

THE UFC'S ULTRA-SEXY BABE

PLAYBOY

ENTERTAINMENT F

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**RACHELLE
LEAH** THE
UFC'S
ALL-ACCESS
GIRL
ALL
NUDE

**DANIEL
CRAIG**
INTERVIEW
THE BEST
BOND EVER?

PLUS:
THE **BOND**
ULTIMATE **SPECIAL**
**NAKED
BOND
GIRLS!**
**ESSENTIAL
BOND
FACTS!**

FROM THE
MAGAZINE
THAT
INTRODUCED
AMERICA TO
007

**CHELSEA
HANDLER** **20Q**
A QUICK AND DIRTY





After *Casino Royale* turned **Daniel Craig** from a respected character actor into a huge star, the Englishman—who is arguably the best James Bond ever—witnessed media interest in him skyrocket. When he sat down with **David Sheff** for this month's *Playboy Interview*, Craig commented on the stories written about him during the production of the new 007 thriller, *Quantum of Solace*. "The media's general attitude is 'Never let the truth get in the way of a good story,'" says Craig, but he has learned to ignore it. "There's an expression here in England about the news: 'It's tomorrow's chip paper,' the paper in which they'll wrap your fish-and-chips. But that doesn't apply anymore. Once it's on the Internet, it's there forever. You have to let it go or you could turn into Howard Hughes and lock yourself in a room and go insane."



In *Welcome to Post-Racial America*, talk-show host and author **Tavis Smiley** says we should stop congratulating ourselves for having a black man and a woman as serious contenders and consider racial and gender issues. He says, "When this country deals with race, we never have a sustained dialogue. As James Brown sings, 'We hit it and quit.' We should consider what those campaigns mean for our 'united' states."



For *The Campaign of His Life*, **Will Blythe** spent nearly two months following 24-year-old Barack Obama volunteer **Lamont Carolina**. "To see a guy with so much charisma and leadership potential at such a tender age is really remarkable," Blythe says. "Obama is injecting a new generation of leaders into the political bloodstream. The effects won't be seen for another 20 years, but he's making young people care about politics."



"*The Wraith* is a cautionary tale about trying to split yourself in two," says **J. Robert Lennon**, author of the forthcoming *Castle* and this month's fiction. In the story, a woman shifts her gloom about the Bush administration into a specter, and then it gets weird. "We talk about our anger or depression as being extrinsic to us—a separate part of ourselves that we strive to snuff out," Lennon says. "But I think our misery is part of what makes us who we are."



Senior Contributing Photographer **Stephen Wayda** opted to use an ultra-stylized fantasy set for UFC sensation **Rachelle Leah**'s first nude pictorial, *The Ultimate Fight Chick*, complete with an octagon-shaped bed for our cover model to lounge on. "It's strange walking into a room full of strangers without having any clothes on. You feel vulnerable and nervous," says Wayda. "After the initial shots Rachelle became comfortable and loved what she was seeing. She's beautiful, enthusiastic and sexy, and she brought an attitude of sensuality and movement to the photographs. Rachelle is fun to talk to because she's an articulate, smart, motivated woman who knows how to take advantage of opportunities in front of her. She has all these qualities besides being a good model, and that will make her very successful."

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features

- 66** **THE CAMPAIGN OF HIS LIFE**
No candidate in recent memory has inspired more young voters than Barack Obama. Among the most ardent is Lamont Carolina, 24 years old, an African American man who had been abandoned by his father and who felt directionless—until he heard Obama speak in New York. Presented with his mission, Carolina became a devoted foot soldier in the Obama campaign. **BY WILL BLYTHE**
- 72** **FACTS. BOND FACTS**
Check any calendar: 2008 is the year of James Bond. To celebrate the 100th anniversary of author Ian Fleming's birth and the 55th anniversary of 007's creation, and in anticipation of *Quantum of Solace*, we look back at all things Bondian, as well as the peerless secret agent's singular role in the world of PLAYBOY (and vice versa).
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Whether you make your own levels in *Little Big Planet* or immerse yourself in the multiplayer world of *Resistance 2*, it seems the people playing video games these days are more important than the games themselves. Plus we preview the hottest thumb-twiddlers for fall.
- 110** **THE SEXUAL MALE, PART FIVE: THE HARD FACTS**
The penis has been a sign of a man's masculinity and virility since we drew on cave walls. **CHIP ROWE** unsheathes the long and the short of it—from what is considered an average size to the biomechanics behind our little bishops.

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- 102** **THE WRAITH**
Carl's wife, Lurene, is unhappy and content to stay that way, until the Bush administration's exploits help unleash her inner monster—an otherworldly being with an insatiable sex drive. Just as Carl adjusts to his wife's libidinous doppelgänger, their daily trysts yield an unexpected result. **BY J. ROBERT LENNON**

the playboy forum

- 51** **WELCOME TO POST-RACIAL AMERICA**
Many Americans are hoping Barack Obama's achievement in becoming a presidential nominee will in itself close the painful chapter on racism in this country. Before we get too self-congratulatory, **TAVIS SMILEY** advises us to ask, Is America as good as its promise?

20Q

- 104** **CHELSEA HANDLER**
On E!'s late-night talk show *Chelsea Lately*, author-comedienne Chelsea Handler elevates mocking celebrities into a sarcastic art form. Now the former *Girls Behaving Badly* prankster shares laughs with **ERIC SPITZNAGEL** about enthusiastic drinking, her affinity for little people and her unique sexual vernacular.

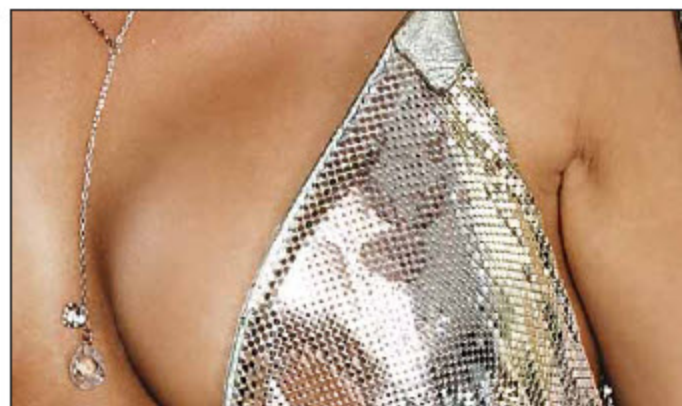
interview

- 57** **DANIEL CRAIG**
He forced all the "James Bland" naysayers to eat crow after his first Bond adventure, *Casino Royale*, turned out to be one of the most popular—and profitable—Bond movies ever. As the world prepares to be shaken and stirred by *Quantum of Solace*, the English actor sits with **DAVID SHEFF** and discusses the evolution of Bond girls, getting in touch with 007's darker side and why he avoids adventure in real life.



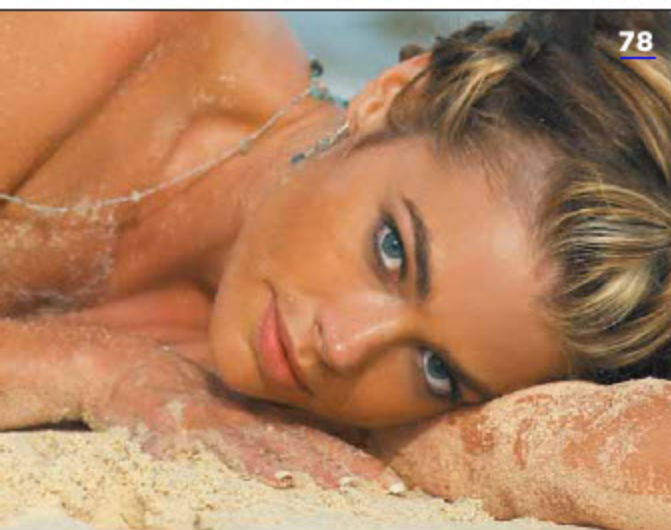
COVER STORY

"I can't believe I get paid to watch one of the most exciting sports out there," says UFC sensation Rachele Leah. The 24-year-old knockout was studying to be a paramedic when a UFC scout saw her picture online and offered her a future in mixed martial arts. Senior Contributing Photographer Stephen Wayda positions Rachele to be our cover's silver lining; our Rabbit shimmers with delight.



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This fall, take a vacation from the typical and try on something new. A shawl-collar sweater and a rugged watch are among the pieces you'll need for the getaway you deserve.
BY JOSEPH DE ACETIS
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Rock band the White Tie Affair crashes the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, wearing threads that look cool without trying too hard.
BY JENNIFER RYAN JONES

this month on playboy.com

MAGAZINE BLOG
News, views and inside perspectives from PLAYBOY editors. playboy.com/blog

THE 21ST QUESTION
Chelsea Handler stays up late for one more question. playboy.com/21q

THE HAUNTED MANSION
Exclusive coverage of Hef's annual fright-fest. playboy.com/halloween

SEXIEST STARS
Tell us who turned you on most in 2008. playboy.com/sexstars

THE DRIVE TO 55
Before the 55th Anniversary Playmate is unveiled, see the beautiful girls who showed up at our nationwide casting calls. playboy.com/pm55



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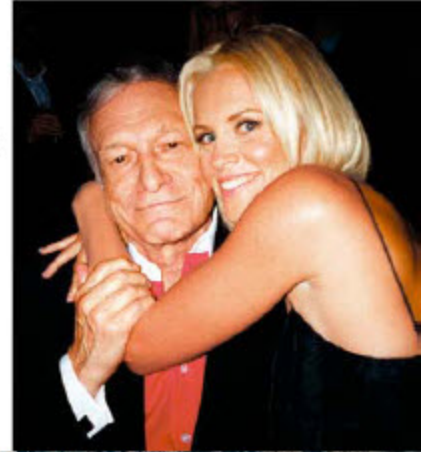
BOB MEYERS *president, media group*

THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY

HEF SIGHTINGS, MANSION FROLICS AND NIGHTLIFE NOTES



JENNY'S AUTISM FUND-RAISER
 Hef and the girls supported PMOY 1994 Jenny McCarthy's fight against autism by attending a Generation Rescue benefit. After her son Evan was diagnosed with the disorder, says Jenny, "I spent many late nights searching the web for answers. When I read 'Autism Is Reversible' on the Generation Rescue website, everything changed. Hope was restored."



BAD NEWS BUNNIES

Kendra organized a softball game with the Girls Next Door, Playmates and their friends split into two teams: the Ballaz and the Playaz. Hef threw out the opening pitch, and after numerous swings, Holly connected. But the highlight was the Mansion-butler cheerleaders.

PUPPY LOVE

Stars and dogs came to the Mansion for Much Love Animal Rescue's fund-raiser. Among the celebrities who strolled the red carpet, er, dogwalk were Tori Spelling and Dean McDermott of *Tori & Dean: Home Sweet Hollywood*, PLAYBOY cover girl Denise Richards, *American Idol*'s Paula Abdul and Kevin Nealon from *Weeds*. Lunch with Nealon and a *Weeds* walk-on fetched \$12,000 for the charity.



HANGIN' WITH H&F



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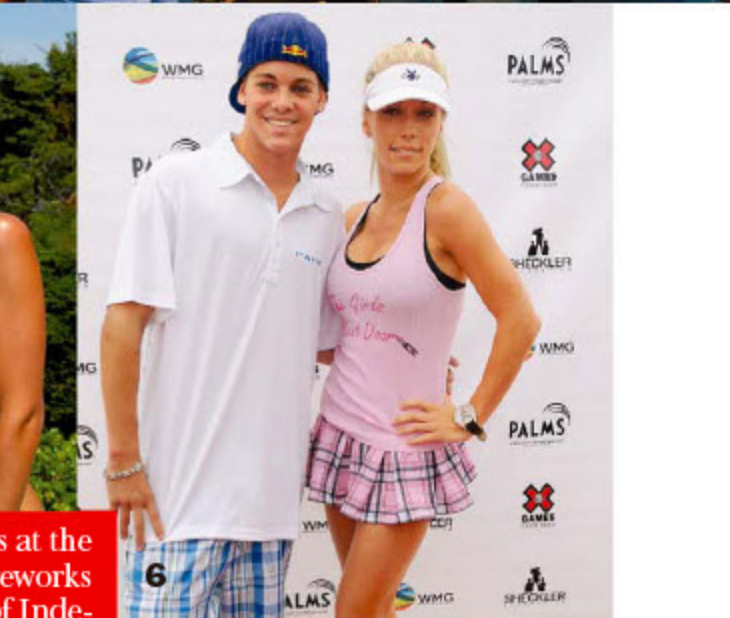
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On the Fourth of July there were fireworks at the Mansion, though in all honesty, there are fireworks at the Mansion every day. (1) In the spirit of Independence Day, Holly, Kendra and Playmates free themselves of their tops on the Slip 'N Slide. (2) Hef toasts with Miss April 1997 Kelly Monaco. (3) Pauly Shore, Jeffrey Ross, Seth Green and Clark Duke keep cool at the Mansion. (4) Bridget flies through the air with the greatest of ease. (5) Hef with Corey and Susie Feldman. (6) More hot fun in the summertime: Kendra with pro skateboarder Ryan Sheckler at the Ryan Sheckler X Games Celebrity Skins Classic. (7) The Girls Next Door get certified as scuba divers. (8) ESPN kicks off its ESPY Awards with a party at PMW. The Ravens' Ray Lewis drops by. (9) Ryan Cabrera and Calum Best. (10) The Giants' Amani Toomer and the Bengals' Keith Rivers lounge. (11) Greg Oden tells us he's going to double down. (12) The Lakers' Sasha Vujacic gets posted up by Miss June 2004 Hiromi Oshima and PMOY 2006 Kara Monaco. (13) During the off-season, football players Shawne Merriman (Chargers), Vernon Davis (49ers) and Braylon Edwards (Browns) play nice.



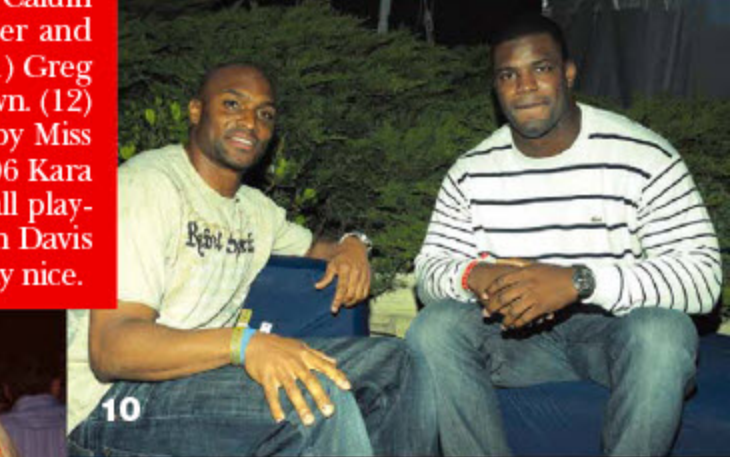
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ASHLEY, ANYONE?

My compliments on your beautiful pictorial of tennis pro Ashley Harkleroad (*Love, Ashley*, August). After seeing her play fearlessly and flawlessly at the 2007 U.S. Open, I was impressed by her strength and nerve. She is a spectacular vision.

Steve Bashore
Wernersville, Pennsylvania



Ashley cools off between sets.

It is not often you feature lovely tennis stars. And Ashley's good, too. The last tennis shot I remember in the magazine is Cheryl Bachman's Centerfold, from October 1991.

Gary Bruehler
Fair Oaks Ranch, Texas

August is the sexiest PLAYBOY COVER I have ever seen. Game. Set. Match.

Joe Bonincontri
Dover, Pennsylvania

Ashley's pictorial is amazing. She has to be one of the hottest—if not the hottest—female tennis players ever.

Robert Adams
Ledyard, Connecticut

COREY'S BETTER HALF

Thank you for the photos of Susie Feldman (*The Surreal Wife*, August). I never wanted to be a former child star from the 1980s until now.

Bill Douglas
Springfield, Illinois

LONE EXCEPTION

Selma Blair is a great actress, and I love her movies (*20Q*, August). However, I find it odd that she "prays" to work with Roman Polanski, who in 1977 pleaded guilty in California to having sex with a 13-year-old girl, then fled the country prior to sentencing (which is why Blair saw him dining in Paris). In another of her responses Blair says people who abuse animals

and children should stay clear of her. Apparently that includes everyone but famous directors.

David Williams
El Paso, Texas

MISSING LINK

We Texans go to great lengths to protect our links. Your August *After Hours* item on Texas barbecue ("Man Food Delivered to Your Door") mentions sausage "lengths," but the proper term is *links*. You also suggest Jerry Jeff Walker, Robert Earl Keen, Guy Clark and Willie Nelson as musical accompaniment to your meal. You can gain some length by adding Gary P. Nunn, Larry Joe Taylor and Asleep at the Wheel. By the way, Chappell Hill Sausage makes a delicious link.

Roger Chambers
Burton, Texas

BONUS BUNNY

Your August cover appears to have a stowaway Rabbit Head. If you turn the magazine clockwise and look at the lace on Ashley's left shoe, another Rabbit Head appears. It's facing left.

Joseph Longo Jr.
Providence, Rhode Island

GAME PLAY

In "Free Games for Cheap Bastards" (*Games*, August), you suggest ikariam.org, which is fun but runs dry after a few weeks. Other great massively multiplayer online role-playing games that will keep your attention include *Nexus War* (nexuswar.com) and *The Kingdom of Loathing* (kingdomofloathing.com).

George Pierce
Bozeman, Montana

THE ART OF BOOZE

What an amazing cover in August. The photo of Ashley Harkleroad plus Denis Johnson fiction and the *Playboy Interview* with Ben Stiller had me eager to dig in. But what happened to *The Playboy Bar*? I quickly became a fan of this feature.

Jason Griffiths
Allston, Massachusetts

It will return soon. We still need to investigate bourbon, gin and rum.

As a bartender, I enjoy *The Playboy Bar*. After reading your July installment on tequila, I wanted to share an alternative tequila sunrise recipe: Pour the grenadine, ice, tequila and orange juice, in that order. When stirred, the grenadine rises like the

sun. As always, quality tequila is the most important ingredient.

Daniel Anderson
Duluth, Minnesota

I was happy to read in *Hot Stuff* (July) that the gimlet is making a comeback and glad to have your recipe. I already had gin on hand, so I had to buy only Rose's lime juice. Talk about wonderful. I let my wife taste it, and now she is hooked. Who says PLAYBOY is just about gorgeous women?

Karl Heberlein
Panama City Beach, Florida

REDHEAD WIVES

As a redhead, I couldn't help but laugh after reading in August's *Raw Data* that none of the world's 100 richest men is dating or married to a redhead. Does this reflect the character of the men or of the redheads?

Jessika Louise Kynett
Livingston, Montana

HOW FAST CAN WE GO?

I read with great interest your article on the fastest humans (*The Perfect Sprint*, August). While Jonathan Littman mentions how sprinting records are typically shaved by tenths or even hundredths of a second, he doesn't address whether this trend is likely to continue. What are the limits of human speed? With the techniques that are being developed, humans could conceivably cut the 100-meter



Top 100-meter sprinters hit speeds of 25 mph.

record to five seconds. It may seem outlandish, but consider that cheetahs, whose muscles, tendons and bones are remarkably similar to ours, attain speeds nearly three times faster than top sprinters'. What sort of tweak would be necessary for such outrageous speeds to be attained? The key factor is how rapidly the ground forces increase as a sprinter's foot contacts the track—this rate is roughly 7,000



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pounds a second at racing speeds of 25 mph. To double the speed, a sprinter would have to increase the rate of force application to roughly 14,000 pounds a second. Possible? Perhaps through genetic switches, cloning and other innovations becoming available to modulate muscle-fiber speeds. When it comes to human speed, we ain't seen nothin' yet.

Peter Weyand
Dallas, Texas

Weyand is a professor of applied physiology and biomechanics at Southern Methodist University.

After analyzing the progression of 3,263 world records since 1896 in track and field, swimming, cycling, weight lifting and speed skating, my colleagues and I concluded earlier this year that human physiological frontiers will be reached within a generation. In other words, mankind has achieved 99 percent of its athletic potential, especially if we continue to bust dopers and there is no new technology such as the full-body swimsuits used in Beijing. Like rowers and football players, sprinters are getting taller (e.g., the six-foot-five Usain Bolt), but humans can get only so big, as we're seeing in the NBA.

Jean-François Toussaint
Paris, France

Toussaint directs the Institut de Recherche bioMédicale et d'Épidémiologie du Sport.

With his emphasis on technique, sprint coach John Smith demonstrates the key factor many people miss when trying to appreciate human speed: the central nervous system. Although powerful muscles, metabolic systems to buffer lactate and a strong heart are crucial components, the brain's ability to control the explosive contractions of muscle is what separates good from great. In fact, evidence suggests injuries happen not because a muscle is weak but because the brain fails to activate it appropriately. Similarly, the teaching of high stride rates relies on training the brain to activate muscles at the right time and in the right sequence—the beauty of a world-class sprinter is not power but coordination.

Ross Tucker
Cape Town, South Africa

Tucker is co-editor of the Science of Sport blog at sportsscientists.com.

WHY COOL IS HOT

Bill Zehme's *The Birth of the Cool* (August) sums up the magic of PLAYBOY. Younger readers may not fully appreciate the article's wonderful history

lesson, but as an early subscriber I can say it shows how the magazine has stood the test of time.

Reggie Oates
Louisville, Kentucky

I was struck by the observation that "the 1950s was the last decade when to be cool meant to be sophisticated." Sophistication is dead and buried, as evidenced by the behavior of most of the population. Can you imagine if the tuxedoed Modern Jazz Quartet tried to make it today? West Coast jazz and East Coast jazz were unique, and Shorty Rogers, Brubeck, Shearing, Bird, Baker, Mulligan, Zoot Sims, etc., didn't need ear-splitting volume for their music to be appreciated.

Ron Pozzo
Canton, Massachusetts

A NEW REIGN

I have been a subscriber for many years, but you have outdone yourself with the August issue. Kayla Collins is



"Doll Face" Collins is a Penn State alum.

by far the most beautiful Playmate I have seen (*Cozy Up to Kayla*). I've had a favorite Playmate for many of those years (I'll withhold her name), but Kayla has pushed her aside.

Dennis Maginnis
Boston, Massachusetts

SCRUMPTIOUS

I turned my back on my nine-month-old son for 10 seconds, and he had ripped off a corner of the July cover and had Cindy Margolis's left nipple in his mouth, sucking happily. That's a boy who knows what he wants in life!

Kori Magallanez
Centreville, Virginia

Read more feedback at playboy.com/blog.



P L A Y B O Y

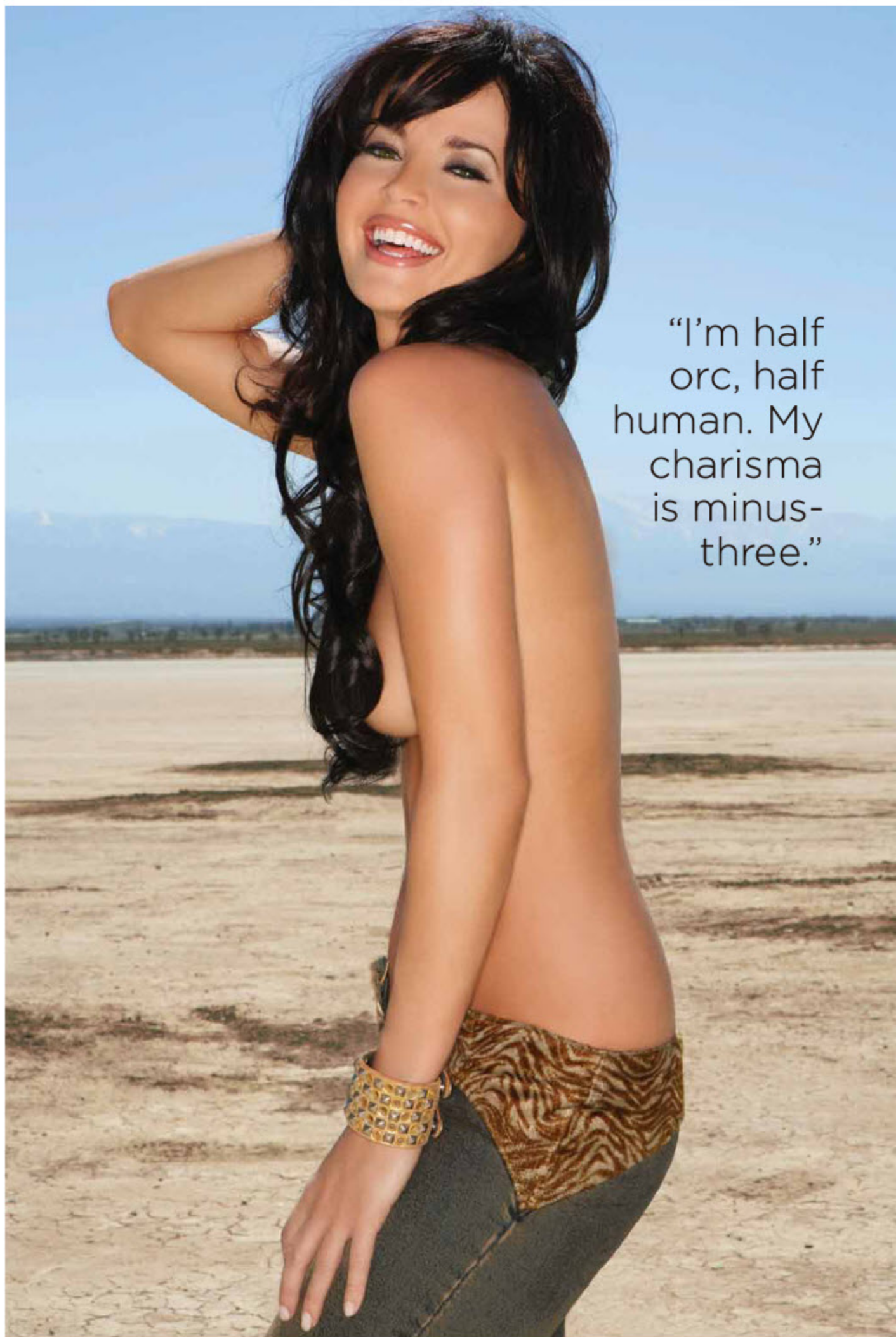
a f t e r h o u r s

babe of the month

April Eden

HER PHASERS ARE ALWAYS SET TO STUN

Make up your mind, April Eden. "I'm queen of the nerds," she tells us, then corrects herself. "I don't like to call myself a nerd. I'm a person who's interested in unusual things." Fine, but her MySpace page bills her as "April (queen of the nerds)," and her next photo shoot is for *Geek Monthly*. Obviously, she's beautiful, but what has *Geek Monthly* all lathered up is her *Star Trek* tattoo. To date, April has done TV hosting (on the home-makeover show *Material Girls*), eye-candy cameos (memorably on *The Office*) and some stunt work (shot in the head in the upcoming *Crank 2*), but *Star Trek* is the dream job. It's why she moved to L.A. 18 months ago. "My goal is to be a sci-fi actress," she says. "When I was a kid, all I did was play video games and watch *Star Trek*." But that's not all she did; it gets worse (or better, depending on one's taste in hobbies): Between NES and TNG sessions, she would sling the 20-sided die. Yes, she played Dungeons & Dragons and still does, avidly. She's having trouble with her current character. "I'm half orc, half human," she explains. "My charisma is minus-three, so it's hard to communicate with other characters. I can't negotiate or make plans, and I get overcharged for everything." It's the saddest story we've heard all week—when we look at April, our impulse is to give her things for free. But she has hope. "I'm learning to play my character. Orcs don't need to negotiate. Just kill the person and take what you want." Spoken like a true Klingon.



"I'm half orc, half human. My charisma is minus-three."

the book on hef

What Sort of Man Edits *Playboy*?

A FEW WORDS WITH STEVEN WATTS,
CHRONICLER OF OUR FOUNDER'S LIFE AND TIMES

In October John Wiley & Sons published Mr. Playboy: Hugh Hefner and the American Dream, a 544-page biography of the world's most famous philosopher of the boudoir. Hef granted author Steven Watts, a professor of history at the University of Missouri, unrestricted access to his archives. Kirkus Reviews calls Mr. Playboy a "nuanced portrait of Hef's life that also serves as a panorama of hip culture from the 1950s onward." We call it essential reading, easily the most comprehensive survey of a legendary American figure. We asked Watts what it was like to work on this book.

PLAYBOY: It's unusual for a historian to have this sort of access to his subject. There are obvious benefits to that, but there must be perils as well.

WATTS: There are two perils. First, you can become so friendly with your subject that you lose your objectivity. Second, your subject has definite, strongly felt views on his life, and it becomes difficult to sort out what you agree with and what strikes you as self-serving.

PLAYBOY: Your first two biography subjects were Walt Disney and Henry Ford. You seem to have a predisposition for Midwestern inventors.

WATTS: You will have to excuse my pride of place as a native Midwesterner, but I have always believed figures from this region have played an inordinately important role in shaping modern American history. I include not only Ford, Disney and Hefner but military commanders such as John Pershing and Dwight Eisenhower, political leaders such as Harry Truman and Ronald Reagan and literary figures such as Mark Twain and Ernest Hemingway. Something in the water, I guess.

PLAYBOY: What will Hef's place in American history be?

WATTS: Hef will be remembered as a catalyst for two enormous trends that reshaped postwar America: the revolution in sexual values and the emergence of consumer abundance as an ideal. He helped define the modern pursuit of happiness.

PLAYBOY: What period of Hef's life do you find the most interesting?

WATTS: The 1950s and 1960s. His career and the magazine in that era open a window on how Americans were questioning and reshaping some deeply held values.

PLAYBOY: What about Hef surprised you most?

WATTS: He has a genuinely romantic nature and a sentimental, optimistic, idealistic take on human beings. The depth of his love for Hollywood movies, which approaches the point of obsession, also surprised me.

PLAYBOY: What is his greatest failing?

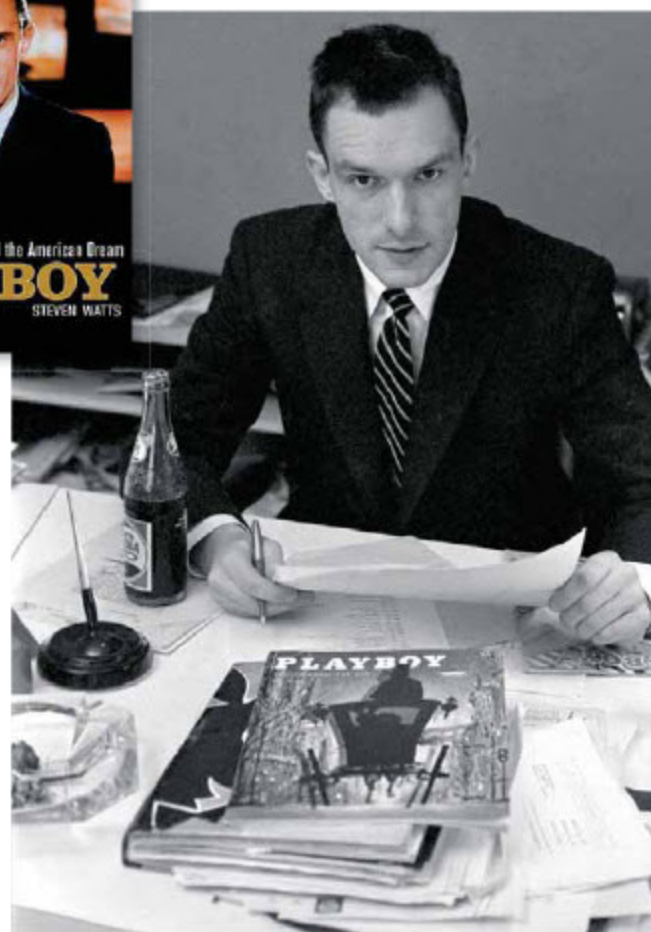
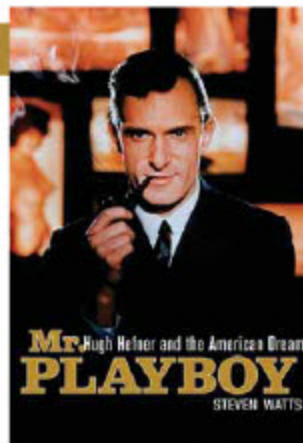
WATTS: Hef is determined to see every moment as the best of all possible worlds. Throughout the decades he has regularly insisted, "It's the best time of my life," but sometimes, when he was dealing with a disastrous relationship or facing political persecution, things looked terrible to an outside observer. His enthusiasm can trump his perspective.

PLAYBOY: How do your students feel about your research?

WATTS: They bombard me with questions: "What is the Mansion like?" and "Have you met the Girls Next Door?" I've heard a few disdainful comments from politically correct types, but the reaction has been overwhelmingly positive.

PLAYBOY: You've become a fixture at the Mansion. Are you ready for your own reality show?

WATTS: I'll leave the reality show to Hef and the Girls Next Door. Those lurking camera crews would drive me nuts—and they wouldn't find much of interest.



Three images from *Mr. Playboy*: Above, the young magazine magnate, with Pepsi at hand, improves copy at his desk in spring 1955. Below, the editor-publisher (in white socks) consults with his editorial and art staff about a *Pittdown Painting Party* pictorial that appeared in the August 1956 issue. At bottom, Hef gets down at a summer party in the Chicago Playboy Mansion in 1962.



drawing a crowd



The Prince of Sin City Isn't Done Yet

MORE FRANK MILLER FOR THE MASSES

Before he wrote the film-inspiring graphic novels *Sin City* and *300* Frank Miller kicked off 20-plus years of Batmania with *The Dark Knight Returns*. It's hard to imagine any of the above without his 1983 series *Ronin*, just reissued as *Absolute Ronin*.

PLAYBOY: *Ronin* combines samurai mythology with postapocalyptic sci-fi. How did that happen?

MILLER: The dirty secret of most cartoonists is we make up stories about things we want to draw. Notice I loaded *Sin City* with vintage cars and beautiful women.

In the early 1980s there was an explosion of creativity coming from France, led by Jean "Moebius" Giraud. And in Japan Koike and Kojima were doing a series called *Lone Wolf and Cub*. I wanted to bring those influences together, yes, but mostly I wanted to tell a rollicking yarn about urban life in America.

PLAYBOY: *Ronin's* format, six 48-page issues with no ads, was also innovative.

MILLER: At the time, we were still stuck on newsprint, with hand-separated colors. Frankly, comic books looked like they were ashamed of themselves. We wanted to bring American comics up to speed to show the Europeans we could compete.

PLAYBOY: You've directed the film *The Spirit*, based on one of the great titles from the golden age of comics. The cast includes Scarlett Johansson, Eva Mendes, Jaime King and Paz Vega. It must have been difficult to drag yourself to work every day.

MILLER: Yes, it was, but we soldier on.

For more of our chat with Frank Miller, visit playboy.com/frankmiller.

all today's parties

Voting Guide 2008

The conventions are over, the paperwork has been filed, and soon you'll be participating in democracy as the founding fathers intended. Remember, your vote is too important to throw away on the likely victor. Consider the *complete* list of candidates before pulling the lever:

REPUBLICAN PARTY

McCAIN, John

DEMOCRATIC PARTY

OBAMA, Barack

GREEN PARTY

FROG, Kermit

HOUSE PARTY

KID, Play

HOUSE M.D. PARTY

LAURIE, Hugh

WORLD PARTY

GOODBYE, Jumbo

BACHELOR PARTY

HANKS, Tom

DINNER PARTY

ORR, Derf

GOING AWAY PARTY

BONN, Voyage

SURPRISE PARTY

SHUSHERE, E. Combs

FRAT PARTY

KEGG, Stan

SEARCH PARTY

WARE, Izzy

STAG PARTY

HEFNER, Hugh M.

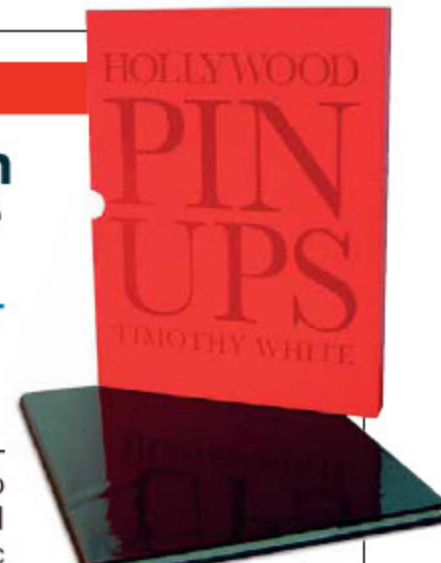
shooting stars

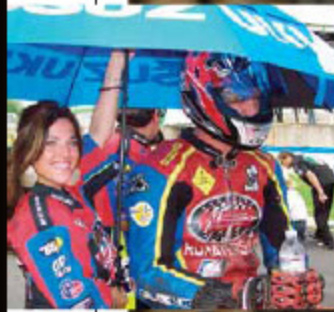


Tinseltown Girls Gone Glam

EAT YOUR HEART OUT, ALBERTO VARGAS

Many an able photographer has sought to capture the look and spirit of the classic pinup artists. Most have failed. But Timothy White is more than an able photographer; his celebrity and fashion shoots have run in *Vanity Fair*, *Rolling Stone* and *PLAYBOY*. For his hefty *Hollywood Pinups* he has convinced some of the great contemporary vamps (such as Tía Leoni, left) to vogue it as they did in the old days.





employee of the month

Super Biker Babe

A SLIGHTLY RACY CHAT WITH SUPERBIKE PIT REPORTER DANIELLE TEAL

PLAYBOY: Other than in *PLAYBOY*, where can we find you?

DANIELLE: I cover AMA Superbike racing for a few websites as an on-camera reporter. Google me.

PLAYBOY: Did you grow up around the track?

DANIELLE: No. In my house, vehicles were for getting from A to B. I was actually opposed to motorcycles, but a boyfriend introduced me to the track, and I just fell in love with it.

PLAYBOY: What in particular do you like about racing?

DANIELLE: The sounds and smells. I'm in awe of people who can go 200 miles an hour on a bike, drag their knees on the pavement and then go out and do it again. In Superbike racing you have to get hurt to get good.

PLAYBOY: Do you dig scars?

DANIELLE: They're not really a qualification, but scars usually come with interesting stories.

PLAYBOY: What's the most exciting story you have covered?

DANIELLE: For a report, I experienced the sport firsthand—wearing a head cam while riding on the back of a bike going 175 miles an hour. It was the best and worst time of my life.

PLAYBOY: Is racing really a sport?

DANIELLE: Anything competitive that you can break a sweat doing is a sport.

PLAYBOY: So then is sex a sport?

DANIELLE: I'm not competitive in bed. For me, it's not about who comes first—but I can break a sweat having sex.

Want to be the next Employee of the Month? Learn how to apply at playboy.com/pose.

rolling in it



Make New Cash From Old Cars

THE SMART MONEY ISN'T HIDDEN UNDER A MATTRESS—IT'S PARKED IN THE GARAGE

The priciest car ever sold at auction in North America is a 1937 Bugatti Type 57SC Atalante Coupe that went for \$7.92 million at the recent Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. How



much money can you make in the vintage-car market? Consider this: The last time the Bugatti sold was in 1974, for about \$60,000; adjusting for inflation, it has appreciated 2,858 percent. Over the same period IBM stock has gone up a nice 206 percent, Merck a decent 898 percent and Exxon a sweet 1,105 percent. Still, you'd have done better with the car. For tips from Ken Gross, *PLAYBOY*'s resident auto savant, on buying a (less expensive) vintage car, go to playboy.com/vintagecar.

life in the slow lane

Sit Back, Relax, Chill Out and Pop a Can of Drag-Ass

KEEP YOUR RED BULL: LETHARGIC HIP-HOP CULTURE HAS SPAWNED THE FIRST "ANTI ENERGY" DRINK



It's always sunny in Houston, and it's usually hot, humid and buggy. The local hip-hop, pioneered by the late DJ Screw, is aural sludge. What does any of this have to do with the purple stuff above? Screw and his contemporaries would get super-slow off codeine-rich prescription cough syrup. A new—perfectly legal—grape-flavored drink called Drank offers extreme mellowness with snoozy ingredients like valerian root and melatonin. Use it as a mixer with vodka or rum, if you dare, and cancel all your appointments—you ain't goin' nowhere.

hanging on the telephone

You Made the Call

THE VOTES HAVE BEEN COUNTED—MEET AMBER J, OUR FIRST MISS PLAYBOY MOBILE

PLAYBOY: Welcome to the family, Amber. Tell us a little about yourself.

AMBER: I'm a 26-year-old Seattle girl, and I work as a server at a seafood restaurant on Lake Washington.

PLAYBOY: How did you enter the Miss Playboy Mobile 2008 contest?

AMBER: I had always wanted to be in PLAYBOY, and I had actually already submitted photos. Then I heard about the contest and entered it online.

PLAYBOY: What has winning the title done for you so far?

AMBER: I was crowned at the Hugh Hefner Sky Villa at the Palms in Las Vegas and given a \$5,000 cash prize. I also got to hang out at the Bunny House after the Playmate of the Year luncheon with Jayde Nicole. The party was sponsored by Patrón. What a blast! I've been a Painted Lady at Mansion parties, and of course I've had my Playboy photo shoot.

PLAYBOY: Where do you hope to end up with Playboy?

AMBER: I'd love to be a Playmate, of course, but I'd be happy as a Cyber Girl or Special Editions model.

PLAYBOY: What's the next step for you?

AMBER: We're already working on the search for Miss Playboy Mobile 2009. This time around, the competition is going global, and I'll be there at the ceremony to crown the winner.

Visit mspbm.com to see photos from the 2008 award ceremony and to learn more about the Miss Playboy Mobile 2009 contest.



fb on the radio



Getting Drafty

FANTASY-FOOTBALL PICKS WITH ROMO, KENDRA AND SKINNY VINNY (WHO?)

When the *Playboy Morning Show* held its fantasy-football draft in September, hosts Andrea Lowell and Kevin Klein were joined by former NFL linebacker Bill Romanowski, Girl Next Door Kendra Wilkinson, Playmate Pilar Lastra and a listener known only as Skinny Vinny. Here's how they picked 'em in the first three rounds. Tune in weekday mornings on Sirius channel 198 to follow who's winning.

1. Bill Romanowski

(NFL legend)

TOM BRADY

MARVIN HARRISON

DARREN MCFADDEN

2. Skinny Vinny

(listener)

PEYTON MANNING

CHAD JOHNSON

TONY GONZALEZ

3. Kevin Klein

(host)

ADRIAN PETERSON

MARQUES COLSTON

DONOVAN MCNABB

4. Kendra Wilkinson

(Girl Next Door)

MARION BARBER

RYAN GRANT

DEREK ANDERSON

5. Pilar Lastra

(Playmate)

TONY ROMO

TERRELL OWENS

LAURENCE MARONEY

6. Andrea Lowell

(host)

BRIAN WESTBROOK

BEN ROETHLISBERGER

REGGIE WAYNE

thing vs. schwing

Choose It or Lose It

WHAT'LL IT BE—TECH OR TRUE LOVE?

Decisions, decisions. On the Playboy TV show *Gadget or the Girl* (airing weeknights), an eligible bachelor gets to know a lovely woman—and then must choose between a romantic getaway with her or some mystery piece of high-end technology. Carl Jung never plumbed man's duality this well.



top topiary

Let It Grow

HERE COMES THE FUZZ



You want to help out, but you can't quite get motivated for the usual charity fun run. We know how it is—we've been there. Yet even the least sporty among us can grow hair on his face for a month and in so doing fight prostate cancer. Playboy is proud to once again be the media sponsor for Movember. Visit the above website for more information.

movie of the month

Quantum of Solace

A BROODING BOND RETURNS FOR REVENGE

By Stephen Rebello

How do you compete with *Casino Royale*, the 21st James Bond adventure and the one that reinvented the film franchise? Not only did it introduce Daniel Craig as a leaner and meaner 007, it also won over critics and satisfied audiences to the tune of more than \$587 million worldwide. Enter the 22nd Bond thriller, *Quantum of Solace*, in which the secret agent haunts Austria, Italy and South America to unlock the mystery behind the death of the woman he loved, in a personal vendetta that leads to an encounter with the explosive Camille (Olga Kurylenko) and a deadly clash with a ruthless businessman and environmental terrorist (Mathieu Amalric). Shake in the requisite showstopping action sequences, verbal jousts with M (Judi Dench), cool cars and more world-class beauties and you have a lethally entertaining cocktail of mayhem, Ian Fleming-style.

The most surprising element of this new Bond epic is arguably the participation of director Marc Forster, who made his name with



smaller-scale films like *Monster's Ball* and *Finding Neverland*. "When they first offered this Bond movie to me, I didn't want to make it," says Forster. "But it's so fascinating historically that, if I was going to do a commercial movie, why not Bond? There is the usual framework—007, the villain, the girl, the car, M—and within that, I wanted to make a film with my own voice. I told Daniel Craig I wanted to go deeper, have Bond question who he is, why he can't sleep, why he does what he does." Forster also tried to create action sequences that offer audiences emotional hooks along with the explosions. "There's this cool chase sequence between Bond and another guy, set in a city's cistern system, and that chase is intercut with a horse race," he says. "As the winning horse crosses the finish line, Bond and the other guy pop up from underground and find themselves in a crowd of 50,000 people. It ends with them crashing through the roof dome of an art gallery. I like it because it has the feel of old-school Alfred Hitchcock."

Now showing: Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman find romance in Baz Luhrmann's *Australia*; Clint Eastwood directs Angelina Jolie and John Malkovich in the thriller *Changeling*; Seth Rogen and Elizabeth Banks hope making a skin flick will pull them out of debt in Kevin Smith's *Zack and Miri Make a Porno*; con men try to bilk a beautiful heiress (Rachel Weisz) out of her fortune in *The Brothers Bloom*. Read more at playboy.com.



dvd of the month

Alfred Hitchcock Premiere Collection

THE MASTER GETS REMASTERED IN STYLE

Alfred Hitchcock always knew how to unnerve us by putting ordinary people in extraordinary situations that were out of their control, thus exploiting our anxiety and paranoia while also breaking taboos. The three biggest movies in this MGM boxed set—*Notorious* (pictured), *Spellbound* and Oscar winner *Rebecca*—star Cary Grant, Gregory Peck and Laurence Olivier respectively, and each title will have an individual release as well. The collection also assembles lesser-known treats: *Sabotage*, *The Lodger*, *The Paradine Case*, the unexpectedly comedic thriller *Young & Innocent* and the John Steinbeck-penned morality play *Lifeboat*. All the films have been newly, gorgeously remastered (some were in dire need of it) and include comprehensive featurettes, scores, commentaries, booklets and more. The sachem of suspense astonished us to the end, so see if you can spot his seemingly impossible cameo in *Lifeboat*—just one of the surprises in this impressive eight-movie collection. **Best extras:** Vintage radio plays and audio interviews with Hitchcock by Peter Bogdanovich and François Truffaut. ★★★½ —Bryan Reesman

tease frame

In 1992's British wartime miniseries *The Camomile Lawn* (pictured), Jennifer Ehle cleans up as a vamp from Cornwall. Catch her next opposite Edward Norton and Colin Farrell in the drama *Pride and Glory*, which follows a large family of NYPD officers.



playing to the base

Rock and Roll

DAVE STEWART WANTS CHANGE

He is much more than half of the Eurythmics. Stewart has written songs with Mick Jagger, Bono and Tom Petty, and the Traveling Wilburys began in his kitchen. Now with "American Prayer" he has made a strong statement—for Barack Obama—in the run-up to the election.

Q: How did this song come about?

A: It has the most crazy history, though it has always said the same thing. I originally wrote this song about Nelson Mandela with Joe Strummer—he faxed me his parts and died something like 24 hours later. So I turned to Bono and said, "Finish this with me." We ended up writing a lot of it over the speakerphone at two in the morning.

Q: You're English. Why do you feel vested in the U.S. presidential race?

A: I live here. I love that it's a place where all sorts of people live and interact. The various cultures create this great feeling when things come together right. But I've also lived abroad and seen how people's perceptions of America have changed in the past eight years.



mix tape musts

"Big River (Count De Money remix)," **Johnny Cash** In the spirit of Junkie XL's spin on Elvis's "A Little Less Conversation."

"Love Can Be So Mean," **Sebastien Grainger** A righteous racket: half of DFA 1979 produced by half of Daft Punk.

"Bruce Wayne Campbell Interviewed on the Roof of the Chelsea Hotel, 1979," **Okkervil River** Wordy, woozy, woebegone.

"Make My Day," **Common** Exuberant cut featuring Cee-Lo sounds like a lost track from the first Gnarls Barkley album.

"I Wonder," **Rodriguez** From reissue of cult 1970 album by Mexican kid from Detroit. Think Dylan, Albert Hammond (Senior).

"Well, Well, Well," **Lucinda Williams** Her best songs have been about nostalgia and weakness. Not so on this strutting kiss-off.

"Never Stops," **Deerhunter** Noisy guitar rocker that somehow manages to be soothing and spooky at the same time.

"The Spirit of '75," **Fort Knox Five** Disco strings, P-Funk, jungle bass and breaks come together on FK5's *Radio Free DC* LP.

Arnold Schwarzenegger campaigning with Twisted Sister? Bill Clinton saxing it up? Check out an exclusive multimedia history of music's impact on politics at playboy.com/musicandpolitics.

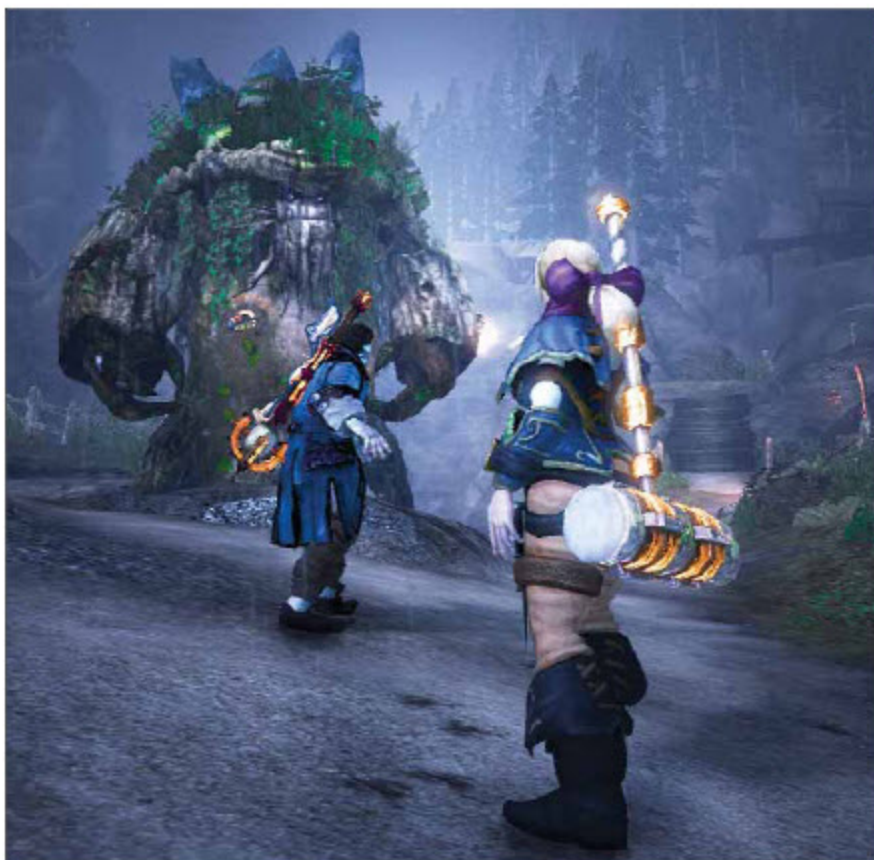
game of the month

Lust, Ethics and Gold

FIGHTING AND DELIBERATING IN *FABLE II*

Four years ago Peter Molyneux's *Fable* fell just short of his sweeping promises but still provided a damn good time. Since then, 500 years have passed in Albion (the game's world), but the thorny ethical dilemmas remain. This 360-only sequel is 10 times larger than the original and much more of an adult affair—having multiple wives, engaging in homosexual relationships and running a brothel, for example, are all on offer. Each of your decisions—to kill or save people, to steal or be honest—impacts your character's development and renders your experience different from anyone else's. Its simple and uncluttered interface makes it exceptionally easy to pick up and play, and the co-op online mode adds an entirely new dimension to the gameplay (see page 86 for more on this). We were hooked from the start, even without the promise of polymorphous polyamory. **★★★★** —Scott Stein

See reviews of *Guitar Hero: World Tour vs. Rock Band 2*, along with *Fracture*, *EndWar* and *Legendary*, at playboy.com/games.



SAINTS ROW 2 (360, PC, PS3) Where *GTA IV* went for gravitas, this open-world gangbanging romp goes over the top. Customize your gang's appearance, fighting style, graffiti tags and vehicles, then steal money, deal drugs and race Jet Skis through the sewers with your online pals. **★★★★** —Marc Saltzman

SILENT HILL HOMECOMING (360, PC, PS3) Most horror is gory at the expense of dread and creepiness. *Silent Hill* does not have that problem. *Homecoming* includes all the forlorn protagonists and disturbing creatures we wanted but with an expanded fighting system and more interactive environments. **★★★★½** —Chris Hudak

MIDNIGHT CLUB: LOS ANGELES (360, PS3) This zippy arcade-style racer's action elevates it above a clichéd story line, with multiple race modes and the ability to create your own online-playable courses that weave through a high-res City of Angels. Fast, nasty and fun as all hell. **★★★★** —Scott Steinberg



My Big Fat Gay Wedding

If California voters uphold the right of gays and lesbians to marry, same-sex nuptials are expected to pour **\$684 million** into the state's economy over the next three years, generating **\$64 million** in state taxes, **\$9 million** in fees for counties and **2,200** jobs.

Temp Job

Researchers have discovered that worker productivity suffers when an office is colder than **72 degrees** or warmer than **78 degrees**.



Loft of Bread

London artist Freddie Yauner has constructed a toaster that pops toast into the air a record **8 feet 6 inches**.

Tough Shirt

\$7,500: Cost of designer Miguel Caballero's bulletproof polo shirt, which can withstand a slug from a nine-millimeter revolver.



Blue Genes

Due to high demand for blue-eyed offspring, Danish sperm bank Cyros International exports to more than **60** countries, resulting in about **1,000** pregnancies a year.



Viral Epidemic

Rick Astley be damned: **13 hours** of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute.

what they're thinking



13% of women have looked at Internet porn while at work.

Gloveless Sex

Of reproductive-age American women who use contraception, only **18%** rely on their partners to wear a condom.



And You Think Our Recession Blows

Runaway inflation in Zimbabwe has pushed the price of a new laptop computer to **1.2 quadrillion** Zimbabwean dollars. That's about U.S. **\$25,000** at the official exchange rate.

Well-Heeled

Average household income of a NYC Marathon runner: **\$130K**.

Holding On **81%** of men still have mementos from an ex.

Know Your Roll Position

72% of people prefer their toilet paper to come off the roll from the top rather than from the bottom.

Mary Ann Still Beats Ginger

Cosmopolitan magazine asked more than **30,000** men, "Which look on a woman gets you hot for her?"

67% chose "The girl next door (ponytail, natural makeup, casual-but-cute outfit, approachable smile)."

12% chose "The wild thing (fashion-forward hair and outfit; spontaneous, up-for-anything MO)."

12% chose "The sex bomb (seductive makeup, revealing clothing, superhigh heels, coy attitude)."

9% chose "The ice queen (chic hair and makeup, stylish clothes that look expensive, cool vibe)."

Tonsil Hockey

1 minute of passionate kissing burns only **2 calories**—and that's if you're doing it right.

Big Dogs

Humans aren't the only ones battling the bulge. Recent studies show canine obesity is on the upswing, with up to **40%** of dogs in the United States classified as obese or overweight.

price check

\$32,500

The amount bandleader Paul Shaffer paid at auction for Godfather of Soul James Brown's medical bracelet.





Once Upon a Time in the West

In Tahoe you go straight from the slopes to the poker table. Why aren't you there?

PARADISE \PER-UH-DICE\ N, a place you can pound your body ragged on insane powder-covered mountains from nine to four, then unclick your boots and walk into a casino. Lake Tahoe is an Eden of American hedonism, a place of staggering natural beauty and tremendous athletic endeavor that also offers a remarkably wide variety of options for getting into trouble. Boasting 15 resorts that sport more than 125 lifts and 20,000 acres of breathtaking terrain, Tahoe's so big it would take a month to ski all the trails just once—and you'll want to hit a lot of them twice. On a powder day, head to Mott Canyon at Heavenly for the fluffiest of bumps (and don't miss the local-favorite glades in the western perimeter off the Olympic Chair). Boarders can shred the extensive (and recently expanded) backcountry at Kirkwood, assuming they don't mind a ride on the 12-person Sno-Cat at the end (tip: it's the best way out). The adventurous can hit Alpine Meadows and hike to Keyhole, an intimidating cliff-littered set of chutes spanning 1,300 vertical feet. Generally, though, we leave the hard stuff for people with something to prove. While they're meeting new and exciting orthopedic surgeons, we're on the Aqua Ski Shuttle booze cruise across the lake (\$64 round-trip), en route to dinner at 19 Kitchen & Bar atop Harvey's Casino, figuring to follow up with some poker at a joint across the street.



Sammy Knows Best

YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD that Sammy Hagar makes a tequila called Cabo Wabo. But have you tasted it? Turns out, the self-described luckiest man in the world has stumbled onto some of the best tequila in Mexico. The *blanco* is lovely, the *reposado* finely balanced, the *añejo* to die for. But the newish Cabo Uno (\$250) is the crown jewel, aged 38 months for deep texture and a smooth finish. If it doesn't make you smile, nothing will.

French Kiss

BY THIS POINT we've had several lady friends who swear by L'Occitane. After discovering the brand's men's line, we do too. The secret sauce in its Cade line of shave supplies is wild-juniper oil, which French farmers have used for centuries as a folk remedy thanks to its antiseptic and strengthening properties. Cade's shaving cream (\$28), shaving oil (\$20) and aftershave balm (\$28) all offer perfect grooming abilities with the merest hint of a woody scent. We're also big fans of the Youth Concentrate (\$11, not shown), but don't tell the lady friends.



Party in Your Pocket

WE ALL WANT to rock the place for reals, but few of us have the time to scour bins to build a bump-worthy LP library. We prefer mining the beats, breaks and other assorted nastiness already in our digital music collection with the remarkable Pacemaker (\$700, tonium.com), which lets you scratch, beat-match, cross-fade, tweak and generally funkulate the flow just like you would on a full dual-deck DJ setup—all on a touch-sensitive gadget the size of a biggish remote.



No Ordinary Rerun

THERE WAS A time, not so many decades ago, when a nine-inch TV was seriously badass. It was a simpler age: Men were men, Marilyn was queen, and the air was thick with Important Scientific Progress. TVs weren't gadgets hung on your wall—they were furniture, damn it. Wilkerson Furniture's M21 Flat Panel console (\$3,600, wilkersonfurniture.com) lets you live like Ozzie and Harriet without giving up your 42-inch plasma. The storage beneath the screen is perfect for equipment, DVD cases and your Ovaltine stash.



Pedal Power

HAVING ONE FEWER car is great and all, and we're sure the penguins are grateful, but all the good bike-riding karma in the world won't keep you from showing up to work sweaty. Battery-powered bikes get you there guilt- and reek-free. Giant's Twist Freedom DX (\$2,250, giant-bicycles.com) has sensors in the crank, so the harder you pedal the less assistance it provides. Or you can not pedal at all: Ultramotor's A2B (\$2,500, ultramotor.com) smartly hides its batteries in the down tube and has a twist throttle that lets you give it as much non-gas as you choose.

The Playboy Advisor

In August a woman wrote to express concern that her fiancé is a “mama’s boy.” You suggested this was “the worst kind of threesome.” I am a 28-year-old mama’s boy and proud of it. A mother provides unconditional love. Girlfriends will profess their love, plan a future...and break your heart. I would never think of putting the wishes of any woman before those of my mother; a woman who wants to separate a man from his mother must be jealous, selfish or both. If a guy is stuck on his mom, she must be a wonderful person. Finally, a young man who is close to his mother will most likely be respectful of other women and treat them like gold.—E.K., Vernon, New Jersey

We can’t imagine why you have trouble keeping a girlfriend. We all love our mothers, but once you’re married, sharing a household and raising children, Mom doesn’t get a vote.

Have you heard anything about the MBT “anti-shoe”? From what I’ve read, it sounds weird.—J.R., Denver, Colorado

The idea behind the MBT (for Masai Barefoot Technology because its curved “rocker” sole was designed by a Swiss engineer after he studied the Masai of Kenya) is that standard shoes distort our natural toe-gripping stride and that Africans who have spent their lives barefoot have healthier feet. As a result, entrepreneurs have stepped in with shoes that allow you to mimic a barefoot gait, including MBTs, the Vivo Barefoot (a leather sole on three-millimeter-thick rubber and DuraTex), Nike Free 3.0, Chung Shi and Vibram FiveFingers, which is a toed fabric-and-rubber athletic sock. Physiotherapists whose clients have worn specialized shoes such as the MBT say they aren’t for everyone but can help rehab injured feet, ankles and knees.

I am appalled by your response in August to the reader whose female friend confided that she has herpes but doesn’t tell her partners. When a male friend expressed interest in the woman, you said the reader had no obligation to warn him off. When we are in harm’s way, friends should protect us, not watch us suffer.—M.M., Westbury, New York

You aren’t alone in questioning our judgment. Read on for more.

How in good conscience could you suggest the reader let a friend walk into an ambush? Would your advice be different if the woman had HIV? If you knew a friend’s spouse was cheating, would you sit that out, too? This type of willful neglect makes you an immoral coward.—N.C., Tucson, Arizona

Our advice would be different with HIV because, while herpes sucks, it’s not fatal. The cheating dilemma you mention requires a new round of letters.

If someone were bringing a gun to a friend’s house to shoot him, would you not warn



him? Although getting herpes is typically not as bad as being shot, it is a significant health risk. The Advisor is more at fault for his callous response than the woman with the STD. In fact, should the reader’s friend contract herpes and take legal action, I could foresee the Advisor being held liable.—W.R., Trenton, New Jersey

If someone were going to shoot a friend and we weren’t busy, we would text-message him.

I faced a similar situation. A girlfriend wanted to date a guy whose ex told me he had herpes. I debated what to do. On the one hand, his sex life is none of my business; plus, his ex may be exacting revenge by rumor. But knowing my girlfriend often had unprotected sex, I gave her a heads-up. Though disappointed, she was grateful. She decided to date the guy anyway. I assume he told her, because they are still together.—A.W., New York, New York

Perhaps the reader could tell the woman, “My buddy is hot for you. I wish you hadn’t told me about your herpes, but you did, so if you two get together, you must tell him or I will.” I’m not sure this would work, given her ethical standards, but I don’t think it’s an automatic “do nothing.”—B.H., Charlottesville, Virginia

When a conflict arises, one should err on the side of the friend who is not engaged in grossly irresponsible behavior. The fact that herpes is so common should not be used as an excuse to allow its spread.—J.A., Brooklyn, New York

You make two great points, and while we don’t believe our answer was wrong, we might have been a little less right than usual. (Are

you buying that? If so, we may run for office.) Assuming they are both your close friends and you must betray one or the other, it’s reasonable to argue that the woman, because of her weak moral position, is the better choice.

Much of my new job involves completing handwritten inspection reports. If there are disputes, my reports become legal evidence. Because my cursive looks like wavy lines, I’ve started printing, but that looks childish. Any suggestions?—J.H., Las Cruces, New Mexico

*It will take practice, but you can salvage your scrawl. Script experts Barbara Getty and Inga Dubay, whose chief clients are doctors, suggest you relax your grip, avoid making large loops, keep your letters at a consistent slope and height and close the tops of letters and numerals (we read both from the top). Fill a sheet or two with practice drills every day and you should see quick improvement. Getty and Dubay’s *Write Now: The Complete Program for Better Handwriting* (handwriting-success.com) has plenty of them. Each week write the pangram “Pack my box with five dozen liquor jugs” on the same piece of paper to track your progress. In the meantime, don’t feel self-conscious about printing, which Getty and Dubay say is always acceptable. You can make printing appear less childish by putting less space between the letters and words.*

What should you say if you are at a salon receiving a massage and you get an erection?—J.R., Las Vegas, Nevada

You don’t need to say anything. Any experienced masseuse has seen this before. For the record, aroused or not, you should never ask or joke about a happy ending.

My husband and I have been married for a year. He is getting into porn. I don’t mind; I watch with him, and the sex is great. However, when I asked why he is able to make love better when porn is playing, he said, “You are this blah stick figure, but with the porn it’s a blah stick figure with a hot background for me to concentrate on.” Am I out of line for being hurt? Would you say that to someone you love?—A.Z., Des Moines, Iowa

Of course not. You’ve made a poor choice, and apparently he’s thinking the same thing.

I’ve always been a fan of erotic art but am not sure how it should be displayed in my home. Is it okay to hang it in areas where guests may see it? What is an acceptable level of nudity?—N.S., Salem, Indiana

We posed your question to Aaron Baker, Playboy’s art curator. “A good rule of thumb is to limit the erotic artwork in your house to the same level of nudity you would feel comfortable displaying in any other medium,” he says. “In other words, a painting of a nude is a work of art, but that doesn’t make the image

any less nude. If you would be uncomfortable having guests see the same image glowing back at them from your computer screen, you should have the same reservations about presenting it as a painting or photograph. As to what level of nudity is acceptable, that's highly subjective. I would give some consideration to the kinds of visitors you usually have. If a lot of kids parade through the house, the living room may not be the best place for your watercolor of a giant penis. However, guests typically do not hang out in your bedroom (most guests, anyway), so that may be the best place to display your sexier acquisitions."

In July a swinger wrote to say she became upset when her husband and another couple had sex without her. My ex-wife, who was active in the lifestyle with her first husband, told me that, several times when she hadn't wanted to play (most notably the day after her mother died), her ex would insist because he wanted to be with the other woman. Love, sex and friendship can be fragile, especially when mixed. (My ex told me she left the marriage because "he was cheating on me.") The next letter in that same issue involves how to respond to a guy who gloats, "I used to fuck your girlfriend." After we were married my ex-wife and I went to a club where she and her ex-husband used to hunt for couples. I didn't know that at the time, but I figured it out soon enough when guys kept coming up to tell me, "I fucked your wife last summer!" They assumed I was her new swinger husband. As you suggested, I didn't say anything in response, but we never went back to that club.—R.F., Tulsa, Oklahoma

Most swingers show more tact with newcomers, but at least she left a good impression.

I know seltzer is carbonated water, and club soda is carbonated water with a touch of salt, but I am unsure which one to use for mixed drinks. Can you help?—D.S., Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin

They're interchangeable, although club soda is more commonly used. In the good old days bartenders made their own seltzer (that is, soda or sparkling water) with a soda siphon, which you can add to your home bar for about \$50. Another common mixer, tonic water, is seltzer made bitter with quinine, which is also used to treat malaria. As the story goes, British colonials in India began mixing diluted quinine with gin to hide its taste.

I became interested in a married co-worker and started to help her out financially because her husband lost his job. I also gave her gifts at the holidays. One day we went to lunch, and on returning she allowed me to touch her private parts as a gesture of thanks. After that our relationship was sexual on several occasions. I even covered her mortgage for a few months because she was behind on the payments. About a year ago I gave her a gas credit card, which she still uses

occasionally. Now she doesn't want to continue. I am frustrated, disappointed and depressed, especially since I see her every day but don't speak with her except to exchange greetings. What should I do?—A.R., Los Angeles, California

You've done quite enough. You're shopping for something she's not selling.

When I see women wet their pants, it totally turns me on. It can't be intentional; they have to suffer and be humiliated. Should I share this with my boyfriend?—C.M., Oxnard, California

We're not sure how you're going to hold this in, especially after you discover the many "female desperation" sites online. However, once your boyfriend sees the effect the fantasy has on you, he may be very accepting.

How can I approach my husband about the idea of an open marriage? It's not that we are suffering in any department; I just want options. I made the decision to sleep with another man, and it was epic. I have never felt such pleasure. I don't want to leave my husband, but I do want to experience this sort of pleasure again.—S.S., Chino Valley, Arizona

*Unless you have some indication your husband is interested in negotiating an open marriage, this won't be an easy conversation. It's also a challenging lifestyle because it will involve overcoming jealousy and being honest with your other partners as well as with your spouse—certainly more honest than you've been with him so far. In her book *Opening Up*, Tristan Taormino points out that even if a partner consents to this arrangement, it needs to be clear what he or she is agreeing to. "Is it further discussion, a trial run or additional partners?" she asks. If your husband believes you're just going through a stage or find the idea an exciting fantasy or says yes because he's afraid you'll leave otherwise, the adventure won't turn out well.*

I hung a leather blazer on a cheap hanger that left marks at the shoulders. Is it possible to remove them?—G.M., Buffalo, New York

Once leather is stretched it's hard to restore, though a tailor may be able to press the marks out or hide them with alterations. The better the leather, the more likely it can be saved.

Before I married my wife we discussed having children. She already has two from a previous marriage, as do I, and we agreed we wouldn't have any more. She now claims she told me during the engagement that she had changed her mind, but I must not have been listening. The way she puts it is "Nothing would make me happier than your wanting a child with me." She's on the pill, but I'm afraid to have sex with her because of the potential for an "accident." How do I handle this?—M.D., Chicago, Illinois

This is known as a deal breaker. If you consent, you may end up resenting her—and perhaps the child. She took a huge risk thinking she

could change your mind. It will be rough on the relationship if every time you have intercourse you have to wonder if she's collecting your DNA. Using a condom would obviously ease your mind but also signal your distrust.

What documents are needed to make sure that real estate, property, bank accounts, IRAs, etc., are passed along to my spouse if I die or to our children if we go together?—S.S., Miami, Florida

Each spouse should have a will. If you go together, the property is left to the children. If they are minors, you designate a relative or friend to be responsible for their care and trustees to dispense the money. You should also make sure to name your spouse as beneficiary on your retirement funds and life insurance (in one case a doctor neglected to update his policy and his ex-wife got a check). A letter of instruction that describes where to find your will and lists all your holdings, account numbers and passwords will be invaluable to your executor. You also need a health-care directive giving your spouse power to make decisions if you become incapacitated. Since every state has its own maze of rules, you should speak to an experienced estate planner about all this, although you can create basic and valid documents with will-making software. Review your documents every five to seven years to account for changes in the law, your family or finances.

I am a healthy 27-year-old male. I'm not sure if this is normal, but I masturbate four to six times a day. It is the first thing I do when I wake up and the last thing I do before I fall asleep. I do it in the shower, in the car, whenever I have the opportunity, even when I have a steady girlfriend. I know there is nothing wrong with masturbation, but is this excessive? Are there any long-term health concerns? I do not have any history of mental or physical disorders, take no medication and have never been sexually abused.—E.K., Union, New Jersey

Six times a day? That's quite a few private moments. There are no long-term health effects, but you may be conditioning yourself to get off relatively quickly and only from very specific stimulation that can't be duplicated by a mouth or vagina. Repeated orgasms won't deplete you—in fact, some research suggests regular climaxes ward off prostate cancer. Depending on your discretion, however, there may be legal consequences. At least abstain while driving.

*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. Our greatest-hits collection, *Dear Playboy Advisor*, is available in bookstores and online.*



THE PLAYBOY FORUM

WELCOME TO POST-RACIAL AMERICA

BEFORE WE GET TOO SELF-CONGRATULATORY, PERHAPS WE SHOULD ASK: IS AMERICA AS GOOD AS ITS PROMISE?

BY TAVIS SMILEY

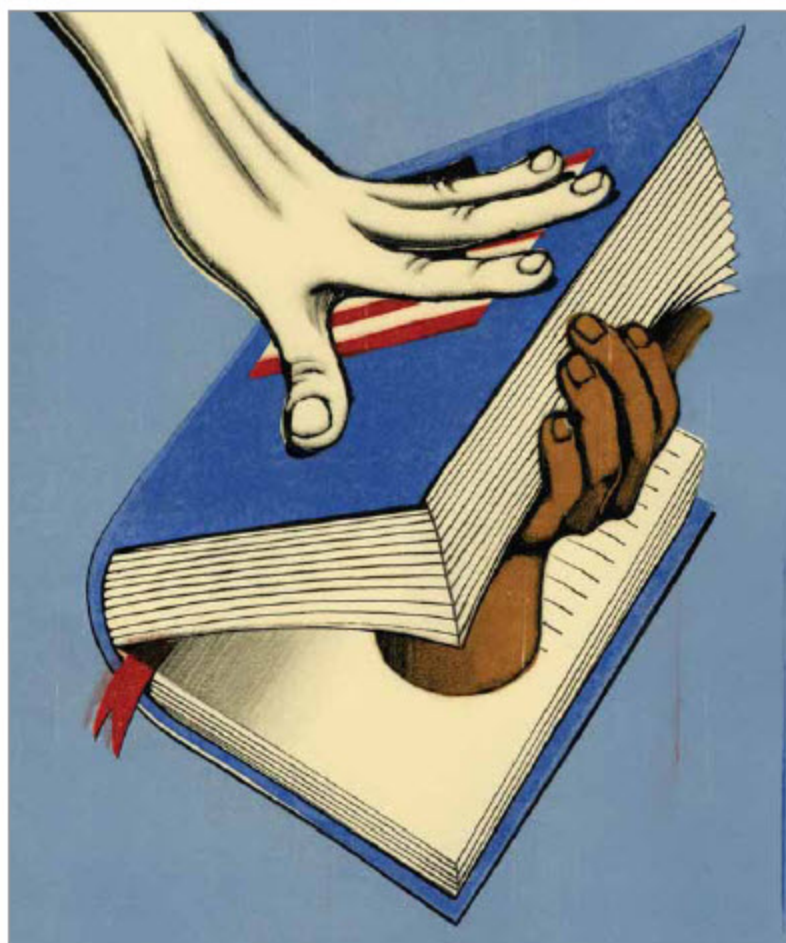
Hindsight is 20/20, but the 2008 race for the White House has revealed that America's vision of racial progress is still quite blurry. From the moment Barack Obama officially announced his candidacy at the Old State Capitol building in Springfield, Illinois—where Abraham Lincoln delivered his “House Divided” speech, in 1858—America reluctantly began a new chapter on race and politics.

The problem is, many Americans hoped the mere fact that Obama could become the presidential nominee meant this country would finally close the painful chapter on racism. Not so. Although the candidacies of both Obama and Hillary Clinton helped capture the imagination of a whole new generation of voters regarding equality and opportunity, they also reminded us of the boundaries that have yet to be crossed.

One of the most disturbing notions playing out over and over in this election has been the suggestion that Obama became a viable black candidate and eventually clinched the Democratic nomination because he was able to transcend race and usher America into a post-racial future. On the surface it appears to be a noble concept, but at best it's naive, and at worst it's sinister.

Despite the speeches and the endless punditry about race relations in America, somehow the idea of transcending race has become synonymous with finding new ways not to address it. Sometimes the idea of transcending race perpetuates the age-old myth of the “acceptable Negro”—someone who manages never to provoke white guilt while holding up the belief that racism is truly a thing of the past. It is much easier to celebrate the symbolic rise of one man rather than face the millions of Americans (black, white and brown) living beneath their privilege and with their humanity contested on a regular basis.

In fact, the phrase *politics of grievance* has been used this election season for the notion that candidates could be misguided into focusing on the pain experienced by some Americans rather than on the possibilities that can be shared by all. Yet a recent report by United for a Fair Economy predicted the subprime-mortgage crisis will



cause people of color to lose up to \$213 billion, leading to the greatest loss of wealth in modern U.S. history. For policy makers to ignore the startling and long-term implications of race and racism in that fact would be tantamount to benign neglect.

The larger truth is that racial equality is forever linked to economic and political democracy. The longer we believe we can have one without the other, the longer this country stays in deep post-racial denial. History has demonstrated through movements like the Montgomery bus boycott and the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court battle that only when black and white folk work together to confront challenges in our society can significant change happen. Ultimately, real and lasting change doesn't come from

transcendence but from transformation.

Although diversity is what makes America America, we still haven't gotten to the point where we really understand or embrace the unique differences that make up our beautiful mosaic. It's not the differences that divide us but rather the belief that “some” are simply better than “others.” And the “some” are usually white. That's something the media seem to overlook, and this election season is no exception.

While the media recycled the controversy over remarks by Obama's former pastor Jeremiah Wright, conservative commentator Pat Buchanan wrote in his column “A Brief for Whitey,” “America has been the best country on earth for black folks. It was here that 600,000 black people, brought from Africa in slave ships, grew into a community of 40 million, were introduced to Christian salvation and reached the greatest levels of freedom and prosperity blacks have ever known.... We hear the grievances. Where is the gratitude?”

Sadly, those words didn't come from a random lunatic rant. They came from a former presidential candidate who has a regular platform in the blogosphere and on television with MSNBC. The story was circulated by a few talk shows; however, the public outcry over his column amounted mostly to a whisper from other writers on the web. Aside from the fact that his remarks were

GET OUT THE VOTE

HOW WE CAN MAKE MORE AMERICANS CAST BALLOTS

racist and patriarchal, the lack of coverage underscored the media's selectivity regarding objectivity and their myopic rather than magnanimous approach to meaningful public discourse on race and racism.

On television in particular, such discourse is really narrowcast rather than broadcast. Speaking of casting, it has been fascinating to note the crop of commentators of color who have suddenly appeared on the cable chat shows this election season. Most of them weren't there before Obama, and I'm curious to see how long it will be after the election before many of them fade to black.

It's interesting to note that this past summer the organization Media Matters released a two-year study of the four major Sunday talk shows, indicating that among more than 2,000 guests, 77 percent were men and 82 percent were white. It's clear that when TV producers feel people of color can offer a relevant perspective, they can be added to the lineup. The good news is the Obama candidacy helped create those opportunities. The bad news is that it took an Obama candidacy to create those opportunities.

Even with a black man and a white woman generating all the energy, enthusiasm, ratings and revenue we witnessed in this election cycle, we didn't see a person of color or a woman get the opportunity to moderate one of the three major presidential debates sanctioned by the Commission on Presidential Debates. That's another reason white America shouldn't be let off the hook and why African Americans shouldn't give up when it comes to the continuing fight for diversity, inclusion and equality. This new wave of political leadership heralded by the Obama and Clinton candidacies can pave a new way in America, but everybody has to be willing to walk the path.

We'll be reviewing the lessons from election 2008 for years to come, but one thing we know for sure: The future can never be held in the hands of one man or one woman. More than 30 years ago the eloquent Democratic congresswoman from Texas, Barbara Jordan, summed it up this way: "What the people want is very simple—they want an America as good as its promise." Not a white America, not a black America, not a brown America, but an America that lives up to its ideals in every way.

*Tavis Smiley is author of the forthcoming book *Accountable: Making the Covenant Real*.*

By Eric Klinenberg

To paraphrase Mark Twain, everybody talks about voter turnout, but nobody does anything about it. In fact, a high voting rate may not be in the interest of our current administration. We asked various academics and thinkers what can be done to improve our participatory democracy.

Alexander Key-sar, Harvard:

Hold elections on Sundays or holidays, as is done in much of the rest of the world. Beyond making it easier for people to get to the polls, weekend elections convey the message that voting is expected of citizens. Election Day registration would also provide a boost. Get rid of the Electoral College. It depresses turnout, as well as other forms of political participation like

campaigning, putting up signs and talking to your neighbors. Presidential election campaigns are conducted almost entirely in a handful of battleground states, and for the rest of us the election is a spectator sport. Broaden political choices. In the 19th century, turnout in American elections was far higher than it has been in recent decades. One distinctive feature of 19th century political life was the fluidity of the party system. For one thing, there were numerous successful third and fourth parties. But at the end of the century the two dominant parties got a grip on the election machinery and passed laws making it difficult for new parties to get on the ballot. Turnout has been declining ever since. It now correlates with social class: It is high among upper-middle-class voters with college degrees and lowest among citizens with the least education and lower incomes. Millions of less-well-off citizens have concluded that their lives are not much affected by the outcome of elections. It's hard to fault that conclusion in a two-party system in which both parties court large contributors while gravitating

toward the political center. *Reinstitute the draft.* Young voters show up at the polls far less often than citizens in their 50s. A draft could engage the young in political life. It would bring home the connection between

their own lives and Washington, making clear that history is something that can happen to them.

Jeff Manza, New York University:

One great myth about American politics is that fewer citizens have voted in recent elections. In fact, turnout fluctuates somewhat with each election. It was particularly low in 1996 and 2000, but among eligible voters, turnout in the presidential elections of 1992 and 2004 was nearly as high as at any point since World War II. None-

theless, voter turnout is still much lower than in virtually all other rich democratic countries. This increases political inequality, because the poor, minorities and the young participate at lower rates. It would be easier to make rates of participation in America more like those of other wealthy democracies if we had a national political system (as opposed to one in which each state runs its own elections) or if we could magically impose dramatic reforms, like turning Election Day into a federal holiday. These are unlikely to happen soon, so let me suggest three modest things that would also increase turnout. First, make sure all citizens can vote. The largest group of citizens who cannot vote—5.3 million in 2004—is current and former criminal offenders. Because some states also disenfranchise former inmates or offenders on probation, some 75 percent of the disenfranchised felon population is not currently in prison. In 2004 almost 40 percent were actually ex-felons who had completed their entire sentence but were still disenfranchised in 11 states. Restoring voting rights for those awaiting trial or living in



Indonesia enjoys high voting rates.

their communities on probation or parole would also make the right to vote for all citizens closer to reality. Second, there's a lot of concern about the vast increase in money in the political system. Candidates rely on advertising and professional consultants who run sophisticated, poll-driven campaigns. They carefully target ways to get their strongest supporters to the polls and to discourage the other side's supporters. Political activists and donors ought to insist that more political resources be used to reach out to prospective voters rather than just to maximize participation among groups likely to vote. Finally, we have good research on what kinds of get-out-the-vote efforts work best: direct face-to-face contact, especially by friends and acquaintances. But consultant-driven campaigns squeeze out the very types of neighborhood- and precinct-level organizing that was common in earlier eras.

Pam Karlan, Stanford: An eminent American psychologist once observed that a voter's chance of casting a decisive vote in a presidential election is on about the same order of magnitude as their chance of being killed while driving to the polls. Given cost-benefit analysis, then, we should either radically revamp our electoral system to make individual votes more pivotal or enhance opportunities to vote by mail, which would reduce the physical risks

POLL POSITION

Voter turnout in the U.S.—48.3 percent—ranks 114th in the world. While some countries make voting compulsory, none of the top five countries has laws that mandate it. Those with the highest voter-turnout rates are:

1. Italy, 92.5
2. Cambodia, 90.5
3. Seychelles, 90.2
4. Iceland, 89.5
5. Indonesia, 88.3



All voting data are from 1945 to 2008.

voters face. But changing the political process wholesale seems unlikely. Our current experience with voting by mail in Oregon and no-excuses absentee voting in many other jurisdictions suggests that allowing voters to cast ballots away from the polls hasn't dramatically increased turnout. So

my modest proposal seeks to piggyback on one thing about turnout we do know: Voting is a habit. The best predictor of whether a citizen will vote in the next election is whether he or she voted in the previous one. We should require high schools to help their students register. Schools should be used as polling places for the students who attend them as well as for citizens at large. This would give students hands-on experience with democracy—serving as poll workers (a group whose average age is commonly thought to be somewhere way past retirement) and learning how to use the appropriate voting technology.

Studs Terkel, author: There are two big issues facing Americans. Obviously, the first one is Iraq. We've spent billions on this, trillions on the Middle East. And for what? The American people will go to the polls if they believe their votes can bring the troops home. Some still say if we object to the war, we're hurting the soldiers. But the opposite is true. If a candidate promised to end the war right now, you'd be surprised how many people would vote. The second big issue is jobs. Today we're heading for another depression, and the American people are worried: How will we support our families? Will we lose our health insurance, our car, our home? Too many of our leaders are true believers in our new religion, the free market, but this philosophy leaves working people on their fannies. The Great Depression sent millions of Americans into poverty. We needed Roosevelt, the New Deal and the WPA to get the country back to work. We need something like them today. Americans will come out to vote for a candidate who promises to stop squandering trillions on global misadventures and instead invests in us. My God, we're the only nation in the developed world that doesn't have universal health insurance. Even Cuba has a better health-care system than we do. I'm 95, and I remember when the United States was the most respected and revered nation in the world. Now we're a laughingstock. Everyone is afraid of us, and we're becoming afraid of everyone else. Thomas Paine said we are the first society in the world in which a commoner can tell a king to bugger off. We, the commoners, don't just have the right, we have the duty to tell this president to bugger off. If we do that, we'll help save lives, we'll help save jobs, we'll help save ourselves.

David Banner, musician: People feel their votes don't matter. They saw what happened in the past two elections. The American people are smarter than we give them credit for. In my eyes, as America becomes more powerful, it becomes

more sloppy. It doesn't need to hide the shit it does. Unless poor people invest in power, power will never invest in poor people. Poor people need to know there

LOW, LOW, LOW

Of the bottom five countries in voter turnout, four are predominantly Muslim and two—Guatemala and Egypt—have laws that make voting mandatory. Countries with the lowest voter-turnout rates are:

136. Jordan, 29.9
137. Guatemala, 29.8
138. Djibouti, 28.0
139. Egypt, 24.6
140. Mali, 21.7



is no such thing as instant gratification. They want everything microwaved. But you have to invest time.

Bob Shrum, political consultant: Turnout spikes when the stakes seem high. In 1960 participation in the presidential election reached a high-water mark for modern times in a hard-fought contest. In 1992, when people felt a profound sense of economic insecurity, the rate of participation confounded conventional wisdom and rose. There were plenty of negative ads, but people felt they had candidates to vote for and something to vote against—George Bush's economic record and the fact that during debates he glanced at his watch in boredom and couldn't answer an ordinary citizen's question about the pain of the recession. Turnout settled down in the uncompetitive contest of 1996 and again in 2000, when George W. Bush left the (false) impression he wouldn't bring much change other than restoring "honor and dignity to the White House" and disclaiming "nation building" in favor of a "humble foreign policy." Then, in 2004, with the country deeply divided, amid a flood of negative ads, turnout surged and Bush almost became the first incumbent president renominated by his own party to be defeated in a time of war. Let's remove obstacles that stop people from voting—the shameful residue of the history that disenfranchised women, African Americans, other minorities and the poor.

Chris Bliss, comedian: If government-sponsored torture, suspension of habeas

corpus and massive warrantless domestic data sweeps—not to mention a self-destructive and borderline psychotic foreign policy—can't rouse Americans to exercise their most basic freedom, what will? As bad as the political process has become, the fault is not in our elections but in ourselves. Considering the lack of interest in anything that doesn't involve fantasy leagues or reality television, the only suggestion I have is to schedule as many *American Idol* and Hooters auditions as possible at polling places.

James Fishkin, Stanford: Rather than tell you what I think, let me report what was said by a representative sample of 1,300 citizens—one set that deliberated about American political participation during a four-week period and one set that simply filled out a survey. When citizens deliberated, support for “allowing Election Day registration” and “allowing felons to vote after they have served their sentences” went up significantly, as did the sense that the current system does not offer enough choice. Participants said that states outside the early primary group should have a say in presidential selection and that a national primary would help this goal. However, support for “making Election Day a national holiday” went down, with participants saying there are already too many holidays. Opposition to compulsory voting increased.

Michael Dawson, University of Chicago: The U.S. has an extraordinarily restrictive regulatory regime that makes it more difficult to vote here than in virtually any other democracy. Voter-registration requirements, poll taxes and grandfather clauses introduced or strengthened during the late 19th century continue to influence electoral policies. Such rules are legacies of Southern elites' racist drive to disenfranchise black citizens (and not coincidentally also to restrict poor whites' ability to vote) and the simultaneous drive by native Northern elites to restrict the franchise of European immigrants, who were believed to hold dangerous political ideologies. It's long past time to break from this heritage. Instead, the U.S. has developed what I call the new Jim Crows. These laws are not limited to felon disenfranchisement. Consider the rules that prohibit taxpaying residents from voting because of their immigration status, even if they serve in the U.S. military. From the 19th into the early 20th century, resident immigrants had the right to vote in many states. These rights diminished as discriminatory laws limited the citizenship of Americans deemed unworthy. We're seeing

more efforts to disqualify minorities on grounds that they too are unworthy.

Josh Silver, Free Press: Move Election Day to Veterans Day. Allow same-day and online registration. Automatically register people when they get a driver's license. Institute “portable registration” that moves when the voter does (since 40 million Americans move each year), and tie registration to mail forwarding. These measures will dramatically increase

PENALTY BOX

In countries where voting is a legal obligation, the consequences of not casting a ballot are often nothing more than having to offer an explanation for your failure. But failure can also result in much more serious problems. In Turkey, Switzerland and Peru you may have to pay a fine; in Chile, Fiji and Egypt you can receive a prison sentence (and in other countries failure to pay the fine can also lead to imprisonment). Failure to vote in Bolivia, Singapore and Belgium can result in disenfranchisement, and in Greece it may prove difficult to get a driver's license or passport without proof you have voted.



turnout. Sadly, they are the easy ones. Now the hard part: American politicians and policies are bought and sold every day to the highest bidder. This corrupt system breeds frustration and alienation, which undermine voter participation. The solution is policy reform: full public funding of national and statewide elections, clear and enforced national standards for paper- and electronic-ballot integrity, redistricting reform that eliminates gerrymandering, and instant runoff voting that provides an alternative to winner-take-all elections. Commercial TV coverage of elections and politics—which is where some 70 percent of Americans get their primary news—is composed of sound bites, celebrity obsession and horse-race election commentary. The homog-

enized radio dial spews far-right vitriol that compounds the problem. Corporate media titans dole out campaign cash and rub elbows at the country club with government elites in a dangerous and mutually beneficial dance. Facts are rendered obscure or irrelevant, and all but the wealthiest Americans are alienated from the process. Here's how we can change this: First, block further consolidation of media ownership and create incentives for local independent ownership of radio, TV and newspapers. Second, get us out of last place in the developed world in per capita funding for public broadcasting. Insulate noncommercial media from political meddling, allowing them to provide viable alternatives to commercial broadcasting. And finally, ensure that the Internet is affordable, fast and accessible to every American. This may be the most important reform as TVs and computers merge into one device fed by a high-speed Internet connection that could allow every website to act as a TV or radio network.

Billy West, actor, *Ren & Stimpy*: Offer free Krispy Kremes. Actually, it's simple: The past two elections were stolen. If we let it happen a third time, there won't be a fourth. The millennial kids need to find out how much power they have. Real power is in voting.

William Upski Wimsatt, League of Young Voters: For high school students, replicate San Francisco's innovative Youth Vote legislation. Not only do high school students get to register during their classes (and vote if they're 18), they get three civic-engagement days to study and discuss what's on the ballot, including local candidates and issues. For college students, pass model legislation called the Student Voter Bill of Rights, which was introduced in Maryland last year. It provides for polling places on every public campus and affirms the right of students to register and vote either where they go to school or at their parents' house. My generation wants to see politicians do something about climate change before Florida has no more beaches left for spring break. We want to see politicians make college affordable instead of cozying up to loan sharks that saddle us with debt. We want to see kids who can't afford college have options besides losing a leg in Iraq and losing their freedom in the war on drugs. We deserve the same health and reproductive options every other industrialized nation offers. Act as if you give a fuck about us for one minute, and not only will you have our vote, you'll have all our friends on MySpace and Facebook voting for you too.

READER RESPONSE

PATRIOTS: ACT

The *Forum* article by Mickey Edwards ("Fortress Washington," August) lays out in plain English the fact that the executive branch has thrown the Constitution out the window. Far too little



Protecting the government from the people.

attention has been paid to the citizens of this country by their government, and it's about time everyone noticed. Washington has turned its radio off—they're not listening to us anymore—and we must do something about it. I hope Edwards's article will get more people involved in this cause. We need to remake America into the country it was created to be, not accept the bleak reality we have now.

Liz Feola
Bethel, Connecticut

TO CHOOSE OR NOT TO CHOOSE

As a girl who recently posed for *PLAYBOY*, I view the magazine as partially about empowering women. Imagine how upset I was when I read "Will *Roe v. Wade* Continue to Stand?" (July). Fetus-fanatic scare tactics and inaccurate propaganda have no place in *PLAYBOY*. Randall Terry increases my disdain for radical pro-lifers. His comment about most women being "law-abiding people" is irrelevant. When a woman finds herself in a terrifying situation that threatens everything she has worked for (and may in fact be the result of a man raping her), the law will not be her top priority. To all anti-choice individuals out there: Why don't you fight for proper sex education and the use of Plan B, promote adoption over contributing to an already overpopulated society and drop the sensationalistic pictures of third-trimester abortions (which are illegal in most states unless the mother's health is in

danger)? Do something productive to lessen the need for abortions instead of condemning people for something a man like Terry will never know a damn thing about since he will never be pregnant. And for his information, I do indeed know when the heart begins to beat, appendages bud and brain waves are first recorded.

Amanda Webster
Sacramento, California

I was surprised and disgusted by the slow-pitch questions put to Terry. How about a nice hardball question like "Where do you and Operation Rescue stand on using comprehensive sex education and contraception to prevent unintended pregnancies in the first place?" Worse yet, asking Terry, "Do you see a general decline in society?" and "What about the 1960s started that downward spiral?" as a springboard for his my-religion's-opinions-define-morality crap was pure pandering.

Lee Helms
Hazel Park, Michigan

It is good to hear from the other side on important issues like abortion. It seems to me, however, that antiabortion activists are too focused on making abortion illegal when they would get better results by working to make it unnecessary. If everyone



Sex education would be useful too.

were exposed to quality sex education and had access to reliable birth control, the rate of unwanted pregnancies (and therefore abortions) would plummet.

Alyssa Farnsworth
Muncie, Indiana

We shouldn't be concerned about whether abortion is wrong in our eyes. The only thing we should strive

for is making it safe. If the procedure is banned, back-alley abortions will increase. Never underestimate desperate people. In denying the facts and in causing people to become ignorant about sex, pregnancy, STDs and abortion, we are forcing them to make stupid decisions. Truth is what we should be concerned about.

Name withheld
Missoula, Montana



Offering uncensored information is key.

Terry's view that no God equals no right or wrong is another form of self-delusion, and if he actually believes this, all the more reason to oppose him.

J. Frank Anastasio
Hartford, Connecticut

My judgment tends to be that abortion is bad, but the choice should be up to the woman. I think the value of a human life grows as the life evolves from a fetus into a child and into an adult with a great presence. For example, killing someone the day before his or her college graduation ceremony is more wrong than killing a newborn.

Steven Rovnyak
Indianapolis, Indiana

I'm cool with giving space to Terry. But the interviewer fails to follow what I consider to be a central line of questioning when it comes to nut jobs like this: Where does Terry stand on contraception and sex education? If he's against them (as so many of his ilk are), how does he plan to deal with the serious issues that would arise if *Roe v. Wade* were to be overturned?

Conan Griffin
Bonita Springs, Florida

E-mail via the web at letters.playboy.com. Or write: 730 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10019.

PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: DANIEL CRAIG

A candid conversation with the best James Bond in years about the new, darker 007, life after a blockbuster and why he's the anti-adventure junkie

Daniel Craig has earned his license to kill. When it was announced that he would replace Pierce Brosnan as James Bond, the near-universal reaction was outrage. Bond fans in the U.K. went so far as to launch a website that included doctored photos of Craig as Vladimir Putin and Al Bundy and called for a boycott of the actor. The press skewered him as "Bland, James Bland."

But then came Craig's performance as Bond in *Casino Royale*, arguably one of the best 007 pictures. The new Bond was favorably compared to the legendary, adored Sean Connery, who also sang Craig's praises. Craig's former critics ate crow, admitting he was the first to truly capture Bond creator Ian Fleming's dark, occasionally vicious characterization. The *Boston Globe* wrote, "The most mocked of Bonds is now fast on his way to generating perhaps the best reviews of anyone in the 007 club for his brutal and engrossing performance."

The film grossed nearly \$600 million, trouncing earlier 007 films and setting the bar high for *Quantum of Solace*, the new Bond installment, opening this month. In the movie, which picks up an hour after *Casino Royale* leaves off, Craig, 40, is back—moodier and more pissed off than ever. Bond's overriding modus operandi: revenge, following the murder of *Vesper*, his lover in the earlier film.

Craig is from Chester, England, where his father was a merchant seaman and owned a pub called Ring O' Bells. After his parents split, in 1972, Craig was raised by his mother, an art teacher, in Liverpool. He left school at 16 to study at the National Youth Theater in London. He earned his living as a waiter and enrolled in the Guildhall School of Music & Drama at the Barbican, where he studied alongside Ewan McGregor and Joseph Fiennes. He graduated in 1991.

When Craig was selected to play Bond, much was made about his size (at five-foot-11, he's the shortest Bond), his piercing blue eyes and his hair color (he's the first blond). But he has subsequently been crowned one of the sexiest men by *Elle* magazine. And apparently he'll soon leave bachelorhood behind: He is romantically linked to Satsuki Mitchell, the actress who accompanied him to the *Casino Royale* world premiere. He has a teenage daughter, Ella, from a previous marriage.

Soon after Craig completed the filming of *Quantum of Solace* in Italy, Australia and South America, PLAYBOY sent contributing editor David Sheff, who recently interviewed Fareed Zakaria for the magazine, to meet Craig in London. Sheff reports: "When I arrived in the U.K., a customs agent asked if I was there on business or pleasure. I

explained I was in town to interview Daniel Craig, at which point her mood swung from chilly and suspicious to swooning. 'Oh my God,' she said, almost hyperventilating. 'His photo's near my bed. He's the sexiest.'

"He's also an impressive actor, as I was reminded before the interview when I attended screenings of *Quantum of Solace* and *Defiance*, in which Craig plays one of three brothers who hide, and save, hundreds of Belarusan Jews from Hitler's local collaborators. The contrast between the roles couldn't have been more extreme, but Craig rose to the occasion in both the action-adventure and dramatic films.

"And yes, he's charming and suave. He drank coffee, not martinis, but he's Bond-like even in blue jeans instead of a Brioni suit."

PLAYBOY: You had to prove yourself in your first James Bond film, but this time expectations are high. Does that add to the pressure?

CRAIG: It's a very high-class problem to have, I suppose. The reverse would have been just awful. Had *Casino Royale* failed, everybody would have been insecure: the studio, the producers—everybody. Me.

PLAYBOY: Is the bar set too high?

CRAIG: Well, we had to do better. And I was keen on taking it to new places.



"I wanted to play around with the flaws in Bond's character. It was much more interesting than having him be perfect and polished and so suave as to be flawless. In the novels he is quite a depressive character."



"If I were 20 years younger—even 15 or 10 years younger—and this kind of success happened to me, I would probably have gone out and spent every penny I'd earned. Because I'm the age I am, I don't have the urge to change."



"I've had my thrills. I'd happily go and sit on a rock and look at the view, but I'm not one of those people who jump off for fun. I'd say, 'I'll meet you down at the bottom. I'll drive down, and we'll meet for lunch.'"

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAKE GAVIN

PLAYBOY: In *Casino Royale* your Bond, a brand-new double-0 agent, is less polished and more ruthless than in the earlier films. Was that intentional?

CRAIG: It was. For that movie my feeling was he should look like the man who had yet to make his first kill. I wanted to play around with the flaws in his character. It was much more interesting than having him be perfect and polished and so suave as to be flawless. I got most of my inspiration from Ian Fleming's books. I reread them. In the books Bond is suave and sophisticated, yes—Sean Connery really nailed it—but there's also a flawed aspect of Bond. In the novels he is quite a depressive character. When he's not working, he's at his worst.

PLAYBOY: How about you? Are you at your worst when you're not working?

CRAIG: I'm not that bad, but I can relate. What's there when we're home alone with ourselves? The deeper, darker stuff comes out. I'm fine when I'm not working, but I feel happiest working, yes.

PLAYBOY: Is the darkness in your Bond more reflective of Fleming's character or you?

CRAIG: Probably both. It's probably a reflection of where I am in my life and also my cinematic influences.

PLAYBOY: Which are?

CRAIG: The psychological thrillers of the 1960s and 1970s, British spy movies like those with Michael Caine and the early Bonds like *From Russia With Love*. They have a huge amount of style but are tense and taut and deal with emotion. To make it interesting I had to bring those emotions in. Otherwise I'd go insane.

PLAYBOY: Compared with his predecessors, your Bond doesn't rely as much on ejection seats, jet packs and exploding pens.

CRAIG: We've kept it all a bit more low-fi. I've got nothing against gadgets, but these days we're surrounded by them. If you want gadgets, pick up a gadget magazine. The stuff you can buy over the counter is insane. For \$300 you can listen to a conversation three miles away while watching somebody in infrared. People aren't that impressed with it anymore. It's normal. Whereas with the earlier films, people were stunned to see the fantasy gadgets. In fact, the early films actually influenced technology we now have.

PLAYBOY: Bond also influenced the culture with his sexual double entendres.

CRAIG: Yes. That's all Fleming. In my imagination, Fleming—sitting in his home, the Goldeneye in Jamaica, with his cigarette holder, his 80 cigarettes a day, drinking martinis—wrote reli-

giously. He'd get up in the morning, write and then have cocktails in the afternoon. His wordplay, including the double entendres, was part of his life. I can imagine the conversation at his dinner parties, the quips thrown about, the jokes. Pussy Galore. These days I don't think you can make puns as easily as in those days. We don't do it naturally anymore. Now a pun's a bad joke. In fact, in the movie we had to be careful of them. They've been sent up in such a way that they almost ring like parody. *Austin Powers* did them in the extreme. So making a Bond movie, you have to keep that in mind. As soon as you go that way you're making a parody of a parody. It looks like you're doing Mike Myers.



The Sean Connery movies stand up for me. I like the others, but Connery is fantastic.

PLAYBOY: Were you cautious of doing *Austin Powers*?

CRAIG: Especially when I made the first movie, yes. I had an *Austin Powers* alarm. On set I'd say, "That's *Austin Powers*. We can't do it."

PLAYBOY: What set off the *Austin Powers* alarm?

CRAIG: There is a chase sequence in the beginning of *Casino Royale*. I run through a room past 10 workers who are sawing planks. These guys had to look as though they were working; they couldn't just look like guys banging nails. There is an explosion, and they look up. We had to go back to the choreography and make it real, because at first it looked like *Austin Powers*.

PLAYBOY: How have Bond's relationships with women evolved in your movies?

CRAIG: In Fleming there's misogyny till the end. Rereading the books reminds you of the time they were written. They are sexist and racist. It's time to put all that in its place. One thing that remains from Fleming is that the women always leave Bond—as opposed to his leaving them. It's the opposite of the way we think of him, that he beds a woman and says bye-bye and flies out the window. In the books he has relationships and occasionally is nearly getting married when she dumps him because he turns moody and dark.

PLAYBOY: Not because she turns out to be a double agent who tries to murder him in his sleep?

CRAIG: No. It's that his true personality comes out, and he's impossible to live with. It suits M, his boss, just fine. M is terrified of Bond actually settling down. His inability to have a relationship keeps him working.

PLAYBOY: Bond films were criticized in the past for being out of sync with the feminist movement. Has that changed?

CRAIG: Beautiful women are always part of the story. In the past maybe they were more objectified. They were just eye candy. Now they're integral and powerful in their own right. They're beautiful, but now things are almost reversed. In this movie I don't think we objectify women. I'm the one taking my clothes off most of the time.

PLAYBOY: More than Sean Connery took off his?

CRAIG: Actually, he took his top off all the time. He was always in these tiny towels.

PLAYBOY: The Bond girls had their fair share of bikinis and often less.

CRAIG: Yes, but the main difference is that we're genuinely trying to find fully formed characters—fully formed women—

integral to the plot. For me, the sexiest thing in a movie is equality in a relationship. It's much sexier when Bond meets someone who's a challenge—someone who says no. There's a sexually charged battle. So I think we've successfully left behind the misogyny. It was something of its time; it's not of this time.

PLAYBOY: When the AIDS crisis hit, Bond films were criticized for the bed-hopping, which appeared irresponsible. Does Bond use condoms?

CRAIG: Yes, though we don't have to show it. We don't need to see him fling one out the window afterward. I think we've kind of made the leap that you would expect someone to use one now.

PLAYBOY: Reportedly, Angelina Jolie and Charlize Theron turned down the Bond girl role in *Casino Royale* that ultimately went to Eva Green. True?

CRAIG: Whether Angelina and Charlize were approached I couldn't tell you. All I know is that when Eva came in to screen-test on M's set, I knew immediately. She was incredibly nervous, but when the camera rolled, I knew she was the girl.

PLAYBOY: You worked with Jolie earlier, in *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*. Afterward she said you were a good kisser.

CRAIG: If she said that, I'm flattered.

PLAYBOY: You worked with Nicole Kidman, too. Once you said, "She turns me on—not in a sordid, horrible way. Well, come to think of it...." Would she make a good Bond girl?

CRAIG: She'd be more interesting as a Bond villain.

PLAYBOY: Who is your favorite Bond girl from the earlier films?

CRAIG: Diana Rigg. She was good in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*. She was the one Bond girl who was nearly bigger than the movie.

PLAYBOY: How have Bond girls changed from Rigg to the newest one, Olga Kurylenko, who stars with you in *Quantum of Solace*?

CRAIG: Olga is very much about her strength. As I said, in the earlier movies the girls were mostly eye candy. We all like eye candy, but things are more interesting now. The character is important to the plot. Yes, she's beautiful, but she's also a good actress and extremely interesting as a woman, and she brings all that to the role.

PLAYBOY: Are you involved in the casting of the Bond girls?

CRAIG: I don't go searching for them. We screen-test. It's kind of awkward and sort of weird.

PLAYBOY: Why?

CRAIG: They build a set, and you get the cameras in; then you're introduced to 10 girls. You have to act out a scene with them. It's kind of weird and awkward and strange, but you know if something's working almost immediately.

PLAYBOY: How about Bond villains? How have they changed?

CRAIG: There's a rich and varied history.

PLAYBOY: Your adversary in *Casino Royale* has an unusual physical trait. He literally weeps blood.

CRAIG: That came straight out of Fleming: an overactive tear gland that actually bleeds. It's a pretty good look. If you can do that on call, it's a pretty good party trick.

PLAYBOY: Alice Cooper, the rock star, recently said he wants to take you on as a Bond villain.

CRAIG: I thought he was a golfer.

PLAYBOY: Apparently, he wants to go up against you.

CRAIG: Bring him on.

PLAYBOY: You've said, compared with

Ian Fleming on the Record

At the height of the original Bond mania, in 1964, we sat down with Ian Fleming, the man who created the superspy in his own likeness, for the *Playboy Interview*. Though he ordered a ginger ale and brandy instead of a shaken martini, the author was as eloquent and cocksure as 007 himself.

I think to be a creative writer or a creative anything you've got to be neurotic. I certainly am.

It's my experience in Naval Intelligence and what I learned about secret operations that finally led me to write about them—in a highly bowdlerized way—with James Bond.

He's not a person of much social attractiveness. But then, I didn't intend for him to be a particularly likable person. He's a cipher, a blunt instrument in the hands of the government.

We live in a violent age. Seduction has, to a marked extent, replaced courtship. The direct, flat approach is not the exception; it is standard. James Bond is a

healthy, violent, noncerebral man in his middle 30s.

I enjoy exaggeration and things larger than life. It amuses me to have a villain with a great bulbous head, whereas, as you know, they are generally little people with nothing at all extraordinary-looking about them.

It does disturb Bond to kill people, even though he continues to get away with it—just as he continues to get away with driving conspicuous motorcars.

Strangely enough, many politicians seem to like my books, I think perhaps because politicians like solutions, with everything properly tied up at the end. Politicians always hope for neat solutions, you know, but so rarely can find them.

filming the new Bond movie, making *Casino Royale* was a walk in the park. What's the difference?

CRAIG: *Casino Royale* was physically tough; I was in pain for most of it. But I was in pain for a lot of this one, too. The difference was the kind of stunts and physical exertion. This time around it was fairly relentless.

PLAYBOY: Were you in similar shape this time?

CRAIG: Yes. Both times I got in shape and got big.

PLAYBOY: Is being big a prerequisite?

CRAIG: I got big because I wanted Bond to look like a guy who could kill. Unfortunately, getting big isn't the same as getting in shape. Last time I picked up a lot of injuries. This time I said, "I can't let that happen again. I've got to get into better shape."

PLAYBOY: How did you do it?

CRAIG: I ran more. I got my heart bigger and stronger.

PLAYBOY: How often do you do your own stunts?

CRAIG: There's a balance. I do many of them but nothing compared with the stuntmen. Still, I found myself in more precarious situations this time.

PLAYBOY: Is there a trade-off for the filmmakers, who want authenticity but also don't want you to get hurt?

CRAIG: For sure. There's a fine line. The stuff that looks good and makes you look as if you're up there has its risks. I picked

up my share of injuries on this movie. You pick up your knocks and bangs.

PLAYBOY: We read that you sliced your finger off.

CRAIG: It wasn't as extreme as all that. I lost the pad. Here. [*He shows off his wound, a scab on his fingertip.*] This is after a month's healing, so it's nothing. It hit the press, though, because I was taken to the hospital. I was bleeding a lot. I had to get it cauterized. Filming stopped and everybody went, "Oh my God! He sliced the end of his finger off!" They went looking for it but couldn't find it.

PLAYBOY: How did it happen?

CRAIG: I was smashing a door into somebody's face, and there was a sharp edge.

PLAYBOY: What is the most physically challenging scene in the new film?

CRAIG: A chase sequence on a rooftop. I'm not scared of heights exactly, but I don't particularly like standing on edges 40 feet off the ground. Their idea was for me to jump from building to building. It's literally a leap of faith because you have to run off the edge—throw yourself off—and land on another building. It's as safe as can be. I'm tethered, attached. But it's the nightmare scenario of standing on a slate roof with the slates all sliding off. I had to slide down and leap from that building onto a balcony below. For some people these days who go rock climbing and all this, it may not be a big deal, but for me it was terrifying enough.

PLAYBOY: Similar to the increased difficulty



of impressing an audience with gadgets and other technology, is it harder these days to impress with physical feats?

CRAIG: Yes. How do you impress people when there are couples who go away on weekends and drive up to wherever and meet Mr. and Mrs. Smith and their other friends and camp out on top of a mountain and jump off? They even film it so they can show their friends. "Look at what we did on the weekend." With all that going on—people rappelling and helicopter skiing on holiday—what can you do in movies? Everything has to be bigger, faster and more dangerous.

PLAYBOY: Kurylenko said she would never do anything dangerous in real life. What about you?

CRAIG: Not normally.

PLAYBOY: Have you ever jumped out of a plane?

CRAIG: No, but I think I would probably do it now—maybe. But having done six months of this crazy stuff, I just want to stay on the ground for a while. I've had my thrills.

PLAYBOY: Are you the type of person who looks for thrills?

CRAIG: Some people need them, but I don't. I'd happily go and sit on a rock and look at the view, but I'm not one of those people who jump off for fun. I'd say, "I'll meet you down at the bottom. I'll drive down, and we'll meet for lunch."

PLAYBOY: You made quite a few men squirm with the *Casino Royale* torture scene. You were stripped and tied up, sitting on a chair without a bottom, being whipped where it would hurt most with an enormous knotted rope. Did you wince too?

CRAIG: There was a moment filming it when I did more than wince. I was actually sitting on a fiberglass seat that had been modeled to me to protect me. The rope came crashing in and cracked the fiberglass. I flew across the room.

PLAYBOY: Was there damage done?

CRAIG: No, but it was too close for comfort as far as I'm concerned. At least we shot it in one day and got it right. I'm glad we didn't have to go back and do reshoots.

PLAYBOY: Ian Fleming called Bond "a blunt instrument." Is your Bond less blunt at this point?

CRAIG: I'm not sure, maybe a bit. Bond is seeking revenge, seeking the people responsible for killing his woman. But hopefully, as you see the movie go on, it gets more complicated than that. He is a blunt instrument, but he's a little more honed, should we say. Blunt but getting an edge.

PLAYBOY: Do you dress like Bond?

CRAIG: Hardly, though I've been given some very nice clothes. When I dress up, I dress up. I have a nice wardrobe. I've been spoiled. Once you're measured for

a suit it's very hard to go back to suits off the peg.

PLAYBOY: You're wearing jeans right now. Would Bond?

CRAIG: Wait until you see the movie.

PLAYBOY: The U.K. *GQ* magazine voted you the number one best dresser. Have you always dressed stylishly?

CRAIG: You can be the best-dressed and worst-dressed person very quickly. I don't dress much differently than I ever did.

PLAYBOY: If not Brioni, what do you generally wear?

CRAIG: I very much like to wear jeans and sneakers. I don't get up in the morning and get into a pressed shirt with French cuffs and a tie—unless I have to.

PLAYBOY: It has been reported that your exercise regimen now includes yoga.

CRAIG: Yogurt?

PLAYBOY: Yoga.

CRAIG: No yoga or yogurt. No.

PLAYBOY: Are you amused when you read reports like that, ones that are completely untrue?

CRAIG: I don't usually read them, but sometimes someone will mention some-

I very much like to wear jeans and sneakers. I don't get up in the morning and get into a pressed shirt with French cuffs and a tie—unless I have to.

thing, and I admit I do go online and look it up. I'll say, "Where the hell does this come from?" It's just that Bond generates enormous interest. A rumor will be started by whatever.

PLAYBOY: You were initially reluctant to accept the Bond role. Were you concerned about the lack of privacy that comes with stardom like this?

CRAIG: Definitely. I was chronically aware of it.

PLAYBOY: What exactly were you worried about?

CRAIG: I fall into the category of actor who doesn't want to be famous. I know that can seem like a contradiction in terms.

PLAYBOY: Then the role of James Bond would definitely pose a problem. But some people may find it hard to believe you would accept the part if you really didn't want to be famous.

CRAIG: Genuinely, I've only ever wanted to act in order to act. But yes, I'm probably being hypocritical. To me, the fame aspect was sort of an inconvenience that went along with acting. It was definitely one of the reasons I was concerned,

though. I thought, I've been working steadily; I earn a living from what I do, but Bond will make it something else.

PLAYBOY: Why did you accept?

CRAIG: Some things come along and you just have to try them. I thought, I can't be afraid of it. I was very brave or very stupid—I don't know which. I did think it through as much as possible. I weighed it from the beginning. I had the fors and againsts. I had conversations with friends and family. It took about 18 months for me to decide. At first I thought, I can't do this. Then I thought, In 10 years I'll be sitting in a bar, drinking, and I'll think, I could have been Bond. I just couldn't turn down the opportunity.

PLAYBOY: You were viciously attacked in the press. How did it affect you?

CRAIG: I decided I had to ignore it, get on with the job and make sure to do the best I could.

PLAYBOY: Fans and reporters criticized your hair color and height, and you were called James Bland. Did it piss you off?

CRAIG: I got pissed off for 24 hours. We were away from home in the Bahamas, and I hadn't read the newspapers. I got wind that the press was negative and did that stupid thing of going online and reading it all. I'd prepared myself for the worst because I knew the risk in doing a movie as large as Bond; there was always going to be a backlash. I had to be ready for it, but it smarted for a minute.

PLAYBOY: Is the loss of privacy a problem for you?

CRAIG: It causes problems you have to work around. I would have been foolish to expect anything less. If the film hadn't been a success, obviously I could have just slipped away and forgotten about it. But this isn't one of those movies. It's a movie that gets out there and gets out there big. I understood it would be open season on me. I've learned to accept it or learned to get around it.

PLAYBOY: Do you sometimes forget you're famous?

CRAIG: Yeah, and then I'm reminded. I have to have a sense of humor about it. On the whole, people are fairly nice. They're fairly good-humored. If I'm walking through an airport and someone runs over and asks if they can take a photograph, I can either get snotty about it or say, "That's absolutely fine." If I'm having dinner with a friend, I can say, "You see, I'm having dinner with my friend, so it's not a good time." You have to assess the situation and make a judgment.

PLAYBOY: Have you gotten better about saying no or at least "not now"?

CRAIG: It's always been fairly easy.

PLAYBOY: Do the press and public wear on your personal relationships?

CRAIG: Relationships are tricky for everyone. I have a fantastic relationship, and

we work hard at it. Like everybody else's, it goes through its ups and downs.

PLAYBOY: The papers also had a field day because you couldn't drive a stick shift.

CRAIG: I could always drive a stick shift. Everyone in England does. That was just stupid.

PLAYBOY: Do you own an Aston Martin?

CRAIG: No, though I'm lucky enough that if I desperately want to drive an Aston Martin, the company is just fantastic to me. They'll let me go on a track and drive one all day long. I could drive it faster and more furiously than anywhere on the road. But I live in London. It doesn't make any sense to drive an Aston Martin there. I've nowhere to park it. Also, it wouldn't look good.

PLAYBOY: Are you kidding? Driving an Aston Martin can look very good.

CRAIG: Me driving around in an Aston Martin? To me, it's kind of like, ugh. So I drive a small car.

PLAYBOY: Does it get good gas mileage?

CRAIG: Yes, which I'm happy about these days.

PLAYBOY: With the energy crisis, will Bond stick with an Aston Martin or switch to a Prius?

CRAIG: I don't see him driving anything but an Aston Martin. Maybe now, though, given the global situation, Aston Martin will make its cars more in line with the realities of energy. I don't know if it'll affect Bond. In truth, Bond tends to drive cars out of necessity. His choices often have to do with whatever car is outside the hotel when he's running away, whatever car he can steal.

PLAYBOY: One story line of the new film is an international fight to control oil. Does \$4 a gallon for gas in the U.S. concern you?

CRAIG: We're paying \$10 a gallon in England. Welcome to the real world. Americans don't know how good they've had it. Compared with the British price, it's still a good deal in America.

PLAYBOY: We imagine you can afford it.

CRAIG: That's not the point when it comes to energy consumption, is it? We all want to use less, don't we? We ought to, anyway.

PLAYBOY: Energy is one of the key issues in the upcoming U.S. presidential election. Do you follow politics?

CRAIG: Of course. It's in my interest.

PLAYBOY: What's your interest in our election?

CRAIG: What happens in the U.S. affects the rest of the world. The U.K. is very connected to America. There's no separation on many issues.

PLAYBOY: What's your view of the campaign? If you could register in the States, who would get your vote?

CRAIG: I strongly feel there needs to be a new way forward. Barack Obama is pushing things in the right direction. I'm excited about the election. Unfor-

tunately, things will probably get dirty. I hope Obama can stay above the fray. He's a different kind of politician, so maybe he can. I'm hopeful for the first time in a long, long while. It's one of the most exciting elections of my lifetime.

PLAYBOY: Did you ever aspire to politics, or were you always interested in acting?

CRAIG: I've been interested in acting, not politics, since I was a child.

PLAYBOY: What was it about acting?

CRAIG: My mother was an art teacher, so art was around and there was interest in the arts. I wanted to act once I saw theater and movies. Art—acting, in particular—was a way out.

PLAYBOY: A way out of what? How would you sum up your childhood?

CRAIG: I was born in Cheshire, which is not far from Liverpool. Then we moved to Liverpool. I was brought up by my mother and lived with my sister. I had a good upbringing. It was tough because it was a struggle for my mother, being a single parent. She worked incredibly hard. Overall there were ups and downs just like everyone's childhood, but there was nothing

*I was a really bad student.
I left school at 16, to
my mother's despair. I didn't
get anything to suggest
I would have any academic
career whatsoever.*

that stands out to me that made it particularly more difficult than anybody else's.

PLAYBOY: Did you continue to have a relationship with your father after your parents divorced?

CRAIG: I had contact at times with my father. Not always, but later on we got it worked out and became closer.

PLAYBOY: Were you a good student?

CRAIG: I was a really bad student. I left school at 16, to my mother's despair. She knew I wanted to be an actor and actually gave me a little push toward it but only because school wasn't looking good. It was just not happening. I didn't get the qualifications, and I didn't get anything to suggest I would actually have any academic career whatsoever.

PLAYBOY: Was it unusual for a boy in your neighborhood to want to be an actor?

CRAIG: It wasn't that it was expected, but Liverpool has always had a very strong arts community. It was encouraged to form a band or whatever you could do for yourselves. Like I said, art was always viewed as a way to get out.

PLAYBOY: What was the first Bond film you saw?

CRAIG: In the cinemas the first one I saw was *Live and Let Die* with Roger Moore, which is his first one. I eventually went back and watched them all.

PLAYBOY: Who's your favorite Bond?

CRAIG: The Sean Connery movies stand up for me. They're my benchmark. I like the others, but Connery is fantastic.

PLAYBOY: Did you aspire to play Bond?

CRAIG: It never really crossed my mind at the time. I was drawn to theater initially, after I saw plays. Movies came later.

PLAYBOY: For a while you supported your acting by waiting tables. Were you a good waiter?

CRAIG: I was a pretty awful waiter. Actually, I never waited tables after I finished school. I swore to myself I would never wait tables again once I'd left drama school.

PLAYBOY: Did you?

CRAIG: I never did.

PLAYBOY: Early roles in plays led to parts on television and in movies for you. When you finally landed film roles in Hollywood, you often played villains, including a series of ruthless killers. Did you mind?

CRAIG: After a while I did. I stopped. I just decided I didn't want to do it anymore. English actors were being offered the bad-guy roles at the time. I don't know why. But after getting some of those parts in Hollywood movies, I decided to stop, no matter how lucrative it was. I concentrated on making movies in England—smaller, independent movies. I made *Enduring Love*, based on the Ian McEwan book, as well as the movies *The Mother* and *Love Is the Devil*. They were much more rewarding. Even since doing Bond, I want to continue to make movies like those.

PLAYBOY: You recently completed *Defiance*, about World War II. Do you intentionally try to mix it up?

CRAIG: That would suggest there is some sort of master plan. There isn't. I accept jobs because they interest me when they come along. I'd had a long year and been working hard. Bond was finished, and we'd wrapped the *Golden Compass* tour. I didn't plan on working right away, but I picked up the script and read it and reread it from cover to cover. It's a good position to be in to be able to make movies like *Defiance* and also do James Bond and *Golden Compass* or whatever comes along that strikes my fancy.

PLAYBOY: Earlier you said you tried to anticipate the impact of being Bond. Is it what you expected? Has it changed everything?

CRAIG: It has. It's changed everything.

PLAYBOY: Similar to the ways you anticipated?

CRAIG: *Anticipated* is the wrong word. Everything that came along was different than anything I could have anticipated.

PLAYBOY: Have you had difficulty handling it?

CRAIG: If I were 20 years younger—even 15 or 10 years younger—and this kind of success happened to me, I would probably have gone out and spent every penny I'd earned. I would have changed my life in a way that would have—well, it probably wouldn't have been the healthiest. But because I'm the age I am, I don't have the urge or the need to change much, and I haven't. The important things haven't changed at all. The important things in life have less to do with the amount of money I earn. It's the simpler things.

PLAYBOY: Has your fame been difficult for your friends and family?

CRAIG: I've always tried to protect my family and friends. I had a choice, but they didn't make a choice about my being famous.

PLAYBOY: How have your relationships held up?

CRAIG: They've solidified. They're better now than they ever were.

PLAYBOY: Has it been especially difficult for your daughter?

CRAIG: I think she's been protected from most of it. Protecting her was my highest priority.

PLAYBOY: How did becoming a parent change you?

CRAIG: It changed me completely. It changes me every day.

PLAYBOY: How?

CRAIG: It's constant discovery. Ask any parent. It makes you look deeper and in a different way. You think differently about yourself, about the world.

PLAYBOY: Will it be difficult for you when your daughter gets older and begins dating?

CRAIG: It's not something I'll publicly talk about. It has to be between me and her.

PLAYBOY: How will you respond if a James Bond type arrives in an Aston Martin to pick her up?

CRAIG: I guess we'll see.

PLAYBOY: Ready access to Aston Martins notwithstanding, is your life anything like Bond's?

CRAIG: I'm living a pretty glamorous life, though I don't publicly live a glamorous life. If I were younger, I would have lived a glamorous life publicly. The changes I have made I've made slowly. I've consciously done it. I'm trying to do this for the long term. Maybe I've got it wrong; maybe I should just go and move to Monte Carlo and live on a yacht.

PLAYBOY: Are you occasionally tempted?

CRAIG: It doesn't tempt me at all.

PLAYBOY: Since your divorce, are you better at relationships?

CRAIG: You do get better, hopefully. I think if you apply the simple rules of taking care of each other and looking after each other and making sure the other person is experiencing as

much as you are and you're part of each other's lives as much as you possibly can be, it'll figure itself out. Just because I make Bond movies doesn't mean things are different for me. Things are exactly the same for me as they are for everybody else.

PLAYBOY: Even with paparazzi and tabloids and the speculation and the Internet?

CRAIG: Yeah, if you're strong about who you are and who you're with. I mean, if you're not, then yes, it's a problem. Your life is open. If you're not strong about who you are, you can be affected by the newspapers, in which you can be married, have three children and get divorced in one afternoon. The papers can quite happily suggest all that. The weird thing is that for some people, it can almost be predicted in the press. People may not be having a nervous breakdown, but the press can make them have one. It can make marriages split up. There can be a rumor going around that somebody's marriage is on the rocks, and it suddenly can be. It's almost as if that forces it to happen. It's really testing for a couple.

If you're not strong about who you are, you can be affected by the newspapers, in which you can be married, have three children and get divorced in one afternoon.

PLAYBOY: People often speculate about actors and their co-stars on movie sets.

CRAIG: So the thing is, you don't have an affair with somebody in your movies.

PLAYBOY: Does public scrutiny intensify any existing problems? It seems it may be true for Britney Spears and Amy Winehouse.

CRAIG: Maybe, because your problems will come out. If you're an artist—a singer, an actor, a painter, whatever—you show your emotions; it's what you do. That's what's appealing about you. If you have problems, the problems will come out and possibly be magnified.

PLAYBOY: Is the attention itself addictive?

CRAIG: Possibly, if you don't understand it. That's why I think it's good for me that the attention came when I was older.

PLAYBOY: If you live by the sword, you may die by the sword. That is, if you buy your own press and come to think you're as great as everyone says you are, you also have to buy your own press when the public turns against you.

CRAIG: And people go down in flames. Something in me admires that.

PLAYBOY: You admire people who go down in flames?

CRAIG: There's something in me that's from the punk generation that I grew up with that's still there. It's just saying fuck you to all this; I don't give a shit what you think.

PLAYBOY: How has the huge success of *Casino Royale* influenced your film choices? There seem to be two ways to go: It could free an actor to take on a wide variety of roles, or it may make him less likely to take risks because he needs, or thinks he needs, surefire hits.

CRAIG: It's not going to happen like that for me. It hasn't really changed the fact that jobs come along and I decide if I'm interested for whatever reason.

PLAYBOY: Are you burned out on action movies yet?

CRAIG: I'm not looking for them at the moment. But if one came along that was great, who knows? The thing is, I genuinely love what I do. That's what you get addicted to—this huge collaborative effort. We worked on the new Bond movie for six months. You work extremely closely with a great bunch of people. It's incredibly rewarding. That happens on a Bond movie or an interesting small movie. I produced a little movie last year with my best friend directing, because he's incredibly talented; we got that off the ground. I do like the idea of smaller, independent movies because you can discuss subjects that won't necessarily make piles of money. They deal with tricky subject matter. I'm happy to do both kinds of movies. When you're starting out as an actor, you don't necessarily have a lot of choices. Hopefully, if you get any success, you can use it to give yourself the space to think, to make the right decisions. Why do you take the job? For the money? Then that's fine. Because there's a story you want to help tell? That's better. You can do both and make conscious choices. You're happier at the end of the day.

PLAYBOY: You reportedly signed on to make four Bond films. Are two more coming?

CRAIG: I did sign on for four, including *Casino Royale* and *Quantum of Solace*. So a piece of paper says there are two more to do. But let's see how this one goes. In the film business everything doesn't always go according to plan. We'll wait and see. If it goes wrong, we'll have to rethink things.

PLAYBOY: And if it goes right?

CRAIG: If it goes right, then, well, either way we'll see, won't we? At least for the time being I'm still quite enjoying myself playing James Bond. Why not? It's great. If it stopped being fun, though, I'd have to kill it off, wouldn't I? I wouldn't think twice.







THE CAMPAIGN OF HIS LIFE

BARACK OBAMA HAS INSPIRED A RECORD NUMBER OF YOUNG VOTERS. LAMONT CAROLINA IS ONE OF THEM, BUT IN HIS CASE THE FIGHT FOR HIS CANDIDATE IS A FIGHT FOR HIS OWN FUTURE

BY WILL BLYTHE

In the retelling, all inevitable love affairs come close to never happening at all. *If I hadn't gone back to the bar to pick up my change...if my parents hadn't moved to Oklahoma, where I got in-state tuition...if I hadn't been dragged out of the house that night by my roommate, who was trying to cheer me up.* From the perspective of the securely coupled, the very possibility of never having met is thrilling torture indeed.

Political love affairs are no exception.

These days Lamont Carolina dares to imagine what his life would be like if he hadn't been strolling through downtown Manhattan one afternoon in September of last year. He was idling away a few hours after work, "studying human interaction," which he likes to do; sometimes he even watches people meet and takes notes "on how to create a relationship out of nothing." His life so far—growing up poor in Brownsville, Brooklyn, and navigating new terrains ever since—has made him watchful. Even though he's a charmer, a good talker, he subscribes to the maxim "Better to keep one's mouth shut and appear stupid than open it and remove all doubt." So walking and watching were what he was doing until he met and bantered with a woman handing out tickets for the Barack Obama rally being held later that afternoon in Washington Square Park.

He followed the crowds converging on the park from all directions, so many people, at least 24,000 of them, that he couldn't see anything, so he climbed atop the foundation of a lamppost on the edge of the square to watch Obama speak. Lamont remembers an old woman—well, "*a wise woman*," he says, correcting himself now that he has become more politically savvy—trying to bump him off his perch so she could climb up and watch the proceedings.

The crowd was hungry, a single organism roiling with excitement, a sense of its own life, its appointment with history.

And then, as Lamont Carolina clung to his lamppost, Barack Obama began to speak.

ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERTO PARADA

PARADA



WALK FOR OBAMA On January 13, 2008 Lamont Carolina led his first rally, which began in Union Square and culminated at Columbus Circle (above).

Before, whenever Lamont conceived of politics, he envisioned “old, bland, bald guys.” Even in regard to Obama, Lamont had not yet “drunk the Kool-Aid,” as he puts it. There might have been uncanny similarities between the candidate and himself—both had grown up without a father, both were black, both were ambitious, both had moved easefully through alien worlds, both were gifted at inspiring people, yet behind the beguiling scrim of their charisma both kept watch on their surroundings with a cool neutrality. But at 23, despite the affinities, Lamont still viewed the electoral process with deep skepticism. He’d seen candidates come and go, but nothing much ever changed in Brownsville, regardless of who held office. Politics appeared to have as much to do with him as the Dow Jones Industrial Average did with a man who owned no stock.

And yet as Obama delivered a standard stump speech in which his voice turned as honeyed as the late September light pouring over the park that afternoon, a psychic channel ripped open within Lamont as surely as if a faith healer had passed hands over him. He fell in political love for the first time in his life.

The speech featured all the usual Obama trademarks—phrases such as “a time for change” and “we the people.” His oratory merged the wonkish and the preacherly in a way that thrilled blacks and whites alike. He inveighed against the war in Iraq and the Bush administration. But Obama, a former student at Columbia University in New York back in the early 1980s, also divulged how he used to drink at a nearby bar, and at just that moment, the microphone cut off and Obama laughed and said, “Someone doesn’t want people to know about that,” and he repeated the story.

Lamont got a kick out of that.

Yes, He Could

THE JANUARY 1969 ISSUE OF *PLAYBOY* FEATURED A TESTAMENT OF HOPE BY MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., THE LAST PIECE HE WROTE FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE HIS DEATH. IN THE FOLLOWING EXCERPT, KING ELABORATES ON HIS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.

People are often surprised to learn that I am an optimist. They know how often I have been jailed, how frequently the days and nights have been filled with frustration and sorrow, how bitter and dangerous are my adversaries. They expect these experiences to harden me into a grim and desperate man. They fail, however, to perceive the sense of affirmation generated by the challenge of embracing struggle and surmounting obstacles. They have no comprehension of the strength that comes from faith in God and man.... The past is strewn with the ruins of the empires of tyranny, and each is a monument not merely to man’s blunders but to his capacity to overcome them. While it is a bitter fact that in America in 1968 I am denied equality solely because I am black, yet I am not a chattel slave. Millions of people have fought thousands of battles to enlarge my freedom; restricted as it still is, progress has been made. This is why I remain an optimist, though I am also a realist, about the barriers before us....

Justice for black people will not flow into society merely from court decisions nor from fountains of political oratory.... White America must recognize that justice for black people cannot be achieved without radical changes in the structure of our society. The comfortable, the entrenched, the privileged cannot continue to tremble at the prospect of change in the status quo.

As he listened to Obama, Lamont heard a candidate “whose thinking was off-the-charts different.” Obama struck him as “a motivational speaker for our entire country” rather than a deal-cutting politician. Until that afternoon Lamont Carolina had not put much faith in “the system.” But suddenly he ventured to believe; the entire political sphere struck him as rich with potential in exactly the way a man newly in love sees surrounding him a world lit up with promise.

He knew right away that he was getting involved in the campaign. In the course of an hour or so, Obama had allowed Lamont to see the hardships of his Brooklyn upbringing as productive of new possibilities. “Lots of people who grew up with challenges relate to Obama on a personal basis,” he says. “His campaign enables me to be part of something greater than myself. If Barack Obama gets to office, I know I will be able to look at the seal of the president and know that it means us.”

He doesn’t mean that “us” to be only black people; he means as “us” everybody who had been spiritually disenfranchised from contemporary American politics. Obama made it plausible for Democrats in particular to be idealists again, to refuse to settle any longer for the soul-deadening geometries of triangulation.

Leaving the rally in Washington Square Park, Lamont came across a flyer that led him to a meeting several days later of Downtown East for Obama, a Manhattan group aiming to make sure, among other aims, that Obama was included on the ballot in every congressional district in the state when the primary arrived that February. One of Downtown East’s leaders is Howard Hemsley, a delegate at large

to this year's Democratic convention, a party organizer since George McGovern's campaign in 1972 and a manager of New York City races for local office. "Lamont stood up, asked questions and wanted to do something right then," Hemsley says. "I said to my fellow coordinators, 'Who is this guy? Let's invite him to our smaller meetings.'"

"I had to do something, I had to!" Lamont says. Within days he had helped organize a march of Obama supporters across the Brooklyn Bridge.

In falling for Barack Obama, it seemed Lamont Carolina had fallen in love with his own potential.

On this Wednesday morning in the summer, one of his days off, Lamont is driving to Brownsville to visit his barber. He wants to get a touch-up before speaking at an Obama event in Manhattan's East Village on Saturday. "They call me a rally leader," he says with a mixture of pride and self-deprecation. Since the fall, he has jump-started many campaign functions with the same let's-get-this-party-started energy he radiated his last year of high school, back in 2003, when he was hired by well-off families as a party motivator to raise the roof at bar mitzvahs and birthday parties with a little Brooklyn flavor and the latest dance steps.

A few days before, for instance, he led the cheers for New York's Obama campaign volunteers at Dewey's Flatiron bar and grill in Manhattan on the night their candidate declared himself the presumptive nominee. Lamont is clearly a favorite among the workers, somewhere between a mascot and a rising leader, though clearly not as privileged as many, like the girl ordering a bottle of champagne for her table, who will be taking the fall semester off from Sarah Lawrence to help run the Obama operation in Pittsburgh. She appears typical of many of the kids present that night, fortunate that their political passion can be subsidized by understanding parents. By contrast, Lamont had dickered for the best deal with a man selling Obama buttons at the door. His activism comes at his own expense. Before speaking he waited for Hillary Clinton to finish her non-concession speech. "It's been a long road," Lamont finally told the volunteers, many, like him, veterans of get-out-the-vote drives in states such as Ohio and Pennsylvania. "Give yourself a round of applause!" The roar was frightening in its intensity.

In recognition of his rhetorical gifts, Lamont is beginning to receive frequent invitations to give motivational talks to Democrats around the city. Not long ago he addressed an open forum on the Democratic platform, opening his speech by exclaiming, "Friends, Romans, countrymen." When the laughter subsided, he spoke passionately and off-the-cuff about developing leadership in urban communities. He asked the assembled, many of them

local notables, including Ronnie Eldridge, leader of the city council, to recall the days before they got into politics, before their futures were assured. "If you'd known more about leadership before you went into politics," he told them, "consider how much further along you would have been."

Based on their encounters with him, some longtime activists in New York City Democratic circles suspect Lamont Carolina has what it takes to eventually run for office himself. Howard Hemsley says, "Lamont is a natural leader. He's charismatic. People are drawn to him. If he's prepared to do the unglamorous work of sitting through boring meetings, of making an endless number of phone calls and of suffering fools, his political future is unlimited."

That notion is beginning to occur to Lamont himself. Having once aspired to a career in stand-up comedy, he's thinking instead of one day running for the New York State Assembly and, maybe even in the more distant future, the U.S. Senate. Of course, as is usually the case with love affairs after the initial euphoria subsides, he must puzzle out what is now required of him in his new role as committed partner. He must understand how much his talents, his history, his hopes, even his shortcomings will allow him. This can be a little confusing when you're still a young man, but as Lamont has said whenever he has faced hardship, like the time he had to apply for work at McDonald's because he couldn't find a job elsewhere, "There's no shame in my game." He'll do what he has to do.

"A black man has to be careful about his line," Lamont says this afternoon, tracing the contour of his hairline with his finger. "Without the right line, you're nothing. And you've got to go to a barber who knows your line, who won't push it back too far. You get a bad shape-up, you're in for a bad two weeks. Did you see Obama's line when he was campaigning in Pennsylvania? You could tell some barber messed it up."

As he rolls past the West Indian enclaves just off Flatbush, he confesses he's having second thoughts about his job in management training for a large company that makes baked goods in New Jersey. The corporate life seems to offer security but only in exchange for freedom; he has already been warned about wearing an Obama button at work. On the other hand, the pay is pretty good, and Lamont is being groomed for high-level management. At a gathering in Manhattan, a VP announced, "Lamont Carolina is the future of this company." In order to familiarize Lamont with every aspect of the trade, senior management has assigned him to ride the delivery routes with the bread-truck drivers every morning, starting at 3:45.

This means he should be going to bed by seven every night in the apartment in Hawthorne, New Jersey that he shares with his girlfriend, Vicki, whom he met at Keystone College, near Scranton, Pennsylvania. But instead, he is often working for

Obama until midnight. He has been offered an important volunteer position with the campaign in Atlanta, but he's not sure he should take it. For one thing, Vicki isn't too keen on it. "What are we going to do about money?" she asks. She keeps wondering when they're going to get married.

There's also the problem of where he should establish residence if he plans to run for office. He likes the idea of Brownsville as his potential base. He'd also like to be closer to his mother, who lives there and seems to be suffering from a mysterious malady that he believes, among other things, is making her hair fall out. But then Lamont says, "Vicki's a white girl from Pennsylvania. She grew up on a farm with pigs and horses. Brownsville? No way!" Mournfully, he says, "Once I was dying to get out of Brooklyn. Now I'm dying to get back."

In the past year, while working full-time, Lamont has canvassed voters, registered them and helped get them to the polls in Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. At least twice a week through the fall, he participated in petition drives to ensure Obama's place on the ballot for the New York primary. (Even now he sees the green petition forms in his nightmares; he hates the clerical side of campaigning.) In Pennsylvania he traveled back to Keystone College, his alma mater, to rouse student interest in Obama.

Not long ago he talked to the woman in HR at his company to tell her he was not sure that managing baked goods was all he wanted out of life. He might want to work for the Obama campaign, for instance, if the opportunity presented itself. She thanked him for his honesty and said she would get back to him.

At the barbershop in Brownsville two older men shooting the breeze say Lamont walked to the beat of his own drum. Always did. He was deep. Then they tease him about appearing in *PLAYBOY* as the subject of this profile. "Whose lap he gonna be on?" They burst out laughing. They say, "Did he tell you about the time he ran around the block in a rainstorm for \$7?"

"I collected," Lamont says.

"He collected, but he was wet." They burst out laughing again.

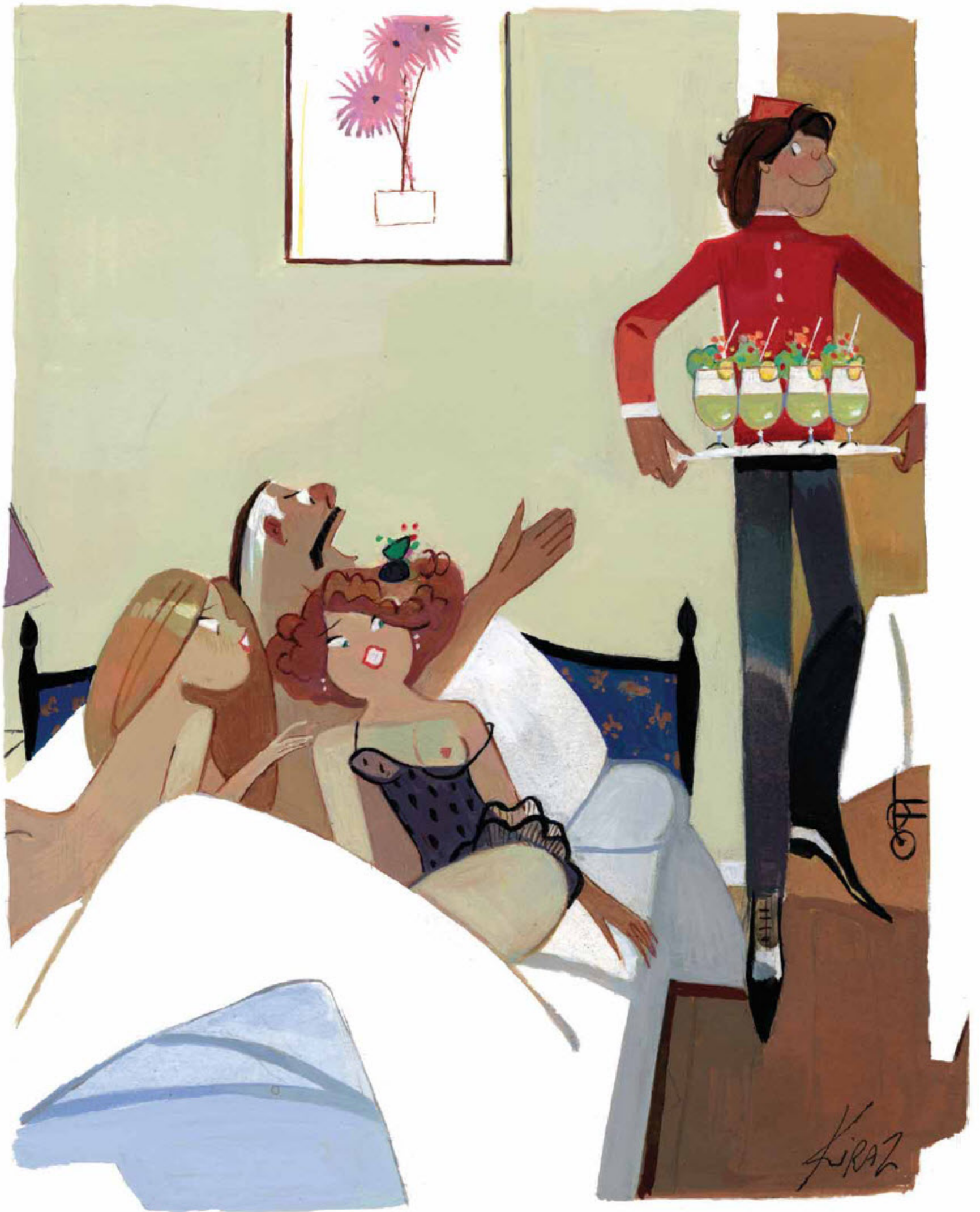
One of the gents says, "He used to tell me, 'I can't rap, I can't play ball.' I told him, 'You funny, just do that. Because it's funny when you try to play basketball!'" The men laugh again, knocking into each other and Lamont.

Lamont gestures at the two gents. "These guys are respected in the community," he says. "They kept me in check, and they gave me a chance."

Inside, a young barber ushers Lamont into a chair. El, the old hand at the shop, says, "We solve the world's problems here."

As the young barber moves around Lamont's head, stopping and squinting as if contemplating a prime piece of marble, El and Lamont discuss rap. "Soulja

(continued on page 142)



"I only ordered three cocktails."



FACTS.

BOND

FACTS



With Quantum of Solace on the way and the film franchise rejuvenated, we look at the secret history of all things 007



Thunderballs: In the novels, Bond sleeps with an estimated **13** women. In the movies, he sleeps with **64**.



The year 1953 saw two auspicious debuts. One was the character of James Bond, in Ian Fleming's novel *Casino Royale*; the other was a magazine called *PLAYBOY*. Though they had much in common from the start, the two didn't get together until 1960, when *PLAYBOY* serialized *The Hildebrand Rarity*, Bond's first major appearance on this side of the pond. In all, *PLAYBOY* has run 16 works of 007 fiction—14 stories or serial episodes by the character's originator and two by official Bond writer Raymond Benson.

second chances

Didn't Say Never

Roger Moore, Timothy Dalton and Pierce Brosnan were all offered the Bond gig twice. Dalton turned down the role in what became *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (he felt he was too young for the part) and accepted it 18 years later, for *The Living Daylights*—when Brosnan was unable to take the job because of contract issues with his TV show *Remington Steele*. Moore was also offered *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* but was still under contract for his TV show *The Saint*.



146 Is Not Enough: Sean Connery's contract allowed him to keep much of the clothing he wore in the Bond films. He ended up with 147 suits, 23 tuxes, 17 trench coats, 11 other jackets, 41 hats and 68 pairs of shoes from his run as Bond.



namesake Winging It

Fleming felt his swashbuckling spy needed a dull name. (Besides, fictional spies named Thomas Elphinstone Hambledon and Johnny Fedora already existed.) Fleming found his uninspiration in a favorite book, a 1936 birding guide by American ornithologist James Bond. Brosnan is seen holding a copy in *Die Another Day*.



formal dress Hello, Sailor

In *Tomorrow Never Dies* Brosnan wears a uniform based on the one Fleming wore as a naval intelligence officer during World War II. While serving king and country Fleming founded a specialized commando outfit called 30 Assault Unit (its logo is pictured above).



Bond girl Caroline Munro (*The Spy Who Loved Me*) was the first woman killed on-screen by 007.

camelot Friends in High Places

Bond got the ultimate celebrity plug when President Kennedy listed *From Russia With Love* as one of his favorite books. In the novel *The Man With the Golden Gun* Bond repays the favor by reading JFK's *Profiles in Courage*.

seaworthy Aqua Man

Nothing gets Bond out of his monkey suit faster than flippers and a scuba tank. There's a reason for all the Jacques Cousteau action: Fleming's pal Jacques Cousteau. The pair met through publishing circles, and Cousteau invited Fleming to visit him in the south of France, where Cousteau was excavating a sunken Greek galleon.



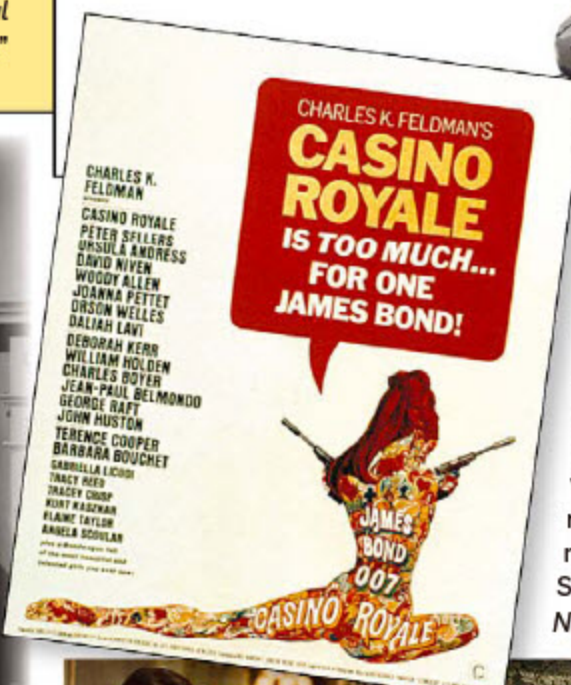
And the Oscar Goes to...: Halle Berry, *Die Another Day*'s Jinx, is the only actress to have won an Oscar before playing a Bond girl. (Kim Basinger won hers for *L.A. Confidential* years after making the "unofficial" 007 film *Never Say Never Again*.)



The flying car in *The Man With the Golden Gun* is an AMC Matador. Olé!



Above: Barry Nelson as "Jimmy" Bond in the first-ever screen incarnation of the superspy, on a 1954 American TV show.



remakes Thrice-Told Tale

Daniel Craig's Bond debut, *Casino Royale*, wasn't the second filming of the first Bond novel—it was the third. Predating the star-studded and none too funny 1967 spoof *Casino Royale* was a 1954 American TV version starring the first screen Bond, journeyman actor Barry Nelson. Sean Connery's 007 bow, *Dr. No*, was still eight years off.





camelot, part 2 Last Picture Shown

From *Russia With Love* became the second Bond novel made into a movie, after John F. Kennedy listed it as one of his favorites. The film version was the last movie the president saw—it was screened at the White House on November 20, 1963. Its commercial release in the United States was delayed five months in the wake of JFK's assassination, and the film didn't hit cinemas until April 1964.

hit parade Highest Chart Positions of Bond Theme Songs

- "A View to a Kill," Duran Duran: #1
- "Live and Let Die," Paul McCartney & Wings: #2
- "Nobody Does It Better," (from *The Spy Who Loved Me*) Carly Simon: #2
- "For Your Eyes Only," Sheena Easton: #4
- "Die Another Day," Madonna: #8
- "Goldfinger," Shirley Bassey: #8



locations Nyet Set



GoldenEye was the first post-Cold War Bond film. *Pro*: Soviet location shoots (such as the tank chase in St. Petersburg pictured above) became possible. *Con*: The Soviet Union was no longer the enemy.

A scan of Bond's wallet in *Diamonds Are Forever* reveals he is a card-carrying member of the local Playboy Club and Casino.



fitness Muscle-Bond



At five-foot-11, Daniel Craig is the shortest 007 but also the buffest. Pre-*Quantum* he worked out on the gymnastic rings and is said to do a passable iron cross.



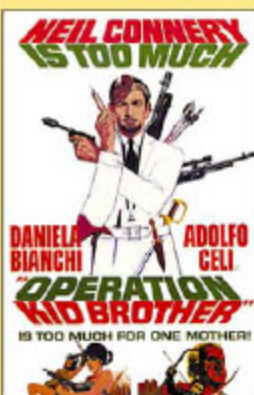
In this *Moonraker* scene Bond and an airplane pilot fight for a single parachute in free fall. It lasts two minutes on-screen and took five weeks and 88 jumps out of a plane to film.

But Would He Like the Fiction? In a 1959 letter to *PLAYBOY*, Fleming wrote, "If he were an actual person, Bond would be a registered reader of *PLAYBOY*."

License to Kill: A code name for the 1976 Israeli operation to rescue hostages held in Uganda was Thunderball.

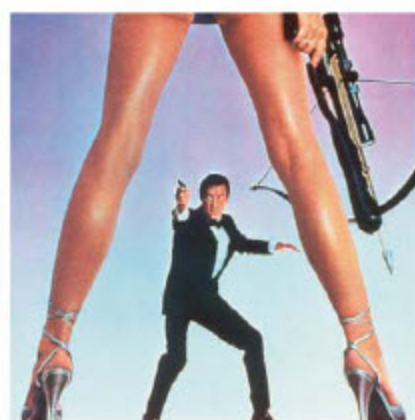
spoof Brothers in Arms

All told, Bond parodies and knock-offs outnumber actual Bond films, but few are as impressively brazen as the 1967 send-up *Operation Kid Brother*

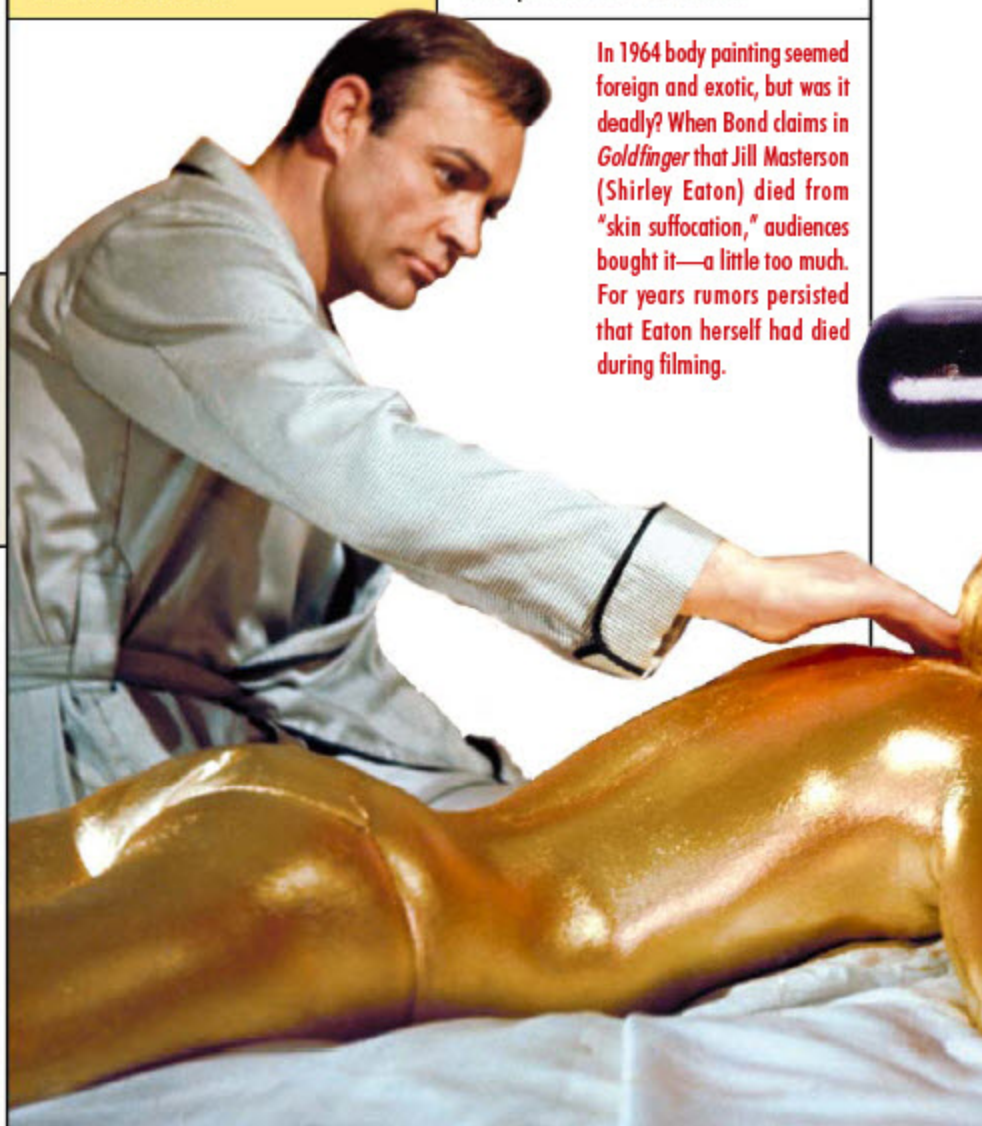


(also known as *OK Connery*). Sean Connery's brother Neil stars in the Italian production alongside Bond regulars Lois Maxwell and Bernard Lee. Also in on the gag are Daniela Bianchi, the lead Bond girl in *From Russia With Love*, and Adolfo Celi, villain Emilio Largo in *Thunderball*.

The Rooks of Love: The chess game in the tournament scene in *From Russia With Love* is based on the Spassky-Bronstein match for the 1960 USSR championship, with the character Kronsteen following Spassky's winning moves.



Big Butt Man: All of Roger Moore's contracts included the right to an unlimited supply of hand-rolled Monte Cristo cigars.



In 1964 body painting seemed foreign and exotic, but was it deadly? When Bond claims in *Goldfinger* that Jill Masterson (Shirley Eaton) died from "skin suffocation," audiences bought it—a little too much. For years rumors persisted that Eaton herself had died during filming.

LOOK OUT!



HERE COMES THE BIGGEST BOND OF ALL
"THUNDERBALL"!

best-seller

Packed Houses

Three films in, the thirteenth for all things Bond had reached a fever pitch, and fourth installment *Thunderball* hit theaters like a ball of, well, you know. It still holds the series record for most tickets sold (eclipsing the previous number one—and still number two in ticket sales—*Goldfinger*). To promote *Thunderball* Sean Connery consented to just one interview—in PLAYBOY.



Double Fantasy: The two female leads in 1967's *You Only Live Twice*, Mie Hama and Akiko Wakabayashi, also appear together in 1962's *Kingu Kongu tai Gojira* ("King Kong vs. Godzilla") and 1965's *Koku-sai himitsu keisatsu: Kagi no kagi* ("International Secret Police: Key of Keys"). The latter was famously recut and dubbed by Woody Allen to create *What's Up, Tiger Lily?*



Eva Green in *Casino Royale* as Vesper Lynd, the inspiration for the perfect cocktail.



The 110-foot speedboat jump made by Roger Moore's Bond during the shooting of *Live and Let Die* set a world record that stood for three years.

Bond drives an Aston Martin in 11 films. How times change: *Die Another Day*'s V12 Vanquish (below left) has a camouflage function in addition to the usual guns and ejection seat of *Goldfinger*'s DB5.



home ec

Vesper Martini

How to make the cocktail James Bond calls a Vesper martini in *Casino Royale*:

- 3 measures Gordon's gin
 - 1 measure vodka
 - ½ measure Kina Lillet
- Shake with ice, add a thin slice of lemon peel and serve in a deep champagne glass (as in the book) or martini glass (as in the movie).

scouting

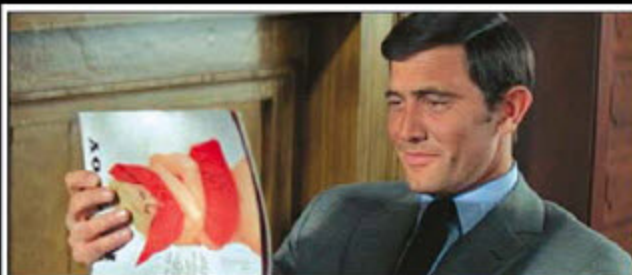
Wood and Plenty

Natalie Wood's sister Lana (whose real name is Svetlana Nikolaevna Gurdin) was cast as Plenty O'Toole in *Diamonds Are Forever* after appearing in our April 1971 issue.



With all Bond's undersea antics, spearguns are a popular prop, but only once does he use one (the above, from *Thunderball*) with lethal force. In *From Russia With Love*, Rosa Klebb tries to kill Bond with a very sharp shoe (left). Who you callin' a loafer?

A man in a tuxedo does not carry a large gun—it's just tacky. Bond's heater of choice in 18 films is the Walther PPK (below). In six novels and four films he packs a .25 Beretta (bottom).



serious issues

Cover to Cover

After infiltrating a Swiss lawyer's office to open a safe in 1969's *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, George Lazenby peruses a February 1969 copy of *PLAYBOY*. The upper part of the Centerfold (Playmate Lorrie Menconi) is briefly visible in the scene. The Fleming novel of the same name was serialized in *PLAYBOY* in 1963.

All Up In His Grille: The metal teeth worn by *Jaws* (seven-foot-two actor Richard Kiel) in *The Spy Who Loved Me* and again in *Moonraker* were designed by Katharina Kubrick, stepdaughter of legendary American director Stanley Kubrick.



bad guys
Blo Jobs



The many faces of villain Ernst Stavro Blofeld, clockwise from above left: iconic Blofeld (Donald Pleasence in *You Only Live Twice*), brawny Blofeld (Telly Savalas in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*), surgically reconstructed Blofeld (Charles Gray in *Diamonds Are Forever*), bearded Blofeld (Max von Sydow in *Never Say Never Again*) and one of several faceless Blofelds. At right, Dr. Evil, the dead-on parody of *Austin Powers* fame.



Five Years Before Liv Lindeland Showed Hers: *PLAYBOY* published *Octopussy*, Fleming's final Bond story, in March and April 1966.

bondage

View to a Kink

James Bond may seem to be an old-school lothario, bedding women while armed with only a cocktail and a cocky grin. Yet time and again we find the franchise cribbing from the Fetish 101 syllabus—unsurprising considering Fleming was into S&M. Clockwise from top left: Claudine Auger's Domino gives good foot in *Thunderball*; Lola Larson as Bambi wields thighs of death in *Diamonds Are Forever*; Grace Jones's May Day prepares to chop some lucky guy into submission in *A View to a Kill*; and enough hog-tying and hair pulling to please Irving Klaw.



big props
Reality Check



Sometimes they get it right: For *Moonraker*, set designers picked the eventual winner from among several prototypes NASA was developing for a reusable spacecraft. The real shuttle's maiden voyage occurred two years later, in 1981. Most Bond sets aren't nearly so prescient—sea lairs, for example, never quite caught on.



Above, Karl Stromberg's Atlantis from *The Spy Who Loved Me*; below, Gustav Graves's Ice Palace from *Die Another Day*.



Bunch of

Zeros: Let's not forget that Bond isn't the only spy licensed to kill by MI6. A guide to others and their often brief appearances:

002 Played by Glyn Baker in *The Living Daylights*.

003 Uncredited actor; found dead in Siberia in *A View to a Kill*.

004 Played by Frederick Warder in *The Living Daylights*; killed by the KGB.

006 Villain Alec Trevelyan (Sean Bean), a double-0 gone bad in *GoldenEye*.

008 Doesn't appear on-screen; mentioned in *Goldfinger* as Bond's replacement should he disregard orders or be killed.

009 Played by Andy Bradford in *Octopussy*; dies disguised as a clown and clutching a Fabergé egg.





OLIVIA

"Come on over. We'll think of something to do."



The most exotic beauties in the pantheon of silver-screen history—in character and nude in the pages of PLAYBOY

BOND GIRLS



Above: **URSULA ANDRESS** as Honey Ryder, on the beach in Jamaica in the first Bond film, *Dr. No* (1962). Critics called her “the most awesome piece of natural Swiss architecture since the Alps” and “the most sensuous and spectacular beauty to grace the screen in years.” Left: An outtake from the first of Ursula’s five **PLAYBOY** pictorials, which ran for 12 pages in the June 1965 issue—at the time, our longest pictorial ever devoted to a single woman. Right: The inimitable **HALLE BERRY** as NSA agent Jinx, re-creating Ursula’s iconic scene for *Die Another Day* (2002). What a pair.



They are the ultimate creatures of fantasy: stunning female spies whose skill at espionage is eclipsed by their sexual appetites. Ever since **PLAYBOY** published Ian Fleming’s *The Hildebrand Rarity* (March 1960), the first appearance of 007 in an American men’s magazine, we’ve enjoyed a love affair with Bond girls. We’ve brought them to you in a way the film world never would—naked. With the 22nd “official” 007 movie arriving this month, we pay tribute.



This page, clockwise from top left: **HONOR BLACKMAN** was, is and always will be Pussy Galore. She followed her *Goldfinger* (1964) role with an appearance in *PLAYBOY*'s first Bond-girl pictorial a year later. **LOIS MAXWELL** played Miss Moneybags from *Dr. No* (1962) to *A View to a Kill* (1985). **BARBARA CARRERA** as Fatima Blush: "Oh, how reckless of me. I made you all wet." Bond: "Yes, but my martini is still dry. My name is James." Barbara scored her part in *Never Say Never Again* (1983) after appearing on our March 1982 cover. Bond producer Cubby Broccoli saw **LANA WOOD** in our April 1971 issue and had to have her as Plenty O'Toole in *Diamonds Are Forever* (1971). **MARGARET NOLAN** was Dink in *Goldfinger*. She appeared in our November 1965 issue. **DANIELA BIANCHI** scored the part of randy Russian cipher clerk Tatiana Romanova in *From Russia With Love* (1963). Clever twist: Romanova was played by a hottie from Rome. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: **MAUD ADAMS** appeared in *PLAYBOY*'s October 1981 issue. Two years later she became Octopussy. **JANE SEYMOUR** plays Solitaire in *Live and Let Die* (1973)—but not by herself. **KIM BASINGER**'s portrayal of Domino Petachi in *Never Say Never Again* cemented her reputation as a leading sex star. Here's an outtake from her February 1983 pictorial. **CORINNE CLERY** looks incredible as Corinne Dufour in *Moonraker* (1979). She looked even better in our July 1979 issue.



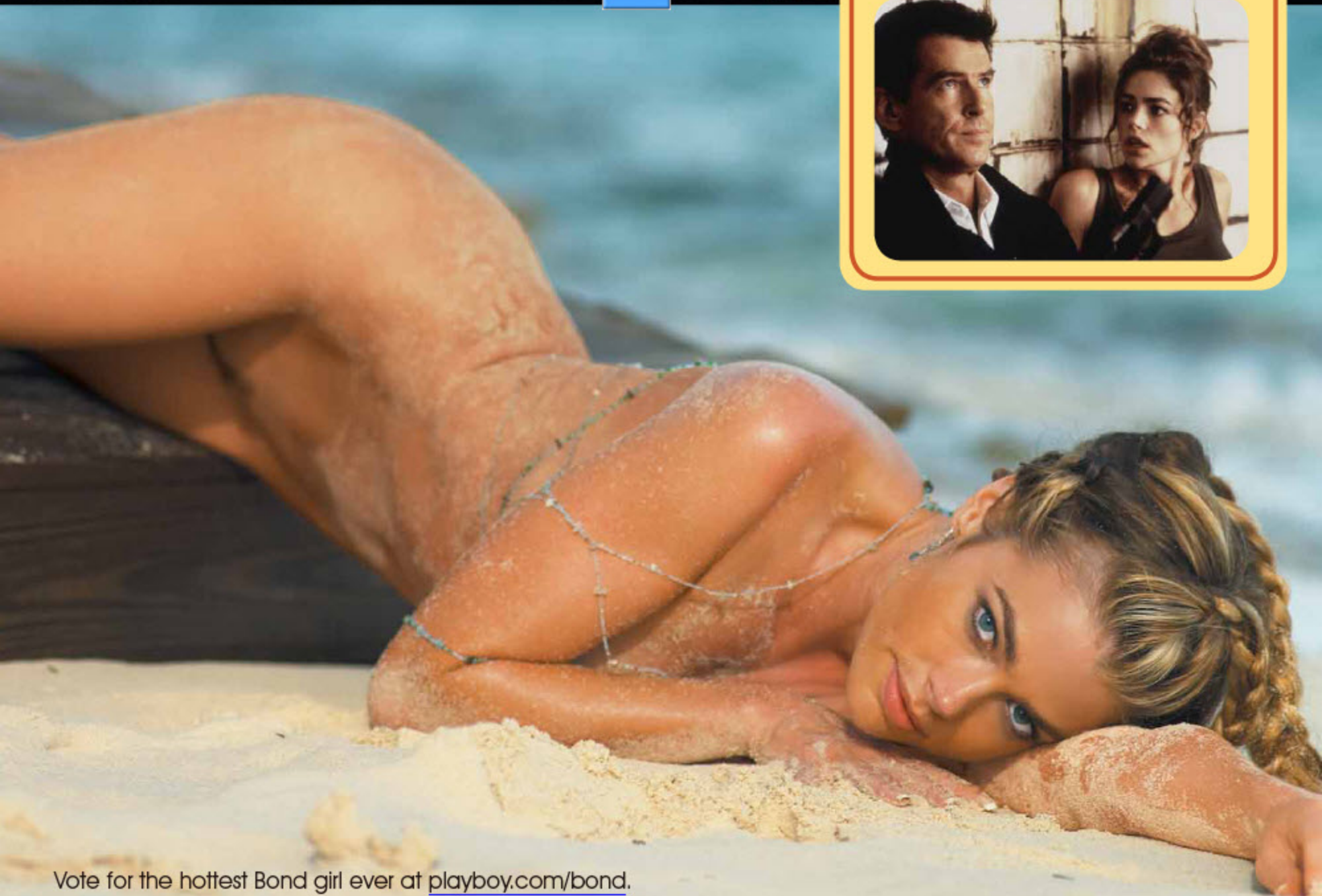


Ukrainian model **OLGA KURYLENKO** plays the main Bond girl opposite Daniel Craig in this month's *Quantum of Solace*. Her character's name? Camille. Not Camille Overthetop, just Camille.





Opposite page, clockwise from top left: **DAPHNE DECKERS** knows how to handle herself in front of the camera. (Can we help you with those?) The beauty made our February 1998 cover after appearing in *Tomorrow Never Dies* (1997). Our review of September 1987 cover girl **MARYAM D'ABO** as Kara Milovy in *The Living Daylights* (1987): "Bond's new lady is a sex kitten so seductive, she transforms fickle 007 into a one-woman man." **TERI HATCHER** literally straddles good and evil as Paris Carver in *Tomorrow Never Dies*. This page, from top: **BARBARA BACH** (a.k.a. Mrs. Ringo Starr and *PLAYBOY*'s January 1981 cover girl) sizzles as Major Anya Amasova in *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977). **DENISE RICHARDS** plays Christmas Jones in *The World Is Not Enough* (1999). Bond: "I was wrong about you." Christmas: "Yeah, how so?" Bond: "I thought Christmas only comes once a year."



Vote for the hottest Bond girl ever at playboy.com/bond.

I, GAMER

The future of video gaming is all about you. Are you ready to play?

Over the past 30 years the underlying DNA of the video-game industry has been in near-constant flux. But its most radical shift is just getting under way. In 2008's most interesting titles, players are far more important to the games' outcomes than even the game makers themselves, flipping our most basic assumptions about the relationship between creators and users. Video games have always offered a more personal experience than other media. Now, thanks to some big thinking by the industry's heavyweights, we're entering an era in which the users, not the makers, call the shots. The next chapter of this story is all about...you.

Changing the Game

by Scott Alexander

Three revolutionary studios upend the status quo and teach us to make our own fun

Historically, video games have been hideously difficult to produce, requiring esoteric knowledge and daunting man-hours. But now, in the most important evolution of the medium since the invention of the integrated circuit, games will be made by millions of people who never entertained the aspiration before. What's more, half the time they won't even realize they're doing it. *Spore* (Mac, PC), *LittleBigPlanet* (PS3) and *Guitar Hero: World Tour* (360, PS3) aren't just turning players into creators, they're pioneering new ways to make the creative process fun.

Far Cry 2

Go wherever you want and blow up whoever's stupid enough to try to stop you in the deadly African savanna.

But user creation within the walled gardens of game consoles didn't start until quite recently, when titles like *Far Cry Instincts* (2005) and *Halo 3* (2007) allowed players to create or modify their game levels and share them. Now it's shifting into high gear.

"What if you made a tool and didn't care about its output but just wanted the process of using it to be entertaining?" asks Will Wright, the mastermind behind *Spore*, a game that outsources the creation of its monsters to the players themselves. In order to move through *Spore's* evolution-based play, you design creatures, buildings and vehicles. As you do so, everything you create is uploaded to a server (the Sporepedia). Then, when anyone starts a new game, the server seeds that player's world with creatures created not by the game's designers but by other *Spore* players. "Every time you play, you increase the possibilities for everyone else" says Wright.

THE THREE MOST REVOLUTIONARY GAMES OF THEIR GENERATION

Guitar Hero: World Tour includes a recording studio and extensive editing options for creating your own songs, along with a Napster-like system for sharing your music with others. It's not unlike having an idiotproof four-track recording studio in your TV. For a franchise that has sold 22 million units and could easily rest on its laurels it's a bold and ambitious move. Brian Bright, one of its developers, looks forward to the musical anarchy it will unleash. "When this gets into the hands of a few million people, it's going to get pretty crazy,"

he says. "If one percent of the people start creating, that's a whole lot of music."

Finally, we have *LittleBigPlanet*, whose cuddly exterior belies its insidious desire to turn you into a game designer. Peel back the surface of this *Mario Brothers*-style platform-jumping game and you find a simple yet versatile set of design tools. Like *Spore*, it turns creativity into a gameplay element—only here you're not making creatures, you're creating whole new levels or even entirely new games. "It's a giant experiment, and releasing the game is only the beginning," says Media Molecule's



Guitar Hero: World Tour

Finally you can create something interesting with those goofy plastic instruments, using the surprisingly deep in-game recording studio.

LittleBigPlanet

Sure, it looks innocent enough, but the tools in this game may just turn you into a video-game designer. Once you get the bug, there's no going back.

Spore

As if its pan-evolutionary scope weren't ambitious enough, *Spore* is also a spontaneous content-generation engine disguised as a bit of a laugh.



Mark Healey, one of *LBP's* principal creators. "I've always dreamed about having the ultimate game-creation tool so I could just unleash my imagination onto the screen."

Indeed, we may be looking at a new era in which a game designer's job is less about building interesting worlds than building interesting tools. Then it will be up to us players to make the most interesting realities we can. See you there.





Fable 2

Throughout the game, your friends can come play in your world. Hope you tidied up.

Left 4 Dead

You'll never survive a zombie apocalypse without your friends. This shooter is built for co-op from the ground up.

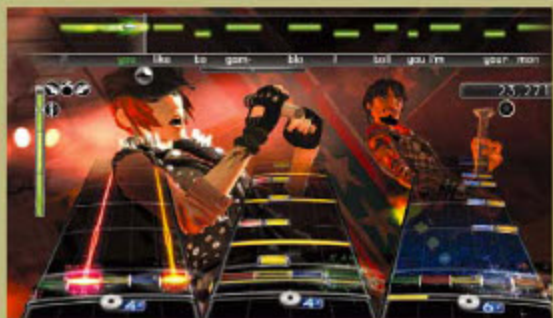
Rock Band

You don't need amps, a van or interesting hair to rock out with this newly upgraded party favorite.

the general trend has been toward gaming as a relatively private endeavor.

But if this year's games are any indication, there's good news coming. Our days of video-game solipsism are drawing to a close. Sure, multiplayer has been around for years, but it's now becoming truly pervasive, and the scope of what it can be is changing radically.

"I'm actually surprised it has taken this long," says Peter Molyneux, lead game designer for *Fable 2* (360), an action role-playing game set in a fantasy world. So far, so Tolkien. But it also offers something unique to the role-playing genre: At any point in the game, players can jump into a friend's world and accompany him on some of his quests. Of course, if he's feeling less than charitable, he may burn down his pal's house and steal his virtual wife instead. "What interests me is sharing and creating," says Molyneux. "There are a wide variety of cooperative experiences that developers are only now beginning to stumble upon."



The More the Merrier

by Scott Jones

Thousands of years ago one caveman said to another, "Og throw rock farther than I." And boom, just like that, multiplayer gaming was born.

Since then, apart from the occasional game of solitaire, contests between people have been the dominant form of play on the planet. That is, until we invented the video game, which began a very odd chapter in the history of play; absurd though it seems, during this period large numbers of people opted to play games with computers instead of their girlfriends. Some early video-game experiences (*Pong*, say) were social, but over the past 30 years



More traditional multiplayer experiences are evolving as well. Sony's upcoming *Resistance 2* (PS3) features cooperative play across the entire game for up to eight players at once. (Most co-op modes support two players; occasional exceptions like *Halo 3* offer four-player co-op.) The upcoming zombie-killing adventure *Left 4 Dead* (360, PC) is one of an increasing number of games in which cooperative play isn't a tweak or an afterthought but the game's entire point. Combative multiplayer modes are also being supersized in *Resistance 2*, which tops out at a whopping 60 people (16 is the current norm).

Social Engagement

by Damon Brown

Gaming was once a way to be social, but these days being social is an excuse to play games. Which is to say MySpace and Facebook are quickly taking over as some of the most popular online destinations for those looking to compete with their friends. Fast, friendly and fun, social networks are an ideal place for gaming to take root.

"Nearly half our top 25 applications are games," says Gareth Davis, Facebook's platform program manager. The number one game on Facebook, *Texas Hold 'Em Poker*, has 4.2 million active monthly users, and the rest of the top five (listed at right) bring the total, with overlap, to more than 14 million players a month.

The win for game makers is obvious: The word-of-mouth factor so key to any game's success is already baked into the social-networking experience. You like *World Conquest*? No need to recruit your friends: They're already on Facebook, there are no compatibility issues or system requirements, and did we mention it's all free? This year's legal skirmish that led to a Hasbro lawsuit against and the subsequent shutdown of *Scrabulous* (an upstart Scrabble clone) shows just how important this space is becoming. Investments by big dogs such as Electronic Arts mean it will only get bigger. We just hope everyone can learn to play nice.

Playboy's Picks

1. **Texas Hold 'Em Poker** Facebook's most popular app may not be a surprise, but it is a delight.
2. **Word Twist** An endless game of Boggle with an endless supply of players. How do you spell *time sink*?
3. **Mob Wars** Recruit goons, do hits and rise through the ranks in this virtual exercise in loyalty and backstabbing.
4. **World Conquest** What's better than hanging out with your college buddies? Kicking their ass in this *Risk* clone.
5. **Scramble** One part word hunt, one part crossword puzzle. Add a timer and you have the makings of an addiction.



You want more? Sony's recently announced *Massive Action Game* (tentative title) promises to raise that number to 256 concurrent players. (They'll keep it personal by organizing players into eight-man squads.)

But you don't need the Internet to have a good time. The Wii's popularity shows the game console is well on its way to becoming the pool table of the 21st century. Ultracausal games like *You're in the Movies* (360) are leading the charge for in-person multiplayer. This adorably hokey and frightfully clever set of minigames generates faux B-movie trailers based on you and your friends acting goofy. Trust us,

you'll play it over the holidays, you will enjoy yourself—and you will never admit it happened.

Yet no game puts more people into hot, sweaty rooms and keeps them there longer than *Rock Band* (360, PS3, Wii). *Rock Band 2* came out recently, along with optional smoke machines and lighting setups that sync with the music.

It's becoming clear the games that will be played (and replayed) won't necessarily be the ones with the most insane graphics or advanced AI. Rather, it's a question of the quality of the connection they create between players. Og and Ig would be proud.



Resistance 2

With its 60-person multiplayer battles and eight-player co-op mode, this is what a killer party looks like nowadays. Pass the ammo, someone.

Citizen Game

by Scott Stein

O riginally, the games industry was the domain of the one-man rock star, the genius who did everything himself. By contrast, the teams that make today's games regularly top 100 people. Now, however, driven by cheap online distribution and a large, willing consumer base, the one-man rock star is back, reborn as the indie game maker.

"Right now the mainstream industry is lather, rinse, repeat," says Sony's Rusty Buchert, the man responsible for signing critics' darlings *Everyday Shooter*, *PixelJunk Eden* and *fOwer* to the PlayStation Network. "We're going to find the next Warren Spector, Shigeru Miyamoto and Will Wright in the indie

game guys. They can take those risks."

Independent games have existed on PCs for decades, but in 2005 *Geometry Wars* (360) kicked off the revolution on consoles. Its success inspired a legion of bedroom coders. "Geometry Wars showed you could make a living making games on this scale," says Jenova Chen, the man behind the arty game *fOwer*, in which you play the wind in a flower's dream. This year's explosion in both the quality and quantity of indie games on consoles is stunning, from oddball strategy title *Fat Princess* to emo platformer *Braid* to the splatterhouse kung-fu homage of *The Dishwasher*. Might talent finally triumph over marketing? A gamer can dream, can't he?



Geometry Wars

If independent video games have a *Reservoir Dogs*, it's *Geometry Wars*, a stripped-down masterpiece of reflex, adrenaline and pure guts.

fOwer

Experimental meets experiential in this dreamiest of art-house games. Playing is believing.



Coming Attractions

Every game we've mentioned thus far in this story is worth your time and money. But we're talking about an industry that is set to do \$21 billion in business in 2008. As you may imagine, there are a few more worthy games coming out this fall (and we mean besides *Barbie Horse Adventures*). For your perusal, we've provided 12 stone killers guaranteed to make the giant flat-screen down at Best Buy that much harder to resist. Here's to yet another best year ever for video games. (Hey, that makes 30 in a row!)



Call of Duty: World at War

You haven't done World War II until you've done it with a flamethrower in the Pacific theater. (360, PC, PS3, Wii)

Blitz: The League II

No NFL license means a lot more realism (and surrealism). From juicing to ruptured testes, it's all here. (360, PS3)



Dead Space

Deep-space horror with "strategic dismemberment" and a story by comics legend Warren Ellis? Sequel, please. Now. (360, PC, PS3)

Afro Samurai

Just over-the-top enough, the game adaptation of Sam Jackson's cartoon is a satisfyingly violent anime bloodbath. (360, PC)



Fallout 3

Getting lost in a postapocalyptic Washington, D.C. wasteland is nuke-level fun. Potential game of the year. (360, PC, PS3)

Mirror's Edge

In a future in which all communications are monitored, fleet-footed couriers keep freedom alive. Feeling agile? (360, PC, PS3)

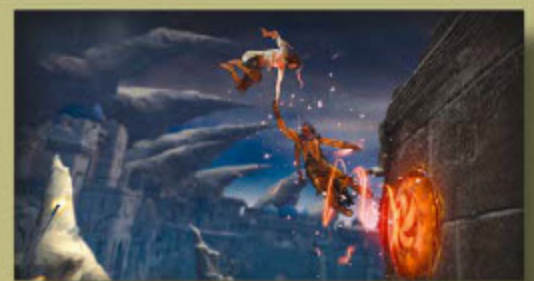


Far Cry 2

This savage tale of mercenaries in the African savanna combines physics and gunplay for maximum carnage. (360, PC, PS3)

Prince of Persia

Painting-style graphics make this second restart of the series feel brand-new. No emo rock, no dark prince, just straight-up epic acrobatic adventure. (360, PC, PS3)



Golden Axe: Beast Rider

The arcade classic is back and tuned for today's consoles, featuring one of the hottest heroines ever put to pixel. (360, PS3)

Tomb Raider: Underworld

Lara's newest adventure features guns, treasure and her redesigned high-definition rear end. (360, PC, PS3, Wii)



✓ **Gears of War 2** Subtle tweaks and improved multiplayer are great, but the best part of this gritty shooter is what hasn't changed at all. (360)

✓ **Tom Clancy's Endwar** This real-time strategy game uses voice recognition to move your troops around a near-future battlefield. (360, PC, PS3)





“Remember how we used to blend in with the snow?”



Miss November is positioned to rock your world

Something about Grace Kim really strikes a chord with us, and it's not just the way she handles her instrument. When we met the guitar goddess during her shoot at Playboy Studio West, her enthusiasm about life was infectious. "I've always been a rebel," says Grace. "I play a mean game of *Guitar Hero*, and I'm willing to challenge anybody. I must warn you I'm a very sore loser—at any game." Creative expression is vital to Miss November—"I feel I can express myself better through writing. It's a pure, passionate love of mine"—and music and art are in her genes. Her mom is a calligrapher, her dad a violinist and her brother a pianist and guitarist. An L.A. girl born and raised, Grace has made three visits to South Korea, from which her family emigrated in 1979. "I have relatives in Seoul, and I went to Korean school to learn to read and write the language."

Miss November earned a degree in English from UCLA and worked

AMAZING GRACE



as a paralegal and a teacher before parlaying her addiction to *Guitar Hero* into a job with Activision, publisher of the video game series. In a bid to win an invitation to a Mansion party, Grace sent her photo to Playboy. "The next day the magazine asked me if I wanted to try out to be a Playmate," she says. "I'm still reeling—it's such an honor and a compliment."

At 29 Grace has been affectionately dubbed the "den mother" by other Playmates, and with that maturity and perspective she has begun writing a book of dating tips aimed at L.A. guys. "It's kind of like a Tom Leykis one-on-one from a girl's point of view," she says. "I like a well-rounded sense of humor in a man, with goofiness, sarcasm and wit all combined. I also love shaved heads—maybe it's a fetish." Grace says her ideal date is a round of *Guitar Hero* or *Rock Band* with perks. "The incentives are pretty good," she says, laughing. We're so game.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
STEPHEN WAYDA





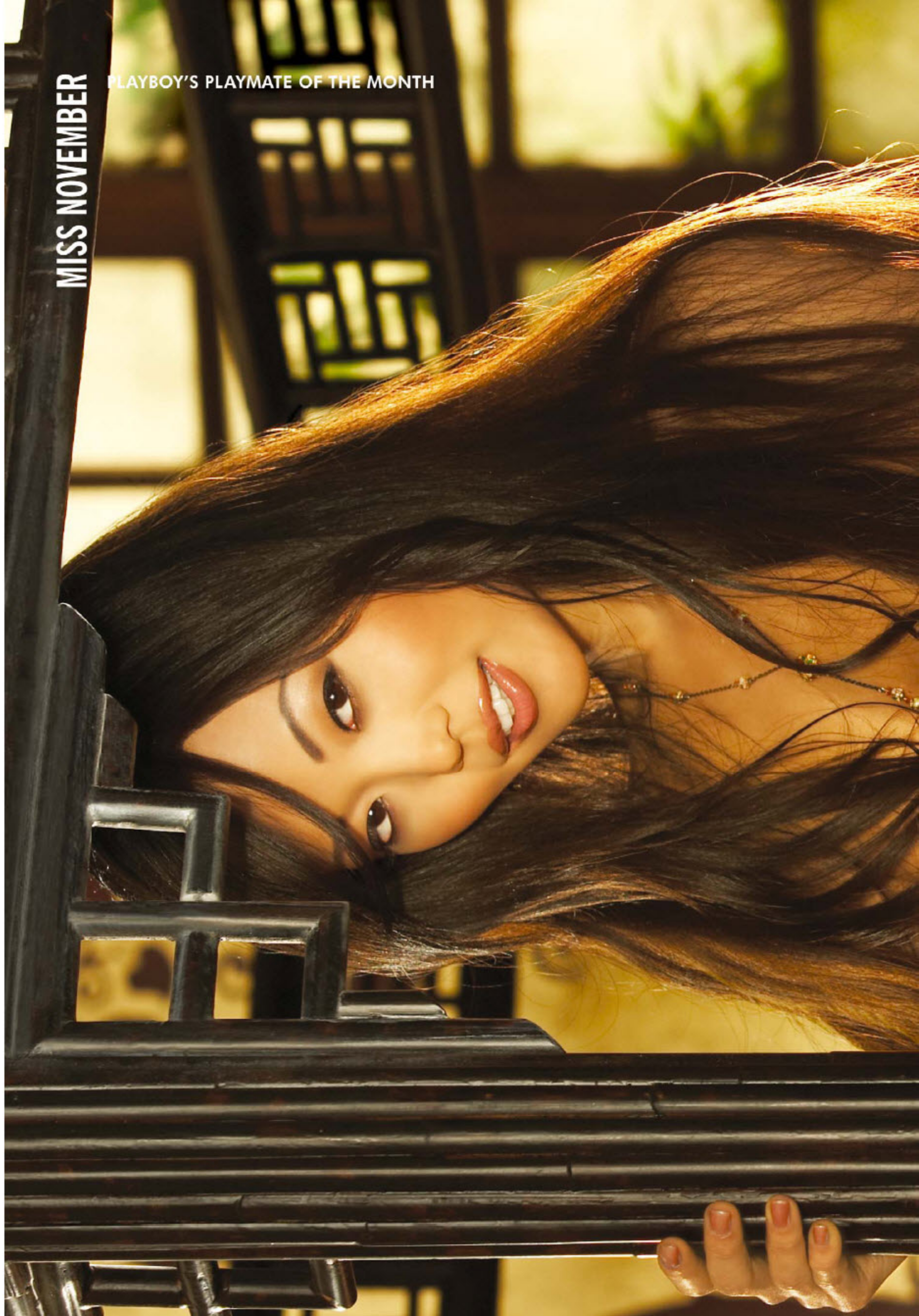






MISS NOVEMBER

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH



PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Grace Kim

BUST: 34C WAIST: 21 HIPS: 32

HEIGHT: 5'6" WEIGHT: 108

BIRTH DATE: 8/20/79 BIRTHPLACE: Los Angeles, CA

AMBITIONS: Continue my career as a Playmate, have my book published and be happy and healthy.

TURN-ONS: Intelligence, an excellent sense of humor (goofy, sarcastic and witty), ambition, creativity and shaved heads.

TURNOFFS: Poor tippers (pet peeve!), poseurs, pessimists, people who sweat the small stuff, fake cockiness and loud/obnoxious guys.

SOMEONE I LOOK UP TO AND WHY: My mom. She is the strongest and most giving woman I have ever known.

MY SIX FAVORITE VIDEO GAMES EVER: Rock Band, Pac-Man, Halo 3, Super Smash Bros., Madden NFL 08, Mario Kart Wii.

A BAND I'D LOVE TO JAM WITH: LED ZEPPELIN, hands down!

MY FAVORITE OUTDOOR ACTIVITY: Snowboarding.

A TYPICAL THANKSGIVING WITH MY FAMILY: An insanely delicious feast of both cultures: American (turkey, stuffing, etc.) and Korean ("kalbi" beef ribs, "kimchi" spicy pickled radish, etc.).



Second grade. So innocent back then.



Junior in high school.



Malibu shot.



Grace Kim

MISS NOVEMBER

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH



Grace Kim

PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

Why was Bill Clinton so upset during the primary season?

If he had known 10 years ago how good Hillary would be at blowing the presidency, he wouldn't have needed Monica.

What do you call a woman who can suck a golf ball through a garden hose?

Darling.

Miss, would you help me?" a customer at a department store asked a female clerk. "I would like to purchase a birthday gift for my brother. What do you suggest for a man who has everything?"

The clerk offered, "My phone number?"



A suspected jihadist was being grilled at Guantánamo Bay. "Honest, officer," he said, "I'm not a suicide bomber!"

"We heard what you said," the officer replied. "We've got you on tape."

"I didn't say I wanted to blow myself up so I could have sex with 72 virgins," the suspect said. "All I said was I'm dying to get laid."

Why did the lesbian cut short her trip to China?

She missed her native tongue.

What do your doctor and your girlfriend have in common?

They're the best people to call when your erection won't go away.

Last August an accountant at Wal-Mart saw that all the stores in Alabama sold out of ammunition in one day. When he called the regional manager to ask what happened, the guy said, "Well, the thinking down here is that Russia can invade Georgia all it wants, but they sure as heck ain't doin' it to Alabama."

A man needs a mistress just to break the monogamy.

What's the major difference between wives and husbands who are trying to have children?

Wives want to videotape the birth of their child. Husbands want to tape the conception.

A priest lecturing a teenage boy told him, "The Golden Rule is, Love thy neighbor as thyself."

"Huh?" the boy said. "Am I supposed to jerk him off, too?"

A teenager was sitting on a park bench, munching on one candy bar after another. After the sixth, a man on the bench across from him said, "Son, you know eating all that candy isn't good for you. It will give you acne, rot your teeth and make you fat."

"You know," the boy replied, "my grandfather lived to be 103 years old."

"Did your grandfather eat six candy bars in one sitting?" the old man asked.

"No," the boy said, "he minded his own fucking business."

Sage advice: Never look down on someone unless they're going down on you.

A couple met at a golf tournament and fell in love. They were discussing how they would continue the relationship after their vacations were over.

"It's only fair to warn you," the man said. "I'm a golf nut. I live, eat, sleep and breathe golf."

"Well, since you're being honest, so will I," the woman said. "I'm a hooker."

"I see," the man said. "It's probably because you're not keeping your wrists straight when you hit the ball."

Why do they say eating yogurt and oysters will improve your sex life?

Because if you'll eat that stuff, you'll eat anything.



A man and his wife were having sex. Fifteen minutes, 30 minutes and then 45 minutes passed. Sweat was pouring off both of them when the wife finally looked up and said, "What's the matter, honey? Can't you think of anyone else either?"

What do you get when you cross an agnostic, an insomniac and a dyslexic?

Someone who stays up all night wondering if there is a dog.

Women think they're so clever because they can fake an orgasm for the sake of a relationship, but men can fake a whole relationship for the sake of an orgasm.

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.



"Oh my goodness! I forgot to serve the pumpkin pie!"



WROTH

BY J. ROBERT LENNON

SOME GUYS MIGHT COMPLAIN
THEIR WIVES ARE MONSTERS
BUT NO + CARL: IT
+ TURNS HIM ON



Carl Blunt was fully aware when he married her that Lurene was an unhappy woman, and he'd had no illusions about the possibility of her ever changing. She had told him as much when they met: "I'm not happy," she'd said on their second date, a dinner followed by a walk along the lake, "and I'm never going to be." His response at the time had been a silent nod of understanding. Later she would tell him that this had clinched her conviction that he was the one; he was the only man she'd ever met who hadn't tried to talk her out of it. He still hadn't. His job was to acknowledge her unhappiness, accept it and attempt, in ways that did not question her right to it, to comfort her in its throes. *(continued on page 132)*





ELI'S SEXY TALK-SHOW QUEEN MOUTHS OFF ABOUT HER WORST GUEST, TELLS HOW TABLOIDS POLLUTE HER MIND, EXPLAINS WHY SHE SAYS "COSLOPUS" INSTEAD OF "VAGINA" AND REVEALS THE UGLY SIDE OF SEX WITH A REDHEAD

Q1

PLAYBOY: Judging by the title of your latest book—*Are You There, Vodka? It's Me, Chelsea*—we know your liquor of choice. Why is vodka a superior form of alcohol?

HANDLER: Vodka is great because it doesn't have an odor. If you drink rum or tequila, your breath will have a very distinct alcohol smell. I was looking for something a little more subtle because I don't like to smell like a prostitute in the morning. Not that I'm worried about offending anybody. I'm usually alone when I wake up. You can't fit two people into a bathtub. Yeah, that's right, I'm a class act all the way. Klassy with a capital k.

Q2

PLAYBOY: You sound like our kind of girl.

HANDLER: I drink often and I drink frequently, but I don't really get drunk. I'm kind of immune to it. As long as you can handle your alcohol, you should be allowed to drink whatever you want, as often as you want. If you drink a certain amount and automatically turn into a loud, obnoxious loser, maybe you should stop. Because that's not attractive.

Q3

PLAYBOY: Your talk show, *Chelsea Lately*, is devoted to making fun of celebrities. Do you really care that much about Hollywood, or is it just an act?

HANDLER: It isn't natural at all for me. Sometimes it's fun, and sometimes it's overkill. But because of *Chelsea Lately* I have to pollute my mind with that crap. It's one thing to thumb through *Us Weekly* while you're getting a manicure—that's just a guilty pleasure—but it's a whole different ball game when you come to your office every morning and all these tabloid magazines are piled on your desk, and it's your job to read them. I just went on vacation and was reading Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, and I said to my boyfriend, "I think my mind is completely blown from doing the show. I just had to reread the last paragraph four times. I may be getting stupider." And he said, "I'm sure you are, because you just used the word *stupider*."

Q4

PLAYBOY: If every young Hollywood celebrity sobered up, stopped going to night-

clubs and started wearing panties, would you be out of work?

HANDLER: I think I'd be okay. Even if Hollywood disappeared tomorrow, it's not as if the human race would become better behaved. If anything, we're devolving as a society and a culture. As long as people keep acting like people and keep doing really, really idiotic things, I'll always have job security.

Q5

PLAYBOY: You once said all celebrities need to be slapped. Do you include yourself in that lineup?

HANDLER: I didn't mean all celebrities need to be slapped, just certain celebrities. Many people working in this industry are, for one reason or another, asking for it. But there are also plenty of respectable, hardworking actors who are just doing their job. I'll never make fun of Amy Adams, for instance, or Gwyneth Paltrow. They just do what they do and aren't making a spectacle of themselves. It's not like I'm going to ridicule somebody just because they're famous and I have a TV show and I need somebody (continued on page 130)



THE GREAT AMERICAN WEEKEND

CUT THE CORD TO THE OFFICE AND TRY ON SOMETHING NEW: A CASUAL COLLECTION FROM AMERICAN BRANDS YOU GREW UP WITH (AND A FEW YOU DIDN'T)

FASHION BY JOSEPH DE ACETIS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES CAULFIELD

HATS AND GLOVES

Face the fall with fleece-lined hats and mittens that retract to reveal fingerless gloves. Left to right: Hat (\$25), gloves (\$25) and hat (\$25) are COLUMBIA SPORTSWEAR COMPANY.

DOWN VEST

Nothing so light warms you as much as down. Don't think you'll need it? Take it anyway—the puffiest vest can be rolled and stuffed into a bag. Shirt (\$65) and vest (\$118) are J. CREW.

LEATHER JACKET

Just because it's a bomber jacket doesn't mean it can't be a little soft. Bonus points for the cotton-jersey lining. Jacket (\$695), shirt (\$125) and pants (\$185) are CONVERSE BY JOHN VARVATOS.

LEATHER WEEKEND BAG

Sure, your rolling luggage has followed you through endless airport terminals, but a relaxed weekend trip calls for a relaxed carryall. Leather duffel (\$795) is MULHOLLAND.

A weekend away lets you shed the suit and put shoe trees in your wingtips. Before you hit the road, however, remember this: The right clothes matter as much as the GPS. With help from some classic brands, we equip you with fresh trends, modern revivals and old reliables that will impress the woman riding shotgun.

→ FOR MORE FASHION VISIT PLAYBOY.COM/STYLE → WHERE AND HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 133.





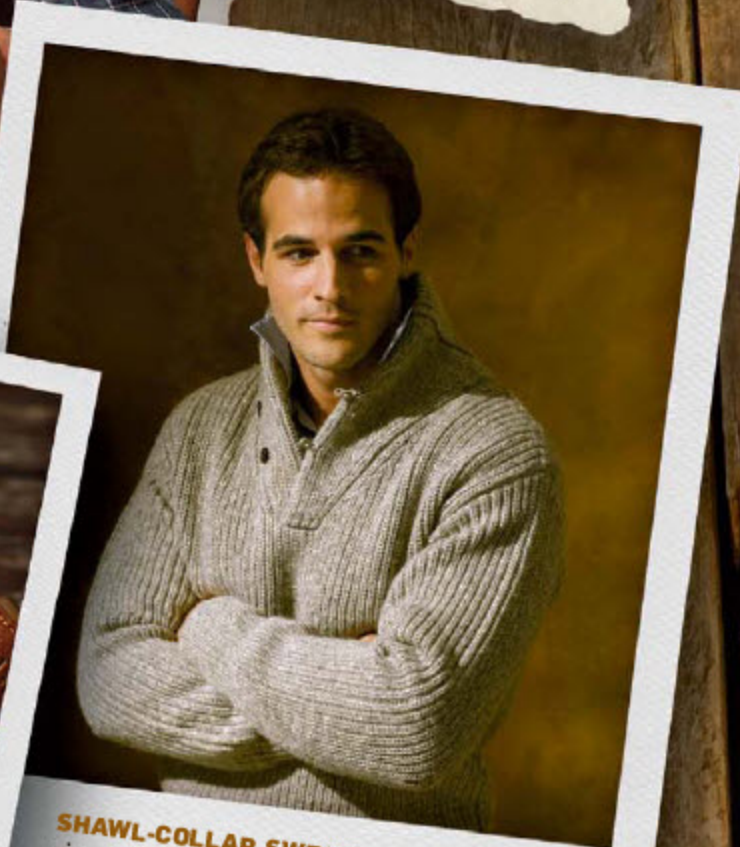
LIGHTWEIGHT JACKET This waterproof jacket has sealed seams to block biting winds. Jacket (\$200) is WOOLRICH. Shirt (\$27) is CALVIN KLEIN STEEL.



COLOGNES Citrus and fresh woody notes make for strong, brisk scents. Left to right: IZOD (\$55), HILFIGER (\$59) and AZZARO CHROME (\$62).



DIGITAL WATCH A chunky digital is not for the office, but on Sunday morning a large time display can be nice. Watches (\$325) are QUADTEC.



SHAWL-COLLAR SWEATER This weighty wool piece is a classy alternative to the standard crewneck. Shirt (\$148) and sweater (\$298) are RELWEN.



BOOTS These classic American boots are durable and comfortable and come in colors other than construction-worker yellow. Boots (\$150) are TIMBERLAND.

DESIGNER: BAND OF OUTSIDERS



SCOTT STERNBERG

What began as a shirt-and-tie company in 2004 has grown into one of America's most admired menswear lines. Now, Band of Outsiders' founder and designer is taking high fashion into the wild. Scott Sternberg, a former Hollywood agent with no formal design training, has speckled his fall collection with trapping hats and cargo pockets, bringing rustic charm to a high-end brand. The clothing evokes a sense of nostalgia while breathing new life into traditional garments. "My suits are cut rather slim and narrow, which helps make them feel more modern and less professorial," he says. What is Sternberg's idea of a great American weekend? "A good balance of outdoor activity and indoor hibernation, exercise and laziness, cleansing and debauchery."

RYAN M.'S JACKET (\$200) IS G-STAR. HIS SHIRT (\$65) IS APOLIS ACTIVISM. HIS JEANS (\$200) ARE WESC.

RYAN C.'S VEST (\$182) IS J. LINDBERG. HIS SHIRT (\$115) IS MODERN AMUSEMENT. HIS T-SHIRT (\$29) IS PLAYBOY. HIS PANTS (\$198) ARE JUICY COUTURE.

TIM'S JACKET (\$800) IS DIESEL BLACK GOLD. HIS SHIRT (\$120) IS GSUS INDUSTRIES. HIS JEANS (\$68) ARE KILL CITY. HIS SHOES (\$125) ARE CONVERSE BY JOHN VARVATOS.

SEAN'S JACKET (\$1,679) IS GOSA NOSTRA BY JEFFREY SEBELIA. HIS SHIRT (\$29) IS PLAYBOY. HIS JEANS (\$98) ARE HILFIGER DENIM. HIS SNEAKERS (\$92) ARE NIKE.

CHRIS'S SHIRT (\$85) IS SALVOR PROJECTS. HIS JEANS (\$200) ARE J. LINDBERG. HIS WRISTBAND (\$55) IS JUICY COUTURE.

THE WHITE TIE AFFAIR

THIS CHICAGO BAND ON THE RISE MAKES A QUICK TOUR STOP AT ONE OF THE HOTTEST SPOTS IN HOLLYWOOD

SEAN'S JACKET (\$800) IS DIESEL BLACK GOLD. HIS SHIRT (\$175) IS APRIL77. HIS PANTS (\$190) ARE J. LINDBERG. HIS SHOES (\$65) ARE VANS VAULT.

CHRIS'S VEST (\$330) IS KRIS VAN ASSCHE. HIS SHIRT (\$780) IS VERSACE. HIS JEANS (\$200) ARE J. LINDBERG.

TIM'S JACKET (\$575) IS J. LINDBERG. HIS SHIRT (\$780) IS VERSACE. HIS PANTS (\$228) ARE ORTHODOX. HIS SHOES (\$110) ARE CONVERSE BY JOHN VARVATOS.

RYAN M.'S JACKET (\$465), SHIRT (\$140) AND BOW TIE (\$65) ARE J. LINDBERG. HIS PANTS (\$198) ARE NEIL BARRETT. HIS SHOES (\$60) ARE VANS.

RYAN C.'S JACKET (\$532) IS J. LINDBERG. HIS SHIRT (\$45) IS GUCCI. HIS PANTS (\$240) ARE JUICY COUTURE. HIS TIE IS VINTAGE. HIS SHOES (\$80) ARE PF FLYERS.

While golden-brown California girls lounge by poolside cabanas, the famous and almost famous gather at a dimly lit bar tucked neatly into the corner of an ornate Spanish-style lobby. So goes another night at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel. A 2005 renovation led to the emergence of two hot spots—Teddy's and Tropicana—and catapulted this L.A. landmark back to the status it enjoyed when Ernest Hemingway and Marilyn Monroe were regulars. The hotel recently played host to another group of stylish artists, the White Tie Affair. Joining her fellow Epic Records staffers was *The Hills'* Audrina Patridge and a slew of celebs to watch the band perform tracks off its Epic debut, *Walk This Way*. Frontman Chris Wallace was happy to showcase the group's style at such a legendary venue. "Our look is evolving," he says. "Now it's lots of vests and button-up shirts and once in a while a tie. It's like an updated spin on classic Duran Duran."



THE HARD FACTS

THE HUMAN PENIS IS ONE OF THE MARVELS OF THE ANIMAL KINGDOM—FLEXIBLE, STRONG AND SUPERSIZED, AS APES GO. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THERE FOR YOU, READY TO PERFORM AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE. BUT HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE JUNIOR SENATOR?

BY CHIP ROWE

During the boom years of the late 1990s Michael Consoli and his 24-year-old nephew, Vincent Passafiume, hit on an idea. A big idea. A big-penis idea. They recruited Consoli's 72-year-old mother and Passafiume's girlfriend to help out, formed a company called C.P. Direct, copied ingredients from websites selling herbal penis-enlargement pills and found a mixologist to pour the concoction into capsules for about four cents apiece. They filled each bottle with a month's supply—60 pills—and created Longitude, which they guaranteed would lengthen a penis by up to three inches.

Of course the pills did no such thing. The clinical research by a "former Viagra pharmacist" that supposedly proved Longitude's effectiveness did not exist. But that hardly mattered. Soon C.P. Direct was grossing \$8 million a month, \$2 million of which it spent to run ads on Howard Stern's radio show and in magazines such as *GQ*, *Esquire*, *Men's Fitness*, *Maxim* and *Penthouse* (*PLAYBOY* refused them). The campaign enticed hundreds of thousands of men or their partners to pay \$59.95 for a product that cost \$2.65 to manufacture. Consoli and Passafiume kept people on the hook with automatic monthly refills and credit card charges; they would later claim the business grew so quickly they couldn't get phone lines in place to process cancellation and refund requests.

Ultimately this lax attitude toward refunds, rather than the bogus product, caused their scheme to go soft. (The FDA does not regulate herbal supplements unless they are said to prevent or cure disease.) In 2002 the Arizona attorney general charged the partners with fraud and money laundering and seized nearly every asset in their empire. Each man served 90 days in jail. At sentencing, Consoli's lawyer argued that his client had been railroaded, that there had been few,

if any, dissatisfied Longitude customers and that even if there had been, you can't fault anyone for selling hope. "I am reminded of my favorite author, Saul Bellow, who once wrote, 'A great deal of intelligence can be invested in ignorance when the need for illusion is deep,'" he said.

Arizona officials estimate C.P. Direct grossed at least \$77 million over two years; Passafiume, who later pitched a \$97 marketing course called the 12-Month Internet Millionaire before violating his probation and becoming a fugitive, put the figure at \$100 million. In July a federal judge in Ohio ordered the con man behind another enlargement pill, Enzyte, to forfeit \$500 million. Why do you continue to get spam about supplements that can supposedly make you harder, stronger and longer? That's why. The ability of these placebos (and of similar products that continue to be sold online) to bring in so much cash so quickly is testament to the fact that a man is attached to his penis by more than a band of muscle. Simply, it is a visible

to select mates who had thicker, longer and more flexible organs, which allow for a wider variety of positions. "In any generation there will always be some women who favor bigger penises and few or none who favor smaller ones, so a trend toward greater length was established," argues archaeologist Timothy Taylor. (The penis stopped growing, he suggests, when further expansion would have made sex uncomfortable or erections cumbersome.) The notion that horny prehistoric women drew the organ out like snake

charmers "contradicts the view of the penis as a symbol of male domination," says evolutionary psychologist Geoffrey Miller. If men controlled sex as male gorillas do, we wouldn't need to compete for females and could get by with the bare minimum.

Unlike apes, human males and females are relatively close in size, so it's easy to imagine how the penis became a clear sign of masculinity as we lost our thick body hair. (Besides being tiny, a gorilla's penis is concealed under a mat of fur.) It may have grown into a symbol of excess in much the same way as a male peacock's colorful but burdensome plumage: The message is "Check this out, babe. Even though I don't need four extra inches to get you pregnant, I am strong and fit enough to carry them around anyway." Given that the vast majority of modern women insist size is not a priority, physiologist Jared Diamond wonders if early man might have better spent the energy needed to instead create additional brain cells (not that we don't have enough, but who can't use more?).

Even if length is of no special advantage, the odd shape of the penis—with its distinctive acorn cap—may be. One challenging idea is that the coronal ridge connecting the head to the shaft developed to scoop out any sperm deposited very recently by another male. In 2003 evolutionary psychologist Gordon Gallup Jr. designed a creative experiment to test this premise. Using latex dildos, a fake vagina and a mixture of starch and water, he and his students at the University at Albany re-created the act of intercourse in the lab. The team reported that the ridge could scoop out 90 percent of an existing mixture with one thrust; a phallus with no ridge managed only 35 percent. They also noted the importance of depth, as anything less than a three-quarter thrust cleared less than 40 percent of the mixture. Further, they surveyed *(continued on page 124)*

THE PENIS GENIUS

Leonardo da Vinci had a long fascination with the penis, observing its anatomy for the first time in 1493 during the dissection of a hanged criminal who had become erect at the moment of death. Leonardo made a few errors in his notebook sketches, such as depicting two urethras—one for urine and sperm and another for the "vital impulse." But he was far ahead of his time when he proposed that blood, rather than air pressure, creates an erection and when he dismissed the canard introduced by Saint Augustine in the fifth century that the penis represents sin. "A man who is ashamed to show or name the penis is wrong," Leonardo wrote. "Instead of being anxious to hide it, he ought to display it with honor."



and tangible sign of his masculinity and virility and has been since prehistoric man drew on cave walls. "I tell my graduate students, 'Men are their cocks,'" says William Granzig, who trains sex researchers in China and at the American Academy of Clinical Sexologists in Orlando. "The men in class will nod their heads, and the women will ask why. I can only reply, 'It just is.'"

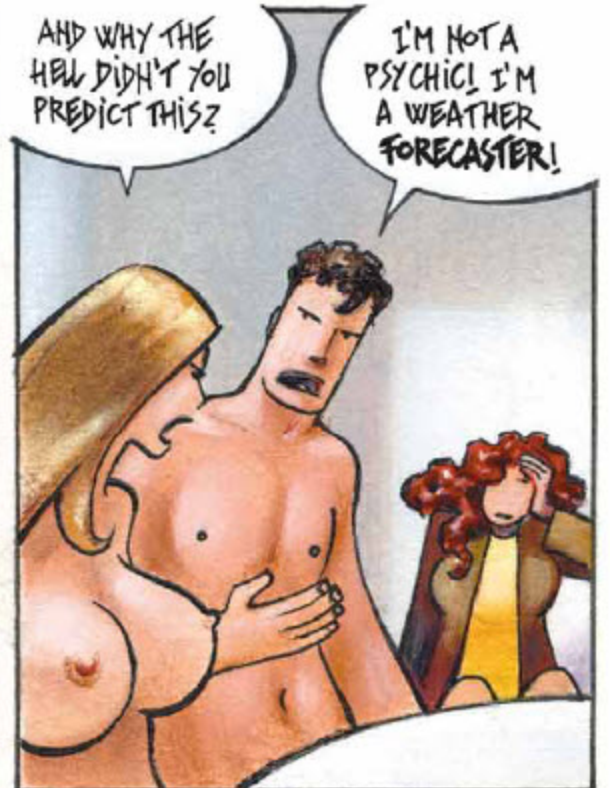
To be told your penis—your manhood—is inadequate, either by a woman or your own demons, is a powerful condemnation. Yet few men can explain exactly what normal is. Most are never taught how their penis functions, what it's made of ("boner" is a misnomer), how it goes from soft to hard and back so quickly or how it manages to propel a column of semen and sperm through a tiny hole at 28 miles an hour. The development of this tubular injection system pushed life from sea to land by allowing for internal fertilization, which keeps the fused sperm and egg in a protected, moist environment. Without the penis, we'd all have gills.

KING OF THE APES

The foremost question biologists have about the human penis is why it's so damn big, at least compared with the pencil dicks of the chimp, gorilla and orangutan, our closest primate cousins. Although a gorilla weighs twice as much as a man, its erection measures only 1.25 inches. By comparison, a five-inch human hard-on is terrific overkill. It sounds like wishful thinking, but some scientists believe we developed oversize penises because early woman's growing love of orgasms led her

The Psychic

I LOVE MAKING LOVE ON A SUNNY DAY.



JUAN IVAREZ • JORGE G



Feel free to fantasize about the UFC's Rachele Leah, but don't even dream of starting a pillow fight

A

lways keep your ears open; you never know when opportunity will knock. One day you're Rachele Leah, ordinary Las Vegas girl studying to become a paramedic and doing some modeling just for fun. You go to a boxing match, and somebody takes your picture. Then somebody else puts it on a website, and then somebody at the UFC sees it and decides that of all the daugh-

ters of Eve now inhabiting planet Earth, you possess the ineffable qualities of the perfect Octagon Girl. He hunts you down. Your reaction to his offer?

"A little hesitant, probably," you admit, "only because I knew I didn't want to be an Octagon Girl forever." Which probably means that despite having taken judo as a youngster, you had never really envisioned your name and the words *mixed martial arts* in the same sentence. But you

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN WAYDA



THE ULTIMATE FIGHT CHICK

"I can't believe I get paid to watch one of the most exciting sports out there, and I have front-row seats," says Rachelle, pictured at right interviewing UFC scrapper Forrest Griffin.

know the sound of opportunity knocking—after all, the UFC was in the process of becoming the hottest story in sports and was developing a program for the Spike network that would be a natural showcase for a telegenic brunette with a killer smile. So you soon find yourself in a halter top and short shorts, strutting around the Octagon, filling the breaks between the bone crushing with your sass and pizzazz. And soon after that, just as you'd hoped, you are





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the host of *UFC All Access*, helping to show the human heart that beats inside these battlers. "Honest to God," you aver, "if you just met most of our guys, you wouldn't guess they were fighters. Some of these guys are teachers or have degrees in business, and we go to their homes and show that they're just totally normal guys."

And so, in the process of showing they're normal, you've become a celebrity. But a fairly laid-back one. "I live in denim," you tell us. "I'm a jeans-and-T-shirt kind of girl, and for the most part, if it's summer in Vegas, I'm a jeans-shorts-and-T-shirt kind of girl. But if I'm going out, I like to dress up. I mean, I'm a girl—I love fashion."

You are also pretty laid-back when it comes to your fans. "Some girls get bitchy, but I'm fine with talking to anyone who wants to talk." Assuming the anyone in question has the right approach. "Being yourself is a good move," you advise us. "I don't like cheesy or overdone anything. I don't like cocky. I like gentlemen—real, genuine people—and you can see that in a person right off the bat."

It's not entirely surprising to hear that the raw energy and excitement of the UFC would appeal to someone who proudly attests, "Any extreme sport is pretty much up my alley." Any extreme sport? Let's see. "I like to dirt-bike. I wakeboard in the summer. I snowboard in the winter. I skateboard—I do it all." And even though the mere talk of it freaks out your manager, you hope to soon add skydiving to your list of accomplishments. "A friend of mine just moved to Australia, and I'm trying to take a trip to visit her in December. It would be so fun and beautiful to make my first jump there. But we'll see." One thing we won't see is your climbing through the ropes like the ladies of World Wrestling Entertainment. "You will never see me fighting. I think the only thing a guy would want to see is my having a pillow fight with a hot girl, and I'm not doing that, either."

Opportunity has continued to knock. First Octagon Girl, then TV host. Most recently you landed a gig working with Anheuser-Busch as a spokesmodel, and you just completed shooting a film called *The Bleeding*, in which you star with three tough guys named Michael Madsen, Vinnie Jones and Armand Assante. From the title, we may assume the movie is a drama about life in the Octagon, but that's not so. "It's a vampire thriller, an action-packed adrenaline rush. It was a great experience, and I'd love to do more. I mean, you never know what's going to happen, but that's the goal."

You're Rachele Leah, you're not yet 25, and your star is rising.

















sexual male

(continued from page 112)

600 college students and found both men and women had the impression that a man thrusts harder and deeper when he suspects a partner of cheating or hasn't slept with her in a while. It would be interesting to know, Gallup says, if a man adjusts his thrusts based on a woman's youth, symmetry or waist-hip ratio, each of which can be interpreted as a sign of fertility. If a man's kids don't all look like him, does that affect how hard he fucks his wife? Do circumcised men thrust harder and deeper because they realize their exposed ridge is more effective as a scoop? And how does a guy keep from clearing out his own deposit? Gallup says two mechanisms appear to prevent this. First, after a man ejaculates, the head of his penis becomes extremely sensitive, making it uncomfortable to continue thrusting. Second, he usually quickly loses his erection. If a man continues to thrust, Gallup suggests, the penetrations will be shallow and less vigorous. He wonders if excessive pumping may explain why some couples have trouble conceiving.

A QUICK TOUR OF THE PENIS

Your penis, like that of nearly every other mammal, is essentially a "big reinforced water balloon," says biologist Diane Kelly of the University of Massachusetts Amherst, who specializes in what scientists call "inflatable intromittent organs." The balloon consists of three spongy rods. As you look down at your erection (go ahead, we'll wait), one is positioned on the upper left and one on the upper right. Known as the corpora cavernosa, they put the hard in hard-on. They are separated by a septum, but it is so permeable that during an erection they essentially merge. The third rod, the corpus spongiosum, lies between and below, extending into the head, or glans. The urethra runs through its center; it stretches from the prostate gland, which can be felt by sticking a finger up your butt (less fun when a doctor does it while searching for cancer), to the opening at the tip of the glans (the meatus). Sperm share this exit with urine. This isn't ideal, but sometimes evolution has to make compromises, such as using your mouth as the entrance for both air and food, which gives you repeated opportunities to choke to death. Semen protects the sperm from receiving a toxic golden shower, and pre-come produced by the Cowper's glands appears to cleanse the urethra before ejaculation.

Reinforcing the balloon are two layers of collagen fibers, the outer stretching lengthwise and the inner wrapping around the shaft. This sleeve, the tunica albuginea, is about the thickness of the cover of this magazine. When smooth muscles inside the penis relax, it rapidly fills with blood, the force of which is distributed evenly by the fibers so your hard-on doesn't bulge in all directions like a pocket full of coins. "An erection is a hydrostatic skeleton,

meaning it needs both a tensile membrane and a pressurized fluid to support itself," Kelly explains. When the penis becomes soft again so it can be stowed, the fibers crimp like drapes. If scar tissue forms on the tunica albuginea, a man's erection may curve, a condition known as Peyronie's disease after the French surgeon who first described it, in 1743. It usually corrects itself without treatment. The tunica albuginea can also fracture during sex, an injury typically accompanied by a loud pop and grotesque swelling.

Although scientists believe all mammals have vascular erections, some, including rodents, polar bears, dogs and seals, get an assist from a penis bone called a baculum, which sounds terrific until you realize it can break. After dissecting the penises of 65 cadavers, a team led by Dr. Geng-Long Hsu of Taiwan Adventist Hospital concluded that a ligament in the glans that keeps it stiff under the buckling pressure of penetration and prevents the urethra from being compressed may be the last remnant of a long-lost human baculum. Without it, he says, the head would resemble "an umbrella without a stick." Other mammals, such as cattle, pigs, dolphins and deer, have fibro-elastic organs, which keep them perpetually semierect. Only humans, equids (e.g., stallions, zebras, donkeys), tarsiers and a few monkeys achieve the grand salute primarily with blood inflation while two muscles lift the erection like volunteers hoisting a Macy's parade balloon. This flexibility is one reason humans are able to achieve more than rear-entry intercourse, although Kelly points out, "to be fair," that other mammals might get just as kinky if they had our range of motion.

HOW BIG IS BIG?

It wasn't until 1939, in experiments with cats, that researchers demonstrated blood is necessary to sustain an erection—it can be induced by manipulating nerves but not maintained. And it wasn't until the 1980s that scientists discovered the key to an erection isn't filling the three sponges—it takes less than two ounces of blood to increase their volume by 300 percent—but keeping them filled. To accomplish this, the pressure created by the rapidly expanding corpus spongiosum presses almost flat the veins that drain the penis. The system is designed to respond quickly to threats. As David Friedman notes in his cultural history of the penis, *A Mind of Its Own*, if you are startled during sex, say by a saber-toothed tiger, the body releases adrenaline to instantly contract the smooth muscles and allow the erectile blood—and you—to sprint away. This same process causes you to rapidly lose your erection after an orgasm.

In 1992 Dr. Jacob Rajfer, a urologist at UCLA, discovered that when nerve endings and blood vessels inside the penis are signaled by touch or erotic thoughts, they produce nitric oxide. The nitric oxide starts a reaction that causes the penile arteries to relax, allowing blood to rush in. However, because nitric oxide breaks down in seconds,

the nerves and blood vessels must continually produce a new supply. "The physiology of an erection is like driving a car," explains Dr. Arthur Burnett, a urologist at Johns Hopkins University. "You can't just turn the key and expect to go anywhere. You also need to hit and hold the accelerator." Some men have trouble staying hard because their penises don't produce enough nitric oxide and the blood drains. Although exercise can make the vessels more efficient (as does laying off the cigarettes), what if a drug could be found to keep more nitric oxide in the erection? As scientists who are now lounging on beaches in the Caribbean discovered, sildenafil, better known as Viagra, does the trick. Because the clitoris works in much the same way—during arousal its two corpora cavernosa and glans fill with blood—Viagra has the same physical effect on women. However, female test subjects who took the drug said they didn't feel turned on. They couldn't see it happening.

When you get an erection, it is lifted into position by a suspensory ligament that connects to your corpora cavernosa. (Hold out your arm as if shaking hands and spread your fingers. The joke is that the pointer represents the angle of your erection in your 20s, the middle finger in your 30s, the ring finger in your 40s and the pinkie in all decades thereafter.) If you are foolish enough to have "enlargement" surgery, this is the ligament the surgeon slices in half to make the penis droop slightly lower when soft. There is no way to lengthen the corpora cavernosa, so the size of the erection, which will never again rise above half mast, remains unchanged. Surveys have found the vast majority of enlarged men are disappointed with the results, especially since their new "monster" cock usually hangs only a third to a half inch lower.

To discourage patients from going under the knife, urologists have in recent years attempted to discover what convinces a man he has a small penis. A few suffer from a mental illness known as body dysmorphic disorder, but most get a skewed view as teenagers after comparing their organs with those of friends or porn stars. In two surveys of patients who asked about surgery, one in Egypt and the other in Italy, urologists found all 159 men had penises of normal size and function. But what is normal? By all accounts, the vast majority of men are between five and seven inches erect. Alfred Kinsey, who collected data mid-century from 2,770 men, reported the average erection, measured along the top from the base to the tip of the glans, to be 6.21 inches. (Only two percent of the men had erections larger than eight inches; at the other extreme are those with micropenis, which is an erection of 2.75 inches or less, although some urologists argue even that can't be considered too small because its owner can still achieve sufficient penetration to reproduce.) One significant flaw in Kinsey's oft-cited data is that he had his subjects report their own measurements, which certainly biased the results upward, so urologists around the



"Is anyone up for quelling an Indian uprising?"

globe have long chased harder numbers. Although the results include Kinsey's self-reporters, a 2007 review of a dozen studies found the average erection to range from 5.5 to 6.3 inches and the average girth at the middle of the shaft to range from 4.72 to 5.12 inches. The largest and most recent study in which doctors or nurses did all the measuring, conducted in 2001 on 3,300 Italian army conscripts, found the average stretched penis (which correlates well to erectile length but requires no waiting) to be just under five inches.

Before you pull out a ruler, keep in mind that none of these measurements tells the full story. In 1999 Dutch scientists reported the results of an experiment in which three couples, including a pair of street acrobats, had intercourse inside a 20-inch-wide MRI scanner. The images revealed that the unseen root of the penis plays a crucial role during penetration, putting the functional length of the average erection at closer to nine inches.

THE UNKINDEST CUT

The penis communicates with the body through two nerves that run its entire length while branching off into the skin and urethra. Drs. Claire Yang and William Bradley of the University of Washington are pioneers in documenting these pathways: One of their investigations, in 1998, involved numbing the penises of 14 volunteers and then poking them with pins. (Where do we sign up?) They discovered the dorsal nerve processes sensations on the shaft and much of the glans, while the perineal nerve, which skims along the urethra, feeds the frenulum, the hypersensitive ridge of skin that connects the foreskin, or prepuce, to the glans. Although it leads the way, the glans is the least sensitive part of the penis, at least to fine touch; it has been compared to the cornea, which can sense when an eyelash is caught under the lid but not its location.

The innervation of the penis is a hot topic in part because for more than a century in

the U.S. a great deal of the organ's tissue has been routinely removed soon after birth. Although many circumcisions are done for cultural reasons (e.g., because of Jewish or Muslim tradition, or so Junior looks like Dad), researchers have discovered a few apparent medical benefits, such as fewer early urinary tract infections, prevention of the rare case of penile cancer and increased protection against HIV. But critics point to less radical defenses against those threats, and today just 56 percent of American newborns are cut on average (the rate is much higher in the Midwest, at 75 percent, than in the West, at 31 percent), compared with nearly 90 percent in the early 1960s. Still, anatomy texts often take the "penis as lollipop" approach, ignoring the foreskin. In the early 1990s, after learning that two of his American grandsons would be circumcised (as a Brit, he is not), pathologist John Taylor of the University of Manitoba decided to read up on what they would be missing. He found little in the medical literature, so he undertook his own investigation, dissecting 22 adult foreskins recovered from autopsies. He was surprised to see under the microscope that the mucous membrane of tissue traditionally thought to be disposable is rich with blood vessels and nerve endings. "It wasn't quite a eureka moment," he says, "but I have since tried to educate intact men about what they have."

Because chimps and bonobo monkeys do not have a glans, the corpora cavernosa and prepuce are the only parts in every primate penis that have survived over 65 million years, a fact that suggests some essential function. "The penis is basically an internal organ in nearly all mammals," says pathologist Christopher Cold, who has confirmed Taylor's findings with hundreds of additional dissections. One of the foreskin's key functions is to provide lubrication during intercourse, with a secretion called smegma, which allows for easier penetration and thrusting (circumcised men must rely on the female to provide lubrication, Cold notes). Taylor,

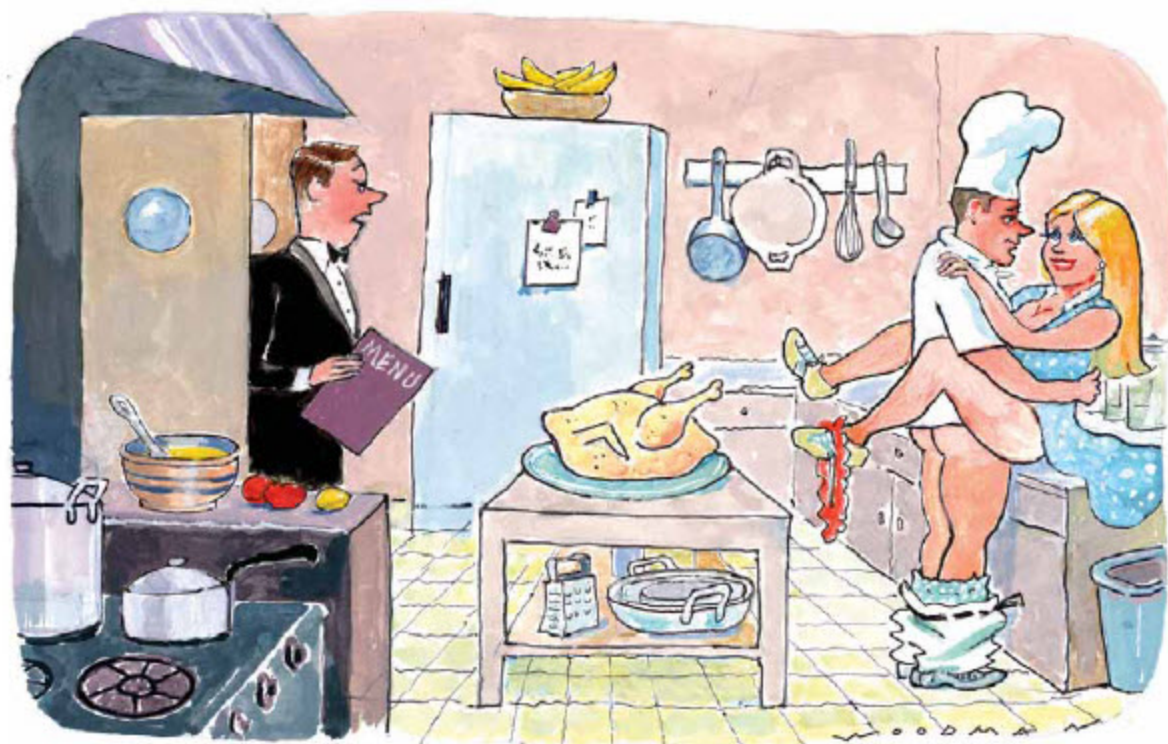
now 76 and retired, proposes that when an accordion-like ridged band of skin under the prepuce stretches during penetration, it triggers a reflex at the base of the penis. This contraction, which is highly erogenous and encourages the man to keep thrusting, compresses the corpora cavernosa, making the penis harder. The contraction also constricts the corpus spongiosum, which "has always been dismissed as having no function besides supporting the urethra," Taylor says. "But it's a large structure for such a trivial role. In fact, when compressed it appears to act as a hydraulic conduit, causing the glans and coronal ridge to expand," increasing surface area and pleasure. "The penis is probably designed to bring on ejaculation quickly once a man reaches full penetration," he says, which happens to be the point when the ridged band is fully extended.

If the prepuce is heavy with fine-touch receptors, do circumcised men feel less pleasure? The science here appears to be of the no-such-thing-as-bad-pizza variety, especially since most men are cut as infants and so never know what they're missing. Taylor and Cold believe a loss of sensation necessarily occurs, given the number of nerve endings removed, although a 2006 survey found that only 20 percent of 255 Korean men who had been circumcised as adults said it had harmed their sex lives, and other studies have found that the glans and shaft, at least, are equally sensitive in cut and uncut men. In 1997 sociologists at the University of Chicago investigated circumcision's effect on behavior by parsing data from a government survey of 1,511 men. They found that circumcised men engage in oral and anal sex and masturbate more often than uncut men do. The difference was greatest for masturbation—47 percent of the circumcised men reported masturbating at least once a month, versus 34 percent of intact men. Are cut men chasing lost pleasure? The sociologists noted the irony that circumcision became popular in the U.S. in the late 19th century because doctors felt it would discourage boys from jerking off. Apparently, it has the opposite effect.

POCKET GUIDE: YOUR BALLS

For the record, no man has ever scratched his balls, only his scrotum, inside of which two slippery, inch-wide testes hang from fibrous bands of muscle. Typically the right testis is five percent larger than the left, though in 85 percent of men the left hangs lower. When you are cold, the tunica dartos, which lies just below the scrotum's thin skin and is responsible for its wrinkly appearance, tightens and pulls the bag up to warmer confines. If your testicles get too hot, the scrotum sweats to release heat. When you are aroused or anxious, a muscle below the dartos called the cremaster tugs the scrotum up like Tarzan pulling Cheetah to safety. You can trigger this reflex by stroking your inner thigh or, better yet, having a woman do it. Some scientists believe testis size is a reflection of how often a primate gets laid, because that determines how much sperm it needs to produce. As monkeys go, our balls are mediums.

If you're trying to protect your genetic legacy, dangling the testes in front of your taint like a pair of clackers doesn't seem like the



"Rene...aren't you supposed to be stuffing the turkey?"

best strategy. But it's certainly cooler down there, and most scientists believe it's easier to produce and/or store healthy sperm at lower than body temperature. Anything that heats your testes higher than about 93 degrees can be trouble; studies have found degraded sperm in men who wear tight underwear, rest a laptop on their knees, carry a cell phone in their pocket or work as long-distance truckers or cabdrivers. Yet if scrota are so important, why do so many mammals not have them? One biologist suggests they evolved in humans to toughen up sperm for their trip through the hostile vagina by making it harder for blood to reach and nourish them. Another wonders if the bouncing sack stimulates the clitoris during rear-entry penetration, increasing the chances that the woman will climax, which may push the sperm along. Others have asked if animals that jump and gallop have scrota because abdominal pressure would otherwise make them leak sperm.

Earlier this year a team of scientists led by biologist Teddy Hsu of Stanford investigated the path of genetic mutations that led to human scrota, a development that allowed us to take over the world by keeping our heat-sensitive sperm at cold-blooded temperatures while we reaped the benefits of a warm-blooded existence (e.g., greater agility, faster reflexes, the ability to survive in the cold). The team found vital clues in the genome of the platypus, which has fur and milk glands but lays eggs like a reptile. This oddball mammal has a gene similar to *Insl3*, which in humans causes the testes to drop into the scrotum shortly before birth. But because the platypus's body temperature is about nine degrees lower than ours, it has no need to cool its testes, and they stay near its kidneys. This suggests the first scrotum appeared sometime after 170 million years ago, when monotremes (e.g., the platypus and spiny anteater) broke off from other mammals. Notably, a version of what became the ball-dropping gene exists in frogs, reptiles and birds, pointing to its origins some 315 million years ago in our common fishy forefather.

PULLING THE TRIGGER

In 1990 Danish researchers attached needle electrodes to the pelvic muscles of seven

men, then asked them to ejaculate into a suspended aluminum pan. The scientists hoped to document the force generated by the bulbocavernosus (BC) muscle, which sends semen spurting out of the urethra. (It's also the muscle you use to squeeze out the last few drops of urine.) A second, smaller muscle, the ischiocavernosus, also fires at climax, but its primary function is to stiffen the erection to prevent injury during thrusting. The independence of these two muscles explains why you can ejaculate without being hard, such as happens during a wet dream.

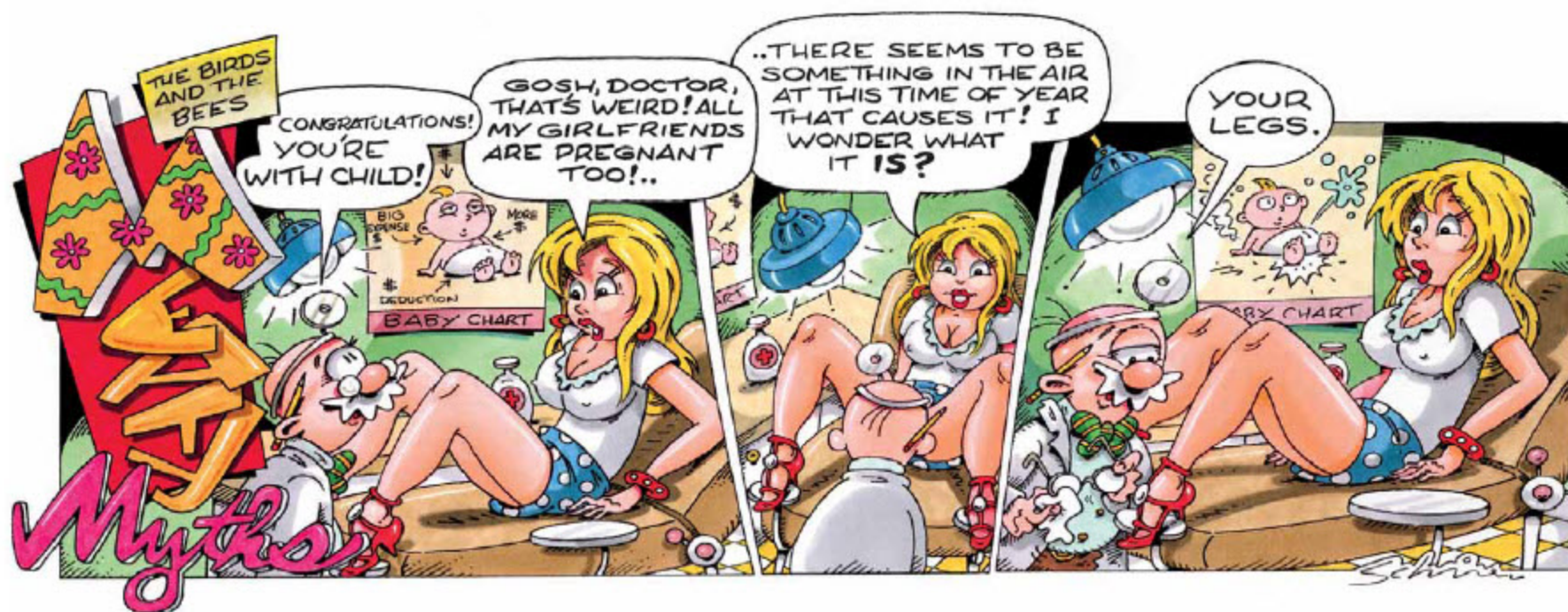
While scientists have learned a great deal over the past decade about ejaculation, they are still at a loss as to what triggers the point of no return. For many years researchers believed the growing volume of semen created a pressure chamber that stretched the base of the urethra enough to fire the BC. But volunteers given drugs to block semen production can still climax, though nothing is expelled. It could be that semen volume and other factors each play a role but that none is essential. For instance, scientists can make the BC contract by applying a vibrator to the glans. Researchers are now looking to the spinal cord for answers. In 2002 neurobiologist Lique Coolen and a colleague discovered that when a bundle of neurons in the lower spinal cord of male rats is deactivated, they still pursue, mount and thrust inside females but cannot ejaculate. (Many go on to work in porn.) Studies of paralyzed men suggest a similar mechanism in humans; if a man is paralyzed above the middle of his rib cage, he can still stroke himself hard and ejaculate (without pleasure, since the brain is not involved). But if the injury is lower, a man can get hard but not ejaculate. If an ejaculation generator exists in the human spinal cord, it probably coordinates erotic sensory input until, at the crescendo, a signal is sent to get the semen-sperm mixture into position, close both the bladder neck and a urethral sphincter to prevent backflow, and trip the BC. At the same time, a burst is sent to the brain, triggering *la petite mort* and a long, happy moan.

RAPID FIRE

Every guy would love to have more control over his ejaculatory reflex, which, according to a four-week study involving 1,587

couples armed with stopwatches, kicks in after an average of 7.3 minutes of hot penis-in-vagina action. But some men blast off much sooner, and sometimes the rocket explodes while being rolled to the launchpad. (One therapist, writing in the book *The Psychophysiology of Sex*, recalls a jumpy patient who would ejaculate while removing his underwear.) While frustrating, this is usually a temporary setback, often brought on by anxiety about pleasing a new partner. However, the anxiety can feed on itself: The more a man frets about coming too quickly or the more pressure he feels to last longer (his aggravated lover may even be yelling at him to hold on), the more agitated he becomes. The psychological underpinnings of many cases of PE are reflected in the results of early trials of dapoxetine, a failed antidepressant being tested as a treatment, in which patients taking placebos doubled their stamina. For cases that don't involve a medical dysfunction, such as an overactive thyroid or a prostate-gland infection, therapists have traditionally prescribed breathing exercises, "cognitive distraction" (e.g., thinking about baseball or your grandmother) or clumsy "stop-start" and "squeeze" techniques.

Sociologist Lawrence Hong wonders if modern male angst about coming too soon is misplaced, if perhaps we descend from a long line of Quick Draw McGraws. After all, once the erection is in position, nature doesn't care how long you take—we're the only creatures on the planet concerned about stamina. Hong, who teaches at Cal State, presented his hypothesis in a 1984 *Journal of Sex Research* paper, "Survival of the Fastest." Based on observations of monkeys, Hong suggests that early men who came quickly were less likely to be pulled off by a rival male (meaning they lived longer and could reproduce more often) or repelled by the female, who is vulnerable during sex and hopes to avoid injury from aggressive mates. With the exceptions of dogs, foxes and wolves (with genital locking), and minks, sables and some rats (without locking), sex in mammals is usually over in seconds. A female chimp in the wild has never been observed talking dirty, giving head or wearing a nurse's outfit, which may explain



why chimp sex lasts about as long as it takes to read this sentence. If PE is an adaptation, Hong says, it should be a concern only when it happens prior to penetration. He writes, "Evolution did not endow males with greater staying power when they first arose from the savannas as an *erectus*, but with better dexterity," so they could fondle and satisfy the female with hands and fingers.

The chief problem in treating rapid ejaculation is that it has never been well-defined. A few researchers suggest counting thrusts—six, eight or 15, take your pick—but most watch the clock. Last year 21 members of the International Society for Sexual Medicine met for three days in Amsterdam to establish a standard. They agreed that the most serious cases of PE involve a man who comes just before or within a minute or two of penetration nearly every

time he has sex, from his first to the most recent. Such cases may be hereditary, says neuropsychiatrist Marcel Waldinger of HagaHospital Leyenburg in the Hague, who has found families in which the father, brothers, sons and grandfather all share the problem. He believes men with lifelong PE may have abnormally low levels of serotonin or problems processing it, which may explain why antidepressants that elevate the hormone, in particular Paxil, often provide relief.

PLEASE COME AGAIN

In 1994 the sex researcher Beverly Whipple received an unusual phone call. A 35-year-old father of four claimed he could climax repeatedly without losing his erection. Most males do not have this ability; once a man ejaculates, his

erection disappears for minutes, hours and sometimes days, depending largely on his age. Masters and Johnson called the time it takes a man to get hard again after an orgasm the refractory period. Women apparently do not have downtime. As physiologist Roy Levin writes, "Using clitoral stimulation with a vibrator, they can have orgasm after orgasm until they weary of them." The economic value of the refractory period is reflected in an observation, in Andy Bellin's *Poker Nation*, by a 29-year-old masseuse who provides the occasional happy ending: "The great thing is that after the guy is finished, he's finished—you know, totally done. He doesn't want to be massaged anymore." Notably, researchers have found that the refractory period can be shortened, at least in rats, by presenting the male with a new female.

Whipple invited the man to her lab at Rutgers University, where on January 15, 1995 she and a colleague, Barry Komisaruk, monitored his blood pressure, heart rate, pupil dilation and ejaculate volume as he masturbated to a video he had compiled of his favorite porn scenes. He achieved his first orgasm (and ejaculated) after stroking himself for 18 minutes. Two minutes later he came again. The man reached orgasm and ejaculated four more times in the next 14 minutes without losing his erection. He said later he stopped only because the lab grew stuffy—at home he usually continued until his balls started to ache. The subject, a swinger who would come to see his ability as divinely inspired and call on modern science to "eradicate" the refractory period, said he had

their study men who ejaculated with each of their rapid-fire orgasms, apparently viewing this as a series of climaxes with unusually short refractory periods, rather than as multiples. It's a distinction most men would not find important.

In the mid-1980s a psychiatrist and a sociologist spoke with 21 multiorgasmic men, most of whom said they had no idea that not every male had the ability, until a stunned partner informed them otherwise. Five of the 21 men said they continued thrusting or stroking to "ride out" the refractory period, while the others had quick, successive orgasms. Most reported having two to nine orgasms at a time. Three men had multiples without ejaculating, two came the first time but not again, and 16 had a variety of pat-

terns. Although the refractory period is thought to lengthen as you get older, about half the men in the sample had their first multiples after the age of 35.

What is their secret? Scientists at the University of Essen in Germany wonder about the role of prolactin, which is known to temper the dopamine high that comes with arousal. Studies have shown elevated levels of the hormone in both men and women for as long as 60 minutes after climax. Peak levels have also been linked to erectile dysfunction. In 2002 the Essen researchers discovered their own repeating rifle—a 25-year-old with abilities similar to those of the Rutgers volunteer. He climaxed with ejaculation in the lab twice in two minutes and a third time 30 minutes later, all

without losing his erection. Nine other men used as a control showed a spike in prolactin after each of two orgasms; the multiorgasmic subject did not. Could prolactin be the key to unleashing man's sensual potential? As a follow-up, another Essen team gave the prescription drug cabergoline to 10 men to lower their prolactin levels, then asked them to masturbate to climax twice within an hour. As the researchers reported in the *Journal of Endocrinology*, the results were telling but not dramatic: The volunteers reported feeling hornier and had a somewhat shorter recovery. This suggests prolactin is just one of a number of factors that regulate the refractory period. The next sex-pill revolution will have to wait.

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been having multiples as long as he could remember and typically each climax was more pleasurable than the last.

Scientists have studied multiple male orgasm since at least 1939, though with different ideas on how to define it. In one study from 1978, researchers interviewed 13 men who said they usually had three to 10 dry orgasms (although one over-achiever claimed 30 in an hour), with the ejaculatory final climax being the most intense. Each man said he had realized one day he could stop thrusting, breathe deeply, concentrate and have an orgasm without emission. The scientists wondered if some men are able to control the usually involuntary muscles that open and shut the sphincters regulating semen flow. Notably, however, they eliminated from



HANDLER

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to joke about. Some people deserve it, and others don't.

Q6

PLAYBOY: As someone who has repeatedly mocked Paris Hilton and Britney Spears, do you have to be extra careful when you're out in public?

HANDLER: Absolutely. If I don't want to put on underwear because I'm wearing a dress and don't want you to see the panty lines, I don't have a choice. I have to wear underwear. If I get caught not wearing underwear, after I've made fun of all these girls who flash their hot pocket for the camera, then I'm the asshole. So at least for the time being I own a lot of panties. If necessary, I'll wear three or four pairs at once just to be safe.

Q7

PLAYBOY: If you were ever to get caught in a public scandal, what do you predict it would be?

HANDLER: I'd guess a sex tape with somebody controversial, like Verne Troyer or Clay Aiken. I'm not making an announcement or anything; I don't know either of them yet, so I can't even hint at when our sex tape will come out. But if I have my druthers, it'll happen very soon.

Q8

PLAYBOY: You've interviewed a lot of C-list celebrities and reality-TV stars. Are you genuinely interested in what they have to say, or is it as grueling to talk with them as it usually appears?

HANDLER: It's mostly grueling. Tila Tequila was probably our worst. I had to talk with her for only a few minutes, but I must have dozed off at least a couple of times. She's as vapid as it gets.

Q9

PLAYBOY: When you were interviewing Lindsay Lohan's dad about camel balls, was there a moment when you thought, I should've gone to college?

HANDLER: No, not really. Not because of his

camel balls, which are a real problem, but because I definitely shouldn't have gone to college. That would have been a waste of everybody's time and money. And by not going to college, I've become so paranoid and insecure that I've overcompensated for it. Sometimes I'll be talking with my family and something far more sophisticated and intelligent than they ever expected from me will just come flying out of my mouth. They'll say, "Wait a minute—how do you know where Ghana is?" I'll be like, "Because I'm paranoid that somebody would ask me and I wouldn't have an answer." That's how my brain works. I don't want to look dumb, so I'm ready for anything.

Q10

PLAYBOY: In your books and stand-up, you portray yourself as a goofy screw-up. Are you the most embarrassing one in your family?

HANDLER: Probably. But my parents gave me a run for my money. My father is a used-car dealer who rarely sells the cars he buys. So they would sit in our driveway for years at a time, next to piles of old car batteries and flat tires. He'd say, "Oh, these are great cars." I'd tell him, "Dad, there are no windshield wipers, and the passenger-side door doesn't open. I'm not letting you pick me up from Hebrew school when I have to climb over you." He was the perfect role model of what not to do as a parent.

Q11

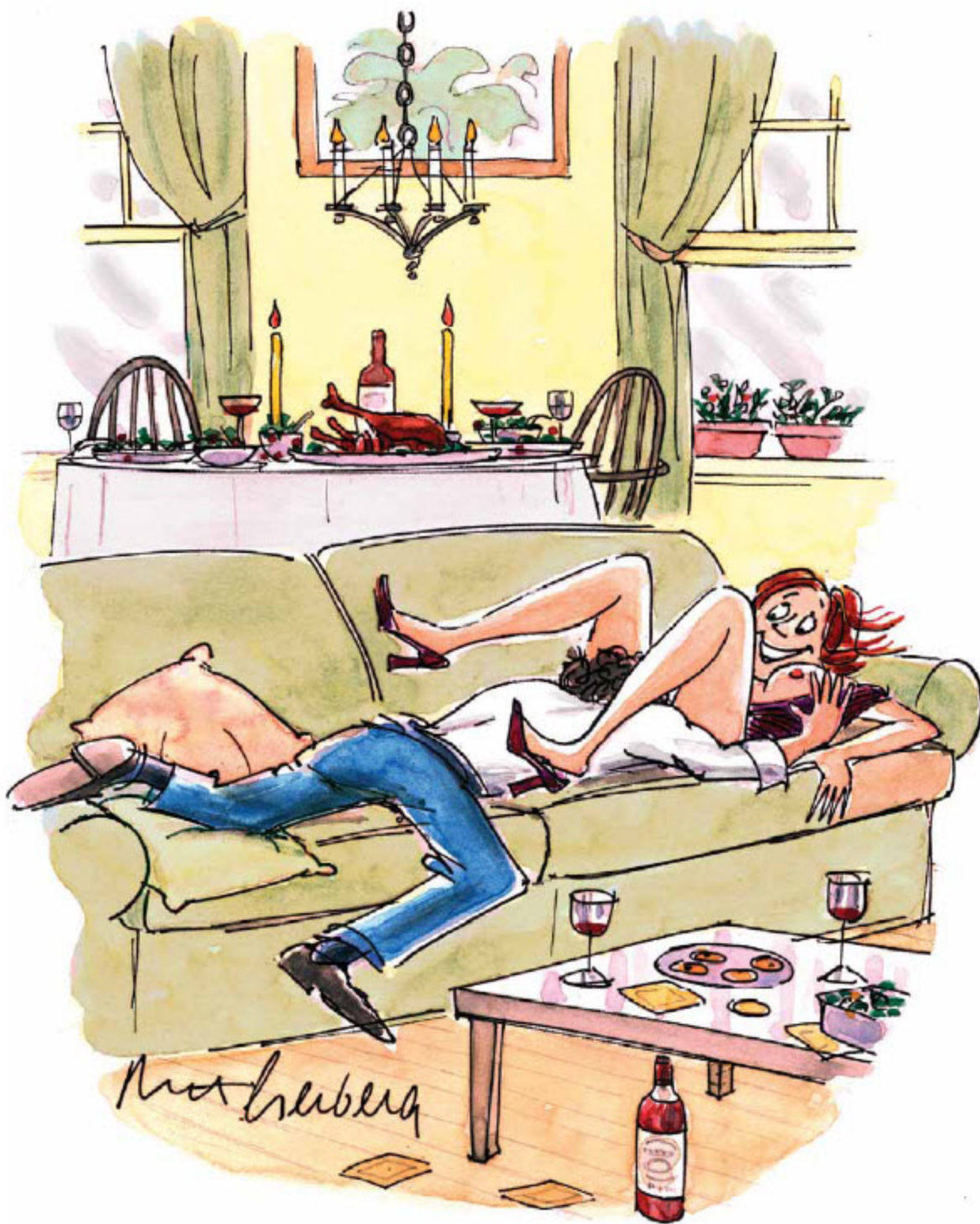
PLAYBOY: One of your first breaks as a comic was a starring role on the hidden-camera show *Girls Behaving Badly*. Do you miss playing pranks on innocent people?

HANDLER: Oh, I still play pranks. They're just not filmed anymore. Right now I have some of the *Chelsea Lately* writers believing I was offered the part of Meryl Streep's daughter in the *Challenger* movie, a dark comedy about the space shuttle that went down in 1986. Meryl plays Christa McAuliffe in heaven and I'm her daughter, and it's a comedy. I don't know how to break it to them that the movie doesn't exist. I kind of thought they'd figure it out on their own. I mean, come on, a comedy about the space shuttle *Challenger*? Really?

Q12

PLAYBOY: Sometimes when you do a monologue on *Chelsea Lately* you have a peculiar physical stance—your fists on your hips and your elbows pointed out—that looks a bit like a Wonder Woman pose. Is that intentional?

HANDLER: It's entirely intentional. I just assume I'm a superhero, and I think most people are starting to come around. One time when Jay Leno gave me a ride in his plane—because he has his own plane and I don't—I challenged him to an arm-wrestling contest, and I won. Then he said, "Let's do that again, because there's no way you beat me." So I arm wrestled him for a second time, and I won again. Then he realized I am She-Ra, Princess of Power. Don't bother confirming any of that with Jay. I doubt he would admit to it since I made the whole thing up and he doesn't even know about it.



"Charlie! Save some room for the pumpkin pie!"

Q13

PLAYBOY: Is it true you were invited to the White House Correspondents' dinner? If so, did you say anything wildly inappropriate to the president?

HANDLER: It was pretty boring. A few weeks before, I went to a cocktail party and Colin Powell was there, because those are the kinds of circles I run in. At some point the Pussycat Dolls were performing, and I noticed Powell, who was sitting at a table right next to me, was taking a picture of them with his iPhone. So I took a picture of Colin Powell taking a picture of the Pussycat Dolls. Because of that I will probably never be invited back.

Q14

PLAYBOY: You're one of those rare female comics who understand the inherent hilarity of farts. When you're in a skit that has you passing gas, do you perform your own stunts?

HANDLER: On *Chelsea Lately* the farts are just a special effect. I'd love it if I were able to fart on cue, but that's a lot more difficult than it looks. I've tried, but I just don't have the muscle control. I think we've all been in a situation when you're talking to somebody and you think, I really wish I could fart right now, just to show what I think of you and this entire conversation.

Q15

PLAYBOY: You've come up with your own sexual language, creating euphemisms like *hot pocket* and *shadoobie* and *peekachoo*. Is that out of necessity, or do you just think most sex vernacular isn't inventive enough?

HANDLER: The E! Network lets us get away with pretty much whatever we want, so it's not because we're being censored. They'll bleep us if we go too far. But I like words like *peekachoo* and *shadoobie* because they let you talk about filthy things without being obvious. I think it's more creative. Usually, when I first use a word, I'll point in the general direction of what it means or at least use it in a very specific context. After that the audience is on their own. They'll figure it out eventually. If they don't, well, maybe they should be watching Animal Planet instead.

Q16

PLAYBOY: What's your personal favorite slang term for the vagina?

HANDLER: *Coslopus* is my favorite right now. That's what my parents and brothers and sisters used to call it when we were growing up. A penis was a batchookie and a vagina was a coslopus. My brothers laughed so much when I started saying "coslopus" and "batchookie" on TV. They said, "I can't believe you've introduced our family words to the country." That makes me so happy.

Q17

PLAYBOY: In your memoir, *My Horizontal Life*, you write, "The great thing about sleeping with a midget is that first you get to have sex with them and then you can use them as a pillow." What are some other great reasons to sleep with a midget?

HANDLER: Okay, first of all, you have to stop using the *M* word. They don't like m-i-d-g-e-t. They're "nuggets." I personally enjoy nuggets because they can get to those hard-to-reach places—and I don't mean just sexually. If you've lost something in your apartment and you can't reach it, invite over a nugget. Also, they can double as a bowling ball. When you're holding a nugget, it's like a little koala clinging to its mommy.

Q18

PLAYBOY: You have a sidekick named Chuy, pronounced "Chewie," whom you affectionately call your Little Nugget. Was he hired because he's a little person, or is it just a lucky coincidence that he's height-challenged?

HANDLER: When I got the *Chelsea Lately* show I told the producers I needed a personal assistant. Because they know I have an affinity for nuggets, they brought in Chuy for a job interview. I hire people predominantly based on their shape and height. If you're fat and meaty and short in stature, you're in. I like things I can hold onto. I like things I can snuggle with. I know some people consider that sexual harassment, but I think sexual harassment can be a good thing if everybody in the workplace is on board with it.

Q19

PLAYBOY: Aside from not being a nugget, what are some other reasons you wouldn't find a man attractive? What are your turnoffs?

HANDLER: I don't particularly care for sandals. That is never a good look, especially if a guy has those double-decker toes. I just don't like jacked-up feet. And I will never sleep with a redhead. I dated a redhead once, and that was the last time. It was blinding. I literally had to go to bed with sunglasses. You wake up in the morning and it looks like he's got a clown in a leg lock.

Q20

PLAYBOY: You're 33, and your boyfriend, Ted Harbert—who runs E!, the Style Network and G4—is 20 years older. What's the appeal of a silver fox?

HANDLER: Older men know how to take care of a woman, whereas younger guys usually need you to take care of them. With Ted I never have to do anything. If we're going out to dinner, he makes the reservations. If we're going on a vacation, he has everything planned out. I realize that's not true with all older men; it's just a personality type. But I think older men have more experience with women and know what we need. They know that if we're being a bitch and we're in a bad mood, the only rational thing to do is just leave us alone. It's never a good idea to nudge and nudge and ask annoying questions like "What's wrong, babe?" An older man realizes, Okay, this will pass. I just need to stay out of her way.

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THE WRAITH

(continued from page 103)

Carl was a large man, over six feet and thick around the middle, and he liked being that way. He viewed his physical size as a single facet of a comprehensive personal identity, which also included among its primary features a quiet competence in all manner of real-world tasks, an unflappable mental order, highly focused and slightly unorthodox artistic tastes and a calm, friendly, unemphatic manner. He was attracted to Lurene because of her narrow hips, large breasts, wide face, stooped walk and pessimistic worldview, and 10 years of marriage had in no way diminished his attraction. If anything, she was more herself than ever, her hips thinner, face wider, breasts larger. She stooped no lower than before, but she gave the appearance of doing so, due to what years of unhappiness had done to her face. It was still pretty, hadn't taken to wrinkling and sagging, but it wore a grave seriousness that levity was powerless to penetrate. They had agreed when they married never to have children, and he was glad they had stuck to that promise, because it just would not have worked. They were too self-absorbed. They felt proud of themselves for knowing this.

Carl was 33. Lurene was 31.

There was one element in their lives that Carl hadn't counted on when he married Lurene, a single wild card. That was politics. Lurene hated George W. Bush, utterly loathed him. She screamed, literally screamed, when she saw his face, which fortunately was not very often, because they had sworn off television news after the 2000 election, and because Carl got to the morning paper before she did each morning and was able to tear out any photos and throw them

away. Lurene nevertheless often growled at the empty hole Bush's face had occupied.

Neither of them had ever been very politically aware, nor was anyone else they knew back in the 1990s. Carl could remember one or the other of them vaguely disapproving of something Clinton did now and then, and he could recall them both being very annoyed by the impeachment hearings of 1998. But nothing seemed of great consequence. They regarded the world as working more or less as it should, and concentrated on themselves, earning money, being married and pursuing their various interests. Carl was steadfast, Lurene unhappy. They were content.

But Bush brought something out in Lurene that Carl hadn't known existed. When the Supreme Court voted to stop the recount, Lurene picked up the transistor radio that his uncle had bought them as a wedding gift four years before, and she threw it against the kitchen wall, where it split in half, spilling electronic parts on the floor. She had never before done anything like that. After September 11, which Lurene blamed Bush for failing to prevent, and the invasion of Afghanistan, of which Lurene did not approve, these incidents became commonplace. She swept books off shelves, overturned chairs and kicked a hole in the Sheetrock wall of their apartment. She snarled at passing cars. When Bush invaded Iraq, she stopped having sex with Carl and then only agreed to resume relations if she could crouch on her knees and press her raving face into the pillow. If he wanted it any other way, he had to catch her before sunrise, before she'd fully woken up, before the horrible world possessed her.

Abu Ghraib made her vomit, and when Kerry lost, she burned her own hand on the stove top on purpose.

For his part, Carl didn't like the president either. Indeed, he disliked the man very

much, the whole lot of liars and fascists. But he didn't complain, because he had no intention of doing anything about it. He didn't go to protests or marches, didn't blog his opinions, didn't stage voter-registration drives or man phone banks. His sole act of objection was his vote, which he cast every four years. He didn't think this entitled him to much acting out. And so he kept his opinions to himself.

But at some point during the era of Hurricane Katrina, Valerie Plame, Jack Abramoff and warrantless wiretapping, Lurene's misery reached a disturbing new nadir, a state of steady and imperturbable deadness. News of the latest atrocities struck her with the force of stones flung into the sea; they made their mark with a pale splash and then vanished underneath the monotonous pummeling waves. At breakfast, she and Carl carried on conversations like this:

"If you get out of that meeting before six, let's go to Jason's for dinner."

"—"

"More coffee?"

"Mm."

"You look pretty this morning."

"—"

The fact was, she didn't look pretty this morning. She looked ghoulish. Her hair had gone lank, her face ashen, her eyes sunken into purple calderas of damp flesh. Her lips were bitten raw and her clothes hung crookedly on her body. Several times each day, Carl found her frozen in some prosaic tableau, her mouth hanging open and her lips twitching, one hand flopped like a hunk of rotten fish on the kitchen counter or off the edge of the bed. And then, as if prodded with electrodes, she would jerk, cough and start up again, ploughing into whatever was left of her day.

One night Carl tried to talk to her about it.

"You seem different lately," he said gently, his hand resting a-jitter on her bony knee.

She shrugged, turned the page of her magazine.

"I'm afraid you're falling into..."

"Don't say it, Carl."

"...that you're suffering from..."

"Don't."

He stopped, pulled his hand away, settled back into his little nest of throw pillows. *Depression*, he didn't say. The word, with all its clinical associations, was forbidden in their house. It cast unhappiness as a problem, a thing that could, and should, be solved. Depression was a frailty. Unhappiness, on the other hand, was a way of life. Lurene insisted upon the distinction and had lodged herself permanently and immovably in the unhappiness camp. End of discussion.

But not end of problem, because she got worse. She walked around crying. She began taking sick days off work. She smoldered with resentment for Carl and his asshole, cocksucking bonsai trees and 1920s jazz and arugula, and she took to spitting in his path, as if to curse him, or at least make him slip and break something.

And then, on an unseasonably warm morning in the middle of February—three days, in fact, before Valentine's Day, a holiday they habitually, pointedly did not celebrate—Lurene broke through the floor of her misery and into some annihilating subbasement of agony. He heard her fall: She was standing at the kitchen counter in her business skirt



"I'll only be a minute. I'm just updating my résumé."

and white blouse, pouring milk into her coffee, and her knees buckled, her hands found the countertop and a sound escaped her, a mortal, creaking gong, like a pair of rusted cemetery gates at long last falling open. And once they did, the furies poured through, and Lurene keened like a dying animal, and tore open her blouse, scraping red lines down her neck and chest.

Carl had been trying to read an article in the paper about third-world debt relief around the ragged Bush-hole he had torn in the other side. He threw the paper down and leapt to his feet. He ran across the room and caught his wife as she fell.

"Let go of me," she wailed but made no move to push him away. She collapsed into his body, knocking him off balance, and the table barked against the linoleum floor as it jumped away from his palm.

"My God," he said. "Lurene."

She resisted, righted herself, pressed her hands to his chest.

"Let me go."

"I won't."

"You will, you fuck."

"I won't."

But he did. He caught his balance, she caught her breath, and he allowed her to extricate herself from his embrace. For a moment they stood facing each other, panting, unsteady on their feet.

"Maybe you should lie down."

"I'm going to do it, Carl. I am."

"No, you won't."

"I'm going to kill myself," she said. Her face tilted up to his, trembling as if it might shatter, cutting him to shreds with its pieces. This was new. This, he had never before seen.

"You won't. You will not."

Her only reply was a sigh.

"Lie down."

Her head shook no, no.

"Lie down. I will be right there. Lie down."

She sighed again and turned toward the bedroom.

"That's it. I'll call in to work for you."

She dragged herself away and disappeared down the hall.

As soon as she was out of sight, he took two swift, heavy steps to the phone where it hung on the wall. He picked it up and pressed nine, and a moment later pressed one. He heard, from the bedroom, the sound of the bedsprings compressing and drew breath. He gazed at his newspaper where it lay, at the plate of cantaloupe humped below it and at the dark-gray stain limned by its wetness. His finger hovered over the one.

Then his eyes traveled to the counter where Lurene had fallen and saw the cutting board, covered with the rough husks of his breakfast. It was wrong somehow, and he stared at it. In the bedroom, Lurene emitted a high pneumatic whine. A chill ran through him.

The paring knife was missing.

He gasped, dropped the receiver. It bounced against the wall, thudding hollowly as an old bone. He spun and lunged into the hallway.

She was there.

For a moment he thought it was someone else. She was standing straight, her shoulders thrown back, her head held high. She was buttoning her blouse back over her unblem-

ished chest and neck. Her eyes were bright, and something was the matter with her face.

She was smiling.

"Lurene?"

"God," she said with a little laugh, "sorry about that!"

He stared. She shook her head and advanced toward him with a kiss. It made a soft hot smack against his cold lips.

"I have no idea what came over me," she said. There were tears on her face, and she cheerfully wiped them off with a quick finger, as if they'd blown onto her from somewhere outside. "But I feel much better."

She moved past him to the coatrack, and shouldered on her heavy jacket.

"I thought..." he stammered.

"Me too!" She gawked at him for a long moment, then let out a mighty equine guffaw. "For a minute there, I wanted to die."

"So you said."

"I'm really sorry." She pulled her woolen cap out of her pocket and popped it onto her head. Her hair pressed against her cheeks, and five years dropped off her in an instant. "I scared you. I'm sorry."

"It's all right." He slumped back into his seat.

"It was just, you know, everything, it just came down on me all of a sudden." She had her purse now, her keys, her hand on the doorknob.

"I thought you took the knife."

She blushed. *Blushed*. Lurene had never once blushed, as far as Carl could remember. She said, "I did," and immediately clapped a prim hand over her mouth. Her fingers parted, her lips poked through and she said it again. "I don't know what I thought I was going to do. But something snapped, and I felt better." She shrugged. "Gotta go. I'm sorry, sweetie."

Sweetie?

She blew him a kiss (*blew him a kiss?*) and walked out the door. Her sprightly steps clicked on the stairs, and a minute later he watched out the window as she half ran, half skipped across the street and down into the subway.

He sat for a short while in stunned silence, listening to the radiator clanking and drops of water leaking into the sink. Sweat poured down his face and into his collar, and he tried to slow his breathing.

Carl worked at home. He maintained various websites. Some of the websites he maintained actually sold web hosting and design. His livelihood was entirely ephemeral, a paycheck wafted on a breeze of multilayered virtuality. Every day he wondered if he really, truly was going to do it—was he actually going to sit down and work again? It just didn't seem real. And then, every day, he went ahead and did it, and the money mysteriously arrived in his bank account. And often he spent it on imaginary things—music downloads, software. When occasionally some physical artifact of his labor arrived in the mail—a tax form, an invoice—it always gave him a jolt.

But today especially, this sense of unreality permeated the apartment. For the first time in as long as he could remember, he considered going back to bed and sleeping

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 106–107 and 108–109, check the listings below to find the stores nearest you.

THE GREAT AMERICAN WEEKEND

Pages 106–107: *Azzaro Chrome*, sephora.com. *Calvin Klein Steel*, cku.com. *Columbia Sportswear Company*, columbia.com. *Converse by John Varvatos*, available at Style Rocket in Asbury Park, New Jersey. *Hilfiger*, available at Macy's stores. *Izod*, macys.com. *J. Crew*, jcrew.com. *Mulholland*, shopmulholland.com. *Quadtec*, pranagioia.com. *Relwen*, relwen.com. *Timberland*, timberland.com. *Woolrich*, 800-995-1299.

THE WHITE TIE AFFAIR

Pages 108–109: *Apolis Activism*, contextclothing.com. *April77*, available at Barneys New York. *Converse by John Varvatos*, [converse.com. *Cosa Nostra by Jeffrey Sebelia*, \[cosanostrainc.com\]\(http://cosanostrainc.com\). *Diesel Black Gold*, \[diesel.com\]\(http://diesel.com\). *G-Star*, \[g-star.com\]\(http://g-star.com\). *Gsus Industries*, \[g-sus.com\]\(http://g-sus.com\). *Gucci*, available at Westland in Los Angeles. *Hilfiger Denim*, \[tommy.com\]\(http://tommy.com\). *J. Lindeberg*, available at J. Lindeberg stores. *Juicy Couture*, \[juicycouture.com\]\(http://juicycouture.com\). *Kill City*, available at American Rag in Los Angeles. *Kris Van Assche*, \[krisvanassche.com\]\(http://krisvanassche.com\). *Modern Amusement*, \[modernamusement.com\]\(http://modernamusement.com\). *Neil Barrett*, \[www.neilbarrett.com\]\(http://www.neilbarrett.com\). *Nike*, \[nike.com\]\(http://nike.com\). *Orthodox*, \[revolveclothing.com\]\(http://revolveclothing.com\). *PF Flyers*, \[pfflyers.com\]\(http://pfflyers.com\). *Playboy*, \[shopthebunny.com\]\(http://shopthebunny.com\). *Salvor Projects*, \[sevennewyork.com\]\(http://sevennewyork.com\). *Vans*, \[vans.com\]\(http://vans.com\). *Versace*, \[versace.com\]\(http://versace.com\). *WeSC*, available at WeSC concept stores worldwide.](http://converse.com)

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it off. Restarting the day in a different frame of mind. He sighed. The computer waited in the study for him to turn it on, and the stain on his newspaper spread. Any moment now he would get up and do something, anything, to break the spell. And then he heard the bedsprings creak.

He was still for a good 30 seconds. Then, idiotically, he said, "Lurene?"

Of course there was no response. The creak was not repeated. Nevertheless, he couldn't resist saying her name a second time. More quietly now, more to himself than whatever phantom his imagination had inserted into the next room.

"Lurene?"

And the nothing that resulted caused him to flush with embarrassment, and his sweating redoubled. He let out a low, quiet chuckle.

It was time to go to work. He would take a shower, get dressed, then call Lurene at the office to make sure she was all right. There—a plan. He was stirred out of his stupor. He got up and walked down the hall and had his T-shirt halfway up over his head before he even got to the bedroom. He stepped over the threshold, freed his ears from the collar and tossed the shirt onto the bed, where it struck a naked woman in the back.

He screamed. The shirt slid onto the bunched bedclothes. The naked woman didn't move.

She faced the opposite wall, her head in

her hands. Beside her lay the paring knife, dark with blood, and blood stained the sheets it lay upon.

For a moment, as he recovered himself, he believed that it was her, that it was somehow Lurene. He knew her shape, the pattern of vertebrae, the curve of her neck and shoulders, and these were those. But as he steadied his breathing, as his eyes adjusted to the brackish light filtering through the curtains, he could see that this body wasn't his wife's. It was scarred, pitted, scraped. It was gray and battered as a sidewalk, and as lifeless. The back was striated, like a stone plucked from a glacial moraine, as if a lifetime of scratches and welts had never healed, never faded; and it did not rise and fall with the woman's breaths. There were no breaths. Only his own, growing quieter in the room.

Nevertheless, when he spoke, it was to say, once again: "Lurene?"

And the woman rose to her feet and turned.

The thing that faced him now was like a statue, a statue of his wife, cast in concrete and left to weather, forgotten, in some abandoned town square. It gave the impression of advanced age and great strength, and it stared at him through flat gray-black eyes that did not blink. It wasn't Lurene but looked like it was supposed to be.

"Who are you?" he managed to ask.

The thing looked at him. Its stillness was uncanny. It stood with its legs slightly

parted, its torso twisted a quarter turn to face him. The wide face, the heavy breasts, the bony hips were flawless facsimiles of his wife's, hewn from beaten old stone.

And now he recognized some of the marks—a deep cleft in the chin where Lurene had a barely noticeable scar. A long gouge that outlined the pelvis, where Lurene had shed a benign cyst. A gravelly rake across the thigh, faded to pink on the real Lurene, the result of a bicycle accident on their vacation in Europe three years before.

And finally, on the inside of the left wrist, a three-inch laceration, following a vein, that corresponded to no wound he had ever before seen.

Carl and the thing stared at each other for long minutes, his eyes ranging in horrified fascination all over this strange body, the thing's eyes locked in place upon his own. It did not speak. It did not move. Until, at last, it broke its gaze and sat down, in exactly the position of contemplative misery he had found it.

Shirtless, sweating more profusely than ever, he strode down the hall to the phone. He snatched up the receiver from where it dangled, tapped the hook until he got a dial tone and called Lurene's cell phone.

"Hi! I was just thinking about you."

There was a lilt in her voice, a playful chirp.

"Uh..."

"I know I don't tell you this often enough," she whispered, "but I love you. I really do."

"Thanks."

She laughed. "'Thanks'? How *romantic!*"

"I love you, I mean. I do. But..."

"But what!"

"Lurene?" he said, low and soft. "Lurene, tell me something. Be honest with me."

"Yes?"

"Did you cut yourself this morning?"

There was a long beat before she said, as if it were the punch line of a joke, "Nnnno!"

He didn't say anything. From the bedroom, silence.

"Although," she went on brightly, "although it's funny, I had this idea on the train this morning that I had. I was so upset. I was almost certain I cut myself. But now I feel like it was a dream."

She stopped but did not sound finished.

"The thing is," she went on, "I didn't. I couldn't have. There's no...there isn't any...cut. On my wrist. There's nothing."

"Nothing," he repeated.

"No." And now she sounded a bit uncertain. "Why—that is—what makes you ask?"

It was several seconds before he said, again, "Nothing."

He might have told her about the thing, but he didn't. What would he say? Besides, he didn't want to puncture her bubble of cheer. She had earned it, after all.

Carl Blunt did no work at all that day. He sent an e-mail to his boss claiming flu. It was so much easier to lie in e-mail than on the phone—he didn't even have to disguise his perfectly healthy voice. Though he made a couple of typos, for good measure.

After that, he got the hell out of the apartment. He walked through the park, hunkered in his coat, his gloveless hands



"Have your people call my people and we'll do lunch."

plunged deep into the pockets. He ate lunch at the pizzeria at the end of his block, went to the drugstore, bought underwear and aspirin and went to see a movie. He was back at the apartment by 4:30. He hung up his coat, put down the Eckerd bag and took a deep breath before going down the hall to the bedroom.

There she was. She had moved. She was lying facedown on the bed now, her head pushed into the pillow. The pillow was hideously distended, as if she were made of lead. The mattress sagged in the middle.

He plucked up his courage and sidled into the room, staying close to the wall. He edged around the dresser and chair, pressed himself to the closet door, then leaned far, far out to pluck the knife from the bedclothes. It made a little gluey sound as it detached itself from the puddle of dried blood. The thing remained still, and Carl withdrew quickly, scooting out of the room with the knife suspended between his thumb and index finger.

In the kitchen, he washed it, placed it in the dish rack and sat at the table to wait for Lurene.

Thirty minutes later she walked in the door. She dropped her briefcase on the floor, hung up her coat, did a little pirouette, then came to Carl for a kiss hello. Up close, she looked different. At first he thought it was merely in contrast to the thing in the bedroom. But no: She was different. Her skin was clear and soft as an infant's, her hair thicker, her eyes brighter. It wasn't a question of age. Tiny lines still fanned out from her eyes; her cheeks betrayed the slightest hint of future jowls. It was a question of pain. In her face, there was none. It was a face to which no insults had ever been spoken, that had never been slapped or seen a hooded man with electrodes attached to his arms. She was utterly, frighteningly unscathed by life.

"Good day?" she said.

"No."

"No?" She skipped to the sink and began to fill a glass with water.

"I didn't get anything done."

"How come?" She sipped her drink, cocked her head, gave him a little grin.

He didn't answer.

"Maybe you didn't get anything done for the same reason I didn't get anything done."

"What," he asked, "is that?"

She winked. "Distraction."

"Okay..."

"I was thinking of other things," she sang. "Ah."

She put the glass down, came to him and kissed him. She plucked his hand from his lap and pressed it to her breast. "Sex time!"

"Well..."

"C'mon, don't be a poop," she said, hauling him to his feet. She grabbed fistfuls of his shirt and pulled him to her, pressing herself against him. "Let's go."

"I think you should go in there alone, first."

"You want me to get all ready?"

"No," he said. "I mean—there's something in there."

His voice, he thought, was dark with foreboding. But she didn't seem to notice.

She scowled.

"And the other thing," he said.

"The knife?"

"No."

She stared at him with can-do intensity, like a fighter pilot.

"Okay, ya lunk," she finally gushed, slapping his chest with a fine ivory hand. "You need a shower anyway. Come to think of it, so do I. I'll go in there and clean up whatever mess I left, and I'll meet you in the bathroom, whaddya say?"

He swallowed, nodded.

She spun and marched off. Carl remained in the kitchen, standing, listening. Her hard-soled office pumps clomped the length of the hallway, passed onto the carpet of the bedroom and then stopped. He bent over, straining to hear. Would she

scream? Would she run out?

She wouldn't. She didn't. She was absolutely quiet, for at least a minute. Carl continued to sweat. The wall clock thunked out the seconds.

And then, at last, her footsteps started again. Slowly now, gently, she took three, four, five steps and again stopped. The silence this time was longer, two, three minutes. And then he heard the bedsprings creak, and a small, guttural yelp, and the ragged exhalation of a breath.

"Lurene?"

He moved to the entrance of the hallway, gazed down at the inch of bedroom he could make out through the distant, foreshortened door.

"Honey?"

A groan, movement on the bed. And then Lurene's shoes touching the floor, one, then the other. A grunt, and footsteps. One,

two, three, four. And on five, she appeared.

Her hand was wrapped around the wounded wrist. Blood seeped from underneath. Her shoulders were sloped, her back bent, her face a mask of misery. "Carl," she said. "Find the bandages." And she fell, gasping, to her knees.

Every morning for a week, she disappeared into the bedroom to get dressed and emerged cheery and full of life. Every morning she left the thing behind, with Carl, in the apartment. He managed to work with it there—he had to. Sometimes he heard it get up and move around. He had found, on the Internet, the word: *wraith*. The ghost of a person still living. He didn't know if

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She had the cheery obliviousness of a character on television.

It occurred to him that she was nearly as frightening as the thing on the bed.

"Something special?" she cooed.

"No, Lurene. Really." He gulped. "Something scary. Something you left there this morning."

She let go of his shirt, fell back on her heels, pouted. "Are you trying to ruin my fun?"

"Lurene," he said, "you cut yourself this morning. With the knife. And it...left something. In the bedroom."

Now, at last, a look of annoyance crossed her face. And perhaps a tiny spark of fear. She held up her hand and unbuttoned the cuff of her blouse.

"Look," she said. "Nothing. No cut."

"There was blood in there."

that's what it was, specifically, but the proper nomenclature hardly seemed important. It was a handy nickname for something that he sure as hell was not going to call Lurene. The Wraith. Sometimes he could swear it was standing in the hallway, waiting for him. But he never budged from the study except for a quick dash to the kitchen for food, or the bathroom. He did not attempt to talk to it. He tried to be quiet, so as not to bother it.

When Lurene came home from work each day, she would draw him into the bathroom, into the shower, and make love to him there. Never before had she taken the initiative in an act which, under ordinary circumstances, she lacked the reserves of joy even to contemplate. He found himself shocked and embarrassed, embarrassed by her ardent desire, by his sudden physical response. Her body was so light, so unencumbered by its own corporeality; every motion was effortless and perfect. And then, even before his lust had managed to leave him, she would go—leave the shower, dry off in silence and return to the wraith. She could feel its need, she told him. She had to go to it, or it would come to her.

One afternoon it was waiting outside the bathroom door.

The next, it was inside the bathroom—behind the curtain when they pulled it aside.

The day after that they locked the door.

Over that weekend, and the next, Lurene stayed Lurene and said nothing about the wraith, and so neither did Carl. But

on Monday morning, he asked her, as she got up from the breakfast table, if he could see.

"See," she repeated, as if she didn't know what he meant.

"See it happen."

Her frown deepened, her eyes narrowed.

"I want to know," he said. "I want to know how it happens. How it comes out."

For a moment he thought she would strike him, but what she did instead was begin to weep. "I don't think I could," she whispered. "I don't think it would work. With you there."

He stood, took her into his arms. He had not made love with his wife, his entire wife, since these strange days began. He missed her. The other one, the happy one—with her it was too easy. His love needed something heavy to hold it down. He said, "Don't cry, don't cry."

"This can't go on," she said.

"It can. It can go on." Though he knew she was right.

They stood in silence for a time, gripping each other so tightly they could barely breathe. Then she pushed him away, walked down the hall and emerged a new woman.

That afternoon, around lunchtime, he was working on some text formatting, trying to convince a client she didn't want blinking letters with sparks shooting off them, when he heard the wraith get out of bed. Its feet thudded on the floor, and he heard them dragging dryly across the room, like a pair of sandbags.

He had grown used to its wanderings, and he tried to ignore it. But after

yet, but he understood that he was helpless. The wraith had a smell, not a bad smell, like that of wet stones drying in hot sun. A bit of ozone, a bit of rot.

"What...what is it?" he managed.

The wraith pulled his shirt open, and the buttons clattered on the floor. It—*she*—pushed it over his shoulders and down his arms and tossed it back over her head. She was very, very strong. She reached for his belt.

"Whoa, whoa!" he said, and she stopped. She did not back off. She stared at him. He gulped air. And then took the rest of his own clothes off, without her help.

The wraith pushed him into the bedroom and onto the bed, then settled itself over him like a landslide. Its skin was neither rough nor cold, though it wasn't as warm as living flesh

and certainly wasn't as soft as Lurene's. It had the consistency of scar tissue, rough but yielding. It felt unbreakable. It felt like it would survive for eternity.

And it turned him on! That was certainly a surprise. He touched hips, belly, breasts, and felt as breathlessly eager, as hungry, as lustful, as he had ever felt in his life. He marveled at himself, his breath catching in his throat. How was it possible? But it was. The wraith knew precisely what to do with him and did it without hesitation. It moved over him, shifting its tremendous weight, sending shocks of pleasure through him. It could kill him in an instant, that was the crazy thing. It could crush him, but instead of being afraid, he felt safe. Protected by it. Gently. Unlike with his flesh wife, he used no condom. It hurt to

penetrate and it hurt when he came.

Its eyes remained open, its lips pressed shut, until it was through. Then it heaved itself up off him and flopped over, face-down on its pillow.

It took a while before Carl realized the whole thing was over. When his heart stopped racing, he picked himself up and tiptoed back to the office. He put his clothes back on, realized he couldn't button his shirt, then threw it in the trash. He had to walk past the wraith again to get a new one, but it didn't budge. Somehow he managed to return to work.

When Lurene got home, they did it in the shower again, and the wraith didn't bother them. He could barely keep it up. And when afterward Lurene emerged from the bedroom, fully herself, she gave him a

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a moment, the footsteps continued into the hallway and down it, to stop right outside his door. His fingers paused over the keyboard, and he held his breath. The door wasn't locked. The wraith had never seemed to show much interest in him without Lurene around.

"Hello?" he squeaked.

The door flew open and crashed into the wall behind it, deepening the hole the knob had dug over the years. The wraith was staring at him, its eyes blacker and deeper than ever, and as lifeless.

He jumped out of his seat. "Uhh..." he said.

It took three long steps toward him and grabbed his shirt in its long gray fingers. It was right there, right up in his face, holding him close. He was not frightened, not

look. But she didn't pursue it. Whatever had happened, she didn't want to know.

And so it continued for several weeks, became routine, and he amazed himself at what depths of depravity it was possible to grow accustomed to. The warrantless wire-tapping continued, the vice president shot some guy in the face, and Carl got himself off daily with his giggling fake wife and a lumbering clay monster. A new normal. His work increased to full productivity, and the hole these strange events had rent in his life simply filled itself in and smoothed itself over. He began to wonder if this was his fate, to be married to a pair of horny half women, and he decided there were worse ways to live out one's days.

But then one morning Lurene came out of the bedroom disheveled, stooped and utterly whole. He gaped. He didn't have to ask, but he asked.

"What happened?"

"I can't do it."

"Well—can't you—did you try again?"

"Yes I *tried again*, you prick!"

He winced, sunk a bit into his chair. "I'm sorry!"

She looked around the room, as if for some obvious solution she had failed to notice. "Fuck," she said and pulled on her coat and hat.

"You're just going to go in to work?" he asked.

"Do you have some better idea?"

He shook his head no.

He spent the entire day in a state of mild anxiety, unaccustomed as he had become to being alone in the apartment. Several times he peeked in the bedroom to see if the wraith was there. But the bed was empty. His palms sweated, and he had to change his shirt often. He did things wrong, then did them wrong again.

He slept on it, figuring it would all make sense in the morning. But it was the same the next day, and the next, and all the rest of that week. And then one night Lurene emerged from the bathroom wearing an expression of horrified epiphany.

"I know why I can't do it," she said. "I'm pregnant."

Unthinkingly, he added himself to the crowded ranks of men who responded to those words by saying "That's impossible." To which Lurene did not lower herself to reply.

He tried again. "We were protected."

She shrugged, lowering herself onto the sofa beside him. They sat in silence, waiting for this new information to settle itself. The television seemed very loud. Carl turned it off.

"Carl," she said.

He turned to her.

"You fucked it. Didn't you."

He looked at her with what must have

been an expression of utter forlornness, and he realized what a weakling he was, that he had no volition, he could only do what he was told, he habitually ignored the world's ills because he couldn't abide them, and he had capitulated to her misery, not because it was right but because it freed him from his own. And then he proved it to himself by saying, "It forced me to. I couldn't stop it."

Her slap was not unexpected, nor was it undeserved. But it was unprecedented. It turned his head with a sound like a splintering plank, and though it didn't hurt, not much, it had all the force behind it of a ton of stone.

His head was hung when she got up from the sofa, and it was still hung when she marched into the kitchen, with what, if he had been paying attention, he would have recognized as her old steely resolve. But the silvery snick of the paring knife being pulled from the block—that he recognized.

He managed to stop her. She meant for him to. Her hand was in the air, the fingers white around the knife; her eyes were trained on the doorway as he stumbled through. He grabbed her by the wrist, and she pretended to fight against him, and the knife clattered to the floor. She let herself go limp. He encircled her in his arms and led her back to the couch.

"I want it out of me," she said, through gritted teeth. She threw off his embrace and rocked back and forth, her lip between her teeth.

"We could...get an abortion," he said and regretted it immediately. But she shook her head.

"Not that!" she cried. "The other!"

Her face was wet and livid, the lips trembling, and to his great surprise, Carl gasped and let out a sob. The sound it made was very loud, like a bedsheet being torn in two, and he slumped against the back of the sofa and for a few moments was insensible with grief. When he came around, he was again surprised, this time to find himself in Lurene's arms, to find her kissing his forehead, his ear, his hair, to find her small rough hands caressing his cheeks, wiping the tears away. "Oh, baby," she said, and her voice was deep and unhappy and real.

He buried his face in her hot neck, and he pressed his lips to the vein there, which pulsed and leapt with blood, and they stayed that way for a long time, as out in the world things were bombed, and polls were taken, and money was allocated, and money was spent. To their child, should it be born, none of this would ever be quite real. All of it—the terrorism, the torture, the scandals—would have the hazy quality of near-legend, the actual truth just barely out of reach, like a scary campfire tale about something that, swear to God, actually happened to a best friend's cousin's roommate. The events would seem invented, and the characters would seem parodies of themselves, without particular depth or dimension.

A tragedy, Carl and Lurene might have said, that the truth was always forgotten, that history was dulled and simplified until it didn't resemble itself at all. One day their child would come to wonder what they were really like back when the world was such a storied mess. The child would recall Lurene as firm and stoic, Carl as decent and shy, and the two would seem long-suffering and impossibly old, heavy with the burdens of their age, like statues come to life.



"But tonight is going to be romantic. We'll drink wine while we watch the game."



CAMPAIGN

(continued from page 70)

Boy is just a little boy," he says disdainfully. Like a merchant in a border town, he keeps switching languages as he passes from one segment of New York to another. "At times I have to portray a certain demeanor," he says. "I'm not just a black kid from the ghetto. I can speak properly."

His hair sheened and his line precise, he strolls through his Brownsville neighborhood, a native son faithful to the etiquette of his streets, greeting with hugs and waves and hand slaps everybody from a con returned from Rikers Island to dreadlocked Jamaicans selling bootlegged CDs to former schoolmates and teachers.

The way Lamont figures it now at the venerable age of 24 (24 in Brownsville years being equivalent to somewhere around 50 in Manhattan's more elegant precincts), his current trajectory from political apathy to Obama activist actually began a lifetime ago. Someday he may spin a myth out of his hard-scrabble origins and retail it to voters (the log cabin of the 19th century = today's two-bedroom apartment in the projects), but he hasn't yet, not in his public life. The idea that such a background may be an asset is a novelty to him. He still feels the disgrace of poverty, remembering how he once pretended to find his own food stamps on the floor of a candy store when a friend entered. As was the custom, he had to split the proceeds of the discovered stamps with his buddy.

Lamont was born in Brownsville in 1983 during a snowstorm. The ambulance didn't make it in time, so he was delivered in the apartment. He never knew his father, only that he suffered from seizures and died in Pittsburgh in 1997. "I cried when I found out," he says. He carried around a much-crumpled photograph of his father until one day he lost it—he never knew where—and now he

has forgotten what his father looked like.

His three brothers all have different fathers. Eric, one of his two younger brothers, has a Jamaican father who sometimes came over to cook oxtail stew for Lamont's mother and all the brothers and take them for rides in his car. Because Lamont didn't have a father of his own, he loved it when Eric's father would visit, but then one day he stopped coming by regularly. Maybe Lamont's mother had told him to stay away, maybe Eric's father had another family. In the years to come Lamont would always say that in his neighborhood, it was easy to be a son to a mother, but nobody knew how to be a son to a father.

Lamont didn't have many friends, mainly just Rogelio, who had moved to Brooklyn from Panama and lived down the block and kept mainly to himself. Vying for attention, Lamont used to get his ass kicked every day. But in sixth grade he finally figured out a good way to get some friends.

He told everybody at PS. 165 that Magic Johnson was his cousin and that he was coming to visit on Friday. Even the teachers at the school got excited. Mrs. Brown, the meanest teacher there ("I breathe fire," she said), asked Lamont, "Magic's coming, right?"

"He's coming," Lamont said.

For a week Lamont had more friends than he'd ever dreamed. Then Friday arrived. "Where's Magic?" all the teachers and students wanted to know. As this was not a sitcom, there was no happy ending. Lamont hid in the bathroom and learned at least one lesson: If he drank a lot of Pepto-Bismol, it would keep the vomit down.

In the neighborhood they call him Larry to this day. Larry never had the latest stuff. He told everyone he'd left his Air Jordans in the house. Pearl and Simeon and Jonny and all the other kids just laughed. They knew he didn't have any Jordans. Jonny said Larry's shoes looked like Cheez Doodles. And Jonny was his friend.

He didn't have the money for brand-name clothes until the summer of 1998 when he worked for the parks department at Lincoln Terrace Park for \$5.15 an hour, raking leaves, picking up trash, sweeping dirt from here to there. He took his first paycheck, around \$200, to Jamaica Avenue in Queens to buy new clothes, and he came across a game that men were playing atop boxes stacked up on the sidewalk; the object was to identify under which of three cups a pea remained after a man shuffled the cups around. Rigged to take advantage of the gullible, the game proved alluring to young Lamont. He watched a man win money by pointing at the cup the pea was hidden under and it looked easy and the men there invited Lamont to put his money down and play and so he did, and to his amazement, he lost. Then he lost again, until nearly all his money was gone.

"That was a good lesson for you," his mother told him.

In 2000 he had to check his mom into the psychiatric ward of Kings County Hospital. He had been coming home from school at the end of the day and finding her sitting in the same spot he'd left her that morning. She didn't check the mail, she didn't pay the bills, she didn't get the paperwork done that a family on welfare needed to keep the services coming. The lights kept getting turned off. The hospital kept her two or three weeks for observation. Lamont and his brothers begged for her to be released, which she was eventually.

His life wasn't all hard, however. He was always welcome for a meal at Jonny and Simeon's grandmother's house just down the block. The Telfords were a West Indian family, and they had rules—they had to do book reports in the summer, not for school but for the family! Alert to the signs of a fellow's propensity for mischief, Auntie Vivian used to ask the local boys, "Is that an earring you wearing?" The family knew Larry didn't have much, and they were as generous as they could be. Even now, when he comes back to the neighborhood, Lamont must visit Granny, which he does today, parking his car in front of the stoop and running in to pay his respects.



"We had a deal, Marty. No Mexican food the day of a show."

Everything turned for Lamont one summer night when he was 15 or 16. For weeks the tension had been festering between teenage boys from abutting Brownsville neighborhoods, and on this night it had been decided that their leaders were going to fight—"the last scuffle," Lamont calls it. This meant that Lamont's friend, Rogelio, known as Machine, their big guy, would battle the fearsome Justin.

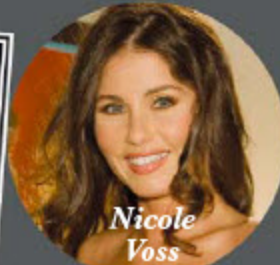
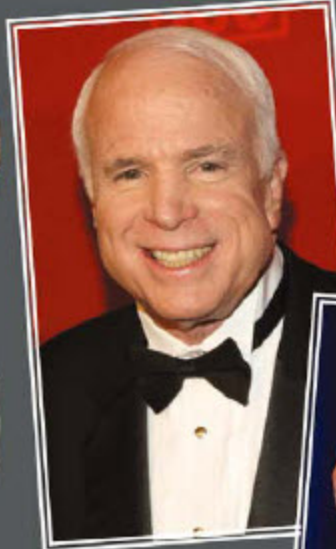
The fight went down in the middle of Amboy, a one-way street. Rogelio and Justin were slugging it out, and Rogelio was starting to prevail when from out of nowhere more boys from the other side rounded the corner, on foot and on bikes, and headed toward the fight, and suddenly there was the sound of *pop! pop! pop!* And Lamont and his buddies saw that the oncoming boys, running and riding their bikes, were firing at them with pistols. Many a Brownsville teen's life had been lost in just

(continued on page 145)

PLAYMATE NEWS



POLLING THE PLAYMATES



After the Huffington Post asked a few Playmates which presidential candidate they prefer, we invited more girls to respond. An intern is still tallying the punch cards in this very tight race, but here is the buzz around the Playmate caucus.

"McCain is more experienced," says Monica Leigh. "Obama is more of an entertainer than a president." Stephanie Glasson concurs: "I like McCain because he's a social centrist and believes in a

strong military." Colleen Marie and Nicole Voss also back McCain, but Juliette Fretté, concerned about the economy and health care, supports Obama. Shannon James agrees but worries "our country isn't yet that open-minded." Shanna Moakler is excited that Obama has started to make people become interested in change. Carrie Stevens likes Obama but is considering a write-in candidate: "Hef's better-looking and smarter than either of them."

30 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

Just before PMOY 1979 **Monique St. Pierre** posed for the Centerfold below, she signed with the Wilhelmina Models modeling agency.



When the pictorial was published, the agency dismissed her. Its loss was our gain: Monique modeled for us for years and then stepped behind the lens and became an executive at the Playboy Channel.

LOOSE LIPS

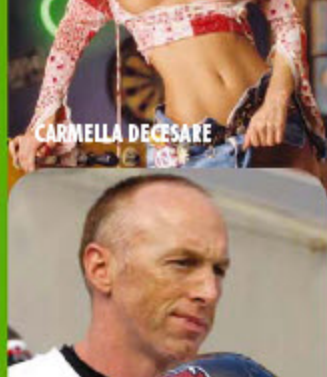
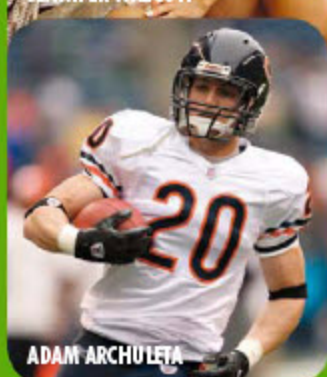
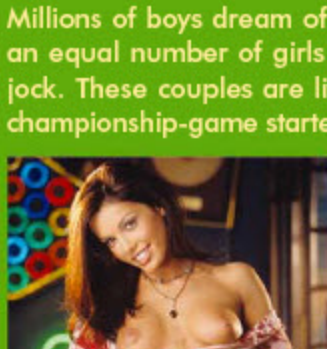
"I don't know why I'm doing the reality show *Pam: Girl on the Loose* yet. I just know I'm an exhibitionist."

—Pam Anderson



NO LONGER PLAYING THE FIELD

Millions of boys dream of becoming a pro athlete and marrying a Playmate, and an equal number of girls dream of becoming a model and settling down with a jock. These couples are living that dream. Check out this lineup: playoff heroes, championship-game starters, a few Playmates of the Year—and every one a winner.



HOT SHOT



SASCKYA PORTO

MY FAVORITE PLAYMATE

By Courtney Hansen

—of Spike TV's *Powerblock* and *Great Builds*

"My Favorite Playmate is Miss October 2003 **Audra Lynn**. She's womanly and voluptuous and not surgically enhanced. Best of all, she's from Minnesota. That's where I was born, and Minnesota rocks!"



POP QUESTIONS: TAMARA WITMER

Q: What has life been like since you posed for us three years ago? **A:** Posing made my life much more interesting. I've met a lot of different types of people I wouldn't have if I hadn't been in the magazine. **Q:** How so? **A:** I started out as a model and did fitness magazines and calendars. Then after posing for *PLAYBOY* I became a hot commodity in Los Angeles. **Q:** Ever consider making it in New York? **A:** Working in New York is different. I wouldn't like competing in the stuffy high-fashion industry. L.A. has more fun stuff. **Q:** Being close to Hollywood, do you see yourself trying to break into acting? **A:** My comfort zone is modeling. Acting takes things to the next level. I've done a couple of independent films, which I enjoyed, but I like to experiment with different things like acting to see how I feel about them. **Q:** What keeps you busy? **A:** I'm in the middle of working on a new reality show, and I'm not sure if I can talk about it much. But I have been dating a lot. **Q:** Oh yeah, we saw you on *Rock of Love* with Bret Michaels. How was that experience? **A:** Ugh, bad. That's all I can say. It was embarrassing. That was the worst show I could have done in my career. It was terrible. They made me look like an idiot, and I regret doing it.



NIK-A-MANIA



Is Nikki Schieler Ziering—Miss September 1997, a *Price Is Right* Barker's Beauty and a sideline reporter for *Ultimate Blackjack Tour*—now becoming a professional wrestler? Yep. The 118-pound beauty will be on the mat with the likes of Dennis Rodman, Dustin Diamond and Butterbean as part of Hulk Hogan's *Celebrity Championship Wrestling* on CMT. Screech better look out for the Playmate pile driver.



PLAYMATE GOSSIP

Miss October 1983 Tracy Vaccaro and her ex-husband, Fred Dryer of *Hunter* fame, welcomed their first grandchild into the world. Their daughter Caitlin had a beautiful baby girl named Emma.... Miss December 1966 Susan Bernard writes to fill us in about the exciting events in her life. She has been working on three books about the photography of Bruno Bernard,



Can you believe Tracy Vaccaro is a grandmother?

who happened to be her father. The working titles are *Bernard of Hollywood's School of Burlesque*, *Bernard of Hollywood's Glamour* and *Bernard of Hollywood's Sixties Girls*. Susan was recently featured in *Garage* magazine.... Miss January 2005 Destiny Davis was heartbroken when she was outbid for private yoga instruction with rap mogul Russell Simmons. When the generous Simmons caught word of this, he set up a private session.... Carol Vitale, our August 1972 cover girl and Miss July 1974, passed away in July after a long fight with lupus and scleroderma. A reader favorite, Carol came to our attention as a Bunny in the Miami Playboy Club. She appeared in a few Bunny pictorials, was part of the "What sort of Man Reads *PLAYBOY*?" campaign and even returned to our pages for a *Playmate Revisited* pictorial in 1997. Carol was also successful outside the Playboy world: She designed lingerie for Frederick's of Hollywood and hosted the long-running television program *The Carol Vitale Show*.

Can you believe Tracy Vaccaro is a grandmother?

Can you believe Tracy Vaccaro is a grandmother?

Can you believe Tracy Vaccaro is a grandmother?

Can you believe Tracy Vaccaro is a grandmother?

Can you believe Tracy Vaccaro is a grandmother?

Can you believe Tracy Vaccaro is a grandmother?



Rap mogul Russell Simmons sets up a date with Destiny.

Carol Vitale is dearly missed by all.



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.

CAMPAIGN

(continued from page 142)

this sort of fake movie known as real life.

Pop! Pop! Pop! Everybody bolted, giddy with their own mortality, Lamont cutting down a side street to get help from his neighborhood, the other guys fleeing for the safety of the train tracks. Lamont wasn't a gangbanger or a fighter or any of that stuff, he wasn't a tough guy, the status he had gained had come from being the funny guy. He earned his legendary status during a blackout in 2000 when he dyed his hair silver like the rapper Sisqó and performed for all comers in front of the co-ops at Hegamen Avenue. But he wasn't a coward, either, and of his friends in those days, he says, "We bled together, we wept together. They were my boys."

And that night he feared the worst until his boys, every last one of them, began slipping back to the familiar stoops of home, having hidden from the shooters by the gravel pit next to the train tracks. After that night everyone got closer for a while. They had seen the face of death, and it looked remarkably like their own young faces, just boys who would have been their brothers had they lived a block or two closer. "Are they gonna come around again?" Lamont and his friends wondered for the rest of the summer.

In time Lamont started to distance himself from his buddies. "Sometimes people overembellish stuff, what they see growing up. Like a white kid might see all of this and say, 'This is the hood!' Like it was glamorous. But a black kid from the hood says, 'How is real life supposed to be?'"

He couldn't stop asking himself that question. "I knew there was more to life," he says. He'd always thought he was meant for something special, though he didn't know what it was and though his circumstances often told him otherwise.

"I'm humble, but I'm not an average joe," he says now, contemplating the mystery of why he manages to rise while so many around him have not. "I have this drive. And I have skills that attract people. I want to help people. People helped us out when my mom was sick. But if I can be on the giving end, even better. This may sound stupid, but not getting a lot during Christmas taught me not to depend on being a getter."

On summer nights when it rained and everyone else in Brownsville went inside, Lamont would leave his brothers in the apartment and head out into the empty streets to walk and think and clear his head. One of his escapes was to climb to the top of the parking garage at the corner of Hegamen and Amboy and stare across the rooftops of Brooklyn at the skyline of Manhattan. The Twin Towers were still standing then. Manhattan was another world, and he imagined somewhere within it was the kind of life he wanted. He had no male role models, his cousins were in jail, he'd seen way too much. But he stared anyway, as if he could decipher the scrambled puzzle pieces of all those rooftops stretching out unsolvably toward a borough that was even farther away than it looked.

So, hair still spruce, line still fine, here is Lamont in that very Manhattan at a church

on Seventh Street in the East Village for Saturday's meeting with prospective volunteers for the Obama campaign. While waiting to speak, he teases a fellow volunteer, Sara Halle-Miriam, a student at NYU. "You cry every time!" he tells her. "You cried when he"—he being Obama—"won North Carolina. You cried when he sneezed!"

"I did not," she says, blushing.

The Obama campaign has arguably produced more volunteers than any other in American history. Energized by the candidate himself and issues like the Iraq war, they're pouring into the system like floodwaters through a New Orleans levee—by some counts, there are as many as a million. The breadth of this grassroots movement is also attested to by the more than 2 million individual donors to the campaign thus far. "Lamont's political gifts are unusual," Hemsley says, "but the story of his involvement is not."

Richie Fife, a New York organizer for the Obama campaign who worked for many years on political campaigns with David Garth, the pioneer in media consulting for elections, is buoyed by the fresh energy entering the system, something he hasn't witnessed to this degree since Bobby Kennedy ran for president in 1968. "It had gotten to the point where you often had to ask unions to bus their people in to fill up a room," he says. "There were no real people there! Now people turn up at meetings and we're not giving away anything, no entertainment, nothing."

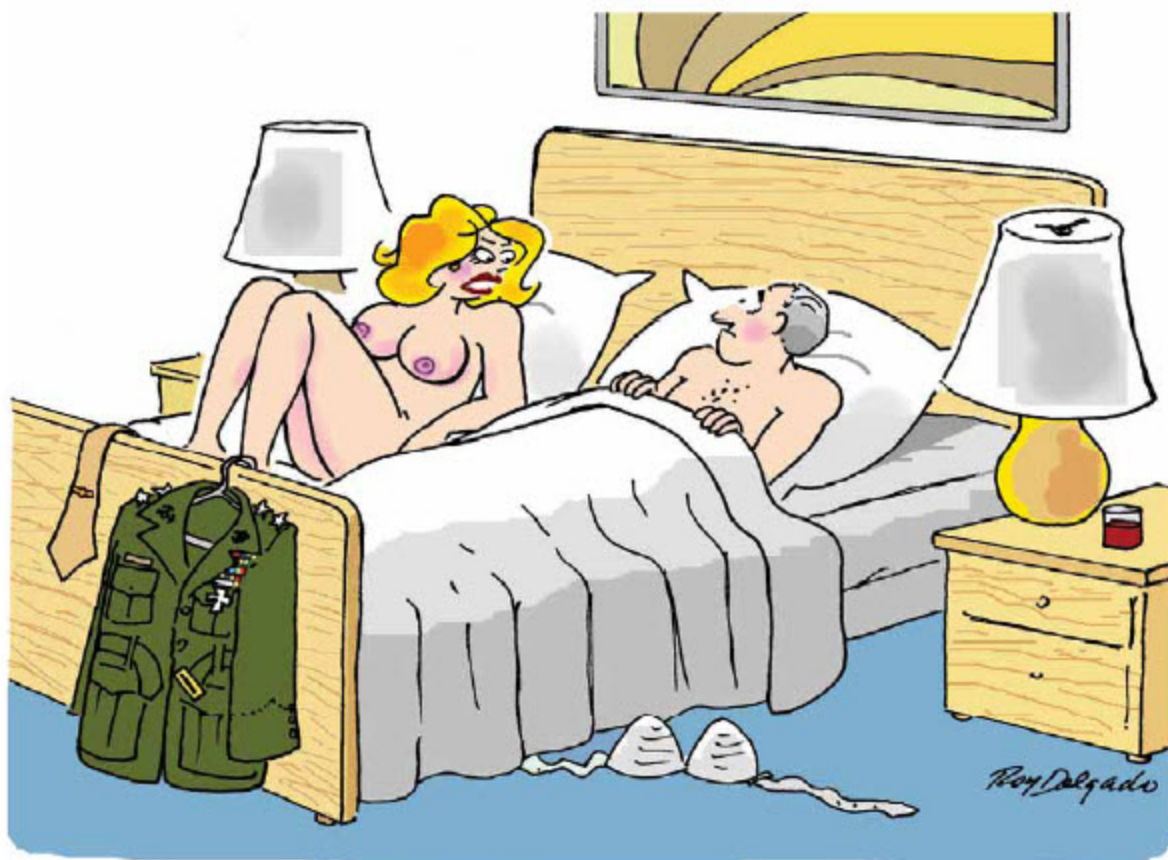
The use of the Internet pioneered most successfully by Howard Dean's organization in 2004 has allowed the Obama campaign to "communicate with large numbers of people at low cost," says Fife. "People who have been activists for decades don't necessarily understand how it's done now and sometimes find it frustrating," says Janice Caswell, a member of the Downtown East steering committee, "but the political pro-

cess has been opened up like never before." Able to consult online templates for action, local groups have taken responsibility for running their own shows, providing a neophyte like Lamont the chance to make an impact perhaps sooner than in elections past. This has its benefits. "He's not encumbered with the cynicism of people who have been doing politics for a long time," Fife says. "He believes he can bring change, and he is able to make the people around him also believe."

Running the meeting today is Susan Jennings, an artist and a member of the steering committee for Downtown East for Obama. She met Lamont back in the winter, while they both petitioned for Obama to be on the ballot in New York. She loved how, in the iciest weather, he would stop even harried, seen-it-all New Yorkers in their tracks with his stand-up routines for Obama. He would tell them, "You smell like a Democrat," and they would usually laugh and stop and sign. His attention-getting tricks were borrowed from nights as a fledgling comic in the clubs of New York, back in his late teens and early 20s, when he was trying to break into the business. Once he had even shared a stage with Chris Rock, who had stared right through Lamont as if he were a nobody.

In fact, somewhere out there are 15 or 20 tapes of a crotch-grabbing, sometimes brilliant but always uncensored show Lamont performed in a dorm basement at Keystone College. "You know it's some black muthafuckas livin' in that dorm," he says on the video, "because the Kool-Aid's so sweet!" Now that he is pursuing a political career, Lamont wonders whether he should be worried about who may have a tape.

Comedy was going to be one ticket out of Brownsville. After being shot at, after hospitalizing his mother, he had decided it



"Billions for defense and not one dime for a vibrator!"

was time to move on. The other route out was through education. At the last of the three high schools he bumbled through, he experienced what he calls "a divine intervention" in the person of an English teacher named Laura Ryan, who, in a year that nearly burned her out as a teacher, taught him, he says, "the fundamentals of being a young man." "The miracle," says Lamont, "is that as she was losing her faith, she gave me mine."

That faith led him to move in with the Rings, a white family in New Jersey, for his senior year of high school. It is one of Lamont's gifts that he has rarely lacked for benefactors. He had met them through another white family who took him in summers when he was a child, under the auspices of the Fresh Air Fund, a program that affords inner-city kids the chance to spend summers outside of their neighborhoods. The school principal in New Jersey told him, "One fuckup and you're gone." But he passed all his classes, and instead of signing up for the Marines, as he had expected, he astonished himself by getting into college. Then, when he earned his degree from Keystone, he gave the diploma to his cousin, Junior, who had always encouraged Lamont to get an education but had missed one himself and had a hard time finding a job after getting out of prison. The diploma hangs on Junior's wall.

Now Jennings invites the potential volunteers to explain what brought them here today. One by one, as if giving testimonies at a gospel service, 30 or 40 men

and women break into tongues of political fire. Obama has somehow made people believe again in the notion of America as an ongoing experiment.

A Trinidadian woman says, "This is America's last chance to stand! Her last chance! This is the first time I've ever been involved with American politics. I'm not a citizen, so I can't even vote. But something is about to happen in America. And I want to be involved. I don't even see Obama as a colored person."

This spectacle suggests how Obama has quickened America's spirit life, how he has tapped into electrical undercurrents crackling off the grid that no Democrat has touched or transmitted in 40 years. Still fresh to the political scene and relatively undefined, he is a dream-catcher for

all varieties of dreamer. In the face of that, even the East Village activists at the church this afternoon, no matter how hungry to repossess the White House, must feel a little sorry for John McCain, confronted by an opponent seemingly in synch with forces greater than himself. The discrepancy is summed up in the image of Barack Obama in Berlin, speaking to 200,000 people who are "waving American flags that aren't burning," as Lamont says, versus McCain visiting a German restaurant in Ohio, tucking into a bratwurst.

Obama appears to be the first black politician to benefit from a series of tectonic shifts on race that have been quietly occurring under our feet for at least a generation. He refuses to blame racism for his campaign's difficulties, in stark contrast to

compulsively honest as well, Lamont wonders whether he'll have to censor himself a little more when he becomes a politician.

"I didn't know that!" Jennings roars. The room breaks into laughter.

"Well, the Bush people were paying \$100 a day for students to make phone calls for the campaign," he says. "And I needed the money. But I encouraged people to vote their hearts."

A couple of years later Lamont actually met George W. Bush when the president visited his college. As a student leader, Lamont was selected to greet him, but first he was called to the dean's office and asked whether he had "any felonies or priors." When he shook Bush's hand, he considered bringing up Hurricane Katrina but thought better of it. The meeting galvanized him. "I knew then,

if George Bush could do it, so could I. But not only as a public speaker—I also had the skills to bring people together, to help build a community, if not as a president, as a senator."

Lamont tells them about leading his march of Obamaphiles across the Brooklyn Bridge. "That's the kind of magic I want to bring to the campaign," he tells the prospective volunteers. "I want to electrify you. I'm a motivator. I believe that if you don't like what you see out there, you go make up your own plate of food."

They cheer. Everybody wants to make up their own plate of food.

Soon afterward, on a sticky summer morning, Lamont's employers call him into a conference room at the bakery company in New Jersey

where he has worked since November. They ask him how the Obama campaign is going. That's when Lamont knows something is up, because they generally don't like anyone to talk politics at work.

Then they tell him, "We're not trying to keep you here if you're not happy," and so they have decided to let him go, effective immediately. They ask him to return the company car; they've hired a car service to take him home. They like him, he could have done well in the company, so this isn't easy.

At the end of the meeting, one of the executives jokes with Lamont, saying, "I hear Barack Obama has a vice-presidential spot open."

The driver, an old guy, taking him back to his apartment, says, "You probably should have had another job lined up first."



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the way Hillary Clinton and her supporters regard sexism as responsible for failures stemming largely from arrogance and mismanagement. He makes many whites feel good about themselves by feeling good about him. And blacks feel good, if a little surprised, that whites feel so good about feeling good about a black man.

Now it is Lamont's turn this afternoon to benefit from and embellish all of this era's good feeling, here in front of an audience of whites, blacks, West Indians, Europeans and even an East Village woman with a spectacular lower-back tattoo who hopes to stage a "graffiti event" for Obama.

He starts out with a confession. "What brought me to the campaign?" he asks. "As a starving college student, I actually worked for Bush." Quite an admission. A comedian, and

"Not necessarily," Lamont says. "Better to be happy."

He sends an e-mail entitled "Jobless in Seattle" to the steering committee of Downtown East. It reads, "It's official, I am currently unemployed! It just happened today. The company was really great about it. It was a mutual agreement, effective today. Any ideas? Lamont."

Vicki is surprised when he tells her. Not long after that, they have a big fight. Vicki takes the car and goes home to Pennsylvania for the weekend. She's considering moving back there. Lamont asks her to think about what she really wants while she's away. As he walks the streets of Hawthorne, he prays, asking God to let him help other people, to show him how best to do that.

By legend, the back rooms of New York City politics used to feature corpulent, tough-talking Boss Tweeds. They smoked cigars, they sold influence, they cut deals. *You take Manhattan, I'll take the Bronx.* But after his inspiring performance at the church on Seventh Street last Saturday, Lamont has been invited to Manhattan's Upper West Side to brave a new back room—that of a Cosi restaurant on Broadway between 77th and 78th, sprinkled with local Democrats, men and women, old and young, nearly all white, noshing on bread, sipping coffee. *You take Manhattan, I'll take a double latte.*

The evening's host, an earnest, unflappable woman with her blonde hair pulled back tightly as if to keep any unruly thoughts bound inside her skull as hostages to good manners, introduces Lamont, who bounds to the front of the crowd wearing a VOTE FOR PEDRO T-shirt and his off-work standard of baggy jeans, belt dangling down the front like a cord to pull in case of emergency.

"You make me proud to be a Democrat," Lamont tells the assembled liberals, many of whom first came together in support of Howard Dean back in 2004. The Upper West Siders beam at this young black man. He beams back. It looks for a moment as if this will be a lovefest, the polarities of race and class dissolved like a shot of hazelnut syrup into an iced Frappuccino. He starts out with a tribute to the diversity of the Obama campaign. "Through working on this campaign, I've seen so many races, ages, sexes...." He waits a beat. "Well, only two sexes."

"In New York it's hard to say just two sexes," a woman in the audience interjects. This being the Upper West Side, her remark may be a sympathetic attempt at humor, or it may be a righteous attempt to be inclusive. She may be suggesting that we can't forget the transgendered, the hermaphroditic, the eunuchs and the just plain freaky-deaky. The Democratic Party should not reject any form of the human organism. If a man has a penis on top of his head or a vagina in his feet, don't stare. Just be sure he's registered to vote, preferably as a Democrat.

Lamont goes on to tell the activists how he had written a college paper about Obama back in 2006. "We had to choose a leader," he says. "It could have been Sta-

lin, it could have been Hitler, it could have been Martin Luther King. But since all the good people were gone—I wrote about Barack Obama."

A few twitters.

"So I researched him, I looked him up, but I didn't feel him up," Lamont says. This might go over well down in Brownsville or in a local comedy club, but the sensitivities are different here. A slight uneasiness pervades the bread-nibblers at Cosi. A few of the women are starting to look at each other, as if asking, Who did they say this guy was?

"Anyway, I got an A-minus on the paper." A few people clap. The goodwill is holding by a thread through Lamont's impromptu stand-up routine. Then he admits—that compulsive honesty again—that what with a full-time job and all of his organizing work, he hasn't had time to read Obama's two books, *Dreams From My Father* and *The Audacity of Hope*. A silence equal to a gasp fills the room. He'll read them, he promises, if Obama somehow loses the election. As consolation, penance.

The room appears unsettled by this scenario.

A white-haired lady interrupts Lamont to ask, "When can we ask you questions about the campaign?"

Lamont spins 360 degrees, showing his dance skills, and starts again. He's getting a rapid-fire lesson in gauging his audience. "I'm Lamont Carolina," he says with a laugh. "What's great about the Obama campaign," he tells the lady, "is that you can do things on your own. Create groups, events, go to the website and so on." He speaks of the 50-state strategy, how Obama will battle McCain in every state.

"Howard Dean invented that," the host says.

"Howard Dean invented it, but Barack Obama perfected it," Lamont parries.

The white-haired lady says, "Where is the Obama headquarters in New York?"

"There isn't one," Lamont tells her, deadpan. "There is actually only a 49-state strategy."

The white-haired lady stares incredulously. "That was a joke," Lamont says.

A younger woman sitting next to the white-haired lady says, "We want to go to a physical place. We don't want to phone-bank at home."

The white-haired lady says, "We want to know when someone is going to come and lead us."

"He's an organizer, not a spokesman for the campaign," a young man shouts at the women.

The white-haired lady says, "Where can we go to get the answers to why Obama voted the way he did on FISA?" She's referring to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, a modified version of which Obama recently voted in the Senate to support, upsetting many civil libertarians.

"I find it disturbing that he's a constitutional lawyer," the host chimes in.

Lamont, again tilted off message, can feel it: The meeting now verges on anarchy. It's a particularly Upper West Side kind of chaos. One of the virtues of the neighborhood is

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that it's a place where people get into a tizzy about wiretapping. One of the defects of the neighborhood is that it's a place where people get into a tizzy about wiretapping. They like their politicians as pure as a plastic bottle full of artisanal springwater.

Recently Lamont has been poring over the intricate, stultifying language of legislation. He's heard Bill Clinton is a master of the small print of bills, and he'd like to become the same. But he's not quite ready to explain the byzantine dimensions of Obama's vote on FISA.

So Lamont answers the chorus of kvetching with enthusiasm, as if sheer gusto will make superfluous the thorny complexities of the wiretapping bill. It's a reflex of his when confronted by difficulty. His path to this room has been much longer than the 10 miles between the Upper West Side and Brownsville. Along the way, he has endured doubts and setbacks more grueling than these cranky Democrats have raised, and he has always overcome them by dogged persistence. Sometimes he feels lonely in his new worlds, but he can't see an alternative. "Knowing where I came from," he has said, "I don't want to go back empty-handed."

With the fervor of a preacher he describes to the audience how at a rally in Union Square on the day of the Nevada primary, he brought coffee and doughnuts over to a forlorn cluster of Hillary Clinton supporters.

"They were drained after trying to match us chanting, 'Fired up, ready to go!'" he says. Eventually he had organized the Clinton and Obama factions into a mutual chant of "Democrats '08, Democrats '08!"

"Do you have anything written?" the white-haired lady asks. She wants to know where people can go for answers to give to Hillary Clinton supporters who have their doubts about Obama. Another woman exclaims, "Obama's website sucks for that!"

Lamont holds out his cell phone to the group. "I'll even give you my cell phone number if you're not computer savvy and you need to ask questions about the campaign. Our way may seem unconventional, but it's working."

And then he proceeds to tell the group about his plans for an Obama scavenger hunt in Central Park.

At this point the white-haired lady has had enough. She gathers her bundles and briskly exits the back room, yelling at Lamont as she goes, "By the way, you should read Obama's books. They're fabulous."

Lamont looks stunned. He makes his way to the lady who has been bitching about Obama's website, bends down and begins whispering into her ear. She smiles. As he departs Cosi, Lamont makes sure to thank the staff for their efforts. "Carlos, thanks!" he yells. "We'll do it again." They smile. They like Lamont. They seem to think he's somebody important; they're just not yet sure who.

In the relative safety of the street (only oncoming cars, no sideswipes about FISA), he finally cracks—just a little. He wipes his brow. "Whew. I had a tougher time there than I did doing stand-up comedy around the corner," he says. The only remark that really made him mad was the white-haired woman telling him he should read Obama's books. "I've had a job," he says, "and all of this volunteering." He punches the air in disgust.

On Amsterdam Avenue he spots a beautiful blonde dressed in green, making her way south. "Excuse me, miss?" he asks. "Do you live on the Upper West Side?"

She does. "What do you know about FISA?" he inquires.

"The drug company?" she asks in a rich Southern accent. She wonders if he means Pfizer.

"No, the bill. Wiretapping. All that. But don't worry about it," Lamont says, relieved that he's not the only one in this neighborhood insufficiently conversant on the issue.

"One more thing, miss, if I may. Who are you going to vote for?"

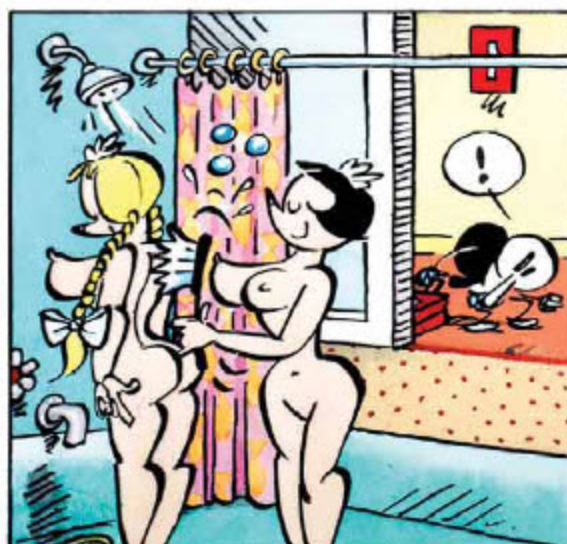
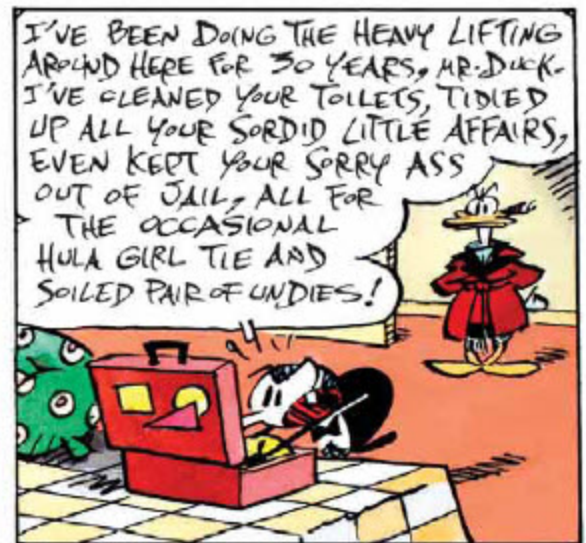
"Obama," she says sweetly, smiling.

"Yes!" Lamont Carolina says, slapping hands with her and punching the air, this time in victory. In the coming weeks, he will land a position as a field organizer for Obama in Cuyahoga County, Ohio. The campaign will go on.



Dirty Duck

by Bobby London





More Like an A+

A word on the above, from singer LILY ALLEN's MySpace blog: "I was very hot in London yesterday, and it's no secret I don't like wearing bras. Measuring in at 32A, it hardly seems necessary."



Better Than a Box of Chocolates

Who says men don't get presents on Valentine's Day? KIRSTY CORNER came into the world on a late-1980s February 14—consider this our thank-you note.

CHRISTOPHER AMERUOSO



Bare With Us

Our friend TRACI BINGHAM is on *Gimme My Reality Show!* on Fox Reality Channel. She's competing to get her own show, to be called *American Sex Symbol*. She needs your vote, and to earn it she has shot new topless pictures (like this one). See more photos at playboy.com/tracibingham; vote for her at foxreality.com.

Entertaining All Offers

"I wouldn't say one way or another what my preference is sexually"—Danity Kane's AUBREY O'DAY to Broadway.com, August 18, 2008.



REICHE BILDSPASH NEWS

CLARETTE LIGOR PLASH NEWS



Mar Mar Superstar

You may have seen MARCELA MAR on TV shows such as *Reinas*, *Todos Quieren con Marilyn* and *Pura Sangre*. If so, you live in Colombia—thanks for reading. Her only work on gringos' radar is the 2007 film *Love in the Time of Cholera*. And we're fresh out of cholera jokes.

JACKSON LEE SPASH NEWS



Up for Grabs

Hitstress RIHANNA signed on to endorse a razor (Gillette Venus), footwear (Nike) and cosmetics (CoverGirl). She does not appear to have a contract with a bra manufacturer. Are you reading this, Victoria's Secret? These puppies could be yours.

Dane Attraction

ANNE LINDFELD, host of *Headbangers Ball* on Danish MTV, is coming to America to rock your ass off. She will rock your ass off, and then you will have no ass, and you will find it difficult to do simple things such as sitting and the hula hoop. Consider yourselves warned.

Next Month



MMM MMM GOOD.



THIS DOES NOT SEEM LIKE OPRAH'S DEMOGRAPHIC.



RICKY WILLIAMS RIDING, UM, HIGH.



CAROL ALT, OUR COVER GIRL.

AGENDA FOR A NEW ERA—COME JANUARY, A NEW PRESIDENT, FRESH FROM MONTHS OF MAKING CAMPAIGN DECLARATIONS, WILL ENTER THE WHITE HOUSE. THERE HE WILL HAVE TO MAKE GOOD ON HIS PROMISES. FORMER SENATOR AND PRESIDENTIAL CONTENDER **GARY HART** DESCRIBES WHAT AWAITS.

CAROL ALT—RANKED AS ONE OF THE TOP MODELS OF ALL TIME ON THE STRENGTH OF HER VISAGE, THE BEAUTY KNOWN AS "THE FACE" SHOWS OFF HER AMAZING BODY.

COMIC-BOOK HEROES—AWARD-WINNING AUTHORS **JODI PICOULT**, **WALTER MOSLEY**, **MARGARET ATWOOD** AND **JONATHAN LETHEM** CONSIDER THE EFFECT COMICS HAVE HAD ON THEIR LIVES, THEIR ART AND THE CULTURE. TOO SEXY FOR KIDS? WAS SPIDER-MAN BLACK?

55TH ANNIVERSARY PLAYMATE HUNT—TAKE AN UNOBSTRUCTED LOOK AT THE GORGEOUS CANDIDATES AUDITIONING FOR THE ROLE OF MISS JANUARY IN OUR 55TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE. WE DON'T COMPLAIN ABOUT OUR JOBS TOO OFTEN, BUT IT HASN'T BEEN A DAY AT THE BEACH HAVING TO CHOOSE JUST ONE.

BLOOD'S A ROVER—CORRUPTION, CONSPIRACY AND MURDER ARE THE THEMES, AND J. EDGAR HOOVER, HOWARD HUGHES, ASSASSINS, FBI AGENTS, DRUG RUNNERS, SMALL-

TIME GUMSHOES AND SUBVERSIVE LEFT-WING BEAUTIES ARE THE CHARACTERS IN **JAMES ELLROY'S** STORY. WE PRESENT AN EXPLOSIVE EXCERPT FROM HIS LATEST NOVEL.

GRANDE VENTI MOCHA OPRAH CHAI—YOU'VE HEARD **DENIS LEARY** RANT BEFORE, BUT YOU HAVE NEVER HEARD HIM RANT ABOUT OPRAH. SERIOUSLY. THE *NO CURE FOR CANCER MAN* THINKS THE POWER OF O COULD HEAL THE COUNTRY.

HUGH JACKMAN—THE CLAWS ARE OUT IN THE INTERVIEW AS WOLVERINE TELLS **MICHAEL FLEMING** ABOUT THE NEW X-MEN MOVIE, *AUSTRALIA* AND WHY REAL MEN DANCE.

THE CURIOUS CASE OF RICKY WILLIAMS—THE RECLUSIVE, OFT-SUSPENDED, POT-SMOKING (?), INJURY-PRONE, YOGA-PRACTICING, HARD-CHARGING RUNNING BACK ALLOWS **PAT JORDAN** TO STUDY THE PLAYBOOK IN HIS SOUL TO FIND THE X'S AND O'S—AND TRICK PLAYS—THAT MAKE HIM TICK.

VIDEO-GAME GIRLS—THEY MAY HAVE IMAGINARY BOOBS (WELL, IMAGINARY EVERYTHING), BUT THESE GIRLS ARE VERY SEXY.

PLUS: EXPERT COLLEGE BASKETBALL PICKS FROM **DAVID KAPLAN**, *SEX IN CINEMA* AND OUR FASHION DEPARTMENT DRESSING UP THE PUNISHER, **RAY STEVENSON**. AND TWINS! MISSES DECEMBER **NATALIE** AND **JENNIFER CAMPBELL**.