

MEET THE 2009 PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR

PLAYBOY

ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN

• JUNE 2009

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ON!"

*Bitch Slap star
America Olivo*

**HOT
SUMMER
NIGHTS**
PLAYBOY'S
THRILL-A-MINUTE
GUIDE

**IS SCOTT BORAS
THE DEVIL?**
**JAMES ELLROY'S
EXCLUSIVE MEMOIR**
ONLINE SEX CULT
**SHIA LABEOUF
INTERVIEW**





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may vary. See dealer for complete details. *EPA estimated highway mileage MAZDA3. Actual results may vary. †2007 Automotive News Economy Small Cars. ††Bluetooth is a registered trademark of Bluetooth SIG, Inc. ©2009 Mazda Motor of America, Inc.

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PLAYBILL

Welcome to the global village. Countries helping countries. We are the world. This month we bring you an issue with a remarkably international flavor. Of course, we still believe in American exceptionalism: **America Olivo** is so exceptional, we've put her on the cover, photographed there and inside by **Terry Richardson**. A shooter who has redefined sexy for the 21st century, Richardson has a much-copied style that manages to recall the 1980s while looking utterly modern. (If nothing else, it provided our art director with an excuse to dig up some totally rad fonts.) Also featured this month is Becoming Attraction **Iga Wyrwal**, a pinup from Poland, and Playmate of the Year **Ida Ljungqvist** (shot by **Stephen Wayda**), the first Centerfold in PLAYBOY history to be born in Africa. No, Ljungqvist is not an African name—Ida, who has lived in more than a dozen countries, is the product of a Swedish father and a Tanzanian mother. It's not only the naked babes who are spanning the globe: In *Forum* we hear from **Dubravka Ugrešić**, a Croatian novelist living in Amsterdam, who has a message of cautious hope about the global economy. And we so liked Swiss-born **Cyril Van Der Haegen's** painting for our December issue (for an article by Gary Hart), we brought him back to illustrate the short story *Lovely Rita* by **Maile Meloy**. Lest you think the pages within are written in Esperanto, rest assured there's plenty here that is truly American. Meloy's tale, for instance, is about a young woman trying to cope in a small Connecticut town in the shadow of a nuclear reactor. In *Soul Man*, **Robert Gordon**, the foremost expert on Memphis music, profiles **Booker T. Jones**, godfather of Memphis soul. Jones used to play with an outfit called the MGs—maybe you've heard of them. This month's fashion feature sees Phillies shortstop **Jimmy Rollins** decked out in hot summer duds, and our 20Q is with **Scott Boras**, the sports agent who makes sure the best players are suitably overcompensated. **David Black** shares the inside scoop on that good old American pastime, swinging, in *Hot. Digital. Sexual. Underground*, and **James Ellroy**, modern dean of noir fiction, that good old American genre, delves deeper into his own tangled sexual history in part two of *The Hilliker Curse*. Miss June **Candice Cassidy**, a farmer's daughter from Ohio, is so red, white and blue we figured we'd run her up the flagpole and see who salutes, and comely columnist **Suzy McCoppin** has written a penetrating essay on that oldest of border disputes, anal sex. Finally, there's *Playboy Interview* subject **Shia LaBeouf**, a California kid with a French name who has played Indiana Jones's son and Megan Fox's boyfriend (twice). Only in America.



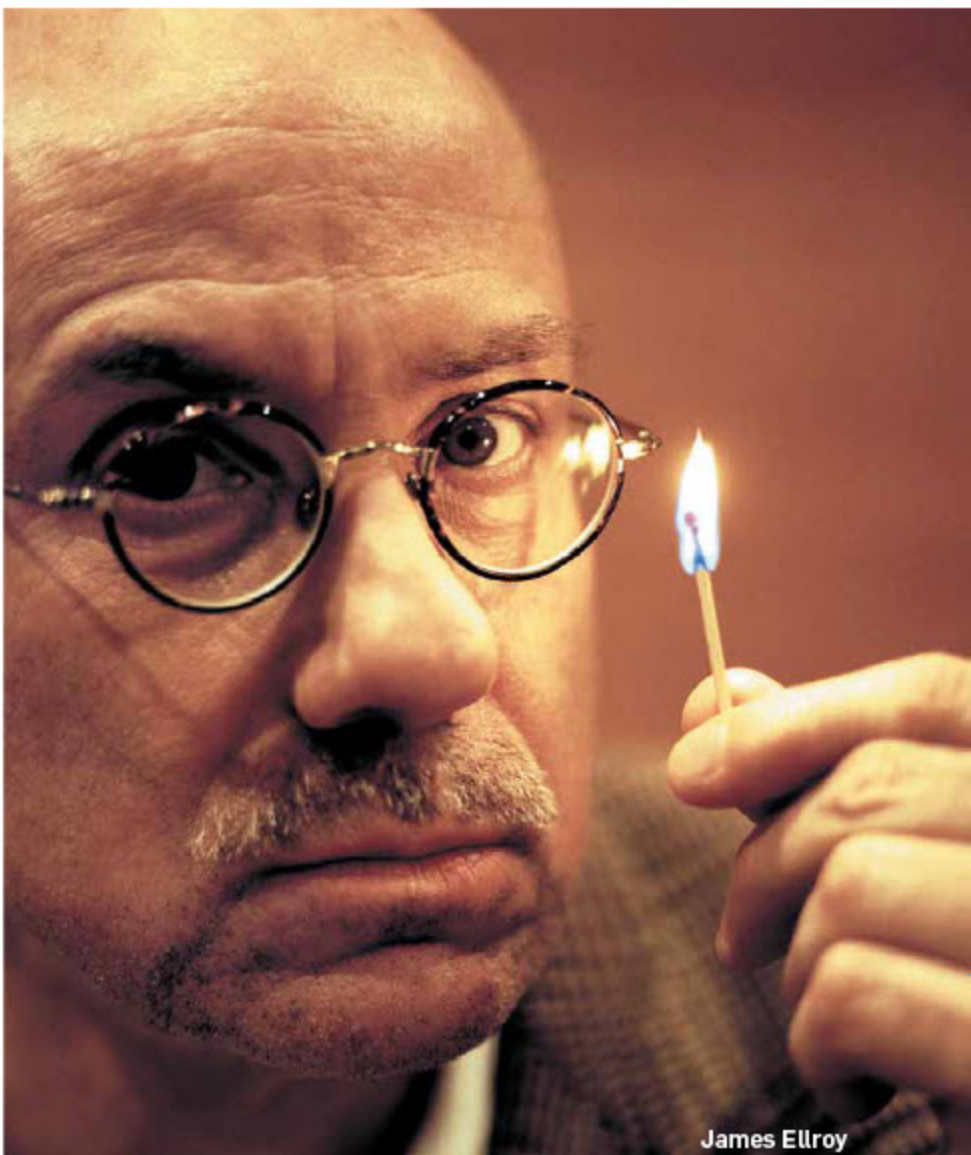
David Black



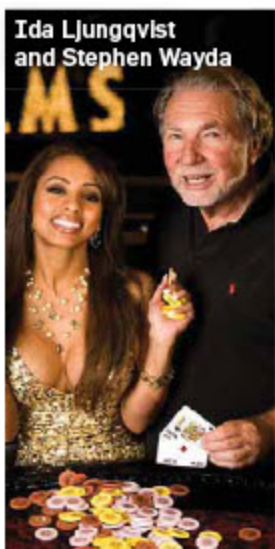
Cyril Van Der Haegen



Suzy McCoppin



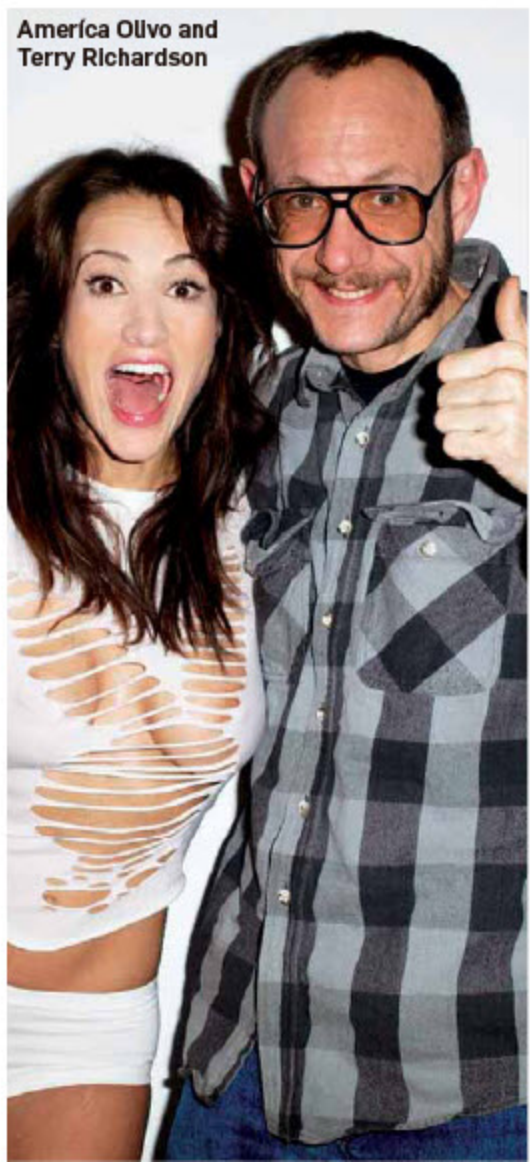
James Ellroy



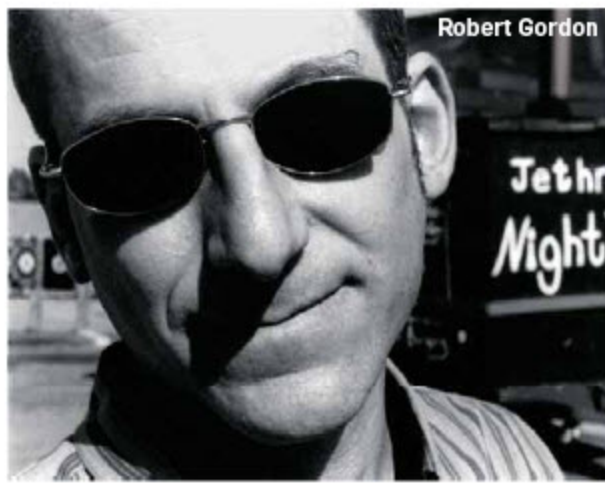
Ida Ljungqvist and Stephen Wayda



Dubravka Ugrešić



America Olivo and Terry Richardson



Robert Gordon



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MEN'S

EASY FASHION... EASY LIVIN'

PLAYBOY

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Nothing has done more to realize the promise of the sexual revolution than the Internet, which makes meeting potential partners easier. **DAVID BLACK** walks on the wild side with some sexual adventurers during his intimate foray into the L.A. swinging scene.



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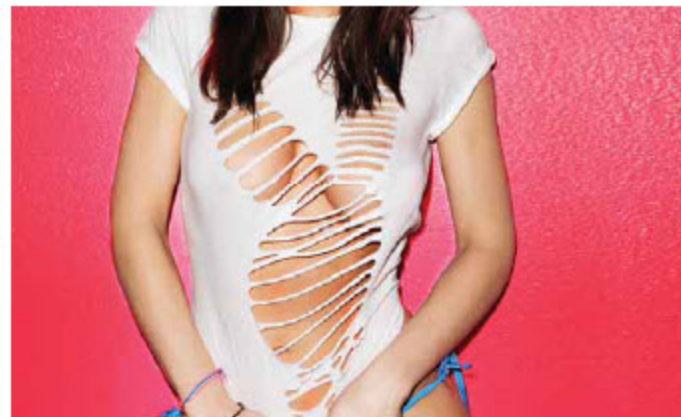
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Boras hits it out of the park for **KEVIN COOK** as baseball's "avenging agent" defends his hardball tactics and his stable of well-paid players.

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COVER STORY

We believe in America—both the country and America Olivo. The Juilliard-trained singer turned actress has four movies coming out in 2009. Plus America looks damn hot and has zero qualms about disrobing on-screen and off. Photographer Terry Richardson creates American history on our cover. Our Rabbit is ripped to shreds over it.

PLAYBOY

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She is fluent in several languages, has lived in more countries than most of us will visit in our lifetime and has a goddess's looks that could smooth over any foreign relations. Talk about global appeal: Ida Ljungqvist is the 50th Playmate of the Year.

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THIS MONTH ON PLAYBOY.COM

OFFSHORE THRILLING We hit beaches on both coasts, in Hawaii and (yes) in the Midwest to find America's best surf spots and rate the top 20 waves.

PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION Get out and get down at our picks for the top 20 places to have sex in public.

LIMBER UP You'll bend in ways you never thought possible after watching our limber yoga instructor's video classes.

HOT LAPS Playmate Pilar Lastra test-drives some of the world's great cars in her new video series.

PLAYMATE PARTY Check out extended coverage of the PMOY bash in Las Vegas.

FASHION | JIMMY 76 | ROLLINS



Phillies shortstop Jimmy Rollins is a smooth major league player who comes out swinging in cool summer fashions. **BY JENNIFER RYAN JONES**



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MONUMENTAL MOMENTS IN HISTORY

- 1953 ● The first issue of *Playboy* makes its debut
- 1960 ● The first *Playboy* Club opens in Chicago
- 1964 ● BRUT® makes its national debut helping men everywhere stay cool in the company of beautiful women
- TODAY ● BRUT® introduces 24 Hour Protection with Trimax® Anti-Perspirant and Deodorant for extreme protection against odor and wetness – ensuring another generation of great smelling men



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THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY

HEF SIGHTINGS, MANSION FROLICS AND NIGHTLIFE NOTES

O'DAY'S BIG NIGHT

Aubrey O'Day celebrated her 25th birthday and her March *PLAYBOY* cover on the same night at the Apple Lounge. Hef and his girlfriends Karissa and Kristina Shannon and Crystal Harris hosted the party at the West Hollywood hot spot, where George Maloof and Miss October 2008 Kelly Carrington (right) also shared a drink. Paris Hilton and Petra Nemcova stopped by to party with Aubrey (below right), who was recently kicked out of Danity Kane. As she puts it, "I'm a public example of being fired in 2008 and making the most of it in 2009!"



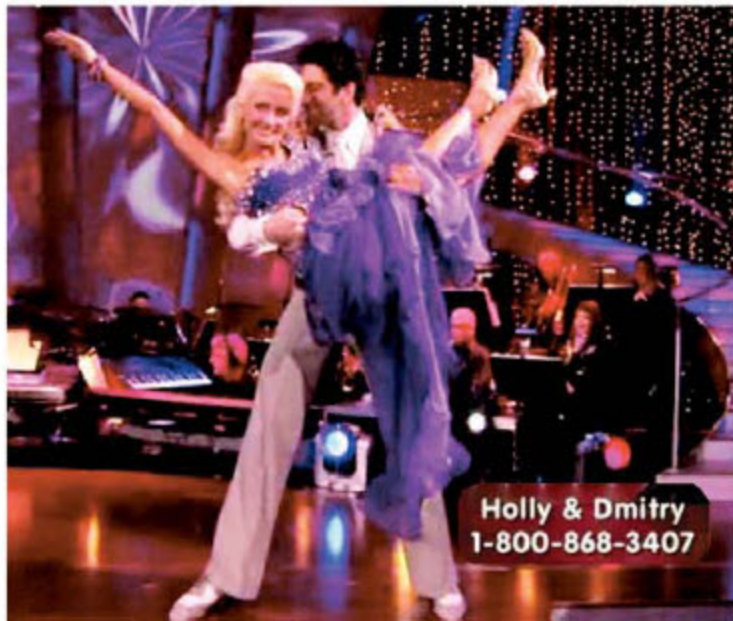
A JAZZY PAIR

Quincy Jones helped Hef announce the 2009 *Playboy Jazz Festival* at the Mansion. On hand to dazzle guests was Jones's new protégé, Alfredo Rodriguez, whom Jones described as having "the potential to be one of the most prolific pianists of the 21st century." Rodriguez will appear along with Kenny G, Patti Austin, Jon Faddis, Sharon Jones & the Dap-Kings and the Neville Brothers at the Hollywood Bowl in June.



HEF AND SCARLETT FOR THE OSCARS

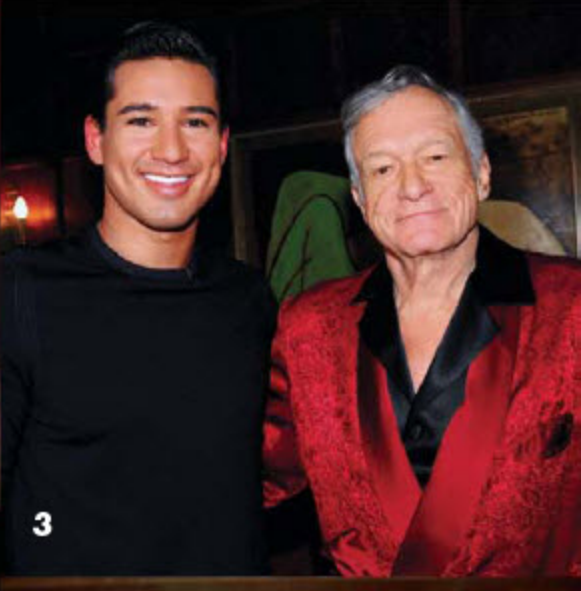
Honoring Hef as a film buff, the Academy Awards included him in a two-minute teaser for the 81st Oscars. The trailer included the thoughts of 59 other cinema enthusiasts (including Scarlett Johansson, who stayed to say hello after the taping). The Man deftly described the influence movies had on his childhood as "the stuff that dreams are made of."



HOLLY DANCES WITH THE STARS

Holly Madison put on her dancing shoes for ABC's *Dancing With the Stars*. Holly (a last-minute substitute for Jewel) and her partner, Dmitry Chaplin, got off to a slow start with the cha-cha and the quickstep. Then she sustained injuries along the way, and they were eliminated in the seventh episode. If only they had tried the Bunny hop.

**HANGIN'
WITH H&F**



Life's one big party—or a series of big parties—in the world of Playboy. (1) The Karma Foundation threw its Kandyland masquerade at the Mansion with the support of Hef and his sweethearts Karissa and Kristina Shannon and Crystal Harris. (2) Playmates Candice Cassidy, Crystal McCahill and Hope Dworaczyk joined the festivities. (3) For the release of Steven Watts's book *Mr. Playboy*, Mario Lopez dropped by PMW to interview the Man for the E! network. (4) Hef and Brigitte Nielsen at Movie Night at the Mansion. (5) Cristal Camden, PMOY 2008 Jayde Nicole, Holly Madison and Miss October 2008 Kelly Carrington at Bowling for Boobies. (6) Super Bowl MVP Santonio Holmes and Hef. (7) Hef and Crystal on Academy Awards night at PMW. (8) Karissa and Kristina with Dolce and Coco Chanel all dolled up to watch the Oscars. (9) Playmates Markéta Jánková, Nicole Narain, Kayla Collins and Ida Ljungqvist. (10) Hef, Crystal, Jayde and Brody Jenner at the party for Jayde's charity, Lengths for Love. (11) Hef meets Kendra Wilkinson's fiancé, Hank Baskett. (12) Hef and his girlfriends celebrate Paris Hilton's 28th birthday.



ROCK HEAVY

I enjoyed *Playboy's Music Awards 2009* (March), but what's up with the shots at Cleveland? First you ask, "Is Cleveland afraid of real rock?" because the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame hasn't nominated Judas Priest, Iron Maiden, Def Leppard or Motley Crue. Then you blast the museum for not inducting Rush. The reason the hall is located in Cleveland, and the reason the annual induction ceremony is returning this year after a decade in New York, is our long-standing tradition of supporting all rock music, especially hard rock. Ask Ian "Cleveland Rocks" Hunter what he thinks of the city, or ask Metallica, which has sold out every show it has ever played here. Your criticism is the equivalent of blaming Canton, Ohio for excluding players from the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Robin Kooper
Cleveland, Ohio

Thank you for inducting Rush into your Hall of Fame. Unlike bands that stay in the news because of gimmicks, arrests and stints in rehab, Rush has had continued success because of its musical prowess. As it sings in "Subdivisions," "Nowhere is the dreamer or the misfit so alone."

Christopher Bailey
Huntington Beach, California

How awesome to see a real rock band like Motley Crue grace the pages of your monumental magazine (*Rock the Rabbit*, March). With your shared interest in great parties, cars and women, the Crue and PLAYBOY complement each other well.

Jeff Homan
Gladstone, Missouri

DAVID AND TED

My husband has been a subscriber for more than 30 years. While he enjoys the photos, I often find myself reading a good portion of the magazine. I thought *My Brother Ted* was poignant and sensitively written. Despite his brother's horrible deeds, David Kaczynski is able to portray Ted's humanity. The deep friendship Kaczynski developed with one of his brother's victims is particularly moving. In contrast to this profound article is the profile of former Danity Kane star Aubrey O'Day (*Backstage With Aubrey O'Day*), who says her goal in life is to give a guy "the best sex he has ever had, the sex he'll never be able to get out of his head." So the March issue went from the highest morality and ideals to the lowest. You offer something for everyone!

Linda Appelbaum
Florissant, Colorado

We're not so sure about your judgment on this one—Aubrey deserves sainthood.

MUSICAL COMEDY MEN

You could not have chosen a better duo to interview than Flight of the Conchords (*20Q*, March). Their song "Ladies of the

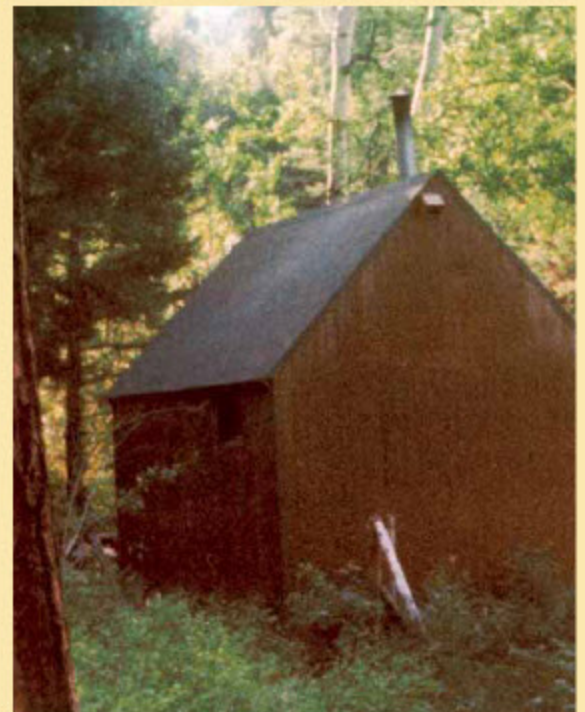
DEAR PLAYBOY

I Knew Him When

Kudos to David Kaczynski for his brave reflections on growing up with the troubled soul who would become the Unabomber (*My Brother Ted*, March). In retrospect it seems Ted's motivation for his spree was to destroy his parents for turning him into a brilliant social invalid. In that sense, his 35,000-word manifesto, which he insisted be published to end the killings, is a rationalization for not blowing up Mom and Dad. There is no doubt David's heroic decision to put humanity over fraternity saved lives.

Gary Prusaitis
Long Beach, California

Since its publication in PLAYBOY, Kaczynski's memoir has appeared in Brothers: 26 Stories of Love and Rivalry, an anthology edited by Andrew Blawner.



World" could be the PLAYBOY anthem: "Just wanna do something special for all the ladies in the world./I wanna get next to you, show you some gratitude/By makin' love to you—it's the least we can do."

Erica Zimmermann
San Jose, California

SUGAR KANE

Aubrey O'Day...wow. Since seeing her pictorial, I've had some restless nights.

Mark Whytsell
Millersburg, Ohio

J. Lo and Kim K., sit down. There's a new booty queen in town.

Bill Shore
Cortez, Colorado



"I want to be in love so badly." Us tool

Congratulations are in order to photographers Markus Klinko and Indrani on their fantastic cover shot. They transformed Aubrey into a golden goddess.

Daniel Perez
Silex, Missouri

SILENT TREATMENT

If your reporter George Prochnik had been truly interested in understanding boom-car culture (*Boom Car Boom*, March), he would have contacted victims of noise pollution—people who suffer from chronic fatigue, mental aggravation, hearing loss and sleeplessness, as well as those who have had to abandon their homes because of boom cars shaking them. Instead, he presents boom-car owners as misunderstood youths and antinoise activists as cranks, dismissing our organization, for example, as little more than an online discussion group that trades a lot of "lathery bile"—which is not only inaccurate but a cheap shot. In fact, we have 52 chapters in 27 states that work with police and the media to combat excessive noise. The idea that some people are born to love booming bass while others prefer peace and quiet, as if there were a moral equivalence between the two, is laughable. People who are silent do no harm to others. Those who crank out incredible levels of noise cause a great deal of damage.

Ted Rueter
Madison, Wisconsin

Rueter is director of Noise Free America (noisefree.org). NFA recently called on the Obama administration to reestablish the federal Office of Noise Abatement and Control.

Boom-car owners insist they have a right to blast music but show no respect for the vast majority of the population that doesn't share their reckless enthusiasm. Car-stereo manufacturers encourage boomers: Sony urges buyers to "Disturb the peace," Pioneer's motto is "Disturb, defy, disrupt, ignite," and JBL states, "Either we love bass or hate your

THE PERFECT SUMMER MIX



PATRÓN GRAPEFRUIT

1 oz. Patrón Silver
1/4 oz. Patrón Citrónge
Fresh grapefruit juice
Splash of club soda

Method:

Pour Patrón Silver and Patrón Citrónge over ice. Fill with grapefruit juice. Add a splash of club soda. Garnish with lemon and lime slices. Enjoy.



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neighbors." Such marketing should be more carefully scrutinized by state and federal officials. The overwhelming evidence that overexposure to excessive sound leads to hearing loss forecasts a time when boom-car owners will burden us with the health-care costs associated with their disability.

Richard Tur
Arline Bronzaft
New York, New York

Tur is the founder of NoiseOFF (noiseoff.org). Bronzaft, a retired psychology professor, has studied the health effects of noise.

I fear your article glorifying boom cars will only inspire more people to create them. I frequently receive e-mails from people who are desperate for relief from noise generated by self-centered jerks. Thankfully, many cities are beefing up their noise ordinances. In the U.K., regulations banning antisocial behavior have allowed police to crush the boom cars of so-called boy racers.

Ron Czapala
Louisville, Kentucky

Czapala is founder of NoBoomers.com.

I submitted the online post Prochnik describes as typical of antinoise activists who object to boom cars. In referring to boom thugs as "human garbage," I meant to suggest they take and give nothing back. My recommendation that boomers should be "shot and fed to wolves" may have been over-the-top, but it reflects the frustration many of us feel. All we ask for is a little common sense.

Jim Tarantino
Stockton, California

Boom cars can be breathtaking—literally. In 2004 my colleagues and I reported in the journal *Thorax* the cases of four adolescents who suffered spontaneous lung collapse as a result of exposure to very loud music, which can cause sudden and violent shifts in air pressure. Three of the young men had positioned themselves next to loudspeakers at concerts, and the fourth experienced sudden pain and breathlessness while testing a new 1,000-watt stereo installed in his trunk.

Dr. Marc Noppen
University Hospital UZ Brussel
Brussels, Belgium

LOVE SONG

Playmate Jennifer Pershing is not only gorgeous, she's a fan of the Dave Matthews Band (*Rock n Roll Fantasy*, March). What a combo! As Matthews sings in his song "Crash Into Me," "You wear nothing, but you wear it so well."

Lenny Stone
Venice, Florida

JESSICA OR ASHLEE?

That sure looks like Ashlee Simpson—not her sister, Jessica—on page 43 of the March issue (*Playboy's Sexiest Celebrities*).

However, my wife thinks it's Jessica. Let's get the sisters together in a pictorial to make a positive ID.

Vance Byram
Grand Junction, Colorado

We'll work on that, but we can assure you it's Jessica. Tony Duran has posted a few other photos from his shoot at tonyduran.net.

ROCK HEAVIER

Antoine Verglas does a masterful job capturing singer Maria Brink's curves while hinting at her many tattoos by having a few poke out from under her sleeve ("Becoming Attraction," *After Hours*, March). Maria has one of the most powerful voices in the industry, but it's nice to see her in something other than a music rag.

Paul Cicero
Hartford, Connecticut

I was wondering when you would realize the metal scene is a hotbed of gorgeous women. How about a *Mistresses*



Cristina Scabbia of Milan's Lacuna Coil.

of *Metal* pictorial with Brink, Cristina Scabbia of Lacuna Coil, Angela Gossow of Arch Enemy, Simone Simons of Epica, Francine Boucher of Echoes of Eternity and Sharon den Adel of Within Temptation? HORNS TO YOU, PLAYBOY.

Joe Jacklin
Grants Pass, Oregon

GUNS, ROSES, BUTTER, EGGS

Duff McKagan, formerly of Guns N' Roses, offers some great no-nonsense financial advice in the March issue ("Just a Little Patience," *Success*). His views are a refreshing departure from the doom-and-gloom rantings of "Chicken Little" Democrats. And they accused George W. Bush of spending like a drunken sailor!

Art Zaldivar
Austin, Texas

You never know where you'll find wisdom, so I am open to getting good advice from anyone at any time. Thanks, Duff, for sharing your lessons learned.

Greg Bowers
Fort Wayne, Indiana



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PLAYBOY AFTERHOURS

BECOMING ATTRACTION

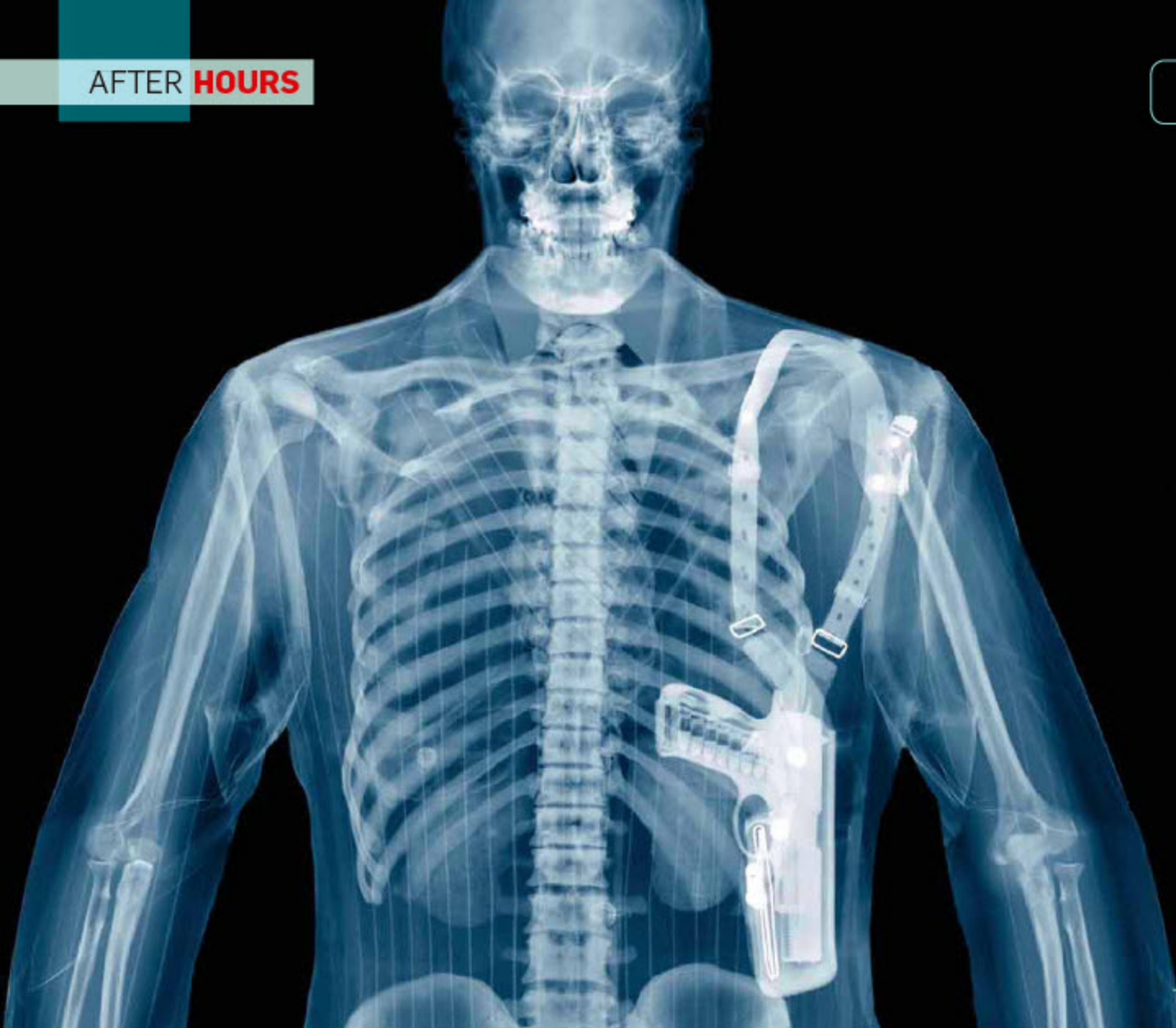
Iga Wyrwal

In 2008 Poland's Iga (or Eva) Wyrwal emerged from obscurity to conquer U.K. newsstands, making *Nuts* magazine's Best New Boobs and Biggest New Boobs lists and being named Sexiest Topless Babe of the Year. "Basically, British men are all about boobs," she says. More than just a pretty pair, Iga is venturing into acting, in the horror film *Dread*. "I had to describe my worst nightmare," she recalls, "which is that someone has kidnapped me, cut off my hands and feet and replaced them with metal parts. My acting is probably a bit crap, though."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALAN SMITHEE



"Basically, British men are all about boobs."



Art

Killer Photography

There's nothing superficial about British artist Nick Veasey. He shoots photos using X-rays powerful enough to penetrate his subjects, revealing a sort of naked truth about them. Subjects are exposed for five full minutes to X-rays four times more powerful than those used in hospitals. See more of Veasey's work and order his book at nickveasey.com.

Gunman (left) and *Office Block* (right). "I'm hooked," Veasey says about his technique. "I even dream in X-ray."



Why We Love YouTube

It was 40 years ago this month—June 7, 1969, to be exact—that ABC debuted *The Johnny Cash Show*, filmed at the Grand Ole Opry. Among the dozens of *Cash Show* clips on YouTube are surprises like the Man in Black dueting with Joni Mitchell on "Long Black Veil" and Ray Charles's take on "Ring of Fire"—though it's hard to say anything beats Cash and Dylan doing "Girl From the North Country" (above).

Show, filmed at the Grand Ole Opry. Among the dozens of *Cash Show* clips on YouTube are surprises like the Man in Black dueting with Joni Mitchell on "Long Black Veil" and Ray Charles's take on "Ring of Fire"—though it's hard to say anything beats Cash and Dylan doing "Girl From the North Country" (above).

The Best Damn Website, Period

S M T W T F S

PMSbuddy.com is the world's first online PMS reminder. When your girlfriend is approaching that time of the month, the site will e-mail you a reminder so you'll know to buy flowers or shut up when you're being spoken to. More than 150,000 people have already signed up. It's free, and here's a little bonus: The service allows you to track the monthly cycles of more than one woman. Creepy? Just a little.

Don't Try This. Really. Don't

Counting cards in a casino isn't illegal. Using any kind of device to count cards in a casino is illegal. So you definitely don't want to mess with the iPhone app Blackjack Card Counter. You can set it to run on stealth mode, which allows you to operate the card counter with your hand while keeping the iPhone tucked in your pocket. Yes, it's cheating in a place where you don't want to be caught cheating. It's unwise. It's illegal. It's a felony. Available at the iTunes store.



Film Reel Rant

Consider yourself a connoisseur of the mobster-movie genre? Take note: The best Mafia flick to come out in years stars no one you know (Salvatore Abruzzese, Simone Sacchetti) and has barely made it onto the big screen in the States. *Gomorrah* is an Italian film about the Neapolitan Mafia, called the System (or the Camorra), considered the most violent crime syndicate in the world right now. The movie is based on the sensational nonfiction book of the same name, written by an Italian journalist with a giant *sacco*, named Roberto Saviano. The film won the Grand Prix at Cannes last year. A DVD version with English subtitles is available in the U.K., and some cable services offer the film on demand. If you're the type to spout *GoodFellas* lines in bars, find a way to catch this one.



ILLUSTRATION BY EAMO

Drink of the Month

Liquid Fire

Hats off to Hesperus Press for rereleasing *How to Mix Drinks, or the Bon Vivant's Companion: The Bartender's Guide* by Jerry "The Professor" Thomas. Published during the Civil War, it was the first mixologist's guide to appear in America. The Prof's signature drink, part cocktail and part circus act:

Blue Blazer

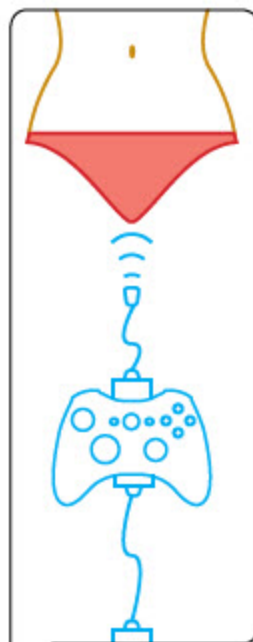
2½ oz. bourbon
2½ oz. boiling water
1 tsp. sugar
lemon peel

Use two large silver-plated mugs with handles. Put the whiskey in one and the water in the other. Ignite the whiskey, and as it blazes, mix both ingredients by pouring them from one mug to the other. It will appear as a stream of blue liquid fire. Sweeten with sugar and garnish with lemon peel. Serve in a four-ounce stemmed mug.



Faster Than a Speeding Bullet

At his day job Andy Green is a fighter pilot in the British Royal Air Force; he spends his spare time busting the world land speed record, which he currently holds at 763 mph. He is now building a new jet-powered car, called the Bloodhound SSC (the mock-up is pictured above), which in 2011 will cart him at a speed of more than 1,000 mph. If Green pulls it off, he'll travel faster than a bullet leaving the barrel of a .357 Magnum.



Plug In, Turn On

Alexander's Law: When a new technology is introduced, someone will try to fuck it. After Microsoft debuted Community Games on Xbox LIVE, where anyone can create an Xbox game, one of the first hits was the new(ish) *Rumble Massage*, which turns your joystick into a remote-control vibrator. She holds it; you control the buzz.

Employee of the Month

Cheri Leah

PLAYBOY: How do we pronounce your name?

CHERI: Like the fruit.

PLAYBOY: Sweet. What is it that you do?

CHERI: I'm a trip coordinator. I schedule flights for rich people at a private hangar.

PLAYBOY: So when they come to your office...

CHERI: No, it's all done over the phone. I don't meet the clients.

PLAYBOY: You mean they don't use a pretty girl like you to drum up business?

CHERI: I guess they don't need to. It's great for me. I can just roll out of bed, throw on sweatpants and head to work.

PLAYBOY: Well, you do have a sexy phone voice and a cute name.

CHERI: At least my name isn't something boring like Sarah. I like having this crazy name. Thanks, Dad!

PLAYBOY: Craziest thing you've done?

CHERI: Sex on the beach.

PLAYBOY: In the sand?

CHERI: Nope. Cheri on top.



Sex

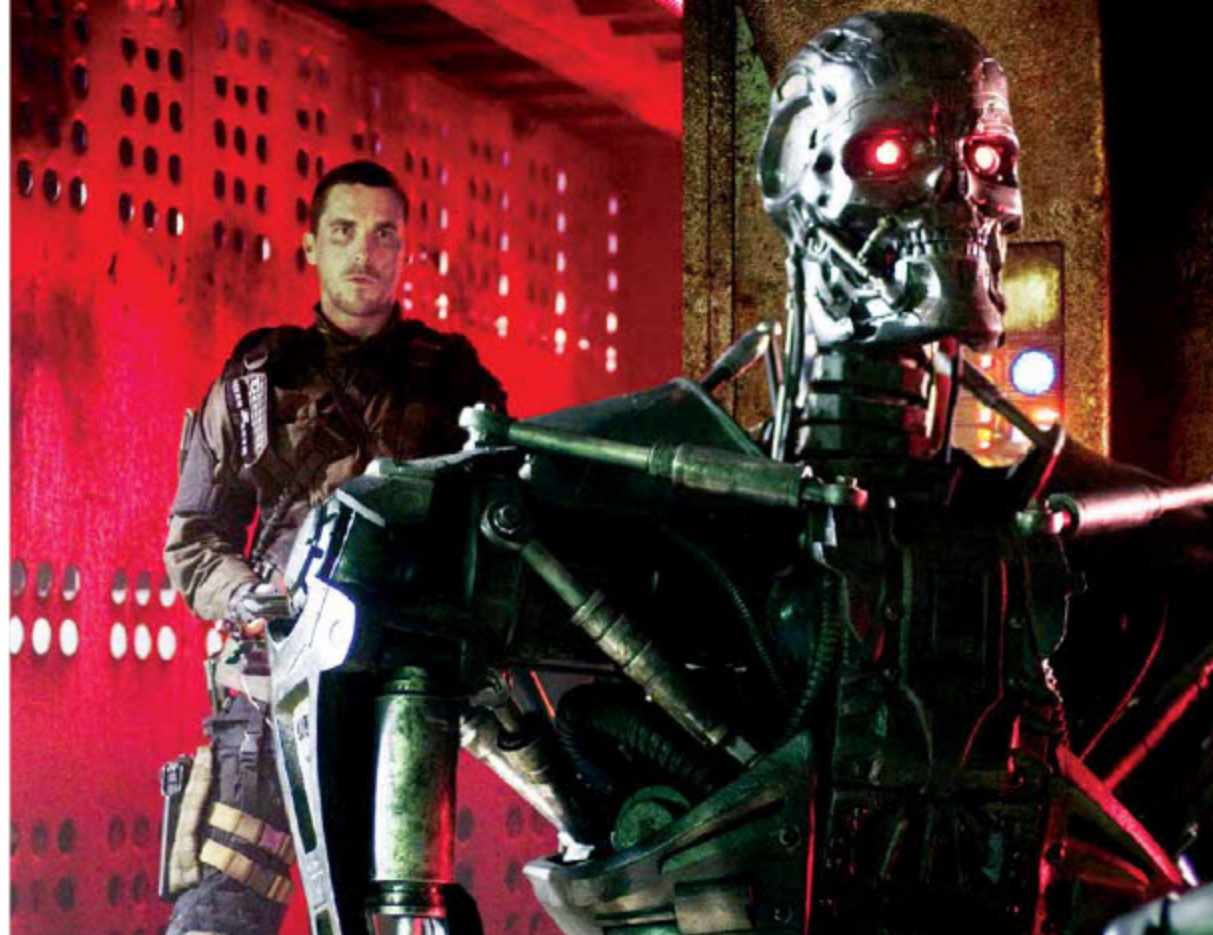
The Real Thing

Sasha Grey, who plays the lead in Steven Soderbergh's *The Girlfriend Experience*, in theaters now, has quite an acting résumé: She's a working porn star. Sasha won a 2007 AVN Award (porn's equivalent of an Oscar) for Best Three-Way Sex Scene (in the film *Fuck Slaves*) and 2008 AVN Awards for Best Oral Sex Scene (*Babysitters*) and Female Performer of the Year. And...action!

Movie of the Month Terminator Salvation

By Stephen Rebello

In the postapocalyptic sci-fi epic *Terminator Salvation*, resistance fighter John Connor (Christian Bale) leads the charge in humanity's battle against an onslaught of unstoppable Terminators in the year 2018. Director McG and company attempt to combine cutting-edge special effects with a gripping story line to match the three previous *Terminator* movies, as well as TV's *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles*. This fourth film also stars Helena Bonham Carter, Bryce Dallas Howard, Moon Bloodgood, Anton Yelchin and Linda Hamilton, who reprises her role as Sarah Connor via voice-over. "Christian and I were never interested in making just an action movie," says McG. "We wanted to honor the mythology of *Terminator* and make a film with beautiful story arcs and a theme that has haunted people ever since Robert Oppenheimer popped the genie out of the



bottle when he fused the atom: Could the very thing that makes us great also be our undoing?" The director says at heart the new movie is "a thinly veiled cautionary tale" that poses "ethical questions." We'll be back.

Now Showing: It's Denzel Washington vs. hijackers in *The Taking of Pelham 1 2 3*; Woody Allen decides to do *Whatever Works*; Jack Black gets biblical in *Year One*.

PLAY TIME:

Finally, a movie-based video game that doesn't suck. *Terminator Salvation* (360, PC, PS3) doesn't reinvent the shooter but does do a highly competent job of putting you in the combat boots of John Connor on a mission gone wrong that takes place before the events of the film. We'd rather shoot robots than people any day.

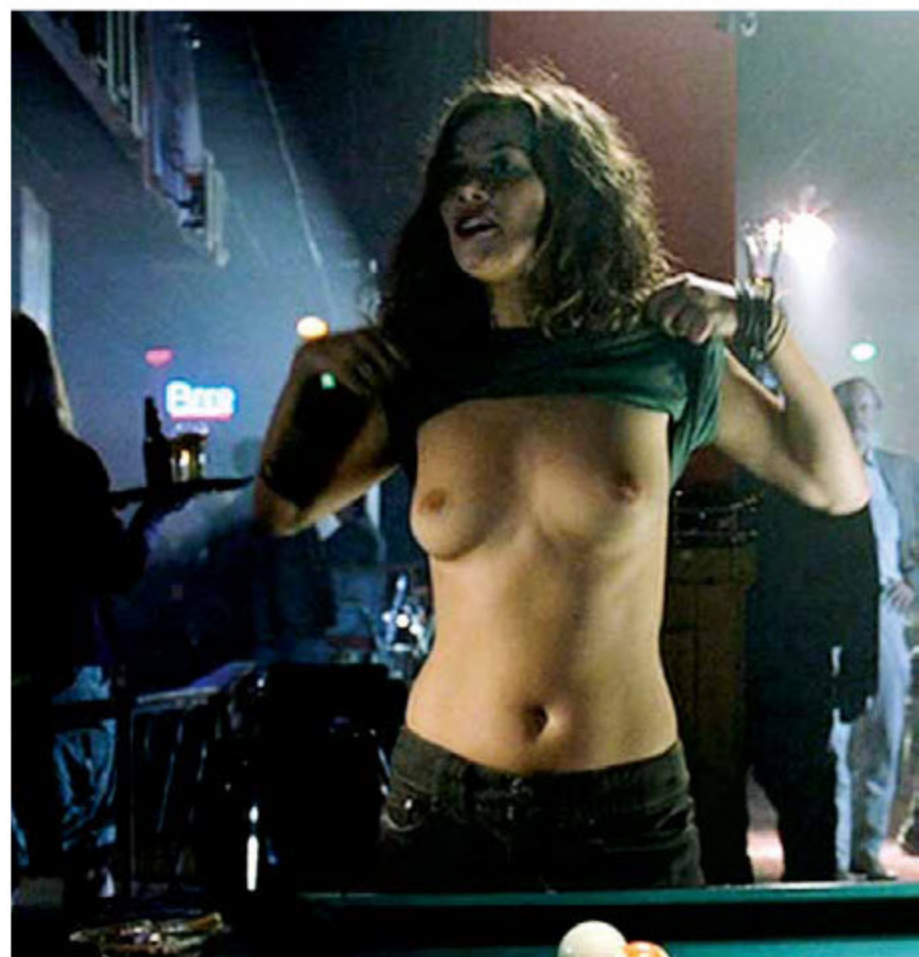
DVDs of the Month

True Blood: The Complete First Season The immortals walk among us on this HBO bayou-based bloodsucker series. Their thirst now quenched with synthetic blood, the vampires come out of the coffin, and one named Bill (Stephen Moyer) falls for mind-reading dive-bar waitress Sookie (Anna Paquin). This episode run is sexy, funny and frightening. **Best extra:** Blu-ray "enhanced" viewing mode serves up picture-in-picture background. (BD) $\text{Y Y Y} \frac{1}{2}$ —Greg Fagan



Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace & Music 40th Anniversary Ultimate Collector's Edition Resurrect your inner flower child with this four-hour director's cut of the Oscar-winning 1970 documentary, including never-seen footage of groups like the Who and Jefferson Airplane. **Best extra:** Hef interviews director Mike Wadleigh on a 1970 episode of *Playboy After Dark*. (BD) Y Y Y Y —Stacie Houglund

Paul Blart: Mall Cop An out-of-shape, hypoglycemic mall security guard tries to take down a team of lithe ninja-like credit-card hackers in this surprise box-office hit. The plot is ludicrous, but Kevin James gets points for giving his lovable loser some heart, spunk and *Rock Band* skills. **Best extra:** Behind-the-scenes footage with pro BMX biker Mike "Rooftop" Escamilla. (BD) $\text{Y Y} \frac{1}{2}$ —Bryan Reesman



Tease Frame

In *Niagara Motel* Anna Friel plays a recovering addict losing her grip on sobriety—and her clothes—in a seedy locale. See her next opposite Will Ferrell as she grapples with giant reptiles in *Land of the Lost*. In this not-so-kiddie remake of the Sid and Marty Krofft Saturday-morning series, Friel plays a more mature Holly than her 1970s counterpart.



Game of the Month

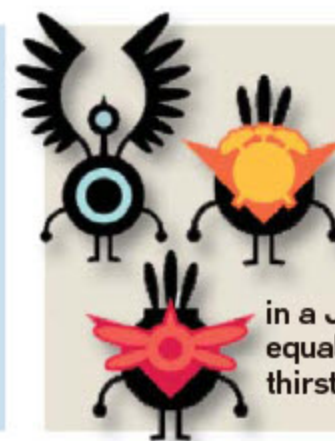
Chronicles of Riddick: Assault on Dark Athena

The first Riddick game, 2004's *Escape From Butcher Bay*, was a major standout on the original Xbox. Too bad no one played it. *Assault on Dark Athena* (360, PC, PS3) lets you right that wrong by including an updated version of the original game along with its new full-length installment. This cerebral shooter stars a virtual Vin Diesel (a redundant concept, we know) and emphasizes exploration and stealth over wanton killing. The first game's narrative has an elegant simplicity whereby your escape from an intergalactic prison is complicated by the relationships you develop with other inmates. In *Athena* it's more you against the world or, in this case, a band of space pirates. With two lengthy single-player campaigns and an all-new multiplayer mode, this is one of the best bargains in gaming and 2009's first must-have. **★★★★** —Scott Jones

Also in Gaming...

FUEL (360, PC, PS3) Far too many racing games take themselves far too seriously. Which is not to say *Fuel* is silly, just that it understands what most guys want out of a car game: instant white-knuckle action, entertaining courses and a learning curve that's more party school than driver's ed. **★★★** —Scott Alexander

WOLVERINE (360, PC, PS3) Thanks to nervous developers, most superhero games err on the side of timidity. We're happy to say the brutality here is turned up to 11. With an engaging, intuitive play style and a movie-inspired story line that keeps things humming along, it's the best *X-Men* game yet. **★★★★½** —Damon Brown



Pocket Tribe

Patapon 2 (PSP) is a bewildering yet addictive mix of rhythm, real-time strategy and role-playing wrapped up in a Japanese aesthetic that's equal parts cute and blood-thirsty. Insane and brilliant.

Music

Fanfare for the Common Man

As the frontman of Pulp, Jarvis Cocker became the poet laureate of Britpop with his tragicomic chronicles of English rust-belt life packed into rousing anthems like "Common People" and "Disco 2000." Now he's back with the new Steve Albini-produced solo album *Further Complications*.

PLAYBOY: You lived through grim times during the Thatcher years as the coal mines closed in the region where you grew up. What's different during this downturn?

COCKER: Yeah, I was living in Yorkshire when the pit closures were happening. I regret now that I didn't get involved in the protests. At the time, I thought political engagement gave legitimacy to the powers that be, that it was better to find an alternative lifestyle than to fight the one that exists. In fighting it, you kind of acknowledge its right to exist. I was apolitical in those days; nowadays I think you do have to engage.

PLAYBOY: You've often made sociopolitical observations part of your songwriting. Is this crisis providing material?

COCKER: I'm wary because it doesn't affect me directly—I've gone all middle-class. The idea of my getting upset about job losses is an abstract thing. So I've gone shallow on this album. I'm not a massively deep person. This is a terrible realization I've come to at the age of 45.

PLAYBOY: Yikes. Between that statement and your lecture at the South by Southwest festival, downplaying the importance of song lyrics, what are we to think?

COCKER: I've not done that dreaded thing and "reinvented" myself. I've just lightened up a little bit.

PLAYBOY: How else is that playing out?

COCKER: It is my ambition this year to learn how to cook. I bought a few cookbooks and a blender—so what could go wrong?



Legendary DJ **Larry Tee** has many claims to fame. He co-produced the first B-52's single, "Rock Lobster." He established such notorious NYC club nights as Love Machine and Disco 2000. He created and nurtured the electroclash scene. Now he has a new album, *Club Badd*, which features appearances by Peaches

(whose career he helped launch back in the heyday of electroclash), Princess Superstar and Perez Hilton—who sings about his junk on "My Penis." To get you in the mood for this sexed-up opus, Mr. Tee has put together a free downloadable hour-long mix tape for us as part of our Music to Fuck To series. Get it at playboy.com/mtfft.



Marrying the Girl Next Door Kendra Gets Hitched on TV

Former *Girl Next Door* Kendra Wilkinson is out on her own and headed for wedded bliss. Keep tabs on bride-to-be K-Dub and her groom, Hank Baskett of the Philadelphia Eagles, on *Kendra*, premiering June 7 on E!

PLAYBOY: Reality TV again—what can we expect this time around?

KENDRA: It's more of a sitcom—reality show, like a modern-day *I Love Lucy* combined with *Nick and Jessica: Newlyweds*, though we don't get married until the last episode. I'm the wild, untamed wifey type, and Hank's so conservative. He's like, "Now, Kendra..."

PLAYBOY: How are you adjusting to life away from the Mansion?

KENDRA: That's part of the show too. I'm learning about life. I've never lived on my own, and now I have a house. I have to cook, clean, do laundry, pay bills, put stamps on envelopes—things I've never done before.

PLAYBOY: Can you cook anything at all?

KENDRA: I haven't even used my stove or oven yet. I get scared when I go to the grocery store, because I don't know what to buy. I end up just throwing shit in the crock pot because it's easy, or we order out. And doing the dishes? Fuck that shit.

PLAYBOY: Are you turning into a bridezilla?

KENDRA: A little bit. I'm very picky about things like my colors and my dress. I think that if I don't feel right on the wedding day, then nothing will be right.

PLAYBOY: Are you worried that anything will go wrong?

KENDRA: My biggest worry is that Hank will forget the ring—or that my boobs will fall out of my dress.



Playboy.com

Macro Duffonomics

Since his *Success* column rocked our March issue, Duff McKagan (yes, *that* Duff McKagan) has been slinging financial expertise online. See playboy.com/duffonomics for weekly updates and the full archive.



Playboy TV

Adult Stars' Naked Ambition

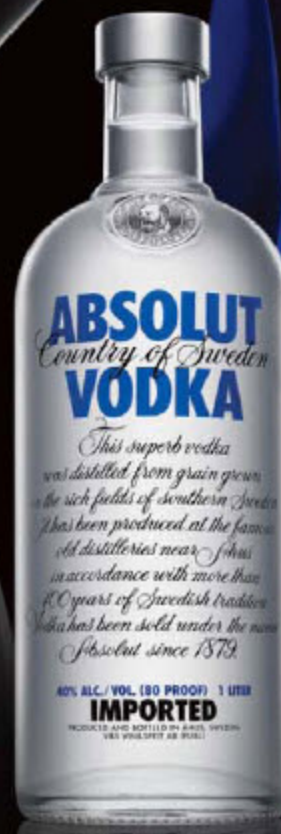
In the fine-art book *Naked Ambition: An R-Rated Look at an X-Rated Industry*, celebrity photographer Michael Grecco gives porn stars like Tera Patrick and Jenna Jameson the full glam treatment. This month a documentary about the making of the book (which has the same name) gets a limited opening in New York and Los Angeles. Look for it later this year on Playboy TV.

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Surf Spots Top Tubes

What's that cynical line from the 1980s teen classic *Under the Boardwalk*? "Surf all your life—just don't be a surfer all your life." We have to disagree: Surf all your life and be whatever you want, just don't waste your time surfing lame waves. Consult Playboy.com's *A-List: America's 20 Best Surf Spots* to find the curl of your dreams, such as this one: the Backdoor pipeline off Banzai Beach on the North Shore of Oahu.



Nothing but the best. It's a fitting credo for a man of discernment, but it raises an obvious question: How do you find the best? Simple—consult Playboy.com's *A-List* on a regular basis and you'll always know what places and things are truly worth seeking out. Jazz clubs, hotel bars, sushi restaurants, skate parks, scotch.... If you want it, we've got it.

Meat Me in Chicago

We left no bun unturned for our *A-List: America's Best Burgers*—from big-city open secrets like Shake Shack in Manhattan to pilgrimage-worthy joints like the Meers Store and Restaurant in Meers, Oklahoma. One shoo-in was the **Kuma Burger** at Kuma's Corner in Chicago. It's



your basic masterpiece: half a pound of Black Angus steak piled with bacon, cheddar and a fried egg, and served on a puffy Labriola pretzel roll. "It's outrageous and sloppy," admits Luke Tobias, Kuma's sous chef. "It's the best of two worlds—dinner and breakfast." Ask for yours rare and there will be blood. "Most order it straight up," Tobias explains. "We don't recommend ketchup or mustard." We agree. Just squeeze that baby like a roll of Ultra Charmin to pop the yolk on the sunny-side-up egg and you'll have more than enough sauce and flavor.



Crash Course at Tattoo U

We love cool tattoos on gorgeous women. Know who this beauty above is? *Hmm*. We called on *Inked* magazine editor Jason Buhrmester to give us his top 10 for Playboy.com's *A-List: Top Tattoo Shops*. Each pick is a temple of artistry and skill—Japanese-style masters, biker-chic artistes and more. And the abdomen above? It belongs to superscorching Italian actress Asia Argento.

Shop Like a Man

Our *A-List Top Stores* recommends paying a visit to **Freemans Sporting Club** in New York City's Nolita. Freemans doesn't sell just a line of clothing, which by the way is quite nice; it's a sort of mini-mall of old-school male delights. The apothecary stocks classic high-end grooming products, and the Sutlery purveys such useful accessories as hunting boots and pocket knives. Get a trim and straight-razor shave at the barbershop. If you're ragged but not shaggy, there's the "hangover remedy," which involves a hot eucalyptus wrap. We feel better just thinking about it.





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RAW DATA

SIGNIFICA, INSIGNIFICA, STATS AND FACTS

THE PLAYBOY POLL



WHO IS THE SEXIEST WOMAN ELIGIBLE TO JOIN AARP?

YOU VOTED:

CHRISTIE BRINKLEY 35%	VANNA WHITE 11%	ANN CURRY 4%
MICHELLE PFEIFFER 21%	MADONNA 9%	MARTHA STEWART 1%
KIM BASINGER 14%	SUSAN SARANDON 5%	

NEXT UP: GO TO PLAYBOY.COM/WWT TO ANSWER JUNE'S QUESTIONS, INCLUDING:

YOU MEET A WOMAN AT A BAR. WHAT DO YOU MOST OFTEN ASK HER FOR AT THE END OF THE NIGHT?

HER NUMBER	HER FACEBOOK ACCOUNT INFO	A "CUP OF COFFEE" AT YOUR PLACE
HER E-MAIL ADDRESS	A KISS	HER HOURLY FEE

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60% OF BRITISH 16- TO 24-YEAR-OLDS AND 70% OF 16- TO 19-YEAR-OLDS WOULD RATHER GO WITHOUT SEX THAN MUSIC FOR A WEEK.



WHAT THEY'RE THINKING

ACCORDING TO LEASETRADER.COM, 18% OF WOMEN PREFER TO DRIVE ON THE FIRST DATE.

18%



18

OF THE 52 MOST VALUABLE PLAYER AND CY YOUNG AWARDS ISSUED SINCE 1996—MORE THAN 1/3—HAVE GONE TO PLAYERS WHO WERE SUBSEQUENTLY LINKED TO PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS.

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ODD STAT OF THE MONTH

Emergency medical personnel recommend performing CPR chest compressions in time to "Stayin' Alive." Its 103-beats-a-minute rhythm is close to the ideal 100.

IN ANSONIA

THE NEW YORK TIMES REPORTS THAT 17% OF INKED AMERICANS REGRET THEIR TATTOOS.

THEFT OF SIDE-KICK CELL PHONES ACCOUNTED FOR 14% OF ALL ROBBERIES COMMITTED IN BOSTON IN 2008.



SINCE DECEMBER 2007 ALMOST 2.9 MILLION AMERICAN ADULT MALES HAVE BEEN LAID OFF. OVER THE SAME SPAN OF TIME THE CARTOON NETWORK'S VIEWERSHIP HAS RISEN BY 10%.





Want to Take It Outside?

Ducati's latest street rocket is anything but last year's model

When champion Thoroughbreds get older, they're put out to stud, given a supply of genetically superior fillies and instructed to enjoy themselves. Motorcycles face a slightly different fate. Rules change, engine displacement grows, some electronic gizmo is added, and suddenly last year's superbike is a footnote, stripped of its fairing and turned out onto the street to dream of glory days past. Unless we're talking about Ducati. The Italians weren't ready to let the 1098 that propelled Troy Bayliss to the 2008 World Superbike Championship shuffle gently off the stage, so they've turned it into the 2009 Streetfighter. The details are delicious, from the "evil eye" LED position lights to the trigger-catch kill switch (the kind you find on fighter planes and missile silos). Modesty is not the focus here, with a Testastretta Evoluzione engine caged in the trademark Ducati trellis frame and nary a fig leaf more. It will snarl out 155 hp at 9,500 rpm, and at 373 pounds this bike has a power-to-weight ratio that's the best in its class. The huge Brembo monoblock disc brakes are known for their planet-stopping power. The standard model—which is anything but—goes for \$15,000. Another \$4,000 buys the S model shown here, with DTC (Ducati Traction Control), DDA (Ducati Data Analyzer) and SEX (we'll let you translate that one).

Message in a Bottle

John Varvatos's clothes make men look good in a way that doesn't shout "Check out how good I look!" The same low-key approach succeeds for his new cologne, Artisan (\$75, johnvarvatos.com). With a combination of citrus, ginger and wood notes, it whispers with quiet authority instead of making a stink.



Mission Critical

When it comes to luggage, we'll take toughness over style any day. But we would prefer not to compromise. Killspencer's Repurposed collection (\$400 to \$450, killspencer.com) is made from military truck tarps that have seen combat. Which means no matter what happens to you out there, you know your bag has seen worse.





About Time

Mechanical wristwatches are one of the most impressive results of mankind's opposable thumb. Too bad most cost four to six figures. Imagine our surprise, then, when Lum-Tec launched late last year, promising handmade watches with automatic movements in the \$400-to-\$800 range. Every watch is one of a limited, numbered series, like the M3 shown here (\$515, lum-tec.com), of which only 155 were made.

Hack Your Life: Death to Cable

These days most major TV networks stream their shows online to anyone with a Net connection. What does that mean? You no longer need to pay for cable. The big dog is Hulu (hulu.com), a partnership between NBC, Fox and other channels, offering thousands of TV-show episodes from the latest *Lost* to vintage *Knight Rider*. CBS has its own site (cbs.com/video), and Comedy Central provides complete seasons of *South Park* (southparkstudios.com), *The Daily Show* (thedailyshow.com) and many others. Netflix's streaming service lets

its customers watch thousands of movies and TV shows instantly. If watching on a computer is inconvenient, you can get almost all this stuff onto your TV by using a video-game console. You can stream Netflix through an Xbox 360 (\$200 and up), and the PlayStation 3 (\$300 and up) can receive Hulu. Alternatively, Roku's Digital Video Player (\$100, roku.com) can stream Netflix, as well as movies from Amazon Video on Demand. (Roku promises Hulu support is coming.) Cable companies, time to start sweating.



Small Wonder

Every so often Sony has to prove why it gets to be Sony (it's in their contract). This year's reason is the Vaio Lifestyle PC (\$900, sonystyle.com), which is eensy, at 1.4 pounds and 0.78 inches thick, but wide enough that your hands won't feel like Cirque du Soleil contortionists. Wi-Fi and Bluetooth are de rigueur, but it also packs in a 3G cellular Internet connection and a GPS receiver for turn-by-turn directions.

Pump-Action Shot Gun

Most espresso machines are hard to fit in your briefcase. But that doesn't mean you need to hit a megachain. The Handpresso Wild (\$100, handpresso.com) is part bicycle pump, part barista. Use the built-in pump to generate 14 to 16 bars of pressure, pack the filter with finely ground high-quality coffee, pour boiling water into the plastic canister, then flip it over. At the touch of a button it will crank out thick, rich, *crema*-topped go juice. Zoom.





Everyone remembers the final scene in *Boogie Nights*, when Mark Wahlberg reveals his prosthetically augmented schlong. But a poignant exchange that occurs midway through the film has always stuck out in my mind.

PORN STAR: Is he going to fuck me in the ass?

DIRECTOR: Is that what you want?

PORN STAR: It would be nice.

That's why people go to the movies—to escape reality. Very few guys patrol the metropolis, fighting crime pro bono, and those who do don't do it in tights, like Batman. I've never met a zebra that can speak jive like Marty in *Madagascar*. And most women, myself included, do not think it would be nice to get fucked in the ass.

Sadly, this does not sit well with much of the male population, as anal sex has become the new zeitgeist obsession. Anal is the new blow job. Blame Youporn or any porn—a fantasy world where anal sex is as readily available as diet Red Bull and women are as excited about it as they are about shoe shopping. This disparity has turned my gender into a league of liars. *Oh yeah, baby, that feels amazing.* Good thing we're usually facedown during sodomy sessions; otherwise you'd see our noses growing.

That's not to say I've never done anal. (Sorry, Mom.) It's not one of my fonder memories. The experience, which I'd stashed deep in the recesses of my mind, resurfaced in the rudest possible way recently. I was pulling up to the intersection of Sunset Boulevard and La Cienega, ironically not far from Larry Flynt's Hustler store. That's when I was rear-ended. All too fittingly, the driver was male, late 20s. He scrambled out of his silver Lexus to assess the damage. As he hunched over to inspect my bumper, *déjà vu* set in. I'd been here before. It occurred to me how startlingly similar this experience was to anal sex, at least from the female perspective. Why, even the word is a blatant parallel: rear-ended.

There I was, cruising along, maybe even enjoying the ride, then *bam!* I was slammed into. At first I was startled, panicked. Even when someone expects it, nothing can truly prepare you for the actual event. Before I could catch my breath I was facedown in a pillow/airbag. I took a few deep breaths. Thoughts raced through my mind: How extensive is this damage? Is my paint on the other person's car? How embarrassing! Even though I'm insured, how protected am I really? Nothing's foolproof.

Awkwardness settled in: Is he going to ask for my number? Will he give me his card? Will I have to ask for it? Time to exchange paperwork. For now

it's over. He's gone, and I'm alone. I got a good night's sleep. I woke up the next morning a little sore.

So why do guys like anal so much? From a young age boys are trained that any sexual contact with a female is a victory. It's your job to try; it's our job to say no. And the further you get us to go, the more successful you are. Anal is the grand-slam homer. Get it, and you have conquered. You're the game's MVP. Another theory is that it's a special gift from a woman to a man. Nothing says "I love you" like anal sex.

Truth is, for most women, it's not comfortable and thus a selfish act on the part of a man. For a lot of men, sex is about power, and anal is the ultimate domination. But shouldn't the woman enjoy it as much as the guy? What's sexier—a woman gritting her teeth as if she's getting a colonoscopy or a woman in the throes of orgasm?

Porn stars do all kinds of prep work for an anal scene. When you see anal in video, the female actor likely hasn't eaten for an entire day prior to the shoot. Those performers who can't stomach starvation simply pop an Imodium. Enemas are a virtual job requirement, according to Tristan Taormino, author of *The Ultimate Guide to Anal Sex for Women* and czar of her own ass empire. Lubricants are vital. "It's not uncommon for actors to go through half a bottle during a scene," says Taormino.

In the real world anal sex is usually impromptu and therefore more risky. Do the math. All the preparation involved in successful porno butt love strongly suggests this orifice should serve as exit only. But maybe that's just how I was raised.

Not all women concur. Of my six closest friends, two are down for anal. If you're a woman and you're a backdoor girl, by all means, write the editors of *PLAYBOY* and prove me wrong.

Taormino teaches classes on how to enjoy the act. "The orgasm from anal sex is way more intense than the vaginal orgasm," she explained during our phone interview. "It's a full-body orgasm. Plus, if you add clitoral stimulation to anal penetration, it will blow your mind. There are more nerve endings in the first part of the butt than in the back of the vagina." Hey, Tristan, there are a lot of nerve endings in my eye socket. It doesn't mean I want a dick in there. Taormino also explained that if the sphincter is too tight to accommodate a penis, one can train one's butt muscles to relax with the help of a butt plug. If I'm going to spend my time training something, it's not going to be my butt.

Maybe I'm just a two-input girl. Is that so wrong?

BRINGING UP THE REAR

THE TRUTH ABOUT
ANAL SEX FROM A
WOMAN'S POINT
OF VIEW

ONE WAY

BY
SUZY
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CALENDAR GIRL DATA SHEET

Name: Destiny Moniz

Bust: 34C Waist: 24 Hips: 34

Height: 5'6" Weight: 113

Birth Date: December 5, 1987

Turn-ons: Athletic guys with great bodies, unique style, ambition & confidence.

Turn-offs: Body Hair, bad teeth, guys that are too cocky, & bad dancers!



CALENDAR GIRL DATA SHEET

Name: Meghan Beck

Bust: 34DD Waist: 26 Hips: 36

Height: 5'6" Weight: 125

Birth Date: January 14, 1988

Turn-ons: Intelligence, business men, the 5 o'clock shadow.

Turn-offs: Men who are lazy with no ambition, poor hygiene, & guys who try too hard!



CALENDAR GIRL DATA SHEET

Name: Kasey Unroe

Bust: 34DD Waist: 25 Hips: 34

Height: 5'6" Weight: 108

Birth Date: October 22, 1985

Turn-ons: Humor, I love goofyness!

Turn-offs: Narcissistic people.

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My wife wants me to get a vasectomy. After the procedure, how do you know when it's okay to have sex without a condom?—R.L., Baltimore, Maryland

When she doesn't get pregnant! No, no, that's a joke—or half a joke, apparently, based on how haphazard many men are about confirming their sterility. Eight and 12 weeks after the procedure, you are supposed to return to the doctor's office to provide semen samples. If both are free of sperm, you can ride bareback. If not, your body needs more time to clear the pipes. In rare cases, the cut ends of a vas deferens have been known to spontaneously reunite. A Cleveland Clinic study of 436 newly cut men found that, despite the risk, 21 percent skipped the follow-ups. Of those who did return, a quarter still had active sperm in their semen at eight weeks, and eight guys were still packing heat at six months. It wasn't until 10 months that everyone came up clear. To address the reluctance of many men to return to the doctor's office, cell biologist John Herr of the University of Virginia has developed a home test that should be available this year. See contravac.com.

In March you wrote about the relationship between ticklishness and sexual response. You may be interested to know that German slang for clitoris is *der Kitzler*, which means “the tickler.” Make of this what you will.—P.S., Easton, Pennsylvania

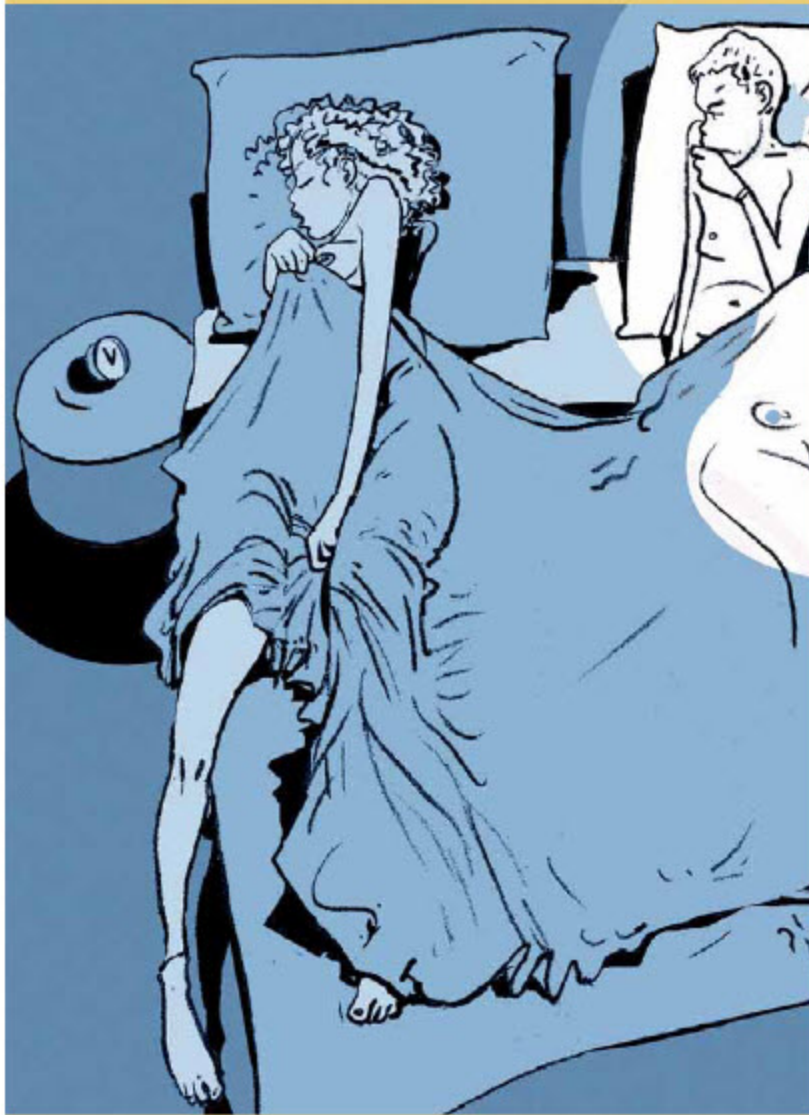
*The Germans also like to say, “Those who tickle themselves may laugh when they please.” The word clitoris (pronounced KLIT-or-iss)—our favorite, after “yes”—has mysterious origins. According to medical linguist William Casselman, it is thought to originate from the Greek *kleitoris*, which means “little hill” and “gatekeeper.” Another source suggests *kleitoris* derives from *kleiein*, which means “to sheathe” or “to shut” and could refer to the clitoral hood or labia. The plural, should you ever be so lucky, is *clitorises*.*

Every year on my birthday my grandfather made pizza for me. After he died I couldn't find his recipe, which he said he'd clipped from *PLAYBOY* in the 1950s. Can you help? He always told me the secret to good pizza is in the crust.—J.C., Evart, Michigan

*You're thinking of a May 1959 article called *Viva Pizza!*, by our long-time food-and-drink writer Thomas Mario. In tribute to your grandfather,*

here's an abbreviated version of the recipe: “Sift together one and a half cups of all-purpose flour (previously sifted and measured), one-half teaspoon of salt and one-eighth teaspoon of ground white pepper. Dissolve one-half cake of yeast

PLAYBOY ADVISOR



Several times in recent months I've been awoken by my wife moaning as if she were having intense intercourse. She was lying on her back, with her legs spread and knees bent, as though someone was on top of her—but she was sound asleep. The morning after this happened the first time, I asked if she'd had any good dreams, and she replied, “You don't want to know what I dream about.” Should I be concerned, or should I enjoy the show?—J.D., Houston, Texas

*Concerned she's cheating on you? It's possible, given her snippy response and the fact that some cases of *sexsomnia* are thought to be triggered by guilt or shame. But it's equally possible she's just stressed-out, depressed or sleep deprived. Usually a person who suffers from sexual behavior in sleep has a history of sleepwalking, talking or moaning. Based on case histories, such as that of the woman who would abruptly tear off her clothing and masturbate violently or another who would initiate sex with her husband always between two A.M. and five A.M., your wife won't respond well to any attempt to wake her and won't believe what you say you've seen. We suggest you continue to monitor the situation, with or without your hand on your dick, to make sure she doesn't get out of bed. She obviously wasn't fantasizing about you, but it's hard to get too worked up about that, considering how often you dream about fucking her friends.*

or one-half packet of dry yeast in one-quarter cup lukewarm water. Melt two tablespoons of lard over a low flame. In a generous-size mixing bowl, combine one-quarter cup milk, the dissolved yeast and the lard. Add half a cup

of sifted flour and beat very smooth with a wire whip. Gradually add the balance of the flour, mixing with a kitchen spoon until a dough is formed. You'll need a little extra muscle power here. The dough should be somewhat moist. Sprinkle lightly with flour, form the dough into a ball, and place it on a floured board. Knead it, i.e., fold toward you with your fingertips, then press down and away with the heels of your hands. Give the dough one quarter turn after each pressing. Do this for three to four minutes, then place in a lightly greased bowl. Cover the bowl with a plate or damp cloth, and put it in a warm place, about 90 degrees, until the dough doubles in bulk. Punch it down, place it on a floured board, and let it rest for 10 to 15 minutes. Then place the dough in a greased nine-inch pie pan. Dip your fingertips in olive oil and press the dough toward the rim of the pan, then around the rim so that it forms a raised edge that will hold the filling.”

Whenver we run into my fiancée's ex-boyfriend at a bar, he offers to buy her a drink but ignores me. When I buy the drinks, I always include his girlfriend. Is he being rude?—B.H., Fort Myers, Florida

He's goading you, and it's working. But where's your girlfriend in this passion play? Why is she accepting these drinks when he disses you?

My wife has made it clear she can live without sex, so for the past four years I have been finding partners online. I even have an online “wife” (she's also married), who attends swinger parties with me. Our relationship is purely physical, and we always practice safe sex. My real wife is unsuspecting, though I'm sure she wonders why I no longer bug her for sex. Now she wants us to attend counseling to address our sexual dysfunction. She says she has been a “horrible” partner. I'm not convinced counseling will change anything, and it could easily expose my alternate life and jeopardize my marriage, which I want to preserve for our two kids. Aside from the lack of sex, our life together is pretty satisfying. We have run into a couple of my girlfriends, but they assume my wife is another one of them, so it's kept under wraps. What should I do?—J.R., El Paso, Texas

Your wife will figure this out eventually, if she hasn't already. You can either take charge of the situation or let it unravel until it reaches its inevitable messy conclusion. If you are truly concerned about your kids living in a two-parent

home, you will need to make sacrifices. That means putting your alternative reality on hold while you focus on preserving the one your family lives in. If your wife is willing to meet you halfway, the marriage has already improved. Seize the opportunity.

Is a pocket square acceptable at a funeral?—C.W., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Yes, but it should be subtle, as should your tie. In other, less somber situations a pocket square adds a little flair. It should complement but not match a color in your tie.

You wrote in February that “players often end up being ambushed—they meet someone who puts their heart and head in conflict.” What happens next? Does a player stop his player ways, or does he cheat?—L.L., Portland, Oregon

Whether someone was a player is not an indication of how faithful he or she will be in a relationship. That’s why it’s a fallacy to think a tally of ex-lovers will tell you anything useful.

I’ve read men should take a daily multivitamin, but aren’t those for guys over 50? I’m 29, but I have had a few unhealthy years.—J.H., Troy, Illinois

Dr. Harvey Simon, editor of *Harvard Men’s Health Watch* (health.harvard.edu), suggests men ditch multivitamins but continue to take vitamin D, which the body otherwise obtains primarily from sunlight. A study released in March found that only 23 percent of teenagers and adults had more than a minimum level of the vitamin, in large part because people have heeded warnings to stay out of the sun and block UVB rays with sunscreen. That’s great for preventing skin cancer, but low levels of D are associated with heart disease, cancer and infection. The Institute of Medicine recommends men and women supplement daily with 200 IUs of vitamin D up to the age of 50, 400 IUs from 51 to 70 and 600 IUs from 71 on. Simon adds that research links high intake of folic acid, found in multivitamins and added to grain products, to colon polyps, which are precursors of cancer. As we have noted in the past, studies have also cast doubt on the value of supplemental beta-carotene, vitamin E, vitamin C, vitamin B₆, vitamin B₁₂ and folate. It’s best to get the vitamins and minerals you need from a balanced diet that includes fruits and vegetables.

After my father died I was told a female cousin may be my sister. We are both willing to check this out but are uncertain whether a DNA test would be conclusive. Is there any way to determine if we are siblings?—P.W., Helper, Utah

We assume you suspect your cousin is your half-sister, i.e., the daughter of your father and your aunt. Assuming you are closely related (your family may have more secrets than you realize), it will be difficult if not impossible to differentiate between the DNA you share as cousins and the DNA you would share as siblings. However, according to Michael Baird, lab director of the DNA Diagnostics Center (800-613-5768 or dnacenter.com), which specializes in paternity testing, if you have any

genetic material left from your father, such as hair, a lab may be able to determine if your cousin is your father’s daughter.

Your accepting attitude in the past few months toward straight men who are attracted to transsexuals makes me breathe a sigh of relief. How can I bring up this desire with my girlfriend without freaking her out?—C.W., Chicago, Illinois

While we always encourage people to be open-minded, we suspect the only way this revelation won’t prompt a freak-out is if your girlfriend used to be a man. On second thought, if that’s the case, she might freak out even more. Good luck.

When a reader asked in March how to get the most out of his daily orgasm while watching online porn, you replied, “That’s easy. Masturbate once a month.” Why didn’t you suggest he explore his prostate with a sex toy? Many guys find that leads to intense orgasms.—S.D., Chicago, Illinois

That’s true, but how will he move his mouse?

I would tell that guy to lie on the floor, bend his legs over his head while keeping his toes and knees off the floor, and then stroke his cock while trying to hit himself in the face when he comes. Not only will this exercise his abdominal muscles, it’s difficult enough to prevent him from masturbating as often. It also causes more guilt and shame if he’s caught, which may provide further discouragement.—A.G., Brooklyn, New York

With that image in our head we’re feeling discouraged about sex in general.

Your advice to the dissatisfied daily masturbator is the worst I have ever read, especially since studies have shown that frequent orgasms prevent prostate cancer. For the sake of all men who read the Advisor, admit you are wrong. No matter what happens in a day, a man can have at least one satisfying moment every 24 hours.—T.C., Jackson, Michigan

Our response was given in the spirit of the reply provided in this space years ago to a woman who asked how to make her wedding night with her live-in boyfriend as memorable as possible. We suggested she not have sex with him for three months before the ceremony while reminding him daily what she had planned. (One reader sent a two-word critique: “You bastard!”) If this guy has the willpower to go from once a day to once a month, which we doubt, the resulting climax will set off car alarms. By the way, scientists reported in March that frequent orgasms as a preventive for prostate cancer appear to benefit only men 50 and older. For younger men they are associated with an increased risk, perhaps because the hornier you are, the higher your levels of testosterone, which may help tumors grow more quickly. More research is needed. In the meantime we recommend everyone, male and female, keep at it.

A reader wrote in March asking how to introduce his curious six-year-old to “tasteful nudes of many body types”

since he didn’t feel PLAYBOY fit the bill. I recall looking at the magazine when I was six, admiring the beautiful women. I also recall my parents catching me. They reassured me there’s nothing wrong with being curious about the human body and said if I had questions to let them know. When I did have questions I felt comfortable going to them. Years later, in my teens, when I stumbled across their stash of raunchier porn, I thought, I’d much rather meet a PLAYBOY girl. Still true today.—T.D., Chicago Ridge, Illinois

Aside from hiding their hard-core porn, your parents seem to have done pretty well.

In March a reader suggested ways to ask wedding guests for money instead of gifts. You quipped, “The easy cash makes us want to get married a few more times.” But isn’t it customary not to give anything to folks getting married for the second (or third) time, particularly if you sent a gift in celebration of the first try?—M.S., Rehoboth Beach, Delaware

If you are invited to a wedding, always bring a generous gift. There is no ex factor.

When I party and can’t get an erection, I find myself still trying to get off. Even though my penis stays flaccid, I manage to climax. Is it healthy to ejaculate while soft?—F.F., Trenton, New Jersey

In some ways booze is a version of hell—it makes you horny and impotent. But as you’ve found, you can cheat the devil. Erection, orgasm and ejaculation are separate physiological functions, which is why it’s possible to ejaculate without an erection (such as during a wet dream) or have an orgasm without ejaculating (the semen goes into your bladder to be dispelled later). Although we admire your persistence, it’s not healthy to consistently drink so much that you can’t get hard.

My girlfriend was engaged a few years ago and purchased a wedding dress. The marriage did not happen, but she still has the unaltered dress. Should we decide to tie the knot, her plan is to wear it at our wedding. I feel weird about that, but she says she loves the dress, and it was expensive. Am I off base to be upset about starting a new life together with such a big symbol of a previous relationship?—D.J., Burlington, Vermont

A wedding dress isn’t a symbol of anything unless it’s worn at a wedding.

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*, 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611, or send e-mail by visiting our website at playboyadvisor.com. Our greatest-hits collection, *Dear Playboy Advisor*, is available in bookstores and online.



PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: SHIA LABEOUF

A candid conversation with the outspoken actor about his clashes with the law, sex on the set, his hippie childhood and how he became an unlikely action star

Radical honesty is not a trait most young Hollywood actors possess. Between studio expectations, the muzzle of publicists and ego-driven proclivities to appear happy and in control, the likelihood of a completely candid answer to, say, "How are you?" or "Is there truth to the rumor of..." is basically nil.

Not so with Shia LaBeouf, an actor seemingly unafraid to present himself as human, even with a gargantuan summer blockbuster like *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* to promote. Partly, it's that LaBeouf, who is only 22, manages to remain likeable no matter what he says or does off camera. This is the guy who once told a TV entertainment reporter that Lindsay Lohan had made "some scary decisions," adding, "If I'm perceived as someone like that, I'm going to be screwed."

In 2007, with three of his movies—*Surf's Up*, *Disturbia* and the original *Transformers*—on their way to grossing more than \$1 billion worldwide, LaBeouf was arrested at a Chicago Walgreens on criminal trespassing charges for refusing to leave the store at a security guard's request. Appearing on *The Late Show With David Letterman* to explain himself, LaBeouf admitted that he was "pretty messed up on the special magic sauce" and that he acted like a "moron." Four months later, on the eve of the release of *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, in which

LaBeouf plays Harrison Ford's son and cohort in adventure, the actor failed to show for a court appearance after being cited for unlawful smoking. That led to a warrant for his arrest. His latest outing run amok occurred midway through shooting *Transformers 2* last summer, when the pickup LaBeouf was driving reportedly ran a red light, flipped over and hit another car. Though supporters rushed to defend the actor ("He was not drunk," insisted *Transformers* director Michael Bay at the time), LaBeouf, who seriously injured his left hand, has spent much of the past year copping to his addiction problems while still eyeing new monster projects. His latest big move: a starring role in John Grisham's legal thriller *The Associate*, currently in production.

Wiry and baby faced with a tough-talking delivery that suggests deeply urban roots, Shia LaBeouf (pronounced "SHY-a la-BUFF") was born in L.A.'s gritty Echo Park neighborhood on June 11, 1986. He comes from a long line of misfits, showboats and troublemakers. One great-grandmother played piano in Lucky Luciano's casino. His maternal grandfather—also named Shia—was a Catskills comic who sidelined as a barber for the Mafia. His dad's parents were a Cajun Green Beret and a Jewish beatnik lesbian who cavorted with Allen Ginsberg. LaBeouf's own childhood was just as bohemian. Mom sold hippie jewelry out of their apartment. Dad was

a street clown (and frustrated actor) who once opened for the Doobie Brothers.

At the age of nine LaBeouf launched his career with raunchy stand-up routines at adult comedy clubs around L.A. That helped him land an agent, who got him an Oreo commercial and soon enough a role on the Disney TV series *Even Stevens*. His first movie, *Holes* (2003), made close to \$70 million. Cast that year at Steven Spielberg's request in the original *Transformers* movie, LaBeouf found himself on the cover of *Vanity Fair*, which dubbed him the next Tom Hanks, a moniker he has tried to live up to (or live down) ever since.

Contributing Editor David Hochman has spent time with LaBeouf over the years—inevitably trailed by paparazzi—and says, "Of all the celebrities I've interviewed in more than a decade, nobody's more open than Shia. There's no small talk. The conversation went deep as soon as I asked him about the injury from his accident."

PLAYBOY: How's your hand?

LABEOUF: Permanently fucked. I'll never be back to 100 percent or have full recovery. I can't zipper my zipper or button my shirt without extreme pain. But I chalk it up as my own shit. These things had to happen. This accident is what I needed in my life. I'm not in control. For the first time, I can admit that and know that. I'm



"Being a public asshole is not fun. It sucks. And I'm somebody who doesn't just roll with these things. These past few months I've experience a lot of self-hatred, a lot of blatant insanity, a lot of thinking about all kinds of shit."



"I'm not going to lie to you; the acting I do in these movies isn't *The Elephant Man* or anything. These are massive fucking movies, and my job is to be the anchor in the chaos. Amazing for a little Jew from Echo Park, isn't it?"



"I grew up with a bunch of hippies, and marijuana was always around. I like pot. It has never been a monster for me. But I definitely saw from a very young age what drugs can do to you. Watching my dad wasn't fun."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIZUNO

a fallible individual, and the hand is like a tattoo that says MISTAKE. It's something I'll have to live with for the rest of my life.

PLAYBOY: You sound like a changed man.

LABEOUF: My attitude is different. It was a wake-up call. This shit's not fun. Being a public asshole is not fun. Being a gimp for months and months is not fun. Losing your driver's license—it sucks. And I'm somebody who doesn't just roll with these things. These past few months I've experienced a lot of self-hatred, a lot of blatant insanity, a lot of thinking about all kinds of shit.

PLAYBOY: How much were you drinking that night?

LABEOUF: I had a whiskey and three beers. It's a good amount of alcohol. It's enough to be impaired, for sure. I'm not going to start speaking on law stuff now and corner myself, but the fact that I ever got into the car was a mistake. What I remember of the accident is my finger lying in the street, a fireman putting me into an ambulance and my going into surgery. That's it.

PLAYBOY: Your finger was lying in the street?

LABEOUF: A piece of it, yeah. My hand got jammed under the car, and a slice of the finger came off. So I just picked it up and showed it to the fireman. A chunk of my hand. It was really insane-looking. So when people ask why I refused to take the Breathalyzer, it's that I wasn't exactly in a conversing kind of mode. No time to sit there and play detective, guys. The firemen were like, "Get this dude to a hospital."

PLAYBOY: Have you quit drinking?

LABEOUF: To say I haven't had a drink is not true. I've had drinks, but it has been a leveling-out process. It's coming to terms with my urges and limitations. I have an addictive tinge, and it's in my family. My father's father drank himself to death. He was a Green Beret, a respected military man, but when he came home he had no interest in life and just drank. My family has been in AA for a while. A lot of close friends around me are in AA, and I'm in AA now too. It's helping me. It may not work tomorrow, but if I get the urge to drink, I call a friend or go to a meeting. Am I an alcoholic? I may not be. I don't know. But I also know that in the situation I'm in, with temptations what they are, I have no room for alcohol in my life. I'm also 22. If I were in college, this kind of behavior would be tolerated. There would be other 22-year-olds trying to figure out shit the way I am. But because I'm in the public eye, I have to shut down the chaos completely or I'll be fucked. I should be clear, though. Drinking is not my problem. Being uncomfortable is my problem. Insecurities are my problem. Fear is my problem. Those are my problems.

PLAYBOY: So many young actors, especially former child stars, screw up. With all the money, all the people invested in your success, all the resources available, why does it still happen?

LABEOUF: It's not like there's a ramp-up period. There's no simmering point, when people can just intervene and say, "No!



"MEGAN FOX IS A BEAUTIFUL, INTELLIGENT GIRL, AND WHEN YOU MAKE A MOVIE WITH SOMEONE LIKE THAT, YOU FEEL THINGS. HOW CAN YOU NOT? YOU'RE HUMAN," LABEOUF SAYS.

Wait! Don't do that." Shit happens, and it happens quickly. In my case *Indiana Jones* had just been released to the biggest box-office numbers Steven Spielberg had ever experienced. You just get the call from Steven, saying, "Hey, it's the biggest thing financially I've ever been involved in." And the next day, literally the next day, you're on your hands and knees looking for a piece of your hand. When was somebody supposed to jump in and stop me?

PLAYBOY: Spielberg has done so much to help your career. Do you worry you've disappointed him?

LABEOUF: Oh God, yeah. Shit, yeah. He took me under his cape and said, "Okay, let's fly." The 10 years I worked in the industry before I met him don't really count. To me it was a 10-year wait to meet him, and then my career began. And what did I do to the respect he gave me? I spit on it. What I can say about Steven, though, is that he's not a judgmental dude. He remains faithful and very much a mentor. He calls to check in. Partly, he's checking on his investment, I realize, but he's also checking in as a friend, as a concerned adult. Harrison Ford calls too. Talking to him is always helpful because it's almost like talking to John Wayne. "Muscle up and get through it," he'll say, and coming from him it's not just some cowboy-lingo shit. It's like medicine for me. Probably the best advice I got this year was from Harvey Weinstein. I don't even know the guy, but he came up to me at an event recently. To me he's one of the figureheads, one of the Marvel comic-book characters of Hollywood, and he said, "Don't forget to be young, man." I took that to mean you can beat yourself up all you want, but it's okay. You make mistakes. Move on.

PLAYBOY: You managed to get *Transformers 2* done. How is the sequel different from the original?

LABEOUF: It's bigger. Fuck, is this movie big! We were the first movie to film at Wadi Rum in Jordan since *Lawrence of Arabia*. The first movie ever to shoot with actors on the Pyramids. And we got something like five Guinness records for making this film, including one for the biggest explosion with an actor in it in the history of cinema.

PLAYBOY: Let us guess. You were the actor?

LABEOUF: Yeah. Amazing for a little Jew from Echo Park, isn't it? It's outrageous. Leave it to Michael Bay to blow shit up with 500 gallons of gasoline. The big explosion was so loud, I felt my organs shake. The heat totally bakes you. Trees were splintering and then started exploding. There's another scene where I have to run down a hill through a forest with a camera cruising behind me at 30 miles an hour. I'm supposed to hit a mark so the camera can whiz over my head. But if I somehow miss the fucking mark, this big monster camera that weighs as much as a car slams me in the head and I'm fucking toast. But I survived.

PLAYBOY: What's the secret to acting opposite a Transformer? Aren't those robots all added later via computer-generated imagery?

LABEOUF: Yeah. Mostly it's just my trying to look fucking terrified. It's a ridiculous situation. You have to believe there's really a robot the size of a building about to chomp your ass. But Michael makes it easy. He'll blow things up for no reason, just to get a reaction. The guy's a maniac. But I'm not going to lie to you; the acting I do in these movies isn't *The Elephant Man* or anything. I'm just a flag holder, a sign carrier. *Transformers*, *Disturbia*, *Eagle Eye*—these are massive fucking movies, and my job is somehow to be the anchor in the chaos. It's not my place to work some kind of Turkish accent or worry if

I'm conveying some bullshit actory vibe with a twitch of my left eyebrow.

PLAYBOY: Does that get frustrating?

LABEOUF: Sure, I'd sometimes rather be cooking pancakes with Dustin Hoffman in a movie like *Kramer vs. Kramer*. Or playing Jake LaMotta. It just hasn't worked out that way. I'm not going to complain. My career has been unbelievably fucking amazing. But I don't know what the fuck I'm doing. People think there's some grand-strategy-plan shit. I just get called on to do these movies, so I do them. I'm a hired fucking gun, and I feel like the luckiest guy in the world to get the roles I get.

PLAYBOY: Do you see yourself as part of an emerging new generation of actors?

LABEOUF: I don't see it as that, but there's so much talent out there right now. More than in the generation before, if you ask me. The group breaking now is raging: Emile Hirsch, Jamie Bell, Joseph Cross from *Running With Scissors*, Joseph Gordon-Levitt. These will be the guys ruling Hollywood. Or a guy like Ben Foster from *Flash Forward*. Pound for pound, he's the best actor under 30. Then there are the women: Ellen Page, Evan Rachel Wood, Camilla Bell, Kristen Stewart from *Twilight*. The best of the bunch is Amber Tamblyn, from *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* movies. She may be better than all the dudes. What's funny is my role has become "physical action guy." I was never really the most masculine dude, and here I am at the center of these grand fucking spectacles. I think it's good for me. It cranks up the testosterone. The problem is it can be hard to turn that shit off when the movie's done.

PLAYBOY: And that's when you get into trouble?

LABEOUF: When I'm not working, I go crazy. Decompression is hard on a movie like *Transformers*. Think about it, man. For months at a time, every day, every night, you're the ringmaster of the biggest circus on earth. You get to play with the biggest toys. You get to smash things together at the highest speeds. I've always been happiest on set. It's the one place I'm allowed to do whatever I want to do. When action is called, it's complete freedom. It's like flying. Just like flying. But then suddenly you're in life mode. When you're not working, that's when the shit starts flying. You're out in the world, but you're still feeling invincible. The trouble is there's no stunt man around off the set. There's no pyro team. Shit blows up in your life, and there's nobody there to put it out. I didn't have the most grounded childhood, so it's hard to put boundaries in place as an adult sometimes. You feel your way through.

PLAYBOY: Can you describe the apartment in Echo Park where you grew up? What did it look like?

LABEOUF: It was in a dilapidated pink building. We lived on the third floor with another family. It was a one-bedroom place. One bathroom. I lived in the back room with another kid. My mom and dad lived



THE WONDER EARS

We owe the Disney Channel much thanks—and blame

The channel that gave the world *High School Musical* has much to account for—especially its alumni list, which includes Shia LaBeouf of *Even Stevens*. Some examples. **The Diva: CHRISTINA AGUILERA** Yes, her *Mickey Mouse Club* co-stars actually called her the Diva; she went on to win three Grammys. **Normal Boy: RYAN GOSLING** "Disney said, 'We're gonna kick you off the show if you say anything sexual again,'" he recalls. "I was fucking 12. All I cared about was sex." **Least Likely to Turn Into a Guy's Guy: JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE** Girls swooned for JT after he joined 'N Sync post *MMC*, and now he's one of the coolest dudes in Hollywood—and the best *Saturday Night Live* guest host ever. **Rock and Roller Coaster: BRITNEY SPEARS** Her career after *MMC*: biggest pop star on the planet, marriages, kids, Grammy, going berserk, shaving head and, now, hot again. **The Lesser Paris: HILARY DUFF** She gained fame for her Disney show *Lizzie McGuire* but has since stayed in the tabloids for no reason at all. —Rocky Rakovic



in the living room. They had a factory in the kitchen where my mom made jewelry she sold on the streets. My dad was working as a clown at the time, so clown makeup and clown outfits were all over the place. There was a chicken living in the apartment. Sometimes I'd walk into the bathroom and see my dad doing this *Dances With Wolves* Zen kind of chicken dance; he'd be trying to get the chicken to get all comfy with him. So we had that. And a Sno-Cone machine. Dad would put on the makeup and sell Sno-Cones and hot dogs around the neighborhood. We were broke as shit. But it wasn't just the lack of money. It was an unusual environment. My parents were strange people with a very strange relationship. We definitely weren't driving a station wagon and going to soccer practice.

PLAYBOY: What did your mom do that was strange?

LABEOUF: The nudity was weird, especially when her friends came over. All of them would just be naked around the house. That was strange for me, and it was really bizarre when my friends were there. You've got your little buds over, and Mom's, like, playing naked connect the dots or whatever. She's in the middle of goddess-group time, where it's literally a bunch of naked women tracing auras around one another's bodies with incense and then sitting together and humming for prolonged periods of time.

PLAYBOY: What was the situation with drugs when you were growing up?

LABEOUF: They were around. I grew up with a bunch of hippies, and marijuana was always around. Pot was never looked at as a negative thing. I could smoke it on holidays with my parents, and we were all good. I like pot. It has never been a monster for me. I can put limits on it. But I definitely saw from a very young age what drugs can do to you. Watching my dad wasn't fun. When I was younger, he would be in the hospital and I couldn't see him because he was coming down off his shit and couldn't cope.

PLAYBOY: What was he using?

LABEOUF: I was never 100 percent sure but pretty much anything. I remember seeing him do heroin two or three times, though I didn't know it was heroin at the time. He just looked like a doctor. You know, kids play doctor and pretend to give one another injections. I thought, He's just messing around or being creative. He would get high and draw. But it was that kind of environment. Kids came over to my house so they could do all the things they couldn't get away with at home. Playing with fireworks. Staying up all night.

PLAYBOY: Did you ever wish you had parents who were more normal?

LABEOUF: Not really. Normal is boring. The shit we were doing felt much more fun and alive than that. Instead of going to Chuck E. Cheese, my mom would take me and my friends to her ashram. So you'd have a bunch of zoned-out hippies and six little six-year-old dudes playing Nerf football.

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All the hippies were blissing out, and the kids were jacked up on candy. You're six years old, and you're freaking out on as many M&M's and Gummi Bears as you can ingest. I had the freedom to do whatever the fuck I wanted, and when you're a kid, that seems cool. It was anything goes.

PLAYBOY: What kind of trouble did you get into?

LABEOUF: I was kicked out of every school I went to. I was always a smart-mouthed kid, and I did some ballsy stuff from a young age. I was kicked out of Pinewood Elementary for stealing the tetherball and taking it home. At 32nd Street Middle School I was expelled for cursing. Because I hung around with all these hippies at home, I knew a bunch of curse words none of the other kids did. I remember making fun of one of the teachers. He had this nasty beard, and I told him, "You've got a huge pubic forest on your face." We were eight or nine years old, and no kid in class knew what *pubic* meant.

PLAYBOY: That sort of language helped you break into show business. Can you give us a taste of your routine as a nine-year-old stand-up comic?

LABEOUF: I would start off sounding like a timid child. Maybe I'd tell a knock-knock joke. It was an unusual set: When you have a nine-year-old performing at a club, you can't serve alcohol, so all the drinks would be cleared for the five minutes I was up there. People weren't used to seeing a kid in a situation like that, so they'd applaud politely and think I was cute. But again, I would hook them with bullshit jokes. "What kind of monkey flies? A hot-air baboon." Then suddenly I'd go, "All right, motherfuckers, now I'm really going to tell you jokes." Their faces would just drop. It was like watching a bipolar child up there. Or the *Exorcist* kid. It was as if somebody else were speaking for me, and I was the vessel. "So I walked in on my mom and dad fucking the other night." And it would just get nastier and nastier. Shit jokes, cunt jokes, really, really dark material. My dad wrote most of it. And it was coming out of this kid with a bowl haircut in corduroy OshKosh B'Gosh. People would laugh, but I think they were more stunned and nervous than amused.

PLAYBOY: So you went from telling dirty jokes onstage to starring in *Even Stevens*, a teen comedy series for Disney. Was it difficult to control your mouth?

LABEOUF: It was tough, especially because *Even Stevens* required a ton of ad-libbing, so the "fucks" would fly after a few takes. Disney was such a wholesome place. It was full of clean-cut young people, all these kids from musical-theater backgrounds who wanted to be straight-up song-and-dance performers. And here I was—the only white kid in his school, living in the ghetto, my parents were hippies—so I'm instantly the doesn't-fit-in-here guy. But you know, you're 10 hours in and everybody's getting tired on set, so you're like, All right, you gotta boost morale. So this other actor, A.J.

Trauth, and I would do insane things. We'd be working on scenes in the school, and we'd decide, "Hey, let's strip down to our bare asses and streak down the hallway." Somewhere in the Disney vaults there's video footage with my penis in it.

PLAYBOY: Can you explain why *Even Stevens*, a show for teens, became popular among college kids?

LABEOUF: They were the majority of our audience, actually. I think it's because there were inside jokes younger kids weren't getting but older ones were. At the time, we figured even the Disney executives weren't getting them. Our coach's name on the show was coach Tugnut. Nobody ever questioned it. Principal Wexler was this extremely feminine, queeny type—very extreme, very touchy with the kids. In one episode, another character is trying to get closer to her dad because they've been apart for so long. But it has this weird incestuous edge. It wasn't supposed to be that strange a show, but it was.

PLAYBOY: What was it like going through puberty on the set of *Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle*?

LABEOUF: Holy fucking Christ! Really disgusting if I get into elaborate details. I remember my trailer was set up in such a way that Cameron Diaz's and Lucy Liu's trailers were visible through my window, through this little shade I had. I'd put down the blackout shade just enough to have my eye peeping through and get them in my crosses. I'd be inside totally going at it. Just the thought of them changing in their trailers was enough to get me off. Or I would steal Polaroids from the wardrobe people. I'd see a hot Polaroid of Drew Barrymore and go, "Hey, that's a cool picture. Can I have it?" And then I'd go into my trailer for a while. Drew Barrymore was the first crush I ever had. That movie *Babes in Toyland*—she was just so spunky. You never watched her and felt like shit afterward. Having her around was too much for me. I had a lot of time with myself on that set.

PLAYBOY: Did your co-stars know you were in heat?

LABEOUF: Everybody knew. The girls knew, definitely. First of all, I'm a pretty forward guy. I'd tell them flat out, "I'm infatuated." They knew they were all my fantasy girls. Lucy Liu especially would play with me. She'd play with my mind. I was deep in puberty at this point. I'm raging. Hormones are flying off me. You could smell it. We'd all be doing a scene in Bosley's office, and Lucy would shift in her seat in a way that would let me see a little too much thigh, or she'd cross her legs or do that torso twist that was just a little bit too much. You know what the fuck I'm talking about. Bernie Mac understood what I was going through, and he'd look at me like, "Yeah, that's right. You just saw that shit." I mean, what are you supposed to do? You're 14, 15 years old, and you've got the fucking sexiest woman in the world sitting across from you, giving you the love. It was torture. But the best part was hanging out

with Bernie. He was teaching me how to be a card shark. Every time he would take out the cards, Lucy would wander over because she wanted to learn too. It quickly became apparent to me that being around Bernie meant being around Lucy, so needless to say, Bernie and I became very tight buds. I miss the guy. I really do.

PLAYBOY: How are women treating you these days, by the way?

LABEOUF: Great. Amazing. Unbelievable. It's cool to be 22 and famous. You go to a party and it's a bit of an all-you-can-eat buffet. It's great, but it's strange. Going out in public, to an event or whatever, there's this third-person thing that happens. Like when we were in Cannes for the premiere of *Indiana Jones*. The whole world had been waiting for the sequel to come out, and you're there with the squadron—the kill squad, I used to call it—Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, Harrison Ford. And me. I'm like the water boy, but somehow the magic rubs off and you find yourself at a party with beautiful women who want to get with you, and there are all kinds of people you can't believe you're seeing. Mick Jagger's there. Bono's there. Elton John's there. "Oh hi, Will." Will Smith! And in those moments I cease to be just Shia LaBeouf. It's not just me. It's Shia, this representative dude. And this representative dude gets a lot of attention. It's that Shia who gets the women rushing over. That can really fuck with your head. Oh, absolutely, it's exciting. It's intoxicating. But it's not real. That's not to say there aren't advantages to it or I haven't enjoyed myself. And certainly when you're with your boys, who are not normally approach artists, let's just say I make it very simple for them to be around women these days.

PLAYBOY: Share with us the dream. What's it like to have women throw themselves at you?

LABEOUF: I remember a night not long after *Disturbia* came out. That's when the shit really hit. *Disturbia* had been number one for weeks, and we were filming *Transformers*. Before that, nobody really cared who I was. But suddenly there was a new energy around me. My phone was ringing like crazy. Friends from the past were calling, girlfriends from yesteryear, girlfriends from, you know, never. [laughs] Your whole world bubbles up. It's a volcano! One night up at the top of the Argyle Hotel, in Hollywood, I wasn't even 18 years old, but the things that were available in terms of astonishing temptations. Jesus! It's three in the morning, and you're looking at a Jacuzzi full of the most insanely beautiful women you've ever seen, and it's pretty much whatever you want. My problem was I wasn't very good at closing the deal in those days.

PLAYBOY: Has that skill improved?

LABEOUF: Yes. Yes, most definitely. It changed after I had sex for the first time.

PLAYBOY: When did that happen?

LABEOUF: I was 18. That night was pretty

hysterical, actually. For some reason, I was trying to portray myself as a man who had done it many times in the past. I didn't tell the girl I was a virgin. I was all, "Don't worry, babe. I'm gonna handle it tonight," and, you know, "We're going to work this out. And the more we have sex, the more comfortable it'll become." And duh-duh-duh-duh. All this bullshit. And meanwhile I was shaking in my boots.

PLAYBOY: What happened next?

LABEOUF: She comes up to my hotel room in Montreal, and I'm pretending to be a stud. I was like, "Oh yeah, go lie down over there." She went and laid down. Getting naked was very strange. It was the first time I'd been naked in the light, in front of a girl, with no hiding place. It was like, *boom*, here I am. That was very nerve-racking.

PLAYBOY: How did it go?

LABEOUF: It became apparent pretty quickly that I didn't know what the fuck I was doing. Somewhere in her mind she had to know. I remember laying her on the bed and putting a pillow underneath her because I had seen that in a porn movie. I didn't know why they did it; I just figured you put a pillow under her hips to raise her up. My dad had told me the same thing. By the time you get to 18, all this mental preparation has gone into losing your virginity. Plus, what a pro thing to do, right? [laughs] So I got her on the pillow, which put her at a weird angle where I couldn't get in correctly. I'm not extremely well-endowed like some nine-inch superhero, and clearly this wasn't the move to do. I couldn't get my dick in, or it kept slipping out. Fortunately, she ended up being my girlfriend for three years, so we had time to work it out. We had a lot of sex and would read the Kama Sutra together and do the wildest shit you do when you're 18 and figuring out how to have sex with all four feet off the ground or some shit. The more you have sex, the more you learn about what works and what doesn't. The best sex is when you can be totally unself-conscious and try things.

PLAYBOY: Like what?

LABEOUF: Like playing with tempo.

PLAYBOY: You mean alternating between fast and slow sex?

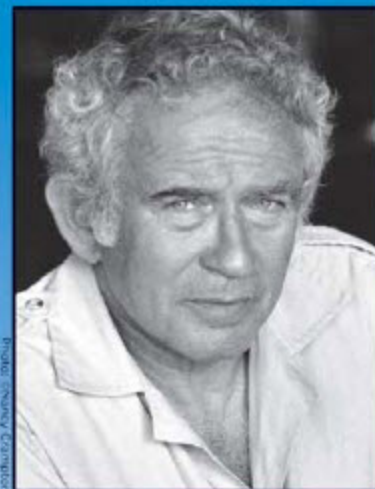
LABEOUF: Maybe. Or how about extraordinarily slow sex? Like just staying in there. And from there do a major tempo shift and really go at it. The key is to be open to experimentation and to create an atmosphere that's safe and beautiful. Trust is so important in that kind of situation.

PLAYBOY: Is it harder to trust women now that you're famous?

LABEOUF: Impossible. Once you're famous or have a lot of money, women will do practically anything to get close to you. I hear stories about companies paying women to have sex with guys just to get a story for their magazine or website. Whether that's true or not, you do start looking at women like, Wait a minute. And then you have that skeptical 10 seconds after you meet someone, which kills all human

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interaction. You know, trying to be close to somebody—it's pretty tough. There are the women who know exactly who I am but pretend they don't. The women who know exactly who I am but act jaded to seem cool. There are the women who come right out and say, "Do you want to get with me?" But those little sentences always start to surface: "I'm trying to get into the business," "I'd love to be in one of your movies." Everybody wants something from you, so it's confusing. At this point I don't think I could ever randomly meet a woman and trust it completely.

PLAYBOY: What's your policy on dating your co-stars?

LABEOUF: I know there's the "don't shit where you eat" type of thing, but the problem is, movie sets are filled with tons of attractive people. You know, you're making *Transformers* with someone like Megan Fox, and she's a very attractive girl. Very attractive. [Laughs] And she's a very close friend. But it hasn't been a romantic thing, because you're trying to respect the work environment. You don't push anything. And with sex and romance, things can become so convoluted so fast. On a big movie like that you're playing with the devil. You have to weigh the risk-reward factor. Yes, the reward of being with Megan Fox would outweigh the risk, but it also becomes a risk for everyone else. You don't know what could happen. We could be shooting, and the relationship is suddenly on the rocks and then what? So we just never ever did anything about it. We were very smart. We're attracted to each other, and I think you can see that in our scenes together. It's very real and tangible, and you can tell something exists. But we never push it past that. It would also be such a high-profile relationship that I'm not sure it would be enjoyable for us.

PLAYBOY: Fox recently broke off her engagement to actor Brian Austin Green. Does that give you pause?

LABEOUF: [Laughs] Listen, I'm going to know the girl forever. She's a beautiful, intelligent girl, and when you make a movie with someone like that, who is around you all the time, you feel things. How can you not? You're human. I know a relationship between us isn't an option right now for a variety of reasons, and that's perfectly fine. I get to kiss her in the fantasy world, and that's okay too.

PLAYBOY: There were rumors about your dating Rihanna a while back. What's the truth on that?

LABEOUF: I attempted to. I was infatuated and made a few phone calls. She passed her number to a stylist friend of mine. I heard she was trying to get in contact with me, and I was, like, Really? Rihanna? It was baffling to me. She's the sexiest pop star in the world, so it was outrageous to me. I remember I was shooting *Indy* in Hawaii at the time and filming a sword fight when I got the message. I said to myself, Can this be my life? I kept telling my friends, "Dudes! I have Rihanna's number." They said, "Are

you kidding?" And I said, "No, I can text her right now." So I texted Rihanna, and we arranged to have dinner.

PLAYBOY: How did it go?

LABEOUF: It never got beyond one date. The spark wasn't there. We weren't passionate about each other in that way, so we remain friends. It's funny how you can fall for an image that is projected and then discover how different the person is from who you thought they would be. I think we both experienced that.

PLAYBOY: How did you feel when Rihanna was having problems with Chris Brown earlier this year?

LABEOUF: It's not my place to be involved in that, but yeah, that sucked. Of course it's painful and not just because she's a friend. For someone who loves women and grew up with women the way I did, it's hard to watch when someone isn't being treated right. But I don't like to comment when shit goes down with celebrities, because I used to be the guy who shit on people for getting into trouble. Rihanna's a beautiful, sexy girl, and let's leave it at that.

PLAYBOY: Who else do you find sexy?

LABEOUF: Oh, let's see. So many. Diane

I'm not saying I'm a born-again. I'm not DMX. I'm talking about opening doors to areas I have been closed off to. Thinking about things like prayer, like having faith.

Lane is hot. Ashley Judd. They're always sexy to me. I watched *Total Recall* recently, and Sharon Stone is unbelievable in that movie. It's a different kind of sexy, though. The sexy like Sharon Stone in *Total Recall* is kick-your-ass-give-you-sex-and-be-nice-to-you sexy. But then there's the sexy of a Natalie Portman or an Anne Hathaway, who are just perfection embodied. Majestic goddesses. For me, it switches all the time. Sometimes I'm interested in somebody at the Spearmint Rhino strip club, and sometimes I go to the library. I'm all over the place. Probably the sexiest woman I know is my mother. She's an ethereal angel. Nobody looks like that woman. If I could meet my mother and marry her, I would. I would be with my mother now, if she weren't my mother, as sick as that sounds.

PLAYBOY: Interesting. By the way, do you ever think about getting into therapy?

LABEOUF: [Laughs] No. I don't know why. I just don't think I'm someone who needs to analyze every move I make. For me, I look at the shit I do and think, Okay, clearly this didn't work, but 70 percent of it is working, so we're still good. I fear a therapy situation would have me boxed into a certain type

of behavior—that there's good and there's bad, and I'm one way or the other. I like the ups and downs. I like running from extreme to extreme. I'm 22. I don't need to have everything figured out at this point.

PLAYBOY: If you could erase something you've done, what would it be?

LABEOUF: I don't think I would.

PLAYBOY: What about the night you were arrested in Walgreens?

LABEOUF: No, man. I can't take it back. I learned shit from all that. Walgreens was—I don't know what it was, actually. But in my mind Walgreens was a joke. To me it was hysterical. I was wasted out of my mind. Most of the problems in my personal life happened when I was intoxicated in some way. But when I'm drunk, my mind stops, and it stopped that night. I was just being an idiot. I was wasted and I wanted to buy cigarettes, and I kept going back into the store even though the security dude had asked me to leave.

PLAYBOY: When you feel out of control, does anything settle you down?

LABEOUF: Besides work? I'll talk to my mom. My relationship with my parents is good these days. Mom will just let me talk and make me deal with the silences. That helps. And Dad, you know, he has his issues. He sits in the garage, smokes weed, hangs out, relaxes, chills, paints. He's big into motorcycles. But we talk, we laugh. I'll tell you, the man has golden sperm. He got lucky having me as a kid, and he knows it. He appreciates that. But beyond that, my biggest comfort right now is soul-searching. As cheesy as fuck as that sounds, religion has been interesting to me lately. Even though I'm Jewish and had a bar mitzvah, it's something I've never really looked at, never really put much behind. I've been propelled by self-motivation. But faith is something else.

PLAYBOY: Did you have a come-to-Jesus moment?

LABEOUF: No, no. Look, I'm not saying I'm a born-again. I'm not DMX. You won't see me coming out with a preacher film. I'm talking about opening doors to areas I have been closed off to. Thinking about things like prayer, like having faith that life will work out. I never really had much faith as a kid. Much of what I'm dealing with now is learning to be comfortable with myself and where I'm headed. That requires me to sit and be with myself—without people around, without my head messed up on something. I'm not talking about meditation. Just being quiet with myself. The hardest thing in the world is being comfortable with myself.

PLAYBOY: What went through your head when Heath Ledger killed himself? Do you understand the mind of a man like that?

LABEOUF: I understand where that guy was. I never had those thoughts, but after you get over the initial reaction people in my age group had—which was that we'd lost one of the pillars, we'd lost the Guy—you start to understand the white-

(concluded on page 110)



THE ONLY CORNERS WE CUT ARE ON THE PACK.

THERE'S NO REAL PLEASURE IN TAKING SHORTCUTS. FOR DAVIDOFF CIGARETTES, OUR UNCOMPROMISING ATTITUDE STARTS FROM THE GROUND UP WHERE CAREFULLY SELECTED TOBACCO PLANTS PROVIDE ONLY THE HIGHEST-GRADE LEAVES FOR OUR DEEPLY RICH AND SATISFYING BLEND. SUPERIOR PAPER IS SELECTED FOR A SMOOTHER, MORE EVEN BURN, WHILE OUR WORLD-RENOUNDED BEVELED-EDGE PACK IS MADE TO PROTECT THE UNIQUELY CRAFTED CIGARETTES INSIDE. SOME MIGHT SAY THIS IS PURE INDULGENCE.

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CIGARETTES

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Quitting Smoking
Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks to Your Health.





Hot. Digital. Sexual. Underground.

THREESOMES, FOURSOMES AND MORESOMES ARE JUST A TEXT MESSAGE AWAY FOR REAL-LIFE SWINGERS INDULGING IN HIGH-SPEED CONNECTIONS

The man—or perhaps woman—dressed all in black and wearing a disturbingly realistic leather horse's head sits apparently despondent (given the mask, it's hard to tell, but his or her body is slumped) on a bench across from the stage where three bare-breasted women with candles taped to their nipples pose holding...are they dildos? The lighting is dim, and they are obscured by naked and half-naked dancing bodies. Through a doorway in the cavernous club—Passive Arts Studios near LAX in Los Angeles—Larry, a well-known actor, can see a man dressed like Johnny Depp in *Pirates of the Caribbean* using an Indiana Jones bullwhip on a spread-eagled naked woman. When Larry maneuvers through the crowd of perhaps 200 at the annual DomCon—Domination Convention—Fetish Ball, he glimpses your average six-and-a-half-foot-tall transvestite dominatrix, as well as a bent-over young man being

BY DAVID BLACK

sodomized by a woman wielding a butt plug the size of a sawed-off Louisville Slugger. A guy in his mid-70s—clearly the oldest in the group—in full leather regalia, handcuffs at his belt, whip under his arm, rocks his walker toward the unisex bathroom.

"Bet he's seen some things in his time," says a woman in a leather thong with studs through her nipples.

"You mean weirder than this?" asks a man in black slacks and a blue blazer.

"You have no idea," the woman says, grinning, and sashays away, headed into the labyrinth of rooms in the back of the club.

Two of the orgiasts who have joined Larry at the Fetish Ball come out of the bathroom. Betty, a blonde, and Veronica, a brunette, each take one of Larry's arms. Veronica's husband, Reggie, lags behind, scoping out a woman in a catsuit.

"Can you believe," says Betty, "someone in the bathroom line told us we didn't look like we belonged here?"

Both women are dressed for an evening at the Bar Marmont (casual cocktail dresses), though Veronica may pass muster at the Fetish Ball since she is wearing a long, not quite translucent white gown with nothing underneath.

But it isn't really their scene.

"No one's having any orgasms," Veronica says.

Larry takes a last look around the club and heads for the door, following Betty, Veronica and Reggie, who consider themselves a sexual trio. Betty comes to L.A. most weekends to play with Veronica and Reggie.

In the past few months, Larry has been involved in orgies with both Betty and Veronica, who are part of a vast sexual underground that's different from the erotic underground of the 1970s and 1980s, the era of Plato's Retreat and Sandstone. It's different in great part because of the influence of the Internet, which makes meeting easier and offers a larger pool of potential playmates.

On the way out Larry, Betty, Veronica and Reggie pass the smorgasbord, which is serving, among other dishes, meatballs in sauce.

"If there's a smorgasbord," a friend told Larry, "eat only prewrapped sandwiches—and avoid the mayonnaise."



A few months earlier, just before Christmas, at about 11:30 on a rainy winter Friday night in Los Angeles, Larry, in sweats and a T-shirt, got a phone call from Mercedes, a dancer he had recently met at a music-video shoot.

"What are you doing?" Mercedes asked.

"Nothing," Larry said. He'd just gotten home from a long day of working on a TV show. "You?"

"I'm at the Velvet Margarita," Mercedes said. "Can I come over?"

"Sure," Larry said. Why not?

They had dated a few times. Successfully.

"She's very sexual," Larry says about Mercedes. "She's 'All I want to do is fuck you. I don't want to cuddle. I don't want a boyfriend.' She has a boyfriend"—a minor celebrity—"and she's involved in a culture that is very sexually open." Larry grins. "Incredibly sexually open. Completely sexually open."

Mercedes is part of the Los Angeles Lifestyle, or swingers, scene. For her business she travels frequently and widely. She has contacts in the Lifestyle in most major cities. It's like being a member of a lodge, the Masons or the Elks: No matter where you go, all you have to do is signal your insider status and you're at home. If she visits a city where she doesn't know anyone, she can go on the Internet site she prefers, LifestyleLounge.com, and hook up with people who are into her scene: moderately kinky heterosexual and lesbian encounters.

Larry thought a night with Mercedes would be an uncomplicated way to unwind.

Uncomplicated?

Larry had no idea what he was in for.

"It was pouring rain," Larry says. "One of those five times a year it rains in L.A. A torrential downpour."

Larry lives in the hills, with a lot of cement

steps leading up to his front door. He heard *clack clack clack...* the sound of one...two...three sets of high heels approaching his place. Mercedes couldn't get the front door open.

"Larry," Mercedes explains, "is an obsessive door locker."

The worst rainstorm of the year. Mercedes pounded on the door. When Larry finally opened it, he saw Mercedes drenched, her blonde hair wet and pasted to her forehead and cheeks, in a black trench coat.

With another beautiful woman, Betty, also drenched, in a black trench coat and high heels.

And a beautiful Asian woman, Kathy, also drenched, in a black trench coat and high heels.

Their hair, before it was soaked, had been done up so they all looked like librarians.

Larry said, "Hi, hi, hi. Whatever is going on here?"

The three women came into his foyer, each pulling a rolling suitcase containing whatever she thought might come in handy during the night.

"Everyone came with her own toys," Larry explains. "Vibrators, dildos, this little vibrating handy thing. I don't know what it was. It looks like a computer mouse."

The Mouse, the Butterfly, the Rabbit, the Penguin—vibrators come with names that make them seem as innocuous as Disney cartoon characters.

Larry offered to take their coats.

"He was trying to be a gentleman," Mercedes explains.

She, Betty and Kathy got the giggles. They knew what the coats covered: Underneath they were wearing nothing but lingerie.

Larry says, "I was like, Why, I never! I do declare!"

But, Larry says, "I knew exactly what was going to happen." He grins. "Dreams do come true."

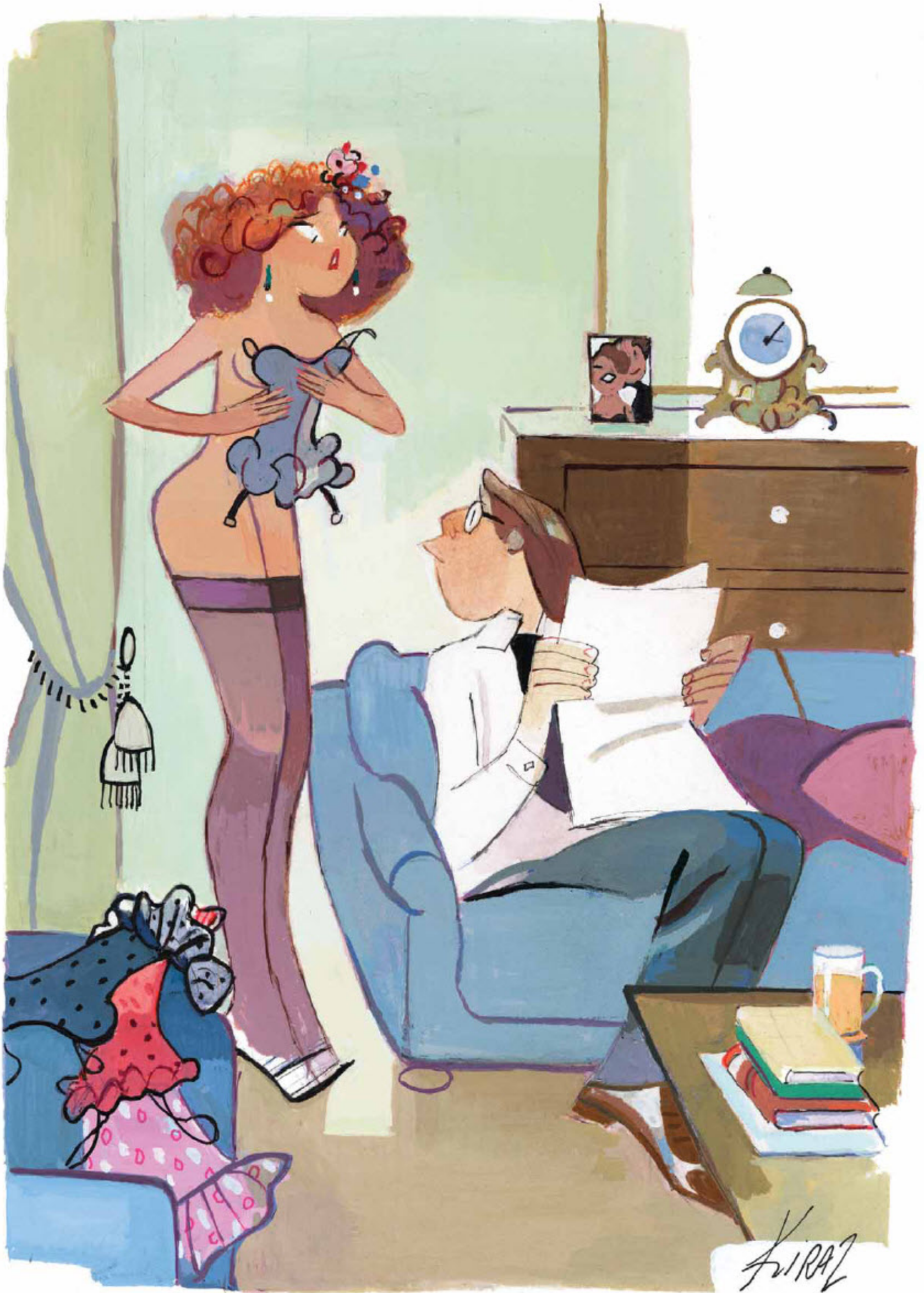
"Larry didn't miss a beat," Mercedes recalls.

His face registered no shock. No surprise.

"What did Bear Bryant say about scoring a touchdown?" Larry says. "Act like you've been there before."

Mercedes and her friends looked, Mercedes says, *(continued on page 111)*





"Which lingerie would you like me to wear for tonight's orgy?"

GOD BLESS AMERICA

SHE CAN DO A JOB ON A POPSICLE,
BUT WHEN IT COMES TO ACTING,
AMERICA OLIVO DOESN'T SUCK!

PHOTOGRAPHY
BY
TERRY
RICHARDSON

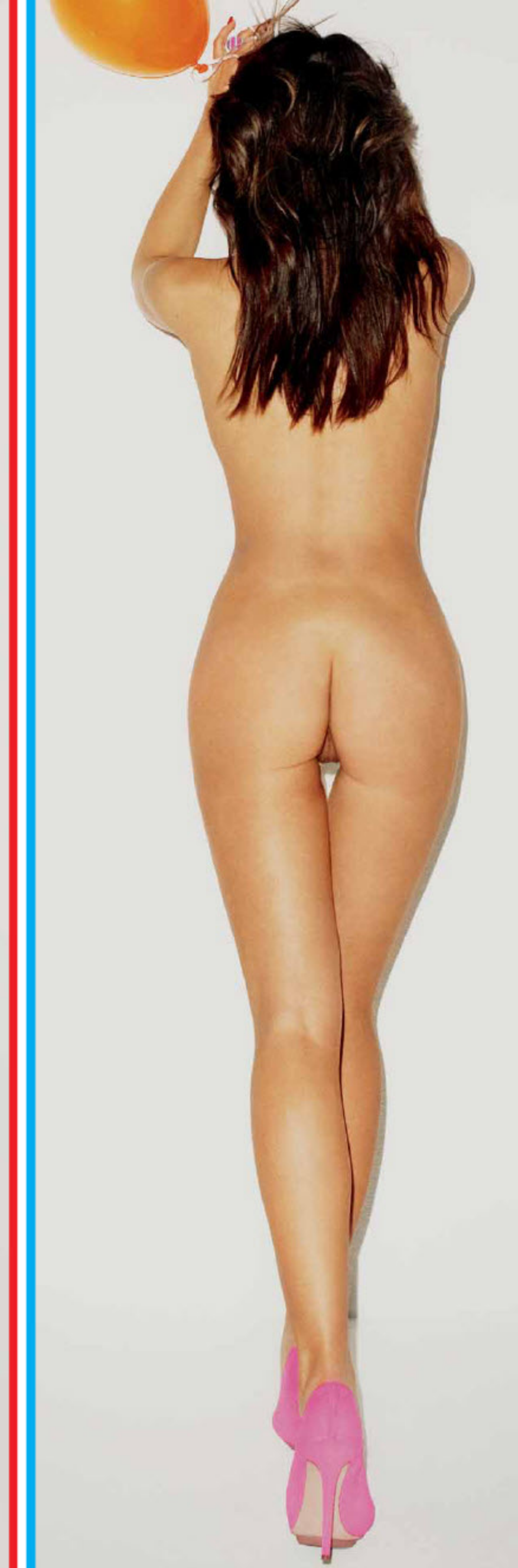


Last you saw America Olivo she was being banged from behind and then killed in the recent *Friday the 13th* reboot. This month she hits the big screen again, as a drug-running, street-fighting lesbian in the much buzzed-about *Bitch Slap*. Don't typecast this über-talent: The 31-year-old earned her degree as a mezzo-soprano (that's opera talk) at this country's finest music school, Juilliard, in New York. "Every time I sang a song about love," she giggles, "my 97-year-old mentor would say, 'You can't really sing a song like this until you've lost your virginity, and I can tell you haven't!'" Here's how she describes her "cherry-poppin' moment": "I lost



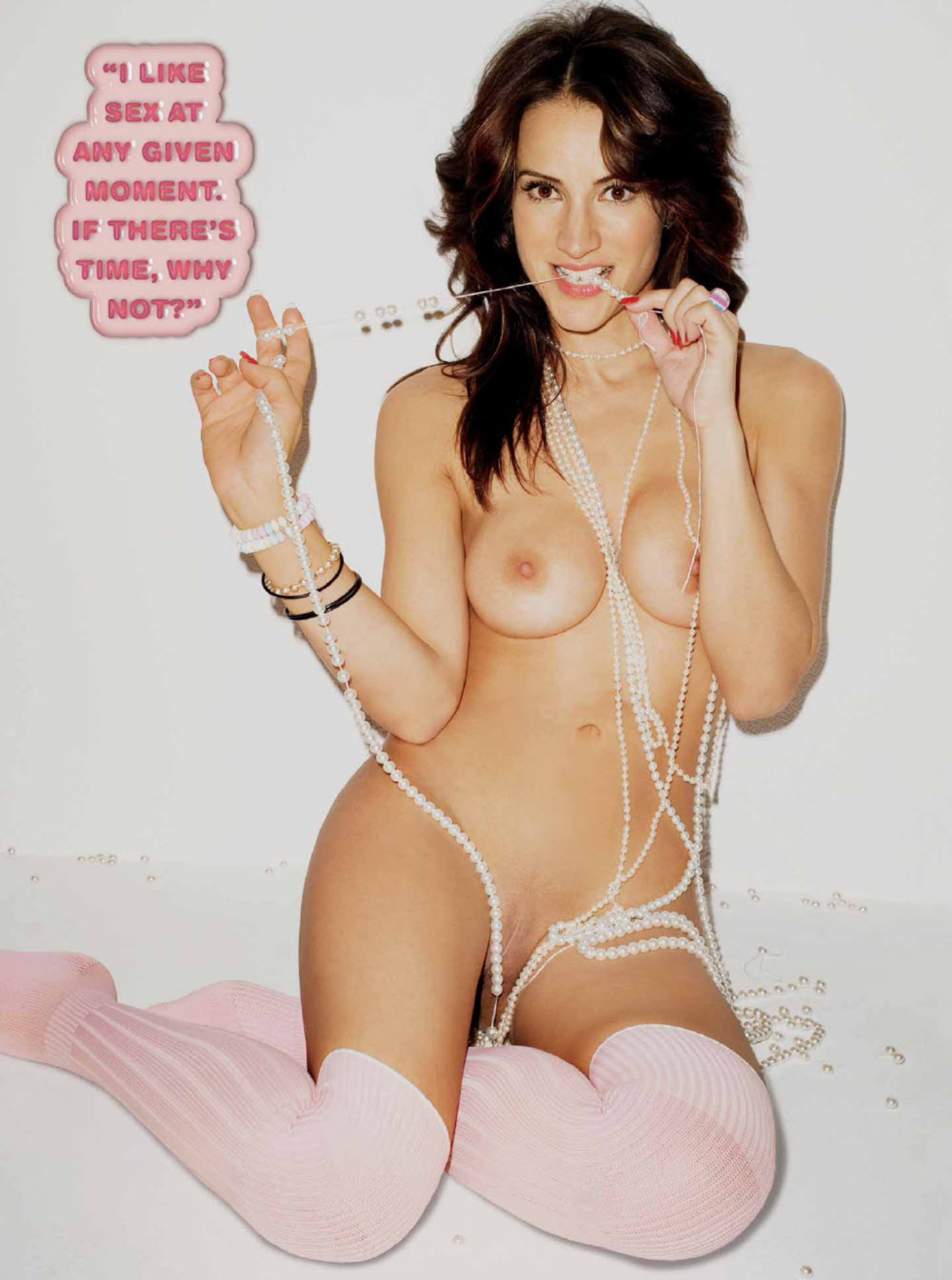


my virginity in Rome in a park with a view of the Vatican—literally.” Miss America signed with DreamWorks Records, toured the world with her band, Soluna, and then fell into acting. (She has four movies coming out in 2009.) Filming *Bitch Slap*, she had to do “blatant lesbian scenes on a trapeze, in which I’m making out, kissing this girl between the legs and riding her so intensely I was more sore than a mofo.” The film will feature the longest girl fight in cinema history. America also wrote and performed two songs for the movie. We knew we loved her soon after she showed up at the studio for her shoot. In minutes she was pogo sticking around in nothing but a pair of Keds. “It felt so innocent,” she says. “Like, Yaaay! It’s great to be naked!” Isn’t it, though?





**"I LIKE
SEX AT
ANY GIVEN
MOMENT.
IF THERE'S
TIME, WHY
NOT?"**





MY PURSUIT OF WOMEN

THE HILLIKER CURSE

BY
JAMES ELLROY

HE SEARCHES FOR HER IN A.A.,
ON THE SEX-FOR-HIRE STRIP.
HE TRIES TO FIND HER IN ONE-NIGHT
STANDS, BUT
NO ONE TOUCHES HIM
LIKE A DEAD WOMAN.

FROM THE MASTER OF
AMERICAN CRIME WRITING,
THE SECOND INSTALLMENT OF HIS MEMOIR
OF HAUNTED LOVE

3.

want to hold your hand.

That was the concluding shtick. You sat through the drunk-and-dopealogues and laced up for the Lord's Prayer. Ninety minutes of confession for 20 seconds of skin. I had to reconstruct my life. That felt like drudge work. The dykey redhead beside me felt like momentary payoff.

My first AA meeting. Monday, August 1, 1977.

I was 29. I survived the seven-year run of inhaler wads and psychoses. I quit booze, weed and pharmaceutical uppers. My new regime was abstinence. It boded horrific. I quit shoplifting and breaking into houses. I had not had a spiritual awakening. An inhaler-inflicted lung abscess constituted a death scare. My compulsive appetite had hung a 180. The straight and narrow beckoned. A ruthless self-interest defined my apostasy. I wanted women. I wanted to write novels. Sobriety meant efficiency. I couldn't advance my agenda in my current raggedy-ass state.

The meeting dragged on. Most people smoked. The fumes tickled my healing lung tissue. An AA guy called the redhead Leslie. She looked like a low-rent Marcia Sidwell. Aah, Marcia: our chaste Brief Encounter. The hand-holding ended. Leslie never glanced at me. You came that far for *this*?

XXXXX

Things weren't *that* bad. My chronic cough was cured. I was young and heroically resilient. I had a caddy gig at Bel-Air Country Club. I had a \$20-a-week hotel room. The communal bathrooms and shower were down the hall. The in-room sink was a pissoir.

A new Beethoven poster loomed above my bed. I played the Master's soaring psalms on an eight-track contraption and brooded. A late-blooming moral sense kept me from peeping. I *peered* now. I roamed Westwood Village, stared and stopped short of approach. I possessed

no notion of a social code. The world was still hazy. The sexual revolution applied to other folks. The permissiveness of the era belonged to the cute and the glib. I was a tenuously reformed pervert, adrift.

Sex had almost killed me. It was drug driven and solitary. It was a still memorable blur of women's faces. I credited God with the save and pondered His mission for me. It came down to write books and find The Other. That was 32 years ago. The faces swirl inside me decades later. The women remain as images seeking a narrative thread. They did not know who I was then and do not know who I am now. Real women have joined them. Real experience and active discourse have in no way dissolved the blur. My lustful heart has expanded to keep them all in.

I attributed my near death to The Curse. It was divine punishment and collateral damage to the death I had caused. My mother was 19 years dead. Her murder was still unsolved. I carried no love for her and ignored my debt to her. I feared her power and nullified it by banishing her from my mind.

My hotel room was narrow and underfurnished. I kept it spotlessly clean. I rarely turned the lights on. I played Beethoven and talked to women, dead sober.

The Hancock Park girls from my childhood were there. The wish-named Joan from Santa Monica appeared often. I mentally aged her to 38 years and reveled in her power as a shape-shifter and predictor. She had preannounced the real Joan. I knew I would meet her someday. The real Joan turned 12 that year.

I created a visual palette with a newly urgent soundtrack. I heard women's confessions in AA. I weighed their depictions of gender bias and sexual trauma sans judgment or male bias. I conversed with them in the dark. I was consoler, interlocutor, friend. Lives of thwarted hunger led us to that first kiss.

The fantasy was endlessly repetitive and easily transferred. I went face-to-face in search of transcendent sex and probity. I embraced woman images discerningly and abandoned them callously. Sobriety enhanced my fantasist's prowess and fucked with my powers of suppression. I felt voodooized. It was a crybaby crisis and punch-the-wall fury fit. It drove me to the point of action.

With the knowledge that women would not read my mind and thus detect my prayerful condition.

With the knowledge that my moral intent appeared to them as pure lust.

With the knowledge that women did not view me as a savior and were quite often afraid of me.

I lurked in bookstores near the UCLA campus. I read women's faces for character and a sense of humor that might mark them as susceptible to my charm. My pickup lines all pertained to books and were all levied on women who appeared to be self-assured and brainy. They had survived the stringent first cut: no heavy makeup, no nail polish, no sexy chick affect or rock-and-roll trappings. I

was seeking a blend of wholesomeness and hot passion. I was looking for a fellow autodidact oblivious to trend.

The first run of women rejected me fast. I betrayed myself instantly. Conversation sandbagged me. My mouth twitched, my beady eyes burned, my jerky body set off alarms. My glasses slid down my nose. I displayed stubby teeth caused by losing fistfights and poor dental care. I was an SOS call. Women knew it immediately. The brush-offs convinced me to readjust my criteria and up the ante spiritually.

Only lonely and haunted women would grok my gravity. They were sister misfits attuned to my wavelength. Only they grooved internal discourse and sex as sanctified flame. Their soiled souls were socked in synch with yours truly.

My rationale was *that* convoluted. My love seeking was *that* mystical and predatory. I threw myself at a second run of record-store women. They possessed less than stellar world-standard looks and were stunningly unsvelte. I dug them and wanted them. *I got them.* They *all* blew me off. My opening salvos all pertained to Beethoven. They were *all* perusing classical-music LPs. I flopped again. Their alarms scree-screeed. A Beethovenian principle was at work here. Beethoven was the only artist in history to rival the unpublished Ellroy. He was a fellow brooder, nose picker and ball scratcher. He yearned for women in silent solitude. His soul volume ran at my shrieking decibel. You and me, kid:

Her, She, the Immortal Beloved/The Other. Conjunction, communion, consecration and the completion of the whole. The human race advanced and all souls salvaged as two souls unite. The sacred merging of art and sex to touch God.

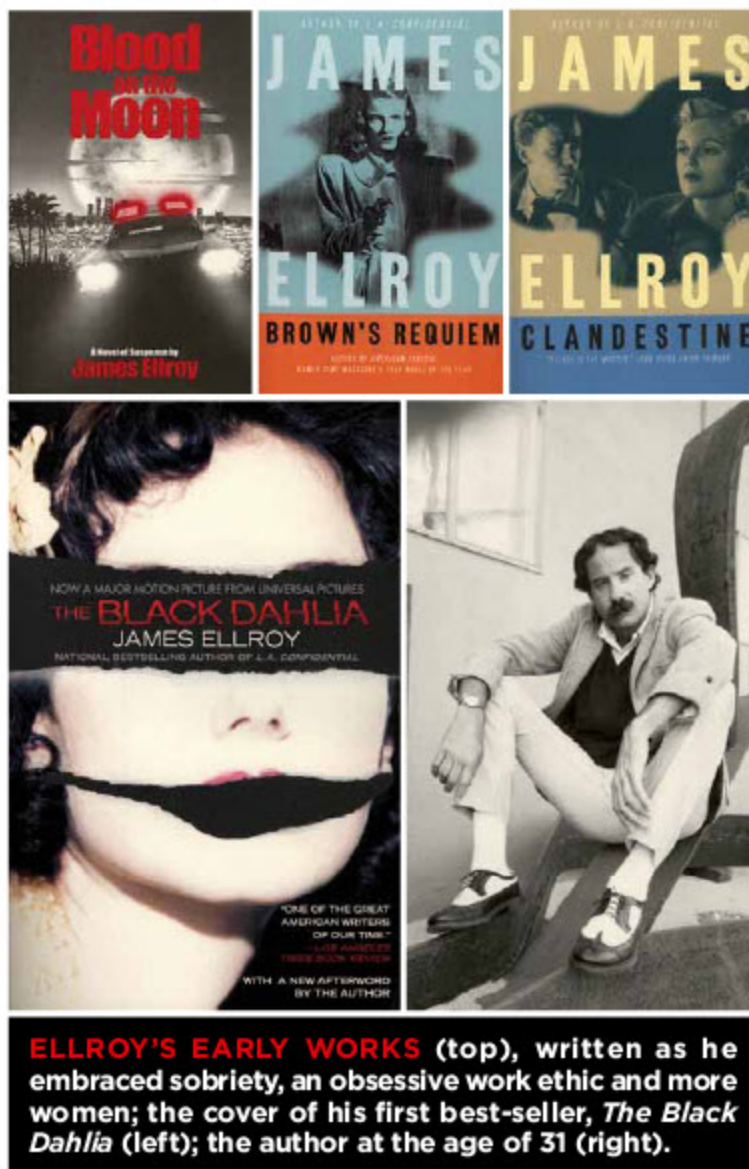
Those women could not have read my heart. My heart would have terrified them.

I want to crawl up inside you and offer you the same comfort. Cup my ears. I'll do the same for you. The scream of the world is unbearable, and only we know what it means.

I put that out to total strangers. My botched repartee was the scream. It was the high-note dissonance in Beethoven's late quartets. Jean Hilliker told me the facts of life in early '58. She said, "The man puts his penis in the woman's vagina." It was a shallow and clinical précis then, as it remains. My mother undermined her power. She could not have predicted The Curse and the arc of our fates.

XXXXX

That death scare kept me focused. The dutiful part of my nature got buttressed all day every day. I was guilt racked and devoutly religious at my core. AA offered me absolutism and a compatible latitude in my faith. Half of my sober comrades were women. I studied them and tore through unrequited crushes at great speed. They joined me (continued on page 100)



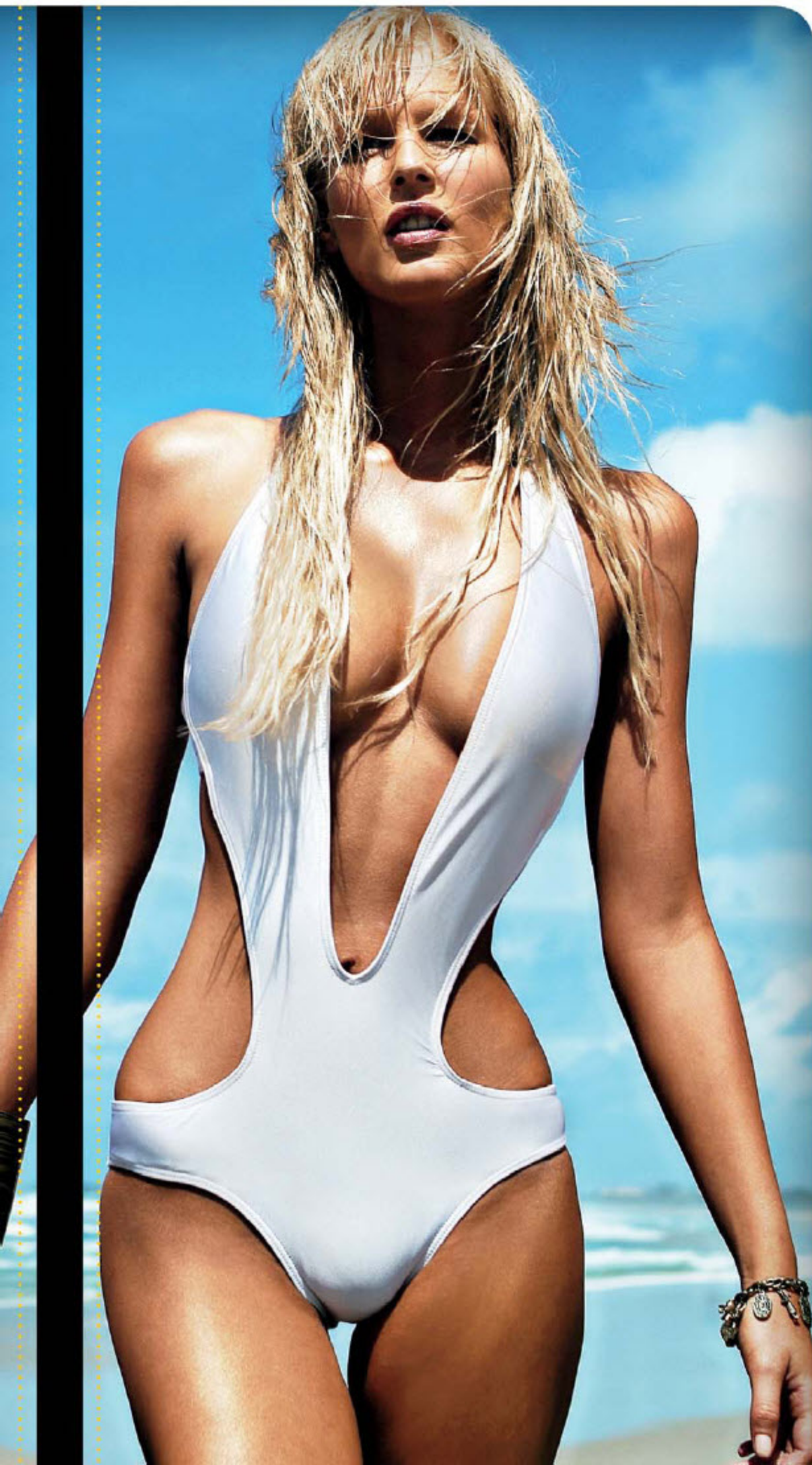
ELLROY'S EARLY WORKS (top), written as he embraced sobriety, an obsessive work ethic and more women; the cover of his first best-seller, *The Black Dahlia* (left); the author at the age of 31 (right).



Olivia

"Okay, Big Boy, where's the fire?"

Wet HOT AMERICAN SUMMER



Think about the way Janis Joplin could wrench all the love juice out of the word *summertime*. (If you're too young to know this song, YouTube it immediately.) She says it all in those three brilliant syllables. Summer is about adventure. It's about late nights, partying, sex and sun, about the impulse in all men that makes us drive until we hit water. We can't sing like Janis, but we can put out a great magazine celebrating our favorite season. What do we love most about summer? It starts here: the sight of a beautiful woman with tanned skin exposed. If you were wondering, this is Danish swimsuit model Ann Lodberg, shot on the beach in Australia. See more of her at annlodberg.com.

THERE WILL NEVER AGAIN BE A SUMMER OF 2009. TAKE IT BY THE HORNS

DREAM BOAT

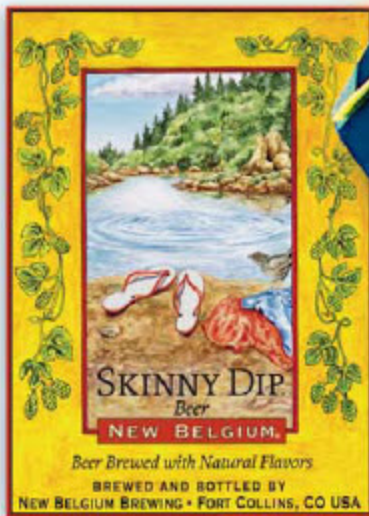
How's this for an afternoon? You're lying in the sun on a boat. You jump in some cool water, get out, crack a beer, jump back in, get out, have sex, beer number two, jump back in, beer number three, then cruise into the sunset in search of a delicious dinner. Not necessarily in that order. As for the hardware, you may not be able to afford the gazillion-dollar 148 Saudade, Wally's biggest megayacht yet (at 148 feet), built for global blue-water cruising and photographed here in Porto Cervo on the north end of Sardinia. But given the economy, there may be no better time to hunt for your dream boat. There are eye-popping deals on every kind imaginable at boattrader.com.





SUMMER BREWS MAKE US FEEL NICE

Below, clockwise from top left: **Anderson Valley Brewing Company Summer Solstice Cerveza Crema**—A crisp and foamy treat from one of our favorite hippie microbreweries. **Primo Island Lager**—After a 10-year hiatus the original surf-centric Hawaiian brew rides a wave back to the mainland. An infusion of sugarcane adds a Polynesian twist to traditional lager flavor. **Lagunitas Lucky 13**—Delicious and more than eight percent alcohol by volume. **New Belgium Skinny Dip**—This one's for her; it has 114 calories a bottle, not counting the requisite lemon twist. **Thomas Hooker Watermelon Ale**—An effervescent sipper from Connecticut. Looking for a good time? This Hooker is worth every penny. **Beach Bum Blonde Ale**—Imagine the hottest blonde you've ever seen on a beach. Now imagine what her lips taste like when you kiss her: citrusy, fruit forward. You know you're going back for more.



CHAIRWOMAN OF THE BOARD

This summer kiteboarding supplants Jet Skiing as the beach-resort sport du jour. Slip your feet into a board, strap yourself to a big kite and let mother nature hurl you like a skipping stone. Work up enough speed and you feel like Jesus walking on water. The sport was pioneered off Maui in the 1990s; now you can learn at any number of resorts in Mexico and the Caribbean. Our favorite kiteboarder: Kristin Boese, a German vixen who turns 32 this month and has won eight kiteboarding world championships. Here she is in action and nude in the pages of German **PLAYBOY**. "I wouldn't mind doing another shoot tomorrow," she says, "maybe with U.S. **PLAYBOY**?" You never know.



FAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

Whether you love golf or not, you can't have a bad day cruising around a gorgeous course with a cart-mounted bar, breathing in the scent of the green grass. If you are a swinger, here's a bit of golf porn for you: the 500-yard par-five sixth hole that runs along the sea at America's old faithful, Pebble Beach Golf Links, just north of Big Sur in California. The course will host its fifth U.S. Open next summer. Book your tee time at pebblebeach.com.



BMW'S NEW \$40,000 SUPERCAR. THE HARDTOP CONVERTIBLE Z4 ROADSTER WITH SPORT PACKAGE WILL HIT 150 MPH.



ROAD WARRIOR 2009 ↑

There's no time like the present to live out your road-movie fantasy. Hit man Dick Hooker (played by you) and his porn-star gal pal, Trixie Vixen (your girlfriend), cross the border to kill a Mexican drug dealer (Burt Reynolds) in this high-octane Ridley Scott-directed thriller. Here's a sweet little ride that'll get you there: BMW's newly styled Z4 roadster, now with a two-piece aluminum folding hardtop (and a manageable tag starting around \$40K). Opt for the twin-turbo three-liter 300-horsepower sDrive35i and the Sport Package, with a slick-shifting seven-speed dual-clutch paddle-shift sport automatic. Zero to 60 goes by in a swift five seconds. Huge ventilated disc brakes? Fifty-fifty weight distribution? Every possible safety feature? Check, check and check.



HOW TO MAKE A LOBSTER ROLL

(SERVES FOUR)

1. Boil four one-pound lobsters until they are bright red.
2. Crack off tails and remove meat. Snap off claws and legs.
3. Place claws and legs in a Ziploc bag and pulverize with a hammer. Pick out meat. In a large bowl, mix meat and four diced celery ribs with 4 tbsp. mayo, 1/2 tsp. salt, 1/2 tsp. pepper and 1/4 tsp. celery salt. Chill in refrigerator for one hour.
4. Butter the inside of four hot-dog buns. Toast, inside down, then spoon in lobster mixture.



A THINKING WOMAN'S GUIDE TO OUTDOOR SEX

A few lessons I've learned along the way: 1. Location, location, location. The best spot is a secluded and beautiful beach, ideally at sunrise or sundown (see below). 2. The more clothes you keep on, the faster your recovery time should anyone wander by. 3. Unless you're inclined to try the *From Here to Eternity* pose, standing positions keep friction areas free of sand and the rest of you free of bugs. 4. Remember the Boy Scouts? The most valuable lesson you learned was how to spot poison ivy—three almond-shape leaves, a hairy vine and grayish-white berries.

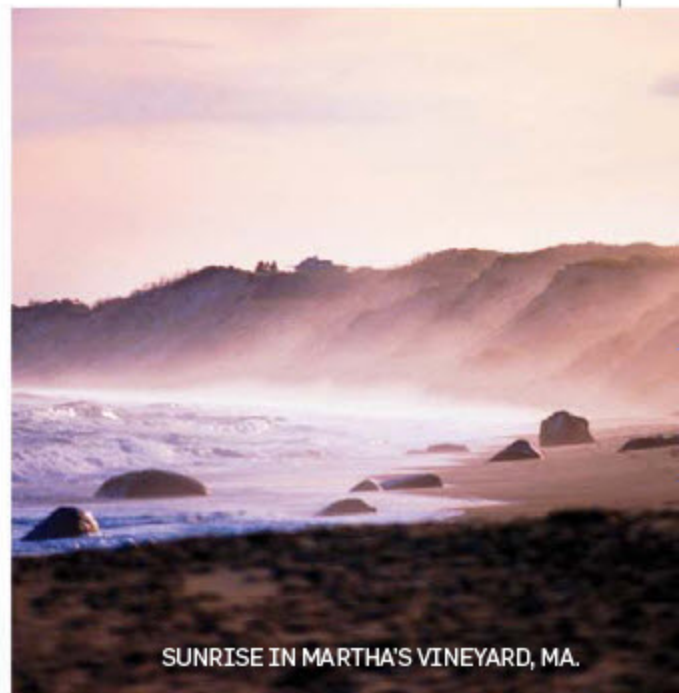
—Judy Dutton



PFEIFFER BEACH, BIG SUR, CA.



MINERS BEACH, LAKE SUPERIOR, MI.



SUNRISE IN MARTHA'S VINEYARD, MA.

ALL ABOUT THE BENJAMINS →

Every summer, Hollywood execs crunch their butt cheeks together and gamble hundreds of millions on would-be summer blockbusters. Will the film be another *Star Wars* (number two all-time moneymaker in inflation-adjusted dollars), an *E.T.* (four) or a *Jaws* (seven)? Or will it be another *Adventures of Pluto Nash*, the Eddie Murphy "vehicle" that came out in summer 2002 and ranks as the biggest financial flop of all time? What drama! We're putting our money this summer on *Land of the Lost* (Will Ferrell, Danny McBride), *Public Enemies* (Johnny Depp, Christian Bale) and *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* (Shia LaBeouf and the furiously foxy Megan Fox, pictured).

🔥 HOW TO BUILD A BONFIRE →

1. Pick an appropriate spot away from any buildings or overhanging trees. It should not be on grass. Dig a foot-deep hole. The size can vary depending on the size of the fire you want. If practical, surround your hole with rocks. Think of the five-foot radius around the rocks as a buffer zone where you shouldn't leave anything flammable.
2. Assemble a "log cabin" center. Fill with kindling and newspaper. Now lay smaller sticks across the logs. Using medium-size pieces of wood, build additional levels over the top in a pyramid shape. Be sure to space out the wood for good airflow and to leave a place for you to reach in and light the kindling.
3. Build a tepee around your log cabin. This is where your big long pieces of wood come into play. Again, leave a gap so you can reach through to light the center.
4. Ignite the center. Blow into it as necessary to accelerate a chain reaction—which, it turns out, is what she said.
5. Pop open beer. Grab guitar. Force everyone to listen to your Bob Dylan impression.



"I HAVE THE LIBIDO OF A 15-YEAR-OLD BOY. MY SEX DRIVE IS SO HIGH."—MEGAN FOX

🛶 SHAMELESS CONSUMERISM

Show up at your local curl with a **surfboard** like the one pictured below and you'd better know how to surf. Called Voodoo Child, the board was designed by California artist Drew Brophy (drewbrophy.com). Looking to buy a present for a guy who has it all? Get him a **submarine**. Navy Surplus is offering a 274-foot Whiskey-class sub decommissioned in 1991. Range: 12,000 miles. The engines have a total of 14,200 horsepower. All that's missing is the liquor and the DJ (\$497K, e-mail submarine@projectboats.com). Time to stock up for July 4. America's top **fireworks** outfit, TNT Fireworks, has some new stuff this season. Our favorite is the Legal Limit Finale, nine little missiles that emit "an enormous amount of beautiful red and blue stars along with a silver bouquet and crackling flowers," according to the product lit. See tntfireworks.com to find a retailer. Don't forget the staples. For **flip-flops**, we like the skull pattern from Brazilian outfit Havaianas (havaianas.com). As for **shades**, the Wayfarer is back in, as if it ever went out (rayban.com). Our favorite **swimwear** is from Sundeck—old-school California cool (sundeck.com).



STOCK UP FOR SUMMER:
SURFBOARDS, DECLASSIFIED
NAVY SUBMARINES AND MORE.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY NIGEL PARRY
PHOTOGRAPHED AT SMOKE JAZZ & SUPPER CLUB, NYC



SOUL MAN

DURING THE 1960s BOOKER T. JONES MADE MEMPHIS THE SOUL CAPITAL OF THE WORLD. TODAY HE'S MAKING THE BEST MUSIC OF HIS CAREER

by Robert Gordon

You've been here before, you're thinking. That guitar, strangely familiar. When the organ kicks in, you look over your shoulder. But what's coming together baffles as it engulfs. Then the chorus swells and there's definition: OutKast's "Hey Ya!" But why does the guitar sound like Neil Young and the organ like a lost soul classic, and why is the feel of the thing as fresh as a new car on an open road?

It has been nearly 20 years since Booker T. Jones released a solo album, about a decade since the last album by Booker T. and the MGs and nearly 50 years since "Green Onions," the MGs' first hit—and the rare song that sounds more contemporary every time you hear it. So the new life he gives to "Hey Ya!" isn't the surprise; it's the excitement of his interpretation.

Famed for the Southern soul he created in his hometown of Memphis, Jones

has lived for the past 15 years in Marin County, outside San Francisco, having moved there after nearly 25 years in Los Angeles. Beneath the vaulted ceiling of his living room there's a Yamaha baby grand with a practice book, Hanon's *Virtuoso Pianist in Sixty Exercises* open and beckoning. His Hammond B-3—Booker's signature instrument—claims part of the dining room. Booker T. is a lean and sharp 64 years old, but he could easily pass for a couple of decades younger.

Booker T. and the MGs—Steve Cropper on guitar, Duck Dunn on bass, Jones on organ and piano and Al Jackson Jr. on drums (since his unsolved murder in 1975, various drummers have substituted)—were the house band at Stax Records through the 1960s. They can be heard on nearly every hit by Otis Redding and Sam & Dave, as well as Wilson Pickett's "In the Midnight



Booker T. Jones is best known for his 1962 Hammond B-3 classic "Green Onions," but he has always been a musician's musician.



THE BEST OF
**BOOKER T.
& THE MGs**

OVER 60 MINUTES OF MUSIC

BOOKER T. JONES
The Best of You



of the most famous organ players of all time, Jones has made his first guitar album. *Potato Hole* is as funky as most anything he has done, and as soulful, but the mass of rocking guitars is new territory and thrilling. "Neil Young was the main influence for this record," he says, also citing Lynyrd Skynyrd. Jones composed the songs on the guitar, and to get the attack he needed he brought in the three-guitar army of the Drive-By Truckers, fueled further by Mr. Young himself—on guitar only and ready for bear, just wailing. "Booker's ear is so fine-tuned," says Patterson Hood of the Truckers. "We'd be rehearsing, and he'd say, 'If you would move your index finger up one fret, and you [another guitarist] move down one, let's see what happens.' The whole thing would open up in new ways."

"I was surprised he wanted so many guitars," says Truckers guitarist Mike Cooley. "Then I heard the demos. His guitar was all fuzzed out, and I knew why he was coming to us. The opening song—that's how you make an entrance. *Bam!* This is going to rock."

"Pound It Out," that first track, opens with a riff of classic organ notes and then a guitar so crunchy it sounds like the speakers are disintegrating. Before you can check for damage, it repeats itself: classic organ, arena guitar. "It's a call-and-response," says Booker. "I ask, 'Are you there?' And they answer, 'Yeah, we're here.' It's definitely a testing of the boundaries and a pushing back." That's the Booker T. Jones story: Test the boundaries, find a new place to go.



Booker T. Jones comes from a family of pursuers. His grandfather owned land in Mississippi when few blacks could, and on it he built not only a home but a school in which he taught others. Jones's father moved to Memphis and taught math at Booker T. Washington High School, the neighborhood institution from which many of the Stax players graduated.

Jones heard his own calling in elementary school, and though fourth-graders were too young to join the school band, he got in by taking the instrument no one else wanted—oboe. He shifted to clarinet, then piano. The movement from a C instrument to a B-flat and back to a C inscribed a strong sense of musical structure early.

One sound, however, remained unfamiliar and intriguing. Jones would stand outside the neighborhood's sanctified church he was afraid to enter, and outside the Club Handy he was forbidden to enter, listening. "I wasn't sure what it was," he says of the Hammond organ, which emanated from—and seemed to function similarly in—both places. "You talk about making the room (concluded on page 118)

Hour," Rufus Thomas's "Walking the Dog" and their own hits, among them the instrumentals "Hip Hug Her" and "Time Is Tight." Their soulful versatility made them the obvious selection as house band at Atlantic Records' 1986 celebration, which led to a gig as house band at Madison Square Garden's Bob Fest honoring Bob Dylan's 30 years in music; there they backed up Neil Young, who asked them to tour and record with him. They were also the house band for the grand opening of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and Eric Clapton enlisted them to back everyone at his first Crossroads Festival. Booker T. and the MGs have been inducted into the rock Hall of Fame and received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. They bring out the best in a musician.

Known for being able to play anything with anyone, Jones finds a new direction with his latest release, the smoking-hot *Potato Hole*. One

BOOKER'S RESERVE

SOME OF BOOKER'S FAVORITE MUSICIANS:

WILLIE NELSON

"When we started working on *Stardust*, we thought we were the only two who really enjoyed this music. In 1976 these were old songs, and there wasn't a lot of remaking going on. It was a maverick thing to do."

BOB DYLAN

"I hadn't expected to be recording with Bob that day. I don't recall how our party got from my house down to the studio, but I ended up

with a bass in my hand, playing on 'Knockin' on Heaven's Door.' I recall it being one of those two A.M. - or three A.M. -type sessions."

OTIS REDDING

"Of all these names, he and I spent the most basic, honest time together—and at a young, tender age. One of my first experiences with Otis had to do with creating new phrases, new musical feelings. The way the song builds in 'Try a Little Tenderness' and 'I've Been Loving You Too Long'—that was new. That was an exercise in real honesty."

NEIL YOUNG

"I never looked for sounds that big before I knew Neil. In the 1990s we did a tour playing his stuff—'Cinnamon Girl,' 'Southern Man.' All those songs had a big rock-band sound. I emulated that big guitar sound on *Potato Hole*."

JIMMY SMITH

"I never knew Jimmy Smith, but I was imitating things he was doing on the Hammond. Some people come into the world knowing how to do things, and they're wondrous."



"Of course, if he hadn't died during the full moon, we wouldn't be burying him in the pet cemetery."



**A ROLL
IN THE
HAY WITH
GORGEOUS MISS JUNE**

RODEO QUEEN

The farm-girl fantasy holds a special place in Americana. She is wholesome and natural yet wise beyond her years. She is decent, churchgoing and sexy as all goddamn hell. Tough, independent, loyal, suntanned from living out her days beneath the big sky....

If you're a true PLAYBOY fan, you know farmer's daughter Candice Cassidy made her first appearance with us as a Cyber Girl in 2006, re-creating old Centerfolds from the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Now that she's Miss June, we wanted to photograph her in all her glory down home on the farm, naturally. The 23-year-old Ohio native lives on her family's 60-acre homestead, where her mother breeds Tennessee walking horses. Growing up, Candice tended the stalls and rode often. But as a kid, she found she was as interested in dance as she was in horsing around.

"My mom put me in classes when I was three because I was a little shy," she says. The plan worked: Candice isn't shy anymore. She owns one of the biggest dance studios in her area. She teaches tap, ballet, jazz and lyrical dance four nights a week, in addition to studying psychology at a local college. (She just graduated.) She plans to get her master's degree and will use her Playmate earnings to leave the family farm and buy some property nearby. Since her Cyber Girl days Candice has also been commuting between Ohio and Los Angeles. She says she's seduced by the City of Angels. "I would say my biggest excitement is flying out for parties every month," she explains. "I live in a rural area, and there's no place to hang out except in people's houses." Still, she says, she'll always be a farm girl at heart.

Candice is currently single, having recently broken up with a guy she'd been dating since she was 14. "I have a weakness for bad boys with beautiful eyes," she tells us. "Eminem would be my dream date." To all the Slim Shadies out there, Miss June hopes to get married and have a family within the next five years. In the meantime.... "There are so many things I want to do!" she says. Ride on, Candice.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ARNY FREYTAG











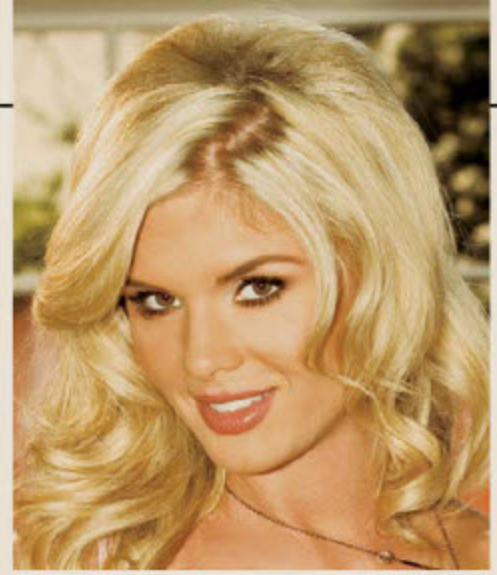
See more of Miss June at
club.playboy.com.





PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Candice Cassidy
BUST: 34c WAIST: 24 HIPS: 36
HEIGHT: 5'9" WEIGHT: 125



BIRTH DATE: 10-23-85 BIRTHPLACE: Portsmouth, Ohio

AMBITIONS: To have a successful Playmate career, be in music videos & finish my master's degree.

TURN-ONS: A guy who is ambitious, honest and romantic and who makes me laugh!

TURNOFFS: Arrogance, negativity, selfishness, obnoxious guys and tighty whities.

FAMOUS DANCERS I ADMIRE: Mia Michaels, Travis Wall, Shane Sparks, Wade Robson, Quest Crew & Tyce Diorio.

ANIMALS I TAKE CARE OF: Jada, my adorable white Chihuahua; Jaelyn, my white boxer; our eight Tennessee walking horses; two cats; & a goat.

A BOOK I RECOMMEND AND WHY: The Notebook because every girl wants a guy like Noah.

THE BEST WAY TO BLOW OFF SOME STEAM: Dancing & shopping.



"Yankee Doodle Santa"
Tap routine, age eight.



Senior prom,
age 18.



My first
Playboy bikini.



MISS JUNE PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH

Candice Cassidy

MISS JUNE PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH

Candice Cassidy



PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

The economy is so bad that now when my secretary tells me my broker is on the phone, I have to ask, "Stock or pawn?"

A customer returned to the bar from the men's room, shaking his head. "What's the matter?" inquired the bartender.

"While I was in the bathroom I noticed writing on the wall that reads, SUZY GIVES GREAT HEAD."

"Ah, buddy," the bartender interrupted, "I wouldn't give it a second thought. We get jerks in here like anywhere else."

"I know," continued the head-shaker. "They scratched out the phone number."



What's the one problem with oral sex?
The view.

A guy went into a pharmacy and asked if they sold erectile-dysfunction pills. Upon receiving an affirmative, the guy asked, "Can I get it over the counter?"

"Hmmm," mused the pharmacist. "Maybe if you took two pills."

A young man who was being interviewed to join the police force was asked, "What would you do if you had to arrest your own mother?"

He answered, "Call for backup."

Why is a laundromat a really bad place to pick up a woman?

Because a woman who can't afford a washing machine will probably never be able to support you.

Ten-year-old twins visiting their grandmother asked her, "What's it called when one person sleeps on top of the other?"

Thinking they would eventually find out anyway, she told the two boys it's called sex.

The next day one of them called her, very upset, and said, "It's called bunk beds, Grandma, and now we aren't allowed to share a room!"

Any guy thinking about asking a woman for her hand in marriage should look at all the definitions of *engagement*. One reads, "to do battle with the enemy."

Our *Unabashed Dictionary* defines *laptop* as a stripper who incorporates a spin into her lap dance.

The recently married young woman was weeping and pouring out her heart to a marriage counselor. "Isn't there some way—without turning into a nag—that I can keep my husband in line?"

"Well," he said, "maybe that's the problem. Your husband shouldn't have to wait in line."

Wives are ironic creatures. They don't have sex with their husbands for weeks, and then they want to kill any woman who does.

A man was on trial for armed robbery. The jury foreman came out and announced, "Not guilty."

"That's awesome!" the defendant shouted. "Does that mean I can keep the money?"

Why do guys enjoy masturbation so much?

Because your hand will continue to please you even after you slip a ring on its finger.



Ally Neiman

How is having unprotected sex like having a 401(k)?

You have to know when to pull out.

A young woman ran to her mother and said ecstatically, "Tim passed his bar exam, so we're going to get married next spring!"

"Gee, honey," her mother replied, "he'll be real busy. Don't you think you two should wait till he's been practicing for a year or so?"

"Oh, Mom," the daughter said, blushing, "we've been practicing."

What's the best way to get into a sleeping bag?

Wake her up first.

Send your jokes to Party Jokes Editor, PLAYBOY, 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611, or by e-mail through our website at jokes.playboy.com. PLAYBOY will pay \$100 to the contributors whose submissions are selected.



"Haven't you ever heard of a double wedding?"

The logo features the number '20' in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The zero is stylized with a yellow and red circular graphic inside it, resembling a question mark or a stylized 'Q'.

BY KEVIN COOK
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT SEBREE

SCOTT BORAS

BASEBALL'S "AVENGING AGENT" SOUNDS OFF ON MEGAMILLION-DOLLAR CONTRACTS, SPORTS GROUPIES, THE STEROIDS ERA AND WHY MANNY RAMIREZ REALLY WANTED OUT OF BOSTON

Q1

PLAYBOY: Fans say you're greedy. Are they right?

BORAS: The last time I looked, *fan* was short for *fanatic*. Fans are fanatical about their favorite team. But athletes have choices. They don't want to be 50 years old, saying, "I turned down \$70 million. I could have done more for my family, my community, my church." A player's life span in the game is short; his agent is there to help him. In the end it's not about the fans. I'm not here to win a popularity contest.

Q2

PLAYBOY: You have three of baseball's five best-paid players in your stable—Alex Rodriguez, Mark Teixeira and Manny Ramirez—all of whom make more than \$20 million a year. Their multiyear contracts add up to half a billion dollars. With the economy tanking, have salaries topped out?

BORAS: I don't see that. Baseball has had record revenues for years. I expect we'll see a ballplayer making \$35 million to \$40 million a year in the next decade.

Q3

PLAYBOY: Did you know A-Rod used steroids? If not, should you have known?

BORAS: I'm not answering questions like that. You need to ask the player.

Q4

PLAYBOY: You and A-Rod almost split up in 2007 after he opted out of his Yankees contract,

upstaging the World Series. What happened?

BORAS: The purpose of the opt out was to get the Yankees to say, "Wait a minute. *Don't* opt out. Maybe we'll increase his compensation." But we didn't want the public to know—that was clearly not in our best interests. As for upstaging the Series, what about Fox? If they thought it damaged the integrity of the game, they didn't have to cut in with the news during a World Series game. In 1985 Major League Baseball announced its drug policy after game three, a move that was wholly intended to get attention during the Series. Still, I have to be accountable. I could have handled that better.

Q5

PLAYBOY: Your former client Barry Bonds was indicted for perjury in a steroids case. Bonds still wants to play, but no team will sign him, even at the minimum salary of \$390,000. Does that smack of collusion?

BORAS: There's some potential litigation about that. I don't have all the facts. I will say I was very surprised he wasn't playing last year. Anybody with that much talent whose name isn't Barry Bonds would have been offered a contract.

Q6

PLAYBOY: We have to talk roids. How should the Hall of Fame deal with players of the steroids era?

BORAS: Look, the Hall of Fame is for players who distinguished themselves *in their day*. Each era has distinctive features—from equipment



and rules to pharmacology, surgical advancements, labor agreements, federal and state laws—that impact performance. The game is always changing. The Hall’s scroll of admission must be drafted with a fluid and broad pen. Only then can it recognize excellence from every era.

Q7

PLAYBOY: Manny Ramirez made himself such a distraction for the Red Sox last year that they traded him to L.A., where he led the Dodgers to the playoffs. Why did he want out of Boston?

BORAS: Manny enjoyed his Red Sox teammates and loved the organization, but he did not enjoy living in Boston. It wore him out. He wasn’t comfortable. It wasn’t like Cleveland.

Q8

PLAYBOY: He wanted out because Boston isn’t like Cleveland?

BORAS: [Nodding] For Manny, environment is important. He had liked living in the Cleveland suburbs. I said, “Manny, I want you to play in L.A. They’ve got some really good young hitters, but they need a slugger, and Pasadena’s a lot like those Cleveland suburbs.” He had been to L.A. only three times in his life, but once we got him there he said, “This is the spot for me.”

Q9

PLAYBOY: Do you advise young players to watch out for baseball groupies?

BORAS: That’s a huge issue because you have high school boys making millions. We have a booklet for young players that tells them about paternity suits. It says, “If a woman has your child, it can cost you \$2 million over the course of 18 years to raise that child.” We talk about using protection and having safe sex.

Q10

PLAYBOY: Rubbers for rookies?

BORAS: Players can also follow a ritual: If you meet a girl at the ballpark, ask her if she knows any players from last year’s team and from the year before that. A girl who hangs around the ballpark year after year may be looking for something other than what you’re looking for. She may see you as her ticket out of town. So we tell young players, “An interaction with the wrong type of girl can wreck your career.”

Q11

PLAYBOY: Groupies used to be called Baseball Annies. What’s the nastiest term you’ve heard for them?

BORAS: Road beef.

Q12

PLAYBOY: You’ve said you’d rather watch a ball game than do anything else. Does that mean baseball is better than sex?

BORAS: [Laughing] Well, I may be better at watching baseball!

Q13

PLAYBOY: You grew up on a farm near Sacramento, California. What were your chores?

BORAS: Milking cows, cleaning the barn. I wrecked a tractor, too. My dad didn’t tell me that listening to Giants games on the radio would distract me from my chores, so I got an oversize baseball cap and taped a transistor radio to the inside of it. I was driving the tractor, listening to a ball game, when one wheel went into a hole. The axle broke, the tractor tipped over, and I got knocked out. I remember waking up and hearing the radio—Russ Hodges and Lon

Simmons announcing the game. Then I saw my father, who had these big Mickey Mantle forearms, crushing my radio with his bare hands.

Q14

PLAYBOY: You went to graduate school while playing minor league ball. How did you study?

BORAS: We had 14-hour bus rides in double-A ball. Most of the players were right out of high school, so they read comic books or adult material on the bus. If you read a textbook, it was not well received. I’d stick a pharmacology book inside a PLAYBOY so they’d think I was one of the guys.

Q15

PLAYBOY: You hit well in the minors, but you quit and went to law school. Why?

BORAS: I had a knee operation. I was getting my knee drained every 10 days. I could hit .280, .290, but I really wanted to be the best at something, so I changed paths. Baseball can be heartbreaking. I never forgot my first spring training. On cut-down day at the minor league complex, they post a list. If your name is on it, you continue. Everybody crowded around the list, and I was on it. *Phew*. Then I saw guys who weren’t. First-round picks. They were *done*. I watched a guy go to a rusted-out van



and tell his wife, “Honey, I’ve been released.” His kids were crying. I’d always thought of baseball as all good, but too many young men take a big risk to play pro ball and then go home with nothing. That’s why I think baseball should stop drafting high school kids. Other sports don’t do that. Maybe you let each team take one exceptional high school player a year and pay him a substantial bonus, but that’s all.

Q16

PLAYBOY: Do you have a favorite minor league memory?

BORAS: I loved old George Kissell, the Cardinals’ coordinator of minor league development. George would give you the intel. He said fielding a grounder is like dating a girl: “You don’t go up and grab her. You gotta *foster* the ball.” Let it come to you. He’d knock on my door at 5:30 in the morning and say, “Boras, get up! Time for church!” I’d go, “Church? It’s Tuesday.” He said, “I saw ya play last night, and we got a lot to pray about.”

Q17

PLAYBOY: How would you change the World Series?

BORAS: I’d modernize it, make it *(concluded on page 110)*

SIZE DOESN'T MATTER



JUAN AWAREN • JORGE G

the **P**LAYER

DURING THE PHILLIES' RUN TO THE WORLD SERIES TITLE, SHORTSTOP JIMMY ROLLINS PROVED HE WAS CLUTCH IN THE FALL. HERE HE SHOWS HOW SMOOTH HE IS IN THE SUMMER

VITALS

FULL NAME

James Calvin Rollins

BORN

November 27, 1978

BIRTHPLACE

Oakland, California

HEIGHT

5' 8"

WEIGHT

175 pounds



FASHION by jennifer ryan jones
 PHOTOGRAPHY by nicola majocchi

Major league managers have learned the hard way that the undersize Jimmy Rollins can't be overlooked. As any Mets fan will tell you, this Phillies shortstop can kill you at least three different ways. He's a leadoff man with long-ball potential. He's a jackrabbit on the base paths. And his glove is a place where seeing-eye singles go to die. All these threats were on display last October when Rollins and his Phillies vanquished the Tampa

Bay Rays and gave their long-suffering city what it had been waiting for. "It had been 25 years since Philadelphia had a title. It felt good to say to the people, 'Here you go—now you've got your parade.'" With a World Series ring on his finger and Johari Smith (his former trainer and future wife) on his arm, all J-Roll needed was a lightweight summer uniform that didn't consist of polyester and hideous red pinstripes. —CONOR HOGAN

ACHIEVEMENTS

ALL-STAR GAMES

Three

MVP AWARDS

One

GOLD GLOVES

Two

WORLD SERIES RINGS

One

THIS PAGE, ON JIMMY:
SHIRT (\$68) BY FRENCH CONNECTION

POLO SHIRT (\$139) BY RARE MAN

PANTS (\$30) BY UNIQLO

WATCH (\$225) BY NAUTICA

ON JOHARI:
BLOUSE BY JUST CAVALLI

SHORTS BY ABERCROMBIE & FITCH

JEWELRY BY CITRINE BY THE STONES

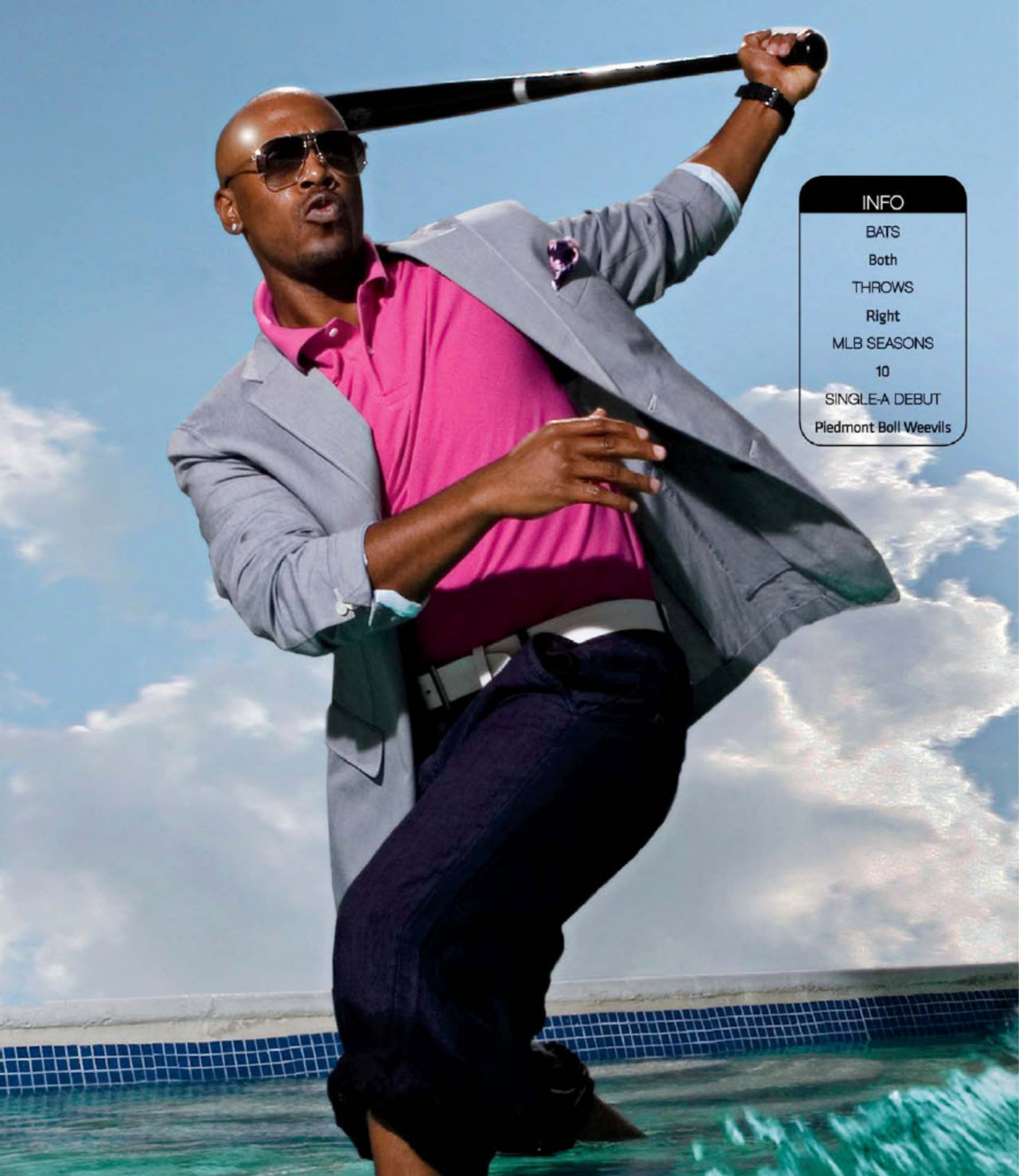
BELT BY URBAN OUTFITTERS

OPPOSITE PAGE:
JACKET (\$395) BY BOSS ORANGE

SHIRT (\$98) BY PERRY ELLIS

T-SHIRT (\$38) BY IZOD

HAT (\$44) BY NEW ERA

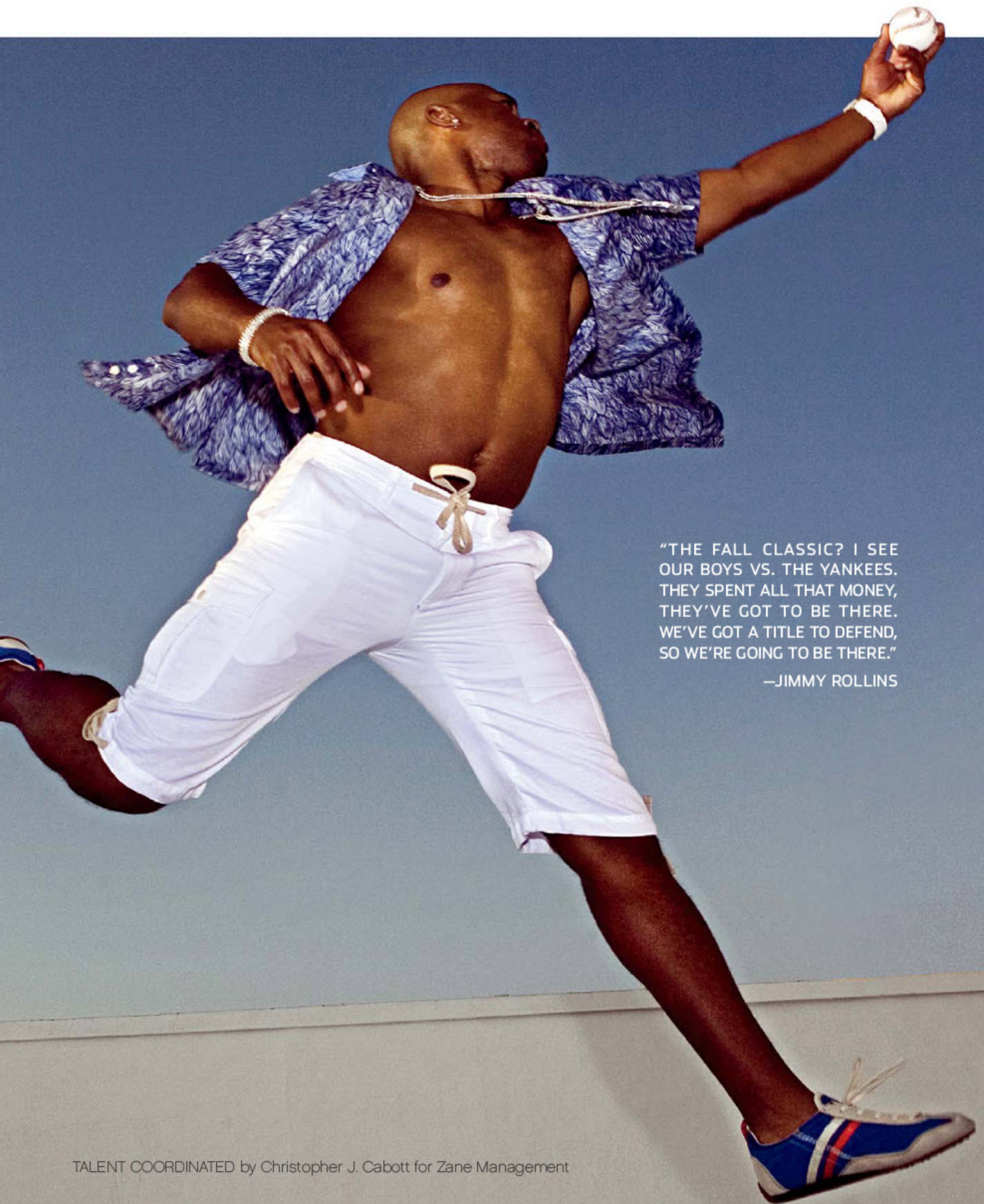


INFO
BATS
Both
THROWS
Right
MLB SEASONS
10
SINGLE-A DEBUT
Piedmont Boll Weevils

THIS PAGE:
SPORTS COAT (\$595) BY **GANT**
SHIRT (\$15) BY **MERONA**
PANTS (\$285) BY **NICOLE FARHI**
GLASSES (\$120) BY **DIESEL**
POCKET SQUARE (\$65) BY **GANT**
BELT (\$68) BY **FRENCH CONNECTION**

OPPOSITE PAGE:
SHIRT (\$65) BY **NAUTICA**
SHORTS (\$79) BY **PERRY ELLIS**
SHOES (\$120) BY **MANGO**
WATCH (\$1,495) BY **HAMILTON**





"THE FALL CLASSIC? I SEE
OUR BOYS VS. THE YANKEES.
THEY SPENT ALL THAT MONEY,
THEY'VE GOT TO BE THERE.
WE'VE GOT A TITLE TO DEFEND,
SO WE'RE GOING TO BE THERE."

—JIMMY ROLLINS

THE PLAYBOY BAR: RUM

THE JUICE ON THE JUICE Slaves on 17th century Caribbean sugar plantations didn't have easy lives. So it's not surprising they found a way to dull the pain a bit by distilling fermented molasses (a by-product of sugar production) into what they called kill-devil. The earliest mention, from a 1651 logbook entry, describes it as a "hot, hellish and terrible liquor." Which it undoubtedly was, but that didn't stop Caribbean pirates from getting ripped to the tits on the stuff, burning villages to the ground and sailing back to Europe with hulls full of gold and booze. By the 18th century rum was the most popular liquor in the Colonies, with thousands of distilleries tucked among the warehouses of New England's port towns. Business waned during the 19th century, but after Prohibition rum made a comeback. We now consume more of it than any other country, but only in the past decade has there been a stable of widely available connoisseur-level rums. We figured it was high time to salute the preferred hooch of sailors, beach bums and anyone else with devils to kill.



WHITE RUM

Often referred to as light or silver rum, this subtle, sweet and clear spirit is the foundation of most rum-based cocktails. White rum is typically aged for a short time in un-charred oak casks or stainless-steel tanks. This liquor comes cheap, but we suggest you spend the extra 10 bucks for Platino Matusalem (\$32).

GOLD RUM

This category is sometimes referred to as amber, but either way, the rums in it spend a few years in charred bourbon barrels, which impart the eponymous gold color while blunting the spirit's inherent sweetness. It has a slightly more robust flavor than white and is used mostly for making mixed drinks. See Bacardi Gold (\$13).

SPICED RUM

A category that emerged in the mid-20th century, spiced rums are gold ones that have been infused with various flavors, most commonly cinnamon, vanilla, caramel and a variety of fruits. You can find some real clunkers in this aisle, but you're safe in the hands of Sailor Jerry (\$20) or the ubiquitous Captain Morgan (\$19).

DARK RUM

Dark rum is aged at least three years in heavily charred oak barrels and carries a complex flavor profile that can rival your better whiskeys. The extra aging mellows it out and brings the sweetness back. Though it can be mixed, it's best sipped neat, on the rocks or with a squeeze of lime. Try Cruzan Single Barrel (\$25).

SUPER-AGED RUM

This relatively new category includes hooch that has been in the barrel even longer, usually for five or more years, to bring out more flavor. Though it can be produced from a single spirit, more often than not it is a blend of oldies but goodies. Mount Gay's 1703 Old Cask Selection (\$100) is a good place to start.

"THE FIRST
TIME I PLAYED
THE MASTERS
I WAS SO
NERVOUS
I DRANK A
BOTTLE OF
RUM BEFORE
I TEED OFF.
I SHOT THE
HAPPIEST 83
OF MY LIFE"
—CHI CHI RODRIGUEZ

FOR HIM: THE BLACK PRINCE
(Created by Philip Ward of New
York City's Death + Company)
2 oz. Ron Zacapa 23 rum
¾ oz. Punt e Mes
(or another Italian dry vermouth)
½ oz. Averna
(a black herbal liqueur)
1 dash orange bitters
Stir ingredients with ice and strain
into a chilled cocktail glass.

FOR HER: THE ACAPULCO
1½ oz. light rum
1½ oz. triple sec
1 tbsp. lime juice
1 tsp. sugar
1 egg white
1 mint sprig
Shake all ingredients (except mint)
with ice, then strain into an ice-filled
old-fashioned glass. Garnish with
mint sprig.

**FOR THE PARTY:
FISH-HOUSE PUNCH**
8 cups amber rum
4 cups brandy
4 oz. peach brandy
1½ cups superfine sugar
8 cups water
4 cups lemon juice
Pour sugar into a large punch bowl
along with just enough water to
dissolve it. Add lemon juice, all
liquors and the remaining water,
then stir and refrigerate for at least
an hour. Add a large block of ice,
garnish with lemon slices and serve.



ANY QUESTIONS?

Why is rum called rum? The ancient Malays had a cane-based booze they dubbed *brum*, though many etymologists contend the word derives from either *rumbullion*, a West Indian term for "a great uproar," or the goblets Dutch sailors used, called *rummers*.

Was George Washington as big a boozer as people say? We cannot tell a lie: For his inauguration ceremony Washington had rum specially imported from Barbados. He was also rumored to request eggnog and rum punch on a daily basis.

Plus, thanks to those wooden teeth, he has the distinction of being the only founding father who could barrel-age liquor inside his own mouth.

Is it ever acceptable for a man to drink a frozen rum cocktail? According to Tom the barman, our local font of unimpeachable booze wisdom, it is acceptable on three conditions. You must be: (1) outside and (2) with a beautiful woman who is (3) also having one.

Would the United States exist without rum? Probably, but it wouldn't be as

much fun. Actually, a tax on molasses was part of what riled up the colonists about taxation without representation. Considering that most of our nation's forefathers owned muskets and were dearly attached to their liquor, something was bound to give.

What is Black Tot Day? July 31, 1970, the day Britain's Royal Navy ended its centuries-old practice of handing sailors a daily ration (or tot) of rum, leaving them, sadly, with only sodomy and the lash.





Lovely Rita

THE TOWN ISN'T THE SAME SINCE THE PLANT MOVED IN, BUT THESE DAYS THE LOCALS NEED CASH, NOT COMMUNITY OR EVEN FISH IN THE RIVER. THEY ALSO NEED THRILLS, AND THEY'RE WILLING TO PAY, WHATEVER THE COST

BY MAILE MELOY

In 1975, Steven Kelly was 23 and newly orphaned. His father had died of pancreatic cancer two years earlier, and Steven had quit a construction job to move home and take care of his mother. She had relied on her husband so absolutely, all her adult life, that she had never filled a gas tank on her own or looked at a tax form. In her grief, after his death, she shifted her dependence to Steven. She told him it was lucky she'd had a son, as if no daughter of hers would be able to master a gas pump either. When she died of the same cancer as his father—one of the doctors described it as mercifully quick, but there was nothing merciful about it—Steven felt like a boxer losing a fight, not knocked out but dizzy from the blows.

His mother showed him pictures when she was sure she was dying, of herself as a grave little girl in a white First Communion dress, with hollow-eyed Italian relatives in suits. She told him stories: Her father had tried to start an ice cream business as a young man, but the unsold, unrefrigerated

ice cream would melt by the end of the day, and he would end up eating it himself, dejected. Her mother had once won a beauty contest, scandalizing the family, in a bathing costume that came down to her knees. It was as if his mother was trying to make a safe place for her family in his brain. She died as she was becoming a real person to Steven, not just the more helpless of his ever-present parents, and so she was frozen in mid-transformation, neither one thing nor the other.

They left him the house he'd grown up in but no money, once the taxes were paid. Their small Connecticut town, where he had spent a happy, bike-riding, bait-fishing childhood, was being transformed by the building of a nuclear power plant. When finished, the plant would pull in water to cool the reactors, which would raise the temperature of the river and kill the fish he had grown up fishing. There were angry, impotent protests, and there were jobs for anyone who could swing a hammer. Steven hated the plant—everyone did—but he couldn't sell his childhood house, so he took one of the jobs.

The plant was two miles long and a mile wide and still being laid with pipes. Steven was hired to build scaffolding for the pipe fitters, then take it down and build it somewhere else. It was a union job, and they'd been told to make it last, so they worked in threes: While one worked below, the other two would climb to the top of the scaffolding and sleep. Someone usually duct-taped a transistor radio to the mouthpiece of one of the paging telephones so music blasted through the plant. When the security guards got close to finding the radio, it would be rescued, and the music would stop, until the guards left. Then the radio would move to another phone, and the music would start again: "Born to Run" blaring over the clanging and drilling and sawing and hammering.

Steven's best friend from high school, Acey Rawlings, also worked at the plant. Acey had joined the Coast Guard for a while but lost interest and was home living with his mother. Any social status Steven had in school came from Acey's reflected cool, and now Acey had mythologized their teenage years, believing them to be as perfect as high school years could be. They had missed the draft for Vietnam by the skin of their teeth, and Acey considered luck to be something they had rights to and could count on.

Most nights after work, they went to the bar to drink beer until the hammering in their heads subsided enough for sleep. So in some ways nothing had changed since Steven was 16: He was still drinking beer with Acey, except now it was legal and less exciting. It was on one of those nights that a girl showed up, hanging around. She was too skinny, with small tits and narrow hips, and she leaned on the bar next to Steven in jeans and a tank top and ordered a gin

and tonic. He reflected that it was difficult not to talk to a girl standing next to you in a tank top, no matter how tired you were.

"Are you old enough to drink that?" he asked her.

She showed him her license. It said she was 23, five-foot-six, 110 pounds. He could have lifted her right into his lap. Eyes: green; hair: brown. Her eyes were oversize and ringed with green eyeliner and black mascara. He showed the license to Acey at the next bar stool, because he could already feel that Acey's interest in the girl trumped his. He was going to have to get out of the way. Then he noticed the name on the card: Rita Hillier.

"I know you," Steven said.

"You do?"

"We went to grade school together. You moved away."

She narrowed her made-up eyes at him. "Did you have a lot of cavities?" she asked.

"No. I mean, not more than normal."

"Did I ever kiss you?"

"No."

She shook her head. "Then I don't remember."

He could have told her that her father was the first person he had ever seen falling-down drunk, but that seemed unfriendly. "You sat in front of me in Mrs. Wilson's class," he said. "You showed me how to cheat on spelling tests by keeping the practice list inside your desk and pretending to look for an eraser."

"I did not."

"You think I don't know who corrupted me?"

"I remember cheating on math, later," she said. "Not spelling."

"Your dad used to walk you home from school."

Her eyes lost their gleam, and she looked at her drink. "That was me," she said. "They took his driver's license away."

"Is he all right?"

"I think so."

"Do you see him much?"

She frowned sideways at Steven. "You ask a lot of questions."

Acey kicked him under the bar.

"This is my friend, Acey," Steven said. "We went to high school together but not grade school. He doesn't ask so many questions."

Acey smiled his handsome smile at her, leaning forward over his beer.

Steven withdrew to the men's room to let Acey move in. Behind the closed door, he stood looking at the filthy urinal, feeling disoriented by his brief return to third grade. Mrs. Wilson had caught him cheating on the spelling test, but he hadn't turned Rita in. It was his first and maybe only major act of chivalry. He got a zero on the test and a C in spelling, but his parents had never asked about the sudden drop in his grade. He guessed that Mrs. Wilson had told them about the cheating, and they were too embarrassed to mention



it. Rita's dad wouldn't have cared if she cheated—the old drunk might even have applauded it as wily—but it had seemed important to protect her from disgrace.

When he went back out to the bar, Rita had her head bent close to Acey's, the deal sealed, and Steven put his arms around their shoulders.

"Let's go out for a midnight nuclear protest," Steven said, and Acey whooped with eagerness.

They drove down to the marina, stole a Sunfish from a slip and sailed it across the river. Acey manned the tiller, singing "Tea for the Tillerman." Rita kneeled precariously in the bow and swayed and waved her arms in the wind, singing along on "Wine for the woman who made the rain come." When they got to the new plant, they yelled until the lights came on and the security guards came running down to the water to see what was going on. It was a pointless thing, hassling the security guards, who were just local guys like them, getting a paycheck. But it felt good to yell on a warm night. Rita was surprisingly loud. When the guards shouted threats, fat and breathless in their tight uniforms, there wasn't any wind left to sail the Sunfish, so they laughed and paddled back to the marina with their hands. They could see a few stars through the haze. When they got back to the slip, Steven was starting to sober up. Acey left them to go pee off the end of the dock, and Rita said, "I'm sorry I got mad when you asked if I see my dad."

"That's okay," Steven said.

"I don't see him at all," she said. "I don't know where he is."

"I'm sorry."

"Do you remember him?"

"A little."

"What do you remember?"

"Not that much, really," he said. "I just remember him picking you up at school. He seemed like a nice man."

She looked at him skeptically, and he pretended he was telling the truth. Then Acey came back, buttoning his jeans. He bear-hugged Rita, kissed her hair and took her home.

After that, Acey was in love, and he couldn't shut up about it. He talked about

Rita all the time, how amazing she was, how unlike other girls. He did it at the plant, where people weren't used to such happiness, and he made himself unwelcome. The married men only smiled and made jaded little jokes—*Wait until the blow jobs run out*—but the lonely ones found it intolerable. A raffle was held for a car someone needed to unload, with two packs of playing cards cut in half on the band saw, and Acey made a big show of buying a lot of tickets and asking specifically for the heart face cards so he could give the car and the winning card to Rita. There was open glee in the plant when he didn't win.

He told Rita about it, at the bar, how he had planned to give her the car. People raffled off all kinds of things: a gas barbecue, a load of firewood. Once a guy raffled off his wife. It was before Steven's time, and he had never met anyone who actually knew the guy, but people said it happened and the wife was in on it. The winner borrowed her for a night. Rita's eyes widened in surprise when she heard that. Acey sang "Oh, baby, baby, it's a wild world" to her, and she laughed.

Men sitting quietly at other tables looked over at Acey cavorting for Rita and shook their heads. When Acey sang "Just remember there's a lot of bad and beware," he had to pull his chin into his chest to get close to the low notes at the end.

Even though Steven knew Acey was driving everyone nuts at the plant and guessed there would be some attempt to take the Romeo down a notch, it still took him a minute to realize what was happening when a high, spooky voice came over the PA system one afternoon, filling the whole plant, calling, "Riii-ta, lovely Riii-ta!" Then it made a kissing noise and hung up.

The guys around them were already laughing, and Steven saw knowledge dawning on Acey's face. He thought he should have taken Acey aside long before and told him to keep his mouth shut.

The high voice came again, asking, "Rita, where *are* you?" Then the kissing noise.

Acey stalked to the closest paging phone, holding a wrench like a weapon, the guys still laughing behind him. No one was at the phone, of course. When Acey turned back with the wrench, he nearly bumped into a white hat, a liaison who came to check on the site for the client. Normally someone saw the white hats coming soon enough for all the sleepers to get down off the scaffolding, but this one had appeared out of nowhere.

"Who's doing that voice?" the inspector asked Acey.

"I don't know," he said.

"Who's Rita?" the white hat asked.

Acey didn't say anything. The guys didn't either.

"Tell me," the white hat said.

"It'll stop," Acey said.

"It better," the man said.

It did stop, until the next inspection. As

soon as the white hat got there, the voice came over the loudspeaker again. "Riii-ta, darling *Riii-ta!*" And then the kissing noise. But by then it wasn't really about Acey or Rita. It had turned into a way of baiting the inspector, who went to their foreman, Frank Mantini, to complain. Someone who was standing outside the office heard Mantini tell the inspector it was a harmless prank, the guys letting off steam.

The white hat put a 100-dollar bill on the foreman's desk, according to the eavesdropper, and said, "It's yours if you find out who's doing this."

"I don't want the money," Frank said.
"Find out anyway," the white hat said.

Frank Mantini had a family at home, three daughters, and must have felt his job was at stake. But he couldn't stop the prank. If he caught one guy—which he couldn't—there would always be another to carry on. Then they switched tactics and started to torment him specifically. The high, spooky voice would say, "*Frankie*, you can't *catch* me!" and then make the kissing noise and hang up.

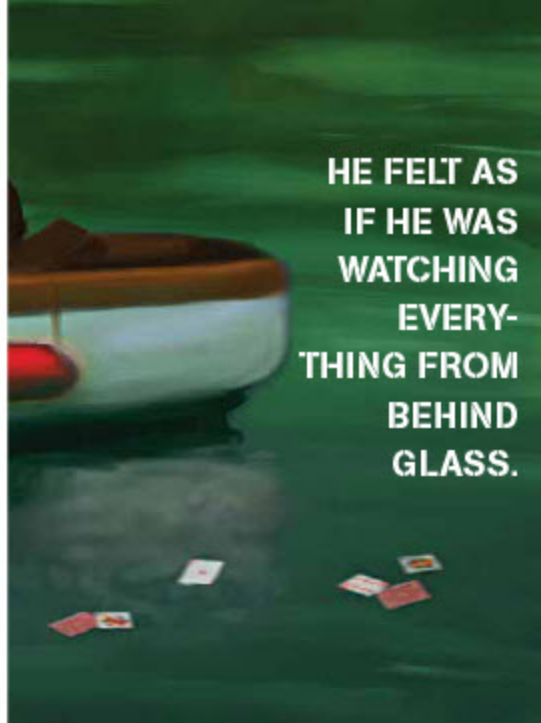
It went on for days, third-grade stuff: the occasional "Lovely Rita," sometimes a line of the Beatles song, badly sung, but mostly taunts for Frank. The white hat came in every day. Frank Mantini started to look ill, and people were saying that whoever was doing the phone stuff should lay off.

At the end of the week, Frank took Acey to the bar for lunch to pump him for information. Some of the guys at the plant went to the bar at noon every day, and the bartender had their drinks lined up. They were career drinkers, old hands, and they drove back to the plant unimpaired. But Frank Mantini and Acey weren't those guys. Acey came back drunk and decided to take a nap, not up on the scaffolding but in a quiet corner on the floor. Frank had already gone into his office and shut the door.

Acey's quiet corner, where he had put his jacket under his head, was behind a parked front loader, and someone went to use it. The poor guy climbed in, started the engine and backed up, feeling a bump. He stopped and climbed down again to check what it was, and saw that he'd backed over Acey with one of the front loader's heavy back tires, crushing his skull.

Someone tripped the alarm, and the ambulance came, pointlessly, and the white hat showed up. Frank Mantini got dragged out of his office, smelling of whiskey, and fell to his knees at the sight of Acey dead on the floor.

The death—the real weight of it—didn't hit Steven for a long time. He felt as if he was watching everything from behind glass. He got his old rod out and went fishing, and wondered why he and Acey had stopped going, why they stole boats to protest the plant but didn't take advantage of the last years of cold water and healthy fish. He didn't catch anything and



HE FELT AS
IF HE WAS
WATCHING
EVERY-
THING FROM
BEHIND
GLASS.

thought maybe the fish knew what was coming and had already cleared out.

The funeral was at St. Mary's, where his parents' funerals had been, and Steven sat in a pew like someone's accountant, thinking about what the flowers cost, and the casket. Frank Mantini, who had lost his job, was there without his family. Acey's little brother, the snotty kid they used to put in a headlock, now a stocky 19-year-old with a crew cut, read from notes, his voice shaking, about how he would never have a big brother again. Acey's mother, who used to cook Steven eggs and muss his hair, tried to speak but couldn't. Then a big motherly girl with caramel-colored skin, Acey's first cousin, got up and helped everyone out by saying nice things without breaking down.

Rita sat next to Steven, not crying. She had sobbed and screamed when he first told her. After the funeral, Steven drove her home and they sat in his truck, talking about nothing, until finally she got out and went inside. He went back to his parents' house feeling like death was on him, a film on his face and grit in his teeth. He took a shower in his old bathroom, wishing he had a warmhearted girl like Acey's cousin to hold on to, and cried under the stream of water. In the morning, he got up to go back to the clanging plant.

Rita called him three days later and said, "I want you to help me hold a raffle."

"A raffle for what?"

"For me," she said. "I want to charge five dollars a ticket."

"What's the prize?" he asked.

"*Me*," she said. "I *said* that. For a night."

Her voice, disembodied on the phone, sounded very young. He thought about her skinny body, the odd waifishness. "No one's ever charged five bucks a ticket," he said.

"No one's ever got a five-dollar hooker either," she said.

He wondered how much the guy had charged in the mythical wife raffle. "Some of them might have," he said. "Some of them get it for free."

"I've seen the way they look at me," she said. "I think I can get five a ticket. That's 540 bucks, with two decks. If I

could get 10, it would be over a thousand and I could get out of here. But I don't know if I could get 10."

"It's illegal."

"So is every fucking thing that goes on at that plant," she said. "Jesus. Will you help me or not?"

He sat with the phone to his ear on his mother's couch and imagined himself pushing raffle tickets for Acey's girlfriend's pussy, for the girl who'd shown him how to cheat at spelling in third grade. "No."

"You have to."

"I don't have to do anything. No one's going to buy a ticket."

"They will too. Just get me the cards, and I'll sell them myself."

"Get your own damn cards. You can cut them with scissors."

"It's not the same," she said. "It has to look like what they're used to. I need you to help me."

Steven hung up and sat looking around his mother's living room, at the curtains she had sewn, now long faded, and the flowered couch where she had sat, missing his father and dying. It seemed strange now, their long marriage, their total dependence on each other. His father couldn't cook a meal or shop for groceries any more than his mother could gas up a car.

In the morning on his way to work, Steven bought two decks of cards, one blue and one red. All he was going to do was give Rita the cut cards and let her do what she wanted, but Kyle Jaker, a kid on Steven's crew, saw him at the band saw and asked what the raffle was for.

"Nothing."

"Come on," Jaker said.

"Acey's girlfriend wants them."

"For what?"

Steven paused too long before saying, "I don't know."

"Oh, man, is it for her?"

Steven wondered how Jaker had guessed that, and moved away. "I said I'd get her the cards, that's all."

Jaker was scrappy and vain and pale skinned, with a wild cowlick in the back of his carefully combed hair. It gave him a roosterish look. He skipped along beside. "How much?" he asked.

"She wants 10." Steven thought Jaker would balk at the price and they'd be done.

Jaker pulled a 20-dollar bill out of his wallet. "I'll take two," he said.

Steven had never seen a 20 come out so easily at the plant or in the bar. Maybe not in his life, ever. "I'm not selling them."

"You just sold two. Come on."

He held the bill out, and Steven finally took it and dealt him two halves from the blue deck.

"The jokers!" Jaker said, grinning. "Jaker's jokers. That's good luck."

Word couldn't have spread faster if Steven had announced the raffle on the paging phones, which had gone eerily silent since Acey's death. By lunchtime he had sold (continued on page 96)

IDA LJUNGQVIST
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PLAYMATE
of the
YEAR
2009

YOUR CHOICE FOR OUR 50TH PMOY IS QUITE A FINE ONE

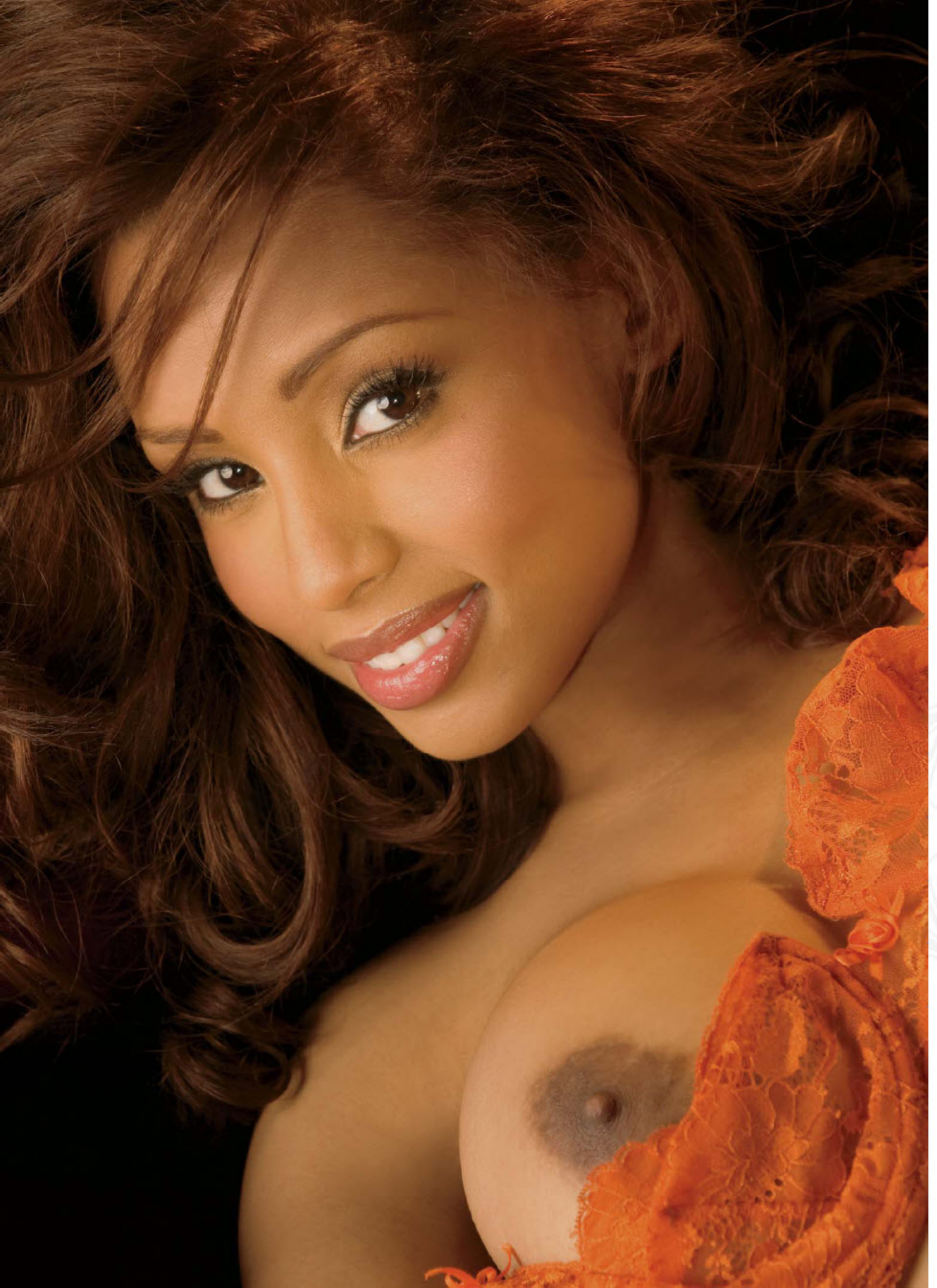


Hot, huh? Ida looks pretty good too. See a history of the Playmate of the Year cars at playboy.com.

Playmates are special girls next door. We often discover them walking their dog, serving coffee or even waiting in line at the DMV. Take Ida Ljungqvist, for example. One day our PMOY 2007 Sara Jean Underwood wandered into a Beverly Hills boutique and saw her. Sara then took the Girls Next Door and their video cameras into Ida's store to see if she would fit into their scene. It turned out Ida was as comfortable out of her clothes as she was folding them, and she accepted the bid into Playmatedom. But you and Hef felt she was more than just a very special girl next door, and that's why we've named her PMOY 2009. In little more than a year, Ida (pronounced EE-duh) went from sexy shopgirl on Rodeo Drive to being crowned the 50th PMOY at her own ceremony at the Palms in Vegas. Ida hadn't considered being a

Ida's PMOY presents: A big check for \$100,000, a party at the Playboy Club at the Palms in Vegas and a sweet ride for our favorite sweetheart: a 2009 Mazda6 in black-cherry metallic finish.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN WAYDA



PLAYMATE DATA SHEET:

NAME: _____

BUST: _____ WAIST: _____ HIPS: _____

HEIGHT: _____ WEIGHT: _____

BIRTH DATE: _____ BIRTHPLACE: _____

AMBITIONS: _____

TURN-ONS: _____

TURNOFFS: _____

SPORTS I HAVE PLAYED: _____

FAVORITE FOODS TO MAKE: _____

MY PETS: _____

SOMEONE I TRULY ADMIRE AND WHY: _____

SOME PERFECTION IS DEBATABLE.









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Playmate before we whisked into her shop. "But I figured I would try something new and break out of my shell," she says. And since her issue came out, she has hung up her retailer's hat and put on her Bunny tail, becoming a perfect ambassador for Playboy. She brightened duffers' days on the course during our Playboy Golf Scramble, was an Easter Bunny at the Mansion's egg hunt and even appeared on *CSI*. For all her hard work, we are celebrating her at the Palms—the first time the Playmate of the Year will be honored in Vegas.

This shoot took place at the \$40,000-a-night Hugh Hefner Sky Villa. "It's amazing. The bed spins around," she says. "When I'm in Vegas, I like to watch." Don't get too excited, guys. She continues, "A lot of my Playmate friends are gamblers and are really good at it. I will sit and be arm candy for one of them while they play blackjack."

And why is she a good-luck charm only for female models? She says guys find it hard to open up to her because they think she's unattainable, but she has news for them. "I am single and ready," she says. "I am the happiest girl in California! I'm a little shy and prefer men to approach me first, but I'll give them a little sign, like a look or wink that says, 'Get your butt over here!'"

She is far from lonely, though. Aside from the Playmate sorority, she has a woman's best friend. "I have a five-pound Chihuahua named Bonnie, and I introduce myself as her mom. You know all those things you hear about crazy pet owners? That's me."

Her other pet project is her continuing interest in charity (her father works for UNICEF). "A lot of people ask me, 'What can I do to help?'" she says. "It gives me an opportunity to find out what they're passionate about. That's one thing that really surprised me: Regardless of what's going on in the economy, everybody wants to help. The United States is a very generous country, and the people are not as self-centered as the news may say."

When we ask Ida about when she is happiest, she pauses for a moment and smiles widely, as she often does. "I'm happy—that's it," she says. "My happiness doesn't come from anything of this world. People think you become happier by doing more, but that's not true. You accomplish more when you realize that everything you have is inside you and you don't need to add anything to yourself."

Just before her PMOY ceremony, we asked Ida how she was handling it all. "Of course I'm going to cry," she said. "Somebody better stuff her bra because I'm going to need a tissue."





See Ida's original Playmate pictorial at club.playboy.com.



Lovely Rita

(continued from pag 85)

all of the blue deck and started on the red. He had agreed to meet Rita at the bar, and she climbed into his truck. He put the wad of bills and the blue stubs on the seat between them, and she grabbed the cash.

"I knew it!" she said.

"I hate this."

"I knew they'd buy them."

"You could get hurt."

"I can take care of myself," she said. She lifted her hips to tuck the cash away in her tight jeans. The wad of bills bulged out the denim. Then she put the blue stubs in her jacket and zipped up the pocket, like a kid putting away her milk ticket.

"There are other ways to get money," he said.

"I've tried them."

"Have you seen those guys?"

"You know I have."

"Why not just turn normal tricks?"

She gave him a level stare. "Do you know how many blow jobs it would take to make this much money?" She held out her hand for the other tickets.

"I'll sell them," he said. "You shouldn't have to do it."

Half the remaining tickets sold to the lunch crowd in the bar. The other half sold by the end of his shift. Some guys pretended to be helping out Acey's girlfriend, but most of them had a hungry glint in their eyes. She was a celebrity—Lovely Rita, muse of the pager phone, the dead guy's girl. Steven thought he was getting an ulcer.

She was waiting outside the plant when he finished his shift. He walked toward his truck and she followed. Inside the truck, he gave her the money.

"What do we do now?" she asked.

"There's no *we* here."

"What do I do? To run the raffle."

"You put the cards in a hard hat and draw one out, and the holder of the other half wins."

"Where does it happen?"

"In the plant."

"Can we do it at the bar?"

"What the fuck is this *we*?"

"Can I do it at the bar?"

"You can't do it alone."

She blew her bangs off her forehead, exasperated. "Make up your mind," she said.

"I'll do it at work tomorrow," he said. He pictured himself standing in front of the hungry crowd, and he was glad he hadn't bought any tickets. If he won, having set up the raffle, they'd tear him apart.

"Thank you," she said, and she gave him back all the stubs, checking her pocket for ones that she'd missed.

He drove her home in silence, and she kissed him on the cheek—an odd, dry, sisterly kiss. Then she clambered down out of the truck and ran through the dark to her apartment. He drove home to bed and lay wide awake, until he rolled on his back and imagined himself the raffle winner. He whacked off like a teenager to put himself to sleep.

When he got to work the next day, early

for his shift, the place was crawling with white hats. They were everywhere: talking to the crews, poking around. He assumed it was because of the accident, and Acey, but Kyle Jaker told him that one of the foremen had been caught diverting stainless steel to replace the pipes in his house.

"That's all?" Steven asked. The place looked like a kicked-over anthill.

"When's the raffle?" Jaker asked.

"I can't do it with all these hats here."

Jaker scanned the busy plant. "I should've bought more tickets," he finally said. "You got any left?"

"No."

"You got your own?"

"I didn't buy any."

Jaker raised his eyebrows.

"I forgot to," Steven said.

"So when's the raffle?"

"I don't know," he said. "After the white hats clear out."

"Hey," Jaker said. "I was just asking."

The white hats didn't clear out, and everyone was jittery. With no one sleeping on the scaffolding, there were too many men on the floor, and they got in each other's way. Steven kept waiting for someone to clap him on the shoulder, charge him with pandering and throw him in jail.

Word started going around that the drawing would be at the bar, and the rumor became a kind of groundswell, it had its own momentum. The guys had given him their money, and they wanted a raffle. By the end of his shift, he had sweated through his shirt, and he changed into a new one.

He'd never seen the bar so packed. Kyle Jaker produced a hard hat and offered to do the drawing, so Steven gave him the cards. Jaker stood on a bar stool and grinned down at the men standing shoulder to shoulder in the bar, staring up at him. He held the hat over his head, as if performing a blood ritual.

"Wait," Steven heard himself say. He was on his feet, when a moment before he'd been sitting at the bar. He hadn't meant to say anything, and his heart was pounding in his chest. It didn't seem to have its right rhythm.

Men turned to look at him, ready to hear him out.

"I know I started this," he said. "But I don't—but we shouldn't do it. Let's just give her the money."

There was a long silence while the men looked at him. No one came after him, and no one laughed. They just turned to look at Jaker again, showing Steven the backs of their heads. They didn't say anything because they didn't need to. The desire in the room was palpable, and the thing was under way.

Jaker smirked at Steven, then waggled his fingers over the hard hat like a magician and drew out half a card slowly, with great ceremony. He held the card so everyone could see it. "Red-backed three of clubs," he announced. "Fuck, that's not me."

Everyone in the room dug in his pocket or looked at the stub in his hand. Finally Frank Mantini came forward. He'd left the plant, and Steven hadn't sold him any tickets. He handed Jaker a stub, and Jaker

held it up to match the card he'd drawn. A sigh of disappointment rose up from the crowd, and there was a round of applause for Frank. Acey's ruined foreman seemed to have some kind of right to the girl. Then the men poured out the door to go home to their families, or to bed. The built-up tension in the room was gone.

"Congrats, Frankie," Kyle Jaker said. He clapped him on the shoulder and moved off.

Frank Mantini turned to Steven, still holding the cut card.

"Where'd you get that?" Steven asked him.

"I had 12 of them," Frank said. "Someone called me. I came down and bought what I could off the guys. I've got daughters her age."

"Don't start," Steven said. "I didn't want to get involved."

"Bullshit," Frank said. He handed over the halved three of clubs. A vein stuck out of his temple. He seemed to have more white in his hair than he had two weeks ago, but Steven could have imagined that. "You were Acey's friend, right?" Frank asked.

Steven said nothing.

Frank looked hollow-eyed. "When you see her," he said, "would you tell her to knock this shit off?"

Steven said he would.

"And you knock it off too," Frank said.

Steven drove by Rita's apartment after leaving the bar. Frank was right: He hadn't tried hard to stop it, and he hadn't tried to make it right, like Frank had. If he had bought a ticket and won, he would have wanted his prize. He'd been thinking of her the way everyone else had, of her small hands and her wide mouth, of her straddling him with her skinny legs. She was the girl in the Springsteen song, if anyone was. "Wrap your legs round these velvet rims and strap your hands across my engines." Now he could wake her up and tell her she was free—he could be the hero. Or, he realized as he sat in the dark in his truck, he could pass off Frank's three of clubs as his own. She wouldn't know until it was too late. Frank Mantini would shit bricks, but Frank had already made his noble gesture and gotten his satisfaction from that.

Steven was about to drive away, undecided, when Rita came outside. She was wearing a white nightgown with a pink ribbon woven through the neck, left untied in the front. She was barefoot and she had been crying, and she got in the truck. He could see the outline of her small breasts inside the white cotton, and her face looked naked with no makeup.

"He's gone," she said. "He's gone."

"Acey?" he asked.

"No, this guy," she said. "My father—I wanted to find my father, so I got this missing-persons guy, you know, who finds people. He said he could find my dad, for sure. So I paid him, I gave him the cash, and he was supposed to look for my dad, and then he just, I don't know, left. And took the money. I'm so *fucking* stupid."

"I'm sorry," Steven said.

"But you know what?" she said. "I'm



"Actually, Miss Fenimore, I think we've addressed your frigidity problem quite well."

almost glad. I think he would've found out my father's dead."

"Why do you think that?"

"Because he never *looked* for me," she said wildly, gesturing to the world outside. "He never *found* me!" Then she seemed to realize that he had never looked for her when he was definitely alive, and she deflated, shrinking into herself. "I don't know," she said. "No one can drink like that forever."

"Maybe he could," he said. "He was a tough guy."

She wiped her nose. "Yeah," she said. "So who won the raffle?"

"Frank Mantini," he said. "Our foreman, the one who was fired." He fished the card out of his pocket and gave it to her. "He bought a bunch of tickets. He doesn't want anything. He said he has daughters your age, and he wanted me to tell you to knock this shit off."

She looked at him, wide-eyed and forlorn, then made a small, anguished noise and covered her face with her hands. Her shoulders in the white nightgown shook. She crawled across the seat into his lap, fitting herself sideways between his chest and the steering wheel. Then she tucked up her legs and buried her wet face in his shoulder. He put his arms around her too-thin shoulders, carefully. Her hair smelled unwashed but not in the way of adults: She smelled like an unshowered child, like summers at the public pool when he was 10.

They stayed there so long, Rita alternately sobbing and sleeping, that his arms grew stiff and the sky started to lighten. Rita finally woke, cried out and extracted herself. At no point had she tried to kiss him, and he didn't try to kiss her, either. It wasn't because she was Acey's girl. It was because she seemed to be drowning and might drag him under.

She wiped her nose with her hand. "What do you remember about my dad, really?" she asked.

He didn't say anything.

"You can tell me," she said.

"I remember he came to school one time to get you, in the middle of the day. He just showed up in the classroom, and he was drunk, I guess. I didn't really know that then. He knocked over a kind of easel thing. He called Mrs. Wilson by her first name and said he was taking you out of school. She said he couldn't."

Rita stared at him. "God, I don't remember anything," she said. "It's like a big eraser came through that part of my brain. Did I go with him?"

"I don't think so."

"Why didn't you tell me when I met you at the bar?"

"Why on earth would I tell you that?"

"Is that why you didn't want me? Why you handed me off to Acey?"

"I didn't hand you off," he said. "Acey grabbed you and didn't let go. He was crazy about you. He talked about you all the time."

"Really?" Her face crumpled.

He didn't want her to start crying again. He had to get out of the truck and stretch his legs. "Are you hungry?" he asked. He started the engine. "Let's get something to eat."

Still in her nightgown, at a glossy diner table, she sat eating eggs and pancakes as if she'd never seen food before.

"Slow down," he said. "You're going to hurt yourself."

She licked maple syrup off her thumb. "I think I'm going to go away," she said. "Maybe find my brother. Do you remember him?"

"No."

"He was older. When we were kids we used to take care of each other. I wanted to be a ballet dancer, and he used to tell me I could, and he would draw pictures of the costumes I would wear. I remember that."

"Did you take dance lessons?"

"No." She laughed. "That didn't seem to matter. Hey, can I maybe borrow some money?" she asked. "Just a little bit. I gave so much to the guy, the detective. I guess he probably wasn't a real detective, was he?"

"Do you mean borrow, or keep?"

She made a pained face. "I don't know," she said. "I want to get on my feet. I'd want to pay you back."

After breakfast, he drove with her to the bank and gave her \$400 he had earned building scaffolding with Acey. And then Rita vanished. It was a family talent. Steven drove by her apartment, and there was a sign saying it was for rent.

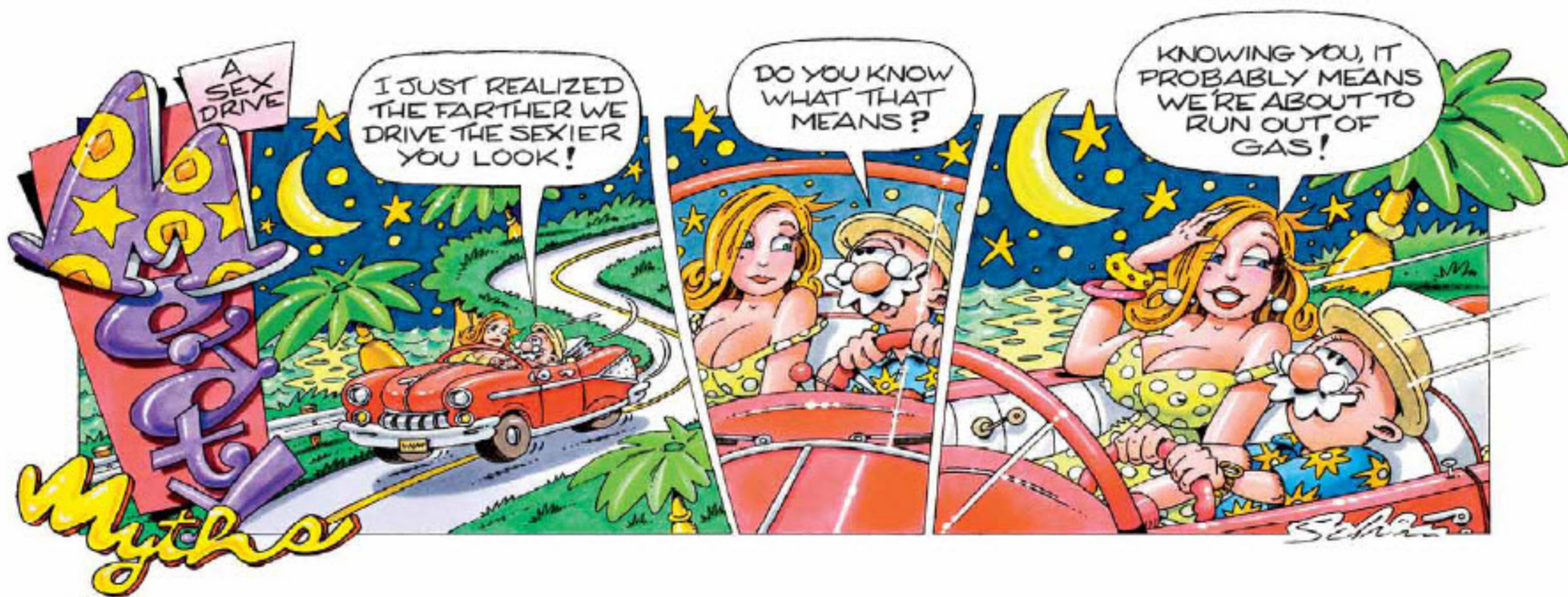
He went out fishing a lot after that. Sometimes he would go at night and borrow a Sunfish like they used to, because it was so easy. Other times he would sit on a dock before

sunset with a line in the cool water, watching the light play on the surface. He caught fish, not as many as he remembered catching as a kid, but enough to prove they were still there, waiting for food to come by, unaware that the river was only theirs until the plant started up, and then their time was over.

He finally left the plant, months before it was ready to open, not long before his job would have run out anyway. He sold his parents' house and moved to Florida, because there were plenty of jobs building houses there and because it felt like a place everyone had moved to. It didn't seem like a place anyone was from. There were girls in the bars there, too, and sometimes he talked to them. If they didn't seem too crazy, he sometimes took them home.

There was one who moved in with him, who was a few years older than he was. She had been a mermaid at a water park, and she looked like a mermaid, with wavy blonde hair. She showed him some of her act once, in the pool at his apartment building, with the kids coming out on the balconies to watch her do backward somersaults. It was convincing even without her green tail, and in that moment he thought he might love her. But he kept comparing the way he felt about her to the way Acey had seemed to feel about Rita, and it was a hard standard. After a few months he broke it off and felt better. He didn't want anything that felt like it had a history to it.

When they started to drain a nearby swamp where birds and fish had lived, for a new housing development, Steven watched the protests and the preparations with interest. The bird people were furious, the developers unmovable, and Steven was filled with relief that the fight wasn't his. Nothing here was his: The streets weren't full of things he'd done with Acey, or places he'd ridden his bike in grade school, and nothing reminded him of his dead parents. Even the old people were older than his parents had been. He thought there should have been something sad about how little he was tied up with the place, but instead it felt like freedom. He was free because it wasn't his water here, and they weren't his fish.



THE HILLIKER CURSE

(continued from page 50)

in the dark. I reconstructed the words they spoke in meetings and altered the meaning of their lives to spotlight their fictive love for me.

It was all about recognition. The dialogue ran 50/50. We shared the truth of our lives on an equal basis and kissed. We stepped back from the brink of precipitous passion, pledged monogamy and made love. I masturbated *then*. That part of my sojourn ended abruptly. *Whew!*—now we can talk about what it all means.

Soft-focus pix scrolled along with the pillow talk. Women never seen naked appeared in the buff beside me. Melinda D. folds a breast back to burrow closer in. I touch the acne scars on Pat J.'s neck to tell her it's okay. She shakes her head, removes my hand and goes, Hush now. Moonlight beams through my dive-hotel window. Laurie B.'s got tears in her eyes. I'm smiling because she just said, "I love you." She laughs and tugs at my grotesque little teeth.

It was like that. It was over 30 years ago—and I cannot let go of one moment of it.

Deep talk, lovemaking, deep talk. Sweat and nicotine breath back when classy women still smoked. The pledge of a shared future. The common cause of *Us*. The analysis of our shared pasts to vouchsafe a utopian future. Their real stories and my reinterpretation. My disingenuous omission of the dead woman hovering. My savior shtick and their capitulation to it. Their vow to assuage my big hurt. My vow to kick the shit out of every male being who had ever done them wrong. Our certainty that we would never cheat and that it would *always* be this *goooooooood*.

Deep talk, lovemaking, deep talk. On a transferably monogamous nightly basis, with any woman who might be *Her*.

Crazy boy, all mental tricks, artist manqué.

This fever consumed a full year. Shifting soul currents defined it. My physical anguish increased. The real world called to me again.

"I will take fate by the throat." Beethoven's shout at his advancing deafness. The Master's chaste solitude and my retrospective conviction: Art is this dialogue with untouchable spirits—and what you grasp for you can write.

XXXXX

My stimulation index exploded. Hookers invaded the Sunset Strip en masse.

It was '78. The Hillside Strangler panic had raged and subsided. No more Hollywood abductions. The fucker had vanished. My prayers for his capture went unanswered. I observed the upshot.

Prostitutes swarmed Sunset for solid miles. Some wore skeezy whore threads and garish makeup. Most dressed like normal women. They seemed to represent a new love-for-sale lifestyle. If they were selling, I was buying.

I knew some cops from AA. They gave me the lowdown. The women were "week-enders." Some were "actresses" looking to score extra bread. Most were office workers and schoolteachers, branching out from dumps like Bakersfield and San Berdoo. They jungled up in motels and found safety in numbers. Sure, they *looked* normal. But—no normal chick peddles her ass for gelt.

The *appearance* of normalcy jazzed me. I sensed individual stories shaped by specious social codes. One cop cited cocaine. One cop cited rogue feminism. One cop

cited greed. Shake yo booty—the times, they are a-changin'.

The women seemed *real*. I borrowed cars, cruised the Strip and scanned faces. I read their eyes, sensed what brought them there and what would convince them to stop. The women clogged the sidewalk from eight P.M. on. I made dozens of recon circuits. I scanned for wholesome faces and evidence of cracking facades. I detoured then. I drove Sunset east to Bunker Hill. I staked out the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion.

Symphony concerts ended around 10 P.M. Women with violins and cellos scooted out rear exits. I was a tongue-tied stage-door johnny. Most of the women met their husbands and boyfriends. They wore tight black orchestra gowns with cinched waists and plunging necklines. They looked anxious to shuck them, belt a few and talk music. Single women walked out, lugging heavy instruments. I offered to help several of them. They all said no.

Back to the Strip. Back to reading faces. Back to the honing of my let's-buy-sex aesthetic.

I liked the women older than me. I thought they might be more grateful for my biz and more responsive. I liked the women with glasses. I liked the women with creased brows that said, "Hooking might not be kosher."

It took two dozen drive-bys and blow-offs from the L.A. Philharmonic. I saved up some coin, borrowed a car and *pounced*.

It was midweek. It was cold. Rainstorms had blown through L.A. The Strip was packed. The women wore puffy windbreakers and buckskin dusters. I noticed a solitary pro upside Hollywood High. She wore granny glasses. She was rangy and fair-haired. She wore a slinky dress under a toggle coat. It was affectless and *sweet*. It was a geek's idea of sexy attire. She was seven or eight years older than me and appeared to be nervous. I extrapolated her life story instantly and to my mind adroitly. College prof on the skids. A history of weak men. A disengaged notion of prostitution as a lab experiment.

I pulled to the curb. She walked to the car and leaned in the passenger-side window. I said, Hello. She asked me if I was a cop. I asked her why she thought that.

She mentioned my short hair. I justified the close-cropped style and told her I worked at a golf course. She said, You just want to be different.

The perception delighted me. She had a flat Midwestern voice. She said it was 20 for French and 30 for half-and-half. I said I had a C-note and just wanted a decent stretch of her time. She looked at her watch and asked me if I wanted something special. I said, Just some time with you. Her look said, Oh—you're one of *those*.

She directed me to a motel, four blocks away on La Brea. The room was twice the size of my room and still small. She locked us in and pointed to the dresser. I laid five 20s down.

The room was warm. My legs fluttered and dripped sweat. She took off her coat and tossed it on a chair. She had soft arms for such a slender woman. An image hit me: Vera Miles as a cocktail-lounge artiste



"Let's stop before we both say some things we'll regret."

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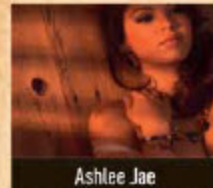
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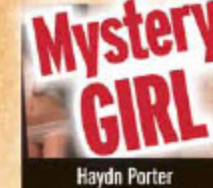
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in *The Fugitive*. She scooped the money into her purse. I said, We don't have to do it. She said, I'll kick you out if you cry.

I leaned against the wall and shut my eyes. She told me not to make it into such a big deal. I opened my eyes. She unbuttoned her dress. I asked her where she was from. She said, Fullerton.

An Orange County college town. My theory validated. I started to say some—

She unhooked her bra. I saw her breasts and smiled. She said, That's better. I took her right hand and kissed her arm above the elbow. She jiggled my hand and said, Lighten up, okay?

Deep breaths tamped my rev down. She kicked off her shoes and kept her socks on. She pulled off her dress and underwear and stood there.

She said, Okay?

The room tumbled.

It was rushed after that. It was rushed because she wanted it to be over and I didn't want to embarrass or displease her.

She didn't want to talk.

She dodged my questions.

She wouldn't let me hold her.

I don't know how long it all lasted. It felt like the world revealed.

XXXXX

So I did it repeatedly—with weirdo intuition and horny-pastor's-kid intent.

The count was high, overpayment kept me broke, my criteria were unique. The swirl of available faces kept on coming.

Borrowed pervmobiles got me to the Strip and home again, laid and unsated. Runs by the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion counterbalanced and ratched up my rev. I aroused suspicion at both locations. The Hillside Strangler was a fresh local horror. I cruised the same turf. Why are you offering me extra money? No, I don't need you to carry my cello.

I understood the distinctions between the two professions and treated both sets of women the same. I looked for a cultural component in the hookers and a brusque wantonness in the string players. I got action from the former and zilch from the latter. My extreme acuity was delusional and acutely self-serving. I read faces for signs of the worthiness of love and demanded reciprocated love instantly. It was all crude male barter: money and mock-impromptu favors. I came in with prepared text and crumbled at the first sign of improvisation. Prostitutes did not want to hear my rationale for buying their body. Violinists did not want my loser ass—they wanted the tall guy in the Guarneri Quartet or a straight Sviatoslav Richter. Both groups saw me as a zealot with a smoke-screened agenda.

The prostitutes put faith in the banality of sex and trusted fuck-me-pay-me men on that basis. I could not accept the implied dictum. The musicians viewed sex as a significant, but not exclusive aspect of their lives in search of refinement. That idea was just as restrictive. The proper answer is Sex is everything—so show me the faces and I'll write the story.

My agenda was women as muse. The Strip to the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion and back again. My selection process. A C-note offered for this: Can we get naked and talk a bit?

I logged three refusals. It worked four times. It depressurized the girls. It got me softness, taxed sighs and conversation. The thrill was the undressing and the staged tableaux. I heard stories of bad dads, cheating hubbies at Camp Pendleton and freaky Uncle Harold who groped them. They were tired and pleased to find a low-exertion john. I studied them as I pressed close. They were saving bread to open a boutique. They needed coin for a retarded kid's schooling. They were postsex or above sex. They were feminist pragmatists

hopped up on some paperback doctrine. They pooh-poohed the idea of sex as the biggest deal on earth. They gave me a pinpoint moment of their lives and were grateful that I granted it importance.

I learned to chat a little. I learned a few sensual tricks. Do this or this—you might have a girlfriend one day. You're a sweet guy, get your teeth fixed, don't *stare* so much. What's going on in that weird head?

I told a few. I said I want to write novels. I love crime fiction and classical music. My brain is overamped. I walk to work and dawdle to look at women. Drama is a man meets a woman. Violent events intercede. The man and woman are swept away by catastrophic corruption. They confront a series of morally unhinged people who need to be interdicted and quashed. The man and woman cannot run from this malfeasance. The moral point of struggle is to overcome it and change. It scares me to think that real-love sex flatlines and dies over time. I want real love and will find real love and will not let it numb my imagination. You're drawing me little pictures. We're here to tell each other special things. I don't care if you're just trying to be nice and I'm paying you for it. Women take me someplace thunderous and hang me out to dry. I want to write from that romantic perspective. You rewire my heart and show me how shit works. You talk to me and listen to me. It's the world in a pop-up book I can understand.

Yeah, but I'm naked.

Well, I'm naked, too.

You're not going to ask for something creepy?

No, I'm not.

I had that conversation four times. Stunned looks and soft looks followed. The last woman and I talked up to two A.M. She was a ranch worker from Kern County. She kept her hands laced behind her head. I kissed her underarms at pause points in my monologues. It seemed to delight her. We didn't have sex. We faded out and slept together. She leaned into me and held my left wrist.

6.

Women fall asleep first. Penny taught me that. Lover's insomnia—a primer.

She's right beside you, she's naked, you've already made love. It's a trillion scenarios replicated. She's insensate. You're wired. You're talking to her. She's oblivious. You didn't *pay* her to listen. She's not talking back.

Penny's bed was short and narrow. I was long-limbed and love-looped and liked to sprawl. Penny had perfected her sleep-with-men posture. She rolled away on her side and created a gap. It was symbolic. She reposed within inches. It was somewhere off Planet Earth.

I scooted closer. I let my foot brush her leg. I had reinstigated contact. Then I started talking to her in the dark.

About her, about me, about *Us*. About her law-school studies and my book in progress. I spent occasional weekend nights at her whim. Penny would sleep in. I got up predawn and zoomed to the golf course.

The bed was a minefield. I never slept.

I craved more contact. I ran breathlessly



"What do you think, boss? We can take it down right after prom night."

anxious. She never said she loved me. The relationship was tenuous and unpredictable. I laid there and anticipated movement. A knee tucked my way marked confirmation. I clenched my bladder until five A.M. I fantasy-talked to Penny. I fantasy-talked to other women and felt guilty about it. Turnovers filled me with gratitude. Pull-aways filled me with dread. She's your first sober love, and she won't say the words. It's not supposed to be this way. You had it all planned out.

We met in June '79. I was six months off of the whore patrol and five months into the book. I rocked with a sense of destiny and exuded a raucous panache. My clergymen ancestors streaked through my soul and anointed me with their calling. They had pulpits. I had my book and AA lectures. I had *two* stories to tell.

I told my life story to a captive audience. I was an accomplished public speaker at the get-go. Years of mental rehearsal had prepared me. An unconscious resolve shaped my testimony. I turned my journey to death's door into comedy.

No murdered mother. No bloody coughing fits. The jack-off man and his loony lust—*that's* picaresque.

It got me laughs from the AA folks. The book gave me my life's composite woman. She sprang from faces studied over my watcher's lifetime.

My hero meets her in a park I used to sleep in. She's poised on a bench with her Stradivarius. My hero hears strains of Dvořák and goes batshit.

I meet Penny in a supermarket check-out line. She's buying her nephew a hula hoop.

I got her phone number and called her. I blathered and tried to make a sound impression. I mentioned classical music in due haste. Penny's reaction was, Fuck that shit—I dig rock and roll.

She was 26 years old and from Brooklyn, New York. She had an East Coast

accent and a slight lisp. She was Jewish. That appealed to me. It would force me to atone for prior anti-Semitism. She was a big knock-kneed woman with auburn hair and brown eyes. She was wary and warm at oddly equal intervals. She'd been through a string of boyfriends in a '70s manner and seemed amused by me. She had a married lover stashed someplace. Don't be bummed by this. Don't be so intense. You can be my main squeeze.

Equivocation, mitigation, compromise at the gate. The suggestion of inimical values. A thorny personality. Better socialized than me. Respectful of my wild-ass path and in no way floored by it. Offering communion on her terms—take it or leave it.

Well....

We kissed on our first date. We were in Penny's car. It was a classic mutual lean-in. *That* part conformed to my script. Penny pulled away and said, No—like this.

I almost ran. The correction racked me. She had a car, I didn't. She would become a lawyer. I might write an unpublished book.

My self-assault outrevved her words. I leaned away, leaned back in and kissed her the right way. We kissed three more times. I understood that Kiss #4 might be rejected. I said good night before Penny could.

Date #2 was delirious. I showed up at Penny's pad with flowers. She noticed my erection, rolled her eyes and yukked. She wanted to rent bicycles and ride a path at the beach. I hated all antic activities. My reaction showed. Penny mollified me and tried not to act impatient.

I blew my roll on the rentals and a burger lunch. That meant extra work at the golf course. We rode the bikes single file. We couldn't talk. It was existential anguish and a macho-mangled loss of control. I got pulsingly paranoid. I thought I saw Penny checking out a black dude. *Danger! Danger! Danger!* I detoured to the Dick-Size Diaspora. Penny might be a coal burner! What if she required a hard black yard?

Lunch was torture. My stomach churned, my eyes darted. I orbited Penny's breasts and Penny's eyes. Was she trawling for dark meat or measuring baskets? She caught my eyeball track. She said, Don't be so intense. I said, Can we go someplace and talk? Penny said, Your place?

It was a first-time afternooner. It felt precipitous. My movies never equaled their coming attractions.

The move-in was synchronous. I kissed per Penny's Date #1 instructions. My bed was as too-small as her bed would be. It was over too fast. A shared desire for release pushed us through. I wanted marriage, daughters and a crib in Brentwood. Penny wanted companionship and an open-ended blast.

Okay, let's talk now. You go first. I'm here to listen.

Penny said she couldn't. She lisped those words and shook her head. She had to go home and study tort law.

XXXXX

Her slouchy scope moved me. Her clumsiness ripped me up. She chewed her nails. Her hands were as big as mine. She was both ill at ease and content in her body.

We loomed over people. She was five-ten, I was six-three. We were similarly awkward and bruised from bumps into fixed objects. Walking entwined was dicey. We kept tripping each other.

Late lessons unfolded. I was 31 and an unschooled zealot. I never questioned Penny's honor. I lived in fear of her contentiousness and a streak of emotional absence. It was a fight I had to win.

My mission was to grant her importance. The Curse carried a debt of formal acknowledgement. She should allot herself more power as a woman and assume potent destiny as her birthright. *My* assumptions were a lover's perceptive gift *and* the shuck of a controlling maniac.

That's what gets me. *That's* how I misdiagnose female personae. *That's* the twisted core of my love-starved generosity.

I recast Penny in my own image. I superimposed my drive upon her—because *I* was delivered from self-destructive doom, and the corollary of exalted design sure as shit worked for me. *That* was my grave disservice, whatever my intent.

Penny was smart, funny, honest, kind and proficient. The dumbfounding truth in retrospect: She was different from me. She lived in the world. She had a family, friends, colleagues, classmates. Her intelligence was generously defined and without conceit. My brain was didactic and stupefyingly attuned to personal advancement.

And we had a groovy kid-lover time—when I eased up a little bit.

Sex was sweaty and clumsy. Long arms and legs flailed. Nightstands collapsed, bathroom fixtures caved, pictures fell off of walls. Debate was active. Penny yelled and sulked more than I did. My game was to apologize and re-seduce. Penny always offered forgiveness—because I always showed up.

She kept me high-wire tense. She withheld the love talk I craved. My anxiety



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and desire *sizzzzzzled*. She believed in my self-expressed and unconfirmed talent. She never lied to me. She dumped me, lured me back and put out one-night-only calls that I always jumped at. No marriage, no daughters, no possessive pronoun. Constant heartache and no narrative line.

I stayed in the fight. I fixed on Penny's formative trauma and tried to salve her there. Her trauma was less hyperbolic than mine. She allotted her trauma a sane contemplation and not much more. She was not out to exploit her demons for public renown.

You know, I'm not you. Won't you please lighten up?

No, I will not.

Penny had that married lover. She'd dropped details on occasion. I called him a Jew cocksucker. Penny kicked me. I boo-hoed and repented. Penny laughed and took me to bed.

I was fighting a two-front war. There's Penny. There's my book and the woman with the Stradivarius cello. Beethoven engaged in similar combat. There's the "Immortal Beloved." There's comely piano students in the meantime. Embrace me, my darling. Later, babe—I gotta write the Fifth Symphony, and I can't hear you anyway.

The presence of the married guy sanctioned me to prowl. I went at it, full speed.

I re-faced another set of women and

melded them into my blur. They were *real* women. I met them, talked to them, courted them and had brief liaisons. My new self-confidence inured me to rejection. I jumped on "Yes," tried again at "Maybe," packed my tent at "No." There were AA women and nude coffee dates at "Hot Tub Fever." It was 1980. Java in the buff was risqué and less than a wolf call. I met women in restaurants and movie-theater lines. I got a lot of phone numbers and developed phone-talk relationships. I waited in the dark for the phone to ring. That's *still* my nightly MO.

Deep talk ensued. There was a good deal of sex and no sex and sex as a topic of discussion. I picked the women discerningly. I wanted women who could talk and interpose questions. The era was self-absorbed. Candor was a facet of the freewheeling lifestyle. Phone calls overlapped. I zoomed to strange addresses to have sex or not have sex or roll around clothed. I took on a confessor role. There was a vampiric edge to it. I wanted the women to be fucked-up, so that they would need me.

The counselor role came easy. I was actively pursuing my life's mission and had empathy to burn. I was happy because I was writing a book and was engulfed by women. They got me out of myself and back into myself and returned me refueled to the fictive woman with

the cello. The story proceeded apace with my brooding sessions and phone calls. The book me is that breathless first-person detective. He's been morally reawakened and sees the woman with the cello as his payoff. He will be with her tenuously and lose her in the end. He will be alone with her memory and wait for a new grail to seek. He will exist in a solitary and dark-roomed state. My first novel predicted the through line of my life. I didn't know it then.

Calls came in, calls went out, I got numbers and distributed my number. Penny bombed through my life, unpredictably. She still had that married geek. She sensed my independent action and adopted a "Don't Ask" policy.

I wanted to finish my first book and start a new book quick. It would be set in 1951. I needed a face for the lonely and haunted woman in quintessence. I brain-bopped through my current life and my voyeur's path to date and came up empty. A rainy-night dream gave her to me.

She was tall and strong featured. Her hair was near red and not blonde. She wore crooked-fitting glasses and squinted without them. She came forward in laughter and nearly gasped in retreat. Mark me a prophet and recast my mysticism years later. She was my future lover Catherine's identical twin.

I finished my first book and started my

Dirty Duck

by Bobby London



second book a month later. Jean Hilliker had been dead for 21 years and six months. I had nullified the red-haired girl from Shitsville, Wisconsin. Now I could trump her. Now I could write her story as fiction and quash *The Curse* flat.

Heedless boy, how could you know?, fate calls you home late.

My new hero was a womanizing cop. He had predatory instincts and my seeker's rationale. Catherine's presaged twin showed up early in the text. Jean Hilliker showed up dead, under a pseudonym. A guy based on my dad killed my mom. The cop met a lawyer based on Penny. A dipshit kid represented me at age nine. The cop and the lawyer rescued his sanitized ass.

A family ripped asunder and a family reborn. Isn't that sweet?

It worked dramatically. It further entombed Jean Hilliker and postponed the rush of *The Curse*.

I dedicated the second book to Penny. She swooned over the manuscript and declined to sleep with me that night.

Both books were sold to a publisher. The combined advance was chump change. I decided to move to New York. L.A. felt old and constricting. Fewer phone calls were coming in. I sensed that the women had found real lovers. New York would provide me with a whole new swirl of faces.

I made some good-bye calls. None of the women called me back. Penny and I had a last nooner. The hookers had vaporized off the Sunset Strip. The Hancock Park houses looked the same. I looked Marcia Sidwell up in a half dozen phone books and didn't find her. The real Joan turned 16 that year. Catherine turned 18.

I looked Penny up in '07. She was 54. She was married, had a teenage son and lawyered for the state AG. She'd read most of my books. Our first phone chat was a catch-up.

She asked me how many ex-wives and daughters I had. I said, Two and none. She asked me if I still sat in the dark by the phone. I confirmed it. She said, You'll always do that.

7.

Paperback writer.

My first book hit the stands in September '81. It sold scant copies. There was no author photo and no woman with a cello represented. The cover sucked Airedale dicks. Fuck—a man with a gun and a golf course.

I found a basement pad in Westchester County. I got a caddy job at Wykagyl Country Club. The Big Apple was a train hop south. I blew my book cash on Hancock Park threads gauged for cold weather. I dressed up for jaunts to Manhattan. *I knew She'd be there.*

My book agent quit the biz and offered me some referrals. My third manuscript was white-hot and ready to unload. Two male agents urged extensive rewrites. A female agent *looooved* the book and thought I was cute. New York, the go-go '80s, a slinky woman of pedigree. She had hard brown eyes. She cleaned her glasses on her blouse tails and soft-focused her heart. We

had dinner and a nightcap at her place. She played me a new record—the Pointer Sisters, with "Slow Hand."

"Darling, don't say a word, 'cause I've already heard, what your body's sayin' to mine."

I believed it.

The bedroom faced north. The Empire State Building filled the window. The spire was lit up red, white and green. The woman and I undressed. This ardent arriviste had arrived.

XXXXX

The basement was my all-time darkest brood den. The lady upstairs was a conductor's widow. Music kept lilt-ing through my vents. She went too heavy on the Mozart and too light on the Liszt. I didn't care. My publisher rejected my third novel. They found the sex-fiend cop and his feminist-poet girlfriend hard to believe. They were right. I wrote the book in a let's-ditch-L.A.-and-find-*HER*-in-New-York fugue state. My quasi-girlfriend agent sent the book to 17 other publishers. They all said *nyet*. My quasi-agent girlfriend dropped me as a client and pink-slipped me as a quasi-boyfriend. I owed her \$150 for Xerox fees. I paid her off with extra golf-course bread.

A male agent coerced me into a rewrite. I went at it, reluctantly. Winter hit. Caddy season ended. I worked dishwasher and stockroom gigs and lived *ultracheap*. Manhattan magnetized me. The faces popped out of dense sidewalk traffic. The women were overcoated, hatted and scarved. I couldn't see enough skin to read auras. Cold air and breath condensation. Voyeur prowls deterred.

I habituated coffee bars and got numbers. I got callbacks at a low percentage of my L.A. rate. I lived in the burbs. That was *déclassé*. You wrote a book. *So?* You schlep bags at a golf club. Stockbrokers are more my meat.

The burbs were *sexile*. I kept hearing that. I lacked lifestyle loot. I kept hearing *that*. Publishing parties got me *some* clout and indoor access. I saw the first *Her* at a Murray Hill bash.

She was a big preppy woman. She ran six feet and probably outweighed me. Tartan skirt, winter boots, burning eyes and freckles. She was *THE OTHER*, assuredly.

I walked to the can, combed my hair and adjusted my necktie. I popped back to the party. She vanished—auf Wiedersehen.

I prowled the surrounding blocks and didn't see her. I went back to the bash and interrogated the guests. I came on too persistent. The host suggested that I leave. I flipped his necktie into his face and skedaddled.

The night was cold. The moon was full. I walked up Fifth Avenue, baying. Passersby swerved around me. Dogs bayed back from swank apartments. I cut east on 43rd Street and hotfooted it toward Grand Central. I saw a woman hailing a cab just west of Madison. The Brooks Brothers windows golden-glowed her. She was blonde. Her overcoat was mud spattered. She wore red leather gloves. She was shivering. Her face

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was goose bumped, her hair was askew, she'd chewed off her lipstick. Her nose was too big. Her chin was too strong. She was *THE OTHER*, incontestably.

I fast-walked toward her. An eastbound cab pulled by me. The woman opened the door and got in the backseat. I sprinted, slid on my feet and hit the rear bumper. The woman looked around and saw me. I winced. My knees were ratched from the collision. I smiled. It spooked the woman. She looked away. The cab turned northbound and brodied on hard snow.

Easy come, easy go. It was cold. My knees hurt. I could relive the heavy heartache back at my pad. Douse the lights and spin the Chopin nocturnes. *Baby, we were close. It should have been.*

I limped to Grand Central. The waiting room was crowded and overheated. I bought my ticket and walked onto the train. I saw the woman. She was *THE OTHER*, incontrovertibly.

She was tall, sandy haired and 10 years older than me. She had grail-grabbing gray eyes and a gaunt and sweet face.

She was carrying a cumbersome portfolio. I helped her hoist it to the rack above the seats. She thanked me. We sat down together and talked.

Her name was Marge. She was a commercial artist. She'd been showing work samples at ad agencies all day. I asked her how it went. She said, Bad. She was in a dry spell. She inquired about my employment. I told her I'd written two published books and worked at a country club. *Your family?* I don't have one.

She smelled like wet wool and dissipating eau de bath. She sat on my right. Her damp hair brushed my windbreaker. She asked me where I detrained. I said, Bronxville. I said, Your destination? She said, Tarrytown.

The train chugged through north Manhattan and the Bronx. Milk-run stops slowed the passage and pressed time in on me. We talked and leaned toward each other. I tried to read Marge and sensed her reading me. It was soft voiced. Small anecdotes made big points. We spoke contrapuntally and never interrupted. Our hands

brushed. We retained the contact. The pact was synchronous.

I said something funny. Marge laughed, displayed bad teeth and covered her mouth. I showed her my bad teeth. She laughed and held my chin to get a better look. I put my hand on her hand and steadied it. She said, Your teeth are worse than mine, and let her hand drop.

We looked away and gave the moment a breather. The train jiggled. We bumped. I brain-scrolled the script.

I instill confidence, she rebukes rashness, we consolidate our hurt. Dogs on the bed and warm nights in cold climates. Her older-woman status and insecurity. My assurance of how much I loved it. Her body's ripening currents over time. That eau de bath caught first thing in the morning.

The Bronxville stop approached. Marge and I shared a look. She said, I'm married.

I touched her shoulder and got up. Our knees brushed. My knee spasmed from the stunt with the cab. I got off the train, walked down the platform and stood by Marge's window. She pressed her hand up to her side of the glass. I placed my hand over it.

XXXXX

The brood den enclosed me. Caddy gigs and chump jobs kept me borderline solvent. I wrote and chased.

The sex-fiend cop became a hardback trilogy. The feminist poet was supplanted by a brainy call girl and the cop's resurrected ex-wife. The woman-with-a-cello book stayed in print. Ditto the my-mom-got-whacked-and-I'm-in-flight epic.

I was happy. I was grateful. I wrote books for minor remuneration and got minor acclaim. I was too circumspect to self-immolate and too tall and good-looking to lose. All my crazy shit stayed suppressed.

New York in the '80s. Jesus—what a fucking ride!!!!

The city was felicitously female. It was a dizzying disproportion. The face pool was bottomless and bottomlessly reflecting. I kept seeing myself.

My prescience had deserted me. The Curse had been roadblocked by hard work and a curt dismissal of the debt. I was out looking for women looking back and up at me.

My watcher's lifetime ran nearly four decades. My debilitating hunger was vaulted and lockboxed. I believed that it had given me mastery and an endless ticket to ride. Doped-up self-sex had almost proven fatal. I sought death to prove my love to a ghost. It was the unconscious courting of reunion. I wanted to expunge our disparities and unite us as a whole. I went at women because they were there. My revised standards denoted my flight from and back to the vault. I started to think that almost any woman could save me—if I confessed hard enough.

The stories I wrote controlled this self-phenomenon. I acceded to the strictures of the hard-boiled school and honed my craft. I perfected the art of womanizing



"Yes, there was a lot of action on the lake. However, we didn't catch a thing."

simultaneously. I felt the weight of horrible circumstance upon me. It was huge. It did not justify my predation. I once scanned faces for rectitude. Now I read them for susceptibility to male charm.

One-night stands, short-term deals, longer-term girlfriends. Sex and no sex, brood sessions and phone calls. "No" was still "No"—but I heard it less and less. I was that attuned to female discontent.

Fuck—the phone rang a lot. I kept a C-note tucked away for late-night cabs to the Apple. They were all decent women. No STDs, no coke-dealer boyfriends, no Glenn Close with a knife. They *looved* my I-want-a-wife-and-daughters spiel. It was abstractly true. It was specifically and equally true that I didn't want it with *them*. I knew it going in. I shouldn't have lied. I possessed greater honesty in my unalaid and mystical state. I never bought their let's-see-how-shit-plays-out routine. That permissive jive got kicked out of me in L.A. I capitulated to the notion for more sex and softness. I rejected it in my heart of hearts—and my heart of hearts cradles my conscience.

If sex is to be everything, then so She must be. I did not bring you this far to drop you in an inappropriate bedroom. This woman does not possess your ferocity. You'll know her if and when you meet her. God is speaking to you.

Stand back now. Sex is the investing of your full soul and imagination.

I know it consciously now. The revelation often curtains my current time alone in the dark. I ached for the kinship of the body then. I wanted every touch, taste and breath I could have. I was too compromised to ever let it be just that.

XXXXX

I wanted an unnamed woman. It was the inextinguishable flame of my life. I wanted to write a woman's story. I knew her name: Elizabeth Short.

The Black Dahlia.

Factors postponed the book. John Gregory Dunne had brilliantly explored the case in *True Confessions*. I had to differentiate my book from Mr. Dunne's. I had to grant Betty Short a precious identity. An investigative saga. An obsessed narrator. An accretion of horror and a rich female spirit disinterred. A lonely detective's journey from wantonness to love.

I began microfilm research and stitched up the plot. I recognized Jean Hilliker as a sister phantom reborn and dedicated the book to her. Honor the debt and reseal the tomb. Tell the story on your best-selling book tour. Combine Jean and Betty and ignore the enveloping issue of women. Seek more recent phantoms who *might* assuage you or teach you or at least fall for your act.

Marcia Sidwell and Marge kept nudging me. They played hell with my phone-call stints and stunts with present women. I called directory assistance once a week and tried to track Marcia. I had a friend post a note at that L.A. laundromat. I checked Grand Central station for Marge. I cruised the Tarrytown station and lurked by the tracks. My landlady told me about

the film *Brief Encounter*. It was a circa-'45 British weeper. A man meets a woman in a train station. She's married, he's not. They acknowledge their love and kowtow to propriety and circumstance. My landlady said, You'd dig the soundtrack—it's all Rachmaninoff.

Bummer. You don't fold before circumstance. You're a weak sack of shit if you do.

True in 1985. Still true today.

Things were getting better. Book money trickled and *almost* flowed in. I tossed my caddy cleats. I wrote Betty's story as the phone did or did not ring.

And it was just that good and just that acclaimed. And it sold just that well. And it honored Jean Hilliker—as a fount of male inspiration and an opportunity.

People magazine ran a feature. The photos flattered me. I had a listed phone number. Four women called out of the blue.

Women #1 and #2 sounded crazy. I got off the line quick. I kowtowed to circumstance with the others. Beethoven grinned and scowled above us. *Jesus, what a run!* and *You're a fucking scheisskopf!*

I always get what I want. It comes slow or fast and always costs a great deal.

The world veered toward me. Acknowledgement and compensation flowed. I bought women I just met four-figure cashmere sweaters. I overtipped waitresses to the verge of bankruptcy. I sent half the female universe flowers. Sex was there or was not there. I stayed in my dark basement with big bucks in the bank. The phone rang or did not ring. I wrote three more great fucking books. Joan and Catherine came of age a few miles south. They did not know each other or know me.

Propriety beckoned. Marriage and daughters became a fixation. I proposed to two women in short-term relationships. They vehemently declined. I proposed to a longer-term sweetheart. She said Yes. I ran from her as we said our vows and settled in Hancock Park East.

Our home was too spacious and airy. Marriage countermanded my mandate of seduce and explain. Cohabitation was constricting. My wife was in no way culpable. My office was too bright. My yard was too big. My wife was probity defined. She got me as much as women got me and played out her end of the string. I wanted out, so I got out. I had to be back in that dark hole, with a phone line plugged in.

Beethoven winked in welcome. Divorce was an exacting legal duty. Repentance came naturally. I saw the hasty union as atonable misconduct. My wife saw my departure as demons aswirl.

There's the dark, there's the phone, there's the *Grosse Fuge*.

"Take note of what you are seeking, for it is seeking you."

It's a paraphrase. Some swoony swami said it. Attribution doesn't matter, because it is true.

I always get what I want. I conjured her, so she came.

Lover, confidante, subverter, mighty soul and sacred comrade.

Hark the name Helen Knode.



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SHIA LABEOUF

(continued from page 36)

flag mentality. It starts legitimizing feelings. I'm not saying that would be a route I'd choose for myself, but what he did doesn't seem that far-fetched. There are ways, with all the pressure in this business, to get to a place like that. I've seen the door he walked through, you know what I'm saying? Fortunately, I can see that door and keep walking, but I've seen it. I try not to get too dark. If I find I'm sinking, I'll get out and paint toilet seats or ride dirt bikes or shoot. Firing shotguns really helps me.

PLAYBOY: Where do you do that?

LABEOUF: Steven Spielberg takes me when he goes. We go to a place called Triple B's and skeet shoot. He's an Olympic shot. The hand-eye coordination of that man is unlike anything I've ever seen. I mean, if he weren't a great director, he could be one of our greatest snipers. I feel so fortunate for any time I get with Steven. It's one of those things 99.9 percent of the population only get to dream about. Like with the first *Transformers*, when Michael Bay wanted us to experience the full effect of the technology and sound of the film and brought us to a coliseum in Taormina, Italy to screen it in front of hundreds of screaming people. And you walk in and it's like *Ben-Hur* or something. These people had never seen a movie like this, and to have a giant screen and the sound blasting and the whole coliseum shaking and then to have someone from the movie right there, it's an old-fashioned sort of thrill. Sometimes I can't figure out how I got into this secret community I always wanted to be part of. Outrageous. Just outrageous. These people I've always seen as godlike—Steven, George, Michael, Harrison—they're now part of my life, part of my history.

PLAYBOY: It will be interesting to tell your kids about some day.

LABEOUF: I hope, yeah, I pray, man. It'd be cool. I hope I'm still here in 10 years to tell them. I think about that sometimes when I see the hat that Harrison gave me.

PLAYBOY: Which hat is that?

LABEOUF: It's Harrison's hat from *Indiana Jones*.

PLAYBOY: Wow. Cool.

LABEOUF: Yeah. It has his sweat stains from the whole movie in it. We were way out somewhere at an airplane hangar on the last day of shooting, and he took the hat off his head, signed it and handed it to me. I didn't want to tell anyone about it at the time because I didn't want people to think, Oh, he's going to be the next Indy or that some sort of crown had been passed to me. That wasn't the point.

PLAYBOY: What did it mean to you?

LABEOUF: Well, when I looked at the hat I saw he had written something with a silver Sharpie. It said, "It's all yours now, kid—Harrison." And I know it's easy to perceive that as his handing the reins over to me on a franchise or whatever, but again, that's not it. First of all, Harrison isn't like that. He's so stoic, so John Wayne-ish. The whole idea of handing down a legacy would be such bullshit to him. What I read it as is "Keep your shit on." It was his way of saying "Life is going to get crazy now, so strap on tight, kid." And that's what I've found. When you're in a life situation like mine, it's hard to keep your head straight, because there are so many temptations, so many obstacles—unless you know the secret.

PLAYBOY: So what is the secret?

LABEOUF: Ha! Great question. I clearly don't have a secret. But if I find it, I'll be sure to let everyone know.



SCOTT BORAS

(continued from page 74)

five out of nine games, with the first two in a neutral city. Announce the MVP and Cy Young awards at a gala held between the playoffs and a new World Series weekend. Move the home-run contest from the All-Star Game to that week, too. The gala and home-run derby would lead to game one of the Series on Saturday, with game two on Sunday. Then the Series would go on with the final seven games in the Series teams' cities. This way, different places get part of the Series. I want the World Series in Pittsburgh, Texas, Seattle. Teams in those markets would sell more season tickets. World Series weekend would be a major stage for corporate events; it could advance the game to the next level.

Q18

PLAYBOY: Have you ever taken less than top dollar for a player?

BORAS: Many times. Alex Fernandez had a big contract with Cleveland but wanted to play in Florida, his home state. We took less from the Marlins. Kyle Lohse liked St. Louis; he just re-signed without even becoming a free agent. Jason Varitek took a lot less to stay with the Red Sox in 2005. Jason said, "Get me a fair contract, but don't negotiate with other teams. Just Boston." I said, "That could cost you 20 percent of your value," and he said fine. Greg Maddux loved pitching for the Cubs, but in 1993 he told me, "I want to play for a team that can win." I said, "Greg, that won't happen in Chicago." We agreed that, with the Braves' pitching and the prospects, Atlanta was a great destination. Later on Greg gave up about \$30 million because he didn't want to go to the Yankees. His pitching style suited the National League.

Q19

PLAYBOY: What will happen on the field in 2009?

BORAS: The Yankees should win 95 games and make the playoffs. Teixeira, with his .400 on-base percentage and Gold Glove defense, was a huge signing for them. The National League races could be very different this year. The Mets probably would have won in 2008 with the bullpen they have now. The Marlins have an up-and-coming superstar in Hanley Ramirez. Manny's in shape for a great season with the Dodgers, and I won't be surprised if the Cubs have a great year.

Q20

PLAYBOY: You've been heckled at ballparks. Does it hurt?

BORAS: Yeah, people come up to me and say, "You're wrecking the game." All I say is "I'm glad you're a baseball fan." Because the fans care. They love the game, and so do I. The difference is that my appreciation for the players' skills is much higher than a fan's because I know how hard the game is. I never wanted anything more than to play pro ball. Even the job I have, as much as I enjoy it, there's no comparison. There is just nothing like waking up and thinking, I'm playin' ball today.



Hot. Digital.

(continued from page 40)

"like drowned rats. It wasn't sexy at all."

Larry disagrees.

At dinner, before Mercedes called Larry, she had suggested to her two girlfriends that they surprise him with a spontaneous foursome. She told Betty and Kathy, "Let's ruin his life. We're going to ruin his life because once someone has a taste for this it's hard to go back."

"We thought we were going to ruin him for straight girls," Betty says, "which didn't turn out to be the case." Like many women in the Lifestyle, Betty refers to women as girls. "We were disappointed," she says. "We wanted a little more shock and helplessness," as though Larry had no idea this kind of thing—threesomes, foursomes, orgies—existed. "Instead," Betty says, "he took the reins."

Typically, Mercedes says, you put a guy who is not part of the Lifestyle scene "in that situation and he's going to go for his comfort zone. He's going to go for me," the woman he knows. But Larry didn't.

"He grabbed my girlfriend Betty," Mercedes says, "threw her on the couch and started eating her out. Kathy and I looked at each other. The party was on!"

Mercedes told Larry, "No fingers."

"What do you mean?" Larry asked.

"No fingers," Mercedes repeated. "What did I say? No fingers." Those were the rules Mercedes laid down. "You can suck only," she explained.

Betty started laughing.

"We tell people what we want them to do,"

Mercedes says, "so you don't have to do the fishing expedition."

"Next thing you knew," Larry recalls, "I had Kathy sucking my cock. Mercedes was underneath me, licking my balls. I was like, Fantastic! I'd never had a threesome or foursome before."

It was, Larry decided, geometrically better: Each added person multiplied possibilities.

"There's so much stimulus," Larry explains, "everything gets sensitized."

It became hard to focus on any particular body part—his or his partners'. "You just join the aroma around you," Larry says.

As in a square dance, they changed partners—and positions. Although Kathy told Larry, "I'm sorry I can't let you fuck me in the ass. I broke my tailbone the other day playing roller hockey."

"Kathy's great to play with," Mercedes says. "Easy to play with. Never gets upset about anything."

There was a lot of bending, but no breaking, of rules.

"Three rounds," Mercedes says. "Amazing fun. I set it up purely for me, the most selfish moment in my life."

"You should be selfish more often," Larry laughs.

That rainy night Larry also didn't leave anyone out. "Whoever I was with at the time," Larry says, "it was like she was the only one there, not like I was looking over her shoulder at who was next." He shrugs. "I only have one cock!"

Mercedes thought Larry was special not just because he took control but because he didn't assume this was his birthright. A guy

cialty magazines like *Connections*, *Spectator* and *Select*, which were hard to find in some areas. They had to send letters and wait for responses. After a number of exchanges, when everyone felt safe and comfortable, people might make phone calls to get a sense of the others from the sound of their voice and the immediacy of the interchange. After enough phone calls, people might meet in bars or, if they lived in large enough cities, seek out swingers clubs. All that effort was shaded by a sense of potential ostracism.

Now, with the Internet, Craigslist, MySpace, Yahoo or any of the many adult-oriented sites like LifestyleLounge.com, Alt.com, Blissparty.com, AdultPartyQuest.com, Fling.com, Swappernet.com, PrivateSoiree.com, SwingLifeStyle.com and AdultFriend

Finder.com (which Peter Cook visited, according to his ex-wife Christie Brinkley), people can instantly be put in contact with hundreds, even thousands of potential swing partners, for either hard swinging (parties where it is assumed couples will trade partners) or soft swinging (parties where swapping is available but not assumed).

One typical site—SwingersClubList.com—advertises itself as "the most up-to-date free worldwide directory for the swinging lifestyle, with listings in the following categories: swingers clubs, parties/groups, hotels/B&Bs, shops, online business and literature, easily sorted by name, location, reviews and ratings." Its "Favorite Swinging Places Rated by Swingers" includes "personals, parties, gangbangs...."

"For those who want more than just one bite of the apple"—presumably the apple Eve offered to Adam—the North American Swing Club Association International, or NASCA, offers information about "on/off premises clubs, travel and resorts, publication listings, conventions and events, Internet services... breaking news, frequently asked questions... and swing club franchise opportunities."

This is no back-alley sneak-around community. The Internet has turned swinging into a multimillion-dollar industry that is growing every year, involving—according to Dr. Robert McGinley, founder of NASCA—at least 400 clubs in the United States with perhaps 3 million American participants. AdultFriendFinder.com claims to have 31,959,644 members. Even smaller and less metropolitan states boast sizable

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who isn't wired right will expect an orgy "every time he sees you, rather than understand this isn't easy to pull off."

Still, the instantaneous and ubiquitous communication available because of the Internet and texting makes it easier than ever to pull off, as Larry would soon learn.

After the women left, at 4:30 in the morning, Larry sat gazing into space, thinking, I have a very good life....

Since the arrival of the Internet, the swingers scene Mercedes, Betty, Kathy, Veronica and Reggie—and now Larry—are part of has exploded both numerically and geographically. In the past, people interested in alternative sex had to find partners through ads in the back of spe-

subscriber numbers, like Alabama, which allegedly has 226,661, and Utah, which allegedly has 135,219.

Alt.com claims to be the “world’s largest BDSM and alternative lifestyle personals” site. It has, according to its own accounting, 2,932,224 members—again, not just in large cities. Even Guam has a membership of 716. American Samoa has 34.

The Lifestyle scene changes from city to city. “It’s very geographical,” Veronica explains on the way to the Fetish Ball. “Some cities don’t have a scene.” Other cities have scenes that are specific to the particular erotic DNA of the local culture. Los Angeles, not surprisingly, tends to be into exhibitionism and voyeurism. New York, the financial capital of the country, tends to be more into S&M, BD and DS: power. Reggie dismisses New York. “Not happening,” he says. “From the neck down, nothing happening.” Too intellectual—although that may betray his Los Angeles bias. Maybe in the suburbs. Westchester County. Connecticut. New Jersey.

San Francisco is “more artsy,” Veronica says. “Unusual. Eclectic.”

“Miami is very into drugs,” Reggie says. “Late nights. Ecstasy.”

Dallas?

“Very stratified,” Reggie says.

“Denver has a good scene,” Veronica says.

“Denver,” Betty agrees, “is a free-spirited, open-minded city.”

They circle back to New York and agree that Giuliani destroyed the scene.

From the moment Larry and Mercedes spotted each other on a music-video set—Larry was visiting a friend, Mercedes was training dancers—it was lust at first sight. If this had been one of Larry’s movies, everyone else would have faded into the background. The soundtrack would have become muffled, and they would have moved toward each other in slow motion as the camera made a 360-degree pan. Their relationship also developed quickly because Mercedes was ready for an adventure.

“Three weeks earlier,” Mercedes says, “I’d been at a business meeting with a guy and his partner, who was ridiculously good-looking.” They were at the bar at the Stan-

dard, on Sunset Strip. The man Mercedes had met for business had an early call the next morning. “You guys keep talking,” he said—and left.

“I knew I wasn’t going to have any dealings with this guy again,” Mercedes explains, so she set out to bed the good-looking partner.

“So,” Mercedes asked, “you live around here?”

“As a matter of fact,” the partner said, “I live in a loft right down the street.”

Mercedes thought, Hmmm.... “Are you married?” she asked him.

“No.”

“Do you have a live-in girlfriend?”

“No.”

“Do you want to go back to your place?” Mercedes asked.

“What?”

“I have a hall pass from my boyfriend,” Mercedes explained. “He says I’m welcome to go home with you if I want to. And I want to.”

“Shouldn’t we do the responsible thing and get to know each other first?”

“Absolutely not,” Mercedes said. “I don’t want to know you.”

He ordered another drink.

Mercedes said, “Check, please.”

This became a running joke between Mercedes and her boyfriend: I give you a hall pass, and you can’t close the deal!

So when Mercedes met Larry, she thought, I’m going to get this one done!

She was intrigued. She liked Larry. He didn’t seem needy. He was laid-back. Honest. Which, Mercedes says, is “very, very rare among single men. He never told me what he thought I wanted to hear. He never looked like he had an agenda.”

“So,” Mercedes asked Larry, “what do you do?”

“I’m an actor,” Larry said.

“You make a living as an actor?” Mercedes asked.

“Yeah,” he said.

“I was a bitch,” Mercedes later says.

She gave him a hard time, but she didn’t much care who or what he was. They went out three times before she thought to Google him and discovered, “Oh, he’s for real.” He was a successful actor.

As Mercedes left the shoot, she was already texting Larry: HOW SOON CAN WE GET TOGETHER?

WHAT ARE YOUR FANTASIES? she texted.

WHAT ARE YOUR FANTASIES? he texted.

“I’d tell him a story,” Mercedes says. “He’d add on. Then I’d add on. Then he would.”

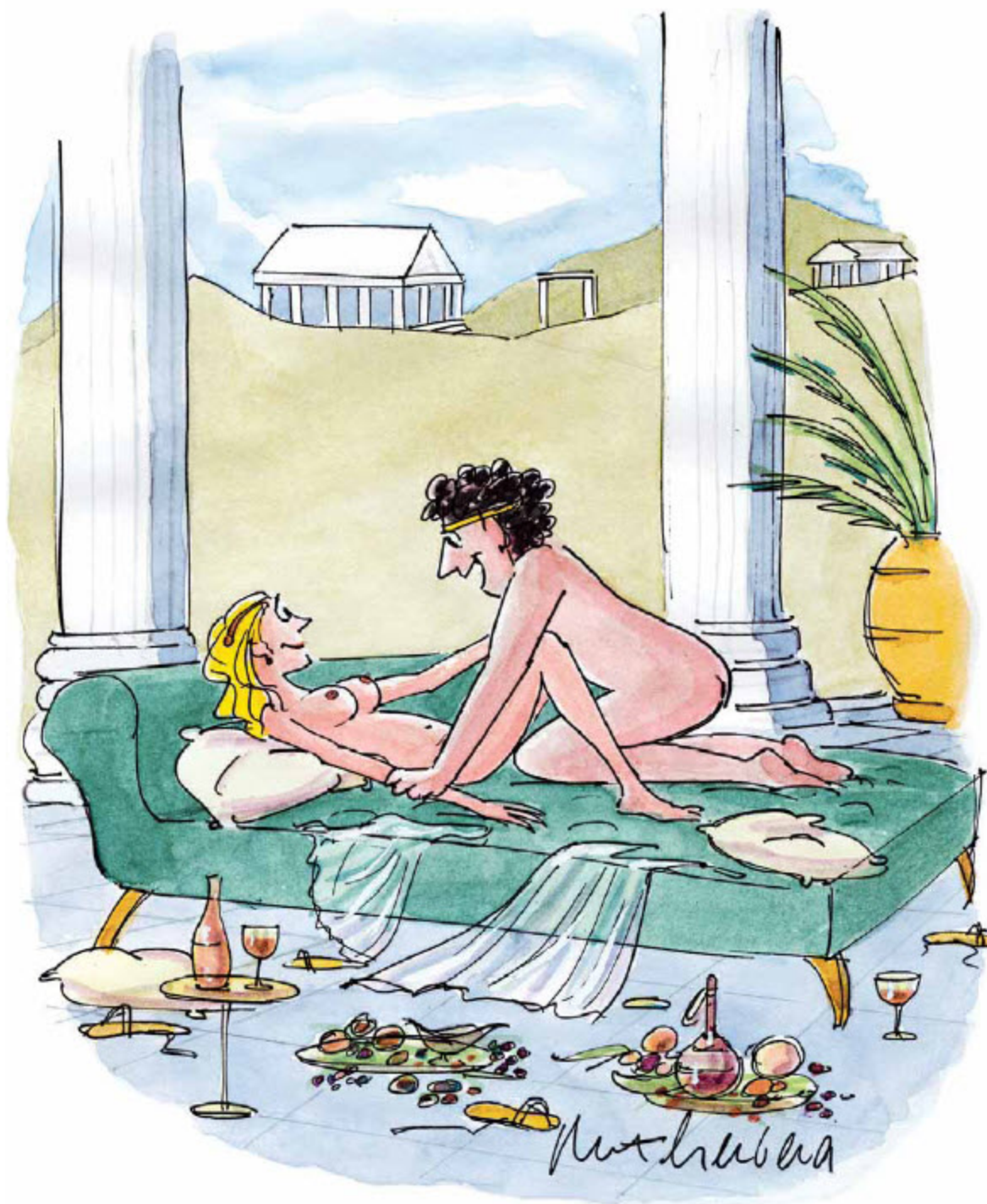
Through texting and e-mail Mercedes almost instantly discovered Larry “liked the side of sex I liked.”

Master-slave role-playing.

“I think people feel more free texting,” Mercedes says. “I definitely talk more freely in text. I don’t do phone sex so well. I change the subject.”

“When we first met,” Larry says, “I was out of town a lot. Texting kept the interest growing. We had a bet to see who could make the other masturbate first using e-mail and text. So when we got together it was explosive.”

Texts flashed back and forth between them.



“Now let’s try LXIX.”

"We pushed the pedal to the metal," Mercedes says, "and were going 200 miles an hour. We knew where the other was fantasy-wise before we even got together."

Technology lubricated their relationship. What might have taken a month or two to develop 20 years earlier—maybe during a dozen dinners and two dozen late-night conversations as they edged deeper into their erotic jungle—happened almost instantly.

"Watch people texting," one orgiast says. "The constant tapping of keys, the rapt expression—it even looks like someone masturbating."

Unlike Larry—who sees himself as a sexual tourist—Mercedes is a sexual hobbyist.

Larry indulges occasionally; for Mercedes, the Lifestyle is a lifestyle.

She stumbled onto the scene 15 years ago, when she was 21. She used to go to a resort in Loreto, Mexico called Diamond Eden, between Cabo and La Paz. She didn't notice anything unusual about the place until she and her girlfriend went one Halloween.

"Even on the plane it was kind of odd," Mercedes says. "Ninety percent of the people were also going to the resort. A guy was walking around the plane with a clipboard, checking people off."

He asked Mercedes and her friend their names and scanned the list. Nope, they weren't on the roster. He walked away.

At the resort, they were sitting by the pool when Clipboard Guy came up to them and said, "You weren't on my list."

"What list?" Mercedes asked.

Clipboard Guy thought they were part of an organization that was meeting there, Lifestyles.

What's Lifestyles? Mercedes wondered.

She began to pay more attention. There were, she noticed, a lot of people wandering around naked, being unusually affectionate.

"I ended up dating a guy who was part of the organization," Mercedes says. "A bodybuilder."

She still has friends she met on that weekend 15 years ago.

"There's no division," Mercedes explains, "between my life and the Life."

But that doesn't mean she isn't discreet, she says. She was in a restaurant with a

dozen friends from the Lifestyle scene, and one couple was being obvious about their swinger association. Across the room was "a client of mine," Mercedes explains. She started distancing herself from the obstreperous couple, but the woman in the couple said, at the top of her lungs, "I don't give a shit who knows I'm a swinger."

"Needless to say," Mercedes adds, "I got a call the next day from my client, who said, 'I don't want to be affiliated with that.' I lost a \$1,200-a-month client."

The foursome in the rain was so successful Mercedes decided she wanted Larry to host a pussy party: Larry, Mercedes, Betty, Kathy—and four of Mercedes's friends who are part of the scene, including Veronica,

"Two on two," she says, "three on three...."

Even with such a low number there's "so much pressure," Mercedes says. "Four people have to like one another. Hard to get that dynamic to work."

Think of it as dating: Even one-on-one it can be hard to find the right match.

What about parties with other men?

"If I had 50 women," Larry admits, "I wouldn't mind another guy—across the room."

Mercedes wanted to throw the pussy party at Larry's primarily to give each woman a chance to act out a favorite fantasy "no matter what it was," she says. "I wanted to do something just for the girls." One wanted to hang out with her girlfriends. Another wanted to watch. Another,

according to Mercedes, "just wanted strange." Betty had "an intimate connection" with Larry, whom she considered her "imaginary boyfriend." Mercedes wanted Larry to read aloud from her favorite book, the first volume of Anne Rice's erotic trilogy *The Claiming of Sleeping Beauty*. She told Larry, "This is who I am."

But Mercedes may also have been trying to draw Larry back in.

Larry had been so busy with business—acting gigs, trips to New York—that Mercedes felt he was neglecting her. One of her many text messages read, I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE NOT HERE. I'M IN BED AT THE STANDARD WITH A DILDO UP MY ASS. WISH IT WAS YOUR COCK, BUT YOU'RE NOT HERE. YOU MADE YOUR CHOICE.

Remember the old telephone ad "Reach out and touch someone"? With the Internet, that's more possible than ever before.

A pussy party might get Larry's attention. The only rule Mercedes gave Larry was no touching. He was there as a butler. A majordomo. A boy Friday. Serving only. Larry grew up in a household with his divorced mother and three sisters, two older, one younger, whom he raised. He explains, "Giving a woman a nice time when they don't have to do shit pleases me."

"His role for the night was supposed to be like a page—to get things," Mercedes explains. "It was never supposed to progress to where it did."

They timed it so that when the women arrived Larry had a bubble bath waiting, candles lit, wine poured, beer on ice.

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who came without Reggie on the condition that she could play with the other women but not with Larry.

Seven women and one man.

Since the foursome, Larry had played with Mercedes and Betty, but none of them considered that an orgy: Three people doesn't rise to their definition of what constitutes an orgy. If four is the lower limit of an orgy, what is the upper?

Larry and Mercedes exchange glances.

With more than a dozen, they agree, it becomes hard to keep track of people—although theoretically there is no upper limit.

When she throws parties at her house, "I limit it to 20 or 30 couples," Mercedes says. "And I have a wait list."

But she prefers smaller parties.

"It couldn't have been a more diverse group of women," Larry says. It was like having a harem made up of the Seven Dwarfs. Very sexy, lithe and lovely dwarfs: Sexy, Sleepy, Sleazy, Bashful....

Larry got them drinks. A kiss here. A kiss there. Then he was in his underpants, leaning back against the headboard of his bed, with the women stretched out around him on the mattress. One of them cuddled up to his left, wearing white panties with pink stripes around the leg holes and a white shirt with a pink oval pattern. Another woman was to his right. A naked woman leaned faceup against his chest while Mercedes—wearing red-and-pink striped panties, a white short-sleeved shirt and a small-brimmed hat—lay facedown between her open legs.

"Within 10 minutes," Larry says, one of the women, Dawn, "had my cock in her hand."

Things got rolling—or, as Mercedes thought, out of control.

"I'd be fucking one," Larry says. "Some

would be watching. Some going down on me. Some going down on each other."

Three of the women ran to the bathroom and started making out in the bubble bath. More wine flowed.

"The problem is the reality of these things," Veronica says. "There's always some catastrophe."

One of the three girls got out of the tub and grabbed a towel. Which was caught under a painting. Which fell. In the bedroom, when Larry heard the glass shattering, he thought, Great, the best night of my life, and I'm going to end up in the emergency room!

In the bathroom "everyone froze," Veronica says. "Three girls in the bath with broken glass and wine and...."

Larry ran in. Everyone was all right. But the bathroom—and the rest of the house—was a wreck. Larry started to clean up, but Mercedes said, "Get out of here. We'll take care of it."

The women went into action, picking up the glass and putting salt and seltzer water

on the wine-stained sheets. After they finished cleaning up, Mercedes corralled the others and told them, "You girls are going to fuck the shit out of him because you're fucking up his place."

The story of the Seven Women Who Destroyed a Guy's House has become legendary in the Los Angeles Lifestyle scene.

For the rest of the night, until 6:30 the next morning, Larry remembers, "every orifice, every part of my body was being touched by a tongue, a pussy. I was fucking this girl. There was this girl going down on another girl. There were tits all over." If this had been a movie, Larry thinks, the daisy chain would have made a great dolly shot. One of the women prided herself on giving the best blow jobs in L.A. Larry says, "She was going to town. Mercedes and Betty were watching, and they were like, 'If you blow your load, we're going to fucking kill you.' And I didn't. They loved that."

Was it the best blow job in L.A.?

It was, Larry admitted, maybe a 9.3.

Larry spent a good part of the night doing multiplication tables to "keep from putting myself out of business."

At one point all seven women were on their backs as Larry went from one to the other to the next. Licking. Like a vaudeville performer keeping seven plates spinning on seven poles. One, Larry says, tasted like a bold merlot, another like a light white wine, another like springwater....

Unlike the swingers scene 30 or 40 years ago, which was driven by men, the scene today is driven by women—which made the pussy party at Larry's not at all unusual—at least not within the Lifestyle. Mercedes supplied the soundtrack for the party. "Women are responsible for their own orgasms and the soundtrack," Larry says. "That's going to be my platform when I run for president."

•

At their orgies, Veronica and Reggie like to play naked Jingo. "Or the name game," she says. "All sorts of stupid games. We watch one another have fun and be silly and hang out and then go and have sex. It's all sort of seamless."

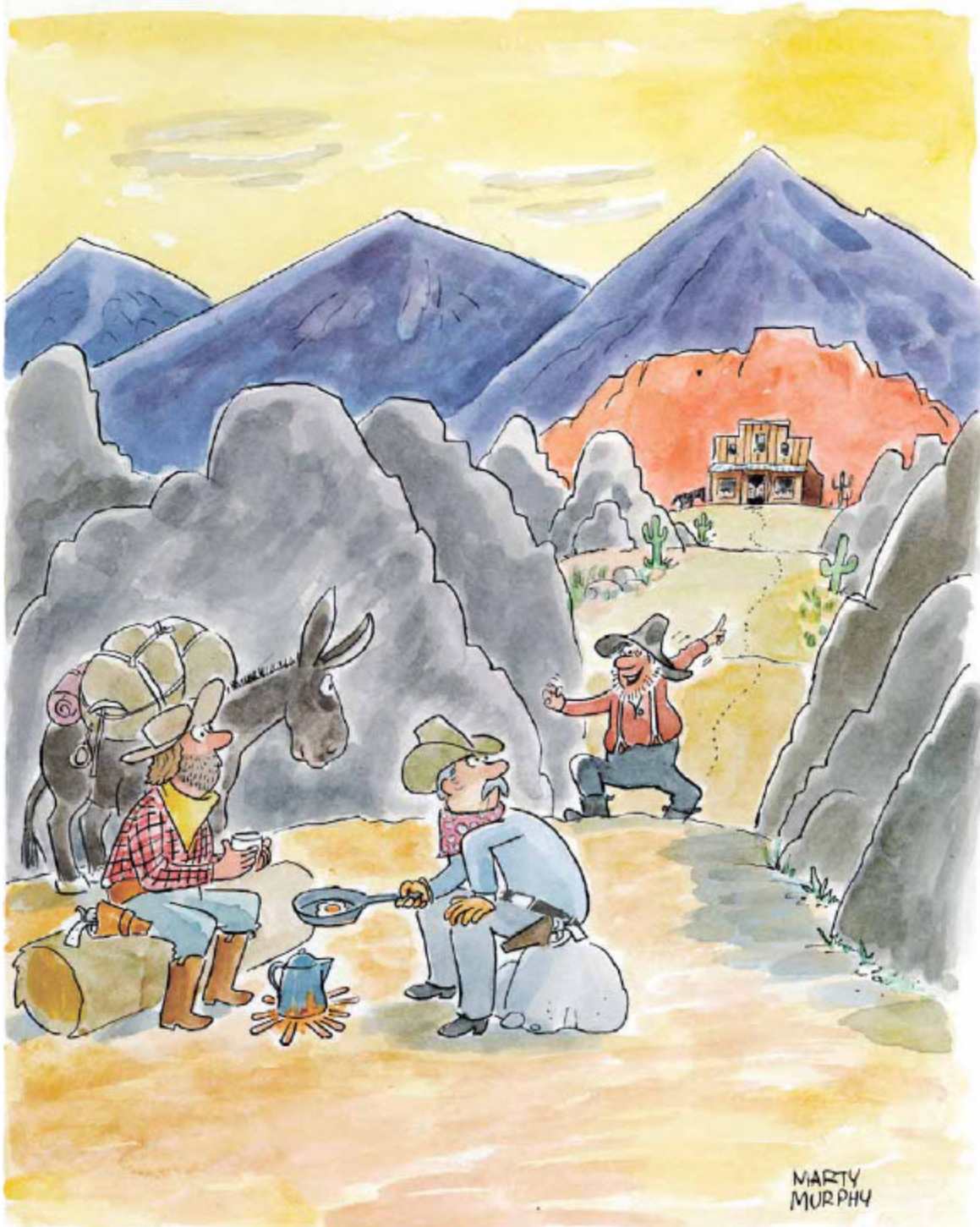
People in the Lifestyle scene autosort: "Couples find their own niche," Veronica says. "Just like in high school."

The people into kink hang together. The people into sexy outfits hang together. The people into drugs hang together, though there aren't as many drugs as one may suppose.

"Mostly ecstasy," Mercedes says, "and Viagra and Cialis...."

Harder drugs like coke or even softer drugs like pot make people dysfunctional—both sexually and socially. "And it's more fun if you can have a conversation," Veronica says.

During the Night of the Seven Women, Larry recalls, "you'd think the conversation would have been very light. But I had deeper conversations than I would on my third or fourth date with somebody normal," outside the scene. "Everything from child rearing to psychology. Most of the time when a guy asks a girl about where she grew up, etc., it's about getting laid. I'm already getting laid, so if I ask a girl anything or if she asks me, it's real. I realized an hour



MARTY MURPHY

*"It's gold, I tell ya! Gold earrings! Gold bracelets! Gold teeth!
We've discovered a whorehouse!"*

in, when they asked a simple question like 'How many sisters do you have?' they really wanted to know. There's no bullshit."

The women at the orgy confirmed that Larry's charm and authenticity made the evening work. Most guys available online are the same type: Arizona, buffed, chinos, short streaky blond hair, a little too tan, shirt a little too tight. Two generations ago it would have been George Hamilton.

Just a tool.

Some people seek anonymity in their orgies: anonymous bodies to rub against. In fact, for some the anonymity is what counts. But more often than not people in the scene describe that phenomenon as old-school, the way people approached orgies in the past. Today the orgiasts seem to be searching for the same thing the characters on *Friends* and *Seinfeld* search for: When we leave home and move to the big city, who will be our family?

"The pure sex," Larry says, "only lasts for so long."

Even for those just looking for a "tool," it seems to be as hard to find a good date in the Lifestyle community as it is in the vanilla community and for some of the same reasons, especially the proportion of appropriate available males to available females. Over and over, women in the scene complain there aren't that many men out there. Unless you get to know the other person as a person and have a relationship, Veronica thinks, it's just friction.

"It's a lot more comfortable when you know the people," Betty agrees. "You're a lot more free to relax and enjoy it, to express yourself. Especially for a single woman."

"The more people involved," Mercedes says, "the more inappropriate people are involved."

Which is the downside of the Internet. It has made hooking up too easy. And oddly, orgiasts do not like that kind of promiscuity, which encourages people who don't get the rules to join in.

"Eleven, 12 years ago, everyone just flocked together," Mercedes explains. You'd go to a Lifestyle resort and see "a celebrity sitting next to a plumber in his 50s." It was more democratic. But there's a difference between erotic democracy and the erotic mob. Increasingly, "no didn't mean no anymore," Mercedes says. Men became more aggressive, expecting—demanding—sex from any woman at a party, whether or not the woman wanted to play. Mercedes noticed the change six years ago at a Halloween party.

"Some guy just walked up behind me," she says, "and I was like, I don't know who the hell you are."

Rejected, the guy threatened Mercedes, who had to go to the party master and have the man ejected.

At big parties, "people don't screen anymore," Mercedes says. "Safety has gone out the door, and you have to feel safe to feel sexy." The big-party scene also became more and more commercial.

"I resent paying \$200 to go to a party that doesn't have good music and you have to bring your own alcohol," Mercedes says. For a lot less, she says, "I can get a group of my friends together and rent a house for the weekend."

Or use Larry's house....

Betty, Veronica and Reggie have also moved away from the big-party scene. That scene—like the weekly Bliss parties in Los Angeles—is about sex and profits. Their orgies are about sex and love.

The three of them have been intimate for four years. Some marriages among their friends haven't lasted that long. Most weekends, Betty comes into Los Angeles and stays and plays with Veronica and Reggie, who drop their kids off at their grandparents' house. They have had Thanksgivings and birthdays together and met each other's families.

"I had no idea it was going to get as deep or intense as it got as fast as it got," Veronica says. Taking Reggie's arm protectively, she adds, Betty's "our girlfriend."

How does that work? Does it work? Clearly, among the three of them, they are not—monogamous? Triogamous?

"No, no," Reggie says, "there's always room for pretty women."

Pretty women. Unmentioned are handsome men. But the women—like the men—like women. The scene is a gynarchy, in which men like women who like women.

"When we started being with Betty regularly," Veronica says, "all of a sudden everything changed. The sex was exponentially better because of the emotional connection. We knew who she was, knew what made her..."

"With someone you don't know," Betty says, "there are always concerns, issues."

"She's seen us in our darkest hours," Veronica says.

"And you've seen me in mine," Betty says, turning to Veronica and Reggie. "It just seems so natural."

Jealousy?

"Communication," Reggie says.

"From my perspective," Betty adds, "this is the most perfect relationship in the world."

How could there be any jealousy? I'm in the easiest position, having nothing to lose."

But the best part, all three agree, is not the sex; it's the cuddling after sex. The spooning. Adds Veronica, "And the pancakes the next morning."

Betty, Veronica and Reggie plan to buy a house together in northern California and live together with Veronica's and Reggie's kids from their previous marriages.

Will it work?

Larry's priorities are different. "I'm not so committed to the scene," he says. He sees his foray into the Life ending in three different ways. "First," he says, "in a Garry Marshall kind of way: Mercedes brings someone, we hit it off, she's Ms. Right, and we walk off into the sunset. Second, I meet Ms. Right, but Mercedes freaks out and grabs a carving knife—the *Basic Instinct* ending. Third, the *Big Love* ending: 'Honey, I'm home. Honey and Honey and Honey.'"

On the night following the Domination Convention's Fetish Ball, Larry, Betty, Veronica and Reggie jump into a limo and cruise through the Los Angeles night. They discuss what to do with the rest of the evening. Drop by the weekly Bliss party to hang with the couple hundred gawkers and stalkers? Drinks at the Sunset Marquis? Back to the Chateau Marmont, where they had started the night having dinner three tables over from Drew Barrymore, two tables over from Robert Downey Jr. and across from one of the Olsen twins?

"What I want," Veronica says, dismissing the fetishists at the ball, "is to go home and have some good old-fashioned hot sex."



"You better go. Here comes my husband."



PLAYMATE NEWS



JAYDE NICOLE AND FRIENDS ARE TAKING IT OFF (THE TOP) FOR CHARITY

PMOY 2008 Jayde Nicole founded Lengths for Love and signed up her Playmate friends—including Miss February 2007 Heather Rene Smith and Miss June 2007 Brittany Binger—to donate their hair for cancer-patient wigs. PMOY 2007 Sara Jean Underwood, Crystal Harris, Hef and Cyber Girl Cristal Camden attended the launch. Jayde says, “If something as simple as cutting your hair can help someone as much as these wigs do, I don’t see why anyone wouldn’t want to do it.” Go to myspace.com/lengthsforlove to help out.

MOVE OVER, STEINEM

The Examiner tapped Miss June 2008 Juliette Frette to be its new columnist for women’s issues. A sample: “What about legalizing the exposure of women’s breasts? Even as a Playmate I would be uncomfortable walking down the street exposed, even under such a liberal ruling. Why? Perhaps it would not be the exposure as much as the response I am conditioned to expect from society for such an action.”



FLASHBACK



Five years ago this month we introduced you to Miss June 2004 **Hiromi Oshima**. She was our first Japanese Playmate and a huge hit with fans on both sides of the Pacific. Hiromi was astutely cast in Nelly’s music video for “Shake Ya Tailfeather” and recently played herself in *The House Bunny*. She is still an integral part of our family, working hard at our events and continuing to be a Mansion regular. In February the Playboy Club in the Palms hosted her 29th birthday party.

Want to SEE MORE PLAYMATES—or more of these Playmates? You can check out the Club online at club.playboy.com or access the mobile-optimized site playboy.com from your phone.

DID YOU KNOW?

PMOY 1994 **Jenny McCarthy** does Botox right. “I get it minimally so I can still move my face. But it’s a savior!”

Miss February 1986 **Julie McCullough**, a.k.a. the Funny Bunnry, appeared at the Ocean City Hot Rod show.

PMOY 2001 **Brande Roderick** boasts that Donald Trump didn’t yell at her once during *Celebrity Apprentice*.

PMOY 2004 **Carmella DeCesare** has some good dating advice: "Men never act like themselves, and that is such a turnoff. I respect a man so much more if he can



just be himself. Be real, be honest, and don't put on a show for me. A date shouldn't feel like a job interview."

PILAR LASTRA SURE CAN PICK 'EM

Scripps-Howard runs an annual celebrity Super Bowl pool. Among those who cast their predictions this year were Maya Angelou, Condoleezza Rice, Bill O'Reilly and our own Miss August 2004 Pilar Lastra, who forecast a 28-24 Pittsburgh victory. The final score was 27-23, with the Steelers taking home the trophy. Take it away, ESPN.com columnist Gregg Easterbrook: "If scantily clad megababes are better than washed-up jocks at predicting football outcomes, perhaps ESPN should reexamine its business model."

MY FAVORITE PLAYMATE

BY LORNA SCOTT

—actress, *Surviving Suburbia* and *Little Britain USA*



"My favorite Playmate is Miss March 2002 **Tina Marie Jordan**. I'm a little prejudiced since she is a friend of mine and I know she is as warm and beautiful on the inside as she is on the outside. Tina is exceptionally smart and giving, and she's a true woman of this new century. We also look exactly alike naked."



ANNA NICOLE SHOW II

The British Royal Opera House will be putting on a production based on the life and tragic death of PMOY 1993 Anna Nicole Smith. "It's an incredible story," says Richard Thomas, the writer working on the libretto. "It's very operatic and sad. She was quite a smart lady with a tragic flaw."

Miss June 1993 **Alesha Oreskovich** says she is "a sucker for a guy who wears his baseball cap backward."

OUT AND ABOUT WITH...

Miss April 2009 **Hope Dworaczyk** modeled Superstar Swimwear's Golddigger suit on her *Inside Fashion* show for the E! network. The line (superstar swimwear.com) is designed by February 2009 Employee of the Month **Danielle Fornarelli** (inset). Danielle's styles are glam—call it rock-and-roll chic—but she strives to make the swimwear feel more like comfortable lingerie than the usual rigid bikini....



For Vivienne Westwood's spring fashion show, Miss February 1990 **Pamela Anderson** was the face and, as *Elle* reports, the muse: "The beauty inspiration for the show was actually Pamela herself." The models were even styled with Pam-like bed-head hair.... Miss May 2007 **Shannon James** and IRL driver Marco Andretti lit up the red carpet at Nick



Lachey's Super Skins Kickoff party.... Miss November 2003 **Divini**

Rae will wed Dr. Winston Fong in August. The couple will celebrate in Mexico with friends and family before honeymooning in Italy. Divini says, "Winston is wonderful. He has always been very supportive of the fact that I spend a lot of time on Divinirae.com."



Miss July 1968 **Melodye Prentiss**, who worked in our editorial library before posing, passed away in March.

DID YOU KNOW ?



BOOKER T.

(continued from page 58)

pulsate: Blind Oscar on the organ could fill up that Club Handy with sound."

In the late 1950s Memphis was the capital of groove—big bands, small bands, rock bands, rhythm and blues. Before he could legally drive, Booker T. Jones had become the go-to guy for Memphis's best R&B bands, a multi-instrumentalist with a deep feel for the guitar. "The bandleaders had to persuade my mom and dad that they were okay," he says. "I'd play baritone sax, piano, and I had that Sears Silvertone guitar and a little amp. We'd be in these cow-pasture joints, playing up-tempo blues, and when it gets a little too late and a little too loud and the sheriff is in there and everybody's dancing and it's hot and it's grinding and the guitar gets turned up and it starts to crunch—I could make that guitar do that. Those were the beginnings of rock and roll. But you didn't do that at Stax Records."

His introduction to Stax, which would become the chief purveyor of sweet soul music in the 1960s and 1970s, came when the label was renovating his neighborhood's movie theater, making it into a recording studio. Rufus Thomas, who lived nearby, walked in with a song idea that needed a baritone sax. The bandleader got Booker from his 11th-grade algebra class; he borrowed the school's horn. "Before I left that session," says Booker, "I let them know I played piano, too."

Stax turned out to be a great opportunity. Most of the grown-up musicians worked day jobs and had families, so once Booker finished his paper route, he'd play sessions all evening. One Sunday he and some other guys grew tired of waiting for rockabilly singer Billy Lee Riley to show up. They cut a blues number popular in the clubs, "Behave Yourself." To release it as a single, they needed a B side. Steve Cropper reminded Booker of a piano riff he'd been fooling with, and Booker tried it on the organ. Not long after, disc jockeys were favoring the flip side, and "Green Onions" became an international hit. Happenstance formed Booker T. and the MGs; serendipity made them an integrated band.

"If you think about it, you'd be stupid to try to start something like that in 1962 in Memphis," Booker says. "In those days in Memphis some terribly inhuman acts happened. The emotion was extreme in the South and in this country—it was out of control. If we'd thought about it, there'd be no way the band could work." Memphis was their home, but the city each member lived in was vastly different. The musicians built a rare bridge between their cultures that has since been trod across and danced on by generations. "I think our purpose was so true that the racial issue just became secondary."

That focus on the music kept them together as Stax went through a variety of growing pains and ownership turmoil, and it allowed them to continue as a group even after Booker moved away from Memphis. In 1967 the MGs and Otis Redding stole the show at the Monterey Pop Festival. But in turn, California stole Booker's heart. "I stepped on the street in Monterey, and it changed my life," he says. "For the first time I saw restaurants giving out food for free. People were sharing hotel rooms and

disregarding money. I never felt an attitude like that before."

Three years later, when Stax was temporarily run by absentee owners whose memorandums stank of greed, Jones remembered the generosity he'd witnessed out West—and he moved there. The MGs then recorded *Melting Pot*, the title song of which has often been sampled. But when Jackson died, the group disbanded. Cropper and Dunn were in demand as producers and session players; Booker, who had produced Bill Withers's debut album, including "Ain't No Sunshine," and played with Bob Dylan on the soundtrack to *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*, was living in Malibu. He and neighbor Willie Nelson had begun playing guitar on each other's decks at the ocean, and they found a shared admiration for some of pop's classics. People tried to dissuade Nelson from pursuing it, but Booker recorded Nelson in Emmylou Harris's Beverly Hills home, and soon even the execs couldn't deny the magic of what became the multiplatinum-selling *Stardust*. Jones has remained the go-to guy for musicians of all genres.

"Rock and roll is all about politics to me," Jones says. "Music of the status quo and the establishment is quiet and polite, and rock and roll is anything but polite." The songs on *Potato Hole* gestated while the American status quo was changing, while Barack Obama was establishing himself as a contender for a job held for 200 years by a white-skinned person. "This music came from that attitude. I can feel proud of America because I've been ashamed of America. I've been in Europe and wished I could speak a different language. The men who wrote the Constitution were some of the smartest and bravest who ever lived. Since we've elected a black man as president, we've become a beacon to the world. We actually do live our creed."

This soul man's venture into rock and roll, then, is less a genre jump than a divining of the change in the world around him. The intensity of the music—and its accessibility—is his reflection of a changing America. "The actual music can mean an emotion—they can be one and the same," he says. "A piece like *Finnlandia* by Sibelius—how does a man write that? His country has been taken and belongs to another country. When an artist can put an emotion in a piece of music and a listener feels the same emotion, then it has been transferred. That's just a real true thing you can't touch."

That real true thing is elusive and difficult to create, but Jones strives for nothing less. "The creative process can be almost divine in its beauty if it's allowed to reflect its source," he says, "but so many things can get in the way. You can forget your idea. You can be unable to re-create it. It may not be recorded correctly." He thrives on the generosity of music—sharing his interpretations. "The Drive-By Truckers let me have the reins. They understood this music and they put their own personality into it, and I was inspired to go further with them."

In an album full of surprises, one of the biggest is the cover of Tom Waits's "Get Behind the Mule." "My family comes from the backwoods of Mississippi, and that's what they did for years—got behind the mule. My uncle took me out in the field, put my hands up on the

plow and said, 'This is how you do it. You've got to keep it right in the row here.' And the mule can be stubborn. And when it's raining, when the sun's shining, when it's hot, when it's cold—you're looking at a mule's ass. This is your life. But the verse that got me was that someone committed a murder and didn't run. You've got to pay for it. Got to get behind the mule. It's just a few words, but it says a lot."

The album's name, *Potato Hole*, comes from Booker T. Washington's autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, a book Jones was recently reading. It refers to a hole in a cabin's earthen floor where food was kept. "I recall that during the process of putting the potatoes in or taking them out," Washington writes, "I would often come into possession of one or two, which I roasted and thoroughly enjoyed." Similarly, Jones considers this album "a place where you deposit a group of happy feelings. We used to have a joint back in college where all the blacks would hang out. We called it the Hole. It was a party place with dancing, and the music also came from thinking about that."

The conversation has subsided, and the sound of Booker's wife, Nan, preparing a meal in the next room emerges—to me. To Booker, the sound gavottes. Something is being chopped, a plate is lifted from a stack. The living room is bathed in light. The bookcases reflect interests in history and music. Booker says, "We're sitting here now, hearing these sounds. There's nothing distracting us. Suddenly you begin to feel her. You look at this place; you look at me, what she has done for me, the family, and you begin to feel Nan." For Booker T., the world is a constant inspiration for music, and tuning in can result in, for example, track five, "Nan," on *Potato Hole*. A part of him is always ready for melody, rhythm and perception to gel.

The food is ready. "I think the reason any of the artistic process works for me," he says, "is I have learned to shut off the creative ideas and the constant flow of music in my mind at the right times. You have to function in the real world. You can't always be in your studio. The trick is to shut the valve off and deal with it."

He rises and leads the way toward the dining room, the creative switch flipped off. But after one step, he turns and snatches a nearby book, *The Golden Ratio*, from a table and says, "Music gives you a way to organize not only notes but all sorts of ideas that fit into that framework. You think of 12 notes in the scale, 12 colors in the spectrum, 12 months in the year and 12 bars in blues. That's Western music, but what about Eastern music? What if you have 16 bars or 13? Thirteen is the magic number if you use it in conjunction with eight and five. And that's the golden ratio." He smiles. "There are so many possibilities to link music with mathematics and beauty, with nature and art."

That switch is never really turned off. He glides on the currents of music, seeing and hearing the world as the elements of a composition. Memories, politics, family, mathematical theory and a field's furrowed rows, the grind of an old roadhouse, the crackling of a purloined potato as it cooks—everything makes a meal for Booker T. Jones.



THE PLAYBOY FORUM

A POSTCARD FROM EUROPE

AN ACCLAIMED CROATIAN NOVELIST FEELS HOPE
DESPITE THE FISSURES OPENING AS THE ECONOMY SINKS

BY DUBRAVKA UGREŠIĆ

I'd be hard-pressed to claim that Europe is coming apart at the seams. All I know is that a friend of mine, a Dutch playwright, decided to put aside his career and embrace the recession with a sober mind. He opened a how-to-survive-the-recession advice center. He has no complaints except that his job transition, he says, sounds like a bad joke.

Another Dutch friend of mine, a journalist, lost her job. She turned the living room of her apartment into a kitchen. She makes pâtés and sells them to restaurants and specialty food stores. Her work is going well, and she has no complaints. The only thing is, as she remarks with a tinge of melancholy, she is up to her elbows in meat.

Seen from without, all seems to be in its place. Venice hasn't sunk; the tower in Pisa stands firmly aslant. But every now and then a seam rips open somewhere: Immigrant youths go wild in Paris suburbs and smash everything in sight, the young of Athens are in a frenzy, and then the northern dominoes topple: Vilnius, Riga, Tallinn. For the wild and embittered players in these riots, the media word is *hooligan*. European hooligan outbursts are treated in the media as if they were hurricanes. Once the hurricane has passed, the media stitch up the seams as skillfully as if there had never been seams at all—until the next hurricane strikes.

Internet sites about the world recession have the drawing power of porno sites. I can't say the recession has much to do with pornography, but I do know that Charlotte Roche's book *Wetlands* has had a Botox-like effect on the European masses: The worry lines have been smoothed. This is how ordinary people forget for a moment that they have been or will be laid off; they forget their worries about their

children and how to get them through school, about evaporating social funds and the future.

Ordinary Europeans ooze solidarity. The circulation of human cargo—thanks to the fall of the Berlin wall (Europe celebrates the 20th anniversary this year!) and the benefits of globalization—is livelier now than ever. First Polish plumbers went off to fix plumbing from Dublin to Madrid, then Romanians flooded European train stations with their accordions. Young Moldovan teachers joined western

European prostitutes soliciting on every corner of Europe; Bulgarian women are fine maids in the homes of western Europe; Albanians are clever traffickers and pimps; Serbs and Croats are trusty drug smugglers; Croatian women are sought as caregivers for the Italian elderly. Ordinary people, the *Wessies* and *Ossies*, have struck up a dialogue, as the Japanese apparently have too: It is cheaper for the Japanese to ship their elderly to Croatian nursing homes than to go bankrupt looking after them in Japan.

If Europe is not coming apart at the seams, the idea of European multiculturalism is showing its cracks. Romanians pelt a Gypsy (claiming he's not a Romanian); Hungarians flog a Romanian (thinking he's a Gypsy). Dutchmen trounce a Moroccan; Moroccans thrash a Dutchman. Italians clobber an Albanian or whomever they grab. The number of Europeans complaining that Jews are getting the cushy jobs in banking and politics is mushrooming. Apparently this is because of Gaza and the recession, they say (history is hardly the teacher of life!). The young, self-appointed champions of national values, in some places called street gangs, elsewhere (as in Hungary) called the young guards, go after someone every other minute: The Russians go after people with non-Russian faces, Croats thrash a tourist (thinking he's a pedophile),



Serbs clobber a Gypsy (claiming he's gay), Bulgarians beat up a Turk, Austrians a non-Austrian, and Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian master of life and death, has forbidden people to die. People are edgy, but for now, as far as the analysts are concerned, these are merely *incidents*.

Ordinary people in the West and the East are sinking slowly into the underclass, according to the sociologists. Ordinary people are losing their faith in banks, courts, institutions and politicians, though a majority of them voted for those same politicians. Indeed, some western European politicians, followed by the post-communist leaders—the people who had thumped the nationalist drums, the semicriminals and criminals, the profiteers, smugglers of cigarettes and guns, the corrupted liars—don't offer much hope. Political apathy and a deficit of social imagination are on the rise.

Europe is holding on tight despite it all, and even if seams were ripping, all were magically resealed on the day of Obama's inauguration. Many Europeans roused from their political lethargy, put down their bottles of beer and listened to Obama's address with rapt attention. Obama briefly united millions of legal European citizens of non-European origin with the Europeans who come from Europe; he united the Moroccans and Dutch, the Walloons and Flemish, the Catholics, Protestants and Muslims. Even the Slovenes momentarily forgot their quibbles with Croats over the Adriatic on the day of Obama's inauguration. What was the trick? Obama succeeded in doing something not a single European politician has been able to do. People believed him. Obama made the word *change* convincing; he gave solemnity to the word *hope*; he made the word *future* real. Obama brought back forgotten values. One of them is decency. With Obama, many not only feel better, they have become better.

Europe and America are bound by an umbilical cord. Like my friends, I am preparing for the recession. I've put in stores to help me weather the worst. I ordered many cans of tuna fish from a Yugoslav dealer in Amsterdam who supplies the diaspora with products from home. Adriatic tuna is the best; the cans are square, flat and thin. You can pack a library with them: the European classics—Proust, Kafka, Joyce—in front, and behind, cans of tuna. Like in Russian homes during communism: in front, Tolstoy, and behind, the dissidents. As far as the social imagination is concerned, I have plenty; it has not dried up. Obama is my hope, too.

English translation by Ellen Elias-Bursac.

DREAD PIRATE

BUSTED BY THE FEDS FOR FILE SHARING,
JARED BOWSER SHARES HIS SAGA

By Althea Legaspi

To a certain subset of astute music fans—and legal experts—the name Jared Bowser is a sort of code. He was part of the first indictment for music piracy, in 2006. His nightmare began in August 2005 when the then 20-year-old Florida resident was given an advance promotional copy of Ryan Adams's *Jacksonville City Nights* as a birthday present. A huge Adams fan, Bowser reviewed the album on a fan message board. Another message-board owner, Rob Thomas, convinced Bowser to give him four tracks. Thomas then posted those songs on his own message board. The tracks in question were digitally watermarked, which made them traceable to the person to whom the promo was originally issued. Soon the feds were knocking on Bowser's door, and he was facing the possibility of 11 years in jail and \$750,000 in fines. Bowser and Thomas became the first people prosecuted for music-

file sharing under the Family and Entertainment Copyright Act, the 2005 law Congress enacted to combat music and movie piracy. After incurring about \$50,000 in legal fees Bowser was sentenced to two months of house arrest and two years of probation. As all this was unfolding, a band Bowser was in released an Internet-only EP. His new band, Sunbears!, just released its music online too. With file sharing back in the news—blogger Kevin Cogill is awaiting sentencing after pleading guilty in December to leaking songs from Guns N' Roses' *Chinese Democracy*—we spoke

to Bowser about his saga, three years to the day after his indictment.

PLAYBOY: You have a band. Has your experience affected the way Sunbears! handle things?

BOWSER: What I did still happens every day. For a midlevel band, it can help get your name out there if people share your music online for free. It can get people to your shows, where they might buy a CD or a T-shirt. Playing shows is how you make all your money. We put our music online and

let people pay whatever they want, the way Radiohead did.

PLAYBOY: Let's go back to the case in August 2005. The tracks appeared online the same day you sent them to Rob Thomas. What happened next?

BOWSER: I was working at a restaurant, and two days later I got a call from a Nashville area code. I walked into the back room and took the call. It was an FBI agent out of the Nashville branch, and he said he wanted to ask me ques-

tions about Ryan Adams & the Cardinals and about *Jacksonville City Nights* being put up on the Internet.

PLAYBOY: What went through your mind?

BOWSER: For probably two minutes I thought it was a prank. I never thought in a million years this would happen. I didn't think the FBI would care about MP3 sharing, Ryan Adams or anything like that. Then I was shaking, thinking, Oh no, what have I done? I waited until I got off work and called him back. He just asked me some questions: Did I have a copy of *Jacksonville City Nights*? Did I send



Bowser is an indie musician and a major fan.

it to anybody online? At first I denied it. At the time I didn't know that the album was digitally watermarked and that they had already called the reporter from the magazine who originally got it, as well as another friend of mine. Eventually I let him know I had it—but nothing more than that. I didn't tell him I sent it to the guy on the message board. Then I didn't hear anything for six days. Every day that went by I felt a little better.

PLAYBOY: You had just turned 20. Did you tell anyone, like your parents?

BOWSER: I did not talk to my parents. I didn't talk to anyone except the guy who sent me the songs. We were both speechless. Neither of us could sleep. We were both like, Oh my God. I felt too scared to talk. I was sick to my stomach. I couldn't even listen to music without being like, Ugh. I had never felt that way in my life.

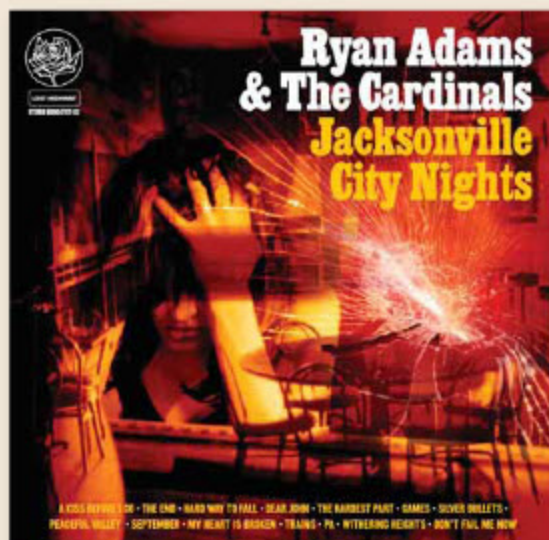
PLAYBOY: Did they take your computer?

BOWSER: Yes. On September 6 I was getting ready to go up to Atlanta to see the band Sigur Rós. I lived with my parents at the time. I was in the bathroom, brushing my teeth, just about to leave, and there was a knock at the front door. My mom came back from answering it and said, "Jared, why is the FBI at the door?" She was kind of freaking out. She had that shaky, about-to-lose-it, crying voice. They said they needed to take my computer for evidence and had to make a copy of the hard drive. They took my computer. I ended up going to the show in Atlanta, so I wasn't there when they came back and returned the computer that day, four hours later.

PLAYBOY: Then there were six months of silence. Did you think you were in the clear?

BOWSER: Totally. I was stoked. My whole family was stoked. My band was signed to an indie label in December. After a few months I didn't even think about it anymore. Then I got an e-mail from a reporter named Ryan Underwood, and he was like, "Hey, I'd really

like to interview you about the indictment handed down today." I didn't answer it. But I googled my name and



The source of Bowser's trouble.

found the press release about the felony charge. Reality set in when I saw "*United States of America v. Jared Chase Bowser*" in writing. That's when I thought, I am so



Ankle monitor he wore during house arrest.

screwed. The first thing I did was tell my dad, "They called back. I've been indicted, and I'm up for 11 years of prison and a \$750,000 fine."

PLAYBOY: What was it like to be booked?

BOWSER: I had to go to the U.S. Marshal's office. They took my mug

shot and fingerprints, and they asked me if I was suicidal. I answered no, but thoughts like that do enter your head when you think you might be jailed for 11 years.

PLAYBOY: The felony charges were eventually reduced to a misdemeanor, and you pleaded guilty. Why?

BOWSER: I assumed they wanted to reduce the charges because they thought they might lose at trial. Once it was a misdemeanor, there was no jail time. There was still a fine of up to \$100,000 and, I think, something like five years of probation and two years of house arrest. So my lawyer said I could plead guilty and avoid trial, or we could go to trial and maybe win and he would make another \$25,000. It was too much risk. My dad had already spent a ton of money. Even though I didn't feel I was guilty, it was basically all I could do. It's sad, but it's all a question of money. Still, what if my parents couldn't have afforded that lawyer up till then? I could easily be in jail right now.

PLAYBOY: Did Ryan Adams benefit from this process?

BOWSER: Not at all. The label and the artist—nobody saw any money. During the trial, they couldn't figure out the monetary loss from what had happened; the prosecutor said that when I was sentenced. He didn't recommend a fine to the judge, because they couldn't calculate any monetary loss.

PLAYBOY: You went to a Ryan Adams show last night. How did that go?

BOWSER: I was always the biggest Ryan Adams fan ever. After I was indicted I still drove to Charleston, South Carolina to see him play. But then I couldn't listen to him at all while the case was happening. Last night, though, I met the pedal-steel player and talked to him for about 45 minutes before the show. He said he was glad I was free and hadn't been locked up. He didn't seem mad about it—he made that clear in the first five minutes, and he continued to talk to me.

GOOD VIBRATIONS

Like a lot of other employers, the Recording Industry Association of America made huge job cuts earlier this year. Though the group cited the economic downturn as the reason, some may view it as the end of the line for the major-label-backed organization. Call it a boomerang effect from the disastrous public relations engendered by its decisions to sue music fans and try to force Internet service providers to cut off users suspected of copyright infringement. In December the RIAA said it would stop initiating lawsuits against users of P2P file-sharing sites, but it is still following through on some cases already in progress. Tens

of thousands of legal proceedings were initiated during the five years the RIAA pursued individual consumers. Meanwhile, the RIAA's vision of turning ISPs into copyright enforcers is facing an uphill battle as well—at least abroad. In New Zealand a three-strikes law that would have forced providers to be copyright enforcers failed to pass. As one blogger put it, "Public opinion, much of it online, has forced the New Zealand government to accept the reality that its people, and not Vivendi Universal, EMI, Warner Music and Sony Music, come first." The question is, will our government come to the same conclusion at some point?

READER RESPONSE

IN-AND-OUT BURGHERS

The United States should better manage all immigration ("Start Making Sense," "American Peon," March) to make sure enough jobs are available for existing legal residents, taking into account the skill and education level of immigrants and the condition of our economy. Currently we allow too many low-skilled legal immigrants into the U.S. and fail to stop illegal immigration, which further lowers wages through oversupply. This creates a situation in which low-skilled legal residents cannot earn enough money to survive, and hence we create more working poor. We cannot and should not import poverty. We can and should help other countries where we can, but the first order of business is to protect our citizenry both physically and financially.

Carol Johnson
Columbia, South Carolina

I realize PLAYBOY is a left-leaning magazine, but unlike mainstream



Is the problem criminal or economic?

media, you are usually very fair to the other side. However, your articles about illegal immigration in the March issue are pathetic. It's not fair to lump all anti-illegal immigration Americans in with one wack-job cop. Speak with my brother who owns a gas station next door to a Home Depot and has to pay for two full-time security guards to keep illegal immigrants from leaving trash all over his parking lot, urinating on his building and harassing his customers. Speak with those of us in border states who have gone to an emergency room with a broken arm and have had to wait 12 hours behind illegal immigrants with a sniffle who know they have to be treated and don't have to pay. Speak with students who don't have proper textbooks because of



Some readers call these men invaders.

the drain on the school system by illegal children who take free educations and free lunches but whose parents don't pay the taxes that provide these services. Speak to construction workers who are out of a job because illegals work for half of what Americans can. I could go on and on. I understand most illegal aliens just want a better life, but why should we be expected to provide for them and give their children a better life at the expense of ourselves and our children? Many Americans hold no ill will toward illegals and even sympathize with their plight, but we are just not willing to let them destroy or bankrupt us. We look at things rationally, are not "driven by post-9/11 hysteria and right-wing talk radio" and should not be lumped together with Sheriff Joe Arpaio.

Scott Bash
Riverside, California

The fact that Joe Domanick consistently refers to those illegally entering our country as "immigrants" as opposed to "invaders" shows what side of the fence he's on. Maybe he should try living next door to a house full of invaders before typing his next article.

Richard Ryzner
Burbank, Illinois

My job took me to local health departments around Georgia. They're full of Mexicans. All the signs are in Spanish; all the employees speak Spanish. I felt as if I were in Mexico. I'm tired of paying for all their health care while my costs continue to go up. I also get tired every time I go to an ATM and it asks if I want to use English or Spanish. I look at the camera every time and say, "This is America, damn it. English." The local McDonald's employees are all Mexican, as are those at the local

Chinese restaurant. To me, a reasonable and realistic policy on immigration is to make Arizona's laws national and Arpaio our president.

Don Oliver
Ellijay, Georgia

If Sheriff Arpaio is tough on illegal aliens, I'd hate to see what Playboy security would do to infiltrators of the Mansion. In fact, I had a dream the other night in which throngs of people crossed the Mansion's borders. Security was able to seek out, detain and kick some of them off the property, but there were so many infiltrators, many hid out and avoided capture. Some people who lived, worked and played within the Mansion walls were more lenient on the infiltrators than security, claiming the poor infiltrators just wanted a job with Playboy. Some who were kicked out snuck back in because a few within the Mansion walls, using Hef's resources, helped them survive there. Eventually the infiltrators blended in, and some got jobs. They even changed the culture at the Playboy Mansion: The infiltrators included right-wing prudes and left-wing feminists who banded together to start a culture of fully clothed women, changing the Mansion forever. That's when I woke up



Arpaio's methods or nothing? Hardly.

in a cold sweat from the bad dream. I quickly realized Playboy wouldn't and shouldn't stand for that, and similarly, Americans shouldn't stand for illegal immigration, either.

J.B. Mann
Birmingham, Alabama

E-mail via the web at letters.playboy.com.
Or write: 680 North Lake Shore Drive,
Chicago, IL 60611.

NEWSFRONT



Sweet Relief

WASHINGTON, D.C.—In a landmark decision applauded by PLAYBOY, the Obama administration reversed the federal government's policy toward medical-marijuana dispensaries. From now on, according to Attorney General Eric Holder, the Department of Justice will not prosecute dispensaries operating legally under state law. This means medical-marijuana providers in California and a dozen other states where they are permitted will no longer be caught in the legal limbo where they languished during the Bush administration, which aggressively targeted dispensaries. Though the new policy does not change federal drug law to recognize the medical use of pot, it does represent a major practical change. "Whatever questions were left," said Ethan Nadelmann of the Drug Policy Alliance, "Holder's comments clearly represent a change in policy out of Washington. He's sending a clear message to the DEA." University of California law professor Rob MacCoun, who specializes in drug policy, said, "We may be seeing the end of an era." But he cautioned, "No one should assume that just because the Obama administration is tolerant of medical marijuana it will be as tolerant of recreational marijuana." Here's hoping this leads to more comprehensive out-and-out legalization.

Money for Nothing

NEW YORK—Recent reports about the financial woes of famed photographer Annie Leibovitz (pictured) speculated the source of the trouble was inheritance tax owed on the estate of her longtime partner, Susan Sontag. As Julia Miranda of AfterEllen, an online community and news site about lesbians and bisexuals in the media, revealed, "Same-sex couples do not have the same privileges as straight married couples when it comes to inheritance. If your partner passes away and leaves her estate to you, you have to pay up to 50 percent of the value of your inheritance in taxes. However, if you and your partner were recognized as a married couple, you wouldn't have to pay a dime." It now appears this was not



the source of Leibovitz's money problems, but it has brought attention to the issue. It hits ordinary people, too: Since employers pay for health insurance under a federal program, gay couples—even in states that allow gay marriage—have to pay taxes on the value of their spouse's coverage because the feds don't recognize such unions.

The Good With the Bad

WASHINGTON, D.C.—If you're looking for a silver lining in the economic crisis, look no further than a few policy shifts being made amid pressure to increase tax revenues and reduce spending. In the first category is a movement in states with blue laws to repeal restrictions on the sale of alcohol on Sunday. (Fourteen states have partial—spirits only—or full bans.) "States are seeing Sunday sales as a positive way to raise revenue without raising taxes or cutting valuable programs," says Ben Jenkins of the Distilled Spirits Council. "That, along with

consumer demand, is driving this change." Meanwhile, the death penalty is also under fire, as states look to trim the costs associated with capital punishment. Maryland has calculated the total cost of a successful death-penalty case (including trial, imprisonment, appeals and so forth) to be more than \$3 million. A case in which the death penalty is sought unsuccessfully costs about \$1.8 million. Cases in which the death penalty is not sought cost only \$1.1 million, and the resultant prison costs are actually lower than those for death-row inmates. Maryland governor Martin O'Malley says, "We can't afford that when there are better and cheaper ways to reduce crime."





New Findings About Rolling Stones and What They Gather

The stone is spherical and would, if on a decline, roll. And there's KATE MOSS, stuck to it like glue. So much for that proverb.

PC SPRESSE'S SLASH NEWS



ROSSIE SMITH PHOTO GALLERY

Hey, Gorgeous, Did Your Mom Ever Help Terrorists Rob a Bank of \$10,000?

'Cause you just stole our heart, LYDIA HEARST.



FRED DUNN/GETTY IMAGES

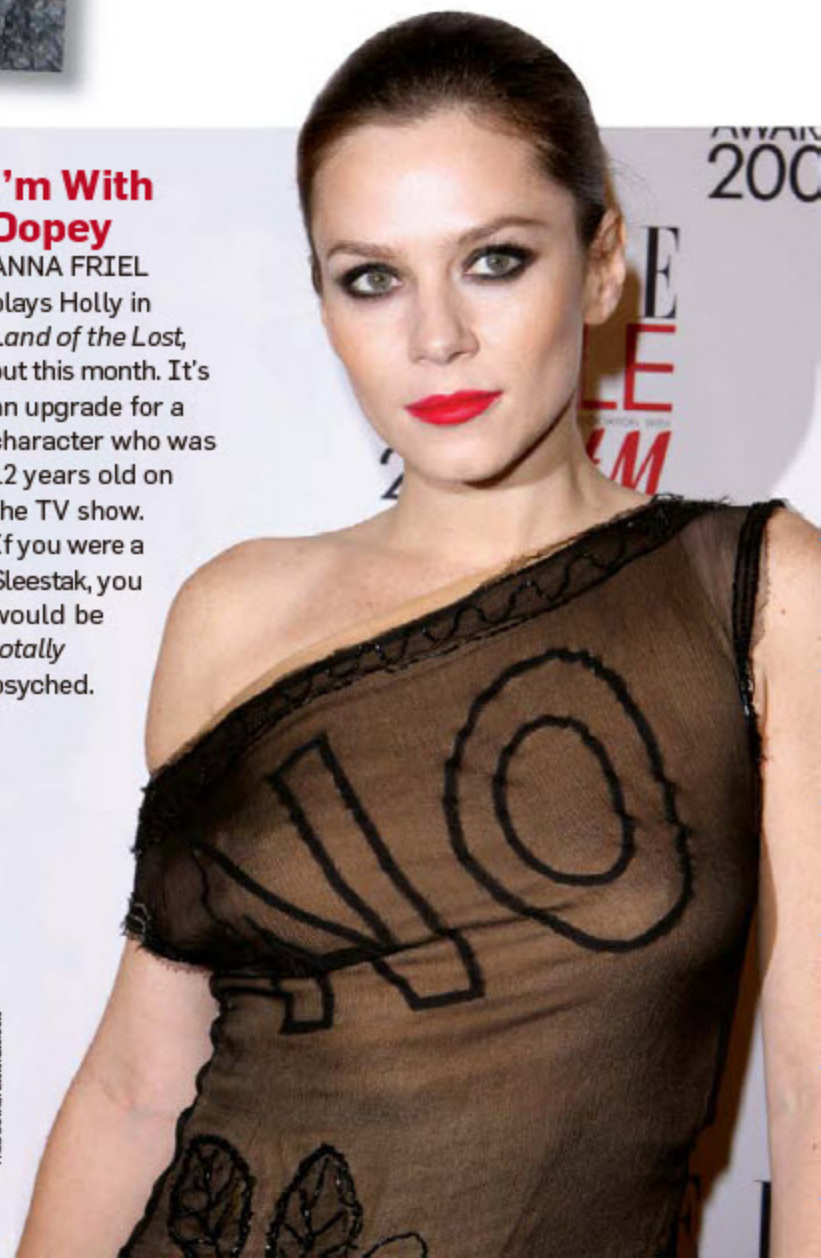
Get Your Wits Out for the Lads

Funniest topless girl in Britain? It's likely ALEX SIM-WISE, who writes for *Front* magazine and chats up celebrities for "Scene Junkie" on MySpace UK. Soon she'll be hosting a TV show about sex laws—move to London and you can watch it!

I'm With Dopey

ANNA FRIEL plays Holly in *Land of the Lost*, out this month. It's an upgrade for a character who was 12 years old on the TV show. If you were a Sleestak, you would be *totally* psyched.

FRED DUNN/GETTY IMAGES



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Gaga Doll

In her chart-topping single "Just Dance," LADY GAGA sings, "Wish I could shut my PLAYBOY mouth./How'd I turn my shirt inside out?" Whatever could these cryptic lyrics mean? Perhaps something about being in PLAYBOY magazine with a top that isn't on quite right. Done!

A Better Prize Than What They're Putting in Cracker Jack Boxes

Our problem with Goldfish? Pour a bowlful, sit down to watch the game and presto—all gone. Solution: Get a bigger bowl. A huge bowl. Big enough to hold thousands of Goldfish and Korean model LAURA MUMMERT. Yeah, that'll work.



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Intelligent Like a Fox

SHARON STONE may not be in Mensa, as she once claimed, but she's *really* smart. After all, it takes brains to steal the show on the red carpet at the Oscars when you haven't made a decent movie in more than two years. Brains, very nice breasts and a see-through dress.

FREDERICK M. BROWN/GETTY IMAGES



DOUBLES, ANYONE?



OUR FAVORITE TV BOSS. SORRY, MICHAEL SCOTT.



HOT SPRINGS BRINGS THE HICKORY.

NEXT MONTH



A GEEK GODDESS TELLS US ABOUT THE NEXT GEN.

WELCOME TO THE NEW ERA—BARACK OBAMA CHALLENGED US ALL TO CHANGE, AND WE ANSWERED HIS CALL AS A COUNTRY. BUT WHERE WILL THAT LEAD IN PRACTICAL TERMS? IN OUR OVERSTUFFED DOUBLE ISSUE, WE ASK A DOZEN EXPERTS—AMONG THEM **T. BOONE PICKENS**, **LEE IACOCCA** AND **OLIVIA MUNN**—TO PREDICT HOW THEIR FIELDS WILL CHANGE IN THE FUTURE.

RAY BRADBURY'S FAHRENHEIT 451—TIM HAMILTON TAKES THE DYSTOPIAN CLASSIC—FIRST PUBLISHED IN THESE PAGES—AND REIMAGINES IT AS A SCORCHING GRAPHIC NOVEL.

MARC ECKO—WE PUT NUDE MODELS AND A CAMERA IN FRONT OF THE HIP-HOP-AND-SKATER STYLE GURU. INSPIRED BY 1980S PINUP ARTIST PATRICK NAGEL, ECKO DELIVERS A RED-HOT PICTORIAL.

THE GOURMAND GOES TO ARKANSAS—BILL CLINTON'S HOME TOWN OF HOT SPRINGS IS ALSO HOME TO MCCLARD'S, THE LE BERNARDIN OF BRISKET AND RIBS. **TIM MCCUSKER** GOES TO BARBECUE BOOT CAMP AND SINGS THE PRAISES OF GOOD OLD AMERICAN CUISINE.

PLAYBOY PAD—IF YOU THINK **JASON POMERANC**'S THOMPSON HOTELS ARE COOL, WAIT UNTIL YOU SEE HIS NEW YORK LOFT.

IN THROUGH THE OUTSOURCE—HALFWAY ACROSS THE GLOBE, INDIAN CALL CENTERS HAVE TO OPERATE DURING AMERICA'S WAKING HOURS. BUT WORKERS THERE ALSO GET TO ADOPT AMERICA'S

LIBERAL CUSTOMS WITHOUT THE SCORNFUL LOOKS OF MOST OF THEIR COUNTRYMEN. **CHRISTIAN PARENTI** GETS INTO THE SCENE.

ALEC BALDWIN—30 ROCK'S VICE PRESIDENT OF EAST COAST TELEVISION AND MICROWAVE-OVEN PROGRAMMING SITS WITH **MICHAEL FLEMING** FOR THE *PLAYBOY INTERVIEW* AND DISHES ON THE HORRORS OF DIVORCE, CUSTODY BATTLES AND TMZ'S HARVEY LEVIN.

CASE OF THE MISSING G-SPOT—CHIP ROWE GOES IN SEARCH OF SEX'S PINK ELEPHANT. THAT'S A QUEST WE CAN ALL GET BEHIND.

KING OF OXICLEAN—BILLY MAYS CAN SELL ANYTHING TO ANYONE. PART OF THE MAGIC IS THE EXCLUSIVITY OF HIS PRODUCTS, WHICH ARE AVAILABLE ONLY THROUGH TELEVISION. THE REST IS ALL BILLY. **PAT JORDAN** MEETS THE BEARDED BARKER TO SEE HOW HIS CHARM TRANSLATES BEYOND TV LAND.

CELL MATES—ONE LAST DARK TALE OF LOVE AND DEPRIVATION FROM THE LATE BEST-SELLING AUTHOR **ROBERTO BOLAÑO**.

JUDD APATOW—IN 20Q **ERIC SPITZNAGEL** SETS 'EM UP, AND THE UNDISPUTED CURRENT KING OF COMEDY KNOCKS 'EM DOWN.

PLUS: PHOTO FUNNIES, DOPE BEACH FASHION AND A LOOK AT PAST SEXY TWINS IN HONOR OF HEF'S **KARISSA** AND **KRISTINA SHANNON**, MISSES JULY AND AUGUST.

Bombay Sapphire. Explore Responsibly.

One&Only Palmilla, Mexico

In some places, the drinks stir you.



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10 EXOTIC BOTANICALS FROM AROUND THE WORLD GIVE BOMBAY SAPPHIRE A REFINED, BALANCED TASTE.

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THE SPIRIT OF EXPLORATION