

THE SEX AND MUSIC ISSUE

PLAYBOY

ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN

MARCH 2009

AUBREY O'DAY

BREAKS FREE OF
DANITY KANE (AND HER CLOTHES)

THE
PLAYBOY
MUSIC
AWARDS

ROCK
THE
RABBIT
PERRY
FARRELL
MOTLEY
CRUE
PHARRELL
THE KOOKS
Q-TIP
AND
MGMT

COUNTRY SUPERSTAR
KENNY
CHESNEY
INTERVIEW

20Q
FLIGHT
OF THE
CONCHORDS

PLUS: **MY**
BROTHER
THE
UNABOMBER

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FAMOUS **SEXIEST**
CELEBRITIES
OF THE YEAR



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PLAYBILL

March Madness: In 2009 the term seems apt for more than a giant hoops tournament. Is it just us, or is this whole country in a sanity recession? At this issue's heart lies a story of classic American madness, that of **Ted Kaczynski**, the Unabomber, as told by his brother, **David Kaczynski**. *My Brother Ted* isn't a plea for anything, merely a recollection by a sibling who still can't understand what happened to his "self once removed." We'll also note here that David condemns capital punishment, as we have always done in our *Forum* pages, and serves as executive director of New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty (nyadp.org). Author **Jim Harrison** visits madness in *The World's Fastest White Woman*, a dream about a beautiful track star who runs to stay sane. But we're not all imaginary Olympians; if the *thump-thump-thump* of feet on street doesn't do the trick, look to music for percussive therapy.

It is both the fever and the cure. It works for **Kenny Chesney**, our *Playboy Interview* subject and headliner of sorts, who tells Contributing Editor **Rob Tannenbaum** he hardly sleeps at night and feels truly comfortable only onstage. You know times are weird when **Duff McKagan**, formerly of Guns N' Roses and currently of Loaded (the album *Sick* will be in stores in April), is delivering sage financial advice, as he does in this month's *Success* column. In *Boom Car Boom*, illustrated by **Tin Salamunic**, journalist **George Prochnik** hangs out with absurd car-stereo enthusiasts, men who seek to play a single note as loudly as possible—from a car. Consider Tommy the King of Bass, a master blaster whose quest for the ultimate boomin' system has destroyed his hearing. Crazy.

(Almost as crazy as swimming with sharks, but that's another tale.) Our latest installment of *Rock the Rabbit* is rich in head cases, from **Perry Farrell** and photographer **Mick Rock**, both insane in the best of ways, to a band called the **Kooks**. If music won't stop the madness, there's that other balm—beauty—which we've turned up to 11 this month. Cover girl **Aubrey O'Day**, photographed by **Markus Klinko** and **Indrani**, was the sex bomb aching to explode out of Danity Kane—and now she has. Cute loose cannon **Lily Allen** opens our annual music package; add to the mix Miss March **Jennifer Pershing** and a couple dozen sexy celebrities and your world will be rocked but good. And speaking of immigration (or not), **Joe Domanick** examines the anti-immigration policies of Arizona's Maricopa County sheriff in *Forum*, while in *20Q* Kiwi novelty rockers Jemaine Clement and Bret McKenzie (HBO's **Flight of the Conchords**) remind us that we'll always love wacko foreigners. Musical ability a plus.



David Kaczynski



Joe Domanick



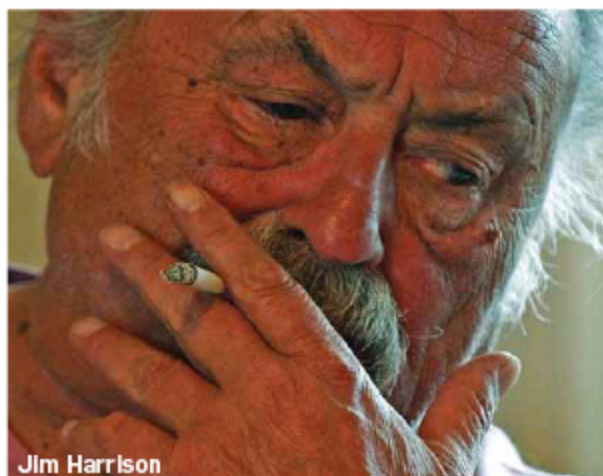
Lily Allen



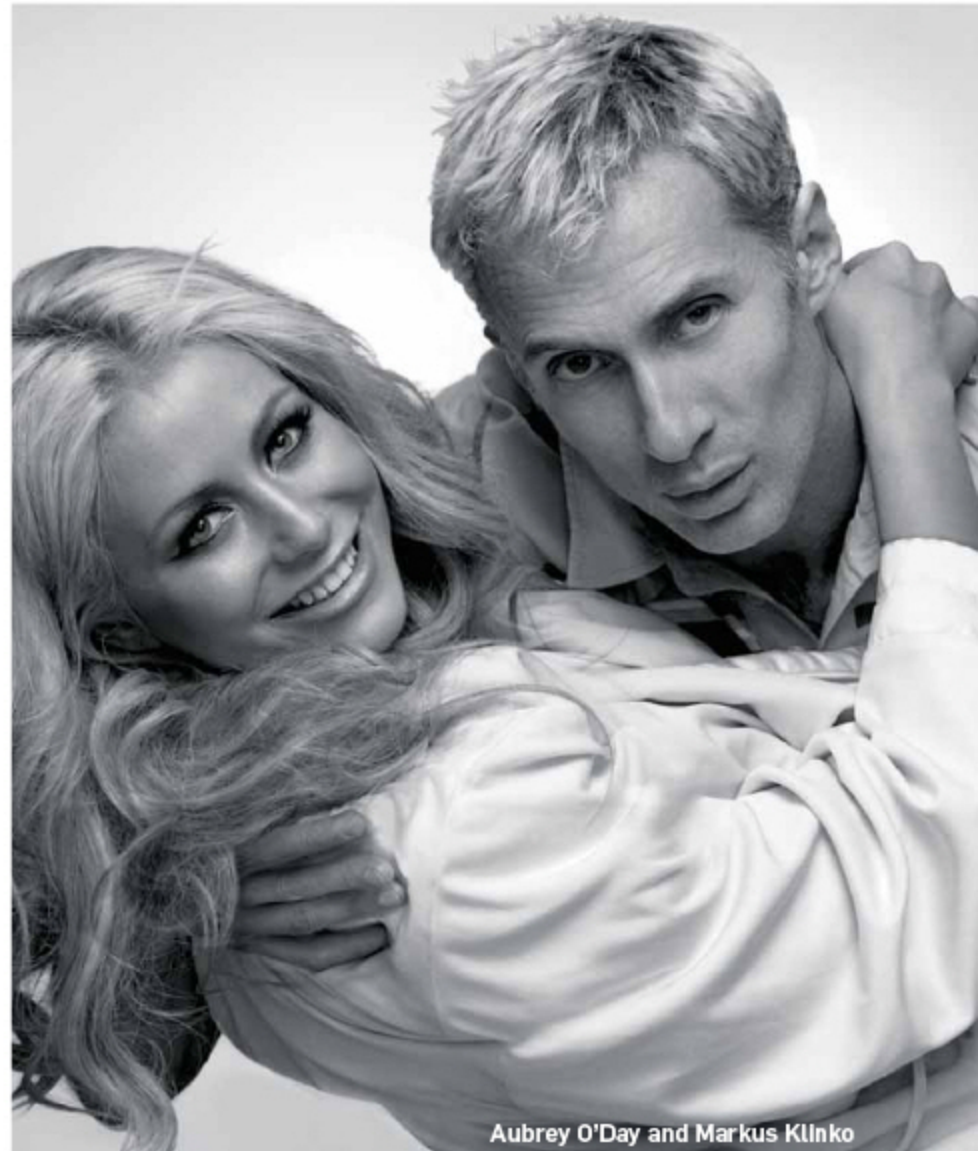
Tin Salamunic



George Prochnik



Jim Harrison



Aubrey O'Day and Markus Klinko



Perry Farrell and Mick Rock

PLAYBOY

CONTENTS



36 MY BROTHER TED

Even killers like the Unabomber have families. Ted Kaczynski's brother, DAVID KACZYNSKI, looks back at growing up with a gifted and very troubled sibling.



90 AUBREY O'DAY

FEATURES

46 BOOM CAR BOOM

It's real tropic thunder. GEORGE PROCHNIK hangs out with Florida's growing boom-car community.

50 PLAYBOY'S MUSIC AWARDS 2009

Our annual aural retrospective has Lily Allen talking dirty and more.

60 AT YOUR DESK, IN YOUR LAP AND ON THE TOWN

The latest laptops have some serious byte.

88 SHARK TALE

It's man vs. monster as THAYER WALKER cage dives in Mexico with great whites.



INTERVIEW

29 KENNY CHESNEY

Nashville's golden boy chats with ROB TANNENBAUM about life on the road and his ill-fated marriage to Renée Zellweger.

20Q

78 FLIGHT OF THE CONCHORDS

ERIC SPITZNAGEL confronts Bret McKenzie and Jemaine Clement about their hit HBO series and unlikely road to stardom.

FICTION

76 THE WORLD'S FASTEST WHITE WOMAN

Our narrator meets a woman whose speed is matched only by her appetites—for food and sex—in this story by JIM HARRISON.



COVER STORY

Singer, actress and reality-TV star Aubrey O'Day has a bad-girl rep, but her philanthropic work reveals a more intelligent and caring woman than she gets credit for. The former Danity Kane member says she feels empowered on our cover by photographers Markus Klinko and Indrani. Our Rabbit scores the best seat in the house.

PLAYBOY

CONTENTS

PICTORIALS

40 PLAYBOY'S SEXIEST CELEBRITIES

Sure, the definition of *celebrity* has changed over the years, but hot is still hot. We highlight 2009's most scintillating stars, including Megan Fox, Hayden Panettiere, Beyoncé, Angelina Jolie, Eva Mendes, Jayde Nicole, the Girls Next Door and other beauties.



64 PLAYMATE: JENNIFER PERSHING

Miss March rocks in two places: the Sunset Strip and right here.

90 BACKSTAGE WITH AUBREY O'DAY

You think she's great onstage? Wait until you get our all-access pass to see the sexy singer raw and unplugged.



FASHION 82 ROCK THE RABBIT

Six very different music makers—the Kooks, Pharrell, MGMT, Q-Tip, Perry Farrell and Motley Crue—break the rules of fashion in all the right ways.
BY JOSEPH DE ACETIS

64 PLAYMATE JENNIFER PERSHING



NEWS AND NOTES

9 THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY

Hef and his new girlfriends step out at Playboy's 55th anniversary party, several Playmates visit troops at Fort Irwin for Playboy Radio, Carmen Electra slips into a Bunny costume to deal blackjack at the Playboy Club in Las Vegas, and more.

114 PLAYMATE NEWS

Miss April 1997 Kelly Monaco teams with former Spice Girl Mel B for the Vegas production *Peepshow*; Miss June 2008 Juliette Fretté takes a closer look at *Juno* writer Diablo Cody's *Candy Girl*.

DEPARTMENTS

- 1 PLAYBILL
- 7 DEAR PLAYBOY
- 11 AFTER HOURS
- 14 REVIEWS
- 17 CITY GUIDE
- 21 MANTRACK
- 26 SUCCESS: DUFF MCKAGAN
- 27 PLAYBOY ADVISOR
- 74 PARTY JOKES
- 122 GRAPEVINE

FORUM

117 START MAKING SENSE

Arizona has the most illegal U.S. border crossings, and that makes Maricopa County sheriff Joe Arpaio mad. JOE DOMANICK looks at one tough cop.

119 AMERICAN PEON

A guest-worker program would help U.S. businesses, which would love to create a working class with few rights.

THIS MONTH ON PLAYBOY.COM

PLAYBOY CITY GUIDES Our editors' picks for the best babes, bars, hotels and more. playboy.com/afterhours

DIGITAL FORUM *The Playboy Forum* makes its interactive online debut. playboy.com/forum

ROCK ON Catch videos, MP3s, style advice and more from our Rock the Rabbit artists. playboy.com/rocktherabbit

PLAY-MATION NATION In our new humor section, cutting-edge animators take PLAYBOY's artistic rep beyond the next level. playboy.com/humor

WANDERLUST In our new travel series we shark dive and check into a Japanese sex hotel. playboy.com/afterhours



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WIGGLE ROOM

As I got my hair cut recently, my seven-year-old son sat waiting on a bench in the barbershop, engrossed in a magazine. Turns out, of course, it was a copy of *PLAYBOY*. A barber kindly put it away, and everyone had a good laugh. On our walk home, my son, sensing his reading material had been inappropriate, apologetically told me, "Dad, I just want you to know...I wasn't reading any of the articles."

Nika Aldrich
New York, New York

HOLIDAY HITS

How can you compile a list of classic holiday party songs ("Deejay Your Christmas Party for \$29.70," *After Hours*, December) without including the all-time greatest: Cheech & Chong's "Santa Claus and His Old Lady"?

Doug Rose
Fresno, California

No Nat "King" Cole? That alone makes your list incomplete.

Dave Murphy
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

Although I usually consider what *PLAYBOY* says to be gospel, it's hard to understand your omission of "Peace on Earth/Little Drummer Boy," the duet by David Bowie and Bing Crosby. The song meets two of your criteria (classic and soulful) while satisfying your cool friends (Bowie) and your in-laws (Crosby).

John Saleone
Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania

Associate Editor Josh Robertson responds: "Some of the 30 songs are hokey, but none is supposed to make you laugh. At any rate, 'Santa Claus and His Old Lady' isn't available for legal download. We toyed with including Cole's 'Christmas Song,' but it's too slow. The Bowie-Crosby number is also too slow and, more important, has a Christian theme. We wanted a theologically neutral playlist."

ALL-NATURAL ALT

What a treat to see an older woman—48-year-old supermodel Carol Alt—on the cover and inside your December issue (*Carol Alt in the Raw*). I've been married for more than 25 years and have thoroughly enjoyed watching my wife grow from a beautiful woman of 21 to an amazingly beautiful woman of 49. My wife says she stays in shape for herself, not for me, and I find that confidence very sexy. As Alt notes, eating healthy is a big part of looking healthy. I have seen this firsthand, as my wife also believes in eating raw foods. Couple that with an active lifestyle, and you have paradise. I am a lucky man.

Brian Gerring
Shingle Springs, California

I have subscribed since the 1960s and don't think I have ever seen anyone in

DEAR PLAYBOY

What Obama Should Do

A lot of what former Democratic senator and onetime presidential candidate Gary Hart suggests in his *Agenda for a New Era* (December) would greatly increase government spending, even as he preaches about the need to cut waste. For example, Hart suggests ordering hybrids to replace all the vehicles in the White House fleet. While this would be a fine gesture toward a greener future, it would also cost millions of dollars. Same with replacing coal-burning power plants with renewable sources. We should do this over time, but renewable sources are much less efficient and deliver less power, meaning we would have to build many new plants. Finally, Hart suggests the military no longer needs carrier-based or amphibious strike groups because modern warfare is confined to small-unit engagements and special operations. That may be true, but with China



challenging our status as the world's sole superpower, we can't afford to downsize too much. We need a strong military to deploy those Special Forces to areas of the globe that are otherwise inaccessible.

Chris Merriam
Virginia Beach, Virginia

the magazine as beautiful as Carol Alt. I would try her raw diet, but I love chicken and beef too much.

Richard Pupi
Boston, Massachusetts

Kudos on your Carol Alt pictorial. Hef obviously likes younger women, but I like older ones. It's nice to see a little variety in the women you feature.

Seth Piatt
Alexandria, Minnesota



We'll have whatever she's having.

Thank you, from a 33-year-old woman, for recognizing healthy femininity at any age. My husband thanks you for not sacrificing your standards to do it.

Rachel Mills
McLean, Virginia

MORE ADVICE FOR THE PRESIDENT

Regarding Gary Hart's agenda for the new president: The chief executive should make hybrids the standard for the entire federal car pool, not just the White House. He should also use the power of revenue sharing to encourage (i.e., force) local, county and state authorities to do the same. If that happened, we wouldn't have the Chicago Police Department converting its patrol fleet to gas-guzzling Chevy Tahoes.

Hugh Cook
Hickory Hills, Illinois

Gary Hart? Of *Monkey Business* fame? What next—wisdom from Ted Kennedy?

Steve Novalk
McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania

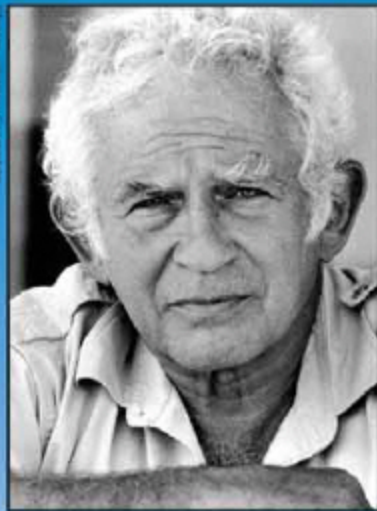
For all the lip service you give in the *Forum* to libertarianism, it's strange you would allow Hart to make a stump speech combining his vision of an international police force headed by the emperor in chief with what he laughingly calls "constitutional principles" and "a Jeffersonian respect for the common sense and good judgment of the people." How is the people's common sense respected when a president "mandates" wildly restrictive changes to an obsequious Congress? How are America's highest principles upheld when mobile strike forces are allowed free rein to treat domestic and international battlegrounds as kill zones regardless of the Posse Comitatus Act? The constitution Hart prays to is fictitious. The actual Constitution says all those powers "not delegated

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to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people," not to an international military-economic-judicial dictator, the likes of which Hart esteems the new president uniquely capable of becoming. I desperately hope Hart is wrong.

M.D. O'Donnell
Athens, Georgia

WHISKEY VERSUS WHISKY

In *The Playboy Bar: Scotch* (December) you refer to Scotch "whiskey." But only Irish whiskey is spelled with an *e*. A subtle note: You name three whisky-producing regions in Scotland, but traditionally there are four: Lowland, Campbeltown, Islay and Highland, which includes the islands and Speyside. In fact, the Speyside region features as many distilleries as the rest of the country. Some people count the islands as a sixth region.

Ernest Black
Marlborough, Massachusetts

We sometimes hear from readers confused by our spelling of whiskey when referring to spirits produced in Scotland or Canada. Our copy editors rely on Merriam-Webster's 11th edition, which regards both spellings as acceptable but prefers "whiskey," with no reference to provenance.

SCENE-STEALER

You give credit in *Sex in Cinema 2008* (December) to Kristen Bell and Russell Brand for their naughty performances in



Jason Segel advances the cause of male nudity.

Forgetting Sarah Marshall but don't mention the real star turn: Jason Segel's full-frontal (if fleeting) nude scenes. It may be the first time the male lead appears nude in a film but the female leads don't.

Alex Gaspar
Seattle, Washington

Segel does deserve credit. But we've seen enough of his package.

MUSIC NOTES

Up until now I've never had a problem with any of your magazine's content, but a category is missing from the *Playboy's Music Poll 2008* ballot (Decem-

ber): the blues, which lies at the foundation of most country and rock. Next year throw us bloozers a bone.

Paul Cook
Ventura, California

The ballot has a minor error. Dave Holland's *Pass It On* is by his newly formed sextet, not his quintet.

James Orr
Everett, Washington

Five, six—it's all good.

It's good to see Baltimore recognized for something other than its seafood, but the so-called Baltimore sound you describe in December's *After Hours* reviews ("Paris + Baltimore = Amour") is definitely not the city's only great music. To me, the most interesting scene these days is hardcore. Acts like Ruiner and Blind the Thief eschew repetitive *chunk-chunk-chunk* tough-guy music and focus on melodic riffing and lyrics from the soul.

Jeff Israel
Baltimore, Maryland

LOVING OPRAH

Thanks for spreading holiday cheer in the form of Denis Leary and his funny, insightful appreciation of Oprah Winfrey (*Grande Venti Mocha Oprah Chai*, December). I laughed. I cried. I Googled Oprah. I also paid a visit to my local watering hole, where I noticed a sign behind the bar: IN OPRAH WE TRUST; ALL OTHERS PAY CASH. That about says it all.

Brian Ormond
Newark, Ohio

I find PLAYBOY sinfully tasty, from the Chuck Palahniuk fiction to the latest Leary rant. When I'm out and about, I get many compliments when carrying my Playboy satchel or wearing my white Rabbit Head sunglasses. The fantasy becomes the style, and the style becomes the life.

Judy Rosenblum
Palmetto, Florida

Leary's take on Oprah may be the funniest piece I've read in my 35 years as a subscriber. It left my wife—an *O* magazine subscriber—in hysterics.

Brian Steckler
Spokane, Washington

CREDIT IS DUE

In the *Playboy Interview* with Hugh Jackman (December) the actor recounts diving on top of a piano and sliding onto the floor during an early Broadway performance of *The Boy From Oz*. Jackman ad-libbed his recovery by calling to a stagehand he remembered as "Jason" and having him slide across the piano to test its slickness. That stagehand was me! I was so close to seeing my name in my favorite magazine. Is there anything you can do?

Justin Sanok
Toms River, New Jersey



THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY

HEF SIGHTINGS, MANSION FROLICS AND NIGHTLIFE NOTES



GRAND CHARITIES HONORS THE MAN FOR HIS GENEROSITY

At the Grand Charities event, Hef gave Pam Anderson a kiss, then was presented with an award for his dedication to philanthropy, plus a \$25,000 check made out to the Hugh M. Hefner Foundation. "Oh," he quipped to Pam after she handed him the statuette, "I thought you were my award."



HEF GIVES ALL ACCESS INTERVIEW

The Man Invited Billy Bush to PMW for an *Access Hollywood* and *Billy Bush Show* interview. "Holly was my number one lady, but it wasn't in the cards," Hef told Bush. "Then wonderful twins walked into my life. I got a two for one. It only happens to Hefner!"



PLAYMATES BOOST MORALE

Playboy Radio broadcast its *Playmate Hour* from Fort Irwin in California. After the show wrapped, the girls took pictures with soldiers soon to be deployed. Here are a few of our boys with Playmates (from far left) Mirlam Gonzalez, Deanna Brooks, Stephanie Heinrich, Heather Rene Smith and Shallan Melers.

WHAT BEATS 21? CARMEN'S PAIR OF 36CS

Our 55th anniversary cover girl Carmen Electra put on a Bunny costume and dealt blackjack at the Playboy Club. Before she worked her shift Carmen had to train and be certified by the Nevada Gaming Commission. She was a bit slower than the pros, but the card players didn't seem to mind at all.



HEF AT 55TH PARTY WITH THE NEXT GIRLS NEXT DOOR?

In honor of PLAYBOY's 55th anniversary Hef threw a fitting fete at One Sunset. This also became a coming-out party, as he showed off his new girlfriends—the Shannon twins, Karissa and Kristina, and the lovely Crystal Harris—with 55th Anniversary Playmate Dasha Astafieva (in sheer dress).



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PALMS

PLAYBOY AFTERHOURS

BECOMING ATTRACTION

Maria Brink

Catch singer Maria Brink in the bathtub and you may not recognize her. Onstage, the gorgeous, tattooed and voluptuous front-woman wails, screams and sweats along with her metal band, In This Moment. But far from the moshing crowds, she gives the rock-chick persona a rest. "I love long baths," she purrs. "I light candles and sing Sarah McLachlan." Serenity is rare for a woman who spends up to 300 days of the year on the road, opening for such monsters of rock as Rob Zombie and Ozzy Osbourne, but she tries. "My dudes are gentlemen," she says of her bandmates. "They give me the back of the bus. I hang curtains and have candles and flowers and all my dresses. It's my little secret girlie place." Maria doesn't avoid the party scene that rages up front, but she does have one rule: "I don't let them have girls under 21 on the bus," she says. "But if she's a grown woman who knows what she's doing and wants to get crazy and naked with them, I don't care." The girl can hang; just watch out that she doesn't beat you at your own game. In Las Vegas to record its latest album, *The Dream*, the band staged a Texas hold 'em tournament. Guess who won. "I'm a competitive woman, and I learn fast," Maria brags. She plans to blow the cash on more of the trademark babydoll dresses that barely contain her curves as she bounds around the stage. "I like my doll dresses really short. I like feminine but eccentric stuff. I'm having a dress made out of this crazy gold 1980s material I just bought." So do the frocks figure in bedroom role-playing? "No way!" she says, giggling. "You'd get much more special treatment than that."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
ANTOINE VERGLAS



Knicker Drawers

Welcome to the Arty Party

When first we heard of Dr. Sketchy's Anti-Art School we pegged it as something that would never play in Peoria. Artistic young people gathering in a bar to drink cocktails and draw live burlesque models? We applauded (in a quiet manner) the fusion of so many favorite concepts—appreciation of the female form, artistic impulse, mixology—but lamented (also quietly) that it would never get out of Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Turns out we were wrong—incredibly so. With upwards of 40 chapters in the U.S. and another 20 overseas, the Dr. Sketchy's phenomenon is swimming in the mainest of hipster mainstreams. In home base New York, that means better babes and



glitzy venues—shown above is noted fetish model Mosh onstage at the Slipper Room in Manhattan. "In three years Dr. Sketchy's has gone from me and my dorky friends in a bar to an empire spanning five continents," says founder, hostess, illustrator and occasional model

Molly Crabapple. "Who would have known pretty girls would be so popular?" Although Peoria remains uncolonized, comparative Smallvilles Missoula, Montana and Asheville, North Carolina host Sketchy chapters. To find out if there's one in your town, visit drsketchy.com/branches.



Employee of the Month

Jamie Holly

PLAYBOY: So what's your job title?

JAMIE: I'm an off-bearer.

PLAYBOY: Does that mean you take your shirt off and bare your—

JAMIE: I work at a plywood mill. An off-bearer pulls wood.

PLAYBOY: Aha. You pull wood. The guys in the mill must appreciate that.

JAMIE: I hear that one every day! I pull wood out, grade it and sort it.

PLAYBOY: This interview is writing itself. Do you sort the wood you pull by girth or by length? Rigidity?

JAMIE: If there's a defect in a board, I plug in the holes.

PLAYBOY: Oh. You really are talking about plywood. Are there many women at your mill?

JAMIE: Some, but I'm the only one not at a desk job. I didn't start as an off-bearer, but I asked for a more demanding job. It's such a good workout that I don't even go to the gym. I think I have more stamina than the guys.

PLAYBOY: Here we go again. Is there any sexual tension at the mill?

JAMIE: Believe it or not, I can't find a date there. Some say I'm intimidating.

PLAYBOY: A beautiful woman can be daunting. If a guy were to ask you out, how could he get past that and provide you with the perfect evening?

JAMIE: Actually, I'm not into romance. Pop in a comedy and laugh with me. That's the key to my heart.

PLAYBOY: And if one can unlock it?

JAMIE: I have a pair of fishnets that doesn't leave my bedroom. And neither would you.

How You're Doing

Read Her Body Language



The Geeks' Guide to World Domination by Garth Sundem is a crucial compendium of trivia and tips to please and inform the geek within us all. The material includes the extremely geeky ("How to Make Chain-Mail Armor"), the highbrow geeky ("Five Brilliant Russian Novelists You've Never Heard Of"), the entertainingly geeky ("The Seven Best College Pranks of All Time") and the actually quite cool ("MacGyver Wine Making"). Here are some highlights from the "Dating Tells" list. Take note (preferably on graph paper). If things are going well, she will:

1. Increase her angle of incidence off vertical as her upper body leans in your direction.
2. Lower drink from initial defensive posture.
3. Point feet and body toward you like a solar array catching sunlight.
4. Allow her pupils to widen, leading to increased blink rate.
5. Touch body parts—hers or yours.



SEE MORE OF JAMIE AT CLUB.PLAYBOY.COM.
APPLY TO BE AN EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AT PLAYBOY.COM/POSE.

Everywhere Man Where to See Zach Galifianakis in 2009



With five films and a TV pilot in the hopper for 2009, comic Zach Galifianakis may soon be a household name—and a difficult one to spell, at that. “I was up for the lead in *The Zach Galifianakis Story*,” he says of the elusive seventh credit. “But they gave it to Jodie Foster.” Fans of the cult hit *The Comedians of Comedy* revere him as a god, yet when we talked to Galifianakis, he was keen to point out that his appeal goes beyond Comedy Central viewers. “I’m good friends with the Denver Nuggets cheerleading squad,” he claims. “They seem to like me,

but they’re not big laughers.” We wondered whether he could even keep track of them—the six projects, not the NBA cheerleaders. “Yes, I can,” he told us. Here they are, in order of release:

***Citizen Cane*.** “This is the story of an old folks’ home.”

***The Complete History of Wine Corks*.** “Self-explanatory.”

Duderonomy, Where’s My Car? “An inside look at how the Bible shaped the automobile industry.”

***Styrofoam Cooler: The Musical*.** “An accountant and his Styrofoam cooler sing duets about his insipid existence.”

***My Left Scissorfoot*.** “I really didn’t understand the premise of this one, to be quite honest.”

***How About Thawing Your Beef-Jerky Breath*.** “If you’ve seen *Yentl*, you’ve pretty much seen this one.”

Galifianakis really is in a lot of movies, though none of the above. The Zach attack kicks off with the comedy Youth in Revolt.



March Badness

Worst month of the year? March. February is short and April cruel, but March seems just plain bad. Winter won’t end, you’ve bulked up like a bear readying for hibernation, and three of your Final Four picks tanked early—again. What can you do to make it through? Some suggestions: **Drink Guinness, and not just on March 17.** Why do you need St. Patrick’s Day as an excuse to consume this pleasant beverage? This year marks Guinness’s 250th birthday; every day can be Guinness day. **Eat ramen.** Not the little sodium bombs that come in Styrofoam cups. We’re talking the good stuff. *Flavor & the Menu* magazine identifies the proliferation of authentic Japanese ramen and soba chains as its top trend in import cuisine. On a cold day it’s hard to beat noodles in a bowl as big as your head. **Buy that muscle car you’ve always wanted.** Nobody needs a new car from a dying company, yet you still have a soft spot for Detroit. Why buy a 2009 Dodge Neon when you could have a 1969 Dodge Charger—the car known to many of us as the General Lee? **Lounge in long johns.** No one can question your grit in a true union suit (a red one-piece with ass flap, \$30 at jcpenny.com), and you’ll find yourself overusing the words *dagnabbit* and *varmint*, which your wife or girlfriend will just love. **Pray for sun on March 8.** That’s GoTopless Day, on which women will (okay, *may*) take to the streets to fight for equality of bare-chestedness. That’s right—public boobies.



Elephant Polo: The Inside Story A Playboy Editor Reports on the Beautiful Game

When Research Editor Bryan Abrams told us he was going to Nepal to play in the Elephant Polo World Championships, we figured it was a euphemism. For what—Asian sex tour for chubby chasers, all-day acid trip in Central Park—we didn’t care to know. Turns out he was actually going to Nepal to play in the Elephant Polo World Championships. His team, the New York Blue, all but one member of which had never mounted a

pachyderm before, won the silver medal, losing in sudden-death overtime to the local Tiger Tops squad. Abrams and company had defeated a British military regiment and the formidable Indian Tigers (no relation) along the way, with one member suffering a serious concussion and another a torn MCL. For the full version of the New York Blue’s near-Cinderella story, complete with pictures and video, visit playboy.com/polo.

Movie of the Month Watchmen

By Stephen Rebello

Zack Snyder, the director of *300*, seems like the perfect guy to helm the movie version of *Watchmen*, the visionary apocalyptic graphic novel by writer Alan Moore, illustrator Dave Gibbons and colorist John Higgins. "When you read the comic, everything you know about pop culture, religion and your own icons gets turned around," says Snyder. "It's sexy, it's violent, it's bloody, but moviegoers are hungry for something really different."

Moviegoers are likely to get something really different from the \$100 million mind bender, which is set in an alternative 1985 with the U.S. and the Soviets hurtling toward World War III. A widespread conspiracy is afoot in the form of a plot to discredit and slaughter vigilantes, none of whom, unlike the godlike Dr. Manhattan, played by Billy Crudup, possesses any



superpowers. "We've been saturated with superhero movies, but the fan base is rabid for this one," says Snyder. The fan base is also nervous, because legal woes have threatened the release.

Now Showing Kristin Kreuk kicks butt in *Street Fighter: The Legend of Chun-Li*; Michael Cera is a *Youth in Revolt*; Milla Jovovich doesn't get *A Perfect Getaway*. Read more at playboy.com/entertainment.

BIG BOX OFFICE:

Sandra Bullock's movies to date have grossed a not-too-shabby \$1,200,204,785 domestically. *Speed* was her biggest hit, taking in more than \$121 million, while *Who Shot Patakango?* earned only \$2,343. Bullock's latest flick, *All About Steve*, is her first romantic comedy since 2002's *Two Weeks Notice*.

DVDs of the Month



The Girls Next Door: Season 4 Most reality shows glorify backstabbing contestants, but Holly, Bridget and Kendra always had a rollicking good time at the Mansion. Highlights include a visit to Holly's home state of Alaska and the Midsummer Night's Dream Party. **Best extra:** Commentary by the girls. **★★★★ —Stacie Houglund**



Religulous Bill Maher travels the globe to challenge religious zealots and poseurs (he writes about his adventures in our July 2008 Issue). This scathing documentary scores major points by calling false prophets and fringe weirdos on their delusions. **Best extra:** Bill Maher Monologues From Around the World. **★★★★ —Bryan Reesman**



Zack and Miri Make a Porno The shockingly vulgar, hilarious first half sets up the premise—platonic deadbeats Seth Rogen and Elizabeth Banks decide to make an amateur X-rated sci-fi film to pay the bills—only to climax too quickly with a well-intentioned but flaccid romance. **Best extra:** Making-of featurette. (BD) **★★½ —Bizz McClain**



TEASE FRAME

For her tasty big-screen debut, in *Varsity Blues* (pictured), **Ali Larter** sprayed on a whipped-cream bikini in an attempt to seduce quarterback James Van Der Beek. She now makes an impression as one of the ordinary people with extraordinary powers on NBC's *Heroes*. See Larter next as a screwy temp who stalks co-worker Idris Elba in *Obsessed*.



Game of the Month The Godfather II

Most movie sequels suck, and most movie games suck. But the game based on the best sequel ever made does not suck at all. This action-strategy hybrid for 360, PC and PS3 builds the player's unique mobster saga from the best lines and most iconic moments in the film. While you won't find flashbacks to Sicily (or any De Niro), you will see a compelling blend of shooting, brawling and strategic planning as you vie with other families to wipe out their dons and take control of the various rackets (drugs, prostitution, gambling and so on) in New York, Miami and Havana. Owning all of one racket confers bonuses you can leverage to try to take over others. And it's all interspersed with gritty cinematic clips and heaps of Corleone-style terrorism. **★★★★½**
—Chris Hudak

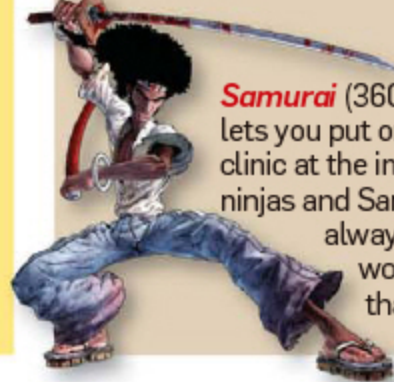
Also in gaming...

STREET FIGHTER IV (360, PC, PS3) Arcade culture may be gone, but *Street Fighter* lives on, now with hot 3-D graphics (though you still play along a 2-D plane). Your favorite characters and moves remain, and thankfully, the core gameplay is largely unchanged, apart from some minor (but smart) tweaks. **★★★★½**
—Scott Alexander

ONECHANBARA (360, Wii) What's better than hot chicks with big swords who kill zombies? Hot chicks with big swords wearing bikinis and cowboy hats who kill zombies. *Onechanbara* is an unapologetic celebration of all that is wonderful about B-movie horror; buckets of gore and copious T&A are included. **★★★**
—S.A.

A Real Cutup

Based on the anime TV series, *Afro Samurai* (360, PS3), out this month, lets you put on a hack-and-slash clinic at the intersection of hip-hop, ninjas and Samuel L. Jackson. We always had a feeling this would be a better game than a cartoon.



2009's Breakout Artists 10 Bands to Watch

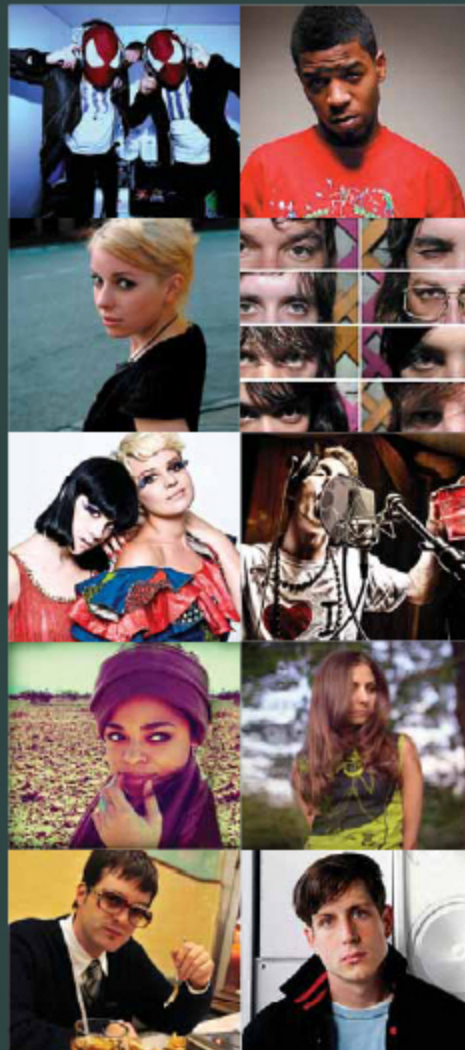
The Bloody Beetroots This duo is from Italy but has nothing to do with Italo-disco revisionism. Instead, it's the electro outfit most likely to become the new Justice, putting the punk back in the Daft Punk formula.

Little Boots This ex-Dead Disco vocalist from Blackpool, England made noise last year with worldwide club staples "Stuck on Repeat" and "Meddle," tracks that straddle the line between disco and electro.

Fan Death Protégées of glam DJ Erol Alkan, this Vancouver duo—co-conspirators Dandi and Marta—captures the soaring strings and female vocals of early disco.

Rox Last year we included then-unknown U.K. soul singer Duffy on this list. Now it's Rox's turn. The 20-year-old daughter of a Jamaican choir mom can roar and coo in equal measure, drawing on soul, hip-hop and gospel.

Mayer Hawthorne & the County This 29-year-old Michigan bedroom producer's vintage-soul-meets-breakbeat tracks and silky Smokey Robinson-like croon are so spot-on, the label that ended up signing him—Stones Throw—thought his songs were covers.



Kid Cudi After releasing an Internet-only mix tape featuring the obsessively catchy "Day n Night," Cleveland-based Scott Mesquedi joined Kanye West's G.O.O.D. Music label and became the guest du jour in 2008; his debut, *Man on the Moon*, drops this spring.

The Phenomenal Handclap Band Led by producers Daniel Collás and Sean Marquand, this 20-plus-member group is a chronology of cool New York music. Disco, funk, first-generation hip-hop, new wave and prog rock all coalesce into music that defies categorization but always aims at the dance floor.

Asher Roth This 23-year-old suburban Pennsylvania MC doesn't try to hide his roots. He has earned love from Jay-Z and 50 Cent and proves lyrical skills and sincerity can trump faux bravado.

Joker's Daughter Vocalist and multi-instrumentalist Helena Costas teams with überproducer Danger Mouse for a series of haunting and mesmerizing modern-day folk songs on *The Last Laugh*. The orchestral and electronic flourishes are great touches, but Costas's voice is the highlight.

Circlesquare This Berlin-Vancouver act fuses slow, woozy rock with slow, woozy electronic music to create the musical equivalent of a futuristic film noir.



Playboy.com's Great Dive Bars Snake & Jake's

From a review of a down-and-dirty New Orleans haunt on our list of 10 dives worth discovering:

"Not even the wrath of Hurricane Katrina could kill the gonzo soul of Snake & Jake's Christmas Club Lounge. This rattrap in the Crescent City's Uptown section has built an irresistibly grungy reputation as the spot to crash-land after you're already wasted out of your mind. No matter what the clock says, it's always three a.m. Even happy hour doesn't start until 10 p.m. The interior is solar-eclipse dark, illuminated mostly by the string of glowing red Christmas lights that gives the bar its name. Regulars liken the decadent atmosphere to Weimar-era Berlin or a speak-easy during Prohibition, and the bartenders are admired for their skills at amateur pyrotechnics."

For the full list, visit playboy.com/divebars.

Playboy TV

Picture-Perfect?

Paige (below) is some lucky guy's girl, but is she perfect? Find out on *Search for the Perfect Girlfriend*. After interviews and a nude photo shoot, you'll know.

Beginning February 27, *Search for the Perfect Girlfriend* airs Fridays at nine p.m. Eastern and Pacific time on Playboy TV.



Sage Advice

Hef on Film

At the climax of *Miss March*, a film by Zach Cregger and Trevor Moore of the comedy troupe the Whitest Kids U'Know, the two main characters try to sort out their romantic lives at a party at the Playboy Mansion. One of them stumbles into a room and finds his lifelong idol, Hugh M. Hefner, played by the Man himself. Hef tries his best to console young Tucker with a tender memory.

HEF: Here, look at this. [offers worn photo of an unattractive woman]

TUCKER: Aww, gross!

HEF: That's Gertrude von Brauer.

TUCKER: What's wrong with her eye?

HEF: It's dead.

TUCKER: Aww!

HEF: Gertrude was my next-door neighbor. Our childhood friendship

blossomed into romance by high school.

TUCKER: Hef! No!

HEF: Tucker, yes. Gertrude von Brauer was the love of my life.

TUCKER: But she's, like, the worst-looking person I have ever seen.

HEF: [Annoyed] Gimme back that photograph. Gertrude died when she was 18 years old.

TUCKER: Oh, thank God.

HEF: [Glaring] Tucker, the point I'm trying to make is that when you find that special someone in your life, you have to hold on to them.... There's a Bunny deep down inside every woman.

TUCKER: They're just not Bunnies you'd put in your magazine.

HEF: No, they're not. But if you can see the Bunny in those girls, then you're onto something, my friend.



Game On Where to Party in the Motor City

What'll you do in Detroit over the Final Four weekend? Start here.... **Happy hour:** The Town Pump (thetownpumptavern.com). **Sports bar:** Cheli's Chili Bar, owned by hockey legend Chris Chelios. You need a shirt, but teeth are optional (chelischilibar.com). **Steak house (and hotel):** Next *Iron Chef* winner Michael Symon's Roast anchors the new Westin Book Cadillac hotel (roastdetroit.com, bookcadillacwestin.com). **Expense-account dinner:** Rattlesnake Club (rattlesnakeclub.com). **Dive bar:** You won't find a better dive bar in any city than Gusoline Alley (gusolinealley.com). **Hangover cure:** The Bomber Restaurant, in nearby Ypsilanti, offers a signature breakfast—four eggs, a pound of potatoes and a pound of meat. They should include a gurney to wheel you out (bomberrestaurant.net).

PLAYBOY CITY GUIDES!



This month we bring you to Detroit for the NCAA Final Four, giving you plenty of time to buy your plane and game tix. Given the Detroit Lions' 0-16 record and the auto companies' problems, this city could use some love. Here's how to spread yours. For our complete City Guides package, go to playboy.com/cityguides.

Girls, Girls

We learned two things from our Super Saturday Night Party that preceded the Super Bowl in Detroit three years ago: The local ladies love to party, and they are lovely indeed. Here are a few suggestions on where to meet and greet come Final Four weekend. **Downtown drinks:** Pulse Lounge (pulsedetroit.com) stays open until two A.M.—sophisticated, unpretentious and definitely happening. **Live music:** Magic Stick has one stage, one bar, 10 billiard tables and the hottest roster of touring bands to come through Detroit (majesticdetroit.com). **Pick-**



Playboy's Super Saturday Night Party in Detroit

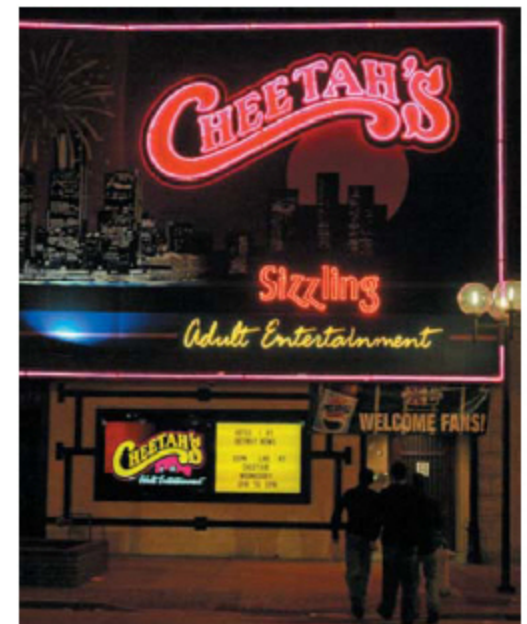
up spot: They don't serve steak at the Bosco in Ferndale, but that doesn't mean this lounge isn't a thriving meat market (thebosco.com). **Cocktail spot:** We

like the libations at Centaur (centaurbar.com). Try the virgin—"Go from naughty to nice with this cherry-poppin' vodka adulteration," the menu reads. Delicious.



Off the Hook

As public monuments go, none is more badass than **Joe Louis's fist**, a 24-foot-long bronze likeness honoring Detroit's own Brown Bomber, who held the heavyweight title for nearly 12 years, starting in 1937. Since the fist was unveiled downtown, in 1987, it has been a source of controversy. Is it a statement of black power? A call to violence? For our money, it says one thing: Nobody hit harder than Joe Louis. This monument beats Philly's Rocky statue by first-round KO.



Border Patrol

Don't forget to bring your passport to Final Four weekend. A short drive from Detroit is the southernmost Canadian city: Windsor, Ontario. Cuban cigars and sports betting are legal, and various members of the "Windsor ballet" dance completely nude at raucous clubs such as Cheetah's (pictured above). Even escort services are fair game, for your "friend." Most cabs will take you over the border and back if you have the paperwork. Start out at Caesars (caesarswindsor.com). The bars are lively, the food is solid, and there's plenty of action at the tables.

RAW DATA

SIGNIFICA, INSIGNIFICA, STATS AND FACTS



BREAKING NEWS

TURKEYS DIE AS GOVERNOR PALIN TAKES QUESTIONS FROM MEDIA

\$225 THE WINNING BID FOR THE TURKEY SEEN BEING SLAUGHTERED IN THE BACKGROUND DURING AN ALASKA TV STATION'S INTERVIEW WITH GOVERNOR SARAH PALIN.



18%

THIS PAST OCTOBER, WHILE THE STOCK MARKET AND RETAIL SALES PLUMMETED, SALES OF VIDEO-GAME PRODUCTS WERE UP 18% OVER THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S.

2008 SEPT 2008 OCT 2008 NOV 2008 DEC 2008

TWENTY-FOUR

Impotence is legal grounds for divorce in 24 states.



67% OF COMMUTERS WHO DEAL WITH TRAFFIC WOULD GIVE UP PART OF THEIR MORNING ROUTINE—TV, TIME WITH THE FAMILY, SHOWERING—TO HAVE A CLEAR RIDE TO WORK.

23% of the glass, **31%** of the iron and **32%** of the aluminum consumed in the U.S. go into making vehicles. And according to the Center for Automotive Research, the auto industry provides one out of every 10 jobs in the country.



WHAT THEY'RE THINKING



THE PLAYBOY POLL

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF THE WOMAN YOU ARE WITH MADE MORE MONEY THAN YOU?

WHAT WE'RE THINKING:

- ★ CONGRATULATE YOURSELF FOR LIVING IN AN ENLIGHTENED AGE 61%
- ★ USE THE JOINT CHECKING
- ACCOUNT TO BUY A BOAT 34%
- ★ SCOUR JOB WEBSITES EACH MORNING 3%
- ★ DRINK TO FORGET 2%

NEXT UP GO TO PLAYBOY.COM/WWT TO ANSWER APRIL'S QUESTIONS, INCLUDING: HOW KINKY HAVE YOU GOTTEN?

- ★ SOFT TOYS (VIBRATOR, FEATHER)
- ★ YOU'VE PUT IT IN HER DOOR NUMBER TWO
- ★ THREESOME (YOU-GIRL-GIRL)
- ★ HARD TOYS (CUFFS, WHIP)
- ★ SHE'S PUT IT IN YOUR DOOR NUMBER TWO
- ★ DEVIL'S THREE-WAY (YOU-GIRL-GUY)

TWO THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS

ACCORDING TO NIELSEN, THE TYPICAL AMERICAN HOME CONTAINS **\$2,200** WORTH OF UNUSED BUT VALUABLE GOODS THE FAMILY COULD SELL TO RAISE CASH.



NUDE

By gender and age grouping, the percentage of people who have electronically sent or posted online nude or seminude photos of themselves. TEENAGE BOYS: 18%; TEENAGE GIRLS: 22%; MEN AGES 20 TO 26: 31%; WOMEN AGES 20 TO 26: 36%.

38

Habitat for Humanity homes built in western Mississippi since 2007 remain unoccupied because no hopeful tenants can afford the post-Hurricane Katrina home-owners insurance rates.

HOME FOR FREE!

WOMEN BUY 4 OUT OF EVERY 10 CONDOMS SOLD.

ODD STAT OF THE MONTH

ACCORDING TO BBC NEWS, PEOPLE ARE WALKING **10%** FASTER THAN A DECADE AGO.

ONE SAMURAI ROAMS
THE LAND WITH A
MISSION OF REVENGE

HE WILL NEVER REST
UNTIL HIS FATHER'S
BLOOD IS VINDICATED.

SAMUEL L. JACKSON IS

AFRO SAMURAI

KELLY
HU

RON
PERLMAN

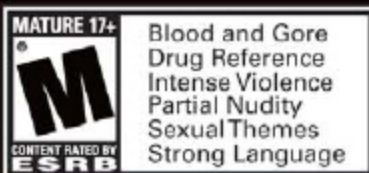
MUSIC BY
THE RZA

XBOX 360. XBOX LIVE.



PLAYSTATION 3

www.bloodisbeautiful.com



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First Person: Free Your Skis

Want to really experience Aspen? Start by skipping the lifts

A lot of people think Aspen is just world-class resorts and opulent nightlife. They forget this town's other distinguishing feature: It's in the middle of goddamn nowhere. I'm a backcountry guide, and that's why I'm here. Once you tire of watching socialites mince down two runs and then retire for martinis, try doing what I do and be your own lift. Over the past decade I've been helping renovate the 10th Mountain Division Hut system, a series of cabins dotting the Alpine wilderness between Aspen and Vail. They're entirely civilized now, with insulated windows and indoor toilets (be glad you didn't visit in the 1970s). Plus they're stocked with propane, firewood and cooking utensils, so all you have to do is pack your food and a sleeping bag (a bottle of Jameson wouldn't hurt either). The closest huts are only a mile and a half from the trailhead, but I prefer the spots in the six- to eight-mile range, where you're really out in it. If you're ambitious, you could trek all the way from Aspen to Vail (42 miles) without burning a single hydrocarbon on transportation. Getting there is mostly an uphill affair but worth it as the huts are strategically situated for access to great downhill pitches of virgin powder. If you've never planned a backcountry trip, get in touch with the experts at Aspen Expeditions (aspenexpeditions.com). They can plan a package for you. See you out there. —Bob Sloezen

Blood in the Crisper

Ninjas are a constant threat. They strike hard, they strike fast, they put a dent in your Chunky Monkey. Keep black-clad assassins out of your icebox once and for all with these decoy *shuriken* fridge-magnet throwing stars (\$19 for two, epauletshop.com). They should distract those ninjas until you can swoop in with your *katana*.



Confusion Cubed

Our biggest limitations often come from our own assumptions. For centuries sailors assumed the earth was flat. And for decades we assumed all the individual squares of a Rubik's Cube had to be the same size. Rubik's Mirror Blocks (\$36, audiocubes.com) shows how things can improve once you get over your preconceptions. It's also the first cube to look more interesting when unsolved. Don't call it a frustrating reminder of your inadequacies; call it dynamic sculpture.



About Time

We're used to seeing watches made of steel. We see wood less often. And we don't usually see fish in the mix at all. Nevertheless, Breil Milano's watchmakers have constructed their elegant new Mediterraneo Chrono (\$895, breilmilano.com) using a polished stainless-steel case, sapelli wood inserts and a strap made from the skin of a dogfish (a type of small shark). Of course, we're not used to seeing quality Italian watches that cost less than a grand, either, especially ones with an inlaid outline of the Mediterranean coast centered on the face. Not that we're complaining. Plus, since it's water-resistant down to 100 meters, you could even take this watch for a dip in its namesake body of water. We don't recommend showing off the band to any sharks you may encounter.



Pack It In

If you can bring only one bag to the Amazon rain forest, make it this one. Tropical downpours are no match for the water-resistant exterior, heat-welded seams and watertight zippers of Tumi's sleek T-Tech Hydro sports backpack (\$225, tumi.com). It's also good if you're taking the A train.

Hack Your Life: Get Your Music Anywhere

The idea of physically lugging your music files (or any files, really) around with you is becoming increasingly outdated. Especially when it's possible to access your entire music collection worldwide with an Internet connection. If you use iTunes, the free Simplify Media plug-in (simplifymedia.com) lets you use the Net to stream music from your home computer to any iTunes-capable device (Winamp and Rhythmbox players are also compatible).

If you have an iPhone, a \$4 app will stream your full music library right to your pocket over the phone's cellular connection. Simplify Media's one downside is that your home computer has to be online for it to work. If leaving your machine powered up 24-7 is impractical (or the electricity use offends your green sensibilities), mediamaster.com offers an alternative: The website allows you to upload all your music files to its servers, which can then

shoot them out to you anywhere in the world. With a few easy steps it's simple enough to shift your entire library online. Once it's in place, you can instantly stream your songs to any web browser, using an interface much like iTunes or Windows Media Player. You can even set up your own radio station and use MediaMaster's web widget to post it to your blog or social-networking page. The site's free for now, but that may change down the line.

Navigator? I Hardly Know Her

Most GPS gadgets don't show elevation, which is fine if you're crossing rural Kansas. In, say, San Francisco, it's a different story. After playing with Navigon's new 8100T (\$600, navigon.com) we were surprised by what a difference ditching the usual flat view makes. Seeing the elevation of the hills and valleys around you definitely helps orient your intuitive sense of direction. And the 8100T is packed with bells and whistles such as a 4.8-inch touch screen, voice recognition, free real-time traffic info and Lane Assistant Pro (which gives lane-by-lane guidance). Size may not matter, but elevation definitely does.



JAMESON® IRISH WHISKEY
PRESENTS
PLAYBOY INTERVIEW:

DAN VANDEN BERGE

A candid conversation with one of the Playboy Mansion's head chefs about Hugh Hefner's unique dining regimen and what Playmates really eat after hours

You probably suspected that life at the Playboy Mansion tastes good, but it is Daniel Vanden Berge's job to make it delectable. As the Executive Sous Chef on a staff of 11 full-time chefs, Vanden Berge keeps the flavor fresh for Hef, his guests and Playmates staying at the Mansion. The 40-year-old Los Angeles native got things cooking early, at the age of seven, when he began baking chocolate chip cookies every day for his family. Chef Dan, who now works the dinner shift and has been at Playboy 20 years, helps run the kitchen as if it were in a five-star restaurant with one VIP guest: Hef.

PLAYBOY: So what does the world's number one playboy eat?

VANDEN BERGE: He has a book of 26 meals that he looks at, and it doesn't change from that. Everything is numbered, so he'll call down and say, "I want a number three." We even have a fridge dedicated to Mr. Hefner. He likes really Midwestern, down-home cooking like his mom used to make. His favorites are lamb chops, fried chicken, corn on the cob and mashed potatoes. For dessert, his favorite thing right now is banana cream pie. He drinks milk with every meal, so we keep glasses frozen in the freezer so the milk is ice cold. It's very regimented.

PLAYBOY: Is where and when he eats also regimented?

VANDEN BERGE: Yes. His breakfast will start anywhere from 10:30 to about 12:30, which would be grapefruit and an English muffin. Lunch will be between five

and 6:30, and he'll eat dinner anywhere from nine to midnight. Typically, he eats up in his room. He's very engrossed in television and movies, so he'll watch something while he's eating.

PLAYBOY: How many people do you have to cook for every day?

VANDEN BERGE: We have to feed all the employees their breakfast, lunch and dinner, so a regular day crew would be 40 to 50 people. Parties can go up to a couple hundred, depending on the size of the party. We can have up to 20 chefs on duty working the main kitchen and the outside kitchen. We have two store-rooms underneath the Mansion that are like little grocery stores, stocked with everything we need for backup for the week.

PLAYBOY: What happens when Hef dines out?

VANDEN BERGE: If he goes out, we'll send lamb chops to the restaurant so everything is as close as possible to being at home for him. We make the sauce for it; we send the baked potato. All they've got to do is bake it. We've had only one restaurant that wouldn't accommodate us, saying, "Well, our lamb has to be better." It's like, but if it's not better, Hef won't be coming back.

PLAYBOY: You used to work the graveyard shift, and the Mansion kitchen is open all night. You must have gotten some strange requests.

VANDEN BERGE: The guests who are stay-

ing here, such as the Playmates, can order anything we have in-house at any time. Everything's ready to roll. We used to have these girls who would come in late and just order 20, 30 things. They'd want scrambled eggs with cheese, oatmeal, a bean burrito, Chinese chicken salad, sushi, a ham sandwich...just because they'd been partying or doing whatever and wanted to snack on a bunch of things.

PLAYBOY: Since a lot of these women pose naked, do you ever steer them away from bad food choices?

VANDEN BERGE: A lot of times these girls are very diet oriented. But we sometimes give a little advice, like, "It's a little heavy. You're going to look bloated." Usually what happens, right after the shoot, a Playmate will say, "Oh, I just want this and this and this and can you give me that?" So that's when they let loose.

PLAYBOY: What else would a new chef need to know before starting at the Mansion?

VANDEN BERGE: We have a book of photographs that show where everything should be positioned on the tray before it is presented to Mr. Hefner. The main entrée has to be on the lower portion of the plate and everything has to be set on his tray a specific way. The applesauce will be top left, plate center. The bread has to go to the right-hand side of the plate and the hash browns to the left, just below the applesauce. The glass of milk is always top right.



"The guests who are staying here, such as the Playmates, can order anything we have in-house at any time. Everything's ready to roll."



"We even have a fridge dedicated to Mr. Hefner. He likes really Midwestern, down-home cooking like his mom used to make."

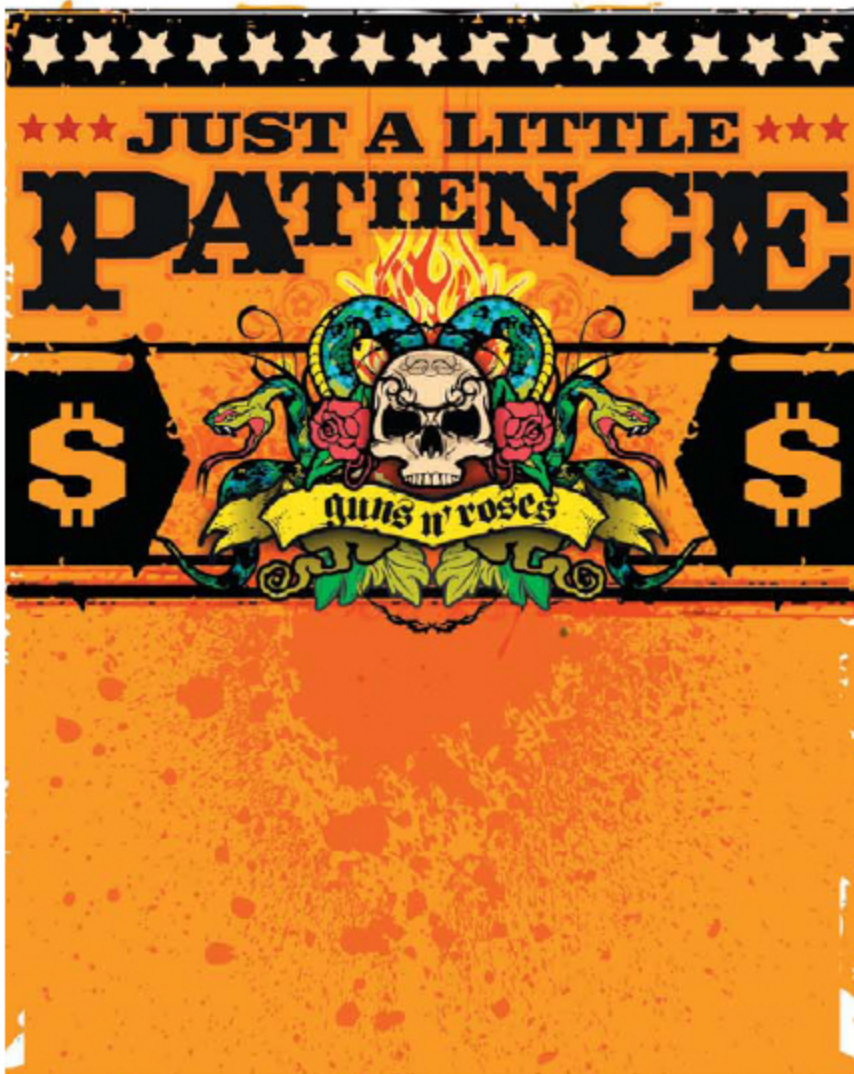


"We have a book of photographs that show where everything should be positioned on the tray before it is presented to Mr. Hefner."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELAYNE LODGE



Visit www.playboy.com/insiders to experience a virtual Mansion tour.



BY DUFF MCKAGAN



BASSIST MCKAGAN WAS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF GN'R AND VELVET REVOLVER.

HEAR NEW MUSIC FROM HIS LATEST BAND,
DUFF MCKAGAN'S LOADED, AT PLAYBOY.COM/DUFF.

My pancreas exploded in 1994, and I had a lot of spare time recovering from that. So I started going through all my financial statements—six years' worth of Guns N' Roses royalty ledgers. They didn't make much sense. As a result, I took a course at Santa Monica College on how to read financial statements, and from the first day of class things became clearer. I got hooked and ended up moving back home to Seattle and taking a degree at Seattle University's Albers School of Business and Economics. I wanted to become a scholar of finance, but at first I didn't know what the fuck I was doing. I didn't know how to study. I would write down way too much. I would take notes on all the wrong things in class, or I would take notes on everything and wouldn't know how to filter through them to get what I needed. When I went to the library I wouldn't know what to look for. Everything would take me 10 times longer than it did the other kids. I had to learn the learning process. But I did, and it sparked me. Things that before seemed hard or unattainable suddenly seemed possible. Since then I've been able to achieve financial security from my investments while enjoying a continued revenue stream from Guns N' Roses and Velvet Revolver publishing and record sales. The formal education was definitely important for me, but I've also found I draw on experiences from my whole life when formulating my investment strategies. Here's a rundown.

SHOW NO FEAR

The biggest thing is to stick to your plan. If you have an asset-allocation plan, don't deviate from it. If you're not looking to retire in the next few years, you should be fine. It's the people who jump off—"I'm going to sell everything!"—who do really poorly. Hey, asshole, you just lost a third of your dough. What sense does that make? It's fear-based action. Look at the stock market crash of 1929, the famous example they show you in Finance 101: Most people who

stayed in their positions in 1929 doubled or tripled their money in the next few years. If you create something—whether it's a rock band or a financial plan—you must keep your mission statement front and center. Keep fear out of the equation.

BUILD A TEAM

Before all the music, I played city football, baseball and basketball. Team sports—being part of something greater than yourself, something that works together—really helped me in band situations. The biggest thing I brought to future band situations was an understanding of how the whole thing could work together. That mentality is true for investing, too. In any good investment quotient you have to hope for a good, sound, steady partner.

LISTEN TO PEOPLE WHO KNOW YOU

I bought a Corvette as my first car, with one of my first royalty checks. One of my brothers came down to L.A. to visit and was like, "Oh, you bought a Corvette, huh?" He checked me. So after that I didn't spend all my dough on stupid shit. I didn't go the Lamborghini route or fly Learjets. I lived pretty humbly for my tax bracket.

MAINTAIN CORE VALUES

Growing up in Seattle, I was the last of eight kids. My dad was a fireman, and we didn't have a ton of dough. We heard all these stories about the Depression, since both my parents had been through it. We grew up with the idea that you don't live beyond your means; thrift was a value very much emphasized in our house. None of my brothers and sisters went out and bought cars or houses they couldn't afford.

KNOW THE LAY OF THE LAND

I'd heard all these stories about Aerosmith getting ripped off and the guys from the Alice Cooper band having to sell their guitars. Hearing those stories and actually seeing guys in Hollywood who

(concluded on page 112)

Is there a correlation between how ticklish a woman is and how easily she gets off? In my limited experience, ticklish women seem to be more sexually responsive.—P.S., Kenoza Lake, New York

*You may be onto something. "Tickle is associated with physical friskiness, a good predictor of sexual playfulness," explains psychologist Robert Provine, author of *Laughter: A Scientific Investigation*. "Good tickle, like good sex, involves give-and-take." Ticklishness reflects a person's trust in the tickler; it's creepy when a stranger tries it. Further, there are elements of BDSM in tickle attacks; you'll find an active tickle-torture fetish community online. Although we are sensitive to light touch from the earliest months of life, only after puberty does tickling take on its erotic charge; it's how teenagers first touch one another to express sexual interest. Early in the past century the sex researcher Havelock Ellis suggested a woman's ticklishness indicates her level of modesty—that is, a virgin is ticklish because it allows her to squirm away from a wandering hand, while a married woman has no reason to reject her husband's advances. There may be a kernel of truth in that view. "From adolescence onward you are about seven times more likely to be tickled by someone of the opposite sex than by someone of the same sex," Provine says. "But after the age of 40 tickle frolics decline about tenfold. These changes are not trivial; they involve major declines in the mammalian triad of tickle, touch and play." In other words, a good tickle may be just what your relationship needs.*

I visited the white pages on a popular Internet site and typed in my name to see if I was listed. To my surprise I was presented with a link to purchase a background check on myself. I clicked through, and even without making a purchase I was shown a list of all my past addresses. Is this legal? How can I have my data removed?—T.C., Spokane Valley, Washington

It is legal. The data comes from two sources: public records (e.g., deeds, birth certificates, criminal records, liens, lawsuits) and information collected and sold by phone companies and marketers. Many sites will remove your information as a courtesy, but there's no guarantee it won't reappear the next time a site updates its database. You can request an unlisted phone number (for a fee), but sealing public records typically requires a court order, such as you may obtain if you're being stalked or turn state's evidence. Visit the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse (privacyrights.org/ar/infobrokers.htm) for a list of aggregator sites and opt-out procedures for those that offer them. Instant background checks have become a

PLAYBOY ADVISOR



I have known from the beginning of our relationship that my wife of two years is bisexual. She suggested we get together with a girlfriend of hers to "have some fun" but said I could only watch. I believe I need to be involved or it's cheating. I would like the Advisor's take on the situation.—D.C., New York, New York

The issue isn't whether you're involved or even in the room; it's whether you approve. If you forbid your wife to sleep with anyone unless you're in the pile, and she does, that's cheating. If you agree to let her go to town while you masturbate in the corner, that's not cheating. But it is noble of you.

popular method to screen potential dates, nannies, employees or business partners. It may be worth spending \$50 at a site such as intelius.com to see what's being said about you.

A reader in December wrote that he doesn't like his girlfriend to give him blow jobs because he feels it is demeaning for her. Although I agree that there is nothing sexier than a woman's face, your advice could have been more to the point. If the guy wants to stop his girlfriend from giving him head, all he needs to do is marry her.—J.B., Houston, Texas

Now, now. We're working on that.

I also discourage my girlfriend when she wants to blow me, primarily to avoid

the awkward kiss afterward. I don't enjoy the taste or smell of penis.—T.K., Chicago, Illinois

But she does?

Blow jobs are not degrading to women, and here's why: The average human jaw muscle can exert up to 280 pounds of force; a man must trust that his partner has not developed a violent grievance against him since his previous blow job that would lead her to take more than a nibble. That puts the woman in a position of tremendous power.—R.B., Atlanta, Georgia

A valid point. How much force is involved in a hand job?

How do you remove a red-wine stain from a white shirt? It's my roommate's Hugo Boss button-down, which I borrowed but can't afford to replace.—B.A., Brooklyn, New York

Ask five people and you'll get five "surefire" remedies. In 2001 a student working with viticulturist Andrew Waterhouse of the University of California at Davis decided to investigate. She tested eight cleaners on red-wine stains left for either two minutes or 24 hours on swatches of cotton, cotton-polyester, nylon and silk. The most effective treatment proved to be a mixture of equal parts dish-washing soap and a three percent hydrogen-peroxide solution. (This may bleach colored fabrics, so test an inconspicuous area first.) Spray 'N Wash and Stain Rx (stainrx.com) also performed well, and bleach usually works on whites. The least effective treatments were salt and two specialty products that claim to remove red-wine stains. White wine removed stains only from nylon. Red wine on silk is a lost cause—careful with those sheets.

As a pre-op transsexual woman, I was thrilled to see your response in December to the

reader who finds himself attracted to a she-male. You asked about the challenges we face. There are many, and they are almost always negative, including seemingly endless scorn, ridicule and violence (two assaults by strangers left me with broken ribs and a stab wound). However, I would not have lived this long had I not transitioned. Your kind and accepting attitude is certainly the exception, and I appreciate it more than you can imagine. Thank you.—B.K., Cranford, New Jersey

You're welcome. And no, you don't look fat in those jeans.

Why the fuck am I reading a letter in the Advisor that begins "I find myself attracted to a she-male"? (concluded on page 111) 27

PLAYBOY INTERVIEW:

KENNY CHESNEY

A candid conversation with country music's biggest star about his crossover success, his ill-fated marriage, his island lifestyle and what's really under that hat

There's an old joke that goes like this: What happens when you play a country song backward? You get your wife back, your dog back and your truck back.

Country has evolved a lot since that joke was first told. The latest star to modernize the music is Kenny Chesney, a self-described "hillbilly rock star" from Tennessee with nitro-powered songs about antic times and warm beaches. If you play a Chesney song backward, you come home from the islands, sober up and feel as blue as the water off St. John. In Chesney's music, problems are solved with a nostalgic memory, thoughts of family, an old rock song on the radio or, especially, a tropical vacation. Country music began in the South, but Chesney has taken it even farther south, down near the equator.

He has won country music's entertainer-of-the-year title eight times and sold more than 30 million records. But he's most distinguished by his concert success: In each of the past seven summers he has sold more than a million tickets, playing shows to as many as 60,000 people at once. No musician has sold more concert tickets in the 21st century.

"He is not only the biggest country star since Garth Brooks," the *San Francisco Chronicle* declared, "but he is also the biggest country star ever." Chesney's renown was mostly limited to country fans until May 9, 2005, when he married actress Renée Zellweger. For Chesney it was the unlikely fulfillment of a fantasy: Years

before, after seeing Zellweger in *Jerry Maguire*, he had written a song called "You Had Me From Hello," inspired by her signature line in the film. But only four months after the wedding the couple announced they were seeking an annulment. Zellweger's petition cited "fraud" as the reason, which led to a flood of tabloid rumors, including one that Chesney is gay.

His musical success did not come quickly. Born in Knoxville, Tennessee to a hairstylist who divorced Chesney's father shortly after Kenny was born, Chesney was a B-list star in Nashville, the kind of singer who might face a lifetime of playing county fairs. He had six top 10 hits between his 1993 debut and 1998, but none was what Nashville calls a "career song," a distinctive and unforgettable signature track.

Even the turnaround happened slowly. He had consecutive number one hit songs—including "You Had Me From Hello"—and in 2002 released *No Shoes, No Shirt, No Problems*. The album felt as if it had been recorded by a beach bum—it was relaxed, tan, refreshed. In place of country's traditional steel guitars and fiddles, Chesney used tropical steel drums and congas. He transformed himself into a "voice of sheer contentment," *The New York Times* explained. *No Shoes* went to number one on the pop album chart and sold more than 4 million copies, as did its successor, *When the Sun Goes Down*.

His latest album, *Lucky Old Sun*, addresses his relationship with Zellweger, describing his time in what he called "a pretty rough place." The arrangements are unusually sparse, the singing subtle, and "Way Down Here" may be the finest song of his career, mixing gentle resignation with his usual themes of island life and alcohol.

"Our interview started a little after noon, at a renovated boathouse that is part of Chesney's 20-acre estate on the Cumberland River outside Nashville," reports PLAYBOY Contributing Editor Rob Tannenbaum. "He spent much of the conversation laughing, even—or maybe especially—when we were discussing the misery of his fleeting relationship with Zellweger. 'This is the longest interview I've ever done in my life,' he said as the sky began to darken, but he never flinched from a question. We discussed the annulment, his premature baldness, his reputation as a ladies' man and his friendship with Peyton Manning—all with amazing humor. No one can accuse Chesney of taking himself too seriously."

PLAYBOY: You've sold more concert tickets than anyone else in music. So let's talk about your shows. When you look out into the crowd, what do you see?

CHESNEY: I see them partying their asses off. They're drinking—a lot. They're dancing—a lot. There's a lot of making



"When I'm offstage, I never feel famous. I will never let anybody call a restaurant and say, 'We're with Kenny Chesney. Can you get us in?' I'm pretty simple except for the fact that I have a really great boat and a little bit of money."



"God, I lost my hair when I was 19. I started losing it even earlier than that. I wouldn't know what to do now if I had hair. I've never had one girl tell me she didn't want to have sex with me because I didn't have any hair."



"I wasn't angry at Renée Zellweger. I was angry at the situation. Who likes to have their relationship on public display? Who likes to have people speculate about everything under the sun? It's tough enough to have a relationship."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIZUNO

out. I see them letting go. Whatever in their mundane lives brought them to the show, I see them let go of it. Every night before I go onstage I meet a lot of contest winners, and it's great when you have a family say, "We planned our whole vacation around you." It's kind of like they're on vacation when they come see us. In today's economic times they may have the opportunity to spend money on only five things the whole summer.

PLAYBOY: A lot of people are broke. Some can afford to go to either a Kenny Chesney concert or the dentist.

CHESNEY: Right. I think about that before I go onstage. I don't sleep a lot. There's a lot of stuff going on under that hat, man. I lie in bed at night trying to think of ways to give people the best experience I can. I think about some kid who's at his first concert, sitting on the grass. What's going to turn that kid on? What's going to make his girlfriend want to give him the best kiss ever at the end of the night?

PLAYBOY: Kissing? Is that really what you're thinking about?

CHESNEY: Okay, whatever. What's going to make his girlfriend want to give him the best night of his life? I think about people who don't really want to be there but got dragged by friends. I want them to leave the show saying, "Wow, what just happened?"

PLAYBOY: Have you seen any fans doing more than making out?

CHESNEY: One time I saw a couple having sex at my show. It was an outdoor festival in 2000—it might have been a Harley-Davidson rally in Sturgis, South Dakota. We were, like, the fifth act, and it was probably seven o'clock. These two people were physically having sex about 25 yards from the stage, and everybody was watching them and clapping. That's the only time I've ever seen that.

PLAYBOY: What song were you playing?

CHESNEY: I don't know. Must've been a hell of a song.

PLAYBOY: So that's what you see when you're onstage. And how do you feel?

CHESNEY: When I'm onstage I feel changed.

PLAYBOY: Do you feel superhuman?

CHESNEY: I have. It's almost an out-of-body experience.

PLAYBOY: How is Kenny Chesney onstage different from Kenny Chesney offstage?

CHESNEY: That's a great question. The Kenny Chesney onstage is pretty much the same guy, but he's—oh my God, am I talking about myself in the third person? I think I just did for the first time in my life. I swore I never would. [laughs] When I'm offstage, I never feel famous. I will never let anybody call a restaurant and say, "We're with Kenny Chesney. Can you get us in?" That's so pretentious. I'm pretty simple except for the fact that I have a really great boat and a little bit of money. When I'm offstage I don't feel like the person everybody sees.

PLAYBOY: Are you happiest onstage?

CHESNEY: Yes. Isn't that weird? To say you're more comfortable playing in front of 20,000 or 30,000 people than not? It's a comfort zone. That's where I feel the most solid.

PLAYBOY: You're right—it is weird. Why are you happier onstage?

CHESNEY: I'm uncomfortable with being famous. I hate it. But I love making music. I love getting paid to do it, and I love getting on my boat after I get paid to do it.

PLAYBOY: So you want attention only when you're onstage, and once you're offstage, you don't want it.

CHESNEY: Yeah. I know it may not work like that. Being famous is uncomfortable because I grew up very simply. Everything revolved around friends, family, church and sports.

PLAYBOY: But there must have been a lot of kids in Knoxville who never left. You left.

CHESNEY: And if they did, they're with me. [laughs] A lot of buddies I went to high school and college with actually work for me now.

PLAYBOY: So part of you wasn't content with simple. You wanted more than that.

CHESNEY: I used to go out in my backyard at night and stare up at the sky and wonder what was out there. I'd go to the beach with my family and—I remember this, I don't know why—I'd stand and stare at the ocean and go, "What's out there? I was definitely born a dreamer. I could never sit still, and I can't now."

PLAYBOY: That probably makes it difficult to settle into domesticity.

CHESNEY: I have friends who have a normal family, kids and a dog, and I think I would blow my brains out. It's fine for them. But I'm such a free spirit, I feel more alive when I've got somewhere to go. I can stay on my boat for a few weeks if I have a guitar and a girl and a Bob Marley CD. After that, I've got to move around.

PLAYBOY: You said you have trouble sleeping. How many hours a night do you typically get?

CHESNEY: I haven't really slept in three years. On the road, in my bunk, I sleep better than I do anywhere else in the world.

PLAYBOY: Now *that* is weird.

CHESNEY: I know. That's backward, man. Everybody wonders why you're so messed up as a person. It's as though I don't know where I belong. I know I belong on my bus—that's it.

PLAYBOY: Right here we have the cover of every CD you've released. Look at them. There's not a single photo of you smiling. Why's that?

CHESNEY: I hate my smile. I always have, even in my school pictures when I was a little kid.

PLAYBOY: Here's the cover of *No Shoes, No Shirt, No Problems*. That doesn't look like a happy man.

CHESNEY: Yeah, but it doesn't look like "Oh, please come buy me," either. I hate album covers where people are just smiling so big. It's like a neon sign that says PLEASE COME BUY ME. I'm a pretty happy guy.

PLAYBOY: You don't look like it.

CHESNEY: I'm not smiling in one of those? [points to the cover of *Kenny Chesney Live*] I'm pretty happy right there; you just can't see it. [points to the cover of *All I Need to Know*] Look how much weight I've lost since then.

PLAYBOY: Looking back, how do you feel about your early records?

CHESNEY: On the second and third records, *All I Need to Know* and *Me and You*, I was not being myself. Every Nashville singer was trying to sound like George Strait because it was a successful blueprint. Sometimes we'd play a club on tour, and it would be just me and the band and the bartenders.

PLAYBOY: How do you get through a night like that without giving up?

CHESNEY: It's tough. When I started playing music at East Tennessee State University I would sit on a stool with a tip jar in front of me and play four hours a night at a college bar called Quarterback's Barbecue. I wasn't thinking about doing it for a living. I was just making enough money to go to Taco Bell every day. People were eating chips, drinking beer and not listening to me. I'd had three or four years of people ignoring me, and I'd kind of gotten used to it. [laughs] By 1995 I was getting gas money, a shower and food—that's what we got paid. We were having a blast, to be honest with you. I didn't know it could get any better. I had 16 guys in a 12-bunk bus, and we would take turns sleeping on the couch. I thought it was great. I didn't realize I wasn't going anywhere. I did realize we couldn't give our records away.

PLAYBOY: Do you have a bad temper?

CHESNEY: I don't really lose my temper that much, but when somebody mistreats my guys, I just go crazy. I did throw a PlayStation out the window of my tour bus one night. We play *NCAA Football* on PlayStation 3, and I'm very competitive. I was getting beat really bad—like three games in a row—and I'd had enough. I pulled the game out of the wall, opened the window while the bus was going down the road and threw it out onto the interstate. That's the maddest I've been in a couple of years. All the guys on the bus were trying not to laugh.

PLAYBOY: Did you get into fights?

CHESNEY: I got into a fight with a guy from a radio station around 1995, maybe in Fort Myers, Florida. He was being an asshole, treating my band bad. He got into a fight with one of my guys, so I got all redneck on him. [laughs] I hit him pretty good a couple of times, kicked him in the gut.

PLAYBOY: So how much money would you guess you made in 1995?

CHESNEY: The whole year? Maybe a hundred grand.

PLAYBOY: That's not so bad.

CHESNEY: Yeah, but I had probably \$90,000 or \$95,000 in expenses, with gas and salaries. Even today magazines say,

"Kenny Chesney grossed \$90 million last year." That's not how much I took home and put in the bank.

PLAYBOY: So on \$90 million gross, what's your net?

CHESNEY: I do a little better than I did back in 1995. I've learned. I remember one time back in 1994 we were in Texas, and I sold almost four or five grand in merchandise. It was the most I'd ever earned in merch. I was so excited that we stopped in New Orleans and went drinking the whole day. I spent every dime of it, just celebrating. When I got money, I spent it.

PLAYBOY: What was the best night you ever had in college with the tip jar?

CHESNEY: I made \$600 one night. That's pretty good. I love James Taylor and Jimmy Buffett as much as the next guy, but I got sick of doing their songs, so I put up a sign that said I TAKE REQUESTS. BUT ANYTHING BY JAMES TAYLOR OR JIMMY BUFFETT IS \$25. People would get drunk and pay it. So that one night I must have played a bunch of James Taylor songs. I'd play Johnny Cash, Tom Petty, Steve Goodman. At one point I probably knew 400 or 500 songs off the top of my head.

PLAYBOY: The music you talk about is more pop or rock than country.

CHESNEY: I was in love with the music of Bruce Springsteen, Willie Nelson, Roger Miller. I loved Buffett's storytelling and the first couple of John Mellencamp records, Elton John. I did love the hair bands of the 1980s. Quiet Riot—are you kidding me? I'd play "Every Rose Has Its Thorn" by Poison every now and then when people requested it.

PLAYBOY: Did playing music make you a star in college?

CHESNEY: I was just trying to fit in. I wasn't a great student, C average. I was pretty shy, but I drank a lot of beer.

PLAYBOY: That helps alleviate the shyness.

CHESNEY: Yeah, I drank a lot of courage. I ought to write a song with that title. I was in a fraternity, but I was so zoned in on music that I didn't go to many parties. A lot of people would ask me if I ever thought about doing music for a living, and I'd say no. I got a degree in advertising and marketing but didn't know what I was going to do. It was a very scary time. All my friends went to work. I packed up some stuff and came here to Nashville.

PLAYBOY: What did you do on your first night in Nashville?

CHESNEY: I watched TV because I'd moved to town on January 12, 1991—the day Congress voted to support the Gulf war. My family and friends thought this was something I was going to try and then go back home.

PLAYBOY: What was the first song you ever wrote?

CHESNEY: I was taking a persuasion class in college, and there was a girl in the class I was trying to persuade to go out with me. Her name was Amy. I wrote a song called

"Amy," and I wish I hadn't written it. I *really* wish I hadn't given it to her.

PLAYBOY: What did she say?

CHESNEY: Nothing. I'm sure it went in the trash can as soon as class was over. She has no idea what I do now.

PLAYBOY: So you did not persuade her?

CHESNEY: I did not. I didn't learn much in that persuasion class. But I started by writing songs about girls, and I'm still writing about them.

PLAYBOY: Why did you become a country singer instead of a rock singer?

CHESNEY: Some would argue I *am* a rock singer. There are moments when I've got five electric guitars on one song. Last year this guy reviewed my show and said, "The best rock show to come through town this year: Kenny Chesney." He thought I should have been more country, just because I wear a hat onstage. "This isn't country music." He meant it as a slam, but we took it as a compliment. I'm a country singer just by how I grew up, who my parents are and my heritage. If Lynyrd Skynyrd came out today, it would be considered country; same with the Eagles. I think the lines are blurred now more than ever. I don't apologize for it.

PLAYBOY: Do you think your CDs are country?

CHESNEY: Yeah, but they're not the kind of record Alan Jackson or George Strait would consider country. Just because I don't sing about the normal country themes doesn't mean my songs aren't country. I'd rather sing about having fun.

PLAYBOY: What are some normal country themes you avoid?

CHESNEY: I do sing about drinking, but it's in a party way. I don't sing about drinking in a drowning-my-sorrows way, like in George Jones's "If Drinking Don't Kill Me (Her Memory Will)."

PLAYBOY: Do some traditionalists in Nashville resent what you do?

CHESNEY: I know it's being said. I hear it around town a little. "Yeah, he's selling out stadiums everywhere, but it ain't really country music." I love traditional country music. But I don't know if I want to go watch it. I want to go watch Bruce.

PLAYBOY: When did your career turn around?

CHESNEY: The moment my life changed was about 1999, with *Everywhere We Go*, when I found my own niche. I'd been on the road since 1993, so for six or seven years I was trying to be somebody else. Record labels today are much less patient: Artists have a bad record, and they're gone.

PLAYBOY: If you were a new artist today, you might have been dropped by your label after a couple of years.

CHESNEY: True. Then, in 2002, we started to have some really, really big records with *No Shoes, No Shirt, No Problems*, which was truthful and kind of edgier. We were able to piece a show together that was really high energy, with an hour and a half of rocking music. We would play older hits,

Kenny Chesney: By the Numbers

19: Age Chesney received his first guitar

86: Award nominations

27: Times he has brought home the hardware

7: Country Music Association Awards

6: Academy of Country Music Awards

6: Country Music Television Awards

33: Top 10 *Billboard* Hot Country singles

15: Number one *Billboard* Hot Country chart toppers

129: Days married to Renée Zellweger

5: Inches Chesney's girlfriend (and former Miss Tennessee USA) Amy Colley is taller than he

144: Pounds Chesney weighed when he played wide receiver for the New Orleans Saints in training camp

225: Pounds Saints starting wide receiver Marques Colston weighs

8: Roadie buses that tour with Chesney

17: Number of semi trucks Chesney uses to cart his stuff around on tour

28,000: Gallons of diesel fuel his tour consumes over the course of a summer

100: Size of Chesney's traveling crew

\$1,400: Bonus Chesney has paid each member of his crew

\$86 million: Amount Chesney's tour pulled in last year

\$162: Average price on StubHub for a Chesney ticket (the lowest for any of the 10 top-grossing music acts)

915: Population of his hometown, Luttrell, Tennessee

\$10,203: Per capita income of Luttrell

10: Minutes it took Chesney to sell out the 60,000-seat Gillette Stadium in Massachusetts (yes, Massachusetts—not exactly the country music capital)

\$100: Bail he had to post after being charged with disorderly conduct in Buffalo, New York (He was arrested with Tim McGraw for riding a police officer's horse.)

6th and 7th: Ranks on *People* magazine's list of hottest bachelors in 2007 and *Country Weekly's* roster of sexiest male country stars in 2006, respectively

and people would say, "Wow, I didn't know this guy sang that song."

PLAYBOY: A large part of your success came from changing the sound of your records. You used steel drums and congas, which are usually heard more in calypso than in country. Did you have to fight to change your style?

CHESNEY: No, especially after I had two albums that sold 4 million copies each. I earned the right to make a record any way I wanted.

PLAYBOY: You turned 40 in March 2008. Did you celebrate or get depressed?

CHESNEY: I was in a cocoon for almost two weeks before my birthday, making *Lucky Old Sun*, the record I have out now. The night before my birthday I was driving home and I thought, Wow, this is my last night in my 30s—that kind of sucks. I had a lot of fun in my 30s, probably more fun than should have been allowed. But I had a big party here in Nashville, with about 300 people. My friends Tim McGraw and Faith Hill came to it, a lot of industry people, a lot of family.

PLAYBOY: What gear were you in?

CHESNEY: Ha! You know about gears? I was probably in fourth gear.

PLAYBOY: Explain the gear system.

CHESNEY: The gear system was invented by me and my boat captain, Ben. First gear is when you're feeling a little tipsy. It goes all the way up to sixth gear. Sometimes, on very rare occasions, a seventh gear rears its head. A couple of weeks ago when I was down on my boat in the Virgin Islands, I reached seventh gear. The next day I decided to fly home and get off the island for a bit.

PLAYBOY: If feeling a little tipsy is first gear, what is seventh gear?

CHESNEY: It's not feeling anything at all.

PLAYBOY: When was the last time you drank so much you vomited?

CHESNEY: It was on the road in 2008. We played the Pittsburgh Steelers' football stadium in the summer and had a big

blowout after the show. The next morning I woke up and blew chunks.

PLAYBOY: What are your rules about drinking?

CHESNEY: I don't really drink before a show. That's my only drinking rule. Especially with today's cell-phone cameras, there's no win to it. I have a rum and sugar-free Red Bull every night to toast with the band, just to take the edge off and give me a little energy. Certain nights, when everything's perfect and we have thousands of people partying their asses off, I break my rule and have a drink onstage. I've never done a show drunk. Well, I take that back. In the early days I did.

PLAYBOY: In the early days you drank a lot more before a show?

CHESNEY: I don't know that I ever went on tipsy, but I would always come off a little tipsy.

PLAYBOY: What are you like when you're drunk?

CHESNEY: I'm a loving drunk. I get sentimental. "I love you guys." I drunk-dial a lot. One night when I was on the road I decided to call everybody in my phone—it didn't matter what time zone they were in. I have actually drunk-dialed my mom. She'll say, "Kenny, be careful." [laughs] That's all I get from her.

PLAYBOY: If we drug-tested you, what would we find?

CHESNEY: Lunesta, which is a sleeping pill, and fever-blister medicine, because I had a cold sore from the sun and stress. You'd find a little bit of alcohol.

PLAYBOY: No pot?

CHESNEY: No. I drink a few beers, and I've smoked a little pot. But I'm too health conscious to do it regularly. I run a lot. I don't smoke cigarettes. Pot is the hardest thing I've tried, really.

PLAYBOY: Has anyone ever offered you some coke?

CHESNEY: Are you kidding? I've been in the music business for 15 years. I've seen it all, man. I've just always been scared of it. When I was on the road and saw some

people do it, I was afraid I would really like it. I was afraid of the consequences. I've been focused for a long time. I've given my life to do this. I've sacrificed everything.

PLAYBOY: One of your biggest hits is "There Goes My Life," from 2003. It's about a guy who's watching his daughter go to college, and he recalls the time he got his girlfriend pregnant and they decided against having an abortion. Did you know the song has been embraced by antiabortion activists? One blog called it the best pro-life song ever.

CHESNEY: Wow. I didn't know that. That's surprising, to be honest with you. I never thought of it as a pro-life song. That's not what the song was written about, but I don't have a problem with that interpretation.

PLAYBOY: Are you pro-choice?

CHESNEY: Yes. I'm very liberal in some ways, and then I'm very conservative in others. I once asked my grandpa, "Are you a Republican or a Democrat?" He said, "I'm a Democrat, but I'm saving up to be a Republican."

PLAYBOY: How did you vote in the presidential election?

CHESNEY: I voted for McCain. I voted to keep my taxes lower. When Obama talks about raising taxes on the rich, he's looking at me. [laughs] He's wearing a Kenny Chesney T-shirt.

PLAYBOY: Were you asked to campaign for John McCain?

CHESNEY: I was asked to do stuff by both candidates, and I didn't. My fans get enough politics on TV every day. I want them to think for themselves. I don't want them to listen to me.

PLAYBOY: Your friend Bruce Springsteen played concerts for Barack Obama. Does he know you voted for McCain?

CHESNEY: He knows now. [laughs]

PLAYBOY: What's under the cowboy hat, Kenny?

CHESNEY: God, I lost my hair when I was 19. I started losing it even earlier than that.

PLAYBOY: That must have caused you a certain amount of grief.

WHEN NASHVILLE GOES HOLLYWOOD

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN COUNTRY STARS HOOK UP WITH MOVIE ROYALTY? IT'S A MIXED BAG

By Steve Pond

Country star: Kenny Chesney

Famous spouse: Renée Zellweger

Duration of marriage: Four months

Then she had him at good-bye: Chesney wrote the song "You Had Me From Hello" after seeing Zellweger in *Jerry Maguire*; several years later, in 2005, they met at a tsunami-relief benefit,



married in the Virgin Islands, caused a tabloid frenzy by announcing their split and then received an official annulment, all in the course of a single year.



Country star: Lyle Lovett

Famous spouse: Julia Roberts

Duration of marriage: 21 months

They're playing our songs: Lovett concedes he earned a reputation as "the luckiest ugly guy in America" when, in 1993, the wry, cerebral, geeky-looking singer married the world's biggest movie star. They had already split up by the time Lovett released his next album of new material, which contains one song ("Fiona") titled with Roberts's middle name, and another, "Her First Mistake," that takes an off-kilter look at ill-fated romance.

CHESNEY: Believe me, if you have a pill that will help, let me know. Actually, I wouldn't know what to do now if I had hair. I'm pretty comfortable being bald. It doesn't bother me. I've never had one girl tell me she didn't want to have sex with me because I didn't have any hair. But it's funny to see my friends going through that middle-age thing about losing their hair. I went through it in college. They all say, "Oh my God, I'm getting old. I'm never getting laid again." Shut up. Yes, you are.

PLAYBOY: They'll still get laid, just by more desperate women.

CHESNEY: Ha-ha! I didn't say that—you did.

PLAYBOY: You have a reputation as "the George Clooney of country music." What does that mean?

CHESNEY: I have dated a lot of women. We're both pretty successful. He has better hair. I probably sing better. I think we've both dated the same woman. He dated Renée for a short time—so we have a lot in common.

PLAYBOY: You're referring to Renée Zellweger. You married her in May 2005. What went wrong with the marriage?

CHESNEY: I didn't have any clue as to what true marriage meant. I was so used to committing to one thing—music—and then I had to totally commit to a second thing, marriage. I didn't know how to commit to both of them. It was a scary moment for me.

PLAYBOY: So far, most of the story of the breakup has come from Renée, and the story goes that you wanted to continue the marriage but she left you.

CHESNEY: That's the perception out there. It was a pretty mutual thing, to be honest with you.

PLAYBOY: We've read that when she filed for divorce, it took you by surprise.

CHESNEY: No, that's false. Very false. I was not taken by surprise. We knew it was going to happen. Somebody had to file the papers. I was fine with her doing it.

PLAYBOY: The marriage lasted only four

months. How soon after the wedding did you realize things weren't going well?

CHESNEY: It was a couple of months. Looking back, I would handle it differently. But I had never really had any kind of attention from paparazzi. It went from zero to the complete other end of the spectrum. I saw fear in people's eyes. My band, my crew, everybody on the road—they were acting differently. I'd go to a concert and there would be helicopters circling, trying to get a picture of me and her together. I thought it would be like that all the time. I mean, I panicked, there's no doubt about it. I just totally panicked.

PLAYBOY: What did you do?

CHESNEY: The only thing I knew to do: I ran. I pushed her away.

PLAYBOY: In what way?

CHESNEY: In every way possible—to the point where I just didn't want to be married to her anymore. It's that simple.

PLAYBOY: So you were the one who called an end to the marriage?

CHESNEY: Yeah, I guess I did. But I still struggle with it. Was it the right thing to do or not? I still think about her every day. Every day I wonder if she's okay.

PLAYBOY: Do you go see her movies?

CHESNEY: Yeah, of course.

PLAYBOY: How often do you talk to her?

CHESNEY: Not often. It's just too hard. We talked about a year ago, on the phone, for five minutes.

PLAYBOY: Have you ever tried to get her back?

CHESNEY: Nope.

PLAYBOY: She has said marrying you was "the single biggest personal mistake of my life."

CHESNEY: Believe me, I thought it was a mistake too. Nothing positive at all in my life came from it, I can tell you that.

PLAYBOY: What would you do differently?

CHESNEY: Maybe we should have dated for a year or two. What would have been wrong with that?

PLAYBOY: Did anyone suggest that?

CHESNEY: You couldn't tell us anything. We were just so excited and in love.

PLAYBOY: It's hard to see how anyone could go from true love to an annulment in four months.

CHESNEY: Don't believe it hasn't left scars. I mean, you don't just fall out of love with somebody. Believe me, I've had a pretty quiet life since then.

PLAYBOY: C'mon, Kenny. We saw pictures of you with Skylene Montgomery, Miss West Virginia, when you were dating her last year.

CHESNEY: She's pretty smoking hot, isn't she? [laughs]

PLAYBOY: She's incredibly hot, especially in the swimsuit competition.

CHESNEY: Yeah, she's hot. Thanks, buddy.

PLAYBOY: Do you compare other women you've dated with Renée?

CHESNEY: Maybe mentally, because she's the smartest woman I've ever met.

PLAYBOY: Wait, Renée is smarter than Miss West Virginia?

CHESNEY: I never got around to talking to her that long. [laughs] Ah, Miss West Virginia. When I met her she presented me with some kind of honorary certificate signed by the governor. She was wearing a yellow dress and boots. She looked really good. It was a lot of fun for a little while.

PLAYBOY: When you break up with a woman do you do it the brave way or the cowardly way?

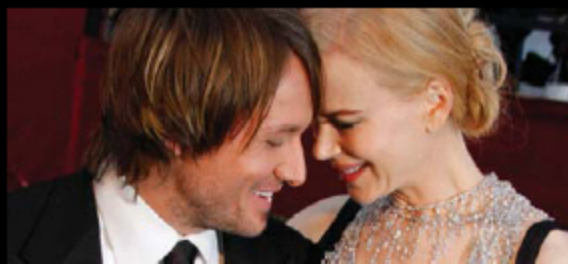
CHESNEY: I do it the brave way: I let them break up with me.

PLAYBOY: How long did you stay mad at Renée?

CHESNEY: I'm not mad at her.

PLAYBOY: After the annulment you said, "I'm sad. I'm angry."

CHESNEY: I wasn't angry at her. I was angry at the situation. I mean, who likes to have their relationship on public display? Who likes to have people speculate about everything under the sun? It's tough enough to have a relationship, and it hurts enough to have it not work. Then you add all this other shit on top of



Country star: Keith Urban

Famous spouse: Nicole Kidman

Duration of marriage: It will be three years in June

Go!n' to the chapel: The fellow Australians (technically Urban's a Kiwi, but he was raised in Australia) met at a 2005 awards dinner for Aussies in Los Angeles and married a year and a half later. At the nuptials outside Sydney, the guest list included Oscar winners (Russell Crowe, director Jane Campion and designer Catherine Martin), along with Oscar nominees (Naomi Watts, Baz Luhrmann) and host Hugh Jackman.



Country star: Natalie Maines (of the Dixie Chicks)

Famous spouse: Adrian Pasdar

Duration of marriage: Eight and a half years so far

The flightin' side of me: Maines went for *Heroes* star Pasdar a year after her first marriage collapsed; the couple tied the knot in a \$55 Las Vegas wedding. After she stirred up controversy by criticizing George W. Bush, Pasdar had her back: He once got into a flight with a "big, tall guy" who had insulted her. (Ever the pragmatist, he quickly smelled lawsuit and calmed down.)



Country star: Brad Paisley

Famous spouse: Kimberly Williams

Duration of marriage: Six years

The art of deception: Paisley's song "Little Moments" ("Well, I'll never forget the first time I heard/ That pretty mouth say that dirty word") is apparently a true chronicle of the time squeaky-clean Williams cursed after denting Paisley's Jeep. It probably served him right—after all, the guy loved Williams so much in the *Father of the Bride* movies, he had his reps set up a meeting with her to discuss appearing in a video he didn't plan on making.

it—what's there not to be angry about?

PLAYBOY: There was speculation that you're gay, because she cited fraud when she filed for an annulment.

CHESNEY: That is the most unbelievable thing in the world. "Because Renée cited fraud, Kenny's got to be gay." What guy who loves girls wouldn't be angry about that shit? I didn't sign up for that. I think people need to live their lives the way they want to, but I'm pretty confident in the fact that I love girls. [laughs] I've got a long line of girls who could testify that I am not gay.

PLAYBOY: Have you ever counted?

CHESNEY: Yeah, but I'm not gonna tell you the number. There's no way I'm telling.

PLAYBOY: Is it more than 100?

CHESNEY: Man, I was over 100 several years ago. I can't believe I'm actually saying this on the record: That was probably back in 2001. I had a good time in college, I really did. My first five years on the road were intense because I was the guy in college who never got laid until I started playing guitar. There were years when I had a better summer than A-Rod, buddy. You know? I got on the boards quite often. From 1993 to 1998—those five years were a blur. We would party on the bus after every show.

PLAYBOY: How would you get the girls off the bus?

CHESNEY: I'd have the bus driver crank up the bus and pretend we were leaving. "Oh, we've got to go. *You've* got to go. See you later." That's why all the gay rumors are so ironic. I'll tell you what, though, in the middle of it all, I never said one bad thing about anybody. Out of respect, I took it. I have never said a negative thing about anybody, even when the whole world was saying I was gay because Renée Zellweger cited fraud.

PLAYBOY: Do you think country music would support a gay singer? It's a pretty conservative genre.

CHESNEY: I don't know. I doubt it.

PLAYBOY: So we won't see a gay country singer in our lifetime?

CHESNEY: It ain't gonna be me, I can promise you that. [laughs]

PLAYBOY: Why did Renée claim fraud?

CHESNEY: I talked to my attorney and her attorney. In order for us to get an annulment, the legal papers could claim either physical abuse, which wasn't true, or mental abuse, which wasn't true, or three or four other things that also weren't true. The best thing we could put in there was fraud. So I said, "All right, do it. Whatever."

PLAYBOY: You said the end of the marriage left some scars. What was the low point?

CHESNEY: It all happened in September, right when I got off tour. I kept pretty much to myself, in this house. I didn't leave the house or get out of bed for seven days. I didn't talk to anybody. I was incredibly depressed. I was like Owen Wilson at the end of *Wedding Crashers*—that was me.

34 That year, 2006, after the annulment was



THE ESSENTIAL KENNY CHESNEY

CLASSIC KENNY: *When the Sun Goes Down*, 2004. Fun in the sun, laid-back tempos, nostalgic ballads, nods to slick 1970s popsters like Billy Joel and James Taylor...and first-week sales on the high side of half a million. What more do you want?

BIGGEST HIT: "The Good Stuff," 2002. Number one on the country charts, number 22 on the pop charts and the first dance at God knows how many weddings.

COUNTRY-EST ALBUM: *In My Wildest Dreams*, 1994. Leaner and twangler than what would follow—and not even close to being a hit.

BEST SONG TITLE: "Being Drunk's a Lot Like Loving You," 2004. No contest, though "Someone Else's Hog" (1995) has a nice ring to it too.

BIRTH OF THE CHESNEY PERSONA: *I Will Stand*, 1997. He wasn't hanging out on the beach quite yet, but the guy got slower and slicker, which in his case also meant he got richer.

BEST DUET: "Shiftwork" with George Strait, 2007. Chesney and Strait ease into a loping shuffle with an energy level

just shy of comatose and an endearing tendency to almost completely drop the f in "shiftwork."

BEST EXAMPLE OF WISHFUL THINKING: "She Thinks My Tractor's Sexy," 1999. "She's even kinda crazy 'bout my farmer's tan," he claims. Don't be so sure about that, Kenny.

BEST WAY TO AVOID WRITING ABOUT YOUR KAPUT MARRIAGE: *The Road and the Radio*, 2005. You would expect the album that followed Chesney's annulment to be full of insight into his lovelorn psyche, but think again: The guy wrote only two lightweight songs on this 2005 disc, neatly preventing listeners from doing much psychoanalytic reading between the lines.

BEST COVER: "Wild Ride," 2007. Chesney's Dwight Yoakam remake gets the nod over his low-key take on Springsteen's "One Step Up" by virtue of Joe Walsh's borderline-psychotic (for Nashville, anyway) guitar.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: *No Shirt, No Shoes, No Problems*, 2002. No hat? Now, that'd be a problem. —S.P.

finalized, I hated the whole year. But I went out on tour and put on a smile every night. Then I would read reviews that said, "Something's wrong with Kenny." No shit. I've had a rough six months. "Something's missing with Kenny's show." Yeah. Kenny's missing from Kenny's show!

PLAYBOY: Describe that week when you didn't leave the house.

CHESNEY: I was numb. I remember thinking, It's really quiet in the house, but outside there's a buzz saw aimed right at me. I was lying in bed, watching all these talk shows featuring lawyers who had never met me. What? Who are you? I wasn't leaving the house again—and I didn't, for a while.

PLAYBOY: Did you see a shrink?

CHESNEY: I should've, but I didn't. I didn't want to talk to anybody. Music's my medication.

PLAYBOY: Why did you finally get out of bed?

CHESNEY: I got hungry. Next thing you knew it was March, and I had to start a tour in a month.

PLAYBOY: So what kind of town are you from?

CHESNEY: I'm from a really small town.

PLAYBOY: Really? Knoxville is small?

CHESNEY: You get 10 minutes out of Knoxville and you're in the country. I wanted to be Joe Morgan, playing second base for the Cincinnati Reds. But I quit grow-

ing when I hit five-foot-six.

PLAYBOY: You quit growing and started losing your hair. That's a raw deal.

CHESNEY: Yeah. I was like, "Wait a minute, I better learn to play guitar! I better learn to do something."

PLAYBOY: What did you learn from your mom and dad?

CHESNEY: I learned from my mom that you should always try to enjoy life, no matter what. She's a very fun-loving person. She has been through a lot in her life. She has had a couple of divorces. When I was in high school she was a single mother. That's when I learned to do my own laundry. My mom and my real father divorced before I was one. My mom and my stepfather divorced when I was in high school. Then she fell in love with a guy, and the guy died. That was a rough time. She has handled adversity well. That's where I got my work ethic. So my mother's where I got my love of music, but my father's where I got my athletic ability. And my hair loss. [laughs] And my love of women.

PLAYBOY: You have an aunt who is almost the same age as you, right?

CHESNEY: My mother and my grandmother were pregnant at the same time. My mom was 19 when she had me, and my grandmother was 42 when she had my Aunt Missy. My mom and grandmother were in (continued on page 101)

MY BROTHER TED



LONG BEFORE TED KACZYNSKI BECAME THE UNABOMBER—
ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S MOST DANGEROUS MADMEN—
HE WAS A MENTOR, A ROLE MODEL AND A FRIEND

{ BY DAVID KACZYNSKI }

I'll start with the premise that a brother shows you who you are—and also who you are not. He's an image of the self, once removed, but also a representation of the "other."

In a universe of unlimited spatial and temporal dimensions, you are brought together with your brother in a unique and specific consanguinity. You come from the same womb. Your family has a certain flavor or smell unlike any other. It has an ethos, perhaps even a mythology all its own. You are a "we" with your brother before you are a "we" with anyone else. Even your parents' "we" can be turned against you.

Your brother, if there are only two of you, is your first peer, thus your template for later adult relationships.

When your brother ventures into the world, he represents you. If he is older, he may become your only way of being and participating vicariously in a world that you are not allowed to enter. He represents, in this sense, your possibility of having a future and a wider social presence. Your pride in your brother is, in part, an egoistic projection.

Through your brother, you also learn the limitations attached to self: the things you do less well, the meaning of *belonging* as a noun, the need to compete for attention, the space that opens up for you only after it's been vacated by your brother. In a sense, especially if you are the younger brother, you only begin to "own" yourself in your brother's absence. But his absence may haunt your aloneness.

Culturally speaking, I have an idea that I am at liberty to fight with my brother—indeed, it's expected—until someone attacks either one of us. Then we will turn in unison on the attacker as one force redoubled. If there's a significant difference in age, then the older brother protects the younger with his fists and his power. But the younger brother protects the older with his admiration and love.

In expansive affirmation of our fellow man, we sometimes call everyone our brother. To designate a special friendship or to invoke community and intimacy within a group, we again use the brother formula as a foundational myth of male fellowship.

My brother, Ted Kaczynski, once sent a bomb to an airline executive, concealed in a hollowed-out copy of a book with the intriguing title *Ice Brothers*.

I don't remember a time when I wasn't aware that my brother was special—a tricky word that can mean either above or below average or completely off the scale. Ted, seven and a half years older, was special because he was so intelligent. In the Kaczynski family, being intelligent carried high value. But at the time of *Sputnik* and the space race in the late 1950s, intelligence—especially technical and scientific intelligence—had a certain panache as well. Ted was a "brain" to school-age children in our working-class neighborhood, where the word conferred status but also a vague stigma, since being too intelligent was linked to maladjustment, and most kids wanted to fit in.

As a young child beginning to gauge social perceptions, I thought of my brother as smart, independent and principled. I heard myself described by our neighbors and aunts and uncles as charming, happy and affectionate—as if those were unusual traits to discover in a child. Even at a tender age, I sensed that adults contrasted me with

my brother. Heck, anyone could be the way I was, since it required no effort. But not everyone could be smart, independent and principled like my big brother. Given a choice, I would gladly have embraced Ted's persona and relinquished my own. I wanted to be like Ted.

When I was about three years old, our family moved from a dingy duplex in Chicago's Back of the Yards neighborhood (the Yards being the famous Chicago stockyards) to a house in Evergreen Park, a new, working-class suburb on the city's southwest side. It was our first house. When summer came, I used to delight in pushing open the screen door and going out to play in our spacious backyard. I was discovering a new world and having a ball. The only frustration came when I tried to reenter the house, because I was too short to reach the door handle. I would often stand on the back patio—a tiny exile—calling for someone, Mom, Dad or Ted, to let me in.

One day I saw Ted fiddling with something at the back door. He was about 10 or 11 years old at the time but always an ingenious person. To this day it mesmerizes me to watch someone drawing or performing some careful manual task, which I ascribe to my early interest in my brother's activities. He had taken a spool of thread from Mom's sewing kit and a hammer and a nail

from Dad's tool kit in the basement. I watched as he removed the last remnant of thread from the spool, leaving only the bare spool. Then he inserted the nail through the hole in the center of the spool and hammered it onto the wooden screen door. When he was finished, he said, "Dave, see if this works!" All of a sudden it dawned on me what he had done: He had crafted a little makeshift door handle for me.

It seems that even after I grew taller and no longer needed it, the spool remained attached to the door for some time—a lingering reminder of my brother's kindness. A few tender memories like this one

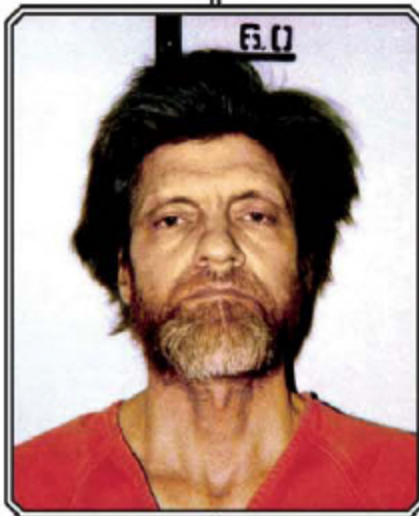
(and there were more than a few) soothe the stings that inevitably come in a sibling relationship. Growing up, I never doubted my brother's fundamental loyalty and love or felt the slightest insecurity in his presence.

Which is not to say that I always felt worthy in his presence.

It was never a challenge to win our parents' approval. Although humble about their own virtues and accomplishments, Mom and Dad seemed to glory in their two boys. I'm sure it was Ted who first clued me in that Mom and Dad's approval ratings were not objective. He sometimes faulted me, too, for being overly subjective. I remember asking him once, "Aren't we lucky that we have the best parents in the world?" to which he replied, "You can't prove that."

Sometimes I suspected that Ted was judging me, even when he said nothing. I wondered if I had done something wrong that I wasn't aware of. Once when he caught me in a fib, he said, "You liar!" and stalked off in contempt. I worried that I had disappointed him terribly, perhaps beyond hope of redemption.

Although I had placed Ted on a pedestal—wanting to emulate his intellectual accomplishments, bragging to my fourth-grade buddies when he went to Harvard on a scholarship at 16—there was another part of me that sensed he was not completely okay.



I was probably seven or eight years old when I first approached Mom with the question, "What's wrong with Teddy?"

"What do you mean, David? There's nothing wrong with your brother."

"I mean, he doesn't have any friends. Why's that?"

"Well, you know, David, not everyone is the same. You have lots of friends because you like people and people like you. That's wonderful! You're a sociable person. But Teddy likes to spend more time by himself, reading and working on things. That's wonderful too. He's different from you, but everyone doesn't have to be the same. It's okay to be different."

"I know but...sometimes it seems he doesn't like people."

Mom must have sensed that I needed more than reassurance. "Sit down, David, I want to talk to you about something that happened before you were born."

Mom and I sat down side by side on our living room couch.

"When Teddy was a little baby just nine months old—before he was able to talk or understand us—he had to go to the hospital because of a rash that covered his little body. In those days, hospitals wouldn't let parents stay with a sick baby, and we were only allowed to visit him every other day for a couple of hours. I remember how your brother screamed in terror when I had to hand him over to the nurse, who took him away to another room. They had to stick lots of needles in Teddy, who was much too young to understand that everything being done to him was for his own good. He was terribly afraid, and he thought Dad and I had abandoned him to cruel strangers. He probably thought we didn't love him anymore and that we would never come back to bring him home again."

I really can't do justice to my mother's capacity for drama. Perhaps it was because of the stories and fairy tales she read to me on that old couch, but Mom had a way of entering into the emotions of the scenes she described. By the time she finished, I was deeply moved. There were tears rolling down my cheeks as I thought about the terrible suffering my brother had endured when he was a baby.

It was an important teaching moment, and Mom took advantage of it. "David, your brother doesn't remember what happened to him, I'm sure. He was much too young. But that hospital experience hurt him deeply, and the hurt never went away completely. One thing you must always remember is never to abandon your brother, because that's what he fears the most."

I promised Mom that I would never abandon Ted. She went on to describe her and Dad's patient efforts to help

their son heal from his hospital trauma—how after they brought him home from the hospital they spoke gently and cuddled him and tried over and over to get him to smile back at them. It took a long time, she said, before Teddy resembled the happy baby he'd been before he had to go to the hospital.

Often, as I grew older, I'd remember this story as I struggled to understand Ted's quirks. It helped me to realize that without compassion you can't really understand someone.

One summer our father, Ted Sr., caught a baby rabbit in our backyard. He placed the little animal in a wooden cage that was covered with a screen top. Several neighborhood kids clustered around to gape at the rabbit, and our father seemed proud to show it off. Dad used to teach us how to identify plants, so it was only natural that he would take pleasure in exposing the neighborhood kids to an educational experience: the chance to view a wild animal up close. My friends were jockeying to get a good look.

Ted was the last kid to join the onlookers, evidently curious to see what all the fuss was about. But as soon as he glimpsed the little rabbit cowering in a corner of the cage, his reaction was instinctive: "Oh, oh, let it go!" he said with panicked urgency.

Suddenly I saw everything differently. Only then did I notice that the young rabbit was trembling with fright. Only then did I realize we were being cruel.

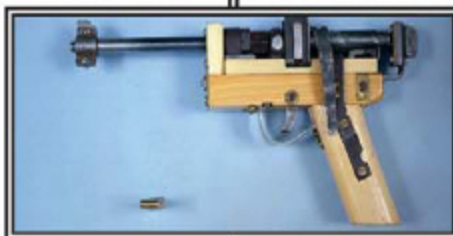
Dad, realizing that he had caused his sensitive son distress, quickly carried the cage to a wooded area across the street and released the rabbit into the wild.

When I was around eight, Dad finished our attic in beautiful knotty pine so that Ted, now in high school, could have his own bedroom. The change provided us both with space and a measure of privacy. But it also afforded Ted an opportunity to isolate himself from the family whenever he wanted, which turned out to be rather often.

Perhaps puzzled by the long hours Ted spent quietly in his room upstairs, I remember approaching Dad with the same question I'd once asked our mother: "What's wrong with Ted?"

My father pointed out that Ted's intellectual interests set him apart from most of his classmates. While Ted read books about relativity theory, they were listening to Elvis and going to sock hops. Someday, Dad said, Ted would go off to college and meet other young people with similar interests. He would form close friendships, eventually marry and raise a family of his own. Ted would find himself, Dad predicted—it just might take him a little longer.

Since Ted didn't seem to crave company, I always felt privileged and rewarded (continued on page 98)



My father pointed out that Ted's intellectual interests set him apart. While Ted read books about relativity, other kids were listening to Elvis.



"A few licks on the horn is a jazz term, Marie."

playboy's sexiest celebrities



Our favorite starlets of 2009
gather for some hot,
clothing-optional revelry

America has been fascinated by celebrities since the golden age of the silver screen. Movie stars like Greta Garbo and Jean Harlow became our form of royalty in the 1930s. A celebrity sighting, whether in a magazine or—whoa!—on some city street, inspired awe and wonderment. Celebrities were mysterious and untouchable. They seemed covered in pixie dust. What you didn't know about them was as interesting as what you did know. In recent years, however, the notion of celebrity has changed. Today we are celebrity saturated. There are celebrities for celebrity's sake, who can't sing or act. You can't open your eyes without seeing stars on billboards, on the Internet and on *Larry King*. Their personal lives make prime-time news. Their sex tapes on the web are as quotidian as Dow Jones charts. But one thing hasn't changed: They remain the avatars of hotness, sex icons of their age. They command power, money and our attention because they are our fantasies in the flesh. All that said, enough with the cultural criticism. We've picked our favorite celebs for 2009. Kick back and enjoy.



Beyoncé (Clockwise from top left) Every pair of jeans should be so lucky. The singer-actress shows us her good side, though it seems she doesn't really have a bad side.

Eva Mendes Our Spanish is a little rusty, but we're pretty sure her name translates to "sultry Cuban goddess."

Fergie When you're as sexy as the Dutchess you need to invent words like *Fergalicious* to describe yourself.



Pam Anderson A strong PETA supporter, she would rather go nude than wear fur. We would prefer that too.

Megan Fox This *Transformers* star has tattoos, pouty lips and a bad-girl attitude. Watch your back, Angelina Jolie.

Hayden Panettiere If every superhero were as hot as her cheerleader, *Wonder Woman* would still be on the air.





Holly, Bridget and Kendra Superstitious killjoys will tell you bad things come in threes. Look no further than E!'s long-running *Girls Next Door* series for evidence to the contrary.

Rachelle Leah Fight fans went wild when *UFC All Access* host Rachelle granted us even more access with a cover pictorial.

Elisha Cuthbert Another *Girl Next Door*, Elisha played the lead in a movie with that title in 2004. She now plays Jack Bauer's daughter on *24*, but she can crash at our Mansion anytime.

Alyssa Milano Even in her *Who's the Boss?* days, when she was 11 years old, you could tell Alyssa had a certain something. Today she's oh so legal and better than ever.





Sofia Vergara See? Not all Colombian exports are illegal. Sofia just looks as if she is.

Scarlett Johansson We've envied many celebrities, but Ryan (*Van Wilder*) Reynolds wasn't one of them. Then the motorboatin' son of a bitch went and married Scarlett. Respect!

Carmen Electra An Electra complex is the female Oedipus complex: Girl wants to have sex with Daddy, kill Mommy. That's heavy. We'll stick to daydreaming about Carmen.

Jessica Simpson To paraphrase Raymond Chandler, Jessica's a blonde to make a bishop kick a hole in a stained-glass window. They say she's hell on Pro Bowl quarterbacks, too.

Christina Aguilera In November RCA released a retrospective of Christina's work, called *Keeps Gettin' Better*. Don't she, though?





Jayde Nicole Last year she won your vote for PMOY and the heart of *The Hills* and *Bromance* star Brody Jenner. This year: world domination?

Brooke Burke After having four kids she went on to win *Dancing With the Stars* and continues to look this stunning.

Rihanna The world crossed its fingers for a wardrobe malfunction during the Super Bowl kickoff concert.

Jessica Alba We sat through *The Love Guru* just for her. Not that we're complaining.

Vida Guerra Cohibas aren't Cuba's best export. This smoking hottie is.





Angelina Jolie *How I Met Your Mother* introduced us to the Vicky Mendoza Hot-Crazy Scale: Picture a dot graph with *hot* on the y-axis and *crazy* on the x-axis. If a woman stays on or above the diagonal, she's desirable. Well, Jolie is crazy hot!

Kim Kardashian She was sitting on her asset until her PLAYBOY pictorial. We and Sir Mix-A-Lot love that big butts are back.

Britney Spears C'mon, it's Britney. And she's back in great Mendoza standing.



BOOM



THOOM! THOOM! THOOM! THOOM!

THOOM!

BOOM-THUGS

BUMPING RESPONSIBLY

Salamander St

NO BLASTING MUSIC

ORANGE

INN

CAR + BOOM

HARD-CORE BASS HEADS DON'T CARE HOW FAST THEIR CARS ARE — ONLY HOW LOUD

One hundred thirty miles from Cape Canaveral, just off Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard near the border between Seffner and Mango, in a stretch of central Florida blistered with low-end strip malls and stamped with a waffle-iron grid of asphalt, stands Explosive Sound and Video, the principality of Tommy the King of Bass. The Sunday before Memorial Day 2008, Tommy, who owns the loudest music-playing driving vehicle in the world, was staging a double competition in his parking lot: a dB (decibel) Drag Race and a Bass Race. Tommy hosts only one or two events a year, and the combination of this rarity with the fact that it had been some time since he broke a windshield promised a healthy turnout from the hard-core boom-car community, many thousands worldwide and growing, who are dedicated to transforming their cars into thundering subwoofers on wheels. "He's going to let it bust," a member of the online forum FloridaSPL (for "sound pressure level"), "the LOUDEST Website in the South," told me as he nodded confidently at the 150-plus people clustered around different vehicles scattered across the lot, three or four of which were emitting an interplanetary vibrational hum. "The crowd's decent, the time's right,

BY GEORGE PROGNIK

ILLUSTRATION BY TIN SALAMUNIC

he can control it—I mean, why wouldn't he break his windshield today?"

My journey to Explosive Sound and Video was the product, in part, of several months spent reading posts on Noise Free America, an anti-noise pollution Listserv, for which boom cars constitute the incarnation of absolute evil. Every few days on Noise Free America a thread of e-mails chugs out of a link to a story involving the arrest of someone somewhere for assaulting a person who complained about the noise of a car, or an attack on a police officer who stopped a vehicle for loud music, or the announcement of a new link between boom cars and drug dealers, or the discovery of guns inside a boom car, or the passage of a new anti-boom car ordinance. The tone of the threads is always of the highest dudgeon—boom-car owners are invariably referred to as thugs or "boom thugs"—and the posts often drip with lathery bile, typified by one from Catdaddybaycali that went up the week before I traveled to Tampa. It linked to an article about a multiperson assault on a woman in New Mexico, occasioned by her protesting against noise (from a neighboring house, not a car): "These criminals are the sort of human garbage that are the life's blood of the boom-car pestilence. Unfortunately, it's not legal to shoot them all and feed their rotting corpses to wolves. The wolves could use the food, and we could use the peace and quiet." The posting was applauded by other forum members. Unquestionably, the assault by four individuals on one woman is abhorrent. But were the "human garbage" who perpetrated the crime really the "life's blood of the boom-car pestilence"? And is the rage of the online anti-loudness soapbox even its own form of noise?

Around the time of the passage of a new Sarasota noise ordinance specifically intended to muzzle boom-car drivers, the name FloridaSPL cropped up on Noise Free America. The SPL forum describes itself as the home of "all the latest news, events and talk about the Florida car-audio scene." When I began to read postings on this site, I found that, while riddled with even more spelling and grammatical errors than their anti-noise counterparts, the comments were generally characterized by a quiet, respectful tone.

I contacted the site administrator, Casey Sullivan, in an effort to hear SPL's side of the story. Casey presented the Memorial Day event at Explosive Sound and Video as an ideal fact-finding opportunity and arranged a rendezvous with an SPL member for a drive around Tampa the night before the show.

We were to meet at a Shell station off I-75, where I was to keep my eyes peeled for what my new contact had described

I DIDN'T HEAR SOUND. I JUST EXPERIENCED MY BONES AND HEART ERUPTING AND BURSTING APART THROUGH MY SKIN. MY HANDS SLAMMED TO THE SIDES OF MY HEAD.



as a "tangerine-colored" vehicle. When I reached the gas station on Saturday night and spotted the one car that had something like a citrus hue, I thought there must be a mistake: The vehicle was hardly bigger than a Matchbox car. It was just a small, sporty, slightly soiled-looking burnt-orange auto. This could not be the machine of a boom thug. The gas-pump hose was stuck in the tank, and there was no one behind the wheel. I slammed out of my car and walked closer. The windshield was finely cracked in many places, creating an effect, in the overhead fluorescence, of delicate ice-crystal calligraphy. A moment later a large man in long shorts pushed out of the station store, sucking meditatively on the straw of a tall soft drink, and began heading toward me.

Robin Butler, a.k.a. MP3 Pimp, is an ample man of mixed race in his mid-20s

with honey-brown skin, light eyes and a softly curling beard. He looks like a biblical patriarch, only gentler and more self-conscious. We shook hands, and he invited me into the car. The second I yanked open the passenger-side door (it was broken) and swung inside, I realized I was entering a whole new realm. This was not a car interior in any sense I'd ever experienced. Everything was at once stripped of its original elements and reconstituted Frankenstein-style—swollen with foam, fiberglass, black speakers and a profusion of colorful wires. The entire rear half of the car behind our seats was obscured by immense black audio equipment; the dashboard seemed to consist only of dark metal cavities, coils and protrusions with a little digital box glowing moon-white at the epicenter like the control panel of a retro sci-fi vessel. MP3 Pimp turned on the engine. I reached across for my seat belt.

"No belts," MP3 Pimp commented, and we pulled out onto the highway.

As we drove and talked, MP3 Pimp occasionally reached up two fingers to push back against the duct tape propping up different sections of the windshield to prevent it from falling in across our laps. I asked him what had triggered his involvement with car audio.

"Just hearing people with bass driving around. Just ever since I can remember hearing it, I remember responding to that sound. And I've had something since I was 17. Nine years. But as for something as ridiculous as this...maybe two years," he said.

And was it true his windshield had cracked because of sound?

"Yup," he nodded. "Fourth windshield this year. See these dents in the metal?" He pointed at the ceiling. "Also audio-related."

"And what is the police response to something like this vehicle?" I inquired.

He shrugged. "They don't really bother you too much as long as you're respectful. If you drive by a cop with your music on and you turn it down when you see him, he knows it's you but you're being respectful. They don't do much. They might pull you over to check your registration, make sure everything's in order..." He told me the people who participate in the shows are rarely the ones creating a public nuisance.

"So the ones creating the problem are a minority?" I ventured.

"Well—actually...no. The people who go to shows continuously—most of us are respectable. They call it 'bumping responsibly.' That's what we do. But you get the kids, and they have a loud system in their cars and they want everybody to know, so they play it loud all the time. Unfortunately, they're in the majority, because a lot of people who have car stereos (continued on page 102)



"I hear you like old movies...!"



PLAYBOY'S

MUSIC AWARDS

2009

HANG ON TO YOUR HEAD-
PHONES. HERE'S WHAT ROCKED
OUR WORLD—AND YOURS



MGMT

said it best: "Let's make some music, make some money, find some models for wives." Yes, the technology-driven democratization of music is turning out to be great for artists new and old (for everyone except Axl Rose). Newcomers Paramore rocked readers' worlds, but ear-melting veterans Metallica also scored big-time this year: The thrash kings garnered a Grammy nod and were the first out-and-out metal band nominated for enshrinement in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. (Is Cleveland afraid of real rock? In a museum set up to honor a supposedly blue-collar art, where's the love for Judas Priest, Iron Maiden, Def Leppard and Motley Crue?) Most important, Metallica's *Death Magnetic* was voted rock album of the year by our readers. No shying away from the genuine item among the PLAYBOY set.

The jam-band scene has looked smart for a while now. The business model established by the Grateful Dead and perfected by Phish (which reunites onstage this year), emphasizing touring and the building of a grassroots fan base instead of relying on studio albums, seems to have predicted the direction of the entire music industry. Now the scene has hatched yet another innovation that looks like a winner. Umphrey's McGee made nine levels of bonus material available to early purchasers of its new album. Here's the rub: The bonuses click in based on total sales of the record. Tell your friend to preorder a copy and you help yourself—and your friend—get closer to another level of bonus material. Simple and awesome. Check out our roundtable discussion with some of the heroes of the scene, including Hall of Famers Bob Weir and Gregg Allman.

This 2008 yearbook is smoking hot. For proof, look no further than PLAYBOY's definitive picks for the sexiest music videos of the year. There's some serious sizzle in these clips—not to mention a Playboy model, a teen pop star in a sauna and, oh yeah, a full-on orgy. Your host, Lily Allen, at left, will put fire in your soul too, just in time for the drop of her new record. Then there are all the stars who designed Playboy Rock the Rabbit T-shirts and, of course, the full results of our annual readers poll. Hey, ho, let's go.



WHEN U.K. POP SINGER LILY ALLEN BEGAN POSTING HER DEMOS ON MYSPACE THREE YEARS AGO, NO ONE COULD HAVE PREDICTED THE MASSIVE SUCCESS SHE WOULD HAVE. HER BRUTE HONESTY MADE HER BOTH A ROLE MODEL AND A RELUCTANT TABLOID STAR. NOW THE 23-YEAR-OLD MULTIPLATINUM ARTIST RETURNS WITH *IT'S NOT ME, IT'S YOU*.

Q: You were more involved musically on the new album than on your debut. Do you feel more confident now?

A: Last time around I didn't really know what I was doing. I knew I wanted to be a singer and had some references, but I didn't really know anything else. With this one I knew a bit more of what I wanted. I didn't want to go down the whole retro thing that others are doing better than I can. It was just about trying to find a musical direction that would work.

Q: Did working with one producer instead of several help you choose that direction?

A: I don't like working with new people, especially now that people know who I am. I feel they will come in with some sort of expectation. I don't think I'm very talented, so I get scared of working with new people.

Q: Are you just being modest?

A: No, I swear! I get scared of working with new people because I worry that they're thinking, Ha-ha, I knew she wasn't really talented! I get terrified.

Q: Where is the line between what you say in public and what you keep to yourself?

A: There is no line. I always find it fascinating when people say, "That's my personal life." They have a public persona and a private persona, and I just

don't understand that, because I just talk and say what I mean. I'm not careerist. I think people who are like that are very much thinking about things in the long term, which I don't.

Q: You have become a public figure outside of music, too. Do you ever check celebrity gossip sites?

A: I check one site called OhNoTheyDidn't. It's on LiveJournal, and people just upload stuff themselves. It's not like Perez Hilton. With Perez, it's his view on things. I don't care what he has to say. I just like looking at pictures and drawing my own conclusions. This site doesn't have an opinion on things.

Q: Do you fear getting older?

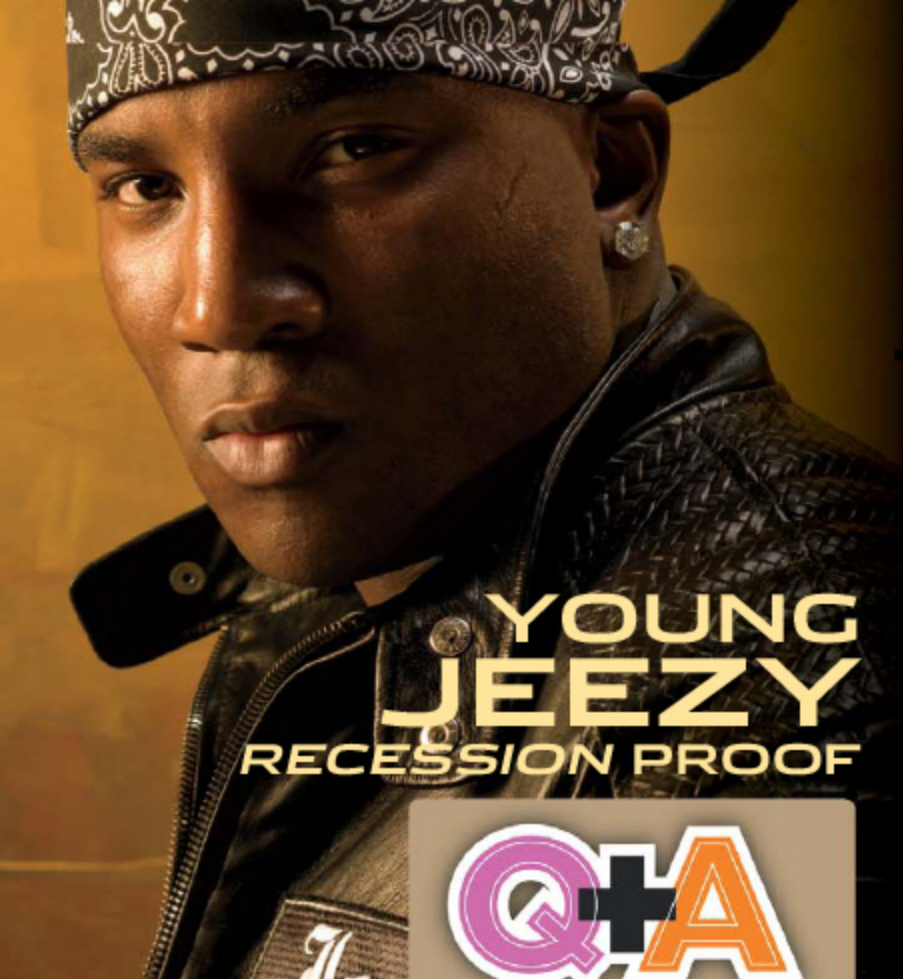
A: No, not at all. I embrace being old. I can't wait. I'm looking forward to my 50s.

Q: Why that age?

A: I guess because no one really cares what you look like. You've had all the sex. I can just chill out.

Q: You sing about a lousy lover in "Not Fair." Any advice for our readers?

A: Just use your fingers a bit more. Think outside the box—literally.



**YOUNG
JEEZY**
RECESSION PROOF



The Atlanta MC's third album—and second straight to debut at number one—turned out to be a news broadcast from the future.

Q: *The Recession* came out before the election, but you have a song on it about a black president. What convinced you to include that?

A: I know it sounds crazy, but I just felt the dude was like me. I was up against all odds when I started out, and everyone was like, "He can't do it." That's how I felt. "My president is black" is a proud statement. And for me to come back and say, "And my Lambo is blue"—those are two unbelievable things. I never would have thought, from where the fuck I came and how I was raised, that these two events would happen—us having a black president and me owning a blue Lamborghini.

Q: Were you worried you would jinx things?

A: Nah. I was with Obama from the beginning. You must understand, a cat with that kind of ambition wasn't going to take no for an answer. I knew he was going to win by a landslide. He was using the Internet, new resources. He was getting the kids involved, he was getting colleges involved, he was getting the rap community involved. He was doing so many things McCain wasn't up on. Now I see all these crises coming up. Would McCain have been able to deal with them? I don't fucking think so.

Q: Did you celebrate on election night?

A: I was over at my people's house, and when Obama won I went straight to the hood. I let the doors up on the Lamborghini. I was whiling out, doing doughnuts and shit, playing the song, and I rode up and down Atlanta all night. Everyone was blowing their horns. But to me it was more that I was happy for everyone else. At least now they've got somebody who'll attempt to make things better.

Q: During a recession, is it still acceptable to make it rain in the club?

A: I'm Mr. Strip Club in Atlanta. It's like my office, where I get my business calls. You want to get any business deals done, you bring them to Atlanta and take 'em out to Stokers, Platinum 21, Pink Pony, Onyx or whatever. We're one big family. I love these girls, and I've been knowing them for years. They danced to my music when I didn't have videos, so I always look out. Partying is my life, but now we need to be conservative gangstas. We need to be conservative thugs. I'd rather just tip the broads.

5 PLAYBOY'S SEXIEST MUSIC VIDEOS OF 2008

1 BRITNEY SPEARS



"WOMANIZER"

It's Britney, bitch, and she's completely nekkid. There is simply no competing with her for flat-out sexiness. No wonder the video for her sixth album's lead single became an Internet sensation viewed tens of millions of times worldwide within hours of its debut.

2 KANYE WEST



"FLASHING LIGHTS"

To give the fourth single from *Graduation* sizzle, Yeezy enlisted Spike Jonze and Playboy Special Editions model Rita G to create something more like a short film. Howard Stern famously said Rita G has the greatest natural breasts he has ever seen; here her ass steals the show.

3 BRIGHTON PORT AUTHORITY



"TOE JAM"

Together with superstar guests David Byrne and Dizzee Rascal, Norman Cook, a.k.a. Fatboy Slim, teased his latest project with a video that's both sexy and funny—no small feat. With the elaborately choreographed dancing bars, censorship is finally put to good use.

4 SAVING ABEL



"ADDICTED"

The original version of this video was so racy it had to premiere on Playboy.com to avoid censorship of the gorgeous nude models. This ode to oral sex went on to be one of the biggest rock hits of the year, leading to an opening spot for the band on Nickelback's tour.

5 SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO



"HUSTLER"

A group of hipster chicks sits in a circle, playing telephone; the message apparently gets more and more lascivious until the girls are all rolling around, hungrily making out with one another. The slinky electro of the track perfectly matches this DIY fun fair.



NO. 2
BRAND

QUALITY
James

JAMES

AT DISTILLER



PLAYBOY'S

ROCK the PLAYBOY



EVERY YEAR, SOME OF OUR FAVORITE ARTISTS DESIGN THEIR OWN PLAYBOY T-SHIRT



PHARRELL



MOTLEY CRUE



MGMT



THE WHITE STRIPES



Q-TIP



A-TRAK



EULOGIES



THE WEDDING PRESENT

HOT TUNES



CRUCIAL MIX-TAPE MUSTS FROM ROCK

“Say Whoa” ▶ **A-Trak** Turntablist champ has developed into an ace electro producer. “They hear the bass and they say whoa.” Indeed.

★ “Day to Day” ▶ **Eulogies** Pretty, wistful teaser from *Here Anonymous*, the next album by the L.A. indie popsters.

★ “Little” material. ★ “See the Sun” ▶ **The Kooks** Everything you need to know about the charms of this uplifting U.K. guitar band is right at hand.

★ “See Saw” ▶ **Jay Reatard** There’s a lot you can say about this guy, but this speaks of his pure pop writing at its finest.

★ “High” ▶ **The Wedding Present** From the *Just Like Heaven* tribute album, this is a future for melodic Brooklyn heroes who channel the whimsical side of David Byrne here.

★ “Betty” ▶ **Diplo** Baltimore-style re-rub of “Betty” with a chime and an auto-tune vocal clip. Nice.

★ “Twenty Thousand Leagues” ▶ **Midnight Juggernauts** The sheen of 1980s synth-pop.

▶ **Dragonette** About as friendly as you can get in a club banger. Think Saint Etienne on steroids.

★ “Face Down in the Dirt” ▶ **Blades** Glam-trash duo hitches riffs, hand claps and “oh-oh’s” to a rare moment of candid emotion.

★ “Side Wifey” ▶ **Jackson Swann** is the answer.

★ “Save Your Life” ▶ **Kenan Bell** Oh no he didn’t! As an L.A. rapper, one could not make a bolder mission statement.

boxed set, this will whet your appetite for Perry Farrell and Dave Navarro’s reunion tour with the original lineup, kicking off in April. ★ “Ki

RABBIT 2009 gallery



Far left: MGMT in shirts by Metric and the Heavy. Below: Perry Farrell in Chromeo's shirt.

SEE ALL THE DESIGNS AT PLAYBOY.COM/ROCKTHERABBIT



THE MORNING BENDERS



JACKSON SWINTON



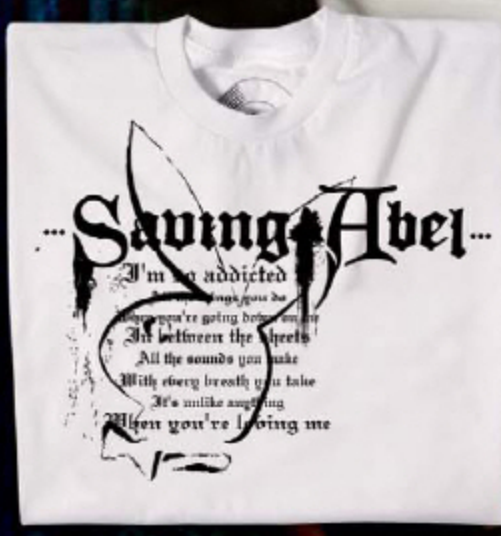
THE WHITE TIE AFFAIR



THE KOOKS



JACK DANIEL'S



SAVING ABEL

THE RABBIT ARTISTS



"Dreams" ▶ **The Morning Benders** The understated Berkeley quartet puts sweet ache into this acoustic Fleetwood Mac cover.
 "Tenderoni (MSTRKRFT remix)" ▶ **Chromeo** Beefed-up reworking of signature 1980s funk tune, from the deluxe edition
 something not talked about enough. ★ "Ce Jeu" ▶ **Yelle** Whistling got a second life after last year's "Young Folks." Here the gorgeous
 Weddoes churn this Cure song through their classic indie guitars. ★ "Strictly Game" ▶ **Harlem Shakes** A quantum leap into the
 Davis Eyes" from seventh Hollertronix mix. ★ "If I Fall" ▶ **The White Tie Affair** The band's hit-making sound plus a bit of U2 guitar
 pop with some swaggering Billy Idol crooning thrown in for good measure. ★ "I Get Around (Midnight Juggernauts remix)"
Motley Crue From the Crue's excellent *Saints of Los Angeles* album, this is as fast and nasty as "Live Wire." ★ "NHDN" ▶ **The Gay**
n For anyone who wondered whether Staten Island would ever produce anything to rival the Wu-Tang Clan, this cheeky multimedia hip-hop crew
 man to sample the Smiths ★ "Mountain Song" ▶ **Jane's Addiction** Live in Hollywood, 1990, from the new *Cabinet of Curiosities*
 ▶ **MGMT** This other anthem from the It band of 2008 is so good, Harlem Shakes cover it regularly in concert.

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BOTTLED A

OUR MASH
WHISKEY

MILLED AND BOTTLED BY
DANIEL DISTILLERY

**M. MOTLOW, PROPRIETOR
LYNCHBURG (POP. 361), TENN. U.S.A.**

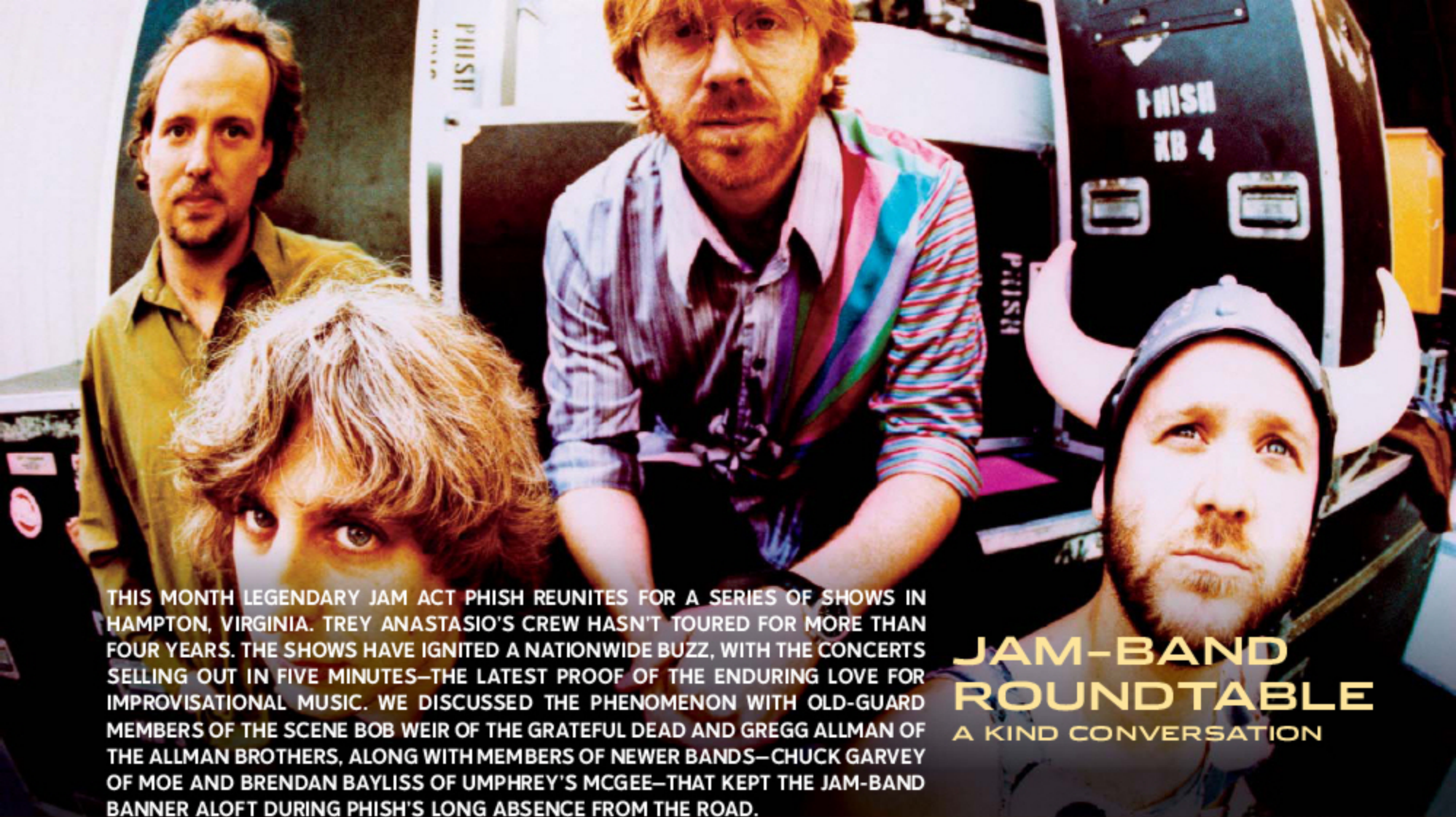
EST. & REG. IN 1866

40% ALC BY VOL. (80 PROOF)

ON TOUR SINCE 1866.



STAY IN TUNE. DRINK RESPONSIBLY.



THIS MONTH LEGENDARY JAM ACT PHISH REUNITES FOR A SERIES OF SHOWS IN HAMPTON, VIRGINIA. TREY ANASTASIO'S CREW HASN'T TOURED FOR MORE THAN FOUR YEARS. THE SHOWS HAVE IGNITED A NATIONWIDE BUZZ, WITH THE CONCERTS SELLING OUT IN FIVE MINUTES—THE LATEST PROOF OF THE ENDURING LOVE FOR IMPROVISATIONAL MUSIC. WE DISCUSSED THE PHENOMENON WITH OLD-GUARD MEMBERS OF THE SCENE BOB WEIR OF THE GRATEFUL DEAD AND GREGG ALLMAN OF THE ALLMAN BROTHERS, ALONG WITH MEMBERS OF NEWER BANDS—CHUCK GARVEY OF MOE AND BRENDAN BAYLISS OF UMPHREY'S MCGEE—THAT KEPT THE JAM-BAND BANNER ALOFT DURING PHISH'S LONG ABSENCE FROM THE ROAD.

JAM-BAND ROUNDTABLE

A KIND CONVERSATION

FOR VIDEOS AND MORE, GO TO PLAYBOY.COM/JAMBANDS.

PLAYBOY: What magic quality in jam-band music keeps audiences flocking to shows?

BAYLISS: We do something for everyone. We'll cover "Africa" by Toto and then 10 minutes later play one of our originals influenced by hard rock or metal. You know there's a chick in the front row who likes Toto but doesn't like metal. Also I would say 15 of our original songs over the past five years have come from onstage improvisations. We offer the possibility that you'll



BAYLISS

see something written in the moment.

WEIR: It's quintessential American music taken from every era and idiom—not something created intellectually but from growing up listening to those idioms and loving them all.

ALLMAN: At the end of the day it's a method of transferring one person's point of view to another person, and it seems to work pretty well. It soothes the savage beast.

GARVEY: The magic comes from not discussing exactly what you're going to do and not squeezing the life out of it. Most rock bands and pop artists try to cut all the accidents out of the equation. When they produce a live show, everything goes off without a hitch.

PLAYBOY: So the magic is in the mistakes?

GARVEY: The most inspiring moments for us and the audience occur when the whole band moves in a certain direction as if using ESP, as if directed. That kind of democratic invention makes it exciting. It's based on reacting to what's happening, listening to everything going on with five or more musicians onstage. And yes, sometimes it can be a train wreck.

PLAYBOY: How much is directed?

ALLMAN: We set up the order of solos. We'll have as many as three people sitting in along with our guys—and our guys aren't going to miss a guitar solo!

BAYLISS: We use a lot of hand signals for key changes. We try to create an A section and a B section and go back and forth between the two.

GARVEY: We have a game plan for seamless segues between songs in different keys. We know we have to get from point A to point X, but no other letters are delineated. It's a matter of feeling it and finding the right moment. You take a chance and hope everyone else in the band comes along and the audience hears it all.

PLAYBOY: Does the audience have to learn to hear certain things?

GARVEY: Casual music listeners may not get it at first. It may sound like a mess to them because they're used to structured music rather than musicians interacting with one another, which isn't the same. There is a lot of push and pull, and it feels different. That's not

to say it won't sound tight, but improvised music is different from a two-minute Beatles tune.

PLAYBOY: Any complaints from the godfathers of the scene about the younger generation of bands?

WEIR: Many of them have a lot of polishing to do, and they need to get to the point a little faster. It involves a little less noodling and a little more cleaving directly to the theme.

PLAYBOY: The music industry has come around to doing business the way jam bands have for years: less emphasis on recordings and more on creating grassroots support. How did you guys come up with your business model?

GARVEY: It was out of necessity. We actually looked more toward punk bands and their ethic of playing as many shows as possible. We would play cheap and try to make converts. It was like missionary work. Now that the major labels are crumbling, people realize you have to build a loyal fan base by doing legwork, by proving yourself on a night-to-night basis. We

didn't foresee this. It was just the way we had to go about it if we were going to succeed.

PLAYBOY: The taper community was a harbinger of the file-sharing boom. Have newer technologies affected the way you or your fans communicate?

GARVEY: The taper community was the first to use the Net to keep in touch. People could say, "I saw the show in Idaho and they kicked ass, so you should see them in California." That kind of interaction allowed us to sell out a major concert hall in San Francisco the first time we played in California. Now people can send videos of a performance from their phone

10 minutes after it happens onstage. The quality may be crappy, but you get the immediate buzz of being a part of the experience even if you're not there.

PLAYBOY: Does the approach to improvisation change over time?

WEIR: With the Grateful Dead, when we were younger we had youthful enthusiasm; when we got older we had wisdom and experience. It's like comparing apples and oranges. But when you improvise, there is a moment when you need to make that leap, and it's the same whether you're 19 or 90.

PLAYBOY: Do you go about it differently than you did 40 years ago?

WEIR: I wish I had done this earlier with the Dead, but with RatDog I've worked up a bunch of hand signals that signify key changes and modulations.

ALLMAN: My grandpa always told me, "You might get too old to cut the mustard, but you're never too old to lick the jar."

PLAYBOY: Why has the fan base for improvisational bands been reliable for so long?

WEIR: Certain people require a little more adventure in their life and in their music. This type of music honors that.



GARVEY



ALLMAN



WEIR

MUSIC POLL WINNERS



JZ JAZZ ARTIST
GREG OSBY

JAZZ ARTIST OF THE YEAR

Even though 2009's Jazz Artist of the Year is celebrated as one of the form's premier alto sax players, Greg Osby has never rested on his laurels. He's always searching for something different and new. From fronting his stripped-down downtown trio and playing with the M-Base Collective back in the mid-1980s to jamming onstage with the Dead, Osby is a ceaseless innovator. Now, at the age of 48, he is no longer the young lion he was during all those late nights at Bradley's. But that's okay: "As a young musician," he says, "I wanted to be the most respected or feared gunslinger in the saloon. In time I learned to shut up, slow down, listen and accept that I didn't know everything."

After making his mark in New York as a sideman for a long list of jazz notables, the St. Louis native got his big break in 1985 when he was invited to join Jack DeJohnette's Special Edition. He went on to cut 15 widely varied albums as a leader for the Blue Note label during the 1990s and 2000s. In 2007 Osby started his own label, Inner Circle Music, to promote forward-looking original work among young musicians.

With *9 Levels*, Osby's first release in three years, he directs his young sextet through nine intricate songs. His playing has grown more distinctive over the years, and his songs have become all the more interesting. Osby's compositions—much like those of Wayne Shorter—are angular and rhythmically surprising. This is pure jazz—free of frills, free of filler, thoughtful, penetrating and wise.



R best rock album
metallica

From duds to studs, Metallica emerged phoenix-like from the ashes of mediocrity with a brilliant new record, *Death Magnetic*, that got fans headbanging again and scored a record-setting fifth straight number one debut. Whether it is the magic touch of producer Rick Rubin or the newly urgent bass of ex-Suicidal Tendencies man Robert Trujillo, *Death Magnetic*—the title a reference to late Alice in Chains frontman Layne Staley—delivers.



C best country album
randy rogers band

Where are the cowboy hats? They're not quite Nashville, but they're all Texas: *Randy Rogers Band* kicks ass wherever it is. Awesome guitar and fiddle showcase Rogers's classic country voice.



JZ best jazz album
willie & wynton

Some of the best music comes out of the unlikely combinations of combinations. But if you consider Wynton's and Willie's blues traditions, *Two Men With the Blues* isn't all that unlikely. It's American music, pure and simple.



W best world-music album
rootz underground

Reviving the glory days of roots-rock-reggae, Rootz Underground paid its dues, jamming in Kingston clubs for five years before recording its tight debut LP, *Movement*. Catch a live show and you'll never forget it.



L best live act
kid rock

Never sleep on the Kid. With his Skynyrd-sampling ode to summer nights of fun blasting out of pickup-truck windows across the country, *Motor City's* other madman hit the road running.



H best hip-hop album
lil wayne

Weezy faced stiff competition from Kanye, but when your album features "Lollipop" and "A Milli," you've knocked it out of the park. No wonder *Tha Carter III* was the fastest-selling LP in three years.



E best electronic album
portishead

All you could hope for was that *Third* wouldn't sully the trip-hop gods' legacy. Instead, their first record in 11 years is an absolute triumph, crafting a familiar atmosphere out of completely new sounds.



H RUSH

HALL OF FAME

Given how many write-in votes Rush got from readers for best live act of the year, it's clear the innovative Toronto band's star has never burned brighter than right now. The definitive version of the trio was solidified in 1974, and from then on bassist Geddy Lee, guitarist Alex Lifeson and drummer Neil Peart have followed a relentlessly experimental path while maintaining one consistent quality: mind-bending virtuosity. Together they've created arena-ready hard rock such as "Fly by Night," established the blueprint for prog rock with the song suites and fantasy-literature imagery of LPs such as *2112* and *Hemispheres*, and successfully guided their legion of fans into synth territory with albums like *Power Windows*. Along the way, they've also written some of the most enduring and best-loved tunes of classic-rock radio, including "Tom Sawyer," "Closer to the Heart" and "Freewill." Unlike so many acts whose work populates classic-rock radio, however, Rush still matters. The band's most recent album, *Snakes & Arrows*, was the second-highest-charting LP of its career, and the resultant tour has run for two years now, drawing arena-size audiences in 2008 to the tune of \$18 million. Further proof of Rush's staying power—both as musicians and as a concert draw—can be heard and seen on the 27-track *Snakes & Arrows (Live)* double album and DVD, both released this year. Though Rush's dozens of gold and platinum albums and performances before as many as 60,000 fans apparently don't warrant its inclusion in Cleveland's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, we're proud to welcome the band, on behalf of our millions of readers, to ours.



S best soundtrack
forgetting sarah marshall

The soundtrack to this Judd Apatow-produced comedy is no laughter. It features Belle & Sebastian, Cake, Pixies frontman Frank Black and vintage tracks from Desmond Dekker & the Aces and Os Mutantes.



SG best song
katy perry

She has since proved she's no one-hit wonder, but this one hit, "I Kissed a Girl," certainly found a place in readers' hearts with its saucy recounting of a little lipstick-lesbian experimentation by a former choir girl.



BA best breakout artist
paramore

You knew it was going to happen at some point: the emergence of a Fall Out Girl. Less clear was just how good it would be. Congratulations to Paramore—PLAYBOY readers love you!



RI best reissue album
bob dylan

The multi-CD *Tell Tale Signs* is not a traditional reissue, as most of the material had not been previously released. But the chance to hear more of Dylan's stellar recent output thrilled readers and editors alike.

AT YOUR DESK, IN YOUR LAP AND ON THE TOWN

HOW MOBILE DO YOU WANT TO BE?
THERE'S A DIGITAL MAJORDOMO TO SUIT
YOU WHEREVER YOU PLAN TO GO

BY
SCOTT
ALEXANDER



HP MINI 1000
\$360
HP.COM



ASUS EEE PC S101
\$700
ASUS.COM



TOSHIBA PORTÉGÉ R500
\$1,550
TOSHIBA.COM

HP MINI 1000 Though it's tiny (10.3 inches by 6.56 inches by 0.99 inches), the Mini 1000 squeezes in a keyboard that's 92 percent standard size. The screen (available in 8.9 and 10.1 inches) is more than adequate, and you can get a 60-gigabyte hard drive if you feel the need (the standard configuration is an eight-gigabyte solid-state drive, upgradable to 16).

ASUS EEE PC S101 The Eee PC S101 represents the luxury end of the new netbook category. Inside you'll find the same 1.6 GHz Intel Atom processor that powers the HP Mini 1000, but the S101 offers more on the outside, like a four-in-one card reader and three USB ports.

TOSHIBA PORTÉGÉ R500 This baby's one of the thinnest notebooks ever made (0.77 inches). Even fancy laptops in this class often come without an optical drive (we're looking at you, MacBook Air), but this puppy is available with a DVD drive. If you forgo the optical drive, it becomes the lightest 12.1-inch notebook on the market, at a mere 1.72 pounds.

SONY VAIO AW The display on this beast is the largest in this article, at 18.4 inches, and the VAIO AW comes with game-worthy graphics, a TV tuner and

IN YOUR LAP The amount of technology you need to get serious work done can fit into a surprisingly small space. The three mini laptops on the opposite page are perfect for students and business travelers as well as coffee-shop auteurs. Two of the three are so-called netbooks, a new category offering scaled-down processing power, sizes and pricing. They're entirely capable of handling word processing, web browsing and media playback.

AT YOUR DESK Taking a 12-pound laptop on a business trip isn't anyone's idea of fun. So don't. The laptops on this page are big-boned and proud of it. The payoff, of course, is that you get a desktop-computer experience—a big screen, game-worthy graphics, good sound, oodles of memory and speed—in a package that lets you work in the office, play in the living room and watch movies (on Blu-ray, no less) in bed.

PHOTOGRAPHY
BY RICHARD
IZUI



TOSHIBA QOSMIO X305
\$1,500
TOSHIBA.COM



SONY VAIO AW
\$1,700
SONYSTYLE.COM



PANASONIC TOUGHBOOK F8
\$2,500
PANASONIC.COM



HP TOUCHSMART TX2
\$1,000
HP.COM

a Blu-ray player. An HDMI port allows you to plug it into your home theater, and it has a compact-flash slot for off-loading pics from DSLR cameras.

TOSHIBA QOSMIO X305 Toshiba's latest Qosmio behemoth has a 17-inch widescreen and weighs nearly nine pounds. The chassis holds four speakers and a subwoofer. Then there's the Intel Core 2 Extreme processor, backed up with dual NVIDIA graphics cards and one gigabyte of DDR3 graphics memory.

PANASONIC TOUGHBOOK F8 Panasonic started making combat-grade computers for the U.S. military 15 years ago, eventually evolving them into its Toughbook line. This year the company debuted the F8, which takes the weight down to just under four pounds while offering almost all the sturdiness of its predecessors. Dropped on concrete? Fine. Beer in the keyboard? No problem.

HP TOUCHSMART TX2 Using the same touch technology found in the iPhone, HP's latest lets you use your fingers for a smooth experience all around and enables all those nifty multitouch gestures iPhone junkies like to show off. And HP has built in a load of customized touch-specific applications to help you make the most of it all.

SAMSUNG Q1EX
\$900
SAMSUNG.COM



NOKIA N85
\$540
NSERIES.COM



APPLE IPHONE 3G
\$200 WITH CONTRACT
APPLE.COM



SAMSUNG Q1EX It's not a laptop and definitely not a phone. We're not sure what to call Samsung's new Q1EX. This 1.4-pound updated Q1 can be operated by touch, or you can dock it into its folding case with a truly typeable keyboard. The industry seems to be pushing the phrase *mobile Internet device* (a.k.a. MID) for gadgets smaller than a laptop but bigger than a cell phone. For now we'll call them awesome.

NOKIA N85 The iPhone may be the smartphone homecoming queen, but for years Nokia has been offering us the cute girl in the library. You know, the one who's actually getting stuff done. Not only is the N85 available unlocked for use with multiple carriers, it boasts Wi-Fi, a 3G cellular data connection and GPS, plus a decent camera that can also record video. Then there's the FM radio for listening on the go and a built-in transmitter for your car radio.

APPLE IPHONE 3G It's not perfect, but nothing has done more to popularize the idea of a handheld Internet device. The iPhone is one of the most attractive and easy-to-use gadgets ever made. Apple's App Store is packed with programs. Just be sure to calculate the total cost of ownership under contract. If that works for you, the two of you will be very happy together.

ON THE TOWN How about this for a paradox: The most exciting segment of the laptop category involves devices that aren't really laptops at all. Expect to see more of these in years to come as we all get used to computing anytime, anywhere. Falling prices for cell-phone data services and the still-pending arrival of WiMax will push these new machines along. Today only a select few people carry them, but they're easy to spot.



Graham
Wilson

"He's very big and green with lots of purple spots."



Miss March strikes all the right chords

The infamous Sunset Strip in West Hollywood still rocks, and we're not just talking about the scene at places like Whisky a Go Go, the Viper Room and Rainbow. At Key Club one night we spotted Jennifer Pershing, a 28-year-old platinum goddess, dancing onstage. "I go there every week to see a band called Steel Panther," says Jennifer. "I grew up loving Motley Crue, Guns N' Roses and Poison, and this is my outlet because these guys are so good at re-creating that vibe. Maybe I'm attracted to guys in spandex who wear makeup. It's just my thing."

Jenn's idea of a good time is to hit the Strip with her gal posse and party like it's 1989. "My friends are superhot. We put on little shiny pants and rock knee-high boots and all that fun stuff," she says. "One night a PLAYBOY scout approached me and asked if I would pose for

Rock n Roll Fantasy



Jennifer, with the metal band Steel Panther, rocking 1980s-style onstage and backstage at Key Club on West Hollywood's Sunset Strip.

the magazine, which had been my dream since I was 18. What's funny is that just before he asked me, I had watched the movie *The Secret*. The idea in the film is 'If you want something, ask the universe for it.' So I would do this little meditation and imagine how I would feel when my dreams came true. It seemed so stupid when I was doing it, but literally a month later I was at a PLAYBOY test shoot."

Miss March's story is right out of a Bruce Springsteen tune. Make that Bon Jovi. It all started in a small town outside Atlantic City, New Jersey. Jenn had done some modeling, and her face had appeared on billboards for a local casino. But she knew she was destined for bigger things. "I got this itch that there was more in life out there for me than just settling down in New Jersey," she says. So in 2002 she packed her bags and headed across the country to Los Angeles. Though she likes to walk on the wild side at night, by day she's a high-energy, articulate businesswoman who manages a Clinique counter at Bloomingdale's. She looks forward to being a stay-at-home mom someday and getting a certificate in child day-care management. Jenn also sees being a Playmate as a platform to raise awareness of autism, a condition that afflicts one of her two younger sisters.

"I've been talking about posing for PLAYBOY forever," she says. "I want to ride this dream." Rock on, Jenn.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ARNY FREYTAG

PDF By Playboyman









See more of Miss March at club.playboy.com.

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MISS MARCH

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH



PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Jennifer Pershing

BUST: 35 WAIST: 27 HIPS: 37

HEIGHT: 5'8" WEIGHT: 125

BIRTH DATE: 6-19-80 BIRTHPLACE: Somers Point, NJ

AMBITIONS: To be a stay-at-home mom, run my own day care and follow Dave Matthews's tour bus!

TURN-ONS: Bald heads ☺, concerts, motorcycle rides, a nice smile, cologne that smells good-not strong!

TURNOFFS: When guys huddle in a group to decide which one will approach but no one gets the nerve to.

A WEBSITE I ALWAYS VISIT: MySpace.com (I'm addicted!).

I HAVE A WEAKNESS FOR: Chili's, Denny's, ramen noodles.

SOMEONE I WANT TO MEET AND WHY: There are two... (1) Dave Matthews because his music is my happy place, and (2) Jenny McCarthy because her work for autism awareness means a lot to me.

THE BEST WAY TO GET A MAN'S ATTENTION: Smile at him. ☺

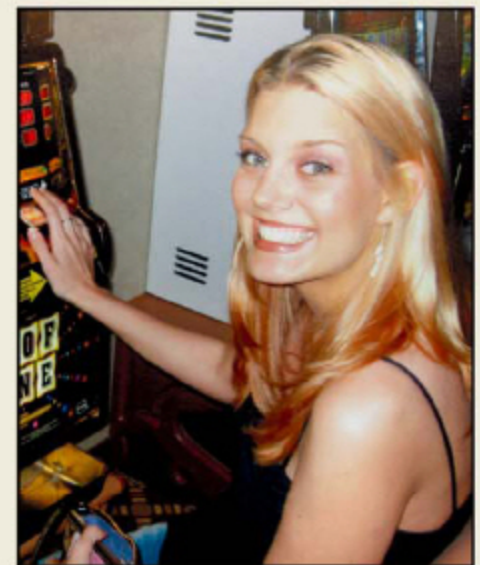
MY FAVORITE BOOK: The Notebook.



Grade school photo, in a dress my mom made.



Halloween 2006, as a sexy witch.



Gambling in Atlantic City, NJ. And I won!





Jennifer Pershing

MISS MARCH

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH



Jennifer Pershing

PDF BY Playboyme

PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

A girl asked her boyfriend, "What do you want for your birthday?"

"I want a watch," he replied.

That night she found another girl and let him.

Did you hear about the guy who was found not guilty for masturbating in public?

The lucky bastard got off twice.

A man approached a woman at a bar and asked, "How many beers does it take to make you dizzy?"

"About four or five," she replied, "and don't call me Dizzy."



What's the difference between a blonde and an ironing board?

It's difficult to open an ironing board's legs.

Overheard on an Arabic dating show: "I'll take the girl behind veil number three."

A grandmother said to her grandson, "The young men of today just aren't as polite and charming as they were when I was young."

He replied, "That's because they aren't trying to fuck you now, Grandma."

What's the mating call of the blonde?

"Next!"

On her honeymoon the blonde bride slipped into sexy lingerie and with great anticipation crawled into bed, but she found her new Catholic husband had settled down on the couch. When she asked why he was apparently not going to make love to her, he replied, "It's Lent."

In tears, she sobbed, "Well, that is the most ridiculous thing I ever heard! Who did you lend it to and for how long?"

A businessman boarded an international flight and found an elegant woman seated next to him wearing the largest, most beautiful diamond ring he had ever seen. They struck up a conversation, and he asked her about the ring.

"This is the Klopman diamond," she said. "It's beautiful, but a terrible curse comes with it."

"What's the curse?" the man asked.

She replied, "Mr. Klopman."

I think my wife is selling drugs," a man remarked to his friend. "Yesterday I was running a little bit late for work when the phone rang. I answered it, but before I could say anything a male voice on the line said, 'Hey, honey, is that dope gone yet?'"

Have you heard about the new supersensitive condom?

After you fuck her it stays and talks to her.

Why do 18-year-olds take sex-ed courses?

So they can learn what they've been doing wrong for the past five years.

An old man looking for oral sex approached his wife with a horny invitation: "How would you like to put your teeth around my manhood tonight?"

His wife nodded willingly, removed her dentures and said, "Do whatever you want with them; just don't wake me."

How can a woman make herself absolutely irresistible to her boyfriend?

Leave him.



A man was startled to see the nonchalant way his friend was dealing with the fact that his wife had been seen with other men. Finally one day he decided to confront him. "You say you love her, yet you saw her with another man and you didn't sock him?" he asked.

"I'm waiting," the friend said.

"Waiting for what?" the first replied.

"I'm waiting," the second answered, "to catch her with a smaller guy."

What do married sex and a 7-Eleven store have in common?

Neither is anything to get excited about, but what else is open at three in the morning?

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.



"I like that, Miss. Our audience has seen enough turtledoves coming out of sleeves."



BY JIM
HARRISON

THE WORLD'S FASTEST WHITE WOMAN

HE MET HER ON THE RUN
AND HAS BEEN LOOKING OVER
HIS SHOULDER EVER SINCE

I SAW

this documentary about the fastest white woman in the world, ever so little behind a black woman by tenths of seconds in the 100 and 200 meters. Or at least I think I saw a documentary or perhaps my mind created this true-to-life story. She was running along the wonderful paths in the ravines in Toronto and you could see the skyscrapers through the green leafy trees. In a ditty TV interview she said that she easily outran a group of rapists in L.A. They wanted to shoot at her when they couldn't catch her but a wise rapist said that he had stopped the shooting under the accurate presumption that she would eventually run in a circle back to them due to the fact that one leg is always slightly shorter than the other and no one can run very far in a straight line. That's why tracks are always circular. I run in very tight circles due to a deformed left leg my parents couldn't afford to get fixed, another mark of Cain. I may as well put on track shoes and twirl. Anyway this fastest white woman in the world is both sad and angry that she can't run around the world because of the water problem. The oceans, whether in their placidity or torment, are not friendly to feet. Even Jesus while walking on the Sea

of Galilee knew that sinking was a possibility. After I met her a single time briefly (she was running in place) in Toronto I introduced myself by letter as a famed physiologist curious about her speed. I bought a white smock and latex gloves and examined the juncture of her hips and thighs and buttocks that propelled her at such an alarming rate. Of course she was more muscular but I found nothing unlike the other 11 women in my life. We were in Austin at the University of Texas and after the minute examination we went down to the track and I tried to film her running but I couldn't figure out the cheap video camera I had bought at Costco. We then went to a BBQ shack where she ate a huge triple portion brisket platter with the hottest of sauces and an ample bowl of pickled jalapeños. She was bereft of her ability to run around the world but somehow managed to eat saying that she needed 7,000 calories a day to maintain her weight of 119 pounds. It was then that I wiped away her tears with a blue paper napkin and suggested that we go to the North Pole where she could run around the world in seconds, but like many of the young she apparently didn't understand geography. We then went to my not-

so-lavish hotel suite where she quickly ate the entire contents of the complimentary fruit bowl. During a long night of love in which we discovered that we didn't like each other I explained to her that her obsession was to beat a dead horse over and over until it became an actual dead horse in the brain, stinking and immovable. I had to be cautious in our lovemaking because her feet had callused spurs that reminded me of the female duckbill platypus that has poisonous spurs on her back feet that can kill a small dog. She wept and at dawn confessed that everyone in her family was morbidly obese and that her speed was never more than a second ahead of her prodigious appetite. I called room service for the dozen scrambled eggs, one-pound sausage patty, quart of OJ and seven pieces of toast she needed. I drank a pot of coffee and read a newspaper to see if the world deserved to exist. We drove into the country until we found a remote road where she ran in front of my Hertz. I admired the way she was staying a single step in front of her madness in the way that so many of us do by merely watching the clock where each tick brings us safely over the lip of the future, our madness a split second behind us.

ILLUSTRATION BY HELLOVON

20Q

BY ERIC SPITZNAGEL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
MATTHIAS CLAMER

Flight of the Conchords

BRET MCKENZIE AND JEMAINÉ CLEMENT, NEW ZEALAND'S SEVENTH-BEST MUSICAL DUO AND HBO'S HIPPEST STARS, TRY TO EXPLAIN THEIR UNLIKELY ROAD TO STARDOM

Q1

PLAYBOY: What's the story behind your band's name, Flight of the Conchords?

MCKENZIE: One version is that it came to me in a dream. I dreamed about flying Gibson guitars, which looked like tiny Vs flying together in a V formation. I told Jemaine about the dream and mentioned the guitars reminded me of Concordes. He changed it to Conchords, and we had our name.

CLEMENT: We also tell people we considered calling ourselves Tanfastic, which is the name of a suntan lotion. But really, we came up with the name right before our first gig. We were the opening act at a comedy night, and we didn't have a name yet. I went to the bathroom and noticed the brand of toilet was Concorde. So I came back and suggested the Conchords, and Bret added the "Flight of" part.

MCKENZIE: Once we'd done a few shows with that name it was too late to change.

Q2

PLAYBOY: On your HBO series, also called *Flight of the Conchords*, you play characters who have your names and musical ambitions. How autobiographical is this show?

MCKENZIE: We're more like our characters than ourselves. I'd say I'm 130 percent like my character.

CLEMENT: They're more accurate reflections of who we are than who we actually are. Our TV characters are beyond real people.

MCKENZIE: Off camera I don't even feel like myself. I'm maybe 70 percent of the man I am on the show.

Q3

PLAYBOY: Since the show has taken off, you've become sex symbols. As comedians, do you take that seriously?

MCKENZIE: I take it very seriously. It's a lot of responsibility. I do everything in my power to promote my sex symbolism. [laughs]

CLEMENT: I don't think anybody in New Zealand, which is

where we're from, takes us seriously as sex symbols at all. It's just here in America, for some reason. Maybe our accents have something to do with it.

Q4

PLAYBOY: While you were performing at your record label's anniversary party, an audience member threw a pair of boxers onto the stage. What does that tell you about your fan base?

MCKENZIE: Panties are more traditional to throw during a concert.

CLEMENT: Yes, but beggars can't be choosers.

MCKENZIE: The warmth of his boxers was definitely the most disturbing part.

CLEMENT: Yeah, you don't want a warm pair of boxers thrown at your face. Especially when the warmth is accompanied by dampness.

Q5

PLAYBOY: As your fictional manager, Murray, reminds you on the show, "Girlfriends and bands don't mix." Have you stayed true to his advice?

CLEMENT: Not really, no. But I don't like to talk about my private life. And I try not to take relationship advice from fictional characters.

MCKENZIE: Especially not fictional characters saying lines we wrote for them.

Q6

PLAYBOY: Fans at your live concerts seem to know all the lyrics and will occasionally sing along with the punch lines. Is that disconcerting?

MCKENZIE: It takes away the surprise. I think people enjoy us most the first time they hear us.

CLEMENT: It's very different from how it was in the beginning.



JEMAINE CLEMENT

BRET MCKENZIE

Sometimes it feels as if we're doing *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Everybody sings along to every line. I try to never listen to them.

MCKENZIE: We turn the sound up so loud onstage that we can't hear the fans. It's the opposite of the Beatles. They couldn't hear themselves because of their screaming fans, but we turn up our speakers so loud that we can hear only ourselves.

Q7

PLAYBOY: You've bragged about being New Zealand's fourth-most-popular folk parody band. Since your success in America, have you moved up to third—or even second?

CLEMENT: I think we've dropped a few points. We're number seven now, maybe even lower. We've moved down quite a bit for selling out.

MCKENZIE: There's a lot of competition in New Zealand for that top spot.

Q8

PLAYBOY: Do you sometimes feel like ambassadors for your home country?

MCKENZIE: *Lord of the Rings* director Peter Jackson put New Zealand on the map, but he put it on the map as Middle-earth, not as New Zealand.

CLEMENT: A lot of what Jackson purports to be true about New Zealand is actually a lie.

MCKENZIE: Despite what you may believe from watching *The Lord of the Rings*, New Zealand does not have a large hobbit population.

CLEMENT: At least not as many as he makes out.

Q9

PLAYBOY: Is it true you met in a college performance-art show about body image?

CLEMENT: Ah, you've been Googling us, haven't you? Yes, that show was at Victoria College in Wellington, New Zealand. It wasn't the first time we'd met, but it was one of our first shows together. It was specifically about male body image.

MCKENZIE: The experience of being a man in the modern world and all the problems that come with it.

CLEMENT: It had an all-male cast. There were five of us, and we needed somebody to play the women.

MCKENZIE: That was usually left up to me. I was the most feminine in the group.

CLEMENT: We put on live demonstrations throughout that show, like on how to interact with the opposite sex. We gave tips on finding the clitoris. And we had a scene about the female orgasm. It sounds pretty juvenile now. We were young. I was just 21 at the time.

MCKENZIE: I was 11.

Q10

PLAYBOY: Do you remember when you started writing music together? Was it instant magic?

CLEMENT: When we started we didn't know much about music. We weren't very good guitarists. Our first song had only one chord. And then we did a second song with two chords. It started with one chord and then a bridge to a second chord and then back to the first chord. It was called "Rock Beat," I think.

MCKENZIE: After that we got ambitious. We went up to three chords, and then four, and then five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10. We eventually wrote a song with 11 chords.

CLEMENT: It was exhausting.

MCKENZIE: We finally went down again because it got too complicated. We stripped it back. Now our songs are usually only four chords.

CLEMENT: That seems like enough. Any more than that and you're just showing off. That's as much as the brain can handle.

Q11

PLAYBOY: One of your first big breaks was in 2005, when *Flight of the Conchords* starred on its own BBC radio show. Did you think radio would be your ticket to stardom?

CLEMENT: [Laughs] Well, to be fair, radio is a much bigger deal in England than it is here, and it seemed enough for us at the time. We didn't think of it as a stepping-stone to anything else. We're very short-term planners.

MCKENZIE: It's kind of a British tradition to make a radio show long before you make a television show. It helps you iron out the flaws in your ideas.

CLEMENT: And it's ridiculously cheap.

Q12

PLAYBOY: Before getting picked up by HBO, you briefly developed a TV series for NBC. What happened?

MCKENZIE: They never called us back. We finished the script and handed it to NBC, and that was the last we heard from them.

CLEMENT: They never told us they didn't like it. They always said they liked it.

MCKENZIE: They never phoned us to say, "Yeah, uh...no thanks."

CLEMENT: Is that how people do business in America? They just don't call you back?

MCKENZIE: It doesn't matter. HBO is a much better fit for us.



Q13

PLAYBOY: Although your songs are satirical, they can also be musically complex. You've mastered genres as diverse as R&B, country and straight-ahead rock and roll. Is there any musical style you can't conquer?

CLEMENT: We tried to do metal once, but it didn't work out.

MCKENZIE: Not loud enough. I've always wanted to try Queen. Does that count as a musical genre?

CLEMENT: I think so, yeah.

MCKENZIE: Freddie Mercury is beyond us. I don't know how he did it. Maybe it was the tight pants.

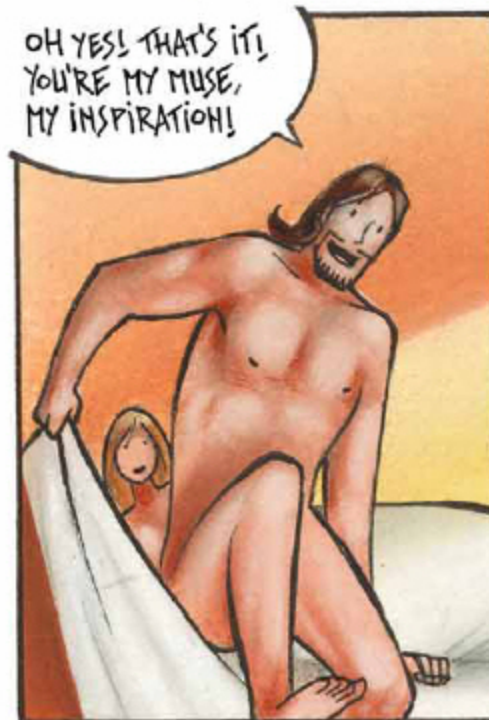
Q14

PLAYBOY: You've also dabbled in hip-hop, giving yourself the rap names Hiphopotamus and the Rhymenoceros. Will you get into a freestyle battle for us right now?

CLEMENT: We could do some freestyle, but we'd need a day or two to prepare.

MCKENZIE: We can't just do it off the top of our head. We need some time to think about it. (concluded on page 113)

THE PORTRAIT



JUAN IVAREZ • JORGE G

THE KOOKS

This young British band is fitting its style to its success. "When we started, we used to wear clothes from secondhand stores," explains frontman Luke Pritchard. "Now I've got a little bit of money, so I spend a lot on clothes. I've become a bit poncy."



ROCK the RABBIT

THESE MUSIC MAKERS THROW THE RULES OF FASHION OUT THE HOTEL-ROOM WINDOW, KEEPING THEIR STYLES AS FRESH AS THEIR SOUNDS

FASHION BY joseph de acetis PHOTOGRAPHY BY mick rock PRODUCED BY jennifer ryan jones



PHARRELL

A hit maker of this caliber hears inspiration everywhere. "You hear a beat when you're having sex with a girl from behind and you're smacking up against her," he says. "I like the sound of the thwap from litty sucks, too."

OPPOSITE PAGE: From left, Luke Pritchard's jacket (\$2,510) is by YOHJI YAMAMOTO. His shirt (\$450) is by COMING SOON. Hugh Harris's sports jacket (\$569) is by J.LINDBERG. His shirt (\$225) is by MEL GAMBERT. His ascot (\$150) is by DION. His hat (\$350) is by BORSALINO. Dan Logan's vest (\$510) is by COMING SOON. His jeans (\$185) are by BUCKLER. His cummerbund (\$180) is by DION. His cuff (\$58) is by ROCK & REPUBLIC. **THIS PAGE:** Pharrell Williams's jacket (\$495), shirt (\$200) and jeans (\$385) are by BILLIONAIRE BOYS CLUB. His glasses (\$375) are by TOM FORD.

MGMT

"We like dressing up in weird clothes," says Ben Goldwasser, who with Andrew VanWyngarden makes up the breakout psychedelic party duo MGMT. "But I'm not sure what we wear could be called a fashion sense as such."

From left, Ben Goldwasser's vest (\$125) and shirt (\$88) are by HOWE. His jeans (\$99) are by BEN SHERMAN. His shoes (\$120) are PF FLYERS. Andrew VanWyngarden's silk robe (\$875) is by DION.

A man in a pinstriped suit stands in a futuristic hallway with glowing lines. He is holding the handlebars of a motorcycle. In the top right corner, the name 'Q-TIP' is written in large, glowing, 3D yellow letters.

Q-TIP

"I try not to think about a legacy," says the hip-hop innovator and founder of A Tribe Called Quest. "If you do, your creativity can get stifled. You feel like you have to live up to what you did in the past."

Q-Tip's suit (\$2,495) and shirt (\$245) are by LA CAMICERIA. His tie (\$125) is by BOSS SELECTION. His pocket square (\$95) is by DION. His shoes (\$470) are by GUCCI.

MOTORCYCLE (\$17,199) IS A HARLEY-DAVIDSON V-ROD MUSCLE.

PERRY FARRELL

"My style has matured," says the iconic Jane's Addiction frontman. "I used to have orange dreadlocks and wear a polka-dot hat. I'd look like an idiot in that now."

Perry Farrell's vest (\$750) and scarf (\$250) are by PAUL SMITH. His shirt (\$165) is by J.LINDBERG. His glasses (\$340) are by TOM FORD.

"There is something fun about going completely against the grain," says drummer and chief troublemaker Tommy Lee. "When everyone is in suits, I'll do the opposite. It's a risk, but why would I want to be like Joe Blow down the street?"

MOTLEY CRUE

From left, Tommy Lee's pants (\$195) are by THEORY. His hat (\$295) is by ARIANNE. His shoes (\$149) are by CALVIN KLEIN. His wallet chain (\$1,100) is by PAUL WALKER. His umbrella (\$19) is by ACCOUTREMENTS. Mick Mars's shirt (\$149) is by BOSS HUGO BOSS. His belt (\$550) is by DAX SAVAGE. His necklace (\$1,000) and rings (\$250 to \$450) are by SAINTS & SINNERS. Vince Neil's jacket (\$595) is by ROYAL UNDERGROUND. His shirt (\$125) is by DKNY. His pants (\$195) are by VERSACE. His necklace (\$1,000) is by SAINTS & SINNERS. His shoes (\$125) are by ALFANI. His watch (\$100,000) is by DUNAMIS. Nikki Sixx's blazer (\$550) is by FORGOTTEN SAINTS. His pants (\$1,800) are by NEW YORK CITY CUSTOM LEATHER.



SEE MORE ROCK THE RABBIT AT PLAYBOY.COM.



I don't have the best luck with animals. I've been on a million safaris, and I've never seen a goddamn leopard. My closest and least enjoyable experience with very large creatures came in Nepal when a rhinoceros chased me up a tree. Sometimes I think I'm better off going to the zoo.

So when I had the chance to join the tour company Shark Diver on a six-day trip to Mexico's Isla Guadalupe to cage dive with great white sharks, I approached it with measured excitement. One hundred and eighty miles southwest of Ensenada in Baja California, Guadalupe is the best place in the northern hemisphere to see the world's most ferocious predators. Between August and December they show up in droves—more than 100, scientists say—to feed on a blubbery medley of seals and sea lions. Because divers here are almost guaranteed a chance to swim in proximity to them, Guadalupe has become a haunt of dive boats in recent years. It's also the latest political battleground on which the fight for the future of this threatened fish is being waged.

After a bumpy 20-hour crossing on the 87-foot *Islander*, we drop anchor in the shadow of Guadalupe, a 22-mile-long extinct volcano that rises from the Pacific, austere and foreboding like the animals that patrol its waters. The crew swings a pair of 10-foot-tall aluminum cages into the water with a crane and throws tuna heads off the stern to attract the sharks. Our Australian marine-biologist guide, Luke Tipple, delivers a lengthy safety briefing that ultimately comes down to one simple piece of advice: Keep your body parts inside the cage. It all seems too easy considering I'm about to go eyeball to eyeball with a 2,500-pound swimming chain saw.

I pull on a wet suit, shove an air hose connected to the boat's compressor into my mouth and join three other divers in the cage hanging off the stern. Less than an hour after we drop anchor, the first dorsal fin appears. In the clear brine, the fish comes into focus quietly and quickly—a 15-footer nearly as wide as I am tall. Without my realizing it, my hands instantly curl into tightly locked fists. This particular shark, I'm later told, has been named Shredder by the dive operators. He has a deep white gash, the result of a recent conflict, running above his gills, and the tip of his dorsal fin is in tatters. Yet his name comes not from his battle wounds but from the fact that several seasons back he severed a boat's anchor cable with his teeth. Not surprising behavior from an animal that never quite closes its mouth.

Now joined by two even larger females, Shredder goes for the bait. The practice here is to entice the sharks, not feed them, so when Shredder feigns interest, a deckhand pulls the tuna heads away. It's unclear who is toying with whom. As he approaches the tuna heads, the shark opens his mouth. It seems wide enough to park a Smart Car inside. Rows of teeth stack up like assembly-line dentures, the back ones

waiting to move forward when the front ones fall out. His slow glide is 11 million years in the making, the nonchalance of a perfect Darwinian killing machine.

The large population of Guadalupe great whites first lured dive operators here nine years ago. The island is now the centerpiece of a \$3 million-and-growing cage-diving industry. Last year, however, the Mexican government accused dive companies of unethical behavior after a YouTube video showed a great white smashing through the bars of one tour operator's cage with two divers inside. Neither the divers nor the shark was injured, but the incident prompted the Mexican navy to enforce a chumming ban to protect the animals as well as the small local band of abalone divers who claim the sharks have become more aggressive as a result of the chumming. The video collected more than a million online hits and made international news in December, with headlines in the U.S., the U.K. and Australia. NBC's *Today* show ran two segments on it.

Dive operators see the issue differently. Without chumming, they claim, they won't be able to attract the

sharks, and if the boats leave no one will be watching the animals, which will be left vulnerable to the poachers who fish sharks for their valuable jaws and fins. "Each

one of those sharks is worth \$20,000 to \$30,000 on the black market," says Marine Conservation Science Institute president Michael Domeier. Adds Patric Douglas, who owns Shark Diver and is my host in Guadalupe, "I have pictures of white-shark meat on sale in the Ensenada fish market." Douglas now runs his outfit with the help of Mexican researchers, who allow him to drop hang bait under their scientific permit.

As I float in Crayola-blue 65-degree water, Shredder

and the other great whites turn loops around my cage. Little about these animals' appearance suggests they need protection from anything. Weighing in at more than a ton, Shredder is a massive wall of flesh. But he's also profoundly beautiful. Thick rods, lateral lines of tissue that help him sense vibration, run down his flanks, creating the kind of streamlined perfection automakers strive to duplicate. His two-toned coloring is masterful camouflage but by no means symmetrical; gray spots fleck the white and vice versa, as if someone had run out of spray paint halfway through the job.

Mere inches away, this infamous sea monster seems almost docile. He's close enough that I could reach out and touch him. You can't do that in a zoo.

THE BEST WINTER ESCAPE
AND GREEN ADVENTURE LURKS
OFF THE COAST OF MEXICO

SHARK TALE

BY THAYER WALKER



See Thayer Walker's exclusive shark-diving video at playboy.com/sharks. Book your own five-day all-inclusive great white excursion with Shark Diver (\$3,100, sharkdiver.com).

BACKSTAGE WITH AUBREY O'DAY



THE DANITY KANE STAR TAKES HER ACT SOLO

By Brantley Bardin

Oh my God, I can't wait to show you this. It's better than a sex tape!" says singer, actress and reality-TV star Aubrey O'Day as she hustles into an ocean-side Mexican restaurant in the surf mecca of Huntington Beach, California. All but spilling out of an ultra-low-cut baby-doll dress, she sits, orders a margarita, pulls a MacBook Pro from her Goyard dog carrier (into which she then deposits her "daughter," Ginger, a Maltese puppy) and presses PLAY. Up pops an iMovie she's just made of her PLAYBOY photo shoot.

"I'm so proud. I've never felt like that in my life," she gushes while on-screen the former Danity Kane girl-group member repeatedly flings her body downward, then arches back up, breasts confidently proffered skyward. "Nudity is a beautiful thing," the 25-year-old says. "In this society we're all taught to cover ourselves and our thoughts up. But I get so intoxicated watching this because I felt so empowered by my sexuality that day." She pauses, then says, "It also made me feel as if I'm at a level where I am not gonna put up with any shit anymore."

Raised in La Quinta, California by an entertainment-lawyer mother, Aubrey was "discovered" by Sean "Diddy" Combs back in 2004 after he auditioned more than 10,000 girls for *Making the Band 3*, a grueling contest that would turn a quintet of gyrating babes into a female supergroup signed to his Bad Boy record label. But after two seasons, platinum and gold albums (*Danity Kane* and *Welcome to the Dollhouse*) and one Broadway show (*Hairspray*), the breakout star of Danity Kane was regularly duking it out with Diddy on TV over what she perceived as shoddy management. ("I was the only one who ever stood up to him," she brags.) Diddy swung back, criticizing Aubrey's increasingly sexual "bad girl" image.

Fueling the feud, Aubrey spent much of 2008 preening for the paparazzi in exponentially more revealing outfits, boasting of her new BFF, porn magnate Jenna Jameson, and spouting bons mots like "I wouldn't say one way or another what my preference is sexually...with a girl, a guy. All I really operate on is the way I feel in my heart." Ultimately, last October, Diddy fired the feisty fox, leaving her a free agent who now



Right: Aubrey O'Day with Sean Combs, who cast her on his show *Making the Band 3*. The two had an on-air falling-out.

PHOTOGRAPHY
BY MARKUS KLINKO
& INDRANI





says she's recording a solo album "that will definitely be out soon." She also has film and TV projects in the works.

All the drama has made the surprisingly sweet and savvy Aubrey more determined than ever to keep, as she loves to say, "the eye on the tiger." "I definitely have 'bad girl' in me," she admits, "but it's also just playing a role." It's worth noting that Aubrey's no fool. She has a degree in political science and drama from the University of California, Irvine, has worked in refugee camps and battered-women's shelters in Tanzania and Thailand and has "been feeding the homeless and doing charity work since I was a child; philanthropy is second nature to me." She also runs her own charity, FAN (Fight AIDS Now).

"But I'm one of those celebrities who are always going to be heavily judged. I don't see any way around it," she says, shrugging and taking a sip of her mango margarita. "The general perception of me is 'slutty,' 'promiscuous,' 'attention whore,' 'bimbo'—some It girl who isn't talented. Hey, I got here because of my talent. My whole career didn't start when I did *Making the Band*." And it's true: Aubrey has been singing, dancing and winning awards in regional theater since she was five years old.

"I'm fine with it all," she says. "I'm really comfortable with who I am. I mean, I used to hate it, but now I love being underestimated. It's a powerful way to move through the industry quickly, especially as a woman." Jenna Jameson, who should know a thing or two about that subject, agrees. "Jenna's like a sister to me. Jenna makes me feel okay about things because she's so proud of me. She told me, 'Honey, you're sexy and beautiful, and when most men look at you they think sex. Don't be ashamed. It's who you are.'"

Indeed. Though she didn't lose her virginity until she was a junior in college ("I'd never even been fingered or eaten out until then," she says, giggling), sex is something Aubrey is certainly into. "I've done it in cabs, clubs, everywhere," she muses. Having been linked with men such as DJ Cassidy, Donnie Wahlberg and R&B singer Jesse McCartney, she says, "I want to be that girl who gives a guy the best sex he has ever had, the sex he'll never be able to get out of his head. I mean, if every time he masturbates he'll have to think of me, then I've got it locked. It's done. It's in the bag."

Though she hasn't found Mr. Right yet, Aubrey confesses that despite her press, she has only one real vice: "My vice is I want to be in love. I want to be in love so badly, I haven't always made the best decisions." Finishing off her margarita, she rests her case. "Most of the stuff you've read about me is made up, and the best stuff about me you have yet to find out. I'm more of a catch than anybody remotely realizes."







I want to be that girl
who gives a guy the best
sex he has ever had, the
sex he'll never be able to
get out of his head."





See more of Aubrey at club.playboy.com.

PDF By Playboyman

I want to be that girl
who gives a guy the best
sex he has ever had, the
sex he'll never be able to
get out of his head."



MY BROTHER

(continued from page 38)

whenever he'd invite me up to his room to show me something—perhaps some ingenious mechanical contraption he had invented—or to view his coin collection and hear how he had acquired the more valuable coins or to play duets he had composed using our cheap wooden recorders. It was my brother who first introduced me to the stories and poems of Edgar Allan Poe. He once showed me a humorous drawing that he had made of the emperor Napoleon, making him appear quite crazed. To my preadolescent and later adolescent mind, it was all so cool to have a big brother who would take me into his confidence. I treasured those times we spent together even more than I did our family vacations and excursions to the nearby forest preserve, I suppose because they felt more special. My emotional bond with Ted was unique and very strong.

Ted left for Harvard at the age of 16. It would never have occurred to me that my brother would suffer as a result of social isolation there, because I had no idea that he needed anything from people. I thought of him as emotionally self-sufficient. I never imagined he shared my weakness for human companionship, my need for social validation.

In high school, I sort of became my brother—or at least tried to. I concentrated on math just like Ted. Although I had a few friends, all National Honor Society types, I grew more socially aloof and never dated. Once an all-star second baseman in our local Little League, I dropped baseball to concentrate on academics. I took an overload of courses so I could graduate in three years. On graduation day, I was 16, not much older than Ted had been on his graduation day. I even applied to Harvard and felt very disappointed when my application was rejected. But by then I already knew I was no match for my brilliant older brother. I may have been an intellectual star at Evergreen Park Community High School, but judging from the way the older faculty members swapped stories about my brother's brilliance, it was clear Ted was one of a kind, an academic legend.

In May or June of my senior year in high school, Ted was home on vacation from his Ph.D. program at the University of Michigan. One afternoon I showed him a calculus problem I'd solved after a long, persistent struggle. Ted, who was also a teaching assistant at Michigan, was impressed. "I'd guess that if I assigned the same problem to my upper-level calculus class, probably no one would be able to solve it." I was thrilled by his praise. I felt as if I had just moved into a select company of smart people whom Ted would naturally admire.

In many ways the next 10 years or so were our closest as brothers. At least that's how I experienced them. But I also felt

myself gradually drifting away from Ted. We spent a month one summer camping together on Michigan's Upper Peninsula. We spent a summer traveling across western Canada, looking for a piece of land for Ted to homestead after he abruptly quit his professor's job at the University of California, Berkeley in 1969. In 1971—after an unsuccessful attempt to get a Canadian homestead permit—Ted followed me to Montana, where I had migrated after college. He suggested that we pool our resources to buy a parcel of land, which turned out to be the 1.4-acre plot six miles outside of Lincoln where he built his now iconic 10-foot-by-12-foot cabin and where he lived a seemingly inoffensive hermit's life for the next 25 years.

Once, invoking his vision of an ideal society, he described to me hunter-gatherer communities based on reciprocity and trust, "you know...like our family." If someone had told me that in another five years Ted would be writing letters of bitter recrimination to our parents, I would have been surprised, to say the least. As late as the late 1970s, he invited me to join him in a quest for remote land in the Canadian wilderness where we might live together far from the bane of civilization. By then, however, it was clear to me I would be quite unhappy with my life shrunk to one relationship.

A change in how I saw my brother was, developmentally speaking, inevitable. Over time, the difference in age matters less and less. Idols show their clay feet eventually. In a healthy relationship, disillusioned hero worship is replaced by mature affection—and there certainly were a lot of qualities to like in Ted. He was still smart, independent and principled. There was also, by this time, a kind of despondency in him that I found very poignant. He didn't want any of the things most people crave: being loved and admired, having money, comfort or worldly success. In his humility and integrity, he resembled the saints of old—except that his asceticism was completely disconnected from faith, love or hope. On the contrary, it seemed haunted by a sorry defeatism. I also sensed that he expected me to live the same way and share his deeply pessimistic views.

When I left Montana to take a job teaching high school English in the Midwest in 1973, my mother asked a typically worried question: "Did you say good-bye to Ted before you left?"

Her question caught me up short, and I answered a little defensively: "Well, he knew I was going." I would have had to drive 180 miles round-trip to see Ted, I told her. In the back of my mind, I was thinking that I couldn't spend the rest of my life shackled to my brother. He never said that he needed me, anyway. Mom was expecting too much, I told myself. But I also remembered my early promise never to abandon my brother. Did it feel to him, perhaps subconsciously, that I was doing so now?

Ted's angry—well, blistering—letters to our parents started arriving in the late 1970s. The gist was that he was unhappy all his life because Mom and Dad had never truly loved him. They pushed him academically to feed their own egos. They never taught him appropriate social skills because they didn't care about his happiness. These letters were not an invitation to talk but an indictment, filled with highly dramatized and—in my view—distorted memories. Yet Ted's conclusion, in his own mind, was as rock solid as a mathematical proof.

At first, I thought he had simply lost his temper. After all, he was emotionally intense and spent nearly all his time alone. He had given up a promising but unfulfilling academic career to live in the woods—and still he wasn't happy. So it was not surprising he could lose perspective and say some things he didn't really mean. It could happen to almost anyone.

But when I wrote to Ted, hoping he would appreciate the pain his letter had caused our parents and apologize, I received a series of increasingly disturbed replies that convinced me he hadn't just lost his temper: Every recrimination he'd flung at Mom and Dad was based in a fixed belief system. I was surely Ted's closest human contact, yet I'd never seen any of this coming. And now, nothing I said could shake Ted's judgment of Mom and Dad in the slightest. At one point he warned me that if I continued defending Mom and Dad, he'd cut me out of his life as well. Once he did so, he said, it would be forever.

For the next decade, more or less, I thought I might persuade Ted to see things differently. There were occasional crises that made me think my brother might be seriously ill. But each time he seemed to recover, more or less. There was a discernible pattern: I never saw any crisis looming, and Ted never wanted to discuss it afterward. Looking back now, I can see there was also a downward spiral. There were more and more topics we couldn't discuss because discussing them made Ted upset. In the letters we regularly exchanged, there was an undertone of stress, based for me in my brother's harsh treatment of our parents. Ted wanted me to agree with him about everything. I wanted to defend my own ego as a separate person. But most of all I wanted to defend Mom and Dad against Ted's cruel opinion of them. It bothered me to realize I was not going to change my brother's mind.

My marriage to Linda was the proverbial straw as far as Ted was concerned. Maybe he understood—whether consciously or not—the implications of bringing another fresh, intelligent mind into the family. Perhaps, too, it forced him to see his little brother differently. In any case, it was Linda who made me confront the growing evidence that my brother was suffering from a mental disorder.



"Aw, baby...you know I'm lactose intolerant!"

"But that's the way he thinks!" I protested at first. I remember her then pointing to a bizarre passage in a letter I'd just received. "David, read this. People who are healthy in their minds don't think like this."

My feelings toward Ted shifted after I read the "Unabomber's Manifesto" in *The Washington Post* and began coming to grips with the horrific possibility that Ted might be the long-sought serial bomber. Again, it was Linda who pried open my mind, Linda who urged me to read the manifesto. I had never considered Ted capable of violence. In fact, my only fear along those lines was the haunting worry that he might someday kill himself.

Suddenly, it felt as if my brother and I were central characters in a grandiose tragedy. I began to discern a frightening symmetry in our lives that led me to the

terrible dilemma that Linda and I then faced: Do nothing and run the risk that Ted might kill again, or turn him in and accept the likelihood that he would be executed for his crimes.

The alternatives looked too stark to be true, more like literature than life. Looking back over our lives as brothers, I began to see how every step led us to this terrible juncture. Suddenly, I felt trapped inside the narrative of my life, my identity forever defined by the fate of being Ted Kaczynski's brother. I wanted out of that role. I wanted to make my own choices in life, not have them foisted upon me. I wanted to create my own life's story. And yet to choose to do nothing was itself a choice. There was no escape. I was boxed in by the awful dilemma we faced as well as by my relationship to Ted. Suddenly, and for some time, I felt engulfed in a vision of the universe as dark as Ted's.

At the same time my resentment of Ted unexpectedly melted away. My ordinary frame of reference in thinking about him no longer made sense. There was just emptiness and deep pity in my heart where my brother had been.

It has occurred to me that Ted and I are almost like disowned parts of each other. Ted the Unabomber represents the violence and pessimism that I reject. David, the putative "moral hero," represents the inauthenticity of hope in a world gone fundamentally awry. Ted's cruelty stigmatizes my good name, but my reputation for goodness comes at his expense. Like all contrived opposites, we reinforce one another. The worst thing he can do to me is deny any opportunity for reconciliation. Hope of reconciliation is something I am bound to maintain, but it costs me little—only the sneaking intuition that an important part of me is missing.

I'm beginning to see the outline of a developmental scheme in this brothers' motif. As a young kid I had lots of boyhood pals, almost like temporary brothers my own age who would come and go out of my life. Unlike my real brother, they turned out to be replaceable. Many of my post-high school friendships, however, endured much longer. I spent four years with the same college roommate, and we've grown even closer over the years. If something ever happened to Joel, I would grieve as much as I would for Ted. Our conversations pick up just where they left off, even after a gap of years. I discover in my friend much of the openness and reciprocity that I never found in Ted. He was there for me in my worst hour. There is a level of trust and respect between us that makes the whole world seem stable and sane at its core, simply because this kind of relationship is possible. I suppose it's what Martin Buber named the "I-Thou"—a recognition of the relational structure of our human reality.

Several months after Ted's arrest I made contact with one of my brother's surviving victims—Gary Wright, of Salt Lake City, Utah. In one sense, he represented someone whose experience of the Unabomber saga was the polar opposite of mine. Part of me desperately needed to open a door to that "other side"—the victims' side. Ted would not talk to me, and neither—not surprisingly—would most of his victims or their family members. A lot of worlds got shattered by Ted's bombs. Probably it was foolish—even self-indulgent—of me to imagine I could reassemble any of those pieces in the hope of making my world whole again. But with incredible grace, Gary volunteered to help me. Five years later, on the evening of September 11, 2001, I was home alone in Schenectady. Linda was away in Indiana, caring for her sick parents. We were terribly worried about Linda's brother and his wife, whose apartment in lower Manhattan was not far from the World Trade Center site, and also about our niece attending college in Philadelphia, cut off from news of her parents because of the telephone outage. I suppose being the brother of a so-called terrorist made the events of that day more disturbing, if possible, than they otherwise would have been for me. I learned from Linda that our sister-in-law had been



"Sweetheart! I wasn't expecting you."

on the phone with Linda's mother when she saw the second tower fall. Then the phone line was cut off. I managed to reach my niece at her dorm room and found her as sane and sensible as always, somehow managing to give back more reassurance than she took. I couldn't bear to watch the news. But the silence felt equally unbearable. I wondered what my brother might be thinking about all of this.

The phone rang again. "Hey, Dave, it's so good to hear your voice! I know you take a lot of trips to New York City. I'm so glad to know that you're okay."

It was Gary Wright.

On a night when just about everyone in America was checking in with their closest family and friends, Gary Wright made a call to the brother of the man who'd tried to kill him. In that moment I knew that Gary would be my friend for life. Our bond forged through violence is as powerful and deep as any other. We also share a base of values. Our bond is a bond of choice as much as a bond of happenstance. Tragedy has given us both an unexpected gift. My life is infinitely richer because of Gary's friendship. Nothing can compensate me for losing Ted, but I find a poetic balance in having gained a new brother in Gary. Our choices end up reshaping the universe—at least the universe we know.

No one lives a life without loss. Loss of loved ones. Loss of innocence. Loss of dreams and hopes. Loss of each precious moment as quickly as it passes. Loss of our own lives in the end.

Sometimes I'll be driving down the road, glance in the mirror and for a split second I'll see Ted driving the car behind me. A moment later I realize it's just another guy with a beard. A guy with a completely different mind and a life all his own. Anyone could be my brother, I realize, if fate had just arranged things a little differently. No matter—a flood of memories rushes in. So many memories: some sad, some anxious, some happy and loving, but all of them hauntingly poignant. What happened to those two little boys who grew up together in 1950s America? Or to the young men who spent an entire summer camping together in western Canada in 1969? Back then, I could never have imagined my life without Ted.

As we were driving back from Canada to Illinois in August 1969, I was eager to return home, thinking about regular baths, Mom's home cooking, an opportunity to catch up on the world's news, perhaps even a chance to see Linda before she returned to school. I wanted to rejoin the stream of my life after this memorable detour. Ted and I were camped out in a county park in the grasslands of Nebraska, lying on our backs side by side, gazing up at the immense, starry sky as warm summer breezes stirred the tall grass around us.

"I wish we were home," I said.

"Really? I wish we didn't have to go back," Ted said.

It was a defining difference. But now I agree with him, wishing we could live that moment again.

KENNY CHESNEY

(continued from page 34)

the hospital at the same time. Aunt Missy is six days older than I am.

PLAYBOY: Why do you wear those sleeveless shirts onstage and in photos?

CHESNEY: When I'm onstage I just want to feel as comfortable as I possibly can.

PLAYBOY: Is there some vanity in it also?

CHESNEY: Of course. Maybe there's a touch of sex appeal in it, sure. But I can't see going onstage wearing a long-sleeve shirt in the dead of summer. I work out hard during the day with a trainer who monitors everything I put in my mouth when I'm on tour. When I first got a record deal, you can tell by my early album covers that working out wasn't that much a part of my life.

PLAYBOY: We've heard you like junk food.

CHESNEY: I could eat my weight in peanut M&Ms. I've quit allowing pizza deliveries to the tour bus, because if it's there, I'll eat it. I've got friends who will drink 100 beers if they drink one. I'm that way with pizza.

PLAYBOY: Can you still fit into a 29-inch waist?

CHESNEY: I don't right now, but I will on April 16, when we start a tour. If I have to go up to a 30, that would be all right. If I'm 40 years old and wearing a 30 waist, that's pretty good.

PLAYBOY: Did you love the islands the first time you went down there?

CHESNEY: Yeah. I went down to do a video for "How Forever Feels" in 1996, right before Christmas. Knoxville is in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains, and parts of the islands are very mountainous. Plus you've got all this blue Caribbean water. I have two homes in St. John, so it's become a huge part of my life.

PLAYBOY: And your music.

CHESNEY: It definitely changed my music. I started writing about my experiences, my surroundings, my friends, everything that meant something to me. That way of life made it into my songs and into our live shows. Because of that, a lot of people come

to our shows who don't even listen to country music. But that's not a bad thing.

PLAYBOY: Appropriately, "How Forever Feels" was the first big record of your career.

CHESNEY: Yeah, maybe. It was at number one for six or seven weeks. I'd had a couple of hits, but they were in and out, off the chart, forgotten forever.

PLAYBOY: Your fiancée was in the video for "How Forever Feels."

CHESNEY: She was. I'll never do that again, either. When it doesn't work out, you have to live with that video. I remember right after that girl and I broke up, I had to do the song at the Country Music Association awards and the whole video behind me was her. I was doing the song with a chip on my shoulder. We went on a honeymoon trip and had a ball. We just didn't want to get married.

PLAYBOY: It's funny: You've had an engagement and a wedding, but you've never officially been married.

CHESNEY: Technically, no, I haven't. Wow! I sure feel like I was married. Sure felt like I split up, too.

PLAYBOY: What's a typical day like down in the islands?

CHESNEY: The other day I woke up on my boat about seven o'clock in the morning. Nobody was out, and I jumped into the ocean completely naked. Swam for 20 minutes, took a shower, made a bloody mary, ate some egg whites and hung out with the girl I'm dating now, Amy.

PLAYBOY: That's Amy Colley. You used to date Miss West Virginia. Now you date Amy, who was Miss Tennessee.

CHESNEY: Usually around 12 o'clock the first Corona gets opened. We'll pull some fish out of the freezer and put it on the grill. That's my favorite day.

PLAYBOY: You must have done a lot to promote Caribbean tourism.

CHESNEY: Yeah, I've brought some unneeded attention to that place. Some people down



"Marriage? I thought you were getting down there to eat me!"

there don't want that. They just want their peace and quiet.

PLAYBOY: You were someone else's opening act for a long time. Were you ever treated badly?

CHESNEY: Sure. One of my good friends is Peyton Manning, and when he was at the University of Tennessee he and a few other football players wanted to go to our show in North Carolina. Peyton got up and sang "Back Where I Come From" with me. The whole time, the headliner flashed his own name on the screen behind us. I was livid. I wasn't trying to upstage him; I was just bringing my buddy up to sing.

PLAYBOY: One of your producers, Buddy Cannon, has said people in Nashville didn't believe in you.

CHESNEY: I don't think they did. If you asked somebody 15 years ago who would be sitting in my spot right now, the majority of people would have bet against me. Now, eight entertainer-of-the-year awards and 30-something million records later... I always believed. But I don't know if I would have believed *this*. If you had said, "Kenny, you're going to be the number one ticket seller in the 21st century, over Springsteen, Madonna, the Rolling Stones, U2," I'd have said you're crazy. But we did it.

PLAYBOY: Someone in Nashville said to me, "He's not the best-looking male singer in country music. He's not the best guitarist, and he's not the best songwriter. But he is the

best-selling act out of them all." What do you think about that?

CHESNEY: I agree that I'm the best-selling act of them all. [laughs]

PLAYBOY: So what do you do better than anyone else?

CHESNEY: Connect. What good is it if a guy can sing real good but he sits on his ass and doesn't make anybody feel anything? I can connect with an audience every time I play. When I sing, they listen.

PLAYBOY: Yet you've said you felt like a punching bag in country music for a long time.

CHESNEY: There was a punching-bag element to it that I never really understood. There was a lot worse music being made than mine. It's ironic because now I'm a symbol of what to be and how hard to work. I have heads of major labels say, "I wish you could teach our artists how to do it." At one point I was the punching bag of what not to be, and now I'm the model of what to be.

PLAYBOY: The Kenny Chesney model is to scuffle for a long time before you make it big.

CHESNEY: I was on one bus with my band and crew for seven years. I didn't come to town with a karaoke tape. I didn't get on a TV show. There were no shortcuts. Anybody who wants to follow my model is welcome to it. You don't want to follow my path.



BOOM CAR

(continued from page 48)

don't come to shows. They don't even know the shows exist. Some people do it for fun. Some people just like it loud, like me. And some people do it to impress other people, like girls or whatever. Some people abuse everything."

"And would new noise ordinances make a difference?" I asked.

"You know, it changes everything once you have the law looking at you." He glanced over at me. "Especially when you're breaking the law." I nodded thoughtfully. He glanced at me again. "Anytime you want me to turn it on, let me know."

"Crank it up," I cavalierly encouraged. After all, the sound itself was why I was there.

MP3 Pimp bent forward and began pushing buttons on the lunar panel. Numbers and words lit up and disappeared.

For the first few seconds of music, I felt very pleased with myself. It was loud, but I could take it, and I enjoyed the rap bass line. I did. I got it. It was fun. MP3 Pimp was still fiddling with buttons. And then, suddenly, the system turned on. I felt as if I had been launched in thunder and fire from an ejector seat—only the seat hadn't ejected, and I remained inside the thunder and fire. I felt my organs collapsing. I didn't hear sound. I just experienced my bones and heart erupting and bursting apart through my skin. My hands slammed to the sides of my head, and I bent forward, vaguely aware of MP3 Pimp's finger pulsing a button near my temple. The sound declined.

"I don't want to cause you pain," he said.

"Thank you," I managed.

Slowly, recalling a study by some behavioral psychologist who declared that the only two forms of fear we're born with are the fear of loud noises and the fear of falling, along with the sober audiologist who had recently told me that a single exposure to 140 decibels can cause permanent hearing loss, I straightened back into my seat. "How loud was that?" I finally asked.

"Oh, it gets a lot louder than that," MP3 Pimp chuckled.

"How loud?"

"I don't know exactly. The loudest I ever heard it is 158.6, and that's on average, over 50 seconds. What you heard right then is 141, 142. It's definitely loud. But it gets louder."

Only then did it begin to dawn on me that there are boom cars and then there are *boom cars*. I was still a long way from grasping that SPL car-audio competitors are, in the words of one FloridaSPL member, "the loudest community on earth except for military operations."

Some perspective on those numbers: A pneumatic riveter at a distance of four feet produces 125 decibels. The decibel system is logarithmic, with every increase of 10 decibels signifying a *tenfold* increase in sound. If you are three feet away from a rifle muzzle when the rifle goes off, the sound you hear is approximately 140 decibels. If you are 75 feet away from a jet at takeoff, you are exposed to 150 decibels. Standing 30 feet from a jet at takeoff, you hear 160 decibels.



The explosion of Krakatoa from 100 miles up in the air, or a jet engine heard from one foot away, is 180 decibels.

The highest recorded score to date in dB Drag Racing is 181.7 decibels.

"What do you think of the forums that basically say all boom cars are evil?" I blurted out.

"I've never looked at one of the forums before, to be honest. I've read some e-mails that I guess a guy from one of them was sending out, and the things that they were saying.... It's kind of funny because they have no idea what they're attacking. They don't even know who they're trying to be at war with." I asked him what he meant. "Just because somebody has a gun—like a hunter, say—doesn't mean they're going to shoot at people. And just because I have a stereo in my car doesn't mean I'm going to drive by your house every night and bother you." He took a phone call and then turned to me.

"But I look on it as a sport. Not an athletic sport, obviously. It's a hobby that became a sport. It keeps me entertained and busy when I'm not working or with my family. Some people bring their kids out to the shows. Meet a lot of people. Make a lot of friends."

A single headlight of a police helicopter beamed down over us, the chopping of its blades drowning out the highway. "They're looking for *somebody*," MP3 Pimp said. "They're *looking* for somebody." He sighed. "Let me show you the car."

He pointed at the inside of the door. "Took the stock panels and turned them into something they're not. Took fiberglass and molded it. Cut out the rear deck with an angle grinder. We use, like, spray foam everywhere and whatnot. You want to seal off everything as much as you can to keep all the pressure up front. And then...." We walked around back, and he opened the trunk. Five car batteries festooned with red-and-blue wires were wedged into the space. "Wow."

"There's another one under the hood and one in the corner by the passenger seat, so seven batteries total. They're pretty heavy—they weigh about 40 pounds apiece. It actually weighs down the car a lot. If you look over here, you see the difference between the tire and the—it caused everything over

here to drop about four inches. We also paint all the windows black. Keep the light that's inside in. Keep the light that's outside out. That way nobody can see in."

Explosive Sound and Video sits next to a hair salon, an ice-cream shop and Tire Kingdom in a parking lot that was already blasting with heat by the time I arrived at 10:30 on Sunday morning. A couple of blue tents had been set up to shade an assortment of high-caliber sound-measuring equipment and laptops. Over the course of the next couple of hours, the participants' vehicles rumbled into the lot along with spectators who clustered around the champion cars, waiting for audio demos and gazing hopefully at the dark-tinted windows to try to glimpse the special "something" each had hidden inside. There were lots of long shorts and loping gaits, and the men, clutching giant plastic cups or dark bottles, seemed to fall generally into the category of short on neck and bald (save for a sneeze of facial hair) or stringy and towheaded. There were plenty of women as well, but with one or two exceptions they were all there in the capacity of girlfriend, wife or the catchall "lady of." Everywhere there were tattoos and T-shirts emblazoned with multiple skull or single crucifix motifs.

By noon a critical mass of participating vehicles had arrived in the plaza. Every 10 minutes or so, one of them would begin to demo its "something," releasing a swarm of sound that swallowed the lot for a few moments before stopping dead again. On the tapes of my interviews, the car-audio blasts do not sound like noise; they simply cancel out the voices—cancel out the soundscape altogether—in a low, humming void that suggests the recorder simply gave up the ghost.

I wandered around and found MP3 Pimp about to perform what is known as "hair trick." Hair trick involves finding a long-haired woman who will lean her head into the window of a car demoing its audio. A young woman with very lengthy red hair was just bending over the passenger side of MP3 Pimp's vehicle as I approached. He turned on the audio, and her orange hair began flying up in the air in every direction, like a free-floating wildfire.

"I love it," she squealed when he turned the car off. "That's the best feeling in the world!"

"Why?" I asked.

"Cause your whole head tingles, and all your hair's moving and you can see it all moving!"

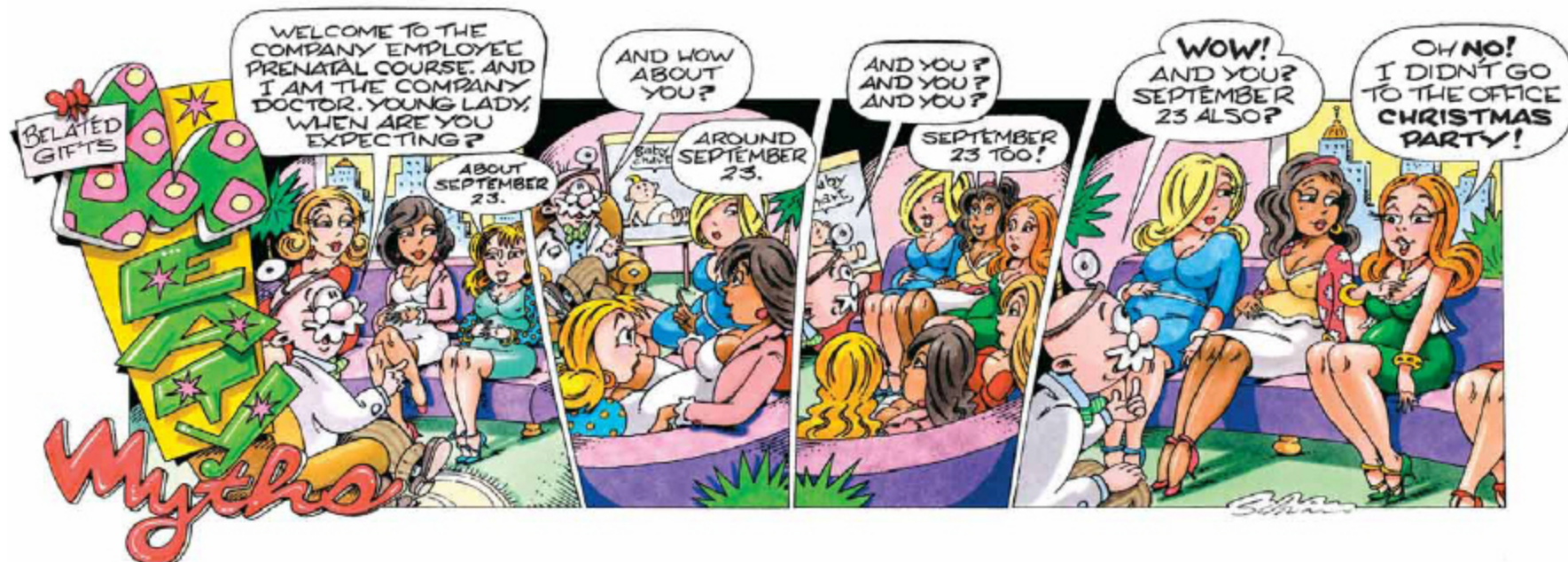
"And you can finally justify having so much hair," a spectator observed.

"I can finally justify having so much hair!" she concurred.

The dB Drag Racing qualifications were at last getting under way. For the onlookers, this process consisted primarily of watching a huge bald man with a shredded auburn goatee, in a tank top that read GORILLA HEAVYWEIGHT, lumber over to cars and stick a sound meter on a hose through the windows of dozens of them one by one, as if he were hooking them up to an IV in preparation for a transfusion. Once Gorilla Heavyweight had positioned the tube, the window rolled back up from the inside, and at the conclusion of a countdown from the judge, who held his fingers above the decibel-monitoring laptop, the audio behind the dark glass switched on to strike a tone barely audible from outside the car.

After watching this for a time (qualifications were to continue for the next four and a half hours), I finally met Casey Sullivan, the administrator of FloridaSPL. Casey, a gangly guy who looks all of 16, wearing a black Kickit Audio baseball cap, walked up to me with his partner, Buzz Thompson (owner of Calusa Custom Concepts), who resembles a somewhat shorter, no less voluble but considerably more coherent version of the Dennis Hopper photographer character in *Apocalypse Now*. But before we got into conversation, I glimpsed the man I suddenly knew to be Tommy "The King of Bass" McKinnie. He had just emerged from the garage of Explosive Sound and Video and was walking to a low, gleaming black-and-silver truck sitting under its own special canopy, with the words HO PROBLEMS stamped across the front windshield and KING OF BASS on both sides.

Even watching Tommy the King of Bass move from a distance, one knew oneself to be in the presence of a master of something. A handsome, mildly pumped-up black man in his 30s, wearing a black Explosive Sound



and Video T-shirt and matching black baseball cap with the brim reversed, he had that hunter's poise, that charged balance—of complete alertness and utter relaxation—the self-assured élan of a successful professional athlete who knows his body will perform exactly as it has to when it has to. Only in this case that body is prosthetic, the chassis of a low-slung 1995 Isuzu packed with enough audio equipment to kill by sound alone.

Tommy has been competing for 10 years and purports to be undefeated in all major car-audio competitions. He has taken his truck everywhere across the United States and prevailed at the world finals four years in a row, from 2005 to 2008. In 2007, for the first time, the finals were hosted over the Internet, with three locations in the United States (Florida, Indiana and California) going “face to face” live online with France, Greece and, perplexingly, Norway, to see who had the earth's loudest vehicle. Answer: Tommy the King of Bass. A lot of times, Tommy told me, “they call the King of Bass ‘the Case’ because I have 24 of everything. Twenty-four midis. Twenty-four tweeters. Twenty-four woofers and 24 amplifiers.” His truck is known as the Loch Ness Monster “because you always hear stories about it, but you never see it.” Nine tenths of the year the Loch Ness Monster remains deep within Tommy the King of Bass's garage. He never drives it or brings it out unless it's going up on his trailer to a show. When I looked inside, it was like looking into Ali Baba's cave rather than a car—a black vortex gleaming with countless silver cones, odd lustrous discs, a gorgon's head of wires and plates of dark metal.

The truck can hit in the 160s constantly for a minute straight. But no judging category technically goes that high, so Tommy runs it in the 150-to-159 class. “What we call balls to the wall,” he nodded. “You know, ‘Run what you brung, and I hope you brung enough.’” There would be no point in going higher than 159, since he would be competing against himself, and besides, he doesn't want people to know how loud the truck can get, because that “sets the par” for the season much higher than it needs to be for him to win—which in turn means unnecessary breakage. Instead, he does a lot of “sandbagging,” that is, holding back from what he's capable of to confuse his competitors. “I sandbag all the time,” he said.

“I'd say my entry into the sport began when I was in junior high, before I got my first car,” Tommy explained. “Guys that considered they were loud in the neighborhood—or considered they were loud in the streets—every time they would drive by I would run to the door, and my parents would think I was crazy. I'd just run to the door and see what the car was, how loud it was, and I said, ‘One day that's going to be me, riding around shaking everybody's house and restaurants.’ I just always wanted a loud stereo.” He added that once he had his first car with his first audio system, he drove it loud enough that he was barred from every restaurant in town on account of shattering their glass—Burger King, McDonald's, Taco Bell. Even the car wash (“which I actually never used, because my

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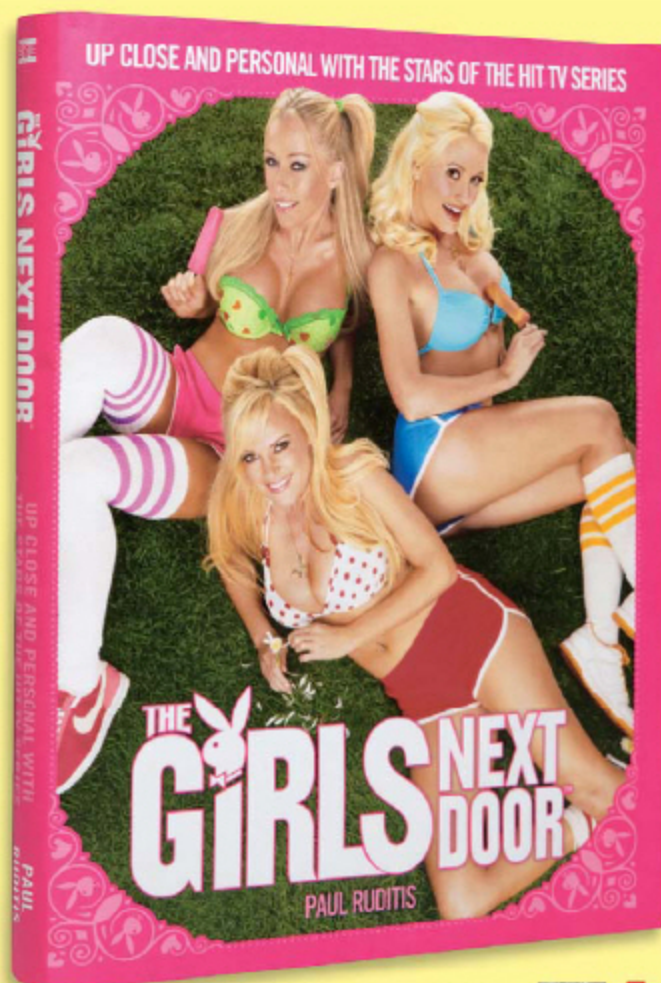
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GET NEXT TO THE GIRLS NEXT DOOR



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ALTA LOMA



truck was always too low") banned him because he drove by one time and broke its window with the power of his sound.

Tommy's story reinforced what I'd heard from MP3 Pimp the night before and what I would hear from a dozen competitors—longtime and first-time alike—over the course of that afternoon. Everyone involved with FloridaSPL whom I spoke with had craved a loud stereo more than anything in the world basically ever since they could remember wanting anything. Some had purchased their first car stereo before they could drive, let alone own, a car. The crowd was not especially thuggish. It was on many levels diverse—amazingly so, racially—peppered with both more and less aggressive sorts, mostly in their 20s and 30s (with a handful of exceptions on either side of the age divide) and making more or less money (though less was certainly the rule). I came away from the show thinking not about what drives some people to annoy others but about the wondrous weirdness of the human animal as such, with its Russian-doll subsets within subsets of desires and its endlessly peculiar needs. When I pressed Buzz Thompson to say what hooked people, he moaned, "It's just so *sensual*. It's sound! It's feeling! It's the attention you get! There's so much to what you're doing when you add a subwoofer to

your car. And once you do it you always have a taste for it. You find someone with louder, and you say, 'Wow, that louder is better than my louder.'"

But of course this sensuality, the sensuality of hair trick and balls to the wall, was not, to put it mildly, everyone's sensuality. And to an extent, Buzz's analysis amounted to saying, "These people are just born this way." Cultural, socioeconomic and personal history may have fed the obsession, but it was there to begin with. These people were carriers of the noise gene. Was my own hunger for silence, in the last analysis, any different?

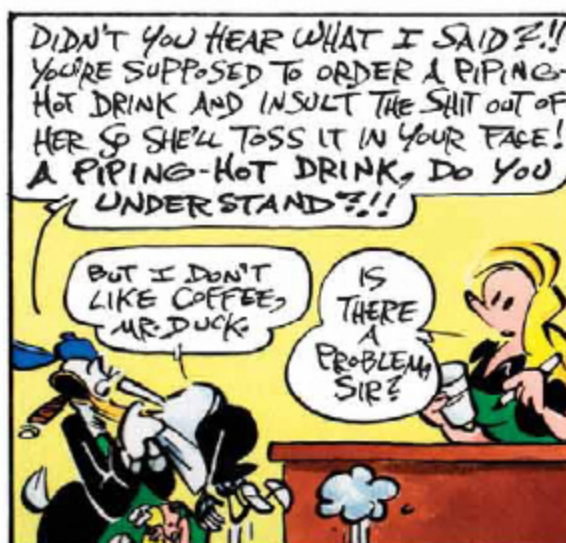
On the previous night MP3 Pimp had begun to give me a history of the sport's evolution from a technological standpoint. Buzz later filled some of the gaps in this version, out in front of Explosive Sound and Video. I say "version" because it is, in the main, an oral history still in a molten state, with competing, not altogether consistent narratives expounded by different pioneer participants and competition sponsors.

Car-audio competitions began in the early 1980s, and although there were always extemporized "boom-offs," along with more esoteric contests such as car-alarm meets—in which challengers matched up to determine who had the biggest, loudest alarm gadgetry in their vehicles—one of the first nationally popular competitions

was the Rolling Thunder contest, launched by George "Doc Thunder" Reed. George was an audio sales rep who wanted to boost car stereo sales, and the Rolling Thunder contests judged cars on three counts: sound pressure level, sound quality and installation finesse. Sound quality tended to get the most attention from car-audio buffs precisely because, as Buzz put it, a car is "such a tackling environment to create quality in. As you're too close to the speakers, you have glass by your ears—that's reflective. You have carpet and leather cushions by your feet—that's absorptive." But the intensity of that challenge also helped limit the appeal of the contests.

Over the next decade, two things happened. First, a new generation of speaker and amplifier technology powerful enough to survive multiple high-volume sessions—and loud enough to excite audiences in ways that quality never quite mustered—began to appear on the scene and to torque the focus of the sport toward bass. Often the men behind the new subwoofers were garage-based tinkerers who never wrote down their secrets and who made their mark by, as Buzz put it, "getting dirty, spending money and taking time." Eventually, if they were lucky, they got recruited by major manufacturers who helped make a handful of American companies the elite standard of the car-audio scene. Second, sometime in the 1990s a new strain

Dirty Duck by Bobby London



of powerful subwoofers from China began swamping the markets. Suddenly there were scores of companies churning out audio equipment that, if not as refined as the subwoofers used in high-end SPL competitions, still had enough kick to make your skeleton shake. Because they were so strong and, relatively speaking, so cheap, they helped provoke a surge in fans that drove the sport's popularity to new heights.

The next game-changing innovation in car audio was "the burp." One day in 1994 Tim Maynor, with Jonathan Demuth in tow, showed up at a bass competition. They blew everyone else away by playing a single note, one ultra-low-pitch frequency, and drowning out all the other competitors in their decibel class. At that time sport participants were required to compete by playing a song

the match sponsors had chosen for them, which happened that particular afternoon to be the first song on the *Flashdance* soundtrack. Driven by the desire to annihilate their sole rival for the championship, Maynor and Demuth had analyzed the first track of *Flashdance* pulse by pulse to find the frequency at which it peaked and where the peak occurred. By abandoning all pretense of playing a recognizable snippet of the song and instead hitting a button at the exact second when the music was loudest and playing only that one tone, they immediately gained three decibels of sound. The crowd, which Demuth told me numbered in the thousands, went wild. Their discovery opened the floodgates. Everyone started converting their cars into "one-note wonders," or "burp vehicles."

A car-audio guy named Wayne Harris, who had won the first Rolling Thunder National Championship with the Terminator, a reconfigured four-ton 1960 Cadillac hearse, founded the first SPL-dedicated venue. The same year Maynor's burp vehicle changed the terms of car-audio engagement, Harris promoted his first dB Drag Racing event. Copycat and offshoot sponsors proliferated, each with its own name and marginally different rule book. Soon thereafter, Tommy related, "dB Drag Racing got out of hand. Everyone lost the highs, lost the pretty stuff, the pretty-looking stuff, and it was all about how loud can you make your car be."

dB Drag Racing cars can't even play music. If they do, they will break their

speakers. And their battery-charging systems do not last longer than the three seconds they're required to compete at their maximal amplitude. (Sometimes destruction is the goal. The world finals occasionally include a Death Match class, in which competitors run head to head for five minutes. The last car standing wins, and both cars get buried in smoke from frying audio innards.) Indeed, the vehicles themselves, let alone the audio systems, cannot withstand the pressure exerted by the burp button. It's not coincidental that Maynor and Demuth were also the first team to replace their vehicle's factory-installed windshield with a steel plate. And yet, for a three-second single-note competition based entirely on loudness, the rules of dB Drag are unbe-

event and could face possible disciplinary action from the dBDR. Examples:

- Throwing a 'fit' in the judging lanes.
- The circulation of or participation in petitions regarding dB Drag Racing.
- 'Mob'-type behavior."

dB Drag Racing continues with head-to-head competitions in which competitors park side by side for three seconds, burp their cars and wait for the laptop readout. But a few years ago the hosting organizations (of which there are several) went through a crisis. They began losing competitors. They started losing manufacturer sponsors because, as Tommy said, "the manufacturers were like, 'All these guys are doing is putting tons of amps, tons of speakers and tons of woofers into their vehicles and just breaking it all in three seconds.'" They were losing spectators as well.

Demuth told me that in putting too much "scientificness into it," they took the fun out of it. "It was too boring," Tommy summarized. "Basically, you'd see some guy pull up in his vehicle with a bulletproof black windshield, bulletproof black side windows, concrete all in it, and you'd see these numbers painted on the side that say this guy does a 180. Then he closes the door, and all you hear is this little quiet *dzzzz*. To me, I know what it is, but you ask a customer and he says, 'What just happened?' No one wants to watch that. Not compared to my truck, that can put on a real show. That's when the organizations approached me and told me they'd come up with a new format—Bass Racing—and they wanted me to compete. It's gonna be no more

burping your car. No more one-note wonders. You gotta play music for 30 seconds. You've got to remain within a certain decibel range the whole time, and your peak average becomes your score. I liked the concept. I knew my truck—which I had all the time but which had been sitting in the garage, since it couldn't compete in SPL—could grab a crowd."

Bass Racing, as Buzz explained, was made less rule restrictive in order to make it more exciting. But it is also a much harder competition to win. Music is obviously dynamic. How do you stay near the top decibel number of your class while playing 30 seconds of commercially available music with all sorts of different frequencies and pitches? Competitors have learned to

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lievably complex. The official guidelines consume 15 long sections of fine print translated into four languages and ranging from descriptions of the admissible amplifiers (a typical clause of which reads, "The amplifiers used in the sound system should be designed for audio reproduction. For clarification purposes, the amplifier's output waveform should be a close facsimile to that of the input signal. In addition, the amplifier's output magnitude should be proportional to that of the input signal. All of these guidelines apply to frequencies between 20 and 80 Hz") to an enumeration of the competitor code of conduct, which stipulates, "Any team member who acts in an offensive or disruptive manner may be ejected from the

search for the music that resonates best with the contours and materials of their particular vehicle. They've learned to identify 30-second stretches of music with minimal dynamic variation. They may wait at the starting line with their fingers on the pause button of their audio machines set 21 seconds into a given song because they know between 22 seconds and 52 seconds that particular piece of music will stay near a maximal amplitude output. The return of music does not, then, mean the "pretty stuff," like the high ranges, is coming back.

As Bass Racing and its equivalent in the domain of another organization, Bass Boxing, became the rage and other dB Drag racers began crossing over, Tommy announced himself to be—and set about actually becoming—the King of Bass. (The difference between Bass Racing and Bass Boxing can be confusing, but it boils down mostly to methodology of measurement: Bass Racing uses an official Term-Lab SPL meter to assess the competition; Bass Boxing picks the winner based on how much crowd applause a car can ignite.)

It should be noted that, for all its musical appeal, Bass Racing is not appreciably quieter than SPL. Last year Tommy broke 30 windshields. (He told me regretfully

that insurance in Florida would cover only three a year.) In fact, while the current peaks of Bass Racing may be closer to 161 than to the 181-plus top scores of dB Drag, the bodily experience of Bass Racing for everyone involved may well actually be louder. This is because, in the modified cars of dB Drag Racing, a range of materials, including three- to six-inch-thick windshields and special reflection panels, guides the energy wave to the exact spot on the dashboard where the judge's microphone is grounded. Three feet down from where Heavyweight Gorilla props the mike, the sound pressure level may drop 20 decibels. Recent changes in regulation have begun to factor in the catastrophic consequences of car-audio showdowns for the hearing of participants. In dB Drag, competitors in the classes of 140 decibels and above are now required to operate their cars from outside, remotely. "Adequate hearing protection" is required if you remain inside at lower decibel levels. Similar rules have come into play for Bass Racing. But I didn't see any Bass Racers standing outside their cars the day I was at Tommy's—and they were hitting some seriously high numbers. The windows and doors were left open. The protection-free crowd got to "feel the vibe," to merge with

the full blast of music, to punish the hell out of their auditory systems.

A little while after we spoke, Tommy the King of Bass at last gave a demo of the Loch Ness Monster, playing his signature song, Phil Collins's "In the Air Tonight."

I was standing about 25 feet away at the time. In the first few seconds I had the uncanny experience of knowing I was listening to music but being unable to hear the sound as music, to experience it as anything other than pure vibration. This is like hearing music if you're deaf, I thought to myself. My pant legs and shirt suddenly felt loose and began fluttering wildly free of my body—somehow as though the wind were coming from inside me. I had a cell phone in one front pocket of my jeans and my recorder in the other, and they both began massaging my thighs like mini vibrators. It was extraordinary. Not exactly exhilarating but electrifying. I saw the opaque panes of glass in the hair salon—covered with decals reading PERMS, TANNING, COLORING—begin flapping like black sheets. Someone pointed up at the floodlights on poles probably 20 feet overhead; the bulbs appeared to be unscrewing from their sockets. It was like standing on the lip of the apocalypse.

After the demo Buzz and Casey spoke about other milestones in the sport, like the time pioneer Richard Clark, for whom Demuth served as an apprentice, drove up to a competition in a bread truck packed with 60-inch woofers he had hand-built out of titanium and magnesium and powered with six amplifiers designed to motorize hospital beds. It hit 172 decibels. And about Alma Gates, who began her career as a way of spending quality time with her kid and ended up with the nickname Boom Car Granny. One day, in Buzz's account, this kid told his mother, a lady old enough to be his grandmother, "I'm into car stereos, and I like this one in the window here." She said, "Well, that's interesting, son. I could be interested in that too." She bought the system, and they built a couple of cars together. One year they flew out to the world finals. The kid says, "Look, there's my hero—Mark Fukuda." (Fukuda—another car-audio idol.) "Mom says, 'Well, let's go meet him.' So they go up to Mark, and when her son tries to look inside Mark's vehicle, Mark shuts the door in his face. He's a total jerk to them. He's rude. Mother's feelings get hurt. She says, 'You know what? We're going to beat that guy.' She takes all her money out of her schoolteacher retirement funds, buys a Ford Bronco and builds one of the loudest vehicles ever made." The next year, Alma Gates returned to the world finals. Fukuda, alas, had retired, but his heir apparent, Tim Maynor, was there. As Maynor and the crowd watched in jaw-gaping astonishment, the Bronco drove into the competition plaza with what appeared to be a giant fish tank lodged inside the cabin—and a pint-size pilot behind the steering wheel. A door like a submarine hatch popped open, the pilot hopped out of the fish tank, and



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the chamber vacuum-sealed shut again. Forty-six 10-inch speakers and 23 amplifiers switched on to full power. "And the old lady just *spanks* Tim Maynor," Buzz concluded. "Destroys him in a great revenge-and-vindication story." Alma continued to compete for several years, coming back each time with something louder.

There are also the pioneers of the increasingly important YouTube-ification of the sport, such as Steve Meade, who was famous for "reaction videos," like the one in which the glass eye of a woman leaning into the window of his truck pops out into the vehicle after he turns on his 20,000-watt car-stereo system. Even though she's a few inches from his head, he can't hear her shouting that her eye has fallen out of its socket because of the power of the sound. So he just sits there staring at the windshield while her mouth writhes and she points frantically at her socket and the floor of his car.

I asked Buzz whether the natural development of the technology combined with the catalytic power of the Internet to accelerate that development would mean the decibels competitors can hit will just keep getting higher.

He reminded me that there is a problem with the dream of perpetual progress in the sport, since it is approaching a realm where the physics of sound begins to create its own threshold limitations. Already, he said, when you're in one of these cars and it's doing 163 or above, there is so much pressure inside that the air molecules cease to behave like air. The air becomes so thick, you feel as if you're moving underwater. Come to think of it, much of the music I'd heard sounded as though the speakers were submerged. Essentially, Buzz said, at 163 and higher the air has ceased to be air. Competitors today are already hitting the low 180s. But once you hit around 194 decibels, sound ceases to be sound. A sound wave is made of two alternating cycles—a compression cycle and a rarefaction, or decompression, cycle. Basically, sound crunches the air and then releases it as it travels. At approximately 194 decibels the pressure is twice the pressure of the atmosphere. That means there are no more air molecules to disperse. There is no more back-and-forth cycle. There is no more sound. There is only a forward-driving force of further compression. If SPL or Bass Race competitors one day hit 194 decibels, they will succeed in creating a shock wave. This is the realm of sonic booms and earthquakes.

Loud cars. Ego. Materialism. The extremes of sound and the imposition of the self on the world through noise—it sounds like a stereotypical American commercial niche. Yet as I'd already learned from Tommy, in 2007, for the first time, a "live on the Internet" world finals was held in real time at three points in Europe and three in the United States.

Buzz described how, when he was posted with the Army in Germany in the early 1990s, the Germans were back where the Americans had been in the 1970s. The equipment was newer, but they weren't thinking about sound staging or creating bass accurately. "They were just sticking a



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lot of speakers into weird places in their cars." But today, 15 years later, there are more car-audio competitions in Germany alone than in the entire United States, and across the continent the Europeans are getting better and better. They now regularly win in the lower-decibel classes, which favor smaller cars. Recently the Australians also became involved, along with the South Africans and the Brazilians. The Brazilians, Casey and Buzz exclaimed, are incredible. They now hit in the 180s. While most components are produced by American companies manufacturing their products in China, the loudspeakers firing under Tommy's truck are made by Selenium, a Brazilian company. In 2008 the Brazilians competed in the world finals as well, so the event was live across three continents. "Asia's next!" Buzz prophesied. "Asia's already buying up every audio device we put on eBay and paying way more money than anyone else would. It's already happening in Thailand. We're just waiting for the Japanese. Everybody knows what happens when the Japanese start reengineering things."

Car audio has become a global phenomenon. "It's just like what happened with rock and roll," Buzz observed. "The U.S. has influenced the rest of the world. People want to be like we are here, without any real understanding of why we are what we are."

In the end, Tommy the King of Bass elected not to compete in the show he hosted in front of his shop. He didn't even bother to break his windshield, confining his demo to a handful of blasts that got the employees from the drive-through McDonald's, more than 50 yards away, storming into the parking lot to complain they were unable to take orders from customers. I suspect, in forgoing the competition, Tommy had looked around and decided there just wasn't enough in it for him to hit a competitive decibel level that day. Why go through the hassle and expense of replacing his glass with nothing significant to gain? Indeed, at this point,

having won every competition that exists in Bass Racing and dB Drag Racing, Tommy sees only one more category continuing to hold out a challenge: sound-quality competition. When we spoke about this, for the first and only time a note of anxiety crept into the confident voice of Tommy the King of Bass. He had given a speech in Daytona the year before in which he announced he was through with SPL and would switch over and make an "SQ car" because he had accomplished everything else there was to accomplish in the loudspeaker world. But now he was not so sure he would follow through with his vow. "A lot more things come into play in sound-quality competition," he conceded. "The way everything is installed, how it looks—all the imaging—the way it sounds. And that would probably be hard for me since I'm sure I've damaged my hearing. It would probably be hard for me to build an SQ car. Because my hearing is damaged, what I think sounds good doesn't really sound good. Because my ears are already *gone* from dB Drag Racing."

Tommy's truck remained intact on May 25, 2008. But just as Buzz was finishing his explanation of Bass Racing and dB Drag Racing as global phenomena, I noticed a Lexus parked halfway across the lot from us, a newish one belonging to a guy named Jesse who'd recently gloated on Fox News about having received 75 tickets for playing his car stereo too loud. The Lexus had had its roof ripped apart at a competition a few weeks back and now had some kind of temporary fiberglass plug in place of it. Jesse turned it on. And turned up the audio. The windshield splintered. I could not hear the roar of the crowd above the sound, though I could see, through the rising arms and clapping hands, a vein-riddled, striated circle trace across the glass like the web of a psychopathic spider. For a second or two, it seemed, I could not hear anything at all.



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ADVISOR

(continued from page 27)

IS PLAYBOY no longer for straight guys? Aren't there publications for people attracted to the faggot lifestyle? I never want you to put such disgusting nonsense in my brain again.—S.B., Denver, Colorado

Welcome to the wild world of desire. For the record, "faggots" typically aren't attracted to men who look and act like women.

During my lunch hour I like to go to the gym, but after working out and taking a shower I continue to sweat for up to an hour. This happens even if I spend 20 minutes cooling down. Is there a trick to get my body to stop sweating?—J.C., New York, New York

A part of the brain called the hypothalamus regulates sweating, based primarily on the temperature of the blood flowing through it. As long as your blood is too hot, the body will release heat through sweat until you reach a balance between heat produced and heat released, i.e., about 98.6 degrees. When you finish your workout your heart rate slows, which means blood is not moving to the surface as quickly, so it may take longer than you expect to cool down. Dehydration raises body temperature, so drink plenty of cold water before, during and after your workout—don't use thirst as a guide. You may also want to end your shower by gradually making the water cooler and finish by soaking your head.

The blades of my battery-powered Gillette razor started going dull faster than usual. My girlfriend admitted to borrowing it. I assumed she had been shaving her legs, but she said she had first used it to "clean up" her pussy. Once she hit the power button, she was hooked. I now have to purchase blades more often but have been designated her official toucher upper. Have you heard of anything like this?—C.J., Upper Darby, Pennsylvania

Does it matter?

I have a six-year-old son who is very interested in PLAYBOY, but I don't think airbrushed perfection is a good introduction to the female form. Can you suggest a book of tasteful nudes of many body types that could be left on the coffee table?—C.P., Oberlin, Ohio

Most nude photography displays stylized beauty. However, check out Greg Friedler's Naked series. He placed newspaper ads in New York, Los Angeles, Las Vegas and London to recruit volunteers and photographed everyone who showed up, so you see lots of unvarnished variety. That said, flipping through images of the naked ape may be a little advanced for a six-year-old. It would be better to read him *Amazing You: Getting Smart About Your Private Parts* and answer his questions. Rather than a single awkward lecture at puberty, sex ed should be a continuing conversation. We're glad the magazine sparked a discussion, but we'll bow out for now.

Chapped lips have always been a problem for me. I have applied balms, Vaseline and baby oil, but nothing works in the long run. A friend suggested wax, but that sounds painful. Is there anything I can do,

or will I just have to live with this?—J.A., Riverview, Florida

Your friend meant beeswax, which is found in some balms, not the sort of wax you drip on nipples. You might instead try Aquaphor, which doesn't contain fragrances or ingredients such as phenol, lanolin and parabens that may irritate the lips, or Dr. Dan's CortiBalm, which contains hydrocortisone. Avoid licking your lips, stay well hydrated and run a humidifier at night.

I masturbate once a day. What can I do to get the most out of my orgasms? Online porn is getting old.—P.T., Los Angeles, California

That's easy: Masturbate once a month.

Ever since I was about 14, every time I witness someone about to get badly hurt, either on television or in person, my genitals hurt for a split second. For instance, I may see a skateboarder fall off a high rail or see someone about to be hit by a car. Even replays of the same scene cause pain. Is there a reason my testicles are so sensitive?—M.V., Hopkinsville, Kentucky

They were raised right. Actually, when a man feels threatened (or cold or aroused), the dartos muscle pulls his scrotum up tight against his body to keep the testicles out of harm's way. Your brain may be signaling the muscle to tighten in that instant before it realizes you're not in danger. As long as your discomfort is only for a moment and only in these limited circumstances, we suggest you reach down and reassure the boys everything is okay.

A set of identical twins sit behind me in one of my college classes. I find one of them attractive. They seem shy, and I am also, to a degree. How should I approach her? I don't want to become involved with both, just the one.—A.D., Bloomington, Indiana

We like your confidence. We recommend the old line "Is anyone sitting here?" Approach from whichever direction is appropriate.

A reader asked in December how he and his fiancée could get wedding guests to pay for their honeymoon instead of buying traditional gifts. My husband and I used a two-pronged strategy. First, knowing it would be tacky to ask for cash, we enlisted a few friends and family members to drop hints. Second, we chose items for our registry that we could live without, then returned most of them. And don't forget the all-important money dance at the reception.—J.M., Hayden, Idaho

Thanks for the suggestions. The easy cash makes us want to get married a few more times.

After my wife and I visited the Science Fiction Museum in Seattle she shocked me by asking me to recommend a book to introduce her to the genre. I know I'll never get another chance like this, so I need to be careful about what I choose. Futuristic technology and strange aliens won't hold her interest; she likes stories in which lots of fully realized characters interact over a period of time with authentic emotional exchanges and moral dilemmas. Do I hand her *Dune* and hope for the best?—R.A., Napa, California

Since most of the fantasies we read are pornographic, we sent a telepathic message to Alice K. Turner, the contributing editor behind *The Playboy Book of Science Fiction*. "A safe opening bet would be Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*, which explores gender relations in a very involving way," she says. "Also, John Crowley's *Engine Summer* is short, sweet, charming and well written. Connie Willis does time travel in a way that makes some of her books quasi-historical; *To Say Nothing of the Dog* is a romantic Victorian farce, if you will, and *Doomsday Book* goes back to the Middle Ages and the black death, but it too has playful moments." Turner advises waiting until your wife is hooked before offering a longer work such as *Dune* or Kim Stanley Robinson's *Mars* trilogy. As with any seduction, play it cool. Don't let your enthusiasm overwhelm her.

Six months ago my fiancée of three years broke off our relationship. A few weeks ago I became involved with her ex-best friend. When my ex found out, she flipped. I would understand if they had still been friends when my new girlfriend and I began dating, but they haven't spoken in a year. Does my ex have a right to be this upset?—R.L., San Jose, California

What part of "ex" doesn't she understand?

In December you mentioned that cock rings are placed behind the scrotum and over the shaft. I'm confused. Most products seem to be designed to fit around the shaft. How does placement behind the scrotum affect the veins in the penis?—W.J., Fayetteville, Georgia

The veins travel into the body, so a ring has the same effect in either position—that is, it makes your erection a bit stiffer. You can wear a silicone or rubber ring around your shaft, but as we mentioned, it could slip off during intercourse. Best to invite your scrotum to the soiree. To determine your size, measure the distance around where you want to place the ring and divide by three. That's the tightest ring you should wear.

You wrote in October, "We are never surprised anymore by what can make a woman come." Neither am I. One of my girlfriends became aroused whenever she listened to the orchestral crescendo about two thirds of the way into Camille Saint-Saëns's *Danse Macabre*. She grew tired of rewinding the cassette, especially since her hands were occupied, so I made her a tape of the crescendo repeating for 90 minutes. Women appreciate handmade gifts.—D.E., Somerville, Massachusetts

Bravo. Is the tape why you broke up?

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.



SUCCESS

(continued from page 26)

you thought would have money but who were scraping by in shitty apartments always made me fearful of getting ripped off. Fortunately, with Guns it was a slow buildup process. We had seen the sharks starting to circle, but we were streetwise if nothing else. I knew to tell the accountants (including the head CPA) that I wanted their home addresses. I said, "I want to know where you live." Right or wrong, that's what I did, and that probably saved me from getting ripped off too severely.

IT'S CYCLICAL

I remember the first check I got after "Sweet Child o' Mine" became a hit single and *Appetite for Destruction* went shooting up the charts. Axl, Slash, Izzy, Steven and I each got about \$80,000. Back then that might as well have been a billion dollars. Our accountants said we should buy houses. I didn't know what interest rates were, what a mortgage meant, or yield or risk. We got another check about three weeks later, and I thought, Okay, I guess I can get a house. I bought a nice little place in Studio City—two bedrooms with a little pool. It was the height of the housing market, but I didn't know what that meant. We all bought houses at the height of the market, in 1988. I bought mine for \$429,000, and half a year later I couldn't have gotten \$290,000 for it, which scared the piss out of me. While this

real estate crash was happening, the band was earning big-time and I was looking to get a bigger house anyway. So I rented out that first house for about 10 years to pay the mortgage. Of course home values came back up, and I realized, Oh, this is all cyclical. I was able to sell that house for more than I paid and then buy a bigger house.

LEARN FROM THE BEST

Another early lesson came when we played four nights with the Rolling Stones in L.A., in 1989. Watching Mick Jagger operate—seeing how intelligent and on top of it he was, how his eyes were wide open—was informative. He wasn't sitting back, going, "Yeah, I'm Mick fucking Jagger." He was a businessman. He personally made the deal with us. We didn't deal with a Stones lawyer or agent or somebody like that. You would think we would have. Nope. It was Mick. We would say, "We want this much per gig." And Mick would say, "No, you're going to get this much."

ATTITUDE COUNTS

Some people wake up in the morning and say, "Ugh, I've got to do this or that today." The secret to my success was to go from that to thinking, Today is another chance to do everything I want to do. I also realized nobody would do it for me. You may think, Oh, this guy's in a big rock band; he has "people" or managers. But that's bullshit—they won't do anything for you if it doesn't get them a percentage of something. Once I figured that out and got comfortable with

it, the sky was the limit—and still is. I began to think, What haven't I seen, what person haven't I met, what conversation haven't I had? Something as simple as that will change your outlook.

DIVERSIFY

When I began investing, in 1994, I created a varied portfolio. From the beginning I've been in 70 percent stocks and 30 percent bonds. Of the stock, I had about 15 percent in high-risk stuff, and then I had another 15 percent in what I considered medium-high risk. I also had 40 percent in blue chips—Coca-Cola, Procter & Gamble, Boeing—stuff that will weather storms. I bought mutual funds and whatnot as well. I own residential properties that I rent out, and I am a partner in a couple of commercial properties in Orange County. I get a nice little monthly check from both those things.

FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU CAN STOMACH

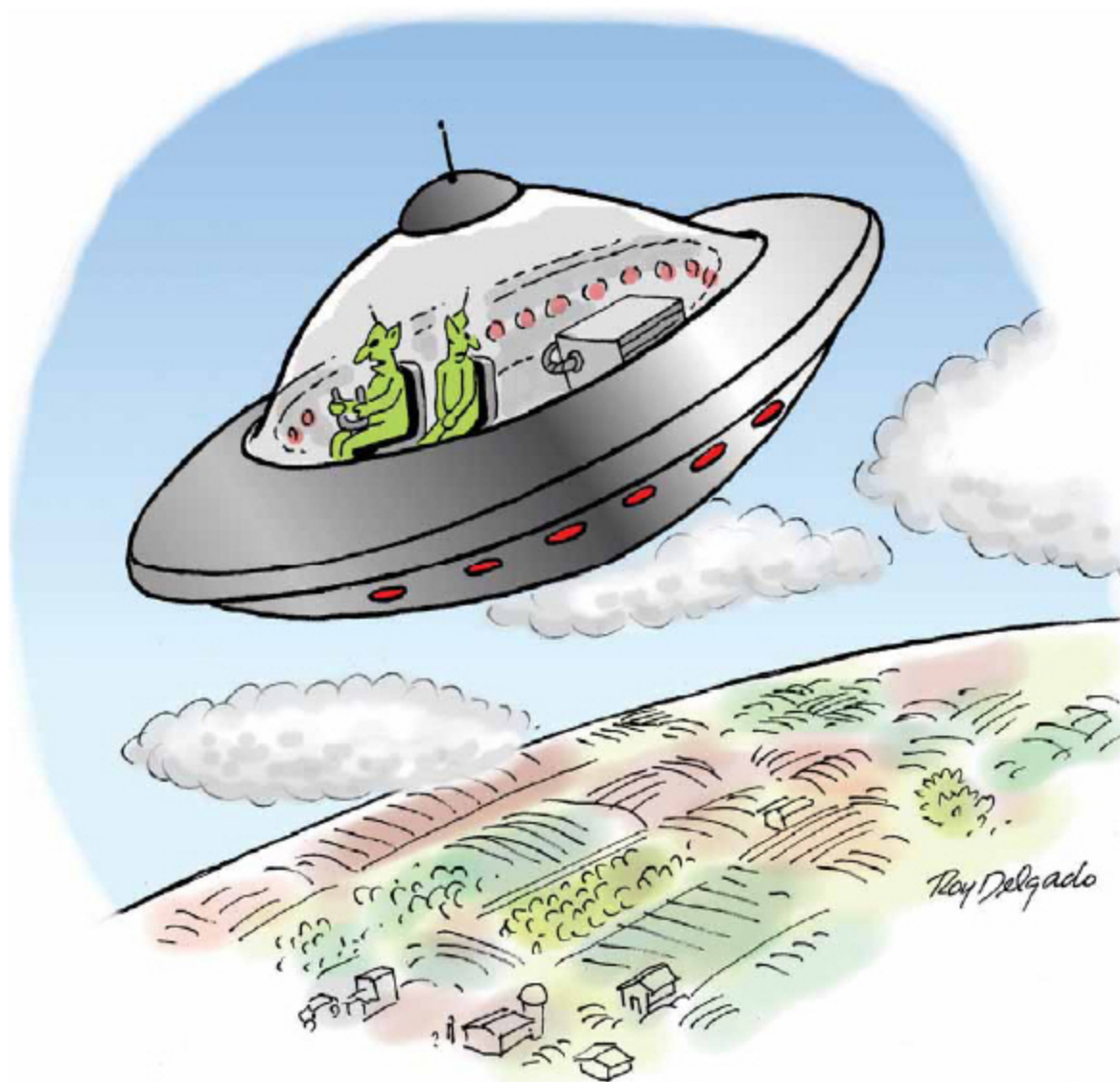
You set a goal in the beginning, make allocations and divide up the pie. You do a risk analysis and decide how much high risk you are willing to buy and where you want it to be. When I started I had some investments around the Pacific Rim and in Eastern Europe (at that point the Eastern European economies were just emerging). I also bought some forward-thinking equities. Everybody in Seattle was buying Starbucks because you could see it growing. It wasn't on every street corner, but it was catching on in L.A. and San Francisco, and there were lines. People were going there. We thought it might be a short-term investment, that Starbucks might burn out or expand too fast, but at the time it didn't look as if it was expanding too fast. A little later I got in early on Amazon.com, another local stock. But I always keep in mind that a good blue-chip company will have a price-to-earnings ratio of 20 to one, 25 to one, maybe 30 to one. When I looked at the dot-coms during the boom, some of the price-to-earnings ratios were a thousand to one, so I didn't get into that.

DON'T OVERESTIMATE YOUR OWN GENIUS

These days people are like, "Dude, where did you get that crystal ball?" because of what they see as my investment forethought. But it wasn't like that. I was just in the right place at the right time. Of course you have to do the work and place yourself there. I would pore over annual reports: What's Bill Gates going to do with all this money next year? You can read what the plan is and decide whether it makes sense. I've made some mistakes, just nothing that has taken me out of the game.

STICK TO YOUR GUNS

When things went bad last fall I wondered whether I should get into some pure bond positions and wait for the bottom. But my advisor said, "Duff, what has always been our strategy? We're in for the long run." So I've stayed in my positions and I'll weather the storm, just as everybody else will.



"It's a world where everything they eat turns to shit."



CONCHORDS

(continued from page 80)

CLEMENT: That's the way we freestyle. It's less improvisational and more...not in any way improvisational.

Q15

PLAYBOY: You're one of the few guitar-based rock acts to use the glockenspiel, a German-style xylophone. What's the appeal?

MCKENZIE: You mean the rockenspiel. We call it the rockenspiel because it rocks more than any other instrument.

CLEMENT: Especially the marching-band one. Have you heard of it?

MCKENZIE: The marching-band glockenspiel—I'm sorry, rockenspiel—you can march with it while you're playing, which obviously isn't all that essential when you're in the studio.

Q16

PLAYBOY: What other odd or little-known instruments do you play that your fans may be unfamiliar with?

MCKENZIE: We used an Omnichord recently.

CLEMENT: Yeah, that's on a few tracks of our latest record.

MCKENZIE: *Omnichord* obviously means "all chords." It's like a Casiotone version of an Autoharp. Do you know what I mean by an Autoharp? You just press a button and get a G major, or press another button and it's D minor. You don't have to hold your fingers in that position, thus the *auto* part of the name.

CLEMENT: I also really like the keytar. I can't play keyboards, but I feel I can play keytar because it looks and feels like a guitar. The magic of a keytar is how it gives you a false sense of confidence. It just feels right when you hold it.

MCKENZIE: A keytar feels as if you're holding a woman.

CLEMENT: Yeah. Well, a tiny woman with a very skinny neck and piano keys on her torso.

Q17

PLAYBOY: Flight of the Conchords is now performing to sold-out crowds around the world. At what point does it stop being a joke and become an actual rock band?

CLEMENT: What do you mean a joke? How are we a joke? What are you trying to imply? [long uncomfortable pause followed by laughter] I'm just pulling your leg. I know what you mean. It's always meant as a joke, but we still try to make the music sound good. The words can be funny, but the guitar can't be out of tune.

MCKENZIE: The live show is quite different from the TV show. It's definitely different from the band you see on HBO.

Q18

PLAYBOY: Now that you have some legitimacy, do you feel obligated to act like spoiled rock stars and trash hotel rooms and destroy your guitars onstage?

CLEMENT: I don't know if I could bring myself to do it. I used to watch the Who on TV, and when they smashed guitars during a concert, I'd always think, That's such a waste. Why ruin a perfectly good guitar?

MCKENZIE: We could smash some broken guitars.

CLEMENT: Yeah, that'd be fine. It wouldn't be nearly as costly. I'd consider smashing some broken guitars. That'd be just as satisfying, don't you think?

Q19

PLAYBOY: Your first CD debuted higher on the *Billboard* charts than any other comedy album, including those by Steve Martin and Dane Cook. Your EP won a Grammy in 2008. You must be raking in some fat cash by now, right?

MCKENZIE: I was amazed at how well the album did, but it wasn't a financial windfall for us. I don't think record sales have windfalls anymore.

CLEMENT: If it were the 1980s, we'd be millionaires.

MCKENZIE: Even in the 1990s we'd be doing pretty well.

CLEMENT: But there are no profits in the music industry anymore. We were smart enough to get involved at the tail end, just as the industry was fizzling out. Even

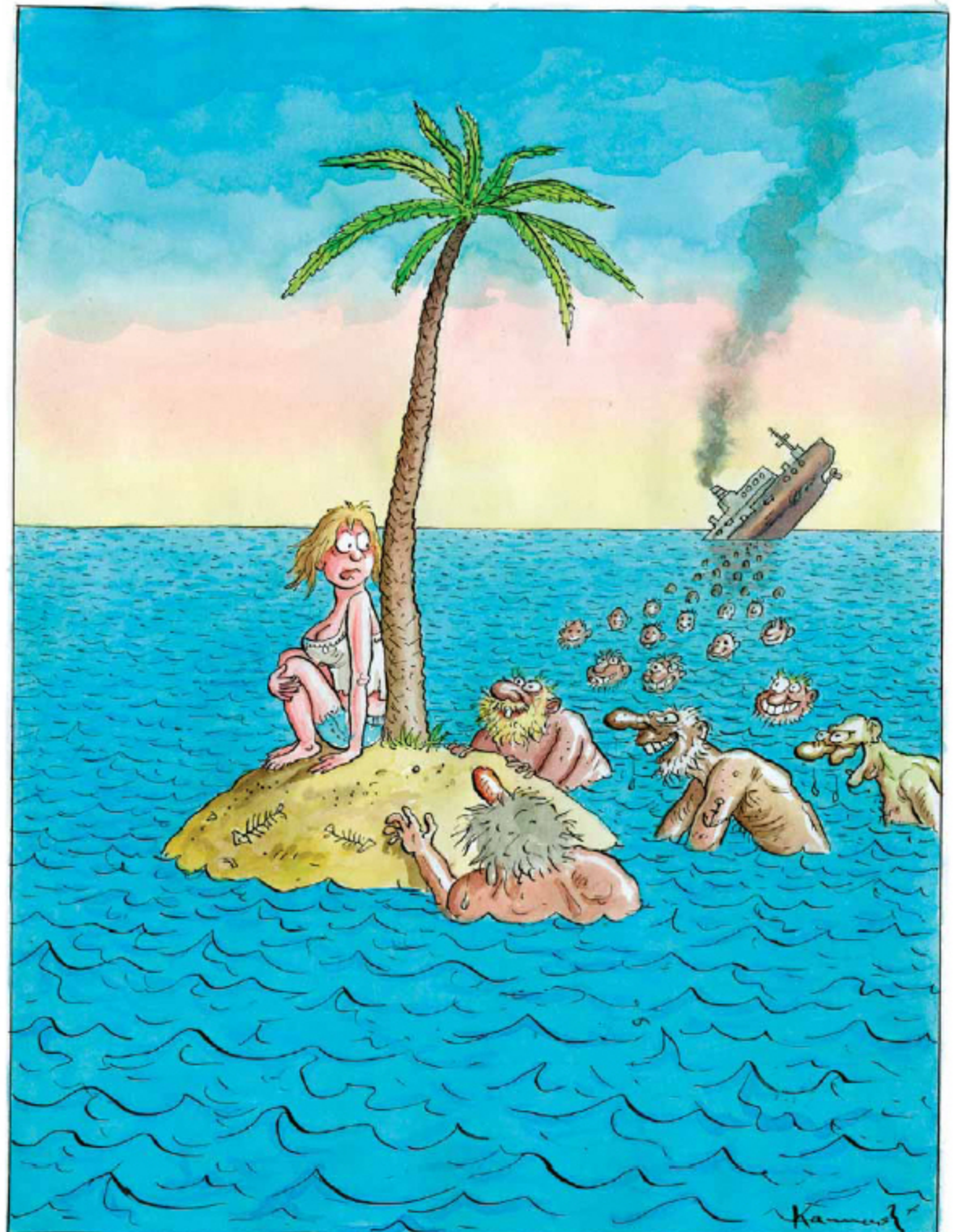
when we got our TV show, people told us, "You know, back in the 1980s you would've made millions of dollars." Aw, we missed the golden age. At least we can tour. The only money is in touring—well, as long as we pay for our own hotel rooms.

MCKENZIE: There are no perks whatsoever. We even had to find our own apartment in New York when we began shooting the HBO show. We used Craigslist. We'd call people, and they'd say, "Wait a minute, aren't you on a TV show?" "Yep. So is this flat available for three months? Three thousand dollars a month? Are you kidding me?"

Q20

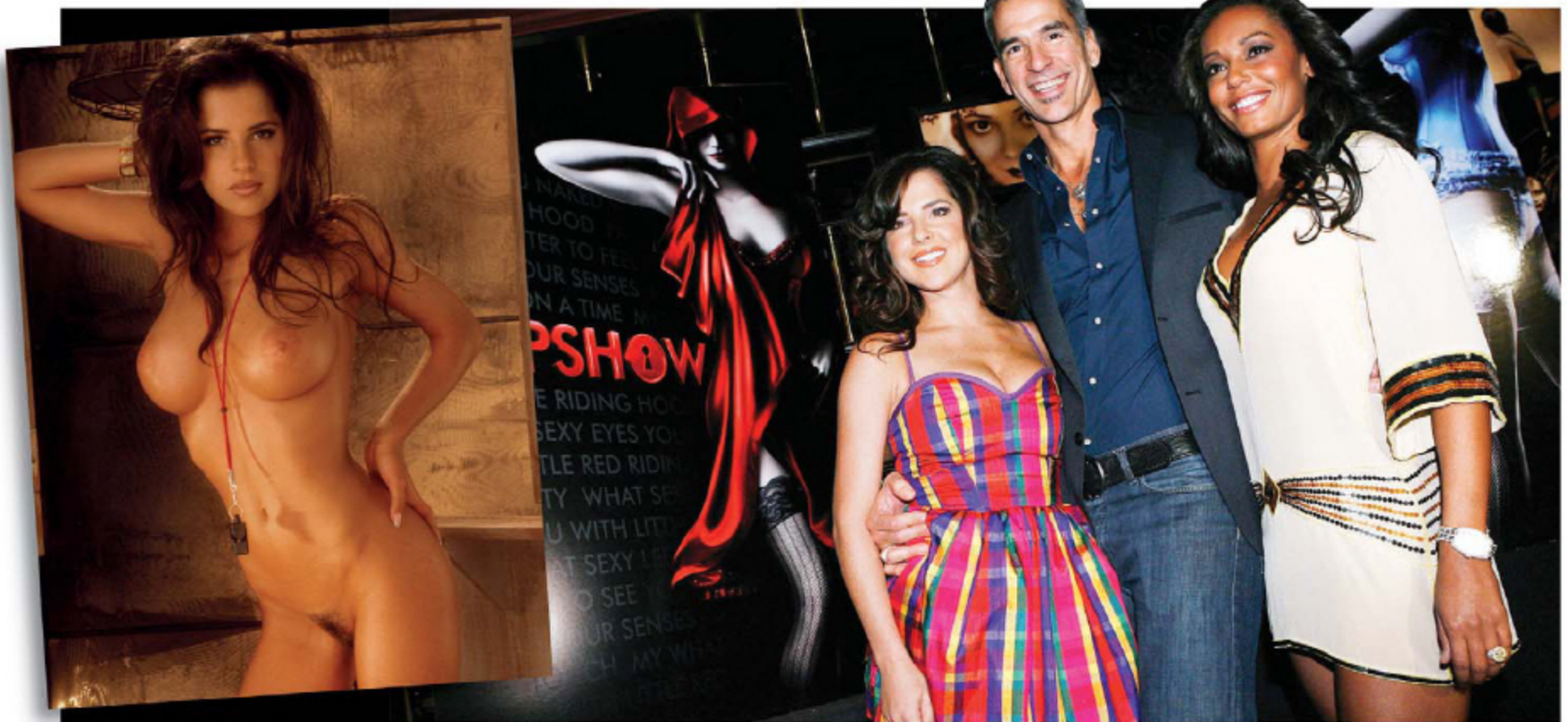
PLAYBOY: How long can the Conchords survive? Will you continue touring into your senior years, like the Rolling Stones and the Who?

CLEMENT: We'll either be around for the next hundred years or unexpectedly retire in the next seven to eight minutes. Somewhere in that general time frame.





PLAYMATE NEWS



LAS VEGAS STRIP

Dancing With the Stars winner Miss April 1997 Kelly Monaco fuses her dance moves with her lack of inhibition in *Peepshow*, Sin City's sexiest burlesque act. Kelly stars as the precocious Bo Peep, who discovers her sexuality throughout the show. Also strutting her stuff for Tony Award-winning director Jerry Mitchell is the Spice Girls' Mel B. *Peepshow* opens this month at Planet Hollywood.



PROFESSORS ANALYZE OUR FIGURES

Mercyhurst College professors Terry Pettijohn and Brian Jungeberg published the paper "Playmate Curves: Changes in Facial and Body Feature Preferences Across Social and Economic Conditions." They used PMOYs' dimensions as representative of the type of girl one desires and compared that with how the economy did that year. They concluded that when money is tight you and Hef select less-curvy girls. But if the start of 2009, in the economy and Centerfolds, is any indication, the latest Playmate curve may diverge from their chart.

Economy
Thinner Playmates

FLASHBACK

Five years ago this month we introduced you to Sandra Hubby. She jumped off her tractor and made it to Cleveland for our 50th Anniversary Playmate search. Though she had to leave her horse Angus on her farm, her newfound fame as a Playmate led to exciting experiences, such as being photographed by Pharrell, who, as a celebrity lensman, shot her for the Cyber Club. These days she's happily back in the Ohio countryside, working in a local law office.



Want to SEE MORE PLAYMATES—or more of these Playmates? You can check out the Club at club.playboy.com and access photos on your phone at wap.playboy.com.

DID YOU KNOW ?

PMOY 1994 **Jenny McCarthy's** beau, Jim Carrey, says he doesn't want to jinx their relationship by getting married.

A six-foot-tall black granite monument has been installed at PMOY 1993 **Anna Nicole Smith's** grave, in the Bahamas.

Five-foot-three PMOY 2007 **Sara Jean Underwood** played in a celeb basketball game for a Detroit children's charity.

Miss October 1993 **Jenny McCarthy** says dinner and a show is a no-no for a first meet: "A man should always take a



woman on a first date that involves an activity of sorts, such as bowling or playing pool—not to a movie where you won't even talk."

MY FAVORITE PLAYMATE

BY JASON MEADOWS

—CMT Music Award nominee



"My favorite Playmates are Misses December 1998 **Erica, Nicole** and **Jaclyn Dahm**. What, are you kidding? There's three of them! The last time I saw three women that hot I was drinking tequila and staring at my wife!"



OUT AND ABOUT WITH...

Miss October 2008 **Kelly Carrington** (above) attended a Thanksgiving event at the Bob Hope USO. She and Los Angeles mayor Antonio Villarraigosa ate Thanksgiving dinner with marines who were being deployed.... Miss February 1990 **Pam Anderson** (below) took in the posh Art Basel Miami Beach gallery, wearing



panties and carrying an Andy Warhol-inspired clutch.... Back out there on the market is



Miss September 1995 **Donna D'Errico** (right), who recently finalized her divorce from Motley Crue's **Nikki Sixx**.... Speaking of people elsewhere in this magazine, here's cover model **Aubrey O'Day** (below right) sitting with PMOY 2008 **Jayde Nicole** at the Sheiki fashion show.



BYE-BYE, BETTIE PAGE

The most celebrated pinup queen in history, Miss January 1955 Bettie Page, passed away in December. Bettie was the perfect Playmate, as we've noted before, because she could be both naughty and nice. She was a vision in black, her raven hair—with those iconic bangs—flowing to her porcelain shoulders. Her fearless fetish images helped broaden America's sexual palate and open new doors of sexuality to mainstream guys and girls next door. "She was a remarkable lady," Hef says, "someone who had a tremendous impact on our society." Years ago



Bettie requested to be remembered "as I was when I was young and in my golden times. As the woman who changed people's perspectives concerning nudity in its natural form." Next month we will honor her with a pictorial.

MISS JUNE 2008 WRITES

Juliette Fretté lauded **Diablo Cody's** book *Candy Girl in Lit. & Music Review*. She pointed to Cody's ability to bridge the gap between two types of women: "Just as strippers balk at being stereotyped as amoral, damaged sluts, no 'civilian' woman wants to be thought of solely as obedient, sexless and wholesome."



After filming *Rock of Love* Miss August 2005 **Tamara Witmer** says she'll never again compete on a reality-TV show.

A blogger for hottestgirlsofmyspace.net named Miss February 2009 **Jessica Burciaga** his favorite on the site.

DID YOU KNOW ?

THE PLAYBOY FORUM

START MAKING SENSE

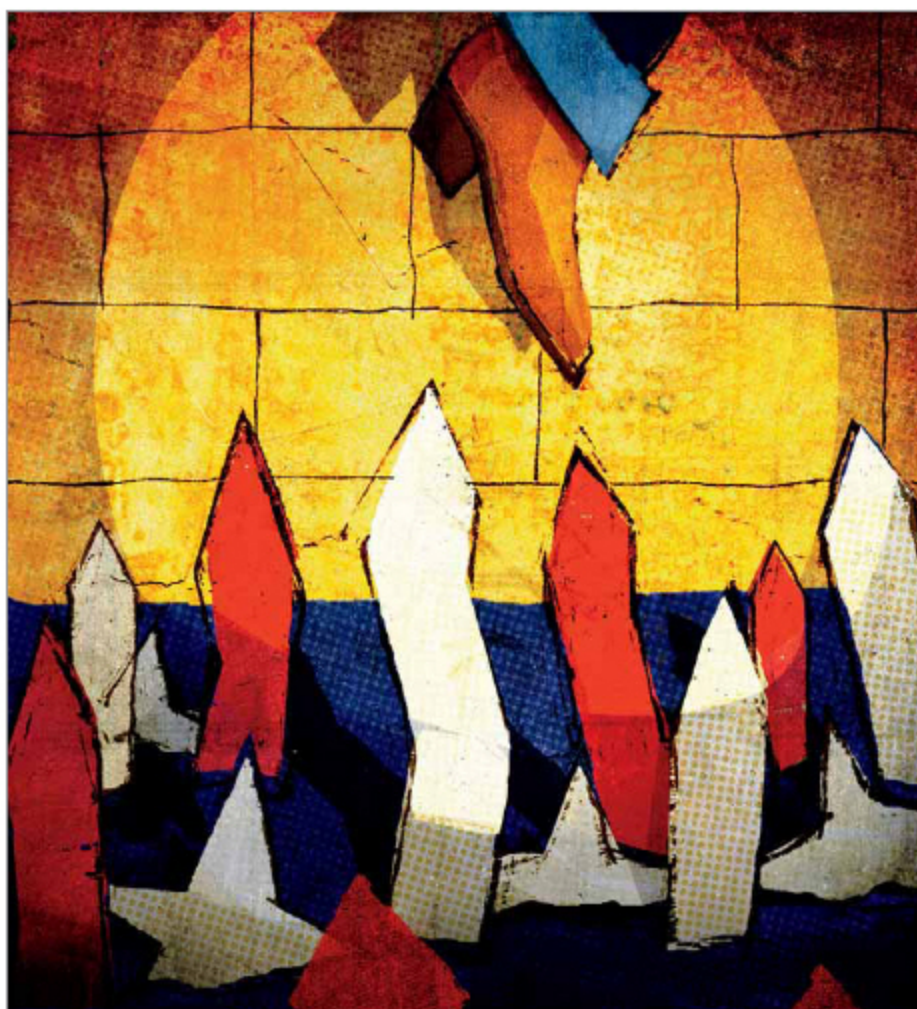
IT'S EASY TO PLAY TO THE NATIVIST CROWD. BUT IT'S HARDER TO ADVOCATE FOR POLICIES THAT ARE GOOD FOR AMERICA

BY JOE DOMANICK

Framed by red, white and blue balloons, Joe Arpaio, the incendiary 76-year-old sheriff of Arizona's Maricopa County, leans into the podium as he speaks to a well-lubricated crowd at the annual Lincoln Day Republican dinner in Lake Havasu City, a Colorado River party town on a man-made lake in the Mojave Desert. Dressed this February evening in aviator glasses, a navy-blue suit and a burgundy tie with a gold .45 handgun tiepin, Arpaio looks more like a Las Vegas Mob character than the head of America's third-largest sheriff's department, which polices a 9,200-square-mile county encompassing two thirds of Arizona's population.

Arpaio is in Lake Havasu City to talk about two of the nation's hottest issues: the locking up and kicking out of 12 million immigrants who reside illegally in the U.S. and the stopping of millions more from entering across our southern border.

With the largest number of illegal crossings among the states, a workforce that is 10 percent illegal and an enraged white citizenry that has passed the country's most restrictive immigration laws, Arizona is ground zero in the increasingly fractious immigration debate. Arpaio is on a crusade to criminalize illegal immigration. He wants local police to seek out, arrest, jail and then deport immigrants solely for being in the U.S. illegally. He has also generated bitter debate by sending uninvited squads of deputies and volunteer posses into Phoenix and Mesa to apprehend motorists on the slightest suspicion that they are illegal—"arresting cooks and gardeners," as Mesa's police chief, George Gascón, puts it, "for the sole crime of trying to earn a living." Janitors, too. Last October, in fact, Arpaio sent 60 armed sheriff's deputies and posse members into Mesa's city hall and central library at two in the morning. They were in search of immigrants working illegally as, well, janitors; three were arrested on suspicion of using false identification. "It was like Mogadishu in the 1990s, like the city was under siege,"



Gascón later told me. "I never saw anything like it."

The 54-year-old son of Cubans who immigrated here when he was 13, Gascón is a former assistant chief with the Los Angeles Police Department. He has a law degree and is a member of the California bar. Gascón has become a critic of Arpaio and what he sees as a radical extension of local police power into an area historically reserved for civil law and federal immigration agents. As far as Gascón is concerned, Arpaio's approach not only involves unconstitutional racial profiling but is also bad policy.

In Gascón's view, if the local police enforce immigration law, no illegal immigrants will

report a crime or serve as witnesses, because if they do, they will face certain arrest for their immigration status. The police chief also worries about turning 12 million illegals into an angry underclass.

But Arpaio's supporters have different concerns. His audience is an assemblage of snowbirds and the local Republican power structure, which is definitely not of the Wall Street that loves cheap labor. Instead they're the vanguard of America's anti-immigrant crusade. Driven by post-9/11 hysteria and right-wing talk radio, they have changed the conversation from comprehensive immigration reform to mass arrests and deportations.

To raucous applause, Arpaio begins his speech by boasting of how he humiliates the county's 10,000 prison inmates by forcing them to wear pink underwear. He talks about how he has lowered the cost of feeding inmates to just 18 cents a prisoner a day by serving them bologna sandwiches. And he says he has instituted "the only female chain gang in the history of the world." He now even has his own reality-TV show.

Then he turns to immigration. "I've been director of U.S. drug enforcement in Mexico, South America, Texas and Arizona," says Arpaio. "And you know this new human-smuggling law that Arizona passed? The guy who sponsored it

RICHARD DORRIS

said he didn't expect me to actually lock up the people being smuggled. But hey, if you lock up the smuggler, why can't you lock up the smugglees? We've locked up 850 on conspiracy charges. And it's a class-one felony, not a little Mickey Mouse misdemeanor."

Arpaio ends his speech and receives a standing ovation. A woman shouts, "We love you, Sheriff Joe." She's not alone in loving Arpaio and his policies. Millions of Americans support both the building of a virtual fence of cameras, sensors and radar and the recent completion of a \$2.7 billion, 670-mile border wall that stretches from California all the way to Douglas, Arizona and features 1,800 100-foot-tall border towers. Meanwhile, an increasingly militarized Border Patrol has purchased four Predator drones for \$14 million each and doubled the number of its agents to 18,000 since 2001. Last May federal agents swept into an Iowa slaughterhouse and arrested hundreds of illegals laboring under predatory conditions and charged them with the extraordinarily serious crime of "aggravated identity theft." That kind of criminalizing of immigration now accounts for 57 percent of all new federal prosecutions and for the building of more than 250 new prisons to hold the convicted illegals—who have become the fastest-growing inmate population in the United States.

Arizona, in the meantime, has banned undocumented residents from receiving public assistance, suing for punitive damages and posting bail for a felony. Any employers twice convicted of hiring an illegal resident, moreover, can now have their business license permanently rescinded.

Nevertheless, in 2007 alone, more

than 500 immigrants died in the Arizona desert while attempting to get into the country, even though, according to a recent study, 90 percent of those crossing the border knew it was "very dangerous to cross under current conditions." Experts attribute the immigrants' determination to the "push-pull" factor: The pay for one



A Maricopa County prisoner walks the line.

hour's work in the U.S. equals that for an entire day in Mexico. The current steep economic downturn may be slowing the tide, but, says chronicler of the U.S.-Mexico border Charles Bowden, "they're like people getting on the fucking Ark." He explains that "they don't know shit about McCain-Kennedy. All they know is that they need to get here. And meanwhile, there's a \$40 billion drug trade on the border and \$10 billion to \$20 billion in people-smuggling. You tell me that's not enough to corrupt a bunch of red-neck border guards. Stopping the bor-

der crossers is like saying we're going to make the high tide illegal."

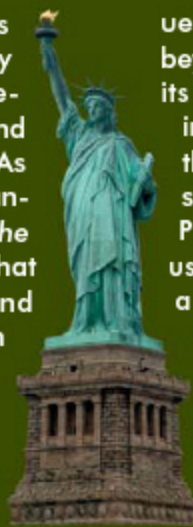
How we ultimately deal with the problem is important—and not just to immigrants. "In Cuba," says Gascón, "I saw what it was like to live in a police state, where cops did what they wanted and neighbors spied on one another for the police. We're creating this huge group of immigrant kids who are being raised to fear the police. They see them as an enemy that may arrest and deport them or their parents at any moment. We're dehumanizing an entire group of people. It's not personal between Arpaio and me. I think we're hired to work with communities to make them safe based on facts and reason, not by playing to public emotions. He feels differently."

Back at the Lincoln Day dinner, Joe Arpaio is being mobbed by members of his audience. But other conservatives have questioned his policies. Arpaio's sheriff's department "is unquestionably tough on crime," writes Clint Bolick in a recent Goldwater Institute Policy Report titled "Mission Unaccomplished: The Misplaced Priorities of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office." But "its violent-crime rates recently have soared relative to other jurisdictions. It has diverted resources away from basic law-enforcement functions to highly publicized immigration sweeps, which are ineffective in policing illegal immigration and in reducing crime generally."

What this country needs is a reasonable and realistic policy on immigration. Playing to fear and raw emotion may make sense from a political perspective, but it's not a wise move from a policy perspective. In this case, perhaps George Gascón has the better idea.

WHY THE FORUM MATTERS

We all have hopes and dreams. *The Playboy Forum* is devoted to keeping these hopes and dreams alive by fighting for basic freedoms, explaining why those freedoms are so important—not only to us but to you—and pointing a finger when those freedoms are trampled. As part of the redesign of *Playboy.com*, we're happy to announce the launch of a dynamic digital version of *The Playboy Forum*. It's a logical next step for a section that has always been about openness and interactivity and fostering an impassioned back-and-forth discussion with our readers. The *Forum* first appeared in the magazine in July 1963. From the start it has served as a colloquium between editors and readers on matters of freedom of speech and sexual rights. As the section has expanded over the years, it has contin-



ued to advocate for progressive values while covering topics beyond the First and Fourth Amendment issues that had to form its principal pillars while the sexual revolution was still in its infancy. *The Playboy Forum* now serves as the policy nexus for the magazine, hitting upon a wide range of topics and considerations, and as a place to highlight the intersection of the *Playboy* philosophy with the nuts and bolts of the world around us. The digital version of the *Forum* will in some ways represent a return to its roots, with the opportunity for real-time interactivity, reader-generated discussion and up-to-the-minute posting of *Newsfront*-worthy material. The section will also host Hot Seat chats with *Forum* writers, exclusive blog posts from authors such as Mark Ames and Charles Nesson and archived articles new and old that form a library of freedom. Please join the conversation at playboy.com/forum.

AMERICAN PEON

GUEST-WORKER PROGRAMS DON'T HELP WORKERS



Congress failed miserably in its efforts to reform immigration laws in 2007. Immigration is such a hot topic that nobody will touch it during an election year, which means we'll see another effort to revamp the laws in 2009. It's a tough issue, especially because many different interests are involved. We have outraged patriots who clamor for a great wall from sea to sea. We have people from Mexico, Guatemala and Colombia here without documentation. We have businesses interested in an abundance of pliable labor. With liberals, conservatives, Hispanics and corporations all pulling in their own directions, it's no wonder we've seen no comprehensive reform.

One supposedly enlightened proposal—which we'll hear again this year—would permit foreign workers to come here as guests, stay for a defined period and then return to their homelands. "Guest workers," they will be euphemistically called. From 1942 to 1964 the U.S. had a guest-worker plan, known as the Bracero Program. It allowed Mexicans to work in the fields and on the railroads. It didn't turn out well, especially for those doing the work. A guest-worker program would help American businesses, which would love to have a working class with little or no rights. But who else would it help?

When Mexican maquiladoras began closing, at the turn of the past century, many people who were desperate for work made it across the border, and our economy has benefited from their plight: Illegal immigrants provide cheap labor. In Chicago the man working the sushi bar is more likely to speak Spanish than Japanese. Care to guess what the National Restaurant Association or the U.S. Chamber of Commerce thinks about immigration? Hint: They're not nativists.

Who loses in a guest-worker program? The American worker, of course, who would be at a disadvantage. Who wins? American corporations and, to a much lesser degree, those of us who pay for gardening and restaurant meals. Guest workers work but get little in return. Like undocumented workers, they would have FICA taxes deducted from their paychecks but would be unlikely ever to get a Social Security check. They'd have no right to organize and no right to vote or otherwise be represented politically. Nor would they have a right to a safe workplace. They would be, essentially, a class of peons. We would have a working class without political representation. Sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? The economic downturn has slowed the tide of people coming across our borders, but you can bet we'll hear about guest workers again soon.

READER RESPONSE

NOT MADE IN USA

I feel compelled to respond to Kevin Phillips's "We Can't Make It Here" (December). The piece covers many of the reasons we are in the mess we're in, but it leaves a few out. One reason we no longer manufacture things in America is that we have laws to protect our workers and to limit pollution of our air, water and land. Many other manufacturing countries lack comparable protections. Pollution from China stretches across the Pacific Ocean and blankets the U.S. Some companies, seeing an opportunity to profit at the expense of people and the planet, decide to move their manufacturing jobs to countries where officials can easily be bribed to look the other way while the businesses pollute with impunity and shamelessly exploit those nations' workforces. Want to try to organize a labor union in China? You'll end up in jail. Want to try to get environmental laws passed? In some countries you'll be shot on the spot.

The concept of profit at any cost is a dangerous one. Some corporations no longer see it as their duty to protect



Globalization has been a race to the bottom.

the environment or the workers who make their goods. People do not seem to realize or care that the protections we take for granted here at home could soon be in jeopardy too. Already politicians are openly saying we need to get rid of these laws and to lower wages so we can compete with other countries. Back in the 1980s so-called experts were saying globalization would raise other nations' economies to the level of ours. It's clear now that globalization has had the opposite effect: The U.S. economy is slowly descending to a third-world level.

C.X. Nemec
Irving, Texas

TO VOTE OR NOT TO VOTE

One reason not to vote that was overlooked in "Get Out the Vote" (November) is that you're less likely to be called for jury duty. I know people who



Should voters need certification?

haven't registered to vote because they don't want to serve on a jury. I can't blame them, because the pay for jury duty is very low. Maybe low voter turnout is not such a bad thing, though. I'm 50 years old, and I'm not sure I want more participation, especially by younger, uninformed people.

Mike Furnish
Houston, Texas

I have to disagree with the idea that everyone should vote. Many people choose a candidate based on superficial factors: because she is a woman, because he is black or because their favorite actor supports their choice. American elections have become little more than popularity contests, with many voters making their selections for the wrong reasons. If you don't know a candidate's history and stance on the issues, please don't vote.

Walt Larson
Anchorage, Alaska

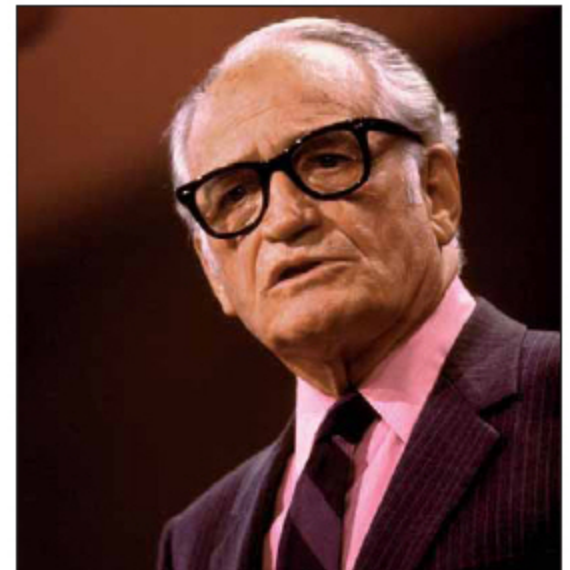
EXCHANGE OF FIRE

I was struck by a 1974 quotation by Hef revisited in January (*Playboy Interview's Greatest Hits*): "There is an enemy out there. This country—indeed, the whole world—consists of two opposing forces: us and those who would force their own values and attitudes on us." I would say, in accordance with this belief, *PLAYBOY* should oppose further gun-control measures, which force an attitude on all of us.

Roy Wells
San Ramon, California

COMPASSIONATE CONSERVATIVE?

I was disappointed that you published Aaron Rogers's letter in the December issue. Rogers paints Barry Goldwater as a racist, trigger-happy psycho who was hated by all. Nothing could be further from the truth. Goldwater, who retired from the Air Force Reserve as a major general, was chief of the Arizona Air National Guard in 1946, when he demanded the unit be desegregated. Moreover, he supported the NAACP in Arizona and voted for every civil rights bill prior to the 1964 Civil Rights Act; he opposed that act because he believed it was unconstitutional. As for advocating "bombing North Vietnam back to the Stone Age with nuclear weapons," again Rogers is mistaken. Goldwater recommended using low-yield nuclear weapons, not bombs, to defoliate the dense forests. All this reminds me of a saying that became popular a few years after Goldwater's loss to LBJ in the 1964 election: "They told me that if I voted for Goldwater, we'd have a war in Southeast Asia, civil and racial unrest and a ruined economy. I voted for him anyway, and it turned out they were right." It is unfortunate that even after all these years, there is such misguided hatred toward Goldwater, especially when all those who met him seem to have liked him. In fact, one of his closest friends in Washington was



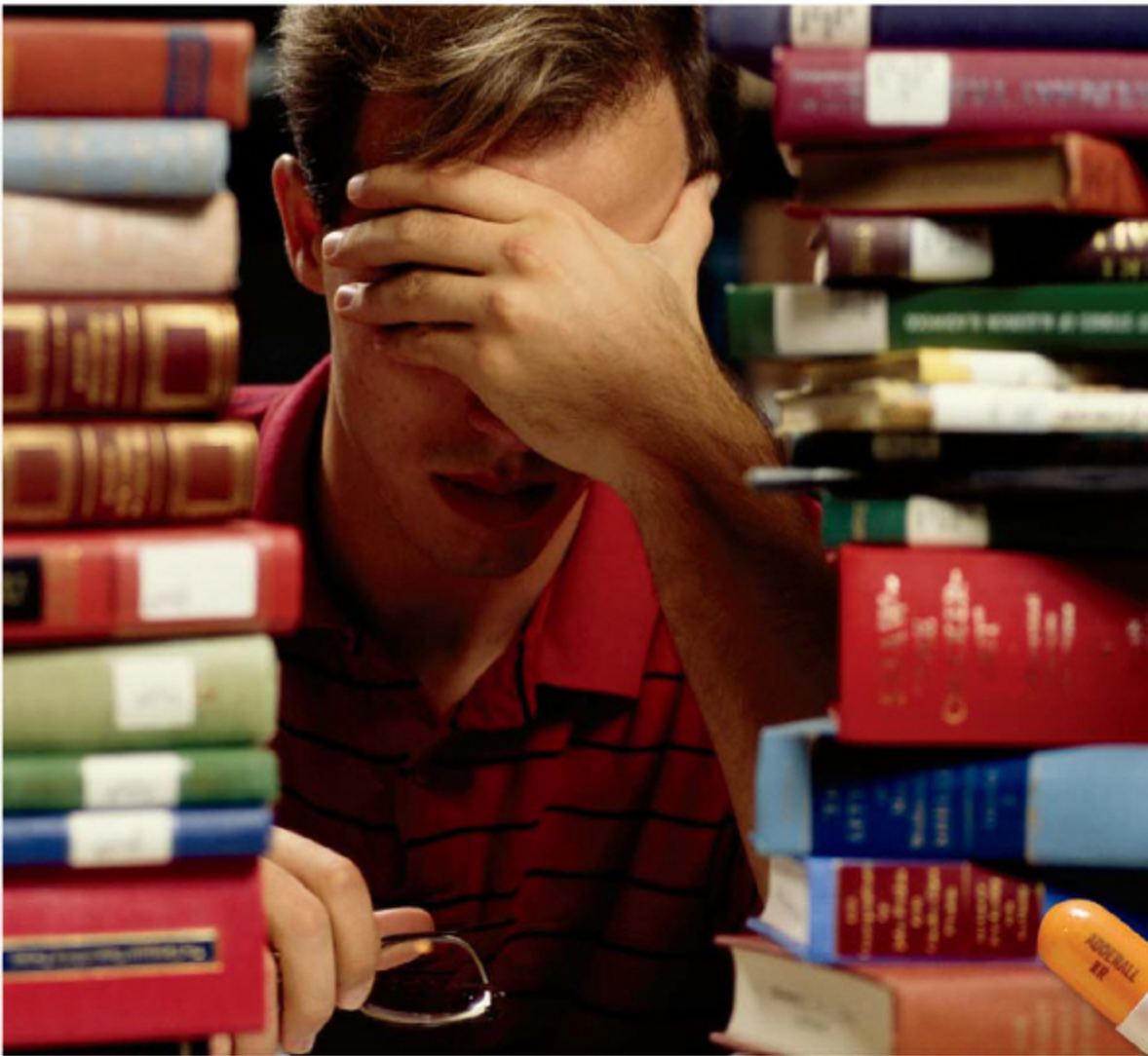
Goldwater revisionism in the house.

Jack Kennedy. Goldwater embodied the idea that you can disagree without being disagreeable.

Mike Norton
Phoenix, Arizona

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

NEWSFRONT

**Tune In, Turn On, Kick Ass**

LONDON—Writing in the journal *Nature*, a group of American and British academics and scientists published a “call for a presumption that mentally competent adults should be able to engage in cognitive enhancement using drugs” such as Ritalin, Adderall, modafinil and others. “Human ingenuity,” the article reads, “has given us the means of enhancing our brains through inventions such as written language, printing and the Internet. Most authors of this commentary are teachers and strive to enhance the minds of their students, both by adding substantive information and by showing them new and better ways to process that information. And we are all aware of the abilities to enhance our brains with adequate exercise, nutrition and sleep. The drugs just reviewed, along with newer technologies such as brain stimulation and prosthetic brain chips, should be viewed in the same general category as education, good health habits and information technology—ways that our uniquely innovative species tries to improve itself.”

Rated Mature

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI—After studying how sex is addressed in nursing homes, researchers from Kansas State University have put together a series of seminars to educate workers about how to handle sexual topics with older adults in their care. “It was liberating to some folks to have an open discussion with university researchers,” says Lillian Claassen, a health services administrator at a home in Hesston, where the researchers offered a training session. “It empowered people to think about how they could help folks.” That’s a good thing—and long overdue, particularly with the number of sexually progressive baby boomers on their way to such facilities in the near future. As Gayle Doll, the director of KSU’s Center on Aging, points out, “Nursing homes are the second-most-regulated industry in the country, behind nuclear power plants. But none of those regulations address sexuality. Consequently, no one knows how to handle it.”

Campus Clampdown

EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN—A Michigan State University student who sent an e-mail asking 391 faculty members to comment on a proposed change in university policy was found guilty by the school of unauthorized use of a university network, or spamming. “MSU’s decision defies the First Amendment, fairness and common sense,” says Adam Kissel of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education. “MSU is effectively preventing the campus community from sending e-mails criticizing the administration to more than an extremely small fraction of the MSU community. The university should be ashamed, and the president should immediately overturn this illiberal finding.”

Windows on the World

CHICAGO—Factory workers at Republic Windows and Doors staged a sit-in after management shut the facility down, blaming its lender, Bank of America, for the company’s inability to pay severance

and accrued vacation averaging \$6,250 per worker. (Bank of America says the company’s management is to blame.) “We need only what is promised to us, nothing more, nothing less,” says Apolinar Cabrera, who worked at the factory for 17 years. “I know the economy is bad, but this just isn’t right to do this to us.” Meanwhile, banks on the receiving end of tax-funded bailouts paid their executives year-end bonuses.

Terminator Time

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A new generation of military robots will be increasingly autonomous rather than remotely controlled by humans the way drones currently are. Israel and South Korea already use robotic border guards, and the U.S. military has funded development of new machines that can decide on their own when to attack.



One Whale of a Tail

It's no secret HEIDI MONTAG had a boob job and a nose job. This past April we heard she was considering gluteal augmentation surgery—yes, a butt job. Did she or didn't she? You be the judge.



Who Needs Lines?

Snow queen MALLOY MARTINI is in *Van Wilder 3*. "I play a Christian sorority girl," she says. "They're called DICK, Daughters in Christ's Kingdom. I don't really have lines, but I do have a scene where I fake an orgasm in church."



First Among Equals

Brazilian ADRIANA LIMA won the Victoria's Secret fashion show. Well, it's not really a competition, but we can print only one picture, and we figure this is the best. We know because we looked at all the photos. Every single one. Again and again. And got paid to do it.

Ebony and Ivory...

GABRIELLE UNION: ...live together in perfect harmony. JOSIE MARAN: Side by side on my piano keyboard. Oh, Lord, why don't we? UNION: What, live on a piano keyboard? That sounds uncomfortable.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JONAS PERSSON FOR GETTY IMAGES



Run, AnnaLynne, Run

The very lovely ANNALYNNE MCCORD is fast becoming a *Grapevine* favorite. Long eyelashes, regal cheekbones, tousled hair, full lips, gleaming teeth, toned thighs—what more could you want in a woman? Nipple, you say? Done! All you gotta do is ask.

RUSTO

Daddy Happy. Daddy Very Happy

Thai boxing's dean's-list collegian JULIA ZABRODINA tells us she's excited to be in *PLAYBOY* because "it's my dad's favorite magazine, and it's important to make Daddy happy."



BIG PICTURES

Pop Goes the Jesus

In 2001 16-year-old Katy Hudson, child of two pastors, released an album of contemporary Christian music. Today she's better known as KATY PERRY, girl kisser and bodice buster. Praise be.





INTERNATIONAL PLAYMATES: NUDE MODEL UN.



THE WORLD'S MOST UNLIKELY LEADING MAN.



BONDS BEHIND BARS?

NEXT MONTH



WE CELEBRATE THE LEGENDARY BETTIE PAGE.

INTERNATIONAL PLAYMATES—IRYNA OLHOVSKA, VIKTORIA METZKER AND MAI-LAN LEENDERS ARE ALL HOUSEHOLD NAMES IN THEIR HOME COUNTRIES. IN APRIL THEY'RE COMING TO AMERICA. THIS IS THE KIND OF IMMIGRATION WE CAN ALL GET BEHIND.

THE COUNT IS 1 AND 10 TO BARRY BONDS—THE BIGGEST SPORTS SCANDAL SINCE THE 1919 BLACK SOX LANDS IN COURT THIS MONTH WHEN BONDS'S TRIAL ON ONE COUNT OF OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE AND 10 COUNTS OF PERJURY BEGINS. **JONATHAN LITTMAN**, WHO HAS SHADOWED THE BIG GUY SINCE THE STEROID ACCUSATIONS BROKE, GIVES US THE BOOK ON BONDS. WILL THE BALLPLAYER WHO HAS HIT THE MOST HOME RUNS AND DRAWN THE MOST BASES ON BALLS WALK AGAIN?

BETTIE PAGE—MISS JANUARY 1955 FOREVER TRANSFORMED THE WAY WE APPRECIATE WOMEN. SHE INSPIRED ART, FASHION AND MILLIONS OF MEN'S FANTASIES. WE LOOK BACK AT THE CULT ICON WITH A PICTORIAL.

SETH ROGEN—HOLLYWOOD'S LEADING JOKESTER IS BACK BEHIND THE BADGE, THIS TIME AS A MALL COP IN *OBSERVE AND REPORT*. ROGEN TALKS CANADA, CANNABIS AND COMEDY WITH **ERIC SPITZNAGEL** IN THE *PLAYBOY INTERVIEW*.

AMY SMART—THE UNCONVENTIONALLY HOT BLONDE AND STAR OF *CRANK 2* SITS WITH **STEPHEN REBELLO** FOR *20Q*.

THE LAST BACHELOR—IN FICTION BY **JAY MCINERNEY** A LIBERTINE IS ABOUT TO GIVE UP HIS WAY OF LIFE AND MARRY, BUT A CHANCE ENCOUNTER WITH A FORMER PARAMOUR MAKES HIM RETHINK EVERYTHING. ON THE EVE OF HIS WEDDING HE REVISITS HIS OLD FLAME. THAT'S WHEN THINGS HEAT UP.

OF CON MEN OLD AND NEW—CYBER CRIMES MAY SEEM COMPLEX, BUT THEY'RE THE SAME FUNDAMENTAL SCAMS SWINDLERS HAVE PULLED FOR AGES. **DAVID PERRY** AND **TODD HOWARD** EXPLAIN AND TELL US HOW TO AVOID GETTING CAUGHT IN THE WEB. HINT: DON'T ANSWER ANY E-MAILS FROM NIGERIAN "PRINCES."

CARLOS BERNARD—WE DRESS UP 24'S VILLAIN (OR HERO?) IN SUITS PERFECT FOR A G-MAN OR ANY MAN WITH STYLE.

THE HILLIKER CURSE—**JAMES ELLROY** IS WRITING A FOUR-PART MEMOIR FOR US ON DEADLINE. FROM A MEMO HE SENT OUR EDITORS: "IT WILL BE A TREATISE ON THE MALE ROMANTIC URGE, A DECOROUS TELL-ALL, A THOUGHTFULLY ESSAYED CRITIQUE OF THE HOLY AND HORRIFIC CONJUNCTION OF MEN AND WOMEN." HE DELIVERS THE FIRST INSTALLMENT NEXT MONTH.

PLUS: THE *PLAYBOY BAR* TURNS INTO A GIN JOINT AND SERVES UP THE JUNIPER, *FIRE UP!*'S **HAYLEY MARIE NORMAN** IS THE BECOMING ATTRACTION, **LAWRENCE LESSIG** PENS A *FORUM* ESSAY, AND OF COURSE, THERE'S MISS APRIL **HOPE DWORACZYK**.

STIMULUS PACKAGE



PINNACLE
— VODKA —

DISTILLED FROM
FRENCH WHEAT AND THE
PUREST SPRING WATER

HANDCRAFTED IN
SMALL BATCHES

France
IMPORTED

THE PROPOSITION:
a toast to yourself and better times
with a smooth, award-winning,
affordable French vodka.

WARNING:

THIS PRODUCT
MAY CAUSE
MOUTH CANCER



SINUS

frost

15 POUCHES

your cigarettes may
get jealous.

camelsnus.com*

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Please Don't take credit for
Playboyman's work - You'll
make me so sad....