROM IRAQ WITH TROUBLES
HER FATHER CAN'T FIX

STORMS

EDWARD FALCO

Through snow, in the gray light of storm clouds massing over the beach, Rick thought he saw a figure in a knee-length, quilted white coat approaching him as he squinted out through the furred circle of his parka hood. He pushed himself forward while wind screamed ashore skimming water off waves so the air was wet and it seemed as though he were walking in rain and snow at the same time. He had taken this walk along the Fire Island beach in winter before, and he knew how the bitterly cold wind firing particles of ice and sand could make bare skin feel as if it were burning. He knew how to dress for such walks: with good boots and thermal underwear under several layers of clothes inside an arctic parka. Still, this was a test. The storm-pushed water had reduced the wide beach to a narrow strip of sand, and visibility was failing rapidly, threatening to turn everything into an indeterminate field of gray light—and since the point of a walk like this was to see up close the rage of the ocean in a storm, he was on the verge of turning back, of turning his back to the wind and letting it push him toward the parking lot where his red Jeep waited alone, parked obediently between a pair of white lines. But he was almost sure he had seen someone in the distance, walking toward him from Fire Island, and the prospect was so improbable—that someone else would be out on the beach in a storm like this—that he continued on, peering out from inside his parka when the icy wind and gray haze permitted.

"Rick," he heard Clare's voice inside his own head, clear as if she were standing alongside him, "you're getting too old for this kind of thing." Clare was his daughter. Somehow, amazingly, the years had spilled along and now *(continued on page 112)*





SHE SINGS, SHE ACTS, SHE'S BEEN BITTEN BY QUENTIN TARANTINO, SHE KICKED A METH HABIT, AND SHE WEARS CLOTHES FROM THE HUSTLER STORE. DOES IT GET ANY BETTER THAN THAT?

Q1

PLAYBOY: Your most recent stab at acting is in *Grindhouse*, a horror movie directed by Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez. Which of those two is crazier?

FERGIE: I play a girl named Tammy. It's not a big role. I didn't know Quentin was going to be there, because I'm in Robert's part of the film. Quentin showed up and worked with me on a scene in which I'm being chased. I was running, and Quentin was acting it out with me. At one point he put on a mask and attacked and bit me. They had to redo the scene about 10 times because he kept making all these noises. He bit and bruised me. He gets into the characters. He's amazing.

Q2

PLAYBOY: You discovered show business at an early age. Do you remember the first time you made an effort to entertain people?

FERGIE: Oh, it was never an effort. [laughs] I would do commercials in my kitchen. I saw a lot of musicals when I was young. My mom would take me to the community theater, where I saw *West Side Story*, *Oklahoma!*, *Peter Pan*, *Annie*. That was a big deal for me. When I was about six my mom saw an ad in the paper

for Karen's Kids, a group that performed at malls. She already knew I wanted to be an entertainer, so she asked if I'd be interested in joining. The group performed show tunes, so it was perfect for me.

Q3

PLAYBOY: You also worked on several *Charlie Brown* specials, doing the voices of Lucy and Sally. Give us one of your lines.

FERGIE: Sally's main line was [in Sally's voice] "Linus, you're my sweet babu." And Lucy's was [in Lucy's voice] "Charlie Brown, you blockhead." Doing *Charlie Brown* was fun. It was a creative outlet for me. My mom has them all on tape. I haven't seen them in a while. I should bring those on tour. That would be funny.

Q4

PLAYBOY: You later starred on the 1980s television show *Kids Incorporated* with Jennifer Love Hewitt. Do you cringe when you watch it now?

FERGIE: Yes, every time I see an outfit I wore and watch my really bad acting. It's actually so bad, it's great. I just saw Jennifer Love Hewitt. I was going to Hawaii for New Year's, and she was on the plane with her mom. It was really cool. We had a moment.

Q5

PLAYBOY: Have you ever had a real job?

FERGIE: I was a babysitter once. It was only because my friend was doing it, and I wanted to go to the people's house to see what food they had in the refrigerator. But I've been working as an entertainer since I was six years old, so I consider that a real job. When everyone else was going off to the playground, I was working.

Q6

PLAYBOY: Are you thankful you weren't a teen pop star like Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera?

FERGIE: Oh, definitely. I at least got to go through my worst times without being in front of the paparazzi. I think there was a plan for me.

Q7

PLAYBOY: You formed the all-girl trio Wild Orchid and released two albums with the group but left after you developed a crystal-meth addiction. When did you know you were in big trouble?

FERGIE: Probably when I ended up on the bathroom floor. I hit rock bottom and cut myself off. At that point I was lucky enough to have my mom's support. I moved back home and (concluded on page 139)

AMERICAN BEAUTIES

★ ★ ★

THE GIRLS OF CONFERENCE USA



Mia Joseph—CENTRAL FLORIDA

There is no better time of year to be on a college campus than right now. Short sundresses slipped over heavenly bodies, blowout outdoor parties, the promise of summer vacation—the unmistakable smell of freedom is in the air. For our annual college girls spectacular, we chose this year to join in the springtime festivities at the schools of the great Conference USA. Our lensmen swept through the South in search of truth, justice and the American way—and some beautiful women to photograph while they were at it. We present to you the sweethearts of Southern Mississippi, the honeys of Houston, the temptresses of Tulane and Texas El Paso and more. Here are 36 reasons to feel proud to be an American.

Above: Part Chinese, part Jamaican and part Scottish, Mia is a heady little cocktail—very intoxicating. **Right:** A bevy of beauties show their school spirit, deep in the heart of Texas. Don't worry; they may be Miners, but they're all over 18.





Top row, left to right: Madison Shepard, Aylisa Park, Vanessa Milian; second row: Natalia Cruz, Vanessa Vega, Alexis Callaway, Victoria Johnson; third row: Nancy Salas, Akantha Edwards, Sandy Morales; bottom row: Amanda Garcia, Mila Cruz, Sophia Gavali—**TEXAS EL PASO**



Morgan Jade—TULANE



Jamie Junior—EAST CAROLINA



Sammie Claymont—RICE



Kayli Sands—HOUSTON



Anahi Casas—TEXAS EL PASO



Opposite page: Morgan says skiing is her great passion. We guess that's why she goes to school in New Orleans. North Carolina-born Jamie is no ordinary Southern girl; she loves the New York Yankees. At Rice, the Ivy of the South, Sammie majors in biochemistry. Her plan is to find a husband and become a doctor. Being a stay-at-home dad suddenly sounds wonderful. Kayli wants to be a Playmate someday; she's off to a good start. This page: Beautiful Anahi has a heart of gold behind those 34DDs. Heavenly Holly tested out of high school after freshman year. She works as a web designer and plays piano.



Holly Tippin—TULSA



Olivia Lyric—MEMPHIS



Megan Pittman—ALABAMA BIRMINGHAM



Carrie Gene—SOUTHERN METHODIST



Opposite page: Olivia aspires to be a photographer and fashion designer. She clearly has talent—the heels-and-nothing-else look will never go out of style. Southern belle Carrie likes to keep it real (yes, even her 36Ds). She enjoys bowling, Southern rock and sweet tea. Megan lives in sweet home Alabama. She's into yoga, shopping and traveling. This page: We're smitten with Stella, a visual-arts major from Texas who digs painting, running, dancing and lacrosse. Stella! Stella! Terra, Tracy and Kala show off their pom-poms. What better way to cheer for Conference USA? Posing for this picture marked the first time Tulsa freshman (and Mensa member) Haydn ever modeled nude, though shortly after this shoot she showed her goods on *The Howard Stern Show*. Leela, a freshman Tiger, says, "It has been tough to make friends." Well, Leela, let us introduce you to our 10 million readers.



Stella Hayward—RICE



Leela Martin—MEMPHIS



Terra Biboise, Tracy Alexander and Kala Marlane—**SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI**



Haydn Porter—TULSA



Adrienne Day—
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI



Victoria Lynn, Angela Noel and Ariana Lynn—
CENTRAL FLORIDA

Clockwise from far left: Golden Eagle Adrienne usually wears scrubs to class but says she wears less at home than she does in this picture. She is studying to be a paralegal for a defense attorney. If any incoming students have doubts about the University of Central Florida, show them the photo at left. If they can't decide on a major, Victoria's is molecular biology, Angela's is English and Ariana's is communications. Vanessa is the most beautiful bird at Texas El Paso, and atop her stunning body is a gearhead—she's into cars. Mandy is reserved about her good looks, so we had to reassure the girl with porcelain skin that of course she's a 10. Some facts about her: She worked at Hooters, wants to be a museum curator, is double-jointed and belongs to several honor societies. Taylor hates cattiness but loves cats. Rrrrow. Had Angela ever rolled in the hay before this shoot? She wouldn't say, but as a girl who loves to ride horses, she knows her way around the bales. Giddyap!



Angela Leigh—
MARSHALL



Vanessa Vega—
TEXAS EL PASO



Mandy Calloway—
HOUSTON



Taylor Reid—
SOUTHERN METHODIST

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Winter Storms (continued from page 101)

A piece of shrapnel killed her. He remembered that day and those weeks with preternatural clarity.

she was a 34-year-old woman and a journalist who was forever placing herself precisely in the center of the most dangerous spots on earth. When she graduated from Columbia, she went freelance to Somalia, where civil war and famine were spilling blood by the tanker load. Since then, she'd been all over the Middle East and Africa as a correspondent with several papers. Now she was in Iraq with the *Times*. Clare was always in Rick's thoughts, and because the voice in his head had sounded so real, he answered her out loud. He said, "You're right, sweetheart. I'm getting old." As he spoke he looked up the beach and again saw the diminutive, wavering human figure in the white coat, only now it appeared to be partly in the water, immersed to the waist—except that the figure was steady, solid in the roiled water, as if it were standing in a backyard pool, impossible in a turbulent ocean in the midst of a storm, and then, as he watched openmouthed, the wind blew back a hood of some kind, and long black hair whipped out and flew around wildly before a wave came in and washed the figure away, leaving only violent water and the mirroring images of clouds and ocean.

Rick took one quick step forward, as if, for a heartbeat, he could help, but he knew with certainty that what he had just seen had to be an illusion—a human being doesn't stand upright and motionless in turbulent water. As he tried to unravel the possibilities, he turned and let the wind drive him back against the dunes and forward to the parking lot. White driftwood blown along the beach was the best explanation he could come up with. Through the snow and mist, in the dim storm light, it was conceivable that a piece of driftwood might look like a human figure—but what explained the hood blown back and the black hair blowing in the wind? Still, by the time he reached his Jeep, he had dismissed it as a trick of the weather. What might have amazed him as a young man merely interested him now, if that.

When he got back to his house, he found Clare waiting for him, Clare who was supposed to be sweltering somewhere in the desert heat of Iraq. The storm had just started a few hours earlier, and there was already three or four inches of snow on the ground. He had gunned the engine to climb the steep part of his driveway, and when he

parked where the blacktop leveled out, the front bumper of the Jeep up against the house, he found himself looking into the big bay window a few feet in front of him, where Clare was sitting on the window shelf looking out, just as she did when she was a child. Even through the blowing snow, he could see a look of grief on her face, and he guessed she was dismayed that he had been out driving around somewhere while all the various apparatuses of the mass media were urging people to stay in their homes and off the roads. He smiled a big toothy smile both to signal that everything was fine and at the joy of seeing her there safely at home—the pure pleasure of that affecting him like a drug, a sense of relief washing through him, his worry over her a constant pressure he wasn't even aware of until it relaxed some, as it did now.

Out of the car, in a little pocket of stillness as the wind dropped away for a moment, he stepped up to the window and pressed his nose against an icy pane of glass, trying to get a laugh out of his solemn-looking daughter. She was small, five-five just, and petite like her mother. At 34, in her brown leather boots, crisp blue denims and pretty yellow blouse, she might easily be mistaken for a college girl. She pulled her knees to her chin and raised her eyebrows, making a face that said *Well, aren't you coming in?* He moved back from the window but couldn't pull himself away from the vision of her there, looking beautiful and healthy if also tense, which showed in the lines around her mouth and jaw and in the telltale way she fingered her hair, an old habit from her childhood, playing at it thoughtlessly, just something she did when anything at all was even a little bit wrong, like, perhaps, worrying about her father out driving around in a storm.

Inside she met him with a hug around the neck that pulled her up onto her toes. Rick, at a little over six feet, bent down to her embrace. He wrapped his arms around her waist, lifted her off the ground and pulled her into the pillowy down of his parka. "What," he asked, and he kissed her on the top of her head, "are you doing here?"

"My God!" she said. "You're freezing!" She kissed him on the forehead. "Look at you! There's ice—" She reached up to touch his eyebrows and his beard, then tugged at the zipper of his parka, opening it midway. "You

need to get into warm, dry clothes." She moved back from him, put her hands on her hips and looked him over. Her eyes filled with tears, which she quickly wiped away. "I'll make you some tea," she whispered. "Go get yourself out of those clothes." She turned her back to him and went into the kitchen.

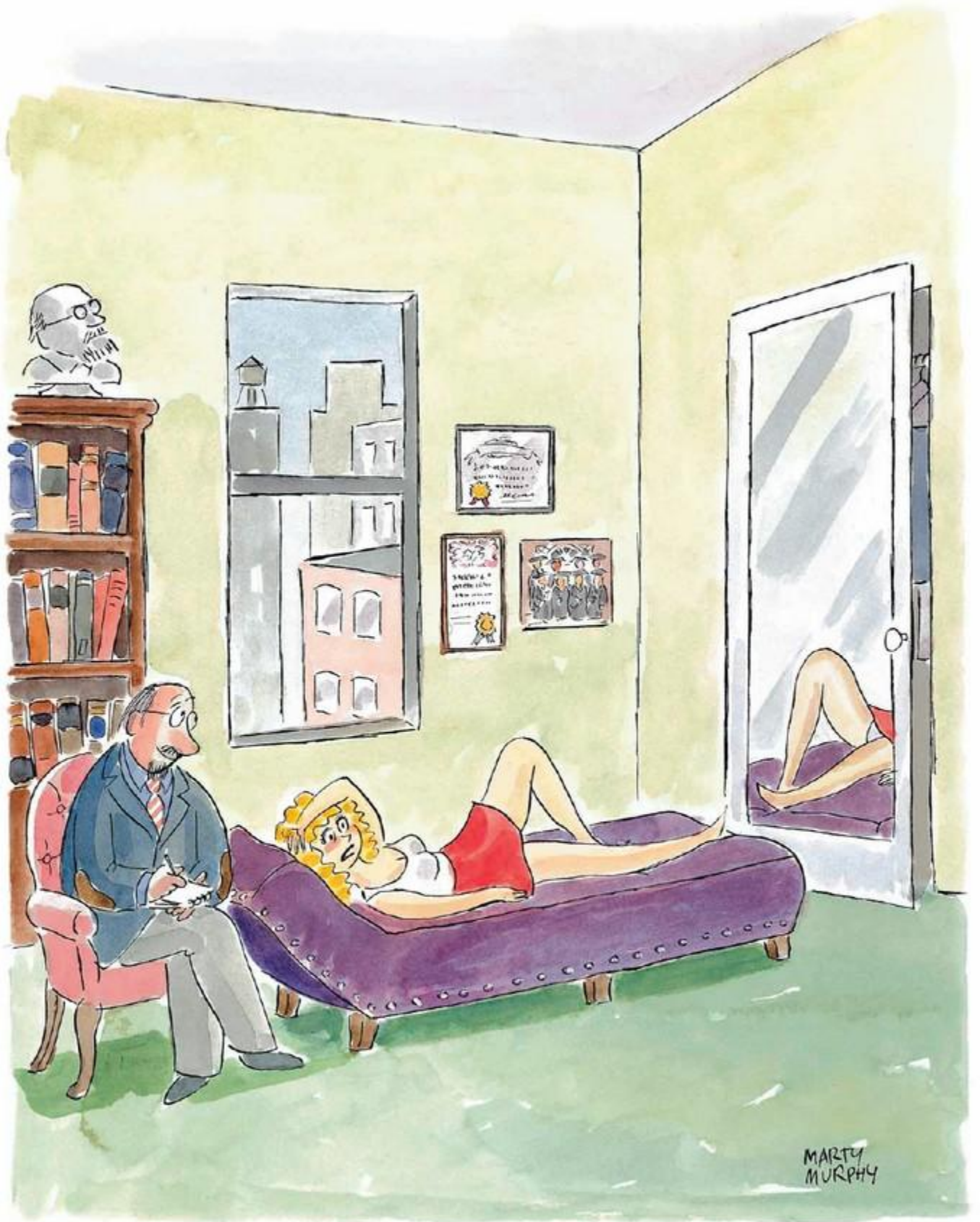
Rick pulled off his boots and tossed them in a corner, under the hall tree where he hung up his coat next to Clare's, which was a long, bright-white quilted parka—much like the one he had seen on the beach. When the connection registered, he felt the eeriness of it, the plain spookiness—but he forced himself to return to the current, very real, situation. Clare wasn't a crier. Their reunions were usually full of joshing and hugs and long talks. Not tears. She wasn't an emotional person, which was something, he guessed, she had learned from him. Rick's response to emotional situations was to fall into a trance of detachment, every cell in his body working to discern the best course of action. It was just the way he was. Vivian, his wife, Clare's mother, had been killed in Jordan. They were living in Amman—this was 1972—during the violence after Munich. An Al-Fatah bomb went off inside the house of an Arab National Union official when Vivian happened to be walking past outside.

A piece of shrapnel killed her. She was the only fatality. He remembered that day and those weeks with preternatural clarity. He was Clare's age. Clare was 11 weeks old. He had made all the necessary arrangements with such calm that the officials he worked with could not have known how much he loved his wife. A month after Vivian's murder he was back in the States with Clare. He quit his job with the World Bank so he could be a full-time father, and he had been living ever since off investments and consulting work. Essentially, at the age of 34, he had retired.

"Rick...." Clare peeked into the hallway. "I'm okay," she said. "Quit standing there like a statue trying to think of what to do, and go get out of those clothes and into something dry and warm." She offered him a quick, reassuring smile and then disappeared again into the kitchen.

Rick followed her. She was standing at the stove, staring at a thin line of steam escaping from the spout of the kettle. "Clare," he said, "what is it?" Then he added, stupidly, "Is something wrong?" Because something obviously was. There were tears in her eyes again.

She wiped a hand across her face and shook her head as if she were about to say, *No, there's nothing wrong, really*, but instead she said, "Yes, there is something wrong," and then laughed at herself. She turned away from the stove and teakettle and said, again, "I'm



"Men are always trying to take advantage of me."

okay," and pointed up the short flight of stairs to the bathroom. "Get...de-iced," she said. "I can't talk to a snowman!"

Rick touched her shoulder and hesitated another second before heading upstairs to the bathroom, where he quickly stripped off his parka and the ski pants and bib under it and tossed them into the bathtub. From the rack, he grabbed a towel to dry his face and hair. As he looked in the mirror, he pushed longish gray hair back off his face, neatening it with his fingers and the palms of his hands, and it occurred to him that he grew more bearlike with every passing day. He had been living alone too long, he thought, with no one to bother him about his appearance. He needed badly to lose some weight. He ran his fingers through his hair one last time and then padded down to the kitchen in heavy wool socks.

Clare was sitting at the table, holding her teacup in both hands, gazing up at him. She looked lovely with her straight brown hair cascading over the bright yellow of her blouse. A second cup of tea awaited him across the table from her. "How did you get here?" he asked. He pulled out his chair and settled into the seat.

"Someone dropped me off."

"Who? In this weather?"

"I don't know him, really," she said, the tears gone, her voice placid. "He's new in the office. He insisted."

Rick sat back in his chair, as if he needed greater distance to absorb this information. "He insists on driving you out to Long Island in the middle of a winter hurricane, and you don't know him? What? Does he have a thing for you?"

"Not like that," Clare said. "Look," she

made a face that dismissed the issue. "Guy gave me a ride. It's not a big deal."

"Okay," Rick said. "So?"

Clare exhaled dramatically. "Look," she said, her eyes fixed on her teacup. "There's so much.... First—" She looked up at Rick. "I got back a few days ago. I didn't call because I wanted to work some things out before we talked."

"Have you been...hurt?" he asked. "Has something—"

"I haven't been hurt," she said. "I was threatened. My life was threatened."

"Are they taking you out of Iraq?"

"Yes, but it's more complicated. I might get cut loose altogether," she said, "because of what happened."

"They're going to let you go because your life was threatened?"

"Please. Dad...." She placed her hands flat on the table. "Let me explain all this. First, I'm here waiting for a call. They're going to let me go, or they're going to reassign me—someplace in the Middle East. Not Iraq. I'm done in Iraq."

Rick nodded, working hard not to show his pleasure at this piece of news.

"This is my career," she went on. "If they let me go...I don't know what's next." Rick had to struggle to keep himself from reassuring her, from telling her everything would be okay, just tell him, just tell Dad what happened—as if she were still a child and he had the power to fix all her problems, which, he knew, had never been the case.

"All right," she said. "This is going to be hard for me to tell you, which is another part of the reason I waited to come out here. So please, Dad, just listen."

"I promise," he said. "I'll listen."

"First," she said, "you have to under-

stand. To get one single bit of reliable information anywhere in Iraq—forget our side. Truth is, absolutely, the first casualty. I'm trying," she said, "to report on the insurgency. This is, from the start, tricky. You're dealing with people who are killing American soldiers, who are killing Iraqis. They're in the business of killing. It's so difficult, morally, in every way. But my job is to report the story, to report it, and I can't—I'm not going to be a propagandist for the Army. I need to see for myself, to report what's going on, and you can't do that from one side's perspective only."

Rick gave Clare a look that said he wasn't an idiot. He didn't need this explained to him.

"All right," she said. "I made a contact inside a group of jihadis. This is near impossible for someone like me to do. It happened," she rapped the table with her knuckles, as if urging him to pay particular attention, "after I met an Arab woman named Sabiha. She represented herself as a freelancer. She had bylines from *Al Jazeera* to the *Monitor*. They all checked out. She moved into the hotel room next to mine, and we met in the hall one evening. We had drinks, we got friendly. Through her I made the contact with Othman. You would never— He was actually working in the fucking hotel."

Rick laughed uncomfortably. He had never heard Clare curse before. It was like being given a quick glance into her other life, the life where she had drinks in hotel bars and made contacts with killers.

"I'm telling you things you shouldn't know, Dad. I'm assuming you understand that."

Rick shrugged off the warning.

"All of Sabiha's stories fairly dripped with bias against anything in any way Western. She was more an Arab propagandist than she was a reporter. I wrote her off as a journalist. She practically gloated every time an American got killed. She'd be chirping, *Five Americans killed this morning!* Like I was supposed to join her for a drink in celebration, and I'm—I understood she was the best shot I had at making a contact somewhere, given she seemed to have contacts everywhere. It was like she worked for the insurgents. I wouldn't at any time have been surprised to find out she really did work for them." She leaned back in her chair. "I thought I was playing her, working her for the contacts. Only she was playing me from the start. She takes the room next to mine, we conveniently meet—perfect. She knew how I'd read her. She knew what I'd want from her. And she used me...like I was a novice."

"Used you?"

"She was one of ours." Clare got up, took both teacups from the table and stuck them in the microwave. "You pick the initials," she said. "We've got operations going on there that you never heard of and you never will hear of."



She pressed a series of buttons and then slammed the microwave door hard enough to rattle the counter. When she turned to Rick again, her face had reddened and she was breathing harder.

Rick said, "Clare, just tell me what happened."

She ran her fingers through her hair. Finally, she took a deep breath and went on. "She was about to up the level of surveillance on these jihadis," she said, "and she knew that would be risky. So what better than to introduce me to them right before she does it? This way, if they find out they're being watched, they're not going to think of her—a sister, a sympathizer. She's practically writing press releases for them. They'll think of me. The American they didn't want to meet from the start. They only did it because of her influence, her pressure. She convinced them they needed an American reporter to tell their side. She promised them I could be trusted. She gave them a goddamned course in American journalistic ethics. And they went along, because of her, only because of her—and only reluctantly."

"And then that's what happened?" Rick said. "They figured it out...and they threatened your life?"

The microwave beeped loudly, and Clare spoke through the beeping as if she didn't hear it at all. "They were going to kill me, Dad. I was going to be one of those tapes that wind up on the Internet." She looked down, and her eyes were full of tears. "They were going to saw my goddamned head off," she said, "and I kept thinking—I kept imagining you watching the videotape—" She pulled her arm roughly across her eyes.

Rick felt that familiar focusing of attention that seemed, at times like this, to replace emotion in him. "Was this an actual, physical— Did they have you? Did they capture you?"

"They grabbed me off the street. Car pulled up, two seconds later I was on the floor in the back with a U.S. Army-issued hood over my head. I never made a sound, it happened so fast. I didn't scream. Nothing. I just...waited."

"Did they hurt you?"

"Kicked me," she said, as if the details were inconsequential. "Screamed at me."

"How did you— My God, Clare...."

"People like Sabiha, like us over there," she squinted and backed away slightly, as if she were recoiling from an unpleasant sight, "we have this...smugness, like we think we're better, smarter, more...

evolved. Like they're savages. I swear to God, *that's* why they hate us more than anything else." Her mouth twisted up in anger, contorting her face. "Othman figured it out in two minutes," she said. "There were questions I couldn't answer, things I obviously didn't know. All I could have possibly done was go to the CPA and say, *Hey, I know this jihadi*—and that would not explain the net that all of a sudden fell on them. There was this point where— They had me duct-taped to a chair, I was answering questions, and then it was like we both figured it out at the same moment. It was Sabiha. It had to be Sabiha."

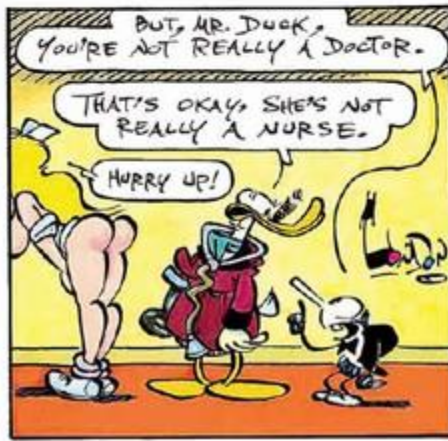
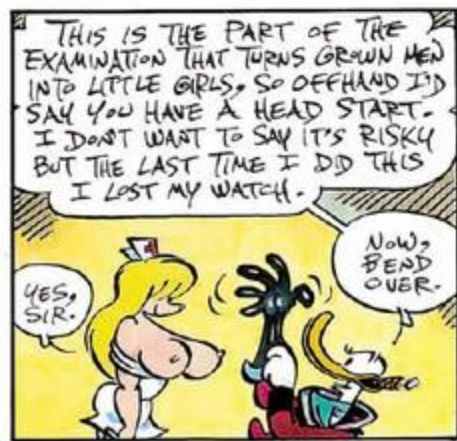
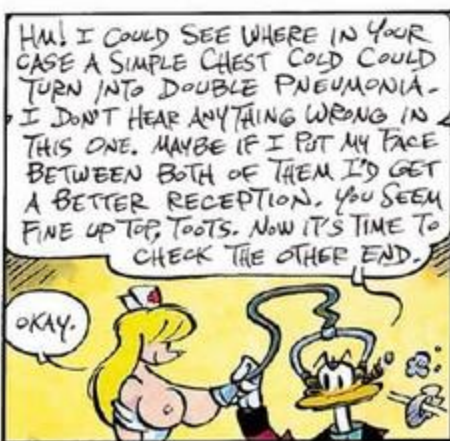
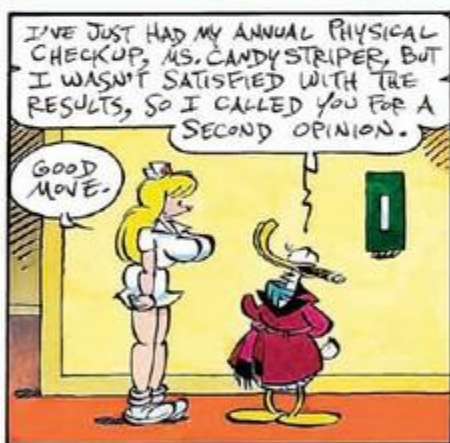
"They let you go? When they figured that out?"

Clare was silent for a long moment. Her body seemed to grow heavier with the weight of what she was thinking. She met Rick's eyes and blinked and then said, softly, matter-of-factly, "They let me go because I gave her up. I gave them Sabiha."

"I don't get that," Rick said, quickly. "What do you mean you gave her up? You said they knew. You said he'd figured it out himself."

Clare rubbed at a spot on the table with the heel of her hand. She was thinking,

Dirty Duck by Bobby London



but it looked as if she were trying to erase something. She said, "Just listen, Dad." She folded her hands together, interlocking her fingers, as if in an effort to keep them still. "They would have killed us both," she said, "or held us both as hostages. They would not have let me go." She paused again, her gaze fixed on Rick. "Sabiha didn't go back to her hotel room that evening. She was, in fact, nowhere to be found. Which is part of what clued in Othman. Why would she disappear like that? And why wouldn't I? Why would I be strolling around outside the Green Zone without even a bodyguard if I had a clue what was going on? If I knew? You see? I mean.... Did she think he would miss that? Did she think he wouldn't pick up on that? I knew where she would be," she said flatly, "and I traded my life for hers."

Rick shook his head slightly, hardly aware of it, as if some silent part of him were unwilling to accept this piece of news. He opened his mouth to say something, but no words came out.

Clare said, "It gets worse."

As if wanting to put off however this story could get worse, he asked, "How did you know where she was?"

"For someone who thought she was very smart," Clare said, "she wasn't. She underestimated them, and she underestimated me. There was a Kurd family working with one of the local councils. I figured them as U.S. operatives. So did everyone. I saw her with the father. They were keeping their distance, but I could tell. I followed them and saw her slip in the back door of their home. This was weeks earlier. I thought then, She's just trying to get a story. I thought she was doing what journalists do, gathering sources. That she was being secretive was no big deal, not then, anyway. But duct-taped to that chair, I saw the chances were excellent that's where she'd be."

"And that— You told them, and they—"

"This is where it gets worse." She opened the microwave as if the bell had just sounded. She put Rick's cup in front of him and took her seat at the table

again. "I know it must be hard to listen to this," she said. "Bottom line, I gave up a fellow American. I understand that. But...I feel like.... You're the only person on earth who might—"

"What?"

Clare looked down and didn't answer; the grief Rick had noticed when he first saw her intensified then, spread all through her, was visible in the way her shoulders slumped and her head hung over the table.

"All right," Rick said. He reached across the table to place his hand over hers.

She slid her hand away. "I had to take them to the house. I was worried because I knew the Kurds had children: two little girls and an infant. They assured me

ing to be told what was coming. He held his head in his hands, covering his eyes.

"We went in two cars. Othman went in with four others. They left me in the car with a driver and another guy in the backseat, next to me. All I heard was the gunfire. It didn't last long. Othman came out alone, bleeding and limping. He pulled me out of the car, spit in my face and left me there."

"The children?" Rick said, and when he looked up, Clare was nodding. Her eyes were dry, and her face was tight, hard.

"When I went in the house—" she said, and then apparently couldn't go on, though her expression remained unchanged.

"All of them?" Rick pressed.

"All of them," she said angrily, as if throwing the words in his face, as if to say, *If you have to know, here it is.* "The infant was shot in the face," she said. "Most of its head was gone."

"All right," Rick said, wanting her to stop. "All right."

Then they were both quiet for a long while as wind battered the house, banging into windows and pummeling doors as if desperate to get in. The dim light outside faded away altogether, and the darkness of the spaces surrounding the kitchen grew more pronounced until it felt to Rick like their brightly lit kitchen table, situated directly under a ceiling light, was at the center of a stage, and in the surrounding darkness an audience sat quietly watching them. After a while

he got up and turned on more lights. He looked out the living room's glass doors and saw the wind had blown the snow in the yard up against the fence, where it was sculpting it in waves, like a mountain's hollows and rises. Though the wind was blowing hard, it was snowing only lightly now. Not much more had accumulated since he had returned from the beach.

When he sat down again at the table, he picked up the conversation where they had left off. "So he lied to you," he said, "this Othman. He told you they would just take Sabiha, but then they executed the whole family."

Clare was staring at her teacup, 117



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they only wanted Sabiha. That once they had her, they'd let me go and no one else would be hurt. They told me this on their honor—which means something to them. I knew they'd do what they said. I didn't tell them," she added, tapping one finger on the table for emphasis, "until I had Othman's word. They would take Sabiha, and they would let me go. I had his word. *She* was the combatant," she said, as if making her argument to Rick. "*She* set all this in motion." She had to pause for a breath. "I knew they'd let me go," she said, almost in a whisper. "What I didn't count on was that Sabiha might be prepared to resist such an exchange."

"Jesus," Rick said, knowing without hav-

holding it in both hands, looking a million miles away. She pulled herself out of her own thoughts and looked up at Rick as if surprised to find him there. "No," she said, "I don't think that's what happened. Othman—on his own terms—could be trusted. No," she repeated, "they went in; Sabiha, the Kurds, they defended themselves reflexively, probably before anything could be said. And once the guns were out.... Once the shooting started...."

"But the Kurd family—"

"They were working with Sabiha." Clare got up from the table. She sounded frustrated. "You're not getting this," she said. "The Kurds were ours. Sabiha was ours. They were all working for us. Once I understood that Sabiha was ours, the rest was obvious. That's how I knew where she'd be. Do you get that?" she asked, her words clipped and angry.

"Okay," Rick said. "I didn't fully—"

"There were enough weapons in that house," she said, as if she hadn't even heard Rick try to explain himself. She got up and started toward the bedroom stairs, then turned around in the kitchen doorway. "All their guns were current U.S. issue," she said. "Not the ancient shit the Iraqis use. There was enough weaponry for a small army. Plus sophisticated communications in a back room."

"All right," Rick said, raising his voice to get her attention. "Still, you don't know what happened in that house. You don't know who's responsible—"

"I'm responsible," she said, as if there were no question.

"No—"

"Please, Rick," she said, "I'm not interested in equivocations. I knew what I was doing. I traded Sabiha's life for mine. It's basically that simple. And the rest.... The children.... I have to live with that. I'm responsible." She sat down on the stairs, more dropped than sat, as if all the strength suddenly went out of her. "Listen to me, Dad," she said. "No one knows any of this for certain. I've told them all that I was kidnapped, held and then brought to that house and kept in the car when Othman and the others went in. From the car, I heard gunfire. When Othman came out wounded and in a panic, I was able to escape. I jumped out of the backseat as the car screeched away." She made a horrible, pained sound that Rick saw was supposed to be a laugh. "It's that last part," she said, "that nobody's buying."

"You don't think," Rick said, "if you explained what happened fully—"

"To whom?" Clare raised her voice as if shocked at the prospect of explaining herself to someone. "Rick, do you understand? If one of Sabiha's circle gets it in her head that I was sympathetic with the insurgents, if one of her good friends, let's say someone who loved her, who went to Harvard or Yale with her—Yale Drama, given the actor she

was—if one of them gets it in her head that I was working with that group, I can disappear. Or even if someone decides I should be punished—it's not hard to interpret what I did as treason—I wind up in some black hole in Romania as an enemy combatant, where I can be raped, tortured, killed, with no recourse to you or anyone. You can tear your hair out all you please. Do you understand? Do you understand the danger?"

Rick didn't say anything. He watched her sitting on the stairs, her eyes full of anger and fear. After a moment he nodded.

"I think it's touch and go as it is," she said. "They figure— They're not dumb. They can figure out that I pretty much must have made some kind of deal to get out of that situation alive. But they don't know. The Times doesn't know. No one knows for sure. It could have happened the way I said. And as long as they don't know, I'll be all right. I think I'll be all right."

"Okay," Rick said. He wanted to touch her, to comfort her in some way because she was his daughter, to say something about the horrors of war, about the ter-

*"All their guns were current
U.S. issue," she said.
"There was enough weaponry
for a small army. Plus
sophisticated communications
in a back room."*

rible things it makes people do—but he knew better. He heard himself whisper, "You don't want me to say anything, do you, Clare? You just need me to listen."

She looked down at her feet and then back up to Rick as if that weren't quite it, as if there were something else she needed from him. She watched him for a long moment before speaking again. "I was thinking of you," she said, in a whisper even lower than his, as if there might be someone listening and they were both trying hard not to be heard. "You lost your wife to this. You shouldn't lose your daughter." She paused and then added, "I kept imagining you watching a videotape of my getting beheaded. I kept imagining what that would do to you. Mom's murder killed most of you. You kind of died there with her, didn't you? You didn't really survive it. Not really."

"You don't," he said without thinking. "You don't. Not really."

Clare watched him, and for an instant an expression very near contempt seemed to cross her face. Then she pulled herself to her feet and climbed the stairs to her old bedroom.

For more than an hour Rick sat quietly at the kitchen table in the hope that Clare might come down for a drink of water or something to eat. In the quiet house even the softest sounds she made in her bedroom drifted down the stairs. He heard her rise and pace the floor. He heard her lie down and get up again. He heard the soft electronic sounds her cell phone made as she dialed numbers three times in the space of an hour or so, each time leaving what sounded like a brief message on someone's machine. Eventually he got up and turned off the lights in the kitchen and the surrounding rooms so he could stretch out on the couch in the dark.

After a while a plow went past the house, its revolving orange light flashing through the room, accompanied by the rhythmically repeating warning tones of the vehicle and the rough scraping noise of the massive blade pushing along the street, throwing off the accumulated snow. He went to the front door to see how much snow the plow had piled up in his driveway and found a small hill of it there, maybe three feet high. It was still snowing, but lightly. In the night sky, thick bands of gray clouds tumbled and rolled low and fast, pushed along by powerful bursts of wind. From behind a double-insulated glass door, Rick listened to an animal wind snarling and watched it twist and swirl, given shape and body by the haze of snow it carried and the artificial light from the street's lampposts.

When, eventually, he closed the door, he found himself facing the dark interior of his house. It was still relatively early in the evening, and he considered turning on the television to watch the news and weather, but the prospect of all that noise seemed impossible. Instead, he made his way through the dark house to his den, where he turned on the desk lamp so he could look through the library of books lining the bookcases built into the den's four walls. He thought he might start one of the several novels he had bought recently but found himself gravitating toward his collection of books on the history and politics of the Middle East. His own experience there and Clare's work had fostered a longtime interest in the region. He pulled out a recent volume on the American occupation of Iraq, but as soon as he held the book in his hand he felt an overwhelming tiredness, as if the book somehow radiated all the endless heartache that had poured out of that little corner of the world, back to the birth of Islam, the birth of Christianity, back to the ancient tribes of the Jews and before. He put it back on the shelf and went down to the living room couch with a novel.

From where he was stretched out he could see up the stairs and along the hallway all the way back to Clare's room. A yellow wash of light seeped out from

under her closed door. He placed the novel on his chest as he sorted through his memories: Clare as a baby asleep on his shoulder, Clare as a child in her favorite black floppy hat, Clare in college.... The fight they'd had when she came home on break with a tattoo of a red lynx peering out of a protective green forest that covered a significant portion of her shoulder blade. He'd been furious. She'd been defiant. He told her it looked like the kind of tattoo a sailor on a binge might get—and when her eyes lit up with pleasure at the comparison, he'd stomped away into the den and locked the door. On the couch, with the wind screeching at the window, he smiled at that, at locking the door as if she might try to break it down to get to him. With the novel still open on his chest, he fell asleep, recalling a night when she was a baby, not long after Vivian's death. She had a cold and couldn't sleep, and he had walked her back and forth in her bedroom, rocking her as he paced, her head on his shoulder, patting her on the back and talking to her softly until her weight shifted in the subtle way it does with sleep.

When he opened his eyes again, there was a pillow under his head, and he was covered with Clare's quilted down comforter. At about the same moment he registered the familiar bluish light filling the living room window and figured out it was early morning, Clare pushed in through the front door, bundled up and carrying a snow shovel. She was followed by an icy blast of air that bullied its way into the house. She smiled shyly at him and said, "Good morning. I tried not to wake you." She stomped her feet, kicking off snow, and went about taking off her gloves and coat.

"What are you doing up so early?" He wrapped the quilt around him and shuffled to the window, where he saw she had already shoveled out the driveway. In the road a pair of telephone lines were down, the raw blond wood spiked savagely where the poles had snapped, high, near the transformers. A repair

crew was already out there working. "Do we have power?" he asked.

"Not yet. You want some orange juice?" Clare shook off the cold and started for the kitchen. She had on boots and jeans and a black turtleneck sweater that made her fair skin look pale and not particularly healthy. "Phone guys said it'd be a couple of hours still."

Rick followed her into the kitchen, holding the quilt wrapped around his shoulders, the length of it dragging behind him like a bridal train. "What's—why are you up so early?" It was the only question he could manage.

Clare stood in front of the refrigerator, holding a glass of orange juice. "Didn't actually go to sleep. I was out there at around 3:30, and—" She sipped her juice and pulled her cell phone out of the pocket of her jeans. "It's a little after seven now."

Rick reached out from under the quilt to rub his eyes. He couldn't quite grasp what was going on. "Why," he asked, "would you shovel the driveway by yourself in the middle of the night?"

"Because someone will be here in a few minutes," she said, and the way she said it made it clear she understood this would not make Rick happy and she was sorry about that. She added, as if to be sure he understood, "I'll be leaving with him, soon as he gets here."

Rick looked out the kitchen window into the backyard, to be sure he hadn't dreamed the whole snowstorm. "In this weather? Where are you going? Are the roads even passable?" He sat down at the kitchen table. "Clare...."

"Storm of the century dumped about a foot and a half of snow before it moved out to sea." She rinsed her glass out in the sink. "The major arteries are all clear. Some of the back roads are still a mess, but the guy drives a Land Rover, so—roads shouldn't be a problem."

"But why?"

Before Clare could answer, her cell phone rang. She flipped it open, listened a second and then went to the living room window. "You're two houses

away," she said into the phone. "We're the driveway with the red Jeep, on your left. I'll be right out."

"I don't believe this!" Rick said. "He's not even going to come in? Why not? Who is this guy, Clare?"

"Just a guy," she said, and she snapped her phone closed.

Rick took her by the arms and held her in front of him. "You can't just leave with some guy and I have no idea—"

"All right, listen." She stepped back out of his grasp. "He's someone who's been assigned to protect me from threats—"

"What threats?"

"Let me finish. I don't know what threats either. He won't— He says he can't get into particulars."

"Well, who is he?" Rick asked, his voice shooting up again. "Do you know for sure who he is?"

"He's Homeland Security," Clare said, as if running out of patience, "and I have to go."

"Do you believe him? That he's protecting you—"

"No," she said. "Please. He's here to make sure I don't go anywhere before they all decide what to do about me."

"Before who all decides?"

"I can't—" Clare pushed past him and started up the stairs to her bedroom. "I'm sorry, Dad," she called back. "I really—I have to go."

Rick dropped the quilt and followed her. With the power out, the house was dark and chilly as a cave. "Is there something else going on that I don't know about, Clare?" He asked his question alone in the shadowy hall, Clare having already disappeared into her room. "Is there something you're not telling me?" When he reached her room, he met her in the doorway, a red backpack flung over one shoulder as she pulled a black suitcase behind her. "Is there?" he asked again.

"I have to go," she said, looking through him. She pushed past him out into the hall.

Rick took her by the arm. "For God's sake," he said. "Clare! You can't



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just leave! I don't even— What happened? Did the *Times* call? Are you going back to work? Are you in trouble? Are you in any danger? You can't just walk off and leave me without any idea what's going on! It's—"

"All right," she said, cutting him off by putting her hand flat against his chest. "Calm down."

Rick let go of her arm and put his hands up. His heart was beating fast enough to worry him. "I'm sorry," he said. "But this is—"

"Okay," she said, and then she looked at him hard for a long moment, and Rick thought that, again, he saw something close to contempt in her eyes.

"Have I done something?" he asked. They stood face-to-face in the dark hall.

"Look, Dad," she said, "I don't know what's happening with me. Please? All I know is, I have to go."

"At least tell me where you're going, then. Is this about the *Times*? Did they call?"

"I called them," she said. "I asked for an indefinite leave, which they were more than happy to grant."

"But why? I thought you wanted—"

"No," she said, as if the issue were decided. "I did want to go back." Her voice rose a little. "I thought I could put it all out of mind, put it all behind me. That I didn't have to—" She stopped and shook her head, as if she didn't want to say what she was thinking.

"Are you going to tell them what happened?" Rick said. "You said you couldn't do that. You said that was impossible."

"I don't know what I'm going to do." She looked down the hall toward the living room, and at the same moment her phone rang again. She told the voice on the other end that she was on her way out the door, and then she touched Rick's arm gently after putting the phone back in her pocket. "I have to go," she said and rolled her suitcase behind her down the stairs and to the front door, where she stopped to put on her winter gear.

"You can work in the States," Rick said. "You can work for another paper."

"Maybe." Clare reached down below her knees and pulled up the long zipper to her coat. "But wherever I go, there'll be whispers." She slung her backpack over her shoulder again. "I don't think it's going to work, lying about it." She closed her eyes as if to give herself a much-needed moment of stillness. "I think I may just have to deal with it."

Rick grabbed her suitcase as she reached for it. "What does that mean, deal with it?" he said. "You said you couldn't tell them. You said it would put you in too much danger."

Clare opened the door, but before she stepped out, she said, "I don't want to run away, Dad. I don't think I can live like that, hiding out." Suddenly she seemed angry again. "This whole situation is

miserable. I need to think it through. But I can't—" She stopped and took a breath and shook off the anger. "I can't run away. I don't think, for me— I don't think that will work."

Outside, when Rick hesitated in the doorway, she said, "You have my cell number," and then she held his head in her hands and kissed him hard on the forehead before taking her suitcase from him and making her way carefully to a black Land Rover waiting in the mouth of the driveway.

Past the Land Rover, farther up the street, two more poles were down. When Rick took a few steps out into the cold so he could see in the opposite direction, past the row of hedges that lined his yard, he saw several more poles snapped, their wires and wood and transformers littering the snow-covered blacktop along with garbage cans, a patio table, roof tiles and various chunks and pieces of debris. He took one quick step toward the driveway, thinking he had to stop Clare from trying to drive through that mess, but he stopped just as quickly as he had lurched forward. He hunched his shoulders against the wind. In the driveway, Clare had just thrown her suitcase into the back of the Rover, and she was moving toward the passenger door as she looked up the street. When she stopped a moment to survey the damage, she pulled up her hood, and no sooner had she done so than the wind blew it off again and her long hair whipped around her head—and the vision from the beach came back to him. He saw Clare duck down and disappear into the car, and he saw her standing in the turbulent water, being hauled under by a wave. Before he could think of anything to do, she was slowly driving away, the black car winding along the street—but it felt as if she were being dragged out to sea.

For a long moment he stood out in the weather as if stunned, and when a blast of wind charged him like a beast, with such ferocity it nearly knocked him down, he noticed a silvery flash of metal against the snow on the driveway—and he knew immediately that it was Clare's cell phone. He hurried down to it, for a confused second thinking he could call her on it, could tell her to come back, she had dropped her phone, and when he realized the absurdity of that, he pressed the phone against his heart, as if it were a token of someone who was lost to him, and he stared out at the road, seeing again and again first the image of a woman being swept away by a storm wave and then Clare driving off in that black car. For what seemed like forever he stood there like that, holding the cell phone to his heart, oblivious to the storm.



STEVE NASH

(continued from page 46)

then say, "You want to see it again?" Who talks the most now?

NASH: Guys don't talk now. They yell to teammates but won't taunt an opponent, probably because there would be fights. Everybody takes things so personally. That's true in the culture, too. People are too sensitive, too easily offended.

PLAYBOY: Were you offended when a few sportswriters said you had won your MVP awards over Shaquille O'Neal, Kobe Bryant and LeBron James because you're white?

NASH: They talked about racism. I said there might be *reverse* racism going on.

PLAYBOY: You meant it may be harder for a white guy in the NBA.

NASH: I didn't say it was the case. I said it was possible.

PLAYBOY: Eminem said that about hip-hop. He felt he had to prove himself twice over because he was white. Do you feel like a minority in your game?

NASH: It's a black man's game. The numbers support that view. The question is, What does it mean to me? Nothing. The ball is orange.

PLAYBOY: What about the league? Is the NBA worried about its image?

NASH: The league is concerned. All businesses are concerned about their public image.

PLAYBOY: You took a political stand at the 2003 All-Star Game, wearing a T-shirt that read NO WAR—SHOOT FOR PEACE. Opposing the invasion of Iraq seems awfully smart now. Do you feel vindicated?

NASH: I don't need to feel vindicated about Iraq. Look, it's not about "I told you so." I just don't believe in aggressive war. Aggression should be a last resort. I didn't think we had done all we could to find weapons of mass destruction before launching an invasion. That's all. I wasn't being anti-American or anti-Bush. And I didn't say you have to believe what I believe. I just wanted everyone to try to be a little more informed, to dig a little deeper.

PLAYBOY: You're not anti-Bush?

NASH: I don't want to spend time being anti-anyone. But I don't necessarily agree with his politics.

PLAYBOY: What now? Are we still in Iraq only because there's no face-saving way out?

NASH: That seems clear. I think everyone, even people who wanted to go to war, wishes there were a good way out.

PLAYBOY: Are Americans more warlike than Canadians?

NASH: I suppose. But then we don't have the means to go sticking our nose in everybody's business. We're just Canada.

PLAYBOY: You stayed on message when you spoke to Santa Clara students last year on the day the school retired your number. "Dig deeper," you said. "Get involved in the world."

NASH: I remember being that age. You can get detached from the world. I wanted them to know they're part of this machine, this mechanism we call society. They've got to be more aware, more connected, because they've got a part to play locally, nationally and even globally.

PLAYBOY: Doesn't sports distract people from all that?

NASH: Yeah, and not just sports. Entertainment has grown tenfold since my childhood. I didn't have the Internet, video games, DVDs, pay TV, satellite TV. Journalism isn't about issues anymore—it's entertainment too.

PLAYBOY: Come on, we're talking issues in a magazine that's all about sober discussion of the issues and nothing else.

NASH: We're all under that big entertainment umbrella.

PLAYBOY: Give us an example.

NASH: We can't swear anymore. As of this year, it's a technical foul. The league wants us to be as presentable as possible. And this can affect games—you get a technical and a \$1,000 fine.

PLAYBOY: You could Cubanize: You could say, "I don't care what it costs. Fuck it—I'm for free speech!"

NASH: You have to pick your spots. I'd rather take that \$1,000 and give it to charity than give it to the Man.

PLAYBOY: That sounds very 1960s. Is there a list of verboten words? Can you say *crap*?

NASH: I don't know. But where do you draw the line? At what point does the game get so *Leave It to Beaver* that all the passion and personality go out of it? We're coming awfully close to finding out.

PLAYBOY: You're not a suit-and-tie guy. When you rejoined the Suns, you wore golf shoes to the press conference. What do you think of the NBA dress code?

NASH: It's unfortunate. We're grown men. But there are more important things to worry about.

PLAYBOY: Bill Walton once called you the least athletic point guard in the NBA. Did you want to pop him one?

NASH: As far as running and jumping, he's probably right. I think that's what he meant.

PLAYBOY: That's charitable of you. A lot of great athletes are motivated by grudges—they'll turn some mild criticism into a war. Jordan was like that. So is Tiger Woods.

NASH: That's not fun. I'd rather enjoy my career than go negative.

PLAYBOY: True or false: Cuban screwed up by letting you go.

NASH: [Grinning] He could have let someone else go, for sure, but I don't have a grudge. Coming to Phoenix was best for me and my family. We love it here.

PLAYBOY: You and your wife have twins, Isabella and Lourdes. Nowitzki is their godfather. Do your kids know what you do for a living?

NASH: They know I play basketball, but they're only two years old. They're not so

clear on the idea of a job. When they see basketball on TV they say, "Papa!"

PLAYBOY: You shaved your head last year, and it made the news in Canada. Were your daughters shocked?

NASH: I shaved it right in front of them. They laughed. "Still Papa!"

PLAYBOY: Tell us about the ball. At the beginning of the season, the NBA introduced a new synthetic basketball, ditching the old leather one. Did the league consult the players?

NASH: We had zero input.

PLAYBOY: The NBA consulted some ex-players but sprang the change on you.

NASH: And it changed the game. It affected your timing. Not a lot but enough to make more turnovers, especially early in the season. The old leather ball had more touch to it—when it hit your hand or the backboard, it had a little give. The new ball hit the glass and went *thud*. When a pass was deflected, the ball didn't skip off a guy's hand; it just died.

PLAYBOY: The league said the new ball was more durable. Was it a problem that balls were wearing out during games?

NASH: No, but if the new ball was better for the environment, I was okay with it.

PLAYBOY: Come on! The new ball left little cuts in players' hands. Finally the league gave up and went back to the old leather model. You're telling us you'd be okay with that synthetic basketball?

NASH: More than okay. If it's better for animals or the environment, I would back it.

PLAYBOY: Is it true you've never dunked a basketball?

NASH: No, I dunked a few times in high school, just never in the NBA.

PLAYBOY: Is dunking too aggressive for you?

NASH: It's just not part of my game. And I don't jump as high as I did in high school.

PLAYBOY: What's the funniest moment you've had on court?

NASH: Suns against Dallas, my first play-off game back in Dallas after I signed with the Suns. My first shot. I went up for a three-pointer, and somehow my thumb caught in the drawstring of my shorts. I was trying to go up, but my thumb was stuck and I threw up this one-handed shot—air ball.

PLAYBOY: You're known for your shooting form. Other than keeping your palm to the ceiling just before release, what's the key to a perfect jumper?

NASH: The legs. Perfect technique up top won't help unless you propel the shot with your legs.

PLAYBOY: How about hygiene? When your hair is long, sportswriters call it long and unwashed.

NASH: Wrong. I wash my hair every day. Don't you?

PLAYBOY: We've talked for a couple of hours, and you're clearly uncomfortable. Are you itching to get back to practice?

NASH: It's my back. It's tough to sit in a chair for too long.

PLAYBOY: Our bad—we should have done this lying down.

NASH: No, it's okay.

PLAYBOY: We'll finish fast. What's your ultimate goal?

NASH: I don't know yet. To play till I'm not capable of playing anymore.

PLAYBOY: How about coaching?

NASH: That doesn't grab me, at least not yet. Charity, maybe.

PLAYBOY: What has been the best part of your MVP run in Phoenix?

NASH: My teammates. We've had a great time. There's real chemistry on this team: jokes, friendships. For me, that's what lasts. You don't necessarily remember games, baskets and plays. You remember the bus, the plane, the locker room and being with your teammates. That's what makes it fun—that and the minutes on the floor.

PLAYBOY: With you, Shawn Marion and Amare Stoudemire, Phoenix has three super-Suns. Pick a winner in this year's NBA Finals.

NASH: I'm not psychic; there are a lot of factors. We've got to be healthy. Amare came into the season after missing a

year, and our challenge was to work him back into the group. Now we have to match up against the best the league can throw at us. Winning in the NBA is not a simple equation, so I'm not predicting. But even if we don't win, we'll be fun to watch.

PLAYBOY: Does a gym rat like you fall asleep and dream of basketball?

NASH: I do. Not every night but frequently. I'll dream I'm on the court with the ball in my hand.

PLAYBOY: When Shaq did the *Playboy Interview*, he told us he dreamed he could fly.

NASH: Not me. I just play as usual.

PLAYBOY: Is the dream realistic? You're in a Suns uniform, looking for Stoudemire breaking for the basket?

NASH: Yes, but I'm...stuck. You know how sometimes you know what to do but can't do it?

PLAYBOY: You're paralyzed.

NASH: Yeah. I know what the play is, but I can't get the ball out of my hand.

PLAYBOY: Freudian shrinks are hereby invited to interpret this dream.

NASH: It's insecurity, probably.

PLAYBOY: But you're a celebrity now—

NASH: Oh, please.

PLAYBOY: *Time* magazine named you

one of the world's 100 most influential people. There was a party for you: Oprah, Bono, Hillary Clinton, the pope, George Clooney, the Dixie Chicks, Steve Nash....

NASH: It was nice to be in the top 100, but I never got an invitation to the party. Maybe I'm not that influential.

PLAYBOY: Charles Barkley wrote your short bio for *Time*, saying how marvelous you are.

NASH: I was surprised and flattered. Charles is great: an unbelievable player, an entertainer, a guy who's not afraid to be himself.

PLAYBOY: What about his right-wing politics?

NASH: I'm sick of everyone being so partisan. He's right, you're left—that's part of the problem. We should address each issue on its merits and stop fighting over right and left.

PLAYBOY: You made a funny ad for TNT, Barkley's network, with Sacha Baron Cohen. Were you an Ali G fan?

NASH: Huge. I was watching him on British TV before he was on HBO, before he was Borat. The TNT ad was a good time, but of course he got a little edgy for TNT, and some of the best stuff never appeared. At one point he turned to me and said, "Did you ever let one of your plums fall out of your shorts to distract the opposition?" That never made the commercial.

PLAYBOY: Owen Wilson's another famous buddy of yours.

NASH: Owen's a fantastic guy, a Dallas guy—we met when I was with the Mavericks. We've gone out for a drink a time or two. And we play soccertennis.

PLAYBOY: Soccer and tennis?

NASH: No, soccertennis. It's Owen's game: kicking a soccer ball around on a tennis court, with tennis rules. You kick the ball to serve. It's tricky.

PLAYBOY: But you're the soccer king. Do you charge the net and do an upside-down scissor-kick volley?

NASH: Not yet. I've tried knocking volleys off my head, but I'm not too good at it. Owen's good—he beat me the last time we played, and I want a rematch. We need to set up a soccertennis showdown to settle this once and for all.

PLAYBOY: At one point your cell phone ringtone was the national anthem "O Canada." Have you changed it to "Promiscuous"?

NASH: I changed it to vibrate.

PLAYBOY: Close enough. And now that you're a celeb, you must have celebrity friends on speed dial. Wilson, Furtado, Nowitzki....

NASH: Sure, I've got friends in my phone, but I'd hate to list them here.

PLAYBOY: You won't give us Furtado's phone number?

NASH: Come on—I've probably come across as a big enough cheeseball in this interview.



"Yes, it is a very nice one, Mr. Grant, but the truth is, there just aren't that many calls for male porn stars."



BASEBALL

(continued from page 68)

seasons and managed to work only 205% innings during the five-year span.



Arizona

Last season: 76–86, tied for fourth, 12 games out. The Diamondbacks went on a 3–20 stretch that began the day before federal agents raided reliever Jason Grimsley's home in search of performance-enhancing drugs. That's the worst stretch in the majors since Detroit went 3–25 to open the 2003 season.

Off-season focus: Arizona wanted to add a lefty to the rotation; the team found two. It acquired Doug Davis from Milwaukee in a deal that cost it right-hander Claudio Vargas and catcher Johnny Estrada. Then it took on the financial liability of 43-year-old Randy Johnson, who is coming off back surgery.



Good Eye

Lowest percentage of swings at balls out of the strike zone (minimum 502 plate appearances): Scott Hatteberg, Reds (16.9); Nick Johnson, Nationals (17.6); Jason Giambi, Yankees (18.5); Kevin Youkilis, Red Sox (19.1); Pat Burrell, Phillies (19.5).

In-season prognosis: Arizona thinks it has better starting pitching than any other team in its division, but its rotation may be undermined by a suspect bullpen without a serious closer candidate. The real concern, however, is the lack of an offensive threat in the middle of the lineup.

The Zito factor: Right-hander Russ Ortiz was released in 2006 with two and a half years remaining on his four-year, \$33 million contract. And to think Jeff Moorad, his onetime agent, now runs the Diamondbacks.



Colorado

Last season: 76–86, tied for fourth, 12 games out. Colorado's 4.66 ERA (13th in the NL) was a franchise record. It marked the first time the Rockies finished better than second worst in the NL and only the fourth time they managed not to finish last.

Off-season focus: Improved rotation depth and center-field play were key. The answer came in one deal, with Jason Jennings heading to Houston for center fielder Willy Taveras and pitchers Jason Hirsh and Taylor Buchholz. Taveras isn't a game breaker, but no impact center fielders were on the market. The Rockies also acquired right-hander Rodrigo Lopez, Baltimore's opening-day starter in 2006, who was begging to get away from Orioles pitching coach Leo Mazzone. The team will also take a look at Mexican lefty Oscar Rivera to augment Byung-Hyun Kim and Josh

Fogg, the four and five starters a year ago. **In-season prognosis:** Colorado has announced that this year will mark its beginning as a legitimate contender, thanks to the build-from-within program that has added shortstop Troy Tulowitzki and catcher Chris Iannetto to the regular lineup, joining previous homegrown players such as first baseman Todd Helton, third baseman Garrett Atkins, left fielder Matt Holliday and right fielder Brad Hawpe.

The Zito factor: Five years and \$51 million for lefty Denny Neagle, a fly-ball pitcher in a home run park? Add a few off-field incidents and it's obvious why the Rockies ate the final \$16 million of his contract after he went 19–23 with a 5.57 ERA over the first three years.



San Diego

Last season: 88–74. The Padres tied for first but wound up NL West champs because of their head-to-head record against the Dodgers. They lost to St. Louis in four games in the Division Series. They were 45–36 on the road, second best in the NL behind the Mets.

Off-season focus: After 12 years on the job, manager Bruce Bochy was told he could look elsewhere, and he saw something he liked in San Francisco. The Padres need a run producer, but rather than add one, they signed 41-year-old Greg Maddux; it took a two-year guarantee to get the 333-game winner. They also got relievers Heath Bell and Royce Ring in a trade with the Mets.



Bad Eye

Highest percentage of swings at balls out of the strike zone (minimum 502 plate appearances): Angel Berroa, Royals (48.2); Vladimir Guerrero, Angels (47.1); A.J. Pierzynski, White Sox (46.6); Jeff Francoeur, Braves (45.2); Ivan Rodriguez, Tigers (44.6).

In-season prognosis: San Diego can always hang around because the team emphasizes pitching under the leadership of GM Kevin Towers, a onetime pitcher, and it plays in baseball's most pitching-friendly ballpark.

The Zito factor: Towers dealt for Randy Myers in 1991, even though Myers had \$12 million remaining on his contract and had such severe arm problems he was never able to contribute for the Padres.



San Francisco

Last season: 76–85, third place, 11½ games out. Former manager Felipe Alou, trying to hold together an old team, used 87 starting lineups in 161 games last season.

Off-season focus: The team talked about getting younger but then turned around and re-signed Barry Bonds and Ray Durham, refused to get serious on

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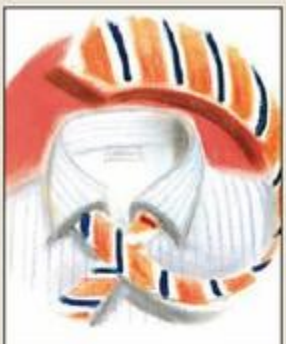
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WHERE &

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 26, 29-30, 92-97 and 142-143, check the listings below to find the stores nearest you.



HUGO-BOSS. *Boss Orange*, 800-HUGO-BOSS. *Boss Selection*, 800-HUGO-BOSS. *Calvin Klein*, available at Macy's. *Calvin Klein Collection*, 877-256-7373. *Calvin Klein Jeans*, available at Macy's. *Gant*, 888-645-GANT. *Gordon Rush*, gordonrush.com. *Hickey*, available at select Neiman Marcus locations. *Hugo*, 800-HUGO-BOSS.

Jasper Conran, available at Jasper Conran in London. *J. Crew*, jcrew.com. *J. Lindeberg*, jlindeberg.com. *John Varvatos*, johnvarvatos.com. *John Varvatos Star USA*, johnvarvatos.com. *Modern Amusement*, modernamusement.com. *Pantherella for the British Apparel Collection*, britishapparel.com. *Robert Talbott*, roberttalbott.com. *Steven by Steve Madden*, stevemadden.com. *Ted Baker London*, 718-336-6260. *TX by Timex*, available at select Bloomingdale's locations. *Uniqlo*, 917-237-8800. *Z Zegna*, available at select Ermeneigildo Zegna boutiques. *Zegna Sport*, available at Saks Fifth Avenue.

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Pages 142-143: *Baxter of California*, baxterofcalifornia.com. *Dart Coat Hooks*, elsewares.com. *DC Comics Covergirls*, rizzoliusa.com. *Escort*, escortradar.com. *Kodak*, kodak.com. *Mercedes-Benz*, accessories.mbusa.com. *Mio DigiWalker*, miogps.com. *Nokia*, nokia.com. *War on Terror: The Boardgame*, waronterrortheboardgame.com.

GAMES

Page 26: *AmBX*, ambx.com. *Command & Conquer 3: Tiberium Wars*, ea.com. *D-Box*, d-box.com. *The Godfather Blackhand Edition*, ea.com. *Heatseeker*, codemasters.com. *Monster Madness*, southpeakgames.com. *Mortal Kombat: Armageddon*, midway.com. *Prince of Persia Rival Swords*, ubi.com. *Runaway: The Dream of the Turtle*, cdv.de. *SSX Blur*, easportsbig.com. *Tritton*, trittontechnologies.com. *Virtua Tennis 3*, sega.com.

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a three-year deal for right-hander Jason Schmidt and gave a seven-year guaranteed contract to Barry Zito. That left it with the last-hurrah contingent of infielder Rich Aurilia, first baseman Ryan Klesko and outfielder Dave Roberts.

In-season prognosis: The Giants have the makings of a solid rotation with Zito, Matt Cain, Matt Morris and Noah Lowry, but the bullpen is a nightmare without a legitimate closer. New manager Bruce Bochy worked wonders in San Diego, but he'll need a miracle to win here.

The Zito factor: Right-hander Armando Benitez somehow persuaded the Giants to give him a three-year, \$21.5 million deal, but midway through 2006, the second year of the deal, the Giants were second-guessing themselves. Not only was Benitez a late-inning disaster but he blamed teammates for his failures.

AL East



New York

Last season: 97-65, finished first but lost to Detroit in four games in the first round of the postseason. The Yankees have an All-Star at eight of nine lineup spots; first base is the only exception.

Off-season focus: The Yanks' plan was to get younger and cheaper. Neither should have been difficult, considering how old and expensive they were in 2006. They did get a bit younger, particularly by trading Gary Sheffield and Randy Johnson. But cheaper? Signing left-hander Andy Pettitte took



Money Pitch

Pitchers with most called third strikes with runners in scoring position: Ted Lilly, Blue Jays (21); Barry Zito, A's (18); Tom Glavine, Mets (17); Tim Hudson, Braves (17); Aaron Harang, Reds (15).

up \$16 million of the \$27 million saved by moving Sheffield and Johnson, and if the Yankees eventually lure Roger Clemens, they'll need more than the remaining \$11 million to sign him.

In-season prognosis: The lineup alone ensures the Yankees will be a factor, and Pettitte's addition should improve the rotation. The bullpen has a few question marks, but closer Mariano Rivera provides the exclamation point at the end.

The Zito factor: Right-hander Carl Pavano is headed into the final year of his four-year, almost \$40 million contract, and he hasn't pitched in the big leagues since June 2005. He was 4-6 with a 4.77 ERA for the Yankees before his series of sidelining injuries began.



Boston

Last season: 86-76, third place, 11 games out. After leading the majors in runs scored

the previous three seasons, the Red Sox scored 820 runs in 2006, 90 fewer than in 2005 and just sixth best in the AL.

Off-season focus: The team was willing to give up defense to build offense, which is why it brought in outfielder J.D. Drew and shortstop Julio Lugo while saying good-bye to shortstop Alex Gonzalez, right fielder Trot Nixon and second baseman Mark Loretta. The team won the right to sign Daisuke Matsuzaka to fill out the rotation and then strengthened the bullpen with right-handers Brendan Donnelly, Joel Pineiro and Runelvys Hernandez, plus left-handers J.C. Romero and Hideki Okajima.

In-season prognosis: For all their juggling, the Red Sox didn't land the closer they'll need now that Jonathan Papelbon has become a starter. As much as they like a rotation in which Matsuzaka joins Papelbon, Josh Beckett, Jon Lester, Curt Schilling and Tim Wakefield, someone has to get the 27th out.



Almost Gone

Batters with most fly-ball outs of 380 feet or more: Garrett Atkins, Rockies (24); Mike Cameron, Padres (22); Eric Chavez, A's (16); Andruw Jones, Braves (16); Barry Bonds, Giants (15); Vladimir Guerrero, Angels (15); Jorge Posada, Yankees (15); Grady Sizemore, Indians (15); Jim Thome, White Sox (15).

The Zito factor: Matt Clement was 13-6 in the first season of a three-year, \$25.5 million contract two years ago, but he struggled last year before undergoing rotator-cuff and labrum surgery. That means he'll pick up the final \$9.5 million this year while rehabbing.

Jays Toronto

Last season: 87-75, second place, 10 games out. Former first-round draft pick Russ Adams lost starting jobs at shortstop and second base in a stretch of 51 days, including a 17-game stint in Triple-A.

Off-season focus: It got a little blurry. The Jays wanted to add rotation depth but struck out. Free-agent pitcher Gil Meche chose to sign with Kansas City, prompting Toronto GM J.P. Ricciardi to blast his competitiveness. Then the Jays came up short in an attempt to retain Ted Lilly, who opted instead for the Cubs. The team had to settle for free agent John Thomson. Designated hitter Frank Thomas arrived, signing a two-year deal, which may block the development of prospect Adam Lind.

In-season prognosis: The rotation isn't deep enough to get the team into October. Roy Halladay, the one proven winner among the starters, has health concerns. But that's no big deal in Toronto, where A.J. Burnett with his ailing arm was able to secure a five-year, \$55 million deal more than a year ago.

The Zito factor: Third base has been a

headache ever since Ricciardi became GM. As if the five-year deal given Eric Hinske weren't headache enough and the Corey Koskie fiasco hadn't caused enough of a stir, the Jays acquired Troy Glaus from Arizona before the 2006 season. In addition to guaranteeing \$32.75 million for his three remaining years, Toronto added a player option worth \$11.25 million in 2009.



Baltimore

Last season: 70-92, fourth place, 27 games back. The Orioles' 5.25 bullpen ERA last season was 29th in the majors.

Off-season focus: The Orioles beefed up their pen and bench, but in looking for a good bat they had to settle for Aubrey Huff. They spent \$42.4 million on middle-line relievers, signing left-hander Jamie Walker and right-handers Danys Baez, Chad Bradford and Scott Williamson to set up for closer Chris Ray. They also signed catcher Paul Bako and outfielder Jay Payton.

In-season prognosis: The lineup is decent, spiked by superstar shortstop Miguel Tejada and emerging star outfielder Nick Markakis. The bullpen has to be markedly better. The rotation—built around the threesome of Erik Bedard, Daniel Cabrera and Adam Loewen—remains filled with potential that hasn't translated into results.

The Zito factor: Orioles fans shake their heads over the five-year, \$65 million deal given to Albert Belle, who hit 60 home runs his first two years and spent the final three in early retirement with a hip injury. Then there was the three-year, \$22.5 million deal handed to Sidney Ponson, who had more arrests (three) than shutouts (two) before being released.



Tampa Bay

Last season: 61-101, fifth place, 36 games out. The Rays were 20-61 on the road, losing 33 of their final 36 games away from Tampa.

Off-season focus: The Rays were the worst team in the majors; they set an AL record by losing 60 games in which they led. But they didn't make a serious move in the off-season. Their most significant action was signing Japanese infielder Akinori Iwamura, who could wind up at second or third.

In-season prognosis: The Rays have finished out of last place only once in their history, and there's no reason to believe that tradition will change in 2007. Left-hander Scott Kazmir, the rotation's lone bid for respectability, missed the final six weeks of last season, prompting concerns about his arm.

The Zito factor: The Devil Rays haven't been around long, but they are paying the price for trying to force a quick fix. Wilson Alvarez won 17 games during the extent of his five-year, \$35 million deal, and Greg

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Vaughn had just 60 home runs before being released after three years of his four-year, \$34 million deal.

AL Central

Detroit

Last season: 95–67, second place, one game out, earned AL wild card. The Tigers defeated the Yankees in four games in the Division Series and swept Oakland in the ALCS. They lost to St. Louis in five games in the World Series. After five



Lowest percentage of inherited runners to score (minimum 30 inherited runners): Denny Reyes, Twins (13.3); Bobby Jenks, White Sox (16.7); John Grabow, Pirates (17.5); Trevor Miller, Astros (17.5); J.J. Putz, Mariners (17.5).

consecutive 90-loss seasons, Detroit looks for back-to-back seasons of at least 90 wins for the first time since 1983–1984.

Off-season focus: The Tigers knew they were missing a legitimate threat in the middle of their lineup, so they

acquired Gary Sheffield from the Yankees for prospects. Nobody has the bat speed of Sheffield, and manager Jim Leyland knows him well from their World Series days in Florida.

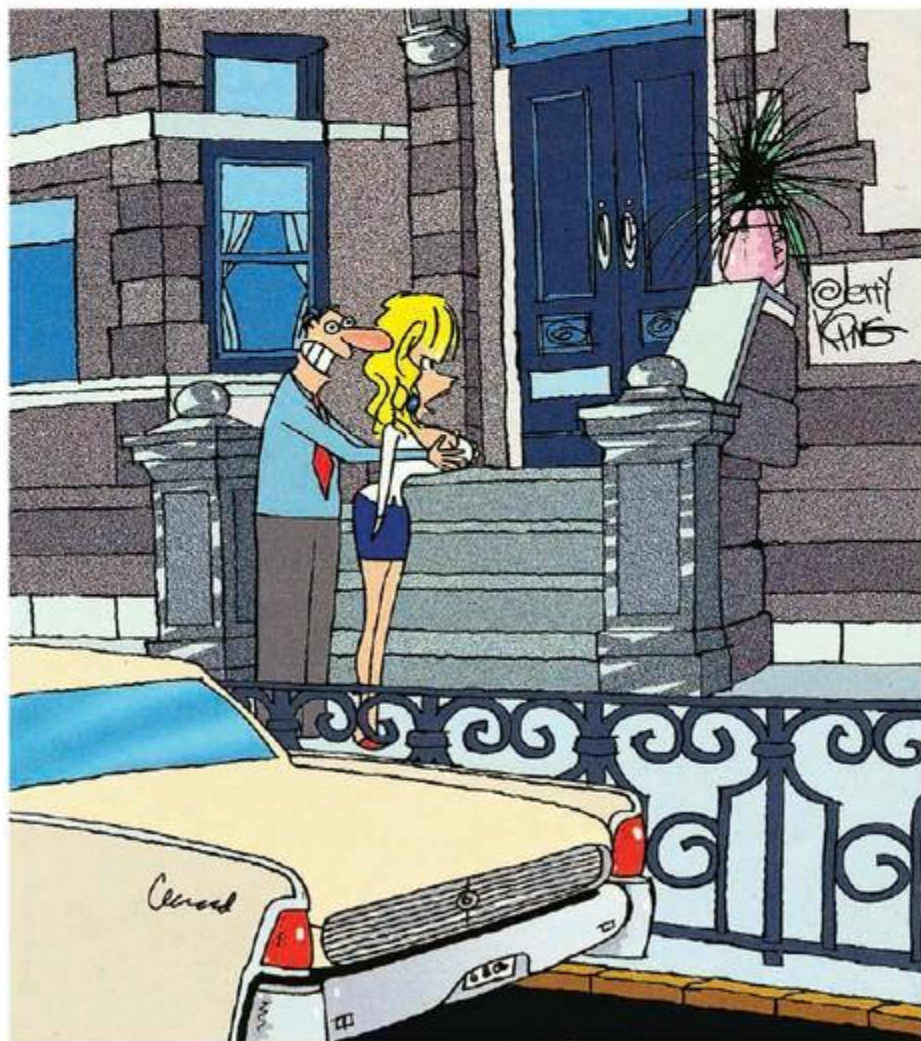
In-season prognosis: The Tigers were the surprise of baseball in 2006, but overachievers can rarely repeat their success. With Sheffield and a solid starting rotation, however, Detroit may be able to.

The Zito factor: The Tigers hoped to wish greatness on Bobby Higginson. He had been a solid player early in his career, and Detroit suddenly decided he was the foundation for the future, giving him a four-year, \$35.4 million deal in 2002. After hitting just 36 home runs, Higginson was released after 10 games in 2005.



Cleveland

Last season: 78–84, fourth place, 18 games out. The Indians lost 16 games in which they led after six innings, which isn't surprising for a bullpen that recorded only 24 saves, the fewest in the majors.



"Usually when someone comes up behind me and says 'guess who,' they have their hands over my eyes."



Lowest ERA in save situations (minimum 20 save opportunities): Francisco Rodriguez, Angels (0.86); Mike Gonzalez, Pirates (1.16); Jonathan Papelbon, Red Sox (1.19); Joe Nathan, Twins (1.34); Mariano Rivera, Yankees (1.55).

Off-season focus: The Indians are trying to resurrect the careers of once-solid relievers they hope will stabilize the pen. They signed right-handers Joe Borowski and Roberto Hernandez, both closers at one time in their careers, and lefty Aaron Fultz. Cleveland also acquired second baseman Josh Barfield, who, along with newly promoted third baseman Andy Marte, should shore up an erratic infield defense.

In-season prognosis: If the bullpen comes together, look out. The Indians were the only team that went to spring training not merely with a set rotation but five quality arms—Paul Byrd, Cliff Lee, C.C. Sabathia, Jeremy Sowers and Jake Westbrook. They have a lineup that can explode, with potential MVP Grady Sizemore, designated hitter Travis Hafner and an offensive threat behind the plate in Victor Martinez.

The Zito factor: The Tribe signed pitcher Wayne Garland to a 10-year, \$2.3 million contract in 1977. After injuring his arm in 1978, Garland had rotator-cuff surgery and was never the same pitcher thereafter.



Minnesota

Last season: 96–66, first place. The Twins were swept by Oakland in the Division Series. They opened the season by losing 33 of their first 58 games but went 71–33 the rest of the way to overtake Detroit.

Off-season focus: Starting pitching was a priority in light of Brad Radke's retirement and left-hander



Highest batting average with runners in scoring position (minimum 100 at bats with RISP): Michael Young, Rangers (.412); Albert Pujols, Cardinals (.397); Freddy Sanchez, Pirates (.386); Lance Berkman, Astros (.382); Derek Jeter, Yankees (.381).

Francisco Liriano's elbow surgery. But GM Terry Ryan won't give up quality young players, so the Twins did nothing dramatic.

In-season prognosis: Never count out the Twins. This year, though, will be a challenge. With the likes of Scott Baker, Boof Bonser, Matt Garza and Glen Perkins, the Twins have quality young arms but no top-flight big-league starter other than Johan Santana. They do have an explosive offense and a bullpen that will protect leads.

The Zito factor: The Twins have always been careful with contracts, but

after Joe Mays was 17-13 in his third big-league season, they decided to buy out his arbitration rights and first year of free agency, giving him a four-year, \$20 million deal. In return they got 18 wins and 26 losses.



Chicago

Last season: 90-72, third place, six games out. The team's ERA climbed a full run, from 3.61 during its 2005 world championship season to 4.61 last year.

Off-season focus: GM Kenny Williams is thinking long term. Cuban



Lowest opponents' batting average with two strikes (minimum 500 batters faced): Cole Hamels, Phillies (.120); Josh Johnson, Marlins (.122); Johan Santana, Twins (.127); Carlos Zambrano, Cubs (.134); Pedro Martinez, Mets (.136).

refugee Jose Contreras, who admits to being 35, is the only White Sox veteran pitcher signed beyond 2008. Wanting to make sure salary demands wouldn't hamper the team's ability to secure pitching depth, Williams dealt veteran Freddy Garcia to Philadelphia for promising pitchers Gavin Floyd, a right-hander, and Gio Gonzalez, a lefty. Then he dealt young arm Brandon McCarthy for two of Texas's young arms, lefty John Danks and right-hander Nick Masset.

In-season prognosis: The White Sox won 90 games a year ago without the rotation meeting expectations. The starters who remain have something to prove, and the bullpen should be better.

The Zito factor: Chairman Jerry Reinsdorf has a rule that pitchers don't get more than three-year contracts, which is why Williams is trying to juggle his rotation. The last four-year deal the Sox gave a pitcher was in 1997, to Jaime Navarro for \$20 million. He was 25-43 in three seasons before being dealt to Milwaukee.



Kansas City

Last season: 62-100, fifth place, 34 games out. The Royals' 5.65 ERA was the worst in franchise history. The team ERA has been 5.05 or higher eight of the past nine seasons.

Off-season focus: The pitching staff had to be revitalized, and rookie GM Dayton Moore never lost sight of that.



Lowest opponents' batting average, closers (minimum 20 saves): Joe Nathan, Twins (.158); Jonathan Papelbon, Red Sox (.167); B.J. Ryan, Blue Jays (.169); Takashi Saito, Dodgers (.177); Chris Ray, Orioles (.193).

He shot for some big-name free agents but was rejected even when his offer was biggest. He finally lured promising right-hander Gil Meche with a five-year, \$55 million deal. He also acquired right-hander Brian Bannister from the Mets and plucked Mexican League star Joakim Soria from San Diego at the winter meetings to help shore up the rotation.

In-season prognosis: The pitching staff will get better, but that's not saying much. The offense remains askew. Physical limitations have kept Mike Sweeney from living up to the expectations that came with his five-year, \$55 million deal.

The Zito factor: With 44 saves, Mark Davis was the NL's Cy Young Award winner with San Diego in 1989. The Royals were trying to reclaim the championship magic of their 1985 season, so they inked Davis to a record-setting contract that averaged \$3.25 million a year. Davis was 9-13 with the Royals, and by the time he was traded to Atlanta midway through the 1992 season, he had registered only seven saves in a K.C. uniform.

AL West



Oakland

Last season: 93-69, first place. Oakland swept Minnesota in the Division Series but was swept by Detroit in the ALCS. A's players missed 561 games on the disabled list, and that doesn't include Eric Chavez, who played through injuries all season.

Off-season focus: The A's don't spend much time worrying about who's leaving; GM Billy Beane just reloads and moves on. So when Frank



Most relief innings pitched: Scott Proctor, Yankees (102 1/3); Salomon Torres, Pirates (93 1/3); Geoff Geary, Phillies (91 1/3); Jon Rauch, Nationals (91 1/3); Chad Qualls, Astros (88 1/3).

Thomas headed to Toronto, Beane grabbed Mike Piazza. And when left-hander Barry Zito decided to move across the Bay to San Francisco, Beane improvised, signing lefty reliever Alan Embree. This allows southpaw Joe Kennedy to return to his preferred role in the rotation.

In-season prognosis: Beane's boyhood chum Bob Geren will now call the shots in the dugout. It will be a challenge to keep this team at the top of the West, though. Rich Harden must pick up the slack in the rotation, and Bobby Crosby needs to provide offense. Both players have been too injury-prone to count on.

The Zito factor: Beane has been good at avoiding bad deals, and when he

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does make one, he has a way of escaping. After giving a three-year, \$9.2 million deal to lefty Arthur Rhodes, Beane managed to swap bad contracts with Pittsburgh and pick up Jason Kendall, who at least is a serviceable catcher.

Los Angeles

Last season: 89-73, second place, four games out. The Angels committed 124 errors in 2006, which led to 80 unearned runs. Both were the most in the AL.

Off-season focus: The Angels wanted to beef up their offense. They made runs at free agents Alfonso Soriano and Aramis Ramirez, talked with Boston about Manny Ramirez and got involved in discussions with Colorado about Todd Helton but didn't like the asking prices. They wound up spending \$76.5 million on long-term deals for outfielder Gary Matthews Jr., righty Justin Speier, left-hander Darren Oliver and infielder Shea Hillenbrand, none of whom are game changers.

In-season prognosis: The pitching is strong enough to carry the Angels to a division title, particularly with Speier to fill in ahead of closer Francisco Rodriguez, whose 92 saves the past two seasons leads the majors, and setup man Scot Shields. Jered Weaver, a midseason call-up in 2006, helps fill

out the rotation, and the team expects pitcher Bartolo Colon to eventually come back from a torn rotator cuff.

The Zito factor: Mo Vaughn was hailed as the leader the Angels needed to win a world championship when he signed a six-year, \$80 million deal after the 1998 season. He stumbled into the visitors' dugout during his first game in Anaheim and hurt his ankle. It was downhill from there.



Texas

Last season: 80-82, third place, 13 games out. Right-hander Francisco Cordero opened the season in the closer's role but blew nine save opportunities, prompting the emergence of Akinori Otsuka. Cordero was then traded to Milwaukee for Carlos Lee in late July.

Off-season focus: Texas hoped to rebuild the rotation, making a strong run at Barry Zito only to be blown away by San Francisco's preemptive bid. It settled for re-signing Vicente Padilla and trading top prospects John Danks and Nick Masset to the White Sox for the strong arm of right-hander Brandon McCarthy. The Rangers also decided to gamble \$6 million on Eric Gagne, who has missed the better part of two years with elbow and back surgeries.

In-season prognosis: The Rangers

had holes and didn't find any sure answers. Not only do they need a revelation in the rotation, they need outfielder Brad Wilkerson and third baseman Hank Blalock to bounce back from subpar offensive seasons. There's no reason to expect Gagne can handle a season-long grind, and the team's lack of faith in Otsuka in the off-season says all that needs to be said about his handling that role a second time.



Highest opponents' batting average with two strikes (minimum 500 batters faced): Victor Santos, Pirates (.290); John Koronka, Rangers (.262); Paul Byrd, Indians (.260); Odalis Perez, Dodgers and Royals (.260); Steve Trachsel, Mets (.256).

The Zito factor: John Hart had more than his share of bad contracts during his GM tenure, including the 10-year deal to Alex Rodriguez, which has the Rangers paying him an average of \$6 million a year to play for the Yankees. But Chan Ho Park and his five-year, \$65 million contract was the worst of a slew of bad deals in 2001 that cost the Rangers four draft picks, crippling their farm system.



Seattle

Last season: 78-84, fourth place, 15 games out. The Mariners suffered an attendance drop for the fourth straight season, leaving them more than 1 million shy of the 3.54 million spectators they drew in 2002.

Off-season focus: The Mariners were looking for a way to make their team functional, which meant shoring up the pitching staff and adding athletic offensive players. They brought in Jose Vidro to take over designated-hitting chores and looked to improve the rotation by trading for Atlanta lefty Horacio Ramirez and signing free agent Miguel Batista.

In-season prognosis: Manager Mike Hargrove's days are numbered. The Mariners did not add an impact player to a team that has finished in last place three years in a row. Ownership has let it be known that it expects a contender this year or Hargrove and GM Bill Bavasi can expect a change in their positions.

The Zito factor: Left-hander Eddie Guardado earned the nickname Everyday Eddie in Minnesota for his availability. With Seattle, which signed him to a three-year, \$17 million deal, he was such a mystery that this past July he was dealt to Cincinnati for minor leaguer Travis Chick. Seattle had to pick up all but \$500,000 of what was left on his contract.



"Hey, I'm homesick too, but this is the Hundred Years' War, and we still have 95 years to go."

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ANNA

(continued from page 56)

She had a high little voice like Marilyn's but with a Texas twang.

HUGH M. HEFNER, PLAYBOY Founder and Editor-in-Chief: Of course, Marilyn Monroe was the sex star of our times. The key to her iconic power was sexuality plus vulnerability.

BILL WHITE, Manager, Playboy Studio West: Marilyn Monroe didn't make many records. We would rotate two CDs, playing an endless loop of "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend," "Some Like It Hot" and a few others—show tunes that would drive you crazy after a few hours.

Anna was a wild one, five-foot-11 and physically strong. She'd wrestle with photo assistants. The photographer would take Polaroids, and we'd yank them from the camera and wait for them to develop. The photographer doesn't want the model seeing the Polaroids before he does, but Anna would get you in a headlock and rip them right out of your hand. She'd say, "Hey, I look good!"

ELIZABETH NORRIS, former PLAYBOY Director of Public Relations: We didn't do a publicity tour when she was Miss May—frankly because she sounded silly. She talked like a baby. And I think she resented not getting that publicity tour. She was moody, very needy, expecting first-class treatment all the time.

But even without a publicity tour, Miss May was a hit. Soon she had a new title and a new name.

REG POTTERTON, PLAYBOY writer: By then she was Anna Nicole, Playmate of the Year 1993. I was sent to interview her at the Drake Hotel in Chicago. I had to wake her up to do it—I arrived at noon. While I waited, I counted the room-service plates piled outside her room: seven of them. This was a hungry woman.

PETER MOORE, editor, Men's Health: I was at PLAYBOY then. I had just started editing Playmate stories and was fired up: "I'm going to bring real journal-

ism to the girl copy!" I loved Reg's bit about room-service plates. It said this girl had prodigious appetites—for food, sex, life. But when the magazine came out, she was furious. She thought we'd made her sound like some kind of Texas food compactor. I instantly called a florist and sent two dozen red roses with a note: "Anna Nicole, we didn't mean anything bad. I completely appreciate all you do for PLAYBOY." Crisis averted. She liked the roses, and after that I was more careful.

NORRIS: Her Playmate of the Year tour was first-class all the way. She loved riding in limos and seeing all the cameras waiting for her. At her PMOY party in New York I said, "You should

MONIQUE PILLARD, co-founder, Elite Models: I liked her right away and put her in my celebrity division. She had a face like an angel, skin like silk. I have worked with Cindy Crawford, Iman, Naomi Campbell—great models—and I thought Anna Nicole could be one of the greatest. But other people in the agency laughed. "That big girl is not a model," they said.

CHRISTOPHER NAPOLITANO, PLAYBOY Editorial Director: It was the age of Kate Moss and the waif look. That skinny heroin-chic image was the ideal of beauty, and this bombshell came along and just blew that stuff up. No wonder she got so famous so fast, from Centerfold to Playmate of

the Year to Guess Jeans girl to household name.

PILLARD: To me she embodied America. I am from France, and when I looked at this girl, I saw peaches and cream. Do you want to know how American she was? When I took her to a fine French restaurant, she asked, "Can I get a greasy hamburger?"

"Honey," I said, "they don't serve that here."

"I want a hamburger. With ketchup." They had to send out for the ketchup.

And how she loved the cameras! If you took her to a quiet place to eat, she would keep looking around. Where are the paparazzi? What good was it to look her best if there were no cameras?

More than success, she wanted fame. But she was not prepared for it.

After seeing Anna Nicole in PLAYBOY, Paul Marciano of Guess made her the Guess Jeans girl. Her career was in full swing, but she was still hungry for more of everything.

DANIELA FEDERICI, fashion photographer: I shot her for PLAYBOY and Guess and loved her. She was cheeky, naughty, goofy, sexy—like a great big Barbie doll.

GRABOWSKI: You never knew what she would do next. She might hole up in a hotel with some guy for three days. Sexually, she was voracious.

POTTERTON: The bed in her hotel room would look as though wild animals had torn it up.

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VOGEL: I'd call her sexually assertive. People think that's masculine, but it wasn't that. Just because she had a few things with a few girls doesn't make her masculine. She was hungry, needy.

STEPHEN WAYDA, PLAYBOY Senior Contributing Photographer: I thought she was strange from the first, acting shy and then transforming for the camera. She may have been unpolished, but she had every stripper move in the book and huge sexual appetites, which was part of her craving for acceptance.

COLE: We were shooting a Valentine's pictorial in 1994 in a bathtub. Suddenly she told Steve Wayda he couldn't shoot another picture unless she got a bottle of Jack Daniel's. Steve called me. "What should I do?"

"She's an adult," I said. "Get her a bottle of Jack Daniel's." They called a liquor store and a delivery guy brought it.

VOGEL: A cute delivery guy. **TOM JOHNSON, delivery guy turned male model:** Anna Nicole walked in, naked except for a feather boa.

VOGEL: She checked him out and said, "Come over here."

JOHNSON: I was like, *Aaaahhh!* I was so nervous. I tried small talk. I remembered she was from Texas like my father, so I asked her where in Texas. She said, "Houston. Now take off your clothes."

WAYDA: She talked him into the bathtub with her. So the guy wound up in the pictorial. It was flirtatious at first, but then she was all over him.

COLE: I don't think they were acting, either. It was pretty real.

Soon the 26-year-old Playmate married J. Howard Marshall II, 89, an oil billionaire she'd met in her stripper days. Apparently they never lived together.

GREEN: I know for a fact that Anna loved her husband, old as he was. She called him every day.

VOGEL: Every day at five P.M. she would go to the models' lounge, a room off the studio with a couch and phone, to call him. They would talk for only a few minutes, but you could tell she was sweet on him.

GREEN: She had a nickname for him.

She would call him Peepaw: "I love my Peepaw."

WAYDA: We all heard her calling Howard Marshall, doing that baby talk of hers. But she didn't always talk that way. She talked to me in a normal voice.

PILLARD: She met me one day draped in a sable coat and what I thought was costume jewelry: earrings, necklace, bracelets. But it wasn't. She had been shopping. "Hello, ma'am," she said—she always called me ma'am. "Look, ma'am. I just spent a couple million dollars!"

Marshall died in 1995, leaving Anna Nicole a still-disputed portion of his \$1.6 billion estate. Now an international celebrity, she was more mercurial than ever.

PILLARD: I was getting her good

trust, and it spins out of control. Like a tornado, it picked her up and carried her away.

WHITE: Even early in the day she'd need a glass of wine to loosen up. She was usually a little tipsy.

GRABOWSKI: She would finish a bottle of champagne and ask for another. She'd deny she was on drugs, but everyone knew.

VOGEL: You couldn't help her. You couldn't take her to Alcoholics Anonymous or even suggest she had a problem; she'd cut you out of her life.

GREEN: Prescription drugs and alcohol—that's what got her off track. But she had her good times. I was with her in L.A. when she was shooting a movie, *Naked Gun 33½*. We were driving around in a pickup truck with Daniel, her son, a great kid she loved to death. He was seven or eight years old then.

GRABOWSKI: She was so proud of Daniel. He was gorgeous, like a young Jon Bon Jovi.

GREEN: She said, "Guess who's going to rent Marilyn Monroe's house!" And Daniel said, "Mommy, I don't want to live there. That's scary."

"Rent the place," I said. "Throw a party; get it out of your system. But don't live there. You're too obsessed with Marilyn—you'll end up like she did." Well, Anna didn't want to hear that. She got angry, and I was out. She wouldn't work with me after I said those words.

WAYDA: By then her life had turned into a full-time circus.

GRABOWSKI: She almost died in 1993. I called her, and she was slurring her words. "I'm in the Jacuzzi," she said. Then the phone went dead.

WHITE: Marilyn tried again. Anna Nicole was pretty out of it. She hung up. Now we were getting worried. I'd taken an EMT course and knew she could be in trouble if she was sitting in a hot tub, drinking. The danger was that she'd pass out, regurgitate and have an airway problem. Marilyn called twice more. No answer. So she turned to me and said, "Bill, get over there."

Anna was renting Marilyn Monroe's 133



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money, booking her on modeling jobs for \$50,000 a day. But she didn't want to work. "Ma'am, I can't go to Dubai," she said. "My passport's expired." Did you ever hear of a world-class model who can't keep her passport in order? After that I didn't work with her. She was already on prescription drugs for pain in her back. "Be careful about the drugs," I said.

VOGEL: With more success came more indulgence. Her ego grew, and she started to believe she was a major star. Here's someone who wasn't educated or sophisticated—how could she handle it all? Everybody's kissing your ass, you don't know who to

bungalow. I drove fast through yellowish-red lights into Brentwood, up this little street to a black iron gate, 12305 Fifth Helena Drive. That was when it hit me: I had seen this place before in a newsreel. This was the spot where they rolled Marilyn Monroe's body out on a gurney. I rang the bell. The door opened, and I was looking at a dripping-wet woman in a swimsuit—the maid. "I'm from PLAYBOY," I said. "Is Anna Nicole okay?"

The maid led me inside, and I heard that same damn Marilyn Monroe music. It was on the sound system. The place was sparsely furnished, with pictures of Anna and Monroe on the walls. And out in the Jacuzzi I found Anna, naked, humming along with Marilyn. There was a wine bottle, three-quarters empty, nearby. Her skin was all pruny. She said, "Bill-ll-ly!" slurring her words. "Come 'n' join me." The maid said she had been in there all morning. We got her out, and it wasn't easy. Anna was

wet and slippery, and she wasn't helping. She was giggling.

GRABOWSKI: That was some moment for Bill, pulling a nude Anna Nicole out of the Jacuzzi. I'm sure he saved her life.

WHITE: We got a towel around her, and she started to come around. After about 10 minutes I showed her the Playmate of the Year layout I'd brought. She loved it. Just then from behind me came a big, deep voice: "Who the hell are you?" Her bodyguard. She'd sent him out to McDonald's. He dropped these two huge McDonald's bags and escorted me out, and I heard Anna say, "Byyye, Bill-ll-ly!" That day scared her. Anna stayed sober after that—scared sober. For a while.

GRABOWSKI: She had her good qualities. She adored Daniel. And she dreamed of having a daughter, too, a little girl of her own. From the time she was in her 20s she'd had a hope chest. She'd buy clothes for the baby girl she

hoped to have—to the point where we joked that she'd have to buy a house to store all those little-girl clothes.

*While denying she had substance-abuse problems, Anna Nicole sometimes told friends she expected to die like Marilyn Monroe. After a stint as the wobbly, overweight star of cable's *The Anna Nicole Show*, she slurred her way through several awards-show appearances. Infections from her many breast surgeries may have eroded her health. Still, last September, one dream came true: She gave birth to a daughter, Daniellynn.*

Three days later Daniel died. And in February Anna Nicole died, leaving others to fight over her daughter, her fortune and even her body.

HEFNER: We got a call from her half sister, Amy Hogan, asking if Anna Nicole could be buried here in Los Angeles in the vault next to Marilyn Monroe. I own that vault. But we weren't going to get into that fight.

NAPOLITANO: Looking at pictures for this issue, I've been struck by how incredible she was. I'm glad we're showing her at her best, at the top of her game.

HEFNER: A small-town girl with a troubled childhood, with big dreams partially fulfilled—you can feel the echo of Marilyn. The public life, the early death. Of course, Marilyn was a very good actress in dramas and comedies. She truly accomplished something in that sense, which Anna Nicole did not. But in this other, newer pantheon of celebrities defined by fame itself, Anna Nicole was one of the greats. And as long as we have her photos, she will not be forgotten. Perhaps in some way that would have pleased her. There's a sort of immortality in the images she left behind.

PILLARD: Let's remember her sweetness, not her problems.

HEFNER: In the end the point is this: She lived large and died too soon.

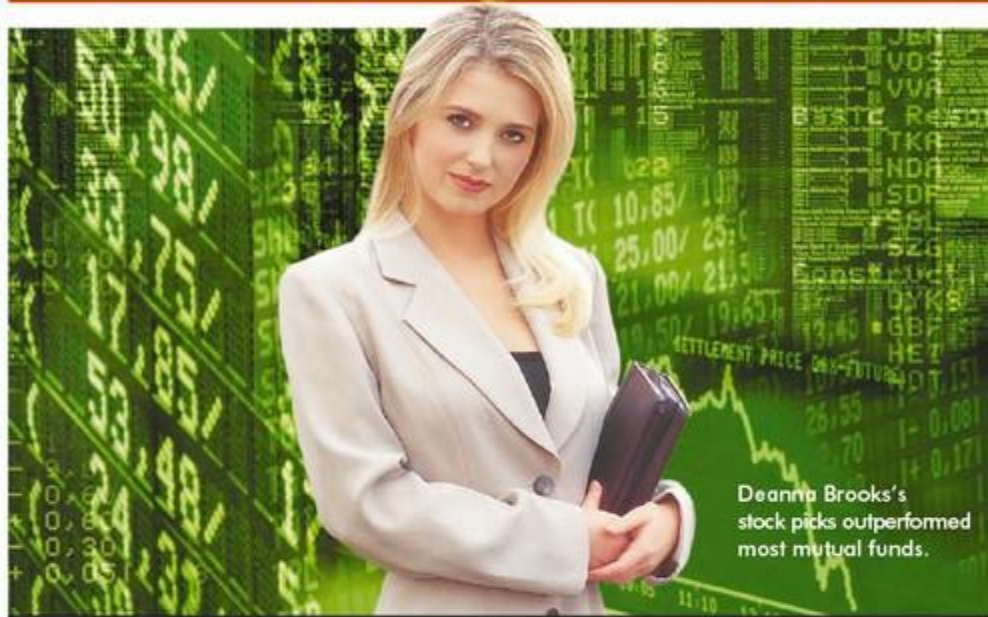
LARRY DJERF, PLAYBOY Newsstand Sales Director: I met Anna Nicole at her Playmate of the Year party in L.A. We had a conference room at the Bel Age hotel full of magazine distributors and wholesalers, and when she came in all heads turned as if they were on swivels. I thought, That is a *va-voom* Playmate.

After the party I saw something I'll never forget. She came out of the hotel alone, wearing the same off-the-shoulder dress she'd worn to the party. And I watched her—this big, beautiful, glamorous, curvy woman—as she got into her Playmate of the Year prize, a Jaguar convertible, and drove off down Sunset Boulevard. And she looked so, so happy.

For another exclusive look at Anna, tune in to "Playboy Remembers: Anna Nicole Smith" on Playboy TV, premiering April 11 at nine P.M. ET. Additional air dates and times available at playboy.com/ANS.



PLAYMATE NEWS



Deanna Brooks's stock picks outperformed most mutual funds.

BANK ON BROOKS

Wall Street bulls are always eager to know what's hot, but we're here to let you in on a sure thing: Deanna Brooks. And we're not referring simply to her stunning looks. Last year TradingMarkets.com invited eight Playmates and two Cyber Girls to participate in a stock-picking contest. At the end of the year the Deanna Fund was up 43 percent, topping not only the other contestants but all except five of 9,734 U.S. stock mutual funds. Miss May 1998's best-performing stock was Yamana Gold, which returned an astonishing 99.39 percent on the year. "I wanted to diver-



sify between small and large stocks," she explains, "and I knew that gold, which has been increasing for the past five years, tends to hit a high near the end of the year."

Deanna's background as a bank manager possibly gave her a leg up on the other leggy lovelies, but who would think passing out loan applications would have helped her outplay the industry's best? "I did get a job offer, but I told them I was better at getting naked than picking stocks," she says. Perhaps she could combine the two and corner an emerging market.

5 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

Baltimore bombshell Christi Shake says she was frequently mistaken for a boy when she was a baby. Clearly, that all changed during her teen years when she landed a spot on her high school cheer-leading team and topped 1,500 aspiring beauties to win a modeling competition held by John Casablancas. Christi then lent her talents to Playboy Special Editions before becoming Miss May 2002.



LOOSE LIPS

"So many guys don't know proper grammar. If I meet a guy and he can't speak properly, I can't bring him home."
—Shallan Meiers



SIX FIGURES

They came. They were seen. They conquered. From left: Centerfolds Athena Lundberg, Tiffany Taylor, Taylor James, Katie Lohmann, Sara Jean Underwood and Cassandra Lynn helped represent Playboy at Glamourcon 2006.



HOT SHOT



TAMARA WITMER

MY FAVORITE PLAYMATE

By Giovanni Ribisi

—actor

My favorite Playmate is Miss December 1953 Marilyn Monroe. Why? Because she's Marilyn fuckin' Monroe.



POP QUESTIONS: VICTORIA FULLER

Q: We understand you've opened a spa for babies, appropriately called Baby Spa, and it's the first of its kind. How did that come about?

A: Spas pop up all over the place; it's a very competitive business. My husband and I wanted to branch out and create something new, so we came up with a spa for babies. Ironically, a month later I became pregnant, which boded well for the business. We've already been covered on *Nightline* and a few of the local L.A. news shows.

Q: So what happens there? Baby massages? Facials?

A: Basically we teach mothers how to massage their newborns, then we give the mothers a one-hour treatment while we take care of the kids.

Q: You've just had your first child. Do you think you'll model again?

A: I've had two careers, one as a Playmate and the other as an artist. Last year alone I sold about 20 originals and a ton of prints, and I just had a solo show



in March at a gallery on Rodeo Drive called Art Brilliant. That was a really big deal for me. My art career has taken off in such a big way, I make so much more now than I ever did modeling.

REPORT FROM PHILLY



"I love how intense Eagles fans are," says Carmella DeCesare. We caught up with the Centerfold, who recently married Eagles QB Jeff Garcia, as the team was coming off a five-game winning streak and getting set to tussle with the Giants in the playoffs.

Garcia, who had replaced the injured Donovan McNabb, secured the win against New York but later lost a tough one to the Saints. DeCesare still enthuses, "Being in Philadelphia has been a really positive experience."



PLAYMATE GOSSIP

Miss May 2006 Alison Waite and Miss November 2006 Sarah Elizabeth were spotted at the Fifth Annual Motor City Men's Expo, held at Ford Field during this year's Motown Winter Blast.... Miss April 2001 Katie Lohmann is keeping an audio blog at DailyCeleb.com.... Miss May 1998 Deanna Brooks vanquished all challengers in *Madden NFL 07* at the PlayStation 3 booth during Playboy's Super Saturday Night party, held during Super Bowl weekend.... Miss November 2001

Lindsey Vuolo joined German Playmate Agnieszka Hendl to support Playboy apparel at the Bread & Butter global trade show in Barcelona.... PMOY 1994 Jenny McCarthy

has been seen all over L.A. with beau Jim Carrey, including at the Los Angeles fire department's Spark of Love toy drive at Paramount Studios. Carrey reports Jenny is "having the best sex of her life." Glad to hear it.... Jenny, along with fellow Playmates Miss April 1997 Kelly Monaco, PMOY 1997 Victoria Silvstedt and PMOY 2001 Brande Roderick, also attended the Leather & Laces Super Bowl weekend party in Miami Beach, which was deejayed by our own Miss January 2004 Colleen Shannon.... More on the party circuit: Miss August 2004 Pilar Lasstra classed up Posh Ultra Lounge in San Antonio, while Miss August 2005 Tamara Witmer was blissfully stuck in Purgatory in Dallas.



Lindsey Vuolo (right) sets her ears on Bread & Butter in Barcelona.



Jenny and Jim take to the ice.

MORE PLAYMATES

See your favorite Playmate's pictorial in the Cyber Club at cyber.playboy.com, or download her to your phone at playboymobile.com.

SEX IN IRAN

(continued from page 98)

their lives for indulging in illicit sex. Yet for many guys in Tehran the whole issue of a girl's virginity is no longer relevant."

Oddly, says Reza, this change may be the unintentional consequence of some government policies. "Years ago boys and girls would date by meeting in parks and other public places. Thanks to the government's harsh regulations, this is no longer possible. The only place they can hook up is behind closed doors, so instead of things progressing slowly, the teens end up in bed faster than ever. On average, teenagers now have sex on their second or third date, and doing so is considered normal among large sections of the nation's youth."

Such changes have taken place in many countries but are happening so rapidly in Iran that the government hasn't had time to plan its next move. A sociocultural revolution heavily influenced by the West is confronting these nations head-on, and those in power find themselves caught between the devil and the deep blue Caspian Sea.

Kayvan knows all about his friend Rozbeh's sex parties. The 24-year-old college student had such a great time at the three he attended that he asked if he could bring his friend Pouya to the next gathering, and Rozbeh agreed. Like Kayvan, Pouya is a rich kid studying computing, but at the age of 22 he's never gone to this kind of party before, so he's feeling a bit self-conscious when Rozbeh greets them at the door of his parents' villa in Lavasan, a suburb of northern Tehran, on a warm and sunny evening in the fall of 2006. But Pouya's nerves quickly disappear when Rozbeh, dressed in a fashionably loose sweater and baggy pants, ushers the two young men into a romantically candlelit main room and introduces them to four girls sitting on a leather sofa. All are wearing sexy, tight-fitting tops and jeans, and two other guys are sitting at the bar, drinking wine and vodka.

"The number of men and women should always be equal," says Rozbeh. He's a computer-studies student from a wealthy family and sports designer stubble and spiky gelled hair. "After all, when people pair up and have sex, we can't have someone left on his or her own."

The extent of Pouya's track record in the sack may consist of a couple of times with his girlfriend, yet he isn't shy. On this particular evening he's not all that choosy about whom he'll end up with. "It's just one night," he reasons, "and afterward we'll never meet again." All things being equal, though, he'd rather have a girl younger than he is, someone less experienced. Like most of his fellow countrymen, he would prefer to save face than learn something new.

Seven couples have been invited to the party, and when Rozbeh puts on a

heavy-metal album they all start dancing on cue. Keenly aware of needing to escape police attention, the host avoids cranking up the volume. Often, dancing lasts several hours, but it's hardly the key item on tonight's agenda.

It's true that these party animals are from rich and middle-class backgrounds, and that they belong to a faster crowd than most kids do. But it's also true that they are pacesetters. Other young people may not be as daring, but they're also image-conscious and interested in fun; in that way they too challenge authority and pose a threat to the government.

Though sex may be discussed on television, it's usually a verboten subject in the average Iranian home. Pouya's parents have no idea how he spends his time, or they choose to have no idea as long as he's not overly involved in politics. "My going to university makes them very comfortable," he says, "and they don't give much thought to who I'm seeing or what I'm doing."

Indeed, college provides kids with a no-questions-asked safety net, which may be why the Department of Education recently warned families about the rapidly increasing level of drug use among students. Still, there are protocols. "No one does drugs at sex parties," Kayvan insists. "If they do drugs before coming to the party, that's another matter. Sex parties are different from X parties"—ecstasy-fueled raves—"where you can find everything from grass to crack. At sex parties there's just drink to help people lose their inhibitions."

They may lose their inhibitions, but they don't totally misplace them. Compatibility and confidentiality remain keys to a good time. Couples generally require their own rooms, meaning that even in larger homes, guest lists never exceed 20 people. Group sex and switching partners are virtually

unknown. "I've never seen group sex," says Farshad, one of the other male guests. "At the end of the night, when everyone's totally drunk, people may fall on top of one other and play around, but I've never seen it lead to very much. Group sex is for the movies. As far as I'm concerned, the girl I sleep with at a party is mine until the night is over. We are, after all, Iranians, and there's something in our psyche that precludes certain kinds of behavior."

The relationships end with the night. "That's the rule," says Kayvan, "and you can be sure that if I'm invited to Rozbeh's next sex party, I won't meet the girls who were here tonight. We don't enjoy being recognized, and it's also more fun to sleep with someone when you know nothing of her past or future. Instead, for a few hours you can just focus on the moment."

Still, why do these young men risk arrest? It's not for sex; after all, the government allows *seigheh*. What the government is against is pure fun, and this is what the young people are flouting. "People need to have fun," Kayvan says. "Leisure time is all about going to parties and having drink, drugs and even sex with a girl. It's about *hal*—enjoying yourself to the fullest. And it's the same for girls. They enjoy having sex too, and they want it. Of course, for 5,000 to 6,000 *toman* [\$5 to \$6] I can have sex with a prostitute, but sex isn't what it's all about. It's about partying, dancing to heavy-metal music, being with friends and plenty of *hal*."

These days, *hal* is the mantra of the young, while that of their parents is "See no evil, hear no evil." This, after all, is a country of pretense: While the government pretends it doesn't know about its citizens' private transgressions, the parents pretend they don't know the extent of their children's double lives, and the offspring pretend they're obeying the



rules—up to a point. “I’ve been arrested a number of times,” says Leila, a 23-year-old coed at yet another covert party in the Tehran suburbs. At this one there’s only dancing and drinking, which means all present are taking a huge risk to have what a vast portion of the world regards as fun. “The first time, I was frightened, but after that I didn’t care. It’s always the same: The police are rude, they push us around, and then they take us to an overnight prison where they question us and give us advice. Maybe they slap some of the guys in the face. They’re such idiots.”

Since the arrests aren’t a big deal to Leila, she acts with little sense of fear or shame. “The government is an irrelevant nuisance,” she shrugs. “My father has to

pay a 100,000 *toman* fine [\$100] every time I’m arrested.”

“So what?” interjects her friend Sahar. “Our parents wanted the revolution. Let them pay!”

Skeptical of promises of an afterlife, fed up with social restrictions and bearing the brunt of the country’s chronic unemployment, Iranian youths are well aware of how their peers live elsewhere in the world. Thanks to satellite TV and the Internet, they see the excitement and opportunities denied to them, and they’re angry. They hold their government responsible for the country’s lousy economic situation as well as its international isolation. They struggle with a national pride that was badly

bruised when reformist former president Mohammad Khatami’s hopes for a “dialogue among civilizations” evaporated when President Bush named Iran to the “axis of evil” in 2002. That was soon followed by the election of anti-American populist Ahmadinejad to the presidency. He promised to restore that pride, create more jobs and fight corruption. To date, little of this has been realized, leaving young people feeling trapped with no way forward, betrayed by and ambivalent toward a West whose freedom and fashions they invariably try to emulate.

That’s why many among this generation of educated and intelligent young people choose to live in the moment, justifying their party lifestyle as resistance to the authorities, as a cry for democracy. In response the government has displayed a little more tolerance toward their Western-inspired activities and pro-Western attitudes. Call it a compromised democracy, one that enables people to speak effectively through their vote for parliamentarians and the president while ceding ultimate control to an unelected, all-powerful supreme leader.



“Look, Rosie, look!”



As a nation, Iran is wary of the interference of foreign powers. During the 20th century, the country’s path to democracy was often thwarted by the goals of great powers, the United States included, and by homegrown authoritarians who seized power in the name of social progress and national security. Today the country feels threatened again. If the current nuclear dispute serves as a pretext for the West to impose sanctions or take actions even more drastic, the regime will have all the excuse it needs to strangle civil rights and avert—or at least delay—its own demise. Yet a more open and less confrontational approach would make it more likely that the country can stay on the path to democracy. Last December’s local elections showed that few are happy with Ahmadinejad, but that doesn’t mean the regime is in danger of collapse, and a hard-line policy out of Washington will only help prop it up. Instead, an approach that invites dialogue and perhaps other inducements is far more likely to persuade authorities to observe human rights and encourage a population that is actually very pro-Western to push for greater freedom. The time is ripe. The Ebrahimi affair has damaged the government-contrived facade of ubiquitous ultraconservatism, and it’s no longer a question of if but when the veil will be lifted on the real Iran. Thanks to an amateur sex video that has delivered a direct hit to the status quo, the government’s propaganda has been laid as bare as the lovers on the screen.

FERGIE

(continued from page 103)

started meeting with people and writing and recording. I never lost focus on that goal. One of the songs on *The Dutchess*, "Losing My Ground," comes from that time. I pulled over to the side of the road and wrote the lyrics in about 15 minutes. It's a strong message.

Q8

PLAYBOY: How did you kick the habit?

FERGIE: I went to therapy. I still go. I need to. I went to Narcotics Anonymous. I went to Crystal Meth Anonymous. Hypnotherapy helped me a lot. I love it. The first time I went was hilarious. I told the doctor I didn't want to do any of that hypnosis shit; I just wanted regular therapy. The next time I went in I was biting my nails, so I told her I'd been biting my nails and wanted to try hypnotherapy. I went into the chair, and it was amazing. It completely worked.

Q9

PLAYBOY: What are you working on with hypnotherapy now?

FERGIE: That's for my therapist to know. I'll let you know later.

Q10

PLAYBOY: With the last name Ferguson, how many people in your family have the nickname Fergie?

FERGIE: It's a family nickname. My sister Dana is Ferg. We all go by different variations. It's a common nickname for the last name. *Fergie* was actually going to be used for the name of a solo album, but then I joined the Black Eyed Peas. It was kind of a rebirth for me because I had gotten off drugs and it was a new start.

Q11

PLAYBOY: The late great James Brown appears on the Black Eyed Peas album *Monkey Business*. What was it like working with the Godfather of Soul?

FERGIE: Surreal. Everyone in his entourage was dressed to the nines. Somebody wanted to take a picture of all of us. James snapped his fingers, and one of his entourage came out with a comb and handed it to him. Not one hair was out of place, but he proceeded to comb it just to make sure.

Q12

PLAYBOY: *The Dutchess* was your first solo album. Why go solo?

FERGIE: The Black Eyed Peas' music is very party-oriented. In that context I don't know if people know the more intimate side of me, the romantic and sensual side. I wanted to let people in a bit more on this album. Next time I might do a reggae or hip-hop album—I don't know what I'll do, but for this album I wanted to get really personal with the audience.

Q13

PLAYBOY: You worked on *The Dutchess* with Black Eyed Pea Will.i.am. Were

you nervous about doing solo material with a fellow band member?

FERGIE: My plan in the beginning was to work with Will; I just stuck by it. It was also convenient because we were on tour and I had to finish the album. We had a bus with a recording studio, so a few hours before we went onstage we could go in and get some stuff done. I felt pressured at the end because I had a deadline. If it were up to me, I'd still be working on it, but Jimmy Iovine, the head of Interscope Records, heard some songs and wanted to put it out. You can't argue with him.

Q14

PLAYBOY: In the summer of 2005 a photo circulated in which it appeared you had peed in your pants onstage in San Diego. What was your first reaction?

FERGIE: Embarrassment. Everyone told me not to talk about it, but I wanted to call people and tell them what had happened. I was advised not to, and I didn't for a while. Now I'm just honest about it. It's embarrassing, but you just have to let it go at some point.

Q15

PLAYBOY: What are you allowed to say about it now?

FERGIE: I'm allowed to say what I want. I'll just tell you the truth. I was late for the show. It was either go in the dressing room and get glam, get hair and makeup done, or go to the stage. The show had already started. I chose to get up there for the people who had bought the tickets.

Q16

PLAYBOY: Have you ever met Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York?

FERGIE: We talked on the phone, and we're going to meet. She set up a phone call with me, which is very flattering and surreal. I mean, she's royalty. It was cool. I think we're going to do something for charity. It takes a bit of time for these things to happen, but we're doing it.

Q17

PLAYBOY: Your boyfriend, Josh Duhamel, stars on the television show *Las*

Vegas. How did the two of you meet? FERGIE: I met him on his show. I had read in a magazine that he had a naughty dream about me. All my friends knew about him because he had been a soap-opera star. I'm not into soap operas, but they told me, "You gotta go out with him. Do it for the group. Take one for the team." Time went by, and I saw on the schedule that we were taping a show called *Las Vegas*, and I thought, Is this the show he's on? We met, and I said, "I read you had a dream about me." He said yeah, and I asked, "Was it good?" He said it was. So we hit it off.

Q18

PLAYBOY: Do you make him dance with you to the Black Eyed Peas?

FERGIE: Make him? He *wants* to. [laughs] He likes dancing. I slow dance with him, but I have to stand on his feet because I'm too short. He's six-foot-three and I'm five-foot-four. Luckily I took ballet, so I know how to stand *en pointe*. He just dances for me in private, and I dance for him in private, in some very interesting outfits. He bought me these amazing boots at the Hustler store. They're thigh-high black patent leather with a big long zipper. They're hard to get on, but it's worth it.

Q19

PLAYBOY: Are any other outfits involved when you and Josh are together?

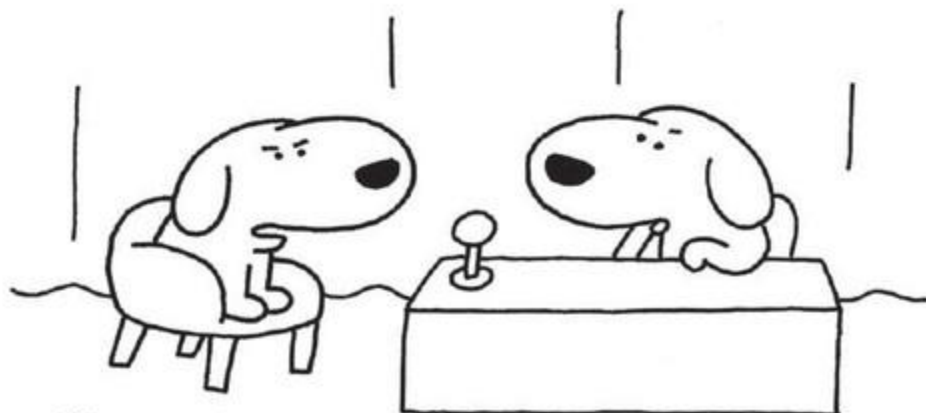
FERGIE: Oh, I do it all.

Q20

PLAYBOY: The Black Eyed Peas tour nearly 300 days a year. How do you deal with that much time on the road?

FERGIE: Recently I took my sister with me. That's a cool thing. It makes me feel a little more normal to have some family on the road. And I call everyone a lot. I have huge phone bills. My last one was maybe \$1,000. It's getting serious.

Read the 21st question at playboy.com/magazine.



Ciparotti

"I'm not fixed and I'll sue any tabloid that says I am."

Investigate Her

Why are the producers of *CSI: Miami* holding out on us? The show is set in one of the world's great beach cities; shouldn't every episode open with yummy EMILY PROCTER in a bikini?



A Woman and a Gentle Officer

Until recently ALEXIA MASON was serving her country as an MP in the Air Force, stationed at Nellis Air Force Base. So which one of you hotshot flyboys wants to spend a night in the brig? Easy, fellas; we said *one*.



Dream On

Even a curvy girl like BEYONCÉ needs a little double-stick tape to keep everything in place. As the saying goes, "There may be slippage, but there will be no nippleage."



STEVE GRANITZ/SPLASH NEWS

Water Music

According to classical myth, a siren is a sea nymph whose song lures sailors to their doom. Does LINDSAY LOHAN qualify? If you dig her 2003 hit single "Ultimate," maybe.

OPRA ANDO



Best in Show

In the most recent Miss Nude Canada Pageant, SHIRA MOSS (also answers to KATIA) won the booby prize—literally. Hers were certified the Most Beautiful Breasts. We'll buy that for a loonie.



CHRISTOPHER P. YOUNG/RETNA

Yes, She Said Knockers

SERENA WILLIAMS's response to the press after winning the Australian Open amid doubts about her fitness: "I could lose 20 pounds and I'm still going to have these knockers and I'm going to have this ass, and that's just the way it is."



GREGORY HEISLER/SPLASH NEWS

Another Great Quote About Knockers

JESSICA SIMPSON on the perils of being a curvaceous Christian pop star: "I had doors slammed in my face as a 14-year-old because my boobs were too big."

CALIFORNIA DREAMING

Back in 1965 an enterprising gent named Baxter Finley was in dire need of a moisturizer to foil the dry, sunny SoCal climate. Discouraged by the offerings of the day, he decided to brew his own, founding Baxter of California. Now, 40-odd years later, the company has refined his original line of silky goop. We like the Herbal Mint Toner followed by Super Shape SPF 15 moisturizer and Hydro Salve lip balm (\$8 to \$18, baxterofcalifornia.com) to condition during the warm months. Toss in a convertible and you're good to go.



NET GAIN

Big cell-phone carriers make it hard for phone designers to include some technologies. Carriers lose money with Wi-Fi in your cell phone, for instance, because it lets you browse the web without paying by the minute. That's why the latest product from cell-phone giant Nokia isn't a phone: The N800 (\$400, nokia.com) is a pocket-size Wi-Fi- and Bluetooth-enabled touch-screen web tablet that makes IM and VoIP (Internet phone) calls with or without video and can piggyback on a cell phone for web access when out of Wi-Fi range.



PHOTOS, FINISHED

Digital picture frames have made an alarmingly fast trip from luxury to commodity, but all frames are not created equal. Kodak in particular has taught its EasyShare EX series (\$230 for eight-inch frame, \$280 for 10-inch frame; kodak.com) some pretty nifty tricks. Built-in Wi-Fi means these frames can stream pictures directly from PCs on your home network. Better yet, they can display pictures stored in online Kodak galleries. Give one to your girlfriend and she'll be able to see up-to-the-minute pics of your latest trip to Vegas. Wait a sec—maybe we need to think this one through.



VINTAGE MEETS VINTAGE

We're suckers for anything that celebrates the heritage of classic cars. These Vintage Wine Stoppers from Mercedes-Benz (\$55 for a set of four, accessories [.mbusa.com](http://mbusa.com)) are modeled after the gearshifts on the company's great silver racers from days of yore when the words *gull* and *wing* made any speed enthusiast drool like a faucet. The set has a stopper for champagne, white, red and rosé bottles, each as well crafted as you would expect from the German automaker. Prosit!

TAKE A HIKE

Many think GPS gadgets are strictly for the car, but city dwellers could use one too if it were pocketable. The amazingly compact Mio DigiWalker H610 (\$500, miogps.com) can switch between in-car, on-foot and bike directions, works as a media player and always knows the shortest way to the nearest bar.



HEROINE ADDICTION

Say what you will about comic books, they know their audience. From the Golden Age to the present, curvaceous cuties have figured prominently on their pulpy pages. Lois Lane was in *Action Comics* #1 alongside Superman, and *Batman's* first issue featured Catwoman. *DC Comics Covergirls* (\$40, rizzoliusa.com) compiles the finest ladies from DC's 70-plus years, letting us chart Wonder Woman's evolution since 1941 and see how today's artists have taken up the torch with such titles as *Bite Club* and *Birds of Prey*.



THINK FAST!

There's nothing like accidentally walking through a dart game in progress to wake you up. Give your guests that little extra lift the next time they hang up their coats with these Dart Coat Hooks (\$34 for set of three, elsewares.com). Made of stainless steel and with screws on the tip instead of points, they're mountable on just about any wall and are guaranteed to keep your friends on their toes.



LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

Behold the next-gen radar detector: Escort's Passport 9500i (\$450, escortradar.com) has built-in GPS. It memorizes the places where you get false alarms and eliminates those annoying bleeps. It also remembers the places where you have passed a speed trap in the past and alerts you to slow down. Bonus: Got your stereo cranked? The 9500i automatically increases its warning volume so you can hear it.

PLAYING ON YOUR FEARS

We live in complex times, and nowhere is that more evident than in the game room. In *War on Terror: The Boardgame* (\$50, waronterrortheboardgame.com) you'll maintain your empire (and its oil) by any means necessary. That may mean fighting terrorism. That may mean funding terrorism. And that may mean fighting the terrorists you originally funded. The politically accurate, non-jingoistic rules take what could have been a glorified bad-taste joke and turn it into one of the most thought-provoking games we've seen in years.



Next Month



PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR.



JUNE FICTION BY JESS WALTER.



THE SPORTSTER AT 50.



MISS JUNE PROMISES THE SUMMER OF YOUR LIFE.

2007 PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR—WHICH OF OUR DOZEN LOVELIES WILL BE CROWNED PMOY? WILL IT BE THE LONG ISLAND BEACH BUNNY WHO SAYS HEALTHY LIVING IS A TURN-ON? OR THE CURVY STUNNER WHO WANTS TO CHANGE THE WORLD? IT WOULD BE SILLY TO REVEAL THE WINNER NOW, BUT HERE'S A PROMISE: YOU'LL BE PLEASED.

CHASING MITNICK—FOR TWO YEARS HACKER PAR EXCELLENCE KEVIN MITNICK ELUDED THE FBI. NOW THAT HE HAS SERVED HIS SENTENCE, *PLAYBOY* LANDS THE EXCLUSIVE STORY OF THE MAN *THE NEW YORK TIMES* CALLED CYBERSPACE'S MOST WANTED. BY **JONATHAN LITTMAN**

ARE WE NOT BOYS?—IN THE SECOND INSTALLMENT OF OUR SERIES ON THE EMERGING SCIENCE OF MALE SEXUALITY, *PLAYBOY* ADVISOR **CHIP ROWE** GOES BACK TO THAT DARK PLACE WHERE NO MAN WISHES TO RETURN—THE WOOLLY WILDS OF PUBERTY.

50 YEARS OF THE HARLEY SPORTSTER—*PLAYBOY* RECALLS THE GREATEST MOMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE MOTORCYCLE THAT HAS COME TO DEFINE AMERICA.

PENISES I HAVE KNOWN—YOU CALL IT MR. HAPPY. **DAPHNE MERKIN** DESCRIBES IT AS AN "ABSURD AND EVEN UNGAINLY

APPENDAGE." IN A CONFESSIONAL ESSAY, THE CULTURAL CRITIC AND BAWDY PROVOCATEUR TURNS A DISCERNING EYE ON THE ORGAN SHE LOVES SO WELL.

WE LIVE IN WATER—A MAN INVESTIGATES HIS RECKLESS FATHER'S DECADES-OLD DISAPPEARANCE AT THE HANDS OF A SMALL-TOWN CRIME BOSS. A MOVING STORY BY **JESS WALTER**

MATT GROENING—CELEBRATING THE 400TH EPISODE AND FIRST-EVER MOVIE OF *THE SIMPSONS*, THE CARTOONIST DISCUSSES HIS LIBERAL LEANINGS AND HIS BOSS, MR. BURNS—SORRY, RUPERT MURDOCH—IN AN ANIMATED *PLAYBOY* INTERVIEW BY **DAVID SHEFF**.

DON RICKLES—MR. WARMTH RECOLLECTS GOOD TIMES WITH CARSON AND SINATRA IN THIS 20Q BY **BILL ZEHME**, BUT HE ALSO SHOWS HE HASN'T MELLOWED. DUCK, YA HOCKEY PUCK!

THE NEW MOBILE PHONES—THEY PLAY MUSIC, TAKE PICTURES, SEND ELOQUENT MESSAGES AND SOMETIMES EVEN LET YOU SPEAK TO OTHER HUMANS. WITH THESE DEVICES, YOU WON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH ANYONE FACE-TO-FACE AGAIN.

PLUS: A PORSCHE BUILT FOR DRIFTING, THE NEW FENDER STRATOCASTER AND SUNNY MISS JUNE **BRITTANY BINGER** BARING HER BEST.